


# Islamic vs. Christian Overview of Abraham & Jesus

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**Our lesson today**

- During Ramadan we want to pray and study
- To truly be a witness to Muslims, we need to understand their beliefs
- Do not deceive yourself
- Today we will look at Abraham
- More importantly at Jesus
- 1<sup>st</sup>—what the Koran says
- 2<sup>nd</sup>—what the Bible says
- 3<sup>rd</sup>—witness of history
- Commentary as we go



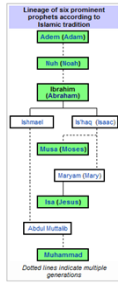
**Key today: Abraham**

- Popular today the idea that many religions revere Abraham, that he is the “father” of both Islam and Christianity
- True in a physical sense, was father of Ishmael and Isaac and Keturah’s sons
- Not true in a spiritual sense
- Very different stories
  - About his life
  - About why his life is important




**Life and Importance in Islam**

- One of the prophets:
- Quran: 2:136 We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma’il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them . . .



**Muslim summary of Abraham’s life**

- Abraham was appointed by God to eliminate all idolatry at the time, and to convey the pure message of Islam to the people. God granted Abraham wisdom in his childhood . . .
- He broke idols, as punishment, he was thrown into the fire, not harmed
- Though not specifically stated in the Quran, Muslims believe it was Ishmael he was asked to sacrifice
- Abraham, in his later years, was commanded by God to set up the holy house of prayer in Mecca, with his first son Ishmael, which became known as the Kaaba. God made a covenant with Abraham and Ishmael, that they should sanctify the Kaaba, as a holy place of worship, where all people in the future could retreat to, bow to and prostrate themselves at
- Abraham and Ishmael further established the rites of pilgrimage, or *Hajj*, which are still followed by Muslims today



**Muslim conclusions about Abraham**

- *Quran, sura 002.132* And this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons, and so did Jacob; "Oh my sons! Allah hath chosen the Faith for you; then die not except in the Faith of Islam."
- *Quran, sura 002.135* They say: "Become Jews or Christians if ye would be guided (To salvation)." Say thou: "Nay! (I would rather) the Religion of Abraham the True, and he joined not gods with Allah."
- *Qur'an, sura 16* Abraham was indeed a model, devoutly obedient to God, (and) true in Faith, and he joined not gods with God. . . So We have taught you the inspired (Message), "Follow the ways of Abraham the True in Faith, and he joined not gods with God."
- Emphasis on his ACTIONS—many not historical that are in Islamic tradition

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## Biblical account, Gen 12-25

- Very little about early life; Called by God
- Responded by faith and went to Canaan
- Faltered when Ishmael born, but little contact with Ishmael after he was sent away after Isaac's birth; Isaac sacrificed and saved
- Faith, not works commended
- God given glory



Gen 12: <sup>1</sup> The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. <sup>2</sup> "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."



## What Abraham's life illustrates to the Christian

- Salvation by faith not by works, key passages:
- Romans 4: 1-3: What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."
- Galatians \*\*The entire book an explanation of the place of grace vs. the law and how Abraham demonstrated faith.

## Galatians

- <sup>1</sup> You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. <sup>2</sup> I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? <sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? <sup>4</sup> Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? <sup>5</sup> So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? <sup>6</sup> So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." <sup>7</sup> Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." <sup>9</sup> So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

## Which is correct? Historical analysis:

- Christian view, from the Bible, written 1400's BC (part of Pentateuch)
  - History agrees with Jewish history, secular history
  - Abraham's faults clearly recorded
  - Abraham portrayed as the father of those who by faith trust God for salvation apart from works
- Muslim view, Quran written 610-632 AD (over 2,000 years later, 2500 after he lived)
  - Quran history very different, myth-like stories
  - Abraham builder of Kaaba, founder of Hajj
  - Not in agreement with Jewish or secular history
  - Portrayed as primary MODEL to believers for *his behavior*



## Which one will you believe?



- Bible or the Quran?
- You cannot believe both
- Both may be wrong, but both cannot be true
- Implications beyond Abraham:
  - If Abraham is a model for how to please God by his behavior, what need is there for a Savior?
  - It logically follows then that Jesus would not be seen as a Savior, a prophet perhaps
  - Goal for Muslim: to live like Abraham, not trust another prophet (Jesus as prophet) for salvation

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## Islam's view of Jesus—all direct quotes from the Quran

- 2:136 We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: **We make no difference between one and another of them . . .**
- 4:157 That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah";—**but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not.**
- 4:171 O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of Allah aught but the truth. **Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His messengers. Say not "Trinity": desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is one Allah: Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth.**

- 5:17 **In blasphemy indeed are those that say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary.**
- 5:75 **Christ the son of Mary was no more than a messenger; many were the messengers that passed away before him.**
- 61:6 **And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad."**
- **Conclusion: Jesus existence not denied**
  - Deity, trinity denied
  - Death denied
  - SUBSTITUTION and ATONEMENT denied

## What does the Bible say about Jesus?

- John 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. . . . <sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.
- Col. 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

- John 8: <sup>31</sup> To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." <sup>33</sup> They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"
- <sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. . . . Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. <sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" . . . <sup>57</sup> "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" <sup>58</sup> "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, **"before Abraham was born, I am!"** <sup>59</sup> At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

## Consider. . . .



Abraham's Tomb, Cave of Machpelah in Hebron



Tomb of Mohammed in Medina



No tomb for Jesus!

## Historical facts of Jesus Life

- Reporting on Emperor Nero's decision to blame the Christians for the fire that had destroyed Rome in A.D. 64, the Roman historian Tacitus wrote:
  - Nero fastened the guilt . . . on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christ, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of . . . Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome. . . .
- Pliny the Younger
  - They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food— but food of an ordinary and innocent kind

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- **Josephus**
  - About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he . . . wrought surprising feats. . . . He was the Christ. When Pilate . . . condemned him to be crucified, those who had . . . come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared . . . restored to life. . . . And the tribe of Christians . . . has . . . not disappeared.
- **Lucian of Samosata** was a second century Greek satirist. In one of his works, he wrote of the early Christians as follows:
  - The Christians . . . worship a man to this day--the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. . . . [It] was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws.

## The New Testament

Author	Book	Date Written	Earliest Copies we have	Time Gap	Copies
Homer	Iliad	800 BC	c 400 BC	c 400 years	643
Herodotus	History	480-425 BC	c AD 900	c 1,350 years	8
Pilato		400 BC	c AD 900	c 1,300 years	7
Caesar	Galic Wars	100-44 BC	c AD 900	c 1,000 years	10
New Testament		AD 50-100	c AD 114 (fragment) & earlier c AD 200 (books) c AD 250 (most of N.T.) c AD 325 (complete N.T.)	+50 years 100 years 150 years 225 years	5366 original lang plus 15,000 translations
Gnostic Gospels	Gospel of Judas Gospel of Thomas and, at the most, 10 others	AD 150-300	c AD 200-300	+50 years	1-3

Veracity as a historical document and about the life of Jesus.

## Conclusions

- This brief lesson
- Was not to make you an expert
- Or an argumentative apologist
- BUT NEITHER
- Should you think Islam and Christianity have the same view about the Bible, Abraham, the Trinity, Salvation, or
- Jesus! Our Risen Lord!



## Questions

- How important is it that our spiritual beliefs line up with historical facts?
- How would you answer someone who says that Abraham is the father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam?
- How does that belief impact what you believe about Jesus?
- What is the difference between believing that Jesus lived and believing in Jesus for salvation?