

Muhammad vs. Jesus
Which One Is the Way to Eternal Life?
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Introduction: Can Both Islam and Christianity Lead to Eternal Life?

A. People are quick to point out that over a billion people claim to be Muslim and about 2 billion people claim to be Christian; *yet, numbers alone do not prove anything.*

B. Many people would say that both can lead to eternal life: That there are many pathways to heaven and that as long as a person is sincere in his religion he is going to be saved.

C. Rather than make any assumptions or buy in to the popular idea that it does not matter what religion a person chooses to get to heaven, we would do well to examine both the teaching of Muhammad and Jesus very closely to find the answer to our question (i.e., the Bible vs. the Koran – and the Hadith).

I. The Call and Mission of Muhammad.

A. Muhammad's call to be the prophet of Allah.

Note: Allah is the Arabic word for God or the term used for the Islamic concept of God.

1. At age 40 (A.D. 610), Muhammad claims that the angel Gabriel came to him and revealed to him the truth of Allah.

* At age 40 (A.D. 610), Muhammad, while praying in a cave, claimed that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and that "*Truth descended upon him.*" – The Correct Books of Islam

* Immediately, Waraqa the "Christian" Ebionite priest (who denied Jesus to be God's Son) declared Muhammad to be "*the prophet of this Arabic nation.*"
– Ibn Hisham, The Life of Muhammad, 3rd ed., vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 73.

* Waraqa, was a monk of the Ebionite tribe (a sect that denied that Jesus was the Son of God); He was Muhammad's mentor and teacher (who also was his wife's cousin).
– Al Hariri, Priest and Prophet

B. Muhammad claimed to be Allah's final prophet of which the Scriptures of the Bible prophesied.

1. Muhammad *erroneously* believed he fulfilled Old and New Testament prophecy - that he was the final prophet Jews and Christians anticipated:

"Some of the friends of the apostle of Allah said to him, O apostle of Allah, tell us about yourself. He said, 'Yes, I am the message of my father Abraham and the good news of my brother Jesus.'" – Dr. Haykyl, "Men Around the Messenger"

2. Muhammad had claimed references to him had been removed by Jews and Christians (SURAH 5:13): NO PROOF!

3. There is not a single, solitary passage of Scripture that points to Muhammad (e.g., Deut. 18:18; Isa. 42:1-2; John 14:26).

C. Muhammad changed his purpose and mission from a “plain warner” to a conqueror of infidels (unbelievers).

1. At first, Muhammad believed his purpose was to be a “plain warner” who would admonish the people to change their ways for Allah (Surah 71:2; 28:46; 29:50-51).

Note: Surahs (chapters) in the Koran are not in chronological order of the moment revelations were claimed to have been given to Muhammad.

a. He demonstrated humility by saying:

“I am only a man like you” (Surah 18:110, The Noble Quran).

2. Muhammad was dedicated to making Muslims who would reject idolatry.

* Muhammad taught people how to be a **Muslim** (i.e., one who has submitted to the will of Allah or Islam): *“Bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone without associates, and disavow al-Lat and al-Uzza [idols], and renounce rivals.”*

-- Ibn Ishaq, The Life of Muhammad: A translation of Ibn Ishaq’s Sirat Rasul Allah. p. 115

* In his youth, his father’s family belonged to the powerful Quraysh tribe who was in charge of the center of worship in Arabia, a temple called **Al-Ka’ba** where many idols were located.

* Muhammad vowed that when he became a man, he would never bow down to idols.

-- Dr. A. Shalaby, Encyclopedia of Islamic History (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Nahadah, 1973).

3. Ironically, Muhammad would later on approve the use of idols.

“But those who take for protectors other than Allah (say): ‘We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah.’” – SURAH 39:3, Ali Translation

Example: Muslims travel to Mecca to worship at the Al-Ka’ba and pay homage to the Black Stone believed to have come down from heaven, believing it has supernatural powers to cleanse their sins away.

4. Later, his humility changed to pride and his purpose became *the conqueror of infidels* (as indicated in his last public sermon as given on Mt. Arafat):

“After today there will no longer be two religions existing in Arabia. I descended by Allah with the sword in my hand, and my wealth will come from the shadow of my sword. And the one who will disagree with me will be humiliated and persecuted.”

-- Ibn Hisham, The Life of Muhammad, 3rd ed., vol. 3, pt. 6, p. 8.

II. The Ministry and Mission of Jesus.

A. Jesus begins His public ministry to preach the gospel.

1. John the Baptist preached the gospel and a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins, preparing people for the coming of the Lord (Luke 3).
2. The true identity of Jesus as God’s Son was made abundantly clear at His baptism.

Luke 3:21-22 (NASB) 21 Now it came about when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, **"Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased."**

- a. This declaration of God showed that Jesus was the Son of God!
- b. This was also the commencement of Jesus' public ministry.

