

Should You Be a Muslim or a Christian?

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Life is filled with choices, and there is no area of life in which our choices impact our relationships and future any greater than those pertaining to religion: Our eternal existence hangs in the balance!

This particular article examines the question as found in the title, "Should You Be A Muslim or A Christian?" I would like to ask the reader to be fair and honest in his consideration of the things discussed as they are intended to help us "choose wisely," the spiritual road upon which we travel: Far better is it to seriously consider these things now, than to have traveled that road, only to learn in the end that we have chosen the wrong one.

Which Is Truly From God?

Choosing between Islam and Christianity should depend upon which, if either, is based upon the truth! Are the teachings of Islam as found in the Qur'an true? Or are the teachings found in the New Testament true and accurate? Other articles in this issue examine the history, teaching, and nature of the religion of Islam, as well as the reliability of the Qur'an and the Bible. Each writer has attempted to provide the reader with pertinent information for the express goal of equipping him/her with the facts needed to make an informed, and thus correct decision between the two. I urge each reader to examine every article with care, and great consideration, for it is the information, and the evidence available that should determine our decision - not prejudices, feelings, or outside pressures but the truth.

If Islam is the true religion of God, and Mohammed was truly His prophet, then the evidence should lead us to that truth. On the other hand, if the evidence leads us to Jesus Christ as being the only begotten of the Father, the Son of God, and the one through whom God has spoken to mankind in these last days, (Hebrews 1:1,2), then we should and must accept that truth and follow Jesus, (i.e. be a Christian). (John 14:6)

I humbly, yet confidently affirm that the evidence leads one to Christianity as it is revealed in the Bible. I believe the Bible to be the Word of God and therefore confess with the apostle Peter that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God," and that this truth is from God, just as Jesus' response indicates, "for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 16:13-18). Therefore I have been convinced that one should be a Christian based upon this truth. (*Note: When I say that I believe one should be a Christian rather than a Muslim, I am not speaking of what many consider to be a Christian, but rather the Christian as he should be, as revealed in the New Testament.*)

What Is Found In Christ That Cannot Be Found In Islam?

If one is to choose to be a Christian, rather than a Muslim, there should be an advantage gained in doing so. Space will not allow me to elaborate upon all of the advantages the New Testament teaches one has in Christ, but those which are not considered are covered by Paul in Ephesians 1:3 "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ."

If all spiritual blessings are, "in Christ," then it necessarily follows that there are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ. The primary advantage then that the Christian has over the Muslim is that the Christian is blessed with ALL spiritual blessings, while the Muslim possess' none of them.

What are a few of these blessings? (Romans 5:1-11).

1) *Justification* (*Romans 5:1*) In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul writes of the need for all men to be justified by faith in Christ. Paul's premise is the "gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek," (1:16). All need the power of God unto salvation because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," (3:23). The consequence of sin is separation from God, (Isaiah 59:1,2). Therefore, all need justification "to be acquitted from the guilt of sin, pronounced "not guilty" by God.

Paul also deals with several things which cannot produce justification:

- Ignorance (Romans 1:18-31)
- Being descendants of Abraham (Romans 2:25-28; 4:9-12,16)
- Through the Law of Moses (Romans 3:19,20,27,28)
- Good deeds apart from faith in Christ (Romans 4:2-4; Ephesians 2:8,9).

The Qur'an teaches "If your good deeds exceed your bad deeds, and you believe in Allah, and sincerely repent of sins, you may go to heaven" (3:135; 7:8-9; 21:47; 49:14; 66:8-9).

The Bible teaches that one sin condemns and must be forgiven, (James 2:10; 1 John 1:5-10; Acts 8:18-24; Romans 3:23-26), and forgiveness is a blessing found ONLY in Jesus Christ; (Romans 3:24; 4:24,25; 5:9). When one by faith repents and is baptized INTO Christ he receives the forgiveness of his sins, (Acts 2:38), whether they be a few or a few thousand.

Islam rejects the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, (Koran 4:156), thus if the Bible is true, a Muslim denies the means and power God has chosen to justify the believer, and consequently will perish (1 Corinthians 1:18).

2) *Peace with God* (*Romans 5:1*) As a result of one being justified by the blood of Jesus Christ, through faith, one has peace with God (Romans 5:1). Jesus said "I am the way,

the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6) Outside of Christ, one is "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Ephesians 1:11,12). But a Christian has "been brought near by the blood of Christ, 14For He Himself is our peace, 16. . . . that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross," (Ephesians 1:13-17).

By rejecting the sacrificial death of Christ, Islam rejects the means used by God to reconcile men unto Himself. Thus through the gospel of reconciliation, we "implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God," (2 Corinthians 5:20).

3) Access Into God's Grace (Romans 5:2) Only through Jesus Christ can one access the grace of God, (Romans 5:2). The word grace means unmerited favor. No one can say "God owes me justification, and reconciliation!" God sending His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the world was due to His love and mercy, not man's goodness (Romans 5:6-11). Man deserves wrath because of sin, but God sent His Son that we may escape wrath. What a wonderful motive to serve God! The Christian doesn't serve God because he fears what God will do to Him if doesn't, but because of what He has done for him that he may escape condemnation.

God's grace is available to one and all on equal terms, (Titus 2:11,12). Paul deals with this in Romans 3 and 4:

"*Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also," (3:29)

"The righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (3:22-24)

"16Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." (4:16) (cf. Galatians 3:10-29, 4:21-31).

Justification and reconciliation are achieved by everyone the same way, and everyone who has access to the grace of God has access through the same person Jesus Christ!

Islam doesn't speak of Grace but of debt "If you're good enough; if you've fasted enough; if you've given to others enough, or prayed enough" then you will be allowed into heaven. The Bible says that Jesus paid the redemptive price due for our sins, and through our complete and submissive trust in Him we become heirs with Him, children of God. Man cannot escape the chains of sin on his own merit apart from Christ . . . He must look to Christ to release Him.

4) Can Rejoice In Hope Of The Glory Of God - (Romans 5:2) The joy possessed by the Christian is not mere happiness, but contentment emanating from a deep and abiding confidence in the promises of God through Christ. The Christian who has built his life upon the teachings of Jesus stands upon promises that cannot be moved, (Matthew 7:24-27), and realizes it (Romans 8:31,35-39). He looks to that city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10,13-16,26). We look to

"Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1,2).

Islam cannot bring about this kind of joyous hope, for it denies the one who gives it: Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord.

Conclusion

Because of what Jesus has done for us we can be justified, have peace with God, and through Christ, have access to God's grace. Consequently, the Christian has the hope of heaven because of his submission to Jesus who suffered death, and arose victorious over death.

Should you be a Muslim or a Christian? If the Bible is truly the Word of God, then you should be a Christian. Those in Christ are blessed with every spiritual blessing, those outside are deprived of them - "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved," (Acts 4:12). Please give the evidence provided throughout this special issue of "With All Boldness" a sincere and diligent examination that you may make an informed choice between Islam and Christianity - your eternity depends upon it!