

# **Salvation in Christianity and Islam**

**By**

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## Introduction

The first half of the Islamic creed makes a sharp distinction between the oneness of Allah and the claims of religious and magical cults which teach that other gods exist besides Allah. Millions of Muslims daily confess, "There is no God but Allah". This testimony is the very core of the Islamic faith. Whoever does not assent unconditionally to this dogma is considered by Muslims a godless idolater. Every theological assertion does not submit to this principle is rejected without question.

Allah is the one who created everything out of nothing by the strength of His Word. He brought everything into being, and to Him we shall all return. He creates life and causes death. He will raise the dead for the Day of Reckoning.

Allah did not merely testify to His uniqueness in the Koran, but also describes Himself with 99 beautiful names. Allah, the Creator, is the Omniscient One with infinite wisdom. He is Omnipotent and His strength is unlimited.

He is the sublime and exalted one above everything. He is the living One, the First and the Last, the One and the Only One, the incomparably beautiful One. Thus he is praiseworthy and Excellent, the Holy, the Light and Peace. He is the true reality and the foundation of everything.

Allah is the Sovereign Lord and King to whom the universe belongs. He exalts and He abases. He is the Defender and the Destroyer. He is the Guide and the Tempter. He saves whom He wills and condemns whom He wishes.

Allah is also Benevolent and Patient, Faithful and Kind to His believing servants. He is the generous Giver of all gifts and abilities. From Him alone comes provision for all mankind. He who possesses everything makes people wealthy and protects all who glorify Him. He is favorable to them and will be a Guardian over all who worship Him.

His overwhelming authority may open the door to success or hinder the progress of an event. He has everything and everyone is in His Hand. He opens and closes the doors. Nothing takes

place without His will. He does not need a mediator. Everything depends directly on Him.

Above all this, He is called the Compassionate and Merciful One, and yet He is the Avenger. He has recorded everything precisely and will be the indisputable witness on the Day of Judgment. He is the best of all judges and will present each man with an exact bill of reckoning.

He acknowledges those who repent, and forgives because He is the Forgiving one. He is gracious toward His believing servants and establishes a good relationship with them. But no believer can be certain whether the good attributes of Allah are directed toward him personally, or whether Allah's harsh and devastating side will eventually strike him. His frightening attributes create fear in people and drive them to do everything possible to keep the law. Poverty and illness are regarded as signs of Allah's wrath for their hidden sins. By the same token, riches, success, and people's esteem in the Muslim society are taken as indications of favor from the One who alone makes rich, and who honors His worshippers with blessings.

Allah created Adam and Eve to dwell on the earth along with their descendants. But a condition was laid upon them to exercise their authority in accordance with Allah's laws. If people adhere to the laws, peace and harmony will exist on earth and Allah will reward the law abiding ones with Paradise in the Hereafter. If people violate these laws, then chaos, bloodshed, and corruption will become prevalent, disrupting the system according to which His universe must run. Those who do such things will be punished with the Hell fire.

People are given control over choosing between right or wrong. Right is defined as that which Allah declares as His Law. Because Allah is just, He sends Messages to people outlining what His laws are. These Messages must not contain errors, and must be interpreted correctly, otherwise, how can Allah fairly judge people if errors are contained in His Messages directed to them? Therefore, all Messengers of Allah must deliver a consistent Message of obedience to Allah's Law. If the Messengers delivered messages that differed from one another, then one could conclude the source of the messages was not the same. But since the Messages all came from the one Allah, they must

contain the same Law. It is for this reason that all divine religions teach the importance of the Ten Commandments and other canons. Muslims believe that the differences which came to exist between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were caused by human forgeries of the original Messages delivered by Moses and Jesus.

Although Christianity and Islam share several basic theological ideas, they differ in countless key characteristics. The most prominent difference is the Christian views of salvation. These include original sin, the identity of Jesus, the Trinity, Jesus crucifixion, and vicarious atonement.

In this book each concept of these will be discussed in detail from the Islamic perspective and also from the views of several eminent Christian apologists.

## Original Sin

Christianity alleges that Allah created humans to live eternally in Heaven, and that when Adam ate from the tree from which he had been forbidden; Allah punished him through death and banishment from Heaven. They further assert that as death was inherited by his progeny, so too was the sin of their father, which was a permanent stain on the hearts of humanity never to be removed except through a sacrifice so great that it would oblige Allah to forgive humanity. This sacrifice would be nothing other than the sacrifice of Allah himself, incarnate in His son "Jesus".

Therefore Christianity deems all of humanity as damned to Hell for the sin of Adam from which they could never be cleansed, except through the belief that Allah became incarnate and died for Adam's sin, ritualized as Baptism, through which Christians are "born again" into the world, but this time free of sin. It is therefore evident that the theory of "Original Sin" forms the basis of various Christian beliefs, from the crucifixion of Jesus to the concept of salvation and savior from Hell. It forms the very basis for the mission of Jesus himself.

### 1- Islamic view

The truth regarding the original sin of Adam is indicated in the Koran. Adam's original sin was forgiven by Allah. The Koran narrates that Allah made a proclamation to the angels of great event, "I am about to place a viceroy in the earth." The angels said, "Will thou place therein one who will make mischief and shed blood, while we adore your Eternal Name and extol your glorious attributes!" Allah answered, "I know what ye know not." The angels, though holy and pure, and endowed with power from Allah, yet they are without passion or emotion, of which the highest flower is love. Man however was endued with emotions that could lead him to the highest and drag him to the lowest. The power of will or choosing between good or bad would have to go with them. This power of will when used aright gave him mastery over his own fortunes and over nature, thus bringing him nearer to Allah, which has supreme mastery and will. The angels had no independent wills of their own; their perfection in other ways reflected Allah's perfection but could not raise them

to the dignity of vicegerency. The perfect vicegerent is he who has the power of initiative himself, but whose independent action always reflects perfectly the will of his principal.

The angels in their one-sidedness saw only the mischief consequent on the misuse of the emotional nature by man; perhaps, being without emotions, did not understand the whole of Allah's nature, which gives and asks for love.

In humility and true devotion to Allah, they remonstrate, "Will Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? – whilst we do celebrate Thy praise and glorify Thy Holy name?"

This mystery of love being above them, they are told that they do not know (1).

Allah then created Adam. Foreknowing that he would be destined to inhabit the earth, Allah imparted to him knowledge of all names which denote each and all members of all classes of beings and objects, the animate and inanimate, the material and immaterial. Then He presented them to the angels and said to them, "Give me the designations of all that I imparted to Adam if ye are right."

Here the angels realized their imperfection of knowledge. At the same time the matter is brought home to them when the actual capacities of man were shown to them.

The angels said, "Glory be to Thee, of knowledge we have none save what Thou hast taught us. In truth it is Thou who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom."

Allah, then, said to Adam, "Tell them Adam of the designations and the destined purposes of all that has been imparted to you." When Adam did, Allah said to the angels, "Did I not tell you that I am the Omniscient of all that is unknown in the heaven and in the earth and that you reveal and what you conceal?"

Here and then Allah said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves to Adam", and the angels prostrated to Adam in admiration, except Iblis (Satan) who declined with inordinate self-esteem, and was disobedient rebel.



Then Allah created from Adam his mate (Eve), and said to Adam, "O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in Paradise and eat as you will, but come not nigh this tree lest you become wrong-doers. But Satan through hatred and envy succeeded in tempting them and they both ate from the forbidden tree.

Allah then said to them, "Get ye down, all, with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood for a time."

Prompted by the sense of guilt, Adam felt shame. But because Adam's guilt was not deliberately intended, Allah in mercy inspired Adam with words for invoking His forgiveness.

Because Allah is Merciful and accepts atonement made by the people, He pardoned Adam's offence. So there is no here an original sin that must be carried on the shoulders of innocent people that must wait for thousands of years, until Jesus comes to sacrifice himself for their sake!

Allah then said, "Go down, all of you (to earth); but verily there cometh unto you from Me a guidance (divine revelation); and whoso follows My guidance, there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. But they who disbelieve and disobey Our revelations, such are the dwellers of the Fire. They abide therein forever."

The Koranic verses corresponding to the above mentioned narration are as follows:

**And then thy Lord said to the angels, "I am setting in the earth a viceroy." They said, "What, wilt Thou set therein one who will do corruption there, and shed blood, while we proclaim Thy praise and call Thee Holy?"**

**He said, "Assuredly I know that you know not."**

**And He taught Adam the names, all of them; then He presented them unto the angels and said, "Now tell Me the names of these, if you speak truly."**

**They said, "Glory be to Thee! We know not save what Thou hast taught us. Surely Thou art the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."**

**He said, "Adam, tell them their names."**

**And when he had told them the names He said, "Did I not**

tell you I know the unseen things of the heavens and earth? And I know what things you reveal, and what you were hiding.”

And when We said to the angels, “Bow yourself to Adam”, so they bowed themselves save Iblīs (Satan); he refused, and waxed proud, and so he became one of the unbelievers. And We said, “Adam, dwell thou, and thy wife, in Paradise, and eat thereof easefully where you desire; but draw not nigh this tree, lest you be evildoers.” Then Satan caused them to slip therefrom and brought them out of that they were in; and We said, “Get you all down, each of you an enemy of each; and in the earth a sojourn shall be yours, and enjoyment for a time.” Thereafter Adam received certain words from His Lord, and He turned towards him; truly He turns, and is All-Compassionate.

We said, “Get you out of it, all together; yet there shall come to you guidance (Prophets, Messengers, revelations) from Me, and whosoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow.”

As for the unbelievers who cry lies to Our signs, those shall be the inhabitants of the Fire, therein dwelling forever (Al-Baqarah, 30-39).

It is evident from this Koranic narration that Eve was not the one who persuaded Adam to eat from the forbidden tree, but it was Satan who tempted Adam and Eve to do so.

As it shows from the Koranic verses, Adam was destined to descend to earth to dwell therein and establish human progenies. Satan was also destined to descend to earth in order to tempt man and dissuade him from the right path. But divine guidance will be sent to man through Prophets and Messengers. If man believes in Allah as the One and Only True God, and adheres to divine guidance, Allah will protect him from the temptations of Satan and grant him Paradise. However, if he succumbs to evil and follows Satan’s path, the loss is his own, and Hell in the Hereafter will be his abode.

It is also clear from the Koranic verses that Adam’s sin was forgiven. After he erred, Allah overlooked his sin, and guided

him to seek repentance. Allah then brought him close and forgave his sin.

It was the pre-determined will of Allah that Adam and Eve go down to earth in order to start building human civilization. A civilization that will be governed by divine guidance, whoever follows it by believing in the Creator and performing deeds of obedience as stated in the divine revelations, no fear shall befall him, neither shall he grieve in the Hereafter, because he will be admitted into Paradise.

The story of Adam and Eve was also mentioned in surat Al-A'râf. Allah ordered the angels to prostrate themselves to Adam in adoration, and the angels obeyed except Iblîs (Satan) who refused to be of those who bow down. Then said Allah, "What prompted you Satan not to prostrate to Adam when I have commanded you to do so!" "But I am of a better sort than he is." Said Satan; "You created me from Fire whereas you created him from clay."

"Then down you go", said Allah, "from this blissful state, you are doomed to a lower state, you are dismissed from My heaven's realm, doomed to the vicissitude of deposition and degradation (arrogance, jealousy, disobedience, egotism and untruth)."

"Give me some respite till the day they are resurrected." Said Satan to Allah.

And Allah said, "You are granted a delay of punishment till the pre-determined Hour."

Then said Satan to Allah, "Since you have sent me astray, I will be in wait for them on your straight path. And I will assail them emotionally and mentally from every side, and you shall find most of them not displaying gratitude."

Allah said, "Go away from here, despised and rejected; I will fill the realm of Hell with you And with the like of you and with all those of mankind who take you as a guide and accept your authority."

"And as for you Adam", said Allah. "You and your wife make abode in Paradise and eat as you will, and wherever you will, but

approach not this tree lest you both should be of the wrongdoers."

Then Satan whispered suggestions to them both in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree save you should become angels or become immortals." And he swore to them both that he was their sincere adviser. So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tested of the tree, their shame became manifest to them, and they kept collecting leaves from the trees of Paradise to cover their private parts.

