

# INTERCEDE

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By a Global Initiative affiliate

## The Muslim Jesus

Some argue that the Jesus of the Muslim sources, the Quran and *hadith*, is essentially the same as the Jesus of the New Testament.

Christians view Jesus Christ as the second person in the Godhead, the Lord who is to be worshipped and adored. Christ's incarnation and substitutionary death on the cross are seen as God's redemptive plan from all eternity, forming the basis of God's offer of free salvation to all who believe.

Islam views Jesus (called Isa in the Quran) as a mere human being, although it accepts and reveres him as a sinless prophet and miracle worker. It also affirms his virgin birth and his return to earth (though as a Muslim). Islam does not accept Isa's deity, incarnation, crucifixion, atoning sacrifice and res-

urrection. Muslims claim that someone else was crucified in his place.

For Muslims, Muhammad, not Jesus, is the God-given perfect example of humankind. Muhammad is seen as vastly superior to Jesus, and in Islamic practice the veneration of Muhammad is widespread. M. Siddiqui, in *Elementary Teaching of Islam*, speaking of Muhammad, says:

*All nature joins in homage, all men adore; Thee who brought light to a darksome world; Ya Rasool Allah! My homage I make to thee; Ya Nabi Allah! My love I tender thee; My life, my all, for thee I gladly give; The divine message shall with me forever live.*

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# Until All Have Heard

*How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? – Romans 10:14*

Jim Bennett  
Global Initiative:  
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On June 26 of this year, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. and dozens of other churches in 26 U.S. states publicly read from the Quran during their Sunday worship services. This was part of an interfaith project promoted by Interfaith Alliance and Human Rights First. Part of their declared purpose is to “bring together Christian, Jewish and Muslim clergy to read from and hear from each other’s sacred texts. In doing so, they will serve as a model for respect and cooperation and create a concrete opportunity to build and strengthen working ties between and among faith communities moving forward.”

Interfaith conferences and meetings are being held with increasing frequency all over the globe. Major global religious leaders are urging all of us to focus on our “shared” religious traditions. The belief that all religions are equally valid paths to the same destination is often taught in houses of worship and at religious institutions around the world.


Along with other “shared religious traditions,” many Muslims concur that “Jesus is not the sole property of Christians. As true Muslims, we love him too. After all, Jesus is mentioned in the Quran dozens of times!”

In many Christian/Muslim dialogue venues controversy is generated over the relationship between the Jesus who is known, loved and worshipped by millions of Christians, and the figure of “Jesus” (called Isa in the Quran and in the *hadith*) as found in Islam. Most Muslims, and some Christians, argue that the Isa of the Muslim sources, the Quran and *hadith*, is essentially the same as the Jesus of the New Testament.

Some Muslim organizations promote a carefully “packaged” version of Jesus that sounds almost like the biblical Jesus. For example, almost all Muslims would answer yes to the following questions about Jesus:

- Do Muslims believe Jesus was a messenger of God?
- Do Muslims believe Jesus was a prophet?
- Do Muslims believe Jesus was born of a virgin mother?
- Do Muslims believe Jesus had a miraculous birth?
- Do Muslims believe Jesus performed miracles?
- Do Muslims believe Jesus will return to earth?

But upon close examination, the Muslim version of Jesus excludes essential biblical truths about Him — His crucifixion, death, resurrection, divinity, sonship, and His role as savior.

Our lead article deals with “The Muslim Jesus” and offers thoughts on why Christians need to be careful not to accept the Islamic version of Jesus. 





# Muslim World News



## Bangladesh

### *Christians face new charges*

Police in Bangladesh have charged two Christians and their four Muslim friends with “hurting religious sensibility” just three days after they were cleared of any wrongdoing. They had been arrested on March 24 in Damurhuda, Chuadanga district, 126 miles northwest of Dhaka, under Section 54 of the penal code, which provides a special power for police to arrest anyone on any suspicion. They were released on bail three days later. Mannan Mridha, a pastor in the Way of Peace movement of 490 house churches in northwest Bangladesh, told *Compass* that the second case was filed only to stop Christian activities in the area. “The case was also filed simply to harass the Christians,” Mridha said. Carpas Danga camp police from the Damurhuda police station charged the men with “hurting religious feelings” of area Muslims after a foreign doctor offered Bibles to patients at a health camp where the accused were volunteering. — *Compass*

