

OUM ABDULAZIZ, EX-CHRISTIAN, USA (PART 1 OF 4): ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Rating: 4.3

Description: How she discovered major differences between Islam and Christianity concerning the “nature” of God and the divinity of Jesus.

Category: [Articles](#) [Stories of New Muslims](#) [Women](#)

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I did not become Muslim overnight. In fact, at first, learning about Islam came quite unexpectedly on my part. I had simply become acquainted with some Muslims and questioned them wanting to understand something of their beliefs. I was surprised to discover many similarities between the teachings of Islam and Christianity. I came to understand that I could not judge Islam merely from the actions of some “Muslims” I had seen and heard about. To learn something of the real teachings of Islam, I was going to have to throw away my prejudices and begin to learn about it open-mindedly. Unfortunately, I found a great deal of misunderstanding between the Christian and Muslim communities partly due to biased media coverage on both sides and by Muslim and Christian individuals who are not living by the standards of good conduct taught in both these great faiths. Just as the teachings of Christianity are not always apparent from observing the actions of the “typical American Christian,” I realized that to understand Islam I was going to have to look beyond the actions of some Muslim individuals to get to the truth. I was encouraged by a new friendship with a sincere, amicable Muslim woman. As I have always enjoyed reading, I went in search of some good books about Islam.

What surprised me most, initially, was that the Muslims already had some knowledge of the teachings of Christianity because Muslims, too, love and believe in Jesus Christ, peace be upon him. I learned that the word “Islam” literally means peace through submission to God by belief in His Oneness and by obedience to Him. Thus, Islam claimed to be the same religion preached by all the earlier prophets, in whom Muslims must also believe. These prophets include Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, John the Baptist, and Jesus (peace be upon them all), among others. The Quran says:

“And We (God) did not send any Messenger before you but we inspired him (saying): There is no god but God. None has the right to be worshipped but I (God). So worship me.” (Quran 21:25)

Islam encourages marriage as a means of sexual chastity and a means of comfort and happiness in life. A marriage is considered a contract between a man and a woman with each of the parties having rights and responsibilities. Upon marriage, a Muslim woman loses neither her family name nor control of her own property. In fact, I discovered that Islam is not oppressive to women, as I had previously thought. I learned that for centuries Muslim women have had rights that most Western women have only obtained in recent years.

I also learned that the followers of Islam worship God in ways strikingly similar to the worship described in the Bible. The Muslim prays daily reciting these words from the Holy Quran:

“In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgement; Thee (alone) do we worship and Thine aid we seek; show us the straight way, the way of those on whom thou has bestowed Thy Grace, those whose portion is not wrath and who do not stray.” (Quran 1:1-7)

Christians are kindly referred to in the Holy Quran as the People of Scripture or “People of the Book” and are addressed directly.

“Say: O people of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but God; That we associate no partners with Him; That we erect not from among ourselves lords and patrons other than God.” (Quran 3:64)

Christians and Jews are also told that their own scriptures will guide them to the truth of the Quran and Mohammed’s prophethood (2:146, 5:41-47, 7:157). Obviously, I was going to have to take this “challenge” and see if my Bible could really vouch for the divine origin of Islam.

Evidence of the unity and oneness of God as taught in Islam is found throughout the Bible. In Deuteronomy (32:39) [It] says, **“There is no god beside Me,”** and in Isaiah (43:10), **“Before Me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after Me.”** In Exodus (8:10), **“No one is like the Lord our God,”** and in Jeremiah (10:6-7), **“There is none like unto Thee, O Lord.”**

Other verses stating the same can be found in Deuteronomy (4:35, 4:39, 6:4), Isaiah (45:5, 45:21-22, 46:9), II Samuel (7:22), I Kings (8:60), I Chronicles (17:20), Psalms (86:8, 89:6, 113:5), Hosea (13:4), and Zechariah (14:9). When asked, **“Which commandment is the first of all?”** Jesus answered, **“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.” (Mark 12:28-29)** Even after the ministry of Jesus, Jesus’ apostles understood this oneness of God. Evidence of this is found throughout the epistles. **“God is One” (Romans 3:30); “There is no God but One” (I Corinthians 8:4); “One God” (Ephesians 4:6, I Corinthians 8:6, I Timothy 2:5);** and Paul writes to James (2:19), **“You believe that God is One: you do well.”**

It is over the nature of Jesus (peace be upon him) that Islam and Christianity really differ. I could agree with the Muslim on basically every other issue, as I found Islam to be both simple and rational. That Jesus was the divine Son of God and part of the Trinity is the essential belief of most Christians. That Jesus was not divine but rather an honored prophet of God is the essential belief of every Muslim. I knew that I had to prove to myself (in order to remain a Christian) that the Bible unequivocally affirms the trinity (i.e. that God is One yet made of three equal and distinct parts), one of part of the trinity being Jesus, the Son. Yet, when I earnestly searched, I could find no real base for the trinity in the Bible. I could not find proof that Jesus or any of the prophets who came before him (peace be upon them all) taught trinity. They all preached monotheism. And how could it be that all of the prophets were ignorant of the very basic nature of God and misguided of the true religion? This could never be! Further investigation showed that the word "trinity" itself is found nowhere in the Bible. The verse that for years seemed to give it some justification has been expunged from the Revised Standard Version and other versions of the Bible because it is not found in any old texts of the New Testament (i.e. it was added to the Bible much later). This is the verse found at I John (5:7) in the King James Version: **"The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one."**

According to Christian sources, "Various Trinitarian concepts exist. But generally the Trinity teaching is that in the Godhead there are three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet, together they are but one God. The doctrine says that the three are coequal, almighty, and uncreated, having existed eternally in the Godhead."

(Watchtower) This is the fundamental doctrine of most churches. Because there is no rational or logical way to explain the trinity teaching that three can be separate yet equal one ($1 + 1 + 1 = 1$)! Most churches say this doctrine is a "mystery," cannot be proved, and must be accepted merely on faith. But I began to question how or why I should accept such a doctrine on faith when it is not explicitly taught in the Bible. If it was not a Biblical teaching, then whose teaching was it? It seems that the trinity concept evolved as an explanation of the supposed divinity of Jesus. So I decided to look further for Bible proofs of Jesus' divinity.

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