And their Lord called to them saying, "Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you that Satan is an open enemy unto you?" They said, "Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not, and bestow not upon us your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers."

Allah said, "Get down (to earth), one of you an enemy to the other (i.e. Adam, Eve and Satan). On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time. Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and therefrom shall ye be resurrected."

The Koran says in this regard:

**We created you, then We shaped you, then We said to the angels: "Bow yourselves to Adam"; so they bowed themselves, save Iblīs – he was not of those that bowed themselves.**

**Said He, "What prevented thee to bow thyself, when I commanded thee?"**

**Said he, "I am better than he; Thou created me of Fire, and him Thou created of clay."**

**Said He, "Get thee down out of it; it is not for thee to wax proud here, so go thou forth; surely thou art among the humbled."**

**said he, "Respite me till the day they shall be raised."**

**Said He, "Thou art among the ones that are respited."**

**Said he, "Now, for Thy preventing me, I shall surely set in ambush for them and from behind them, from their right hands and their left hands; Thou wilt not find most of them thankful."**

**Said He, "Go thou forth from it, despised and banished. Those of them that follow thee – I shall assuredly fill Gehenna with all of you."**

**"O Adam, inherit, thou and thy wife, the Garden, and eat of where you will, but come not nigh this tree, lest you be of the evildoers."**

**Then Satan whispered to them, to reveal to them that which was hidden from them of their shameful parts. He said, "Your Lord has only prohibited you from this tree lest you become angels, or lest you become immortals." And he swore to them, "Truly, I am for you a sincere adviser."**

**So he led them on by delusion; and when they tasted the tree, their shameful parts revealed to them, so they took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden. And their Lord called to them, "Did not I prohibit you from this tree, and say to you, "Verily Satan is for you a manifest foe?"**

**They said, "Lord, we have wronged ourselves and if Thou dost not forgive us, and have mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the lost."**

**Said He, "Get you down, each of you an enemy to each. In the earth a sojourn shall be yours, and enjoyment for a time."**

**Said He, "Therein you shall live, and therein you shall die, and from there you shall be brought forth." (Al-A'râf 11-25).**

In the Koran Allah repeated also the story of Adam and Eve in surat Taha.

Allah entered into a covenant with Adam but he forgot, and Allah found no constancy in him. Allah said to the angels prostrate yourselves to Adam, they fell prostrate save Iblîs who refused. And then Allah said to Adam, "Iblîs is an avowed enemy to you and to your wife, so let him not drive you both out of the Garden so that you will be distressed." "You may rest assured", Allah added, "that therein never shall you suffer thirst nor be exposed to the parching heat of the sun."

But Satan wickedly whispered to him, instigating evil. He said to Adam, "Shall I show you the tree of eternity and to a kingdom

that will never waste away?"

Deceived by Satan's allurements, Adam and Eve ate of the tree and so their private parts became manifest to them. They kept collecting leaves from the trees of Paradise to cover their naked bodies which arouse the sense of shame.

Thus did Adam disobey his Lord and strayed from the right path. But Allah, His Creator, chose him and guided him.

"Upon our command", said Allah, "Get you down, both of you, with Satan altogether from the Garden, with enmity to each other (Satan against Adam and his progeny). But if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoso follows My guidance, he will not go astray nor come to grief. But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. Then shall he say, "O my Lord, why you thronged me blind when in life I was able to see and to argue and defend myself?"

Allah will say, "So it must be, Our revelations came unto you, but you did forget them. In like manner you are forgotten this Day. Thus do We reward him who transgresses beyond bounds and believes not in the signs of his Lord; and the torment of the Hereafter is far more severe and more lasting."

The Koranic corresponding verses are:

**"And We made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no constancy. And when We said to the angels, "Bow yourselves to Adam"; so they bowed themselves, save Iblīs; he refused. Then We said, "Adam, surely this is an enemy to thee and thy wife. So let him not expel you both from the Garden, so that thou come to toil. It is assuredly given to thee neither to hunger therein, nor to go naked, neither to thirst therein, nor to suffer the sun's heat." Then Satan whispered to him saying, "Adam, shall I point to thee to the Tree of Eternity, and a kingdom that decays not?" So the two of them ate of it, and their shameful parts revealed to them, and they began to hide by heaping upon themselves leaves of the Garden. And Adam disobeyed his**

**Lord, so went astray.**

**Thereafter his Lord chose him, and He guided him.**

**Said He, "Get you down, both of you together, out of it, each of you an enemy to each; but if there come to you from me guidance, then whosoever follows My guidance shall not go astray nor come to grief; but whosoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall be a life of narrowness, and on the Resurrection Day We shall raise him blind."**

**He shall say, "O my Lord, why hast thou raised me blind, and I was wont to see?"**

**Allah shall say, "Even so it is. Our signs came unto thee, and thou didst forget them; and so today thou art forgotten."**

**So We recompense him who is prodigal and believes not in the signs of his Lord; and the chastisement of the world to come is more terrible and more enduring (Tâha 115-127).**

## 2- Views of Christian apologists

Christianity teaches that all men and women have an inherent sin nature. This sin nature is the result of the fall of Adam, the first created being. Allah gave Adam and Eve every good thing that He created to eat for their sustenance. They were forbidden to eat only from the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But Allah also gave them moral responsibility and choice. They chose to disobey Allah, and thus Allah's perfect creation became tainted with stain of sin, resulting in man being separated from the close communion with Allah that Adam enjoyed prior to the sin. Sin ultimately resulted in both physical death and spiritual death – eternal separation from Allah. This one sin caused all future offspring to be born with a sin nature where, left to our inborn instincts, would live in sin continually.

The Bible tells us that this one sin condemned all mankind. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

In 354 A.D. however, two men were born, both of whom would make an enormous impact on the Church of Jesus Christ. The two men were Pelagius and Augustine.

Pelagius believed that God created Adam neither good nor bad, but 'neutral'. Adam was in a position to choose for himself whether he would do good or bad. Adam had a free will; Adam had the capacity to choose between good and evil. Pelagius taught that God made Adam a mortal being; 'death' was simply part of being a creature. In other words, Pelagius believed that death was not the wages of sin. Adam chose to sin, to do evil. The consequence of this choice was not that Adam became sinful, depraved, or dead in sin, but rather that Adam became a sinner. However, after the fall into sin Adam retained a free will and so was still able to come back from doing evil and do good (be it that, once he had tasted the forbidden fruit of sin it was harder to refrain from it). Contrary to what Scripture states in Genesis 6:5, namely, that "every intent of the thoughts of his heart (i.e. every thought and every imagination behind all thoughts) was only evil continually". Pelagius taught that Adam did not become depraved in his heart but rather, he could commit isolated sinful acts if he so desired. When Adam chose to sin, he injured himself alone, and not his descendants. Adam's fall was Adam's alone; his descendants did not fall with him. So no other human is guilty of original sin, nor did any one become depraved. Adam's children remained the way Adam was created: neutral. As to why people sin, Pelagius reasoned that children sin because they follow a wrong example, and sinning can become habitual, consequently, people sin. Yet Pelagius believed that it was possible for children, born innocent, sinless, with neutral minds and hearts, to grow up without knowing sin if they are never exposed to a bad example. As to man's need for God's grace, Pelagius believed that man did not need God's grace in order to be saved, but man could choose for himself whether or not he would be saved.

Augustine believed that the Bible taught the following: God created Adam good. Adam was not neutral, (i.e. neither good nor bad), or in a position to choose between being good or evil but he was good and able to do good. As far as Adam's free will was concerned, Adam, created good, was able to do either good or evil; i.e. Adam was able to sin. By placing the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden, God placed Adam before a test. Adam was not created mortal; he would not die unless he sinned. Death, in other words, is the wages of sin. When Adam fell into sin he changed from being good to being



evil. He did not merely become a sinner but he became sinful, dead in sin, depraved. Having made himself depraved, Adam did not have the wherewithal to revert to being good. Having placed himself on the side of Satan, Adam would stay lost forever unless God took him away from Satan back to Himself. In order to go back to God, Adam was totally dependent on God's grace. With Adam's fall into sin, all his descendants fell also. The whole human race was present in Adam when he fell into sin and so all are affected by original pollution, i.e. all have lost their goodness and become depraved, dead in sin. More, all are responsible for their own fall into sin, so that each is guilty of original sin. In order to be saved, then, Adam and all people are in need of God's grace. We all are totally dependent on God for all things. An acknowledgment of total dependence on God for salvation implies an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty. Only those predestined by God to be saved shall receive salvation. Our dependence on God is such that there is no salvation for us unless God chooses to save us and unless God acts upon us.

The Armenians maintain that man inherited a sin nature from Adam and man sins due to that nature. Man is not guilty for Adam's sin and cannot be punished unless he actually sins.

Ezekiel 18:20a states, "The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son."

The word used for "soul" in this passage is the Hebrew word, nephesh. This passage leads to the objection that original sin cannot be true, because it involves the son inheriting the guilt of the father.

Despite its prominent place in Christianity, the notion of an "original sin" is not found among the teachings of any Prophet, Jesus included.

## Conclusion

As we have seen from the previous Koranic verses, there is no original sin left to be carried on the shoulders of Adam's descendants. Eve was not the one who persuaded Adam to eat from the forbidden tree but Iblīs. After Adam and Eve realized their mistake, they immediately sought forgiveness, from Allah.

They said, **“Our Lord! We have wronged our souls. If you forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be lost.”** (Al-A'râf, 23).

The Koran describes that Allah taught Adam some words to use to seek repentance. **“Then Adam learned from his Lord certain words, and Allah accepted his repentance, for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful** (Al-Baqarah, 37).

In Islam, there is no concept of original sin. Adam and Eve made a mistake by eating from the forbidden tree and asked for forgiveness, and Allah showed them mercy. Allah does not hold us accountable for what we cannot uphold, nor does He accept atonement given on behalf of Jesus or someone else. But in His Grace and Mercy, those who believe and repent may be forgiven for their misdeeds.

When the earth had been prepared, blessed with sustenance, rain, and abundant plant and animal life, everything was ready for the entrance of a new creature, Adam. A special being that Allah would endow with gifts: a soul and conscience, knowledge, and the free choice to follow Allah's guidance.

Allah created Adam and his human descendants to be a vicegerent on the earth. In order to fulfill this role, the first human being, Adam, needed knowledge, so the first thing Allah did upon creating Adam was to teach him the names of all things to give him knowledge of the world. Human beings were endowed with a reasoning and intelligent mind, unique among the creatures of the earth.

Allah also created human beings with the conscious knowledge of right from wrong and the free choice to follow the path of good or the path of evil.

When Iblîs (Satan) declined to bow to Adam, Allah rejected him, cast him out and cursed him. Allah warned Adam, and consequently his descendants, that Iblîs will be the enemy of man on earth, because he will try to bring some of the humans along with him to Hell. He will assault them from before them, and behind them, from their right and their left. Allah warned that **“whoever of mankind will follow Iblîs, He shall assuredly fill Hell with all of them”**. (Al-A'râf, 18).

## Is Jesus God or son of God?

### 1- Islamic view

Christians and Muslims also differ about their views of God. Christians follow a triune God, God the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. Though each has specific roles and responsibilities, Christians view them as one God. This differs from the Islamic view of a singular God, called Allah, the Creator of the world and all that exists on it.

Christians view Jesus as their Lord and savior, part of the Holy Trinity as the son of God, and the key to their entire religion. They believe that Jesus came to earth as the Hebrew Messiah, thus finally saving the Jews from their sins. His death on the cross and resurrection provided Christians with the opportunity to be forgiven from their sins and have a chance to live with God for eternity in heaven.

The Prophet of Islam - peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – came after Jesus to re-establish the Oneness (Tawheed) of Allah on earth. He came to make intelligible to the Jews and the Christians much of what they had concealed of the Scriptures (Allah's Oneness, usury, the advent of Muhammad after Jesus as foretold in their Scriptures etc.) so that they apprehend what is purely spiritual and intellectual, and to repeal much of what is now irrelevant. Indeed there has come to the Jews and the Christians a new light and a perspicuous Book (the Koran), wherewith Allah guides all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leads them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light and direct them to the true path of rectitude.