## Iran

### *Hostile rhetoric heats up*

Increased public statements against Christianity in Iran have intensified pressures on Christians, but at their core they reflect Islamic leaders’ dismay with the growth of house churches and may signal dissension within Iran’s leadership. Sources told *Compass* the comments may indicate a power struggle between Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In May, Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi said authorities have not done enough to quench the growth of Christian house churches, considering the “massive funding” the government has spent toward that end. Mohabat News reported that Hojatolislam Tarashioon of the Mehdi Seminary in Qom claimed that “the enemies of Islam” are providing \$50,000 a year to some house churches. Experts believe public attacks on Christians resulted in the arrest of more than 120 Iranian Christians between December and January. — *Compass*

## Pakistan

### *Blasphemy charges continue*

At least 10 Christian families in a village in Pakistan have fled their homes after Muslims accused a Christian of blaspheming Islam on June 10. Yousaf Masih told *Compass* that his brother’s grandson, 8-year-old Ihtesham (also known as Sunny), had gone out to fetch ice when Muslim boys started harassing him. Masih said that his son Dildar Masih saw the Muslim boys thrashing his nephew. “Sunny told him that the boys were beating him because he would not recite their Kalma, at which Dildar rebuked the boys for forcing Sunny to renounce his religion.” Some 60 Muslims claimed Dildar Masih had blasphemed Islam by abusing the Kalma. Mosque loudspeakers began urging “all the faithful to find the blasphemer and punish him,” but Dildar Masih was caught unaware when the Islamic throng arrived. “They slapped him, kicked him, and my poor son didn’t even know why he was being tortured,” his father said. — *Compass*

There are two main sources for the Muslim “Jesus” (Isa): First, the Quran gives an abbreviated history of his life, and second, the *hadith* collections (containing extra-quranic accounts of Muhammad’s words and actions) especially establish his place in the Muslim understanding of the end times.

## Jesus (Isa) in the Quran

The quranic description of Isa includes some biblical elements but often directly contradicts or embellishes the biblical story. Scholars trace the sources of some of the quranic material on Isa to extra-biblical sources such as Gnostic and apocryphal gospels

The Quran claims that Christians believe in a family of gods, making them polytheists. Islam teaches that God and Mary had a physical relationship from which their son Isa was born. According to the Quran, Isa was a prophet in a long line of equal prophets of Islam whose main message was surrender to Allah. Muslims therefore see Jesus as equal to but not higher than all other prophets:

*Say: “We believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes and in (Books) given to Moses. Isa, and the prophets, from their Lord; we make no distinction between one and another among them and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam)” (Quran 3:84).*

Isa was like Adam, a created being formed out of the dust of the earth:

*This similitude of Isa before Allah is as that of Adam: He created him from dust then said to him: “Be” and he was (Quran 3:59).*

Isa was given a book (the *Injil*, the Gospel) and a law for his time:

*And in their footsteps we sent Isa the son of Mary confirming the law that had come before him; We sent him the Gospel, therein was guidance and light and confirmation of the law that had come before him, a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah (Quran 5:46).*

In the eyes of Muslims the *Injil* has been corrupted, and it has now been abrogated and corrected by the more perfect revelation brought from God by Muhammad, the last and the best of the prophets.



Muslims hold fast to the belief that Isa foretold the coming of Muhammad:

*And remember Isa the son of Mary said: “O children of Israel! I am the apostle of Allah (sent) to you confirming the Law (which came) before me and giving glad tidings of an Apostle to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad” (Quran 61:6).*

They consider that Isa’s original disciples were true Muslims (not Jews or Christians) who confessed:

*We have faith and do thou bear witness that we bow to Allah as Muslims (Quran 5:111).*

## Birth

Mary, the mother of Isa, is described as Miriam, sister



# im Jesus

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of Aaron and Moses, who was fostered by Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist (Quran 3:35-37; 19:28): a chronological impossibility. Isa was born not in Bethlehem but in a desolate place under a date palm tree (Quran 19:22-23). Isa spoke as a baby in his cradle, and among his miracles was the breathing of life into clay birds (Quran 3:46; 5:110).