3. Jesus began His public ministry at the age of 30 (Luke 3:23) (A.D. 25).

B. Jesus preached the gospel: His mission to be the Savior of the world (e.g., Mark 8:31).

1. Unlike Muhammad, Jesus never sought to conquer lands and peoples and rule as an earthly king: **Jesus never deviated from His mission to be our Savior:**

Mark 10:45 (NASB) "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to **give His life a ransom for many.**"

C. Jesus claimed to be more than a man: He confessed to be the Christ, the Son of God, even God Himself! ("I AM" – **John 8:58**).

Matt 16:15-17 (NASB) 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."** 17 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because **flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.**

-- cf. Luke 4:16-21; John 4:25-26; Mat. 26:63-64; John 8:24;10:36-38

III. Their Methods of Conversion.

A. **Muhammad:** *From* love, patience, and gentleness *to* hatred, brute force, and threat of death.

1. In the beginning, Muhammad showed patience and gentleness when teaching his doctrine to others:

"There is no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error..." – Surah 2:256

- a. Muhammad expressed love for those who rejected his message.

"O Mecca, I swear you are the closest city to my heart, and if it weren't for your people who forced me out, I wouldn't have left"

-- Ibn Kathir, *The Beginning and the End*, vol. 2, pt. 3, p. 215.

- b. Rather than show wrath and violence against unbelievers, Muhammad taught his followers to take care of themselves and leave judgment of them up to Allah (Surah 5:105).

* Historians point out that Muhammad had at one time a more gentle approach to spreading his message because Muslims were few in number and severely persecuted.

2. In time, Muhammad's love, patience, and gentleness toward others were replaced with hatred, brute force, and threat of death.

* Muhammad had worked to form powerful alliances to protect himself against his enemies and raised his army of soldiers.

3. 13 years after his call to be Allah's prophet, Muhammad *now* declared that Allah had instructed him to fight against the enemies of Islam: **Jihad**.

-- Ibn Ishaq, , The Life of Muhammad: A translation of Ibn Ishaqu's Sirat Rasul Allah p. 280.

* **Jihad ("struggle" in Arabic) = Holy war, fighting those who resist Islam.**

"Those who reject Islam must be killed. If they turn back (from Islam), take (hold of) them and kill them wherever you find them..." – SURAH 4:89, The Noble Quran

"Fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and polytheism, i.e. worshipping others besides Allah) and the religion (worship) will be for Allah Alone [in the whole of the world]" . – SURAH 8:39, The Noble Quran

"Let not the Unbelievers think that they can get the better (of the godly): they were never frustrate (them). Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies..."

– SURAH 8:59-60, Ali Translation

"So, when you meet(in fight – Jihad in Allah's Cause) those who disbelieve, smite (their) necks till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly (on them, i.e., take them as captives)" . – SURAH 47:4, The Noble Quran

a. Safety from Muhammad's wrath came only by accepting Islam.

"Say to those who have believed, if they cease (from disbelief), their past will be forgiven. But if they return (thereto), then the examples of those (punished) before them have already preceded (as a warning)." – SURAH 8:38, The Noble Quran

"Kill the Mushrikun [Pagans] wherever you find them, and capture them and besiege them, and lie in wait for them in each and every ambush. But if they repent and perform As-Salat [prayers] and give Zakat [charity tax], then leave their way free."

-- SURAH 9:5, The Noble Quran

Note: Some Muslims speak of Jihad as a spiritual struggle against evil in a metaphorical sense: "Peaceful Jihad" (i.e., peaceful struggle against evil) or a "Personal Jihad" (i.e., internal struggle toward submission to Allah). However, Jihad in the Koran is not metaphorical! The Koran teaches Muslims to **literally** fight a Jihad against the infidels.

- Compare to figurative passages (e.g., Isaiah 44:23; Rev. 5:6).

* *A Muslim is not a true Muslim unless he follows these passages of Jihad found in the Koran.*

The 4 Stages of Jihad around the World:

- First stage: Passive, "peaceful," keep a low-profile, fewer in number (e.g., S. America).
- Second Stage: More influential, proactive stance, larger presence (e.g., U.S., Europe).
- Third Stage: Aggressive, violent, preparing for a full Jihad, exist in greater numbers (e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine).
- Fourth Stage: A FULL SCALE WAR AGAINST THE INFIDEL!

B. Jesus: Used the power of the gospel, not violent coercion to make disciples who chose to follow Him by their own free will.

1. Jesus taught His disciples to leave judgment of those who rejected the

gospel up to God (not to bring punishment upon them):

Matt 10:14-15 (NASB) 14 "And whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 "Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

2. Those who became followers of Jesus would be strictly volunteers in His service and not coerced in any way.

*Ps 110:3 Thy people will **volunteer freely** in the day of Thy power...*

3. Jesus used the power of the gospel (Mark 1:14-15; Rom. 1:16) (not the sword) to create faith in people's hearts (Rom. 10:17) and make disciples.

4. He gave evidence by the miracles He wrought that He was the Son of God and that His message came from God (Mat. 4:23; 12:38-40; John 2:23; 14:11).

IV. Muhammad's Teaching on How to Be Saved.

A. Muhammad taught that people must worship Allah only, believe Muhammad to be Allah's prophet, and follow the Quran (Koran).