As we read in the Koran:

**People of the Book, now there has come to you Our Messenger, making clear to you many things you have been concealing of the Book (Torah and Gospel), and effacing many things (repeal much of what is now irrelevant). There has come to you from Allah a light, and a Book manifest (the Koran) whereby Allah guides whosoever follows His good pleasure in the ways of peace, and brings them forth from the shadows into the**

**light by His leave; and He guides them to a straight path**  
(Al-Maidah 15, 16).

Muhammad came after Jesus to the Jews and the Christians to help them abandon imagination and superstition so that they cannot later on claim innocence and say "No one came to us in the capacity of a spectacle and a warning. There he is – the Messenger Muhammad in your midst, who has been sent to you all as a spectacle and warning.

**People of the Book, now there has come to you Our Messenger, making things clear to you, upon an interval between the Messengers lest you should say, "There has not come to us any bearer of good tidings, neither any Warner." Indeed, there has come to you a bearer of good tidings and a Warner; Allah is powerful over everything** (Al-Maidah, 19).

While Muslims respect the teachings of Jesus (as mentioned only in the Koran), they view him only as one of the greatest Prophets.

In the Koran Allah emphasized His Oneness and Uniqueness. He repeatedly said, **"Do not worship two gods, I am One, and therefore fear Me and keep in awe of Me and of Me alone." Take not to you two gods. He is only One God; then fear Me, and Me alone** (An-Nahl, 51).

The identity of Jesus was indicated in the Koran several times. The identity of Jesus does not necessarily come from priests or from the superstitions of peoples. It comes from Allah, and where there is direct revelation, there is no room for doubt.

The Koran says:

**(This is) the truth from thy Lord (O Muhammad), so be not of the doubters. This is the true story. There is no god but Allah, and assuredly Allah is the All-Mighty. The All-Wise. And if they turn their backs, assuredly Allah knows the workers of corruption** (Al-Imran 62, 63).

The Koran also confirmed the human nature of Jesus:

**Truly, the likeness of Jesus, in Allah's sight is as Adam likeness; He created him of dust, then said He unto him "Be," and he was (Al-Imran, 59).**

Jesus was therefore no more than a man. It is against reason and revelation to call him God or the son of God. In the Koran Jesus is called the son of Mary to emphasize his human nature. He had no human father, as his birth was miraculous. But it was not this which raised him to his high spiritual position as a Prophet, but because Allah called him to His office. The praise here is due to Allah Who by His Word gave Jesus spiritual strength – strengthened him with the Holy Spirit (Archangel Gabriel). The miracles which surround his story relate not only to his birth and his life and death, but also to his mother Mary and his precursor Yahya. These were the clear signs which Jesus brought. It was who misunderstood him who obscured his clear signs and surrounded him with mysteries of their own invention (1).

The Jewish excess in the direction of formalism, racialism, exclusiveness, and rejection of Jesus have been denounced in many places in the Koran.

The Christian attitude which raises Jesus to equality with Allah, in some cases venerates Mary almost to idolatry, attributes a physical son to Allah, and invents the doctrine of Trinity, is also condemned in the Koran.

**People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, and say not as to Allah but the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of Allah, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers and say not, "Three." Refrain; better is it for you. Allah is only One God. Glory be to Him – that He should have a son! To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth; Allah suffices for a guardian (Al-Nisa, 171).**

As indicated in the above verse, Christ's attributes are mentioned: (1) that he was the son of a woman, Mary, and

therefore a man; (2) but a Messenger, a man with a mission from Allah, and therefore entitled to honor; (3) a Word bestowed on Mary, for he was created by Allah's Word "Be", and he was; (4) a spirit proceeding from Allah, but not Allah: his life and his mission were more limited than in the case of some other Messengers, though all people must pay equal honor to him as a Prophet of Allah.

The doctrines of Trinity, equality with Allah and son ship, are repudiated as blasphemies. Allah is dependent of all needs and has no need of a son to manage His affairs.

Christ often watched and prayed as a humble worshipper of Allah; and his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was full of human dignity, suffering, and self-humiliation (Matt. Xxvi. 36-45).

The Koran says:

**The Messiah will not disdain to be a servant of Allah, neither the angels who are near stationed to Him. Whosoever disdains to serve Him, and waxes proud, He will assuredly muster them to Him, all of them (Al-Nisa, 172).**

The Koran states that infidels indeed are those who declare that Allah is the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, for Jesus said to the Children of Israel, "O you Children of Israel, worship Allah my Creator and your Creator and keep in mind that he who incorporates with Allah other deities shall be denied Paradise, and the Fire will be his abode. And the wrong-doers shall have no protectors in the Hereafter."

The Koran also states that infidels are those who say: "Allah in Trinity." Allah is only One, and if they cease not from what they say, verily a painful torment will befall them.

The Koran emphasizes that the Messiah, the son of Mary, was no more than an Apostle; many Messengers like him have passed away before him. His mother was a righteous woman, she believed in the words of Allah and His Books. She and her son used to eat food as any other human being, while Allah does not eat. Allah makes His signs (verses) clear to the people, yet they counsel deaf.

Allah ordered Prophet Muhammad - may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him – to say to the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) who associate with Allah other deities, "Do you worship besides Allah, those who can neither do you harm nor can they afford you help?" And also to say to them, "O people of the Book exceed not the limits in your religion by believing in something other than the truth, and do not follow the vain desires of people who erred and went wrong in judgment aforetime (like the Romans who adopted Christianity) and caused many to go wrong and stray from the wrong path.

**They are unbelievers who say, "Allah is the Messiah, Mary's son." For the Messiah said, "Children of Israel, serve Allah my Lord and your Lord. Verily who associates with Allah anything, Allah shall prohibit him entrance to Paradise, and his refuge shall be the Fire; and wrongdoers shall have no helpers."**

**They are unbelievers who say, "Allah is the third of three." No God is there but One God.**

**If they refrain not of what they say, there shall afflict those of them that disbelieve a painful chastisement. Will they not turn to Allah and pray His forgiveness? Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.**

**The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger; Messengers before him passed away; his mother was a just woman; they both ate food. Behold, how they perverted are!**

**Say, "Do you serve, apart from Allah, that which cannot hurt or profit you? Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.**

**Say, "People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds of your religion, other than the truth, and follow not the caprices of a people who went astray from the right way." (Al-Maidah 72-77).**

The Koran states that infidels are those who declare that Allah is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary. Allah instructed Muhammad to say to them, "Who then can restrain Allah in any way, if He willed to do away with the Messiah, his mother, and all those domiciled on earth! To Allah alone, belong all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth and all that lies in between. He

creates and brings into being whom and whatever He will; He is indeed Omnipotent.

**They are unbelievers who say, "Allah is the Messiah, Mary's son."**

**Say: "Who then shall overrule Allah in any way if He desires to destroy the Messiah, Mary's son, and his mother, and all those who are on earth?"**

**For to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth, and all that is between them, creating what He will. Allah is powerful over everything (Al-Maidah, 17).**

On the Day of Resurrection Allah will ask Jesus in the presence of his people, "Did you Jesus, the son of Mary say unto men to take you and your mother as two gods beside Me?" Jesus will say, "Glory is to you! It was not for me to say what I had no right to say. Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner-self though I do not know what is in yours; truly, you, only you, are the All-Knower of all that is hidden and unseen. Never did I say to them aught except what you did command me to say: "Worship Allah my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when you ordained that I depart life, you were the watcher over them; and you are a witness to all things. If you punish them they are your slaves, and if You forgive them, verily, You, only You, are the only All-mighty, the All-Wise."

Jesus disclaims here any knowledge of the sorts of things that are attributed to him by those who take his name. The worship of Mary, though repudiated by the Protestants, was widely spread in the earlier churches, both in the East and the West. Jesus here acknowledges that he was mortal, and that his knowledge was limited like that of a mortal. The Master, Allah, can justly punish His servants for disobedience: no one can say to Him nay, for He is high above all. But if He chooses to forgive, He in His wisdom sees things that we mortals cannot see.



Allah says in the Koran:

**And when Allah said, "O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say unto men, "Take me and my mother as gods apart from Allah?" He said, "To Thee be glory! It is not mine to say what I have no right to. If I indeed said it, Thou Knowest it, knowing what is within my soul, and I know not what is within Thy soul; Thou knowest the things unseen. I only said to them what Thou didst command me: "Serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord." And I was a witness over them, while I remained among them; but when Thou didst take me to Thyself, Thou wast Thyself the Watcher over them; Thou Thyself art witness over everything. If Thou chastisest them, they are Thy servants; if Thou forgive them, thou art the All-Mighty, the All-Wise (Al-Maidah, 116-118).**

Where a Messenger of truth (Muhammad) comes to teach people the better way, it is foolish to say: "What our ancestors did is good enough for us." But how will it be if their fathers had missed the path of certitude!

**And when it is said to them, "Come now to what Allah has sent down (the Koran), and unto the Messenger (Muhammad), they say, "Enough for us is what we found our fathers doing," What, even if their fathers had knowledge of naught and were not guided? (Al-Maidah, 104).**

To suppose that Allah has a son or family or partners or companions is to have a low idea of Allah. Never did Allah take or beget a son nor did He share His sovereignty with any god; for, if He did, then each god would have had a kingdom of his own, and each would have established his own laws and made sure to exalt himself above the others. Glory be to Him and exalted are His glorious attributes. He is infinitely far beyond all that they falsely attribute to Him.

The Koran states:

**Allah has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him; for then each god would have taken off that he created and some of them would have risen up over**

**others; glory be to Allah, beyond that they describe, who has knowledge of the Unseen and the Visible; high exalted be He, above that they associated (Al-Mu'minun 91, 92).**

Allah has sent down for mankind the Koran in which there is their reminder.

**Now We have sent down to you a Book wherein is your Remembrance; will you not understand? (Al-Anbiya', 10).**

Allah has revealed the Koran unto His slave Muhammad, and has not placed therein any crookedness. He has made the Koran straight, to give warning of a stern punishment from Him, and to bring unto the believers in His oneness and do good deeds the news that theirs will be Paradise wherein they will abide forever. And to warn those who say: "Allah has chosen a son", a thing whereof they have no knowledge nor had their fathers. Dreadful is the word that comes out of their mouths. They speak not but a lie.

**Praise belongs to Allah who has sent down upon His servant the Book and has not assigned unto it any crookedness; right, to warn of great violence from Him, and to give good tidings unto the believers, who do righteous deeds that theirs shall be a goodly wage therein to abide forever, and to warn those who say, "Allah has taken to Himself a son"; they have no knowledge of it, they nor their fathers; a monstrous word it is, issuing out of their mouths; they say nothing but a lie (Al-Kahf 1-5).**

Those who prided themselves on their works in this life, their loss is all the greater because they had misplaced confidence in false deities they worshipped besides Allah. The Jews and the Christians took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords by obeying them in things that they made lawful or unlawful according to their own whims and desires. The Christians took as their lord Messiah, son of Mary, while they were commanded in the Gospel to worship none but Allah. By worshipping Jesus they thought that they were doing good deeds while in fact they are the greatest losers in the Hereafter. Allah has prepared Hell as an entertainment for the disbelievers in His oneness (Islamic monotheism – the religion of Muhammad and all Prophets before him including Jesus).

**What, do the unbelievers reckon that they may take My servants as lords (i.e. Jesus as a son, angels, Allah's Messengers, Mary, idols, priests, popes, animals) apart from Me? We have prepared Hell as an entertainment for the disbelievers.**

**Say: "Shall We tell you who will be the greatest losers in their works? Those whose striving goes astray in the present life, while they think that they are working good deeds. Those are they that disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and the encounter with Him; their works have failed, and on the day of Resurrection We shall not assign to them any weight. That is their recompense – Hell, for that they were unbelievers and took My signs and Messengers in mockery (Al-Kahf 102-106).**

The Trinitarian superstition that Allah has begotten a son and the Arab superstition that the angels were daughters of Allah, all such superstitions are derogatory to the glory of Allah. The Prophets and angels are no more than servants of Allah, they are raised high in honor, and therefore they deserve our highest respect, but not our worship. They never say anything before they receive Allah's commands to say it, and their acts are similarly conditioned.