*Then will Allah say: "O Isa the son of Mary, recount my favor to thee to thy mother. Behold! I strengthened thee with the holy spirit so that thou didst speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold! I taught thee the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel. And behold, thou makest out of clay as it were the figure of a bird by my leave and thou breathest into it and it becometh a bird by my leave and thou healest those born blind and the lepers by my leave. And behold, thou bringest forth the dead by my leave. And behold, I did restrain the children of Israel*

*from (violence to) thee when thou didst show them the clear signs and the unbelievers among them said: 'This is nothing but evident magic.'"* (Quran 5:110)

## Crucifixion and Death

The Quran denies the death of Isa on the cross:

*That they said (in boast) "We killed Christ Isa the son of Mary the Apostle of Allah"; but they killed him not nor crucified him but so it was made to appear to them and those who differ therein are full of doubts with no (certain) knowledge but only conjecture to follow for of a surety they killed him not. Nay God raised him up unto himself; and God is exalted in power, wise (Quran 4:157).*

Most Muslim commentators interpret this as meaning that a substitute was made to look like Isa and crucified in his place while Isa was taken straight up to heaven (without dying).

## Divine Sonship

The Quran denies that Isa is the Son of God:

*They say: "(Allah) Most Gracious has begotten a son!" Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous! At it the skies are ready to burst the earth to split asunder and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin. That they should invoke a son for (Allah) Most Gracious. For it is not consonant with the majesty of (Allah) Most Gracious that He should beget a son (Quran 19:89-92).*

## The Trinity

In the quranic view, the unity of Allah precludes the possibility of the Trinity. Belief in the Trinity is blasphemy:

*Christ Isa the son of Mary was (no more than) an Apostle of Allah and His Word which He bestowed on Mary and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not "Trinity": desist; it will be better for you, for Allah is one Allah; glory be to Him; (for Exalted is He) above having a son (Quran 4:171).*

*They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity, for there is no god except One Allah (Quran 5:73).*

Believing in the deity of Christ and in the Trinity is the grave sin of *shirk*, of adding a partner to the One God, the greatest sin in Islam, for which there is no forgiveness.

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# The Muslim Jesus

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*In blasphemy indeed are those that say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary. Say: "Who then hath the least power against Allah if His will were to destroy Christ the son of Mary his mother and everyone that is on the earth?" (Quran 5:17)*

## Jesus (Isa) in the *Hadith*

According to orthodox Islamic doctrine, God gave Muhammad the responsibility of interpreting the Quran, so his words and acts as found in the collected traditions (*hadith*) became the second revelatory source, which expounds the Quran.

### ***Hadith* That Describe Jesus' Features**

Several *hadith* claim that Muhammad saw Isa both in his Night Journey and in a dream — and then described him to his companions:

*Narrated Ibn Umar: The Prophet said, "I saw Moses, Isa and Abraham (on the night of my ascension to the heavens). Isa was of red complexion, curly hair and a broad chest" (Al-Bukhari 4.648).*

### **Jesus' Return and Modern Muslim Apocalyptic Based on *Hadith***

Space does not permit a complete listing of all *hadith*

"beliefs" about the end times relating to Jesus. A partial list:


- The return of Jesus to fight the anti-Christ (*Dajjal*) and his supporters (mainly Jews).

*Narrated Hudhayfah ibn Usayd Ghifari: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) came to us all of a sudden as we were (busy in a discussion) and He said: What do you discuss about? The companions said: We are discussing about the last hour. Thereupon he said: It will not come until you see ten signs before and (in this connection) he made a mention of the smoke, Dajjal, the beast, the rising of the sun from the West, the descent of Isa son of Mary (Allah be pleased with him), the Gog and Magog, and landslides in three places, one in the east, one in the west and one in Arabia at the end of which fire would burn forth from the Yemen, and would drive people to the place of their assembly (Sahih Muslim 13520).*

- Upon his return Jesus will help lead the Muslim *umma* (nation) to final victory, including "breaking the crosses" [destroying the churches].
- Jesus will eventually marry, die, and be buried in Arabia to await Judgment Day.
- On the Day of Judgment Jesus will point all those seeking his intercession for them with God to Muhammad, who alone will be able to intercede for his followers.

## Conclusion

Muslims hold that biblical description of Jesus is true only insofar as it agrees with what the Quran says about Isa. In the Muslim view, any biblical passages that contradict the Quran have been corrupted by Jews and Christians and are not valid. Islam thus insulates its followers from the biblical text, including the Gospel narratives about Christ, claiming it is unnecessary for them. The Islamic idea of Jesus is therefore but a pale caricature of the true Jesus as He is revealed in the Bible.

In the 4th century, the Alexandrian presbyter Arian affirmed the heresy that Christ was not truly divine — but a creature who has been called into being out of nothing — that he had had a beginning and is finite. While it is laudable that Christians might seek to locate common ground in building bridges with Muslims, it is essential not to allow a "new Jesus" to emerge, stripped of uniqueness based on incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, redemptive mission and universal Lordship, and remarkably similar to Muslim perceptions about Him. 