B. Muhammad taught a meritorious law system: Each person **earns** salvation by their good deeds outweighing their bad deeds as determined on Judgment day.

"Then, he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy, Will be in a life of good pleasure and satisfaction. But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light, - Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit." – SURAH 101:6-9, The Holy Quran

*"It is Allah Who has sent down the Book in Truth, and **the Balance (by which to weigh conduct)**. And what will make thee realize that perhaps the Hour is close at hand?"*

– SURAH 42:17, The Holy Quran

-- cf. Surah 6:73ff, 18:99ff, 20:102ff, 23:101ff, 27:87ff, 36:48ff, 39:68ff, 50:20ff, 78:18ff.

V. Jesus' Teaching on How to Be Saved.

A. Jesus taught that a person must believe in Him to gain the free gift of eternal life (John 4:10-14) and that true faith is shown by obedience to the gospel.

1. Jesus taught that **only** through Him could a person be saved.

*John 14:6 (NASB) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but **through Me**.*

2. Belief in Christ would be demonstrated by obedience to His gospel.

*Mark 16:16 (NASB) "He who has **believed and has been baptized shall be saved**; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.*

B. Jesus taught His disciples to love God and love other people (Mat. 22:37-38) including their enemies (Mat. 5:44) and to demonstrate their love to the Lord by obedience to God's word (**John 14:15**).

C. Rather than merit or earn heaven through law-keeping (which is impossible – Rom 3:20; Titus 3:5-7), the Christian performs works of faith (James 2:14-26).

1. Every person will be judged according to their deeds (2 Cor. 5:10), yet no person will merit salvation; Salvation is by grace through faith.

Eph 2:8-10 (NASB) 8 For by **grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

VI. How to Receive Forgiveness According to Muhammad.

A. Muhammad could not provide a way of forgiveness nor offer any assurances of pardon from Allah in the present life (Surah 9:80).

B. In Islamic theology, there is a distinction made between “great sins” and “little sins.” The type of sin committed determines the procedure for forgiveness.

1. If a Muslim commits a “little sin”, he could receive forgiveness in exchange for his good deeds (e.g., paying charity tax, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca).
2. If a Muslim commits a “great sin,” he/ she will not know whether or not he is forgiven until Judgment day.

C. Muhammad taught that a Muslim could earn forgiveness by fighting in a Jihad or dying for Islam.

“O you who believe! Shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from a painful torment? That you believe in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad), and that you strive hard and fight in the Cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives: that you will be better for you, if you but know! (If you do so) He will forgive you your sins , and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow...” Surah 61:10-13, The Noble Quran

1. Due to the great uncertainty of forgiveness in Islam, many Muslims are persuaded that the only sure way to be forgiven is death in a Jihad.

VII. How to Receive Forgiveness According to Jesus.

A. Jesus, unlike Muhammad, had authority on earth to forgive sins (Mark 2:10).

B. Jesus is the Savior of the world who provides the way of forgiveness (**John 1:29**).

1. Jesus’ death (on the cross) achieved the forgiveness of our sins (**Mat. 26:28; Luke 24:46-47**).

C. Those who obey the gospel of Christ receive the forgiveness of sins *immediately* (no uncertainty or delay until Judgment day) (**Acts 2:38**).

D. Jesus, as High Priest, intercedes for the Christian, making propitiation (atonement) for sin possible (Heb. 2:17-18).

* Muhammad being just a man (as he confessed, Surah 18:110) could not provide this.

1. Christians can continue to receive forgiveness when they repent and confess their sins to God (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

VIII. What Assurance of Salvation Does Each One Give?

A. Muhammad provides no hope or confidence in one's salvation, only doubt, uncertainty, and fear.

1. Islam teaches a doctrine similar to the false teaching of Calvinism that distorts the biblical doctrine of predestination.

Note: Calvinists teach that salvation is based solely on God's choice, that it has nothing to do with man's choice or obedience, and only a few pre-selected people will be saved.

2. According to Muhammad, while a person is *still* in his/ her mother's womb, Allah **predetermines** what this person's deeds will be, when he will die, how he will make a living, and whether he will go to hell or paradise.

- a. Sooner or later, a person's predetermined destiny will take over regardless of whether he had lived an evil or good life for Allah.
- "The Correct Books of Bukhari, vol. 4, bk. 55, no. 549 (i.e., Hadith)

B. Jesus Christ provides a living hope of heaven, blessed assurance, and confidence in one's salvation (John 14:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:3-4).

Conclusion: Jesus Is the Way to Eternal Life.

A. Muhammad leads only to the misery of a meritorious law system, to violence, hatred, fear, and doubt.

B. Jesus leads us to spiritual life with God and the true rest of our souls!
(Matthew 11:28-30).

Many of the ideas and information of this material came from these resources:

Gabriel, Mark A. (2004). *Jesus and Muhammad: Profound Differences and Surprising Similarities*. Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House.

Gabriel, Mark A. (2002). *Islam and Terrorism*. Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House.