This is exactly the teaching of Jesus as reported in the Gospel of St. John (xii 49-50): **"For I have not spoken of myself: but the father which sent me. He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."**

If rightly understood, "Father" has the same meaning as our Sustainer, Cherisher, not Begetter or Progenitor.

The Koran says in this regard:

**Or have they taken gods apart from Him? Say, "Bring your proof! This is the Remembrance (the Koran) of those with me and the Remembrance of those before me. Nay, but the most part of them know not the truth, so therefore they are turning away.**

**And We sent never a Messenger before thee except that**

**We revealed to him, saying, "There is no god but I; so serve Me."**

**They say: "The All-Merciful has taken to Him a son."**

**Glory be to Him! Nay, but they are honored servants that outstrip Him not in speech, and perform as He commands. He knows what is before them and behind them, and they intercede not save for him with whom he is well-pleased, and they tremble in awe of Him.**

**If any of them says, "I am a god apart of Him", such a one We recompense with Gehenna (Hell); even so We recompense the evildoers (Al-Anbiya' 24-29).**

The Koran mentioned that to Allah alone belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: no son has Allah begotten, nor has He a partner in His dominion. It is He who created all things and ordered them in due proportions. Yet the infidels have taken besides Him gods that can create nothing but are themselves created. These false gods have no power to control their own destiny, nor can they defend themselves against what is destined to neither do them harm nor stop what is meant to profit them, nor do they have the power to give life or to cause death, nor can they effect resurrection.

**Blessed be He who has sent down the Criterion (the Koran) upon His servant, that he may be a Warner to all beings; to whom belongs the kingdom of the heaven and the earth; and He has not taken to Him a son, and He has no associate in the kingdom; and He created everything, then He ordained it vey exactly.**

**Yet they have taken to them gods apart from Him, they create nothing and themselves are created, and have no power to hurt or profit themselves, no power of death or life or rising up (Al-Furqan 1-3).**

Believing in and worshipping Allah alone, besides Whom there is no other god is the greatest teaching brought by the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, and it is the greatest teaching brought by all the Prophets.

Now let us see what Jesus really said to his people:

"A certain ruler asked him: "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered, "**Why do you call me**

**good? No one is good except God alone.”** (Luke 18: 18-19 – NIV).

**“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”** (John 17: 3 – NIV).

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me it will be yours.”

Jesus answered, **‘It is written: “Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’** (Luke 4: 5-8 – NIV).

One of the teachers of the law came and noticed them debating, Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments which is the most important?” **‘The most important one,’** answered Jesus, **‘is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’**

**The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There are no commandments greater than these.”**

“Well said, teacher” the man replied. ‘You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other than him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.’

When Jesus saw that he has answered wisely, he said to him, **‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’** And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.” (Mark 12: 28-34 – NIV)

What Jesus said to his people about the unity of God is the basis of the teachings of all Prophets before him. The same teaching appears in the Gospel of Mathew, in similar wording: **“All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”** (Mathew 22: 39 – NIV).

This belief in the oneness of Allah is indeed the Message of all Prophets since Adam, Jesus and until Muhammad. The Koran says in this connection:

**“And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We revealed to him (saying) “none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah) so worship Me (alone and none else).” (Al-Anbiya’, 25).**

The Koran adjures the Jews and the Christians to venerate and worship no one but Allah alone and not to incorporate with Him other deities.

**Say: ‘People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but Allah (God), and that we associate no partners with Him, and do not some of us take others (Cohen, saint, pope, priest, Brahman, Jesus as son of God, animal, etc...) as lords, apart from Allah. And if they turn their backs, say: ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims.’ (Al-Imran, 64).**

## 2- Views of Christian apologists

Acquainted with the origin and development of early Christianity, Abdul-Haq ibn Kwesi ibn Al-Ashantyi and Abdul-Rahman Bowes in their book entitled “Before Nicea – The Early followers of Prophet Jesus”, sifted through the speculation of many books and articles about early Christianity, to present the reader with factual evidence, as it stands in light of Islam (2).

Hasting in The Dictionary of the Bible says: “It is doubtful whether Jesus used the expression ‘Son of God’ to refer to himself.”

Adrian Thatcher wrote, “There is scarcely a single competent New Testament scholar who is prepared to defend the view that the four instances of the absolute use of “I am” in John, or indeed most of the other uses, can be historically attributed to Jesus (3).

David Brown stated that: “There is good evidence to suggest that Jesus never saw himself as a suitable object for worship,” It is “impossible to base any claim for Christ’s divinity on this

consciousness once we abandon the traditional portrait as reflected in a literal understanding of St. John's Gospel." (4).

But, he says, "It is incoherent to suppose that a human mind could be conscious of its own divinity." (5).

The late Archbishop and New Testament scholar, Michael Ramsey, wrote: "Jesus did not claim deity for himself." (6). He also stated: "The title 'Son of God' need not of itself be of high significance, for in Jewish circle it might mean no more than the Messiah or indeed the whole Israelite nation, and in popular Hellenism there were many sons of God, meaning, inspired holy men," (7).

James Barr argues that the expression Abba, commonly used to illustrate Jesus 'divine son ship', did not have the intimate sense that is often attributed to it, but simply meant 'father.' (8).

James Dunn mentioned both arguments, for and against, for the nature of the use of 'Abba.' Dunn said, "There is no real evidence in the earliest Jesus traditions of what could fairly be called a consciousness of divinity." (9).

Brian Hebblewaite admits, "It is no longer possible to defend the divinity of Jesus by reference to the claims of Jesus." (10).

Sanders wrote: "The oft-repeated claim that Jesus "put himself in the place of God" is overdone. He is often said to have done so in forgiving sins, but we must note that he only pronounced forgiveness, which is not the prerogative of God, but of the priesthood."

## Conclusion

Jesus is not God or son of God, but only a Prophet who was sent to the Children of Israel. He came miraculously without a father and was supported with miracles in order to convince the Children of Israel of his prophet hood. He called his people to worship none but Allah his God and theirs.

## The Trinity

### Islamic view

The concept of Trinity is totally rejected in Islam. The Koran teaches that infidels indeed are those who say: 'God in Trinity' for God is only One and absolutely One. God is the only Creator of the world. The Koran emphasizes that if the polytheists do not desist their foolish thoughts and vain words and correct their derangement of mind, they shall bear the evil consequences. Those of them who continue to pursue this line of thought are infidels indeed and the infidels must expect a painful doom. Mary, the mother of Jesus never claimed that she was a mother of God, or that her son was God. She was a pious and virtuous woman.

**They are unbelievers who say, 'Allah is the third of three.' No God is there but One God. If they refrain not from what they say, there shall afflict those of them that disbelieve a painful chastisement (Al-Maidah, 73).**

Allah is One. He has no son or family. His Message is one, yet how people's perversity transforms truth into falsehood, and religion into superstition, especially when they claim that Allah is Jesus Christ!

**They are unbelievers who say, 'Allah is the Messiah, Mary's son. For the Messiah said, 'Children of Israel, serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Verily whoso associates with Allah anything, Allah shall prohibit him entrance to Paradise, and his refuge shall be the Fire; and wrongdoers shall have no helpers (Al-Maidah, 72).**

Excess as opposed to moderation and reason, is the simplest test by which a hypocrite or a selfish man, who trades on religion, is known from a sincere, pious and truly religious man. Excess means the truth is sometimes concealed or trampled upon, that the fashions of ancestors or contemporaries are copied or overdone, and Allah's name is dishonored by blasphemies or the setting of false gods or fetishes, or that good or even bad men are deified and worshipped. The true path is the even path, the path of rectitude.



Allah ordered the Prophet to say to the Jews and the Christians, 'Do not carry your religious beliefs to excess and beyond the truth, nor should you decline to the same desires propounded by a people who erred and went wrong in judgment aforesaid, like those who invented the concept of Trinity and incorporated it in the adulterated Bibles, and the pagan Romans who adopted Christianity and imposed the concept of Trinity on Jesus' followers, thus causing many to go wrong and wandered from the path of rectitude.

**Say: 'People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, other than the truth, and follow not the caprices of a people who went astray before, and led astray many, and now again have gone astray from the right way.'** (Al-Maidah, 77).

False or imaginary objects of worship serve no purpose whatever. They cannot hear; if they could hear, they could not grant prayers or petitions. In fact, if they are real creatures, such as angels, or deified human beings, they will very rightly repudiate any such worship as brings them into competition or partnership with Allah. On the Day of Judgment they shall deny association with their worshippers, and what they attribute to Allah of plurality.

**If you call upon them, they will not hear your prayer, and if they heard, they would not answer you; and on the Day of Resurrection they will disown your partnership. None can tell you thee like One who is aware** (Fatir, 14).

As we have seen before, on the Day of Judgment Allah will ask Jesus in the presence of his people, "Did you say unto men to take you and your mother as two gods beside Me?" Jesus will disown association with his worshippers and will disclaim any knowledge that was attributed to him by those who took his name.

On the Day of Judgment no false ideas will remain when true values are restored. Why not then the Christians accept the truth now in this life, and get on to the true path of grace? None can tell the truth better than Allah who is All-Wise and All-Knowing. Why not accept His Message and receive His guidance?

## 2-View of Christian apologists

For the majority of Christians today, the Trinity is a key concept, but for the early followers of Jesus it was unheard of. The New Catholic Encyclopedia, officially approved by the Catholic Church, explains that the concept of Trinity was introduced into Christianity in the fourth century: "There is the recognition on the part of exegetes and biblical theologians, including a constantly growing number of Roman Catholics that one should not speak of trinitarianism in the New Testament without serious qualification. There is also the closely parallel recognition on the part of historians of dogma and systematic theologians that when one does speak of an unqualified trinitarianism one has moved from the period of Christians origins to, say, the last quadrant of the 4th century. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma 'one God in three persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought...it was the product of three centuries of doctrinal development." (12).

The Oxford Companion to the Bible which has entries from over two hundred and sixty scholars and academics from leading biblical institutes and universities in America and Europe states: "Because the Trinity is such an important part of later Christian doctrine, it is striking that the term does not appear in the New Testament. Likewise, the developed concept of three co-equal partners in the Godhead found in later creedal formulations cannot be clearly detected within the confines of the canon." (13).

John McKenzie in the Dictionary of the Bible notes: "The Trinity of God is defined by the Church as the belief that in God is three persons who subsist in one nature. That belief as so defined was reached only in the 4th and 5th centuries AD and hence is not explicitly and formally a biblical belief." (14)

David Lyle Jeffrey, writing in the Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English literature, mentions: "According to orthodox Christian doctrine, God is one nature in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. No one of them precedes or created the others or stands above them in power or dignity. In precise theological terms, they are one in substance (or essence), coeternal and co-equal. The doctrine so stated does not appear in scripture, the

orthodox doctrine of the Trinity was hammered out gradually over a period of three centuries or more. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the coeternity and co-equality of the divine persons remained a matter of theological dispute, and are thus frequently discussed in the context of heresy. In 381 the bishops convened again at Constantinople and set forth the orthodox doctrine in its final form." (15).

F.J. Wilken, the Australian Baptist, wrote in *Christadelphianism*: "In the Old Testament, the unity of God was clearly affirmed. The Jewish creed, repeated in every synagogue today was 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord (Deut. 6: 4). This was the faith of the first Christians, so Paul writes, "There is one god and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all." (Eph. 4:6). But gradually some addition or modification of the creed was found necessary." (16).

Regarding textual evidence of the Trinity, *The Interpreter's dictionary of the Bible* highlights: "The text about the three heavenly witnesses (1 John 5: 7 KJV) is not an authentic part of the New Testament." (17).

Edward Gibbon also recognized that Trinity was a fabrication and while this fact is now widely accepted as fact and has been removed from most translations of the Bible, such acceptance took time. Richard Porson defended Gibbon, and later published devastating conclusive proof that the verse was first inserted by the Church into the Bible at the end of the fourth century.

Regarding Gibbon finding, Porson concluded: "His structures are founded in argument, enriched with learning, and enlivened with wit, and his adversary neither deserves nor finds any quarter at his hands. The evidence of the three heavenly witnesses would now be rejected in any court of justice; but prejudice is blind, authority is deaf, and our vulgar bibles will ever be polluted by this spurious text." (18).