# JUMAA PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

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Facebook. Please join today.*



Friday, September 2, 2011. Please pray

*...for the crisis in Eritrea.* Hundreds of Christians are currently incarcerated, with the vast majority languishing without charges or trials.

*...for continued allowances of religious freedom in Kuwait.* Kuwait currently allows several churches to conduct services in designated compounds. Restrictions certainly exist, but Kuwait is far more lenient than any of its neighbors.

*...for the incessant violence in Iraq.* Pray that peace would come to a troubled land.

Friday, September 9, 2011. Please pray

*...for the country of Uzbekistan.* There is a growing trend toward fundamental Islam and hostility to Christianity.

*...for the country of Tajikistan.* Ninety percent of the country is Muslim. Pray that long-term Christian workers would take the Gospel into Tajikistan.

*...for the Muslims of Niger.* Pray that a new Christian radio ministry will plant the Gospel seed in Muslim hearts.

Friday, September 16, 2011. Please pray

*...for the Druze Muslims of Lebanon.* Pray that through their unique belief system, they might be more open to the Gospel.

*...for Muslims in the "closed" country of Libya* during a time of war and chaos.

*...for Muslims living in "neglected frontiers" of Southeast Asia.* Pray that Christian workers would hear the call to witness and reach out to the Muslims of Myanmar.

Friday, September 23, 2011. Please pray

*...for MBBs in Mozambique.* It is reported that several thousand churches have been planted, aimed at ministering to the Muslims of East Africa.

*...for the Millet (Turkish-speaking Gypsies) Muslims of Bulgaria.* They have no status in the national census, but estimates put their number at approximately 300,000.

*...for Muslim Background Believers in Yemen.* They live in extremely difficult circumstances and face severe challenges.

Friday, September 30, 2011. Please pray

*...for the Church in Kazakhstan.* Government authorities continue to pressure Christians to register their congregations. Those refusing face heavy fines for their officially illegal services.

*...for Christian workers delivering literature inside Iraq.* Pray that this literature would reach Muslims searching for the truth about Jesus Christ.

*...that the Lord will raise up MBBs* to work miracles in lives of their Muslim neighbors across the Islamic world.

***I URGE, THEN, FIRST OF ALL THAT REQUESTS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSION AND  
THANKSGIVING BE MADE FOR EVERYONE. – 1 TIMOTHY 2:1, NIV***



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**Friday, October 7, 2011. Please pray**

*...for the country of Turkey.* Operation World calls Turkey the “largest unreached nation” in the world and estimates there are fewer than 10,000 evangelical Christians out of a population of 70 million.

*...that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would penetrate Saudi Arabia, the bastion of Islam.* Pray that despite the most oppressive of religious laws, reports of house churches and MBB conversions would continue.

*...for Sufi Muslims in Iran.* Pray that through Christian broadcasts, dreams and visions, seeking Sufis would receive a true revelation of Jesus Christ.

**Friday, October 14, 2011. Please pray**

*...for the future of Lebanon.* Hezbollah has become a state inside Lebanon, with its own militia, television and radio stations, and social programs. Radical regimes in Iran and Syria provide financial and military support for Hezbollah.

*...for the Alawite Muslims of Syria.* Pray that through their unique belief system, they might be more open to the Gospel.

*...for Christian teachers working in secondary schools in Muslim countries.* Pray that doors will open for them to share the love of Jesus Christ.

**Friday, October 21, 2011. Please pray**

*...that the day will come when spiritual walls will fall across the Islamic world and Christian witness is unfettered.*

*...for the Uighur Muslims in Northwest China.* Pray for Christian workers reaching out to an often neglected minority.

*...for indigenous Christian pastors across the Muslim world.* Many toil under a heavy burden of physical danger, minimal conversions and meager pay. Pray that God would encourage and embolden these precious and invaluable laborers.

**Friday, October 28, 2011. Please pray**

*...for Muslims in Bangladesh.* Pray that the Lord would continue to use Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) to reach Bangladeshis with the love of Christ.

*...for an estimated 1.5 million Muslim widows living in Afghanistan,* with an average of five to eight children each.

*...for expatriate workers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).* 80 percent of the UAE population is made up of foreign workers. Pray that through this diverse mix, the Gospel of Jesus Christ will reach Muslims in the UAE.

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