## Conclusion

Muslims believe in one, unique, incomparable God, Who has neither son nor partner, and that none has the right to be worshipped by Him alone. He is the true God and every other

deity is false. He has the most magnificent names and sublime perfect attribute. The name of God in Islam is Allah.

It is a known fact that every language has one or more terms that are used in reference to God and sometimes to lesser deities. This is not the case with Allah. Allah is the personal name of the One true God. Nothing else can be called Allah. The term has no plural or gender. This shows its uniqueness when compared with the word god which can be made plural, gods, or feminine, goddess. It is interesting to notice that Allah is the personal name of God in Aramaic, the language of Jesus and a sister language of Arabic.

To a Muslim, Allah is the Almighty, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, Who is similar to nothing and nothing is comparable to Him. The Prophet Muhammad was asked by his contemporaries about Allah; the answer came directly from God Himself in the form of a short chapter of the Quran, which is considered the essence of the unity or the motto of monotheism. This is chapter 112 which reads:

**In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say (O Muhammad) He is Allah, the One God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, nor has been begotten, and equal to Him is not anyone."**

Some non-Muslims allege that Allah in Islam is a stern and cruel God who demands to be obeyed fully. He is not loving and kind. Nothing can be farther from truth than this allegation. It is enough to know that, with the exception of one, each of the 114 chapters of the Quran begins with the verse: "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) we are told that he said: "Allah is more loving and kinder than a mother to her dear child."

But Allah is also Just. Hence evildoers and sinners must have their share of punishment and the virtuous, His bounties and favors. Actually Allah's attribute of Mercy has full manifestation in His attribute of Justice. People suffering throughout their lives for His sake and people oppressing and exploiting other people all their lives should not receive similar treatment from their Lord. Expecting similar treatment for them will amount to negating the very belief in the accountability of man in the

Hereafter and thereby negating all the incentives for a moral and virtuous life in this world. The following Koranic verses are very clear and straightforward in this respect:

**"Verily, for the Righteous are gardens of Delight, in the Presence of their Lord. Shall We then treat the people of Faith like the people of Sin? What is the matter with you? How judge you?" (68: 34-36)**

Islam rejects characterizing Allah in any human form or depicting Him as favoring certain individuals or nations on the basis of wealth, power or race. He created the human-beings as equals. They may distinguish themselves and get His favor through virtue and piety only.

The concept that God rested in the seventh day of creation, that God wrestled with one of His soldiers, that God is an envious plotter against mankind, or that God is incarnate in any human being are considered blasphemy from the Islamic point of view. The unique usage of Allah as a personal name of God is a reflection of Islam's emphasis on the purity of the belief in God which is the essence of the message of all God's messengers. Because of this, Islam considers associating any deity or personality with God as a deadly sin which God will never forgive, despite the fact He may forgive all other sins.

The Creator must be of a different nature from the things created because if he is of the same nature as they are, he will be temporal and will therefore need a maker. It follows that nothing is like Him. If the maker is not temporal, then he must be eternal. But if he is eternal, he cannot be caused, and if nothing outside him causes him to continue to exist, which means that he must be self-sufficient. And if He does not depend on anything for the continuance of his own existence, then this existence can have no end. The Creator is therefore eternal and everlasting: 'He is the First and the Last.'  
Allah is Self-Sufficient or Self-Subsistent 'Al-Qayyum'. The Creator does not create only in the sense of bringing things into being, He also preserves them and takes them out of existence and is the ultimate cause of whatever happens to them.

**"Allah is the Creator of everything. He is the guardian over everything. Unto Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth." (39:62, 63)**

**"No creature is there crawling on the earth, but its provision rests on Allah. He knows its lodging place and its repository." (11:6)**

If Allah, the Creator, is Eternal and Everlasting, then His attributes must also be eternal and everlasting. He should not lose any of His attributes nor acquire new ones. If this is so, then His attributes are absolute. Can there be more than one Creator with such absolute attributes? Can there be for example, two absolutely powerful Creators? A moment's thought shows that this is not feasible.

The Quran summarizes this argument in the following verses:

**"God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him: For then each god would have taken of that which he created and some of them would have risen up over others." (Al-Mu'minun, 91)**

**...Were there gods in earth and heaven other than God, they (heaven and earth) would surely go to ruin." (Al-Anbiya', 22)**

The Quran reminds us of the falsity of all alleged gods. To the worshippers of man-made objects, it asks:

**"Do you worship what you have carved yourself?" (as-Sâffât, 95)**

**"Or have you taken unto you others beside Him to be your protectors, even such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves?" Ar-Ra'd, 16)**

Islam necessitates for the believer to believe in the oneness of God, in the sense of His being the only Creator, Preserver, and nourisher. In other words, one must acknowledge the fact that it is God alone Who deserves to be worshipped, and thus abstains from worshipping any other thing or being.

When faith enters a person's heart, it causes certain mental states which result in certain actions. Taken together these mental states and actions are the proof for the true faith. The Prophet said, **"Faith is that which resides firmly in the heart and which is proved by deeds."**

A believer loves, and is grateful to Allah for the bounties He bestowed upon him, but being aware of the fact that his good deeds, whether mental or physical, are far from being commensurate with Divine favors, he is always anxious lest Allah should punish him, here or in the Hereafter. He, therefore, fears Him, surrenders himself to Him and serves Him with great humility. One cannot be in such a mental state without being almost all the time mindful of Allah. Remembering Allah is thus the force of faith, without which it fades and withers away. The Quran tries to promote this feeling of gratitude by repeating the attributes of Allah very frequently. We find most of these attributes mentioned together in the following verses of the Quran:

**"He is Allah; there is no god but He, He is the Knower of the unseen and the visible; He is the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate. He is Allah; there is no God but He. He is the King, the All-Holy, the All-Peace, the Guardian of Faith, the All-Preserver, the All-Mighty, the All-Compeller, the All-Sublime. Glory be to Allah, above that they associate! He is Allah the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful. All that is in the heavens and the earth magnifies Him; He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." (59:22-24)**

**"There is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them and what is after them, and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge save such as He wills. His throne comprises the heavens and earth; the preserving of them oppresses Him not; He is the All-High, the All-Glorious." (2:255)**

**"People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, and say not as to God but the truth. The**

**Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of Allah, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers, and say not, 'Three.' Refrain; better is it for you. Allah is only one God. Glory be to Him - (He is) above having a son." (4:171).**

## **Crucifixion**

### 1- Islamic view

Allah clarified in the Koran that Jesus was not crucified; rather, it was made to seem that way to the Jews, and that Allah raised him to the Heavens. It was the plan of Jesus' enemies to crucify him, but Allah saved him and raised him up to Him. The likeness of Jesus was put over another man. Jesus' enemies took this man and crucified him, thinking that he was Jesus (19).

Allah says:

**"And when Allah said: 'O Jesus! I will take you and lift you up to Me, and purify you of those who disbelieve, and will make those who followed you above those who disbelieved until the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me shall you all return, and I shall judge between you in that which you dispute'" (Al-Imran 54 ,55).**

**"And for their saying (in boast): 'We killed Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah'; but they killed him not nor crucified him. Only a likeness of that was shown to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubt with no certain knowledge, but only follow mere conjecture, for a surety they killed him not. But Allah lifted him up to Him, and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. And there is none of the people of the Book, but will believe in him before his death, and on the Day of Judgment, he will be a witness against them." (An-Nissa 157-159).**

These verses tell us that Jesus was lifted up to the heaven and was not crucified. His opponents from Jews misled the king of that time, as they wanted to slay Jesus and crucify him. The Koran does not explain, though, who was the person crucified instead of Jesus.



One of the fundamental beliefs of Christianity is that Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. The Bible on the other hand refutes this belief. Based on the verses of the Bible, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee were with Jesus before the chief priests came to take him for crucifixion. Jesus at this point talked to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee as in Matthew 26: 38, "Then saith he unto them, **'my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me'**. Then Jesus went a little further way from them and prayed to Allah as in Mathew 26: 39. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed saying, **'O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.'**

It is clear from the above verse in Matthew 26: 39 that Jesus had no intension of dying. After Jesus made the above mentioned prayer he was answered by Allah according to the Hebrews 5: 7. **"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."** This clearly shows that when Jesus was praying strongly to Allah, Allah granted him what he requested and saved him from crucifixion.

According to the Christian doctrine, Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. A question here arises: why anyone has to die for our sins when Allah is the All-Merciful and could easily grant forgiveness if we ask for it?

According to the Bible the way of redemption could be obtained without the need for sacrifice. The Bible says:

Ezekiel 18: 20 **"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."**

Ezekiel 18: 21 **"But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."**

It is clear then that no one shall bear the sins of others, so Jesus cannot bear the sins of others either. If one is righteous then it shall be upon him, and if one commits a sin then it shall be upon him, and not on Jesus. Therefore, the way to repentance and forgiveness is by turning from all sins, doing what is right, and keeping the commandments.

The same system of repentance was also given by Solomon. He says in the book of Ecclesiastes 12: 13 **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear Allah, and keep His commandments for these are the whole duty of man."**

In 2 chronicles 7: 14 **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."**

Finally the bible says in Samuel 15: 22 **"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord a great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."**

This clearly states that obeying Allah is better than sacrifice. What Allah likes is for us to obey Him. It is not of Him at all to come later and change His mind, and change his ways (34).

Also, Islam stresses the notion that Allah is able to and forgives all sins, if a person truly repents and then refrains from repeating it. Allah does not need any blood sacrifice for that, let alone descend in the form of man himself and die for every man's sins. Rather, Allah's mercy extends to all creatures, believers, and disbelievers alike. The door to forgiveness is open to anyone who seeks it.

As such, Islam denies that Jesus came to this earth with the purpose of sacrificing himself for the sin of Adam, Eve, and the rest of humanity. Islam strictly rejects the notion that any person bears the sin of another. Allah says:

**"No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another."**  
(Az-Zumar, 7).

As seen from the above mentioned Koranic verses, Allah confirmed that Jesus was not crucified, though, it was made to seem that way to the Jews. Allah says:

**"...They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but (another) was made to resemble him to them..."** (An-Nisa, 157).

**"Allah lifted him up to His presence. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise."** (An-Nisa, 158).

As mentioned above, the Koranic verses confirmed the lifting up of Jesus to Allah, but still, this ascendance was not mentioned in detail. There is however several narrations in the Islamic literature describing the events that happened just before Jesus ascendance to Allah. The following is some of these narrations:

Ibn Abu Hatim has narrated from Ibn Abbas saying: "When Allah wanted to lift Jesus up to heaven, Jesus came to his companions in the house. There were twelve people, with some from among his disciples. He had just a bath, and his head was still dribbling with water. He said to them: 'There are those among you who will disbelieve in me twelve times after he had believed in me!' Then he said: 'Who will from among you take my likeness and be killed in my place, so will become in my rank?' a young youth came forward. But Jesus said to him: 'Sit down!' Then he repeated the same question, and the same youth stood up and came forward, and said, 'I.' Jesus said, 'you are the one.' And then the likeness of Jesus was put on him, and Jesus was lifted up to the heaven from the window of his house.

"The Jews came looking for Jesus. They took the youth and killed him then crucified him. Later they became three groups. One group known as Jacobites believed that it was Allah himself among them who stayed with them as long as he wanted to, then went back to the heaven. Another group known as Nestorians, believed that it was the son of Allah who was with them and stayed among them as long as he wanted, then his father lifted him up. But the group of true believers said that he was the slave of Allah and His Messenger who stayed among

them as long as he wanted, and then his Lord Allah took him up to Him. The two disbeliever groups (Jacobites and Nestorians) collided together against the believer group and killed them, and so real teachings of Islam taught by Jesus became obscure till Allah sent the Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him."

Hasan Basri and Bin Ishaq said: "The king who ordered the killing of Jesus, was David bin Naura. He commanded Jesus to be killed and hanged. They surrounded Jesus who was in a house inside Bait-ulMaqdis. It was a Saturday night. When they were about to enter the house, his likeness was put on one of those who were present there with him. And Jesus was lifted out from the window of that house to the heaven. When the police entered the house they found the youth on whom the likeness of Jesus was put, so they took him and crucified him. Even they put a crown of thorns on his head to mock him. Those Christians who were not present there at that time, believed what Jews claimed, that they killed Jesus."

Ibn Jarir has narrated from Wahb bin Munnabih, saying: "Jesus came along with seventeen of his disciples to the house. Then the police came and surrounded the house. However, when they entered the house, Allah put the likeness of Jesus on all those who were there. They were confused, and said: 'You have bewitched us. Either Jesus comes to us, or we will kill all of you.' Jesus said to his companions, 'Who can buy today a place in Jannah (Paradise)?' A man said: 'I' and went out, claiming; 'I am Jesus.' They took him and crucified him, and so they were deluded in their belief that they have killed Jesus, and so are the Christians. But Jesus was lifted up to Allah on that day."

Ibn Asakir said: "Mary lived after Jesus for five years, and then died at the age of fifty-three years."

Hasan Basri said: "Jesus was thirty-four years old when he was lifted to the heaven." Sa'id bin Musayyib said: "He was thirty-three years old when he was raised up to the heaven (20).

## 2-Views of Christian apologists

In Christian theology, various doctrines of atonement have been advanced in history, all of which give central place to the life and death of Jesus. The classical theory of atonement, widely

accepted in the early Church, depicted Jesus as the divine victor in a cosmic struggle with the devil for rights over the human soul. In Medieval Latin theology emphasis shifted from the divine to the human side of Jesus. The most widely held theory at this time, often called vicarious atonement, was first stated by St. Anselm in *Why God Became Human* (1197-98): only human beings can rightfully repay the debt which was incurred through their willful disobedience to God, although only God can make the infinite satisfaction necessary to repay it; therefore God must send the God-man, Jesus Christ, to satisfy both these conditions. Anselm's doctrine, slightly altered or elaborated, has become part of Roman Catholic theology and of that of many Protestant churches. In another theory of atonement emphasis is placed on God's unconditional mercy and on the gradual growth toward union with God as inspired by Christ's selfless example. This theory was given its standard form by Peter Abelard in the 12th cent. Here the juridical concept is replaced by an organic and social concept. The tendency today in the Church is not to regard any single interpretation of atonement as all-embracing but to view Christ's atoning work from a variety of vantage points (21).

Christians during the pre-Islamic era however, followed diverse doctrines as they do today (2). Among these beliefs were that Jesus was not crucified and many early Christian sects denied that the crucifixion even occurred. This begs the question as to why they denied the crucifixion of Jesus.

H.M. Gwatkin in *Early Church History* states: "The stumbling block of the age of the early Christianity was not so much Jesus' divinity, but his crucifixion." (22).

John Toland in his work, *The Nazarenes* mentioned that Plotinus who lived in the 4th century stated that he had read a book called 'The journeys of the Apostles' which related traditions of Peter, John, Andrew, Thomas and Paul. Among other things, the book stated that Jesus was not crucified, but rather another in his place, and therefore Jesus and the Apostles had laughed at those who believed Jesus had died on the cross (23).

H. Lincoln, Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh in their controversial and critically acclaimed 'The holy Blood and the Holy Grail' (24) mentioned an historical text, the Nag Hammadi

Scrolls (25) and stated that these manuscripts contained a manuscript entitled 'The Treaties of Seth.' Here it is mentioned that Jesus was not crucified even though a crucifixion did take place, Simon of Cyrene was the victim and not Jesus.

J. Stevenson, a Cambridge University lecturer of divinity, noted that Irenaeus described the teachings of Basileides. While Basilleides and his followers believed that Jesus was the god of the Jews and other strange things about the creation of the universe, with regards to the crucifixion of Jesus they said, "He appeared, then, on earth as a man, to the nations of these powers, and wrought miracles. Wherefore he did not himself suffer death, but a certain Simon of Cyrene, being compelled, bore the cross in his stead. Simon was transfigured by him, so that he might be thought Jesus, and was crucified, through ignorance and error." (26).

Cerinthus (27), a contemporary of Peter, Paul and John, also denied that Christ died on the cross and that Christ did not suffer because he was a spiritual being (28). The 'Carpocratians' also believed that Jesus did not die on the cross but another person that resembled him.

Also the early community of Christians called the 'Docetae,' held that Jesus never had a real physical body, only an apparent or illusory body. Therefore, the crucifixion was apparent, not real (29).

There has been the argument that because the crucifixion is mentioned by the historians Josephus and Tacitus, this therefore proves that Jesus was crucified. However, it should be noted that Josephus and Tacitus merely stated that a pious worshipper of God called Jesus lived, taught and was later crucified. Their accounts are not eye-witness accounts but most probably hearsay accounts due to the massive uproar in the area at the time from the impact of Jesus with the Jews and Romans. It is in fact the case that Josephus was only born circa 38 CE indicating that he was an historian and not an eye witness. Geza Vermes of Oxford University has shown that the works of Josephus had been altered by the later Christians who inserted their own version of events into the writings of Josephus (2)

## **Vicarious Atonement**

Atonement in Christianity is a doctrine that describes how human beings can be reconciled to God. In Christian theology the atonement refers to the forgiving or pardoning of sin through the death of Jesus Christ by crucifixion, which made possible the reconciliation between God and creation. All Christians believe that Jesus is the savior of the world and through his death the sins of mankind have been forgiven.

The Christian doctrine that Jesus had to die on the cross because nothing in this world is holier than his blood to atone for the sins committed by the entire human race is so obscure and absolutely unthinkable. For example, those of the previous generations who received and followed the divine revelations through the chain of former Prophets i.e. Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc., could not attain salvation simply because they did not affirm Jesus Christ as their savior. Thus, accepting this misconception would be against all laws ever known to man.

For the origin of the doctrine of atonement, one does not go to the teachings of Jesus, but instead to the words of Paul, the true founder of Christianity; in teachings of present Christian terms and practices.

Like many Jews, Paul had no use for the teachings of Jesus, and he himself persecuted the followers of Jesus for their unorthodox beliefs. This zealous persecutor was turned into an ardent preacher, however, through a sudden conversion around 35 CE. Paul claimed that a resurrected Jesus appeared to him in a vision, thereby, choosing Paul as his instrument for carrying his teachings to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:11; 12:15,16).

Paul's credibility in any capacity is questionable, however, when considering that: (1) there are four contradictory versions of his so-called "conversion" (Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-10; 26:13-18; Gal. 1:15-17); (2) God says, in passages such as Num. 12:6, Deut. 18:20 and Ez. 13:8-9, that revelations come only from Him, and (3) accounts of numerous disagreements between the other disciples and Paul regarding his teachings are recorded in Acts.

Experience and observation had taught Paul that preaching among the Jews was not feasible; he, therefore, chose to go to

the non-Jews. By doing so, however, Paul disregarded a direct command from Jesus against preaching to other than a Jew (Mat. 10:5-6). In short, Paul set aside the actual teachings of Jesus in his desire to be a success.

Among the pagans of Paul's time, a wide variety of gods existed. Although these gods had different names and were embraced by people from different areas of the world – Adonis from Syria, Dionysus from Thrace, Attis from Phrygia, for instance – the basic concept in each cult was the same: these sons of gods died violent deaths and then rose again to save their people.

Since the pagans had tangible savior-gods in their old religions, they wanted nothing less from the new; they were not able to accept any sort of an invisible Deity. Paul was quite accommodating, preaching therefore of a savior named Jesus Christ, the son of God, who died and then rose again to save mankind from sin (Rom. 5:8-11; 6:8-9).

The Bible itself points out the error of Paul's thinking. While each of the four gospels contain an account of the crucifixion of Jesus, these accounts are strictly hearsay; none of the disciples of Jesus were witness to such, having fled his side in the Garden (Mark 14:50).

In the Torah, God says that one who is "hanged upon a tree" – crucified – is "accursed" (Deut. 21:23). Paul side-stepped this by saying that Jesus became accursed in order to take on the sins of man (Gal. 3:13); in so doing, however, Paul set aside the very Law of God.

The resurrection, wherein Paul says that Jesus "conquered" death and sin for mankind (Rom. 6:9,10), plays such an important part that one who does not believe in it is not considered a good Christian (1 Cor. 15:14).

Here, too, the Bible lends little support to Paul's notions; first of all, not only was there no eyewitness to the actual resurrection, but all post-resurrection accounts are in contradiction with each other as to who went to the gravesite, what happened there, and even where and to whom Jesus appeared (Mat. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20).



Secondly, although Christianity states that the body following resurrection will be in a spiritual form (1 Cor. 15:44), Jesus had obviously not changed, for he both ate with his disciples (Luke 24:30,41-43), and allowed them to touch his wounds (John 20:27). Finally, as the divine son of God in Christianity, Jesus is said to share in God's attributes; one cannot fail to wonder, however, just how it can be possible for God to die.

In his desire to win souls among the pagans, Paul simply reworked a number of major pagan beliefs to come up with the Christian scheme of salvation. No prophet – including Jesus himself – taught such concepts; they were authored entirely by Paul (37).

### **The belief of early Christians**

The concept of vicarious atonement necessitates that Jesus is god or the son of God! This awkward belief was not the belief of the early Christians who saw Jesus in person or learned his teachings from his disciples afterwards. This group of early Christians was Unitarian, they believed in the One God "Allaha" – the name of God in Aramaic, the language of Jesus – and they believed that Jesus was a Prophet and not God or the son of God.

The Koran says in this respect:

O believers, be you Allah's helpers, as Jesus, Mary's son, said to the Apostles, "Who will be my helpers unto Allah?" **The Apostles said, "We will be helpers of Allah." And a party of the Children of Israel believed, and a party disbelieved** (As-Saff, 14).

At his ascension, Jesus left behind a multitude of followers relying on what he had taught them for the worship of Allah. The Unitarian concept of Allah and the prophetic human nature of Jesus were held by many early communities basing their way of life on the teachings of Jesus, such as the Ebionites, the Nazarenes, the Cerinthians, the Basilidians, the Carpocratians, the Hypistartians, the Symmachians and the Elkesaites.

According to the Koran, Jesus never said anything about Allah or himself which he had no right to say. He was a man and a Prophet who told his followers to worship One God, as Muslims. However, to the Christians, all of this is of no consequence for they do not consider the Koran to be the word of God.

Therefore, it will be more feasible to present the research of eminent Christian apologists concerning the unity of God which Jesus taught his disciples.

According to E.J. Goodspeed, around 90 CE, the *Shepard of Hermas* was considered to be the book of revelation by the church around 90 CE. This book was one of two books found in the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which had not been included in the modern Bible (30). In it is Ten Commandments and the first is:

“Believe that God is One and that He created all things and organized them, and out of what did not exist made all things to be, and He contains all things but Alone is Himself uncontained. Trust Him therefore and fear Him, and, fearing Him, be self-controlled. Keep this command and you will cast away from yourself all wickedness, out on every virtue of uprightness, and you will live to god if you keep this commandment.”

According to Theodore Zahn in Articles of the Apostolic Creed (31) until around 250 CE the article of faith was simply, “I believe in God, the Almighty,” which today is only one element of the Angelical creed. J.R. Harris quoted Aristedes, an early Christian apologist as saying that, “The Christian worship in the beginning was more purely monotheistic than that even of the Jews.” (31).

During the early history of the Christian church there existed a prospering group called the ‘Ebionites’. On the origin of term Robert Wilken says that this Hebrew word mean ‘poor persons’ and he continues to explain that there is no evidence to support the claim of some Christian writers that it is derived from a person called ‘Ebion’, he highlights: “The origin, history and distinct character of the Ebionites had been subject to intense debate in recent years. It is possible that the Ebonites go back to the earliest period of Christian history, where most Christians were Jews and some continued to observe the Jewish law. If so, they would be the earliest example of a Christian movement

within Judaism that was eventually left behind as Christianity adapted to the influx of gentile converts. These Christians eventually became a distinct group that, along with other groups (e.g. the Gnostics) was rejected as heretical by the emerging 'great' church. They are sometimes identified with the Minim (heretics) mentioned in the Talmud. The Ebionites were Jews who accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah (Christ) while continuing to maintain their identity as Jews. They cultivated relations with Jews as well as Christians though they were welcomed by neither. They followed the Jewish law, insisting on circumcision, keeping the Sabbath and celebrating the Jewish festivals and observing the dietary laws. They repudiated the apostle Paul because of his denigration of the Jewish law. They saw Jesus as a Prophet, an exceptional man in the line of Jewish Prophets (as described in Deut. 18: 15) and denied the virgin birth. They justified their way of life by appealing to the example of Jesus' life. He was circumcised, observed the Sabbath and celebrated the Jewish festivals, and taught that all the precepts of the law should be observed. They celebrated Easter on the same day that the Jews celebrated the Passover, and they held the city of Jerusalem in high esteem (32).

Furthermore, there were other Jewish Christian sects including the Nazarenes, the Saymmacbian and the Elkesaites (16). Because it is difficult to distinguish one from another, Wilkin suggests that '*Ebionite*' may have been used to characterize any form of Jewish Christianity which stressed observance of the law. The *Ebionites* had their own gospel and ancient writers. There was a resurgence of Jewish Christianity in the late fourth century, encouraged by Jewish messianism (16).

According to *Compton's Encyclopedia* the early Jewish Christians were persecuted because they recognized that Jesus was the expected Messiah, while the Jewish authorities considered him as an imposter and traitor: "The early Christians were all Jews. They remained in Jerusalem and partook in the religious observances in the Temple. They differed from their fellow Jews only in that they believed that the Messiah had come. Had they kept quiet about their conviction, they might well have remained a sect within Judaism. However, they insisted on preaching to all who would listen that the Jesus whom the Jewish authority had persecuted was the one Israel had long waited. This preaching aroused great hostility on the part of religious leaders and the

early Christians were persecuted...These Christians had no thought of venturing beyond the confines of Israel with their message." (33).

Based on the above, it could be seen that the Unitarian concept of God and the Prophetic human nature of Jesus, was held by many early communities basing their way of life on the teachings of Jesus, such as the *Nazarenes*, the *Cerinthians*, the *Basilidians*, the *Carpocratians*, the *Hypsistarians*, the *Symmacbians* and the *Elkesaites*.

Trinitarian Christians point out that these groups have always been seen as heretical by the early Church, by this they mean the prevailing Church without attempting to establish whether that Church followed authentic teachings or not. These Christians eventually became distinct groups and were rejected as heretical by the emerging great Church (16).

This shows that the so called '*heretical*' church was rejected by an '*emerging*' Christianity. In other words, the earlier followers of Jesus' teachings were to be condemned by later followers of an adopted faith.

In *Theology and History of Jewish Christianity*, Hans-Joachim Schoeps taking up the research of Harnach and Schlatter and completing it with studies by C. Clement, T. Andrae and H.H. Schaeder comes to the following conclusion: "Though it may not be possible to establish exact proof of the connection, the indirect independence of Muhammad on sectarian Jewish Christianity is beyond any doubt. This leaves us with a paradox of truly world historical dimensions: the fact while Jewish Christianity in the Church came to grief (disappeared) it was preserved in Islam and, with regard to some of its driving impulses at least, it has lasted till our own time (34).

Hans Küng *et al.* note that: "The traditional and historical parallels between early Judaic-Christianity and Islam are inescapable." (35).

John Toland writing in 1718 concluded: "Since the Nazarenes, or Ebionites, are by all the church historians unanimously acknowledged to have been the first Christians, or those who believed him from amongst the Jews, who were his own people

and apostles, with which he lived and died and witnessed his actions, considering this, I say how was it possible for them to be the first of all others (for they were made to be the first heretics), who should form wrong conceptions of the doctrines and designs of Jesus? And how did the gentiles, who believed in Jesus after his death from the preaching and information of people that never knew Jesus, have truer notions of doctrine and Jesus, or whence could they have their information but from the believing Jews." (36).

### **Requirements for Salvation in Islam**

1- Worshipping Allah alone, the One and Only God, without associating with Him any partners

Allah the All-Mighty is All-Knowing, and He is fully aware of how the Christian Church imposed its own fabricated dogmas like the divinity of Jesus and blood atonement on peoples worldwide. Such dogmas were not at all taught by any of the Prophets, including Jesus and Muhammad. In refuting the Christian concept of salvation through Jesus Christ, Allah explicitly emphasizes that one's own sins is his sole responsibility, and should not be borne by another.

For one to attain salvation in Islam and be saved from the torment of Hell-Fire, he must firmly believe that there is no god but the One and Only True God, Allah. Believing in Allah's Oneness and worshipping Him alone is a principal requirement for attaining salvation in Islam. The belief in the One God is confirmed by performing the five daily prayers, so that the Muslim is constantly reminded of Allah and seeking His guidance, mercy and forgiveness. In addition, the daily prayers remind Muslims to give thanks for Allah's blessings and that Islam takes precedence over all other concerns, thereby revolving their life around Allah and submitting to His will.

Man believes only in what he sees, hears, touches and tastes. Allah, however, is invisible, and praying to Him without seeing Him is a clear admittance from the worshipper that Allah exists. Believing in the Unseen (Allah), is an act that is highly appreciated by Allah, the Creator.

The Koran says:

**That is the Book, wherein is no doubt, a guidance to the god-fearing.**

**Who believe in the Unseen (Allah), and perform the prayer, and expend of what We have provided them; who believe in what has been sent down to thee and what has been sent down before thee, and have faith in the Hereafter; those are upon guidance from their Lord, those are the ones who prosper (Al-Baqarah 2, 3).**

**Those only are believers who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts quake, and when His signs are recited to them, it increases them in faith, and in their Lord they put their trust (Al-Anfal, 3).**

**Who when Allah is mentioned, their hearts quake, and such as endure patiently whatever visits them, and who perform the prayer, and expend of what We have provided them (Al-Hajj, 35).**

On the Day of Judgment every soul will be crowned with its deeds. The inhabitants of Paradise, known as the companions of the right hand, beheld in bliss, they will convey their thoughts reciprocally in talk, with the wicked in their infernal abyss; they will say to them, "What brought you to Sakar?" (one of the names of Hell Fire). The inhabitants of Hell will answer back: "We were not among those who engaged in worship, nor did we feed the indigent, nor to benevolence did we submit. We always joined those who delighted in idle talk, and we were given to indulging in personal vanity, and drowned ourselves in the nonsensical, and we obstinately refused to acknowledge the truth of the Day of Judgment until we were caught in the jaws of death and were affronted with reality."

**Every soul shall be pledged for what it has earned, save the Companions of the Right; in Gardens they will question concerning the sinners, "What thrust you into Sakar?"**

**They shall say, "We were not of those who prayed, and we fed not the needy, and we plunged along with the plungers, and we cried lies to the Day of Doom, till the certain (death) came to us." (Al-Mudaththir 38-47).**

The Prophet said, **“The first thing that will be looked at on the Day of Judgment will be a person’s prayers. If they are complete, his prayers and all deeds will be accepted. If his prayers are incomplete, then his prayers and all deeds will be thrown out.”**

The Prophet said, **“Whoever performs his prayers punctually, there will be light for him on the Day of Judgment and will lead to his forgiveness. The person that does not pray will not have any light and will not be forgiven... (Musnad Tibraani).**

**The Prophet also said, “The differences between us and them (polytheists, hypocrites, disbelievers, idolaters, atheists, etc.), is prayer. He who intentionally misses prayers is a non-believer (Tirmizi).**

Thus, complete faith in Allah, the One and Only True God, is essential for one’s own salvation. Faith becomes meaningful only when it is translated into practice. So, fortunate is he whose belief and deeds are always meant for pleasing Allah alone.

It is worth mentioning in this respect that never shall Allah forgive the impious irreverence of incorporating with Him other deities (son, saint, priest, pope, animal, idol, etc.), but forgives He all else to whom He will. And he who incorporates with Allah other deities shall have committed the most heinous and unforgivable sin.

**Verily, Allah forgives not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him; less than that He forgives to whomsoever He will. Whoso associates with Allah anything, has indeed forged a mighty sin (An-Nisa, 47).**

2- Beside worshipping Allah alone and believing in the Koran, the worshipper must believe in all preceding divine Books, all Allah’s angels, all Allah’s Messengers, the last Day, and fate either good or bad. The Muslim scholar Abdullah Yusuf Ali stated that unbelief takes various forms: (1) denial of Allah and His revelation to mankind through inspired men; (2) a sort of nominal belief in Allah and His Prophets, but one which is partial, and mixed up with racial pride, which does not

allow for the recognition of any Messengers beyond those of a particular race; (3) a nominal belief in universal revelation, but so hedged around with peculiar doctrines of exclusive salvations, that is practically approaches to a denial of Allah's universal love of all mankind and all creation. All three amount to unbelief, for they really deny Allah's love and care (1).

Those who deny Allah and refuse to acknowledge His Prophets and wish to dissociate Allah from His Prophets, and recognize some Prophets and decline to accept others, and wish to take a middle course, are they who were born to be losers. Allah has prepared for them a humiliating punishment.

As we read in the Koran:

**Those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and desire to make division between Allah and His Messengers, and say, "We believe in part, and disbelieve in part," desiring to take between this and that a way – those in truth are the unbelievers; and We have prepared for the unbelievers a humbling chastisement (Al-Nisa, 150, 151).**

Whereas those who believe in Allah and recognize all His Prophets and make no distinction between any of the Prophets, shall be recipients of Allah's grace.

**And those who believe in Allah and His Messengers and make no division between any of them, those We shall surely give them their wages. Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate (Al-Nisa, 152).**

In another verse Allah ordered the believers not only to believe in Him, and the Koran, and His Messenger Muhammad, but also in the Scripture He sent down to those before Muhammad. And whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away.

**O believers believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book which He has sent down before. Whoso disbelieve in Allah and His angels, and His Books, and His**



**Messengers, and the Last Day, has surely gone astray into far error (Al-Nisa, 135).**

The true faith that Muslims must adhere to is what Allah has also ordered them to declare: (1) we believe in Allah, the only God; (2) we believe in all that has imparted to us in the Koran and in all that was imparted to Abraham, and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob and to the tribes of his twelve sons, and in what was imparted to all the Prophets from Allah, their Creator; (3) we do not discriminate one of them from another and (4) we conform our will to Allah's blessed will; He is the heart of our purpose.

**Say you: 'We believe in Allah, and in that which has been sent down on us and sent down on Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob and the Tribes, and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and the Prophets, of their Lord; we make no division between any of them, and to Him we surrender.**

**And if they believe in the like of that you believe in, then they are truly guided; but if they turn away, then they are clearly in schism; Allah will suffice you (for defense) against them, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing (Al-Baqara 137, 137).**

- 3- Believing in the One God, Allah, must be crowned with good deeds based on the teachings of the Koran and the Sunna of the Prophet. In other words, after believing in Allah's oneness, and in all His Books, angels and Messengers, and the Last Day, and in fate either good or bad, the believer must live a pious life by abiding to the teachings of the Koran and the Sunna of the Prophet. There are several verses in the Koran indicating that Paradise is the abode of those who believed in Allah and did good deeds.

**Surely those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah' and then go straight, no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow.**

**Those are the inhabitants of Paradise, therein dwelling forever, as a recompense for that they have been doing (Al-Ahqâf 13, 14).**

**And those who believe, and do righteous deeds, We**

Allah welcomes those who believe in Him alone (Islamic monotheism) and work righteous deeds. He mercifully admits them to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, for Allah does what He wills.

**Allah shall surely admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into gardens underneath which rivers flow; surely Allah does that He desires** (Al-Hajj, 14).

He who works deeds of righteousness while he is a believer in Allah's Oneness, then he will have no fear of injustice, nor of any curtailment of his reward.

**Hopeless indeed will be the man that carries iniquity (on his back). But whosoever does deeds of righteousness, being a believer, shall fear neither wrong nor injustice** (Taha 11, 112).

The Koran states that enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is the road to attain felicity.

**Let there arise out of you a nation, calling to good, and bidding to honor, and forbidding dishonor; those are the prosperous** (Al-Imran, 104).

In Islam, man's fate depends on his deeds. On the Day of Resurrection his deeds will be hanged round his neck. These deeds, good or evil, will be embodied in a scroll which will be quite open to him in the Day of Judgment.

**And We have fastened every man's deeds to his neck; and We shall bring forth to him, on the Day of Resurrection, a book he shall find spread wide open** (Al-Isra', 13).

On that Day man's real accusers are his own deeds. It will be said to him:

**'Read thy book! Thy soul suffices thee this day as a**

**reckoner against thee.'** (Al-Isra', 14).

In the Koran the doctrine of personal responsibility is insisted on, the doctrine of vicarious atonement is however, condemned. Salvation of the wicked cannot be attained by the punishment of the innocent. One man cannot bear the burden of another because that would be unjust. Every man must bear his own personal responsibility.

**Whosoever is guided, is only guided to his own gain, and whosoever goes astray, it is only to his own loss; no soul laden bears the load of another. We never chastise, until We send forth a Messenger** (Al-Isra'. 15).

Allah also says:

**Whoso does righteousness, it is to his own gain, and whoso does evil, it is to his own loss. Thy Lord wrongs not His servants** (Fussilat, 46).

Natural relationship may be considered as a reasonable cause for bearing each other's burdens. For example a mother or a father might offer to die for her or his child, but this does not apply to spiritual matters. There the responsibility is strictly personal and cannot be transferred to another.

**No soul laden bears the load of another, and if one heavy-burdened calls for its load to be carried, not a thing of it will be carried, though he be a near kinsman. Thou warnest only those who fear their Lord in the Unseen and perform the prayer; and whosoever purifies himself, purifies himself only for his own soul's good. To Allah is the homecoming** (Fatir, 18).

Those who deluded others from the right path shall carry the burden of their wrongs and the burden of those they misled, and on the Day of Judgment they will be called to account for their falsehoods.

**They shall certainly carry their loads, and other loads along with their loads, and upon the Day of Resurrection they shall surely be questioned concerning that they were forging** (Al-Ankabût, 13).

In the Koran, Allah swears by His creation that the Day of Resurrection and all its terror is one of the greatest portents to any of mortals that chooses to work righteous deeds or remain behind (by committing sins). Every soul will be in pledge for its deeds.

**Nay! By the moon, and the night when it retreats, and the dawn when it brightens, surely it is one of the greatest things as a Warner to mortals, to whoever of you desires to go forward or lag behind. Every soul shall be pledged for what it has earned (Al-Muddathir 32-38).**

The divine law that no burdened soul with sins shall bear the burden of another had been mentioned in the ancient Books of Abraham and Moses as well. There can't be any vicarious atonement.

The Koran says:

**Seest thou one who turns back?  
Gives a little, then hardens (his heart).  
Does he possess the knowledge of the unseen, and therefore he sees?  
Or has he not been told of what is in the scrolls of Moses, and Abraham, he who paid his debt in full?  
That no soul laden bears the load of another.  
And that a man shall have to his account only as he has labored.  
And that his laboring shall surely be seen, then he shall be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense.  
And that the final end is unto your Lord (An-Najm, 33-42).**

The above verses clearly show an important Koranic principle: the responsibility of any person is exclusively his, since he is sane and has free will and choice to distinguish between good and evil.

## **Forgiveness in Islam**

The word Tawbah (repentance) in Arabic literally means 'to return'. In an Islamic context, it refers to the act of leaving what Allah has prohibited and returning to what He has commanded. Repentance therefore involves regret and remorse at committing a sin, and turning to Allah for forgiveness and mercy.

It is mentioned in the Koran:

**"...and turn you all together in repentance to Allah O believers, that you may be successful."** (An-Nour, 31).  
"

**Surely Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves."** (Al-Baqarah, 222).

A Muslim repentance must be sincere.

**O you who believe! Repent towards Allah with sincere repentance** (Hūd, 3).

Sincere repentance is distinguished by: (1) remorse over committing the sin (2) removing one's self from the sin (3) decide not to commit the sin again (4) asking Allah for forgiveness every time the repentant remember the sin.

In order for the repentance to be accepted, a Muslim must repent quickly before he is gripped by death. This is based on the verses:

**Allah shall turn only towards those who do evil in ignorance, then shortly repent; Allah will return towards those; Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise. But Allah shall not return towards those who do evil deeds until, when one of them is visited by death he says, "Indeed now I repent," neither to those who die disbelieving; for them We have prepared a painful chastisement** (Al-nisa 17, 18).

Therefore, it is best to race towards repentance than to delay it. Repenting in advance of illness or death allows a person to fulfill other conditions for the acceptance of repentance: (1) remaining genuinely remorse and regretful of his sin; (2) increasing good deeds while decreasing bad deeds; (3) staying fearful of Allah's anger and sincerely praying for forgiveness; (4) developing a sense of humility and servitude to Allah (38).

Although a Muslim is ashamed of his sins in front of Allah, he benefits from repentance by becoming more God-conscious and appreciative of the Mercy of Allah. Because the sinner recognizes his own weakness, he will become more humble and forgiving of others.

In this sense, sinning followed by sincere repentance is better for a Muslim than not sinning and becoming conceited or complacent in his religion.

The Prophet said:

**"If you do not commit sins, then Allah will dispose of you and replace you with people who commit sins and then ask for forgiveness so that He can forgive them."**  
(Muslim).

Muslims develop a healthy balance between fear and hope of Allah. A believer is afraid of Allah's displeasure when he sins, but he repents and hopes for Allah's mercy.

The Prophet said:

**"Allah extends His hand at night so that He can forgive the sinner of the day; He extends His Hand in the day so that He can forgive the sinner of the night. He will continue to do this until the sun rises from the West."**  
(the Day of Judgment) (Muslim).

Even in the case of great crimes, if there is true repentance as tested by a changed life in conduct, Allah's mercy is available, and it will transform the repentant's nature from evil to good.

**Save him who repents, and believes and does righteous work – those, Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds, for Allah is ever All-forgiving, All-compassionate; and whoso ever repents, and does righteousness, he truly turns to Allah in repentance (Al-Furqan 70, 71).**

Muslims do not view any human being infallible; they believe that infallibility belongs to Allah alone. They believe that the only source of forgiveness for a human is Allah. Muslims deny the authority of men to listen to another person's confessions and then pronounce him forgiven of his sin. Islam does not have a priest class. The connection between man and Allah in Islam has always been a direct one. Repenting to anyone besides Allah in Islam is forbidden because it is considered as an act of polytheism.

The Koran teaches that in order to obtain forgiveness, the person must confess his sin directly to Allah, he should then repent of that sin sincerely, intending to never doing it again, and he should then trust in Allah's Mercy.

Allah is indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes in His Oneness, and associates none in worship with Him, and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them till death.

**Yet I am All-Forgiving to him who repents and believes, and does righteousness, and at last is guided (Taha, 82).**

The Prophet said, **"Avoid the great destructive sins."** They (the people) asked, "O Allah's Messenger! What are they?" He said, **" (1) to join partners in worship with Allah; (2) to practice sorcery; (3) to kill a person whom Allah has forbidden except for a just cause; (4) to eat up usury; (5) to eat up the property of an orphan; (6) to show one's back to the enemy and fleeing from the battle field at the time of fighting and (7) to accuse chaste women who never even think of anything touching their chastity and are good believers (Sahih Al-bukhari, Vol. 8, Hadith No. 840).**

If the people avoid committing the major sins which they are forbidden, Allah will remit from them their evil deeds and admit them an honorable entry into the realm of bliss and the beatitude of heaven.

**If you avoid the heinous sins that are forbidden you, we will acquit you of your evil deeds, and admit you to a noble Entrance (Al-Nisa, 31).**

Allah is just, never in the least does Allah wrong anyone for the equivalent of an atom, and if there is a good deed, He will double it and will give the doer an immense reward.

**Surely Allah shall not wrong so much as the weight of an atom; and if it be a good deed He will double it, and gives from himself a mighty wage (Al-Nisa, 40).**

Allah's mercy is always open for sincere repentance, but those who reject Allah will be deprived from His grace and guidance. They have hearts wherewith they understand not, they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the truth). They are like cattle, nay even more astray, these are the heedless ones (of warning).

**Whomsoever Allah guides, he is rightly guided; and whom He leads astray, they are the losers. We have created for Gehenna (Hell-Fire) many jinn and men; they have hearts, but understand not with them; they have eyes, but perceive not with them; they have ears, but they hear not with them. They are like cattle; nay, rather they are farther astray. Those – they are the heedless (AL-A'raf 178, 179).**

Thus, complete faith in Allah, the One and Only True God, is essential for one's own salvation. Faith becomes meaningful only when it is translated into practice. So, fortunate is he whose belief and deeds are always meant for pleasing Allah alone.

Islam considers salvation as a personal responsibility that is based on one's faith, piety, righteousness, steadfastness, and noble service – not an object of blood atonement or vicarious sacrifice. Islam abolishes idolatry, a practice which is



commonplace to all other religions. It is the only religion in the world that has upheld the absolute oneness of Allah – a divine concept, which in every respect serves as the ultimate solution to the Trinitarian controversy.

### **Salvation in Islam**

Based on the above, the key to salvation is the belief in and worship of the One True God, Allah, and obedience to His commandments, the same message brought by all Prophets. Islam teaches that all people were born into a naturally pure sin-free state. No person inherits original sin, nor is anyone held accountable for the sins of others. Islamic doctrine teaches that all people are born fundamentally good with a natural inclination to worship one God, Allah. This innocent, sin-free state of birth is called *Fitrah* (normal disposition). An upbringing in a religion other than Islam can drive a person away from this natural state. Although born without original sin, a person is vulnerable to committing sins and becomes accountable for them after the age of reason. Allah created man with free will to either obey Him or not. In Islam sinning includes all actions which contradict the commandments or will of Allah. (39).

Since Muslims believe that people are born inherently good, and that Allah loves those who obey Him, there is no concept of redemption in Islam. Muslims strive to earn Allah's pleasure and rewards based on their own merits.

In Islam, no person is held accountable for the sin of another. While Muslims fear their accountability on the Day of Judgment, they are hopeful for Allah's mercy. Muslims believe that sincere repentance and good deeds can help atone for their sins, and that Allah is Merciful and Forgiving.

Islam teaches that there is only one sin which won't be forgiven: *shirk*. *Shirk* is the association of partners with Allah in worship (Jesus as god or son of God and the like).

Muslims do not believe in salvation on the merit of faith alone. On the Day of Judgment a person will be fairly judged according to his faith, his actions, and his efforts to sincerely repent. Ultimately, however, it is the Mercy and Forgiveness

of Allah which will admit a person to Paradise, and not just his faith and deeds (39).

Despite its prominent place in Christianity, the notion of an 'original sin' is not found among the teachings of any Prophet, Jesus included. The doctrine of original sin gave Paul the means to justify pagan influence in his scheme of salvation. Irresponsibility became the hallmark of Christianity through this doctrine. The followers of Christianity through this doctrine assume no responsibility for their actions.

Since Allah is Almighty, He doesn't need the charade concocted by Christians in order to forgive man. As we are all responsible for our actions there is no need for a humanly concocted savior in Islam; salvation comes from Allah alone.

The evidence is overwhelming that the concept of salvation in Christianity, its doctrine of vicarious atonement, came not from Allah (God) but from man via pagan rituals and beliefs.

Paul effectively shifted the center of worship away from Allah by saying that Jesus was the divine agent of their salvation (Gal. 2:20). In so doing, however, Paul set aside all teachings of Allah's Prophets, and even the concept of monotheism itself, since Allah in Christianity needs Jesus for His divine "helper" (40).

Based on the historical facts presented in this book, The Christians need to use their objectivity and rational thinking to realize that the man-made Trinity that they have been worshipping is nothing but a product of political and personal manipulations by such men as Athanasius, Constantine and Paul. Their criminal backgrounds or immoralities were enough grounds that they were devoid of any divine inspiration. It follows, therefore, that the Trinitarian doctrine is human and not divine in nature.

With one's very salvation at stake here, Christians should take a closer look at what they believe in and why.

Allah says in the Koran:

**"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...for Allah is One God; glory be to Him: far exalted is He above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of Affairs." (An-Nisa', 171).**

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