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# A Christian apologetic response to the claim of ‘prophet’ by the founders of Islam and Mormonism, Mohammad and Joseph Smith, jr. – Mohammad

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## **Abstract**

*The article focuses on the question if the biblical particulars of prophethood apply to Muhammad, the founder of Islam, as he and his followers believed. This claim is being weighed by focusing on a comparison of Muhammad’s theology with doctrine found in the Old and New Testament, including what Muhammad believed Jesus to be, as well as understanding who Deuteronomy 18 referred to. Based upon what Muhammad believed about himself, as well as what he believed about the biblical prophets and about Jesus, coupled with Islamic history and legend spoken about Muhammad in contrast to the warnings issued in*

*both the Old and New Testaments, the article comes to the far reaching conclusion that Muhammad was not a prophet of God after the order of the biblical prophets.*

## **Opsomming**

*Die artikel fokus op die vraag of die Bybelse vereistes wat aan 'n profeet van die Here gestel word van toepassing gemaak kan word op Mohammed, die stigter van Islam, soos wat sy volgelinge glo. Hierdie bewering word opgeweeg deur 'n vergelyking van Mohammed se teologie met die leerstelling wat in die Ou en Nuwe Testament gevind word, insluitende dit wat Mohammed oor Jesus Christus se identiteit geglo het, asook die verstaan na wie in Deuteronomium 18 verwys word. Op grond van dit wat Mohammed oor homself verkondig het, asook wat hy geglo het oor die Bybelse profete en oor Jesus, tesame met die Islamitiese geskiedskrywing oor Mohammed en die ooreenkomste met dit waarteen beide die Ou en Nuwe Testament waarsku, kom die artikel tot die verreikende gevolgtrekking dat Mohammed nie 'n profeet van God volgens die ordening vir Bybelse profete was nie.*

In a previous article (*Journal for Christian scholarship*) it was discussed what a biblical prophet was, what a prophet did, and to whom the office or gift of prophecy applied in the biblical contexts of Old and New Testament revelations. This article focuses on the question: do the biblical particulars of prophethood apply to Muhammad, the founder of Islam as believed by Muslims? By consulting with what the primary sources of Islam reveal,<sup>1</sup> along with commentary from those who staunchly uphold their beloved leader as a biblical prophet,<sup>2</sup> and contrasting those claims with what has already been written, the question of whether or not Muhammad was a prophet after the order of the Old and New Testaments prophets will be evaluated.

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1 The primary sources in Islam considered authoritative are the Koran and Hadith.

2 A partial list would include *Tafsir Ibn-Kathir*, A.Y. Ali's *The Meaning of the Holy Koran*, and M. M. Ali's *The Religion of Islam*.

The assessment begins by researching three additional questions. First, does Muhammad's theology comport with either Old or New Testament theology? Second, is Muhammad referred to by Moses in Deuteronomy 18? Third, who did Muhammad believe Jesus to be? Was He God's Son, incarnate in the flesh, or a mere man? Answers to these questions will provide the basis to consider the claim that Muhammad was a prophet after the same order as the biblical prophets.

## 1. Muhammad's Theology

The pagan setting in which Muhammad was reared is reported in hundreds, if not thousands, of books and journal articles. Therefore, it is unnecessary to rehash that history here. The relevance of his upbringing in the research is whether the description of Allah by Muhammad is the same as the attributes of God in the Bible. As was previously discussed (Derengowski & Stoker, 2018), one test to determine whether a prophet was called of God lay within the theology he proclaimed, especially on his understanding of who God is. The Bible teaches in Deuteronomy 13:1-5 that even if a prophet performed the miraculous in the name of God, if he also urged the people to go after "other gods" then he was not called by God. Moreover, in the New Testament, Jesus not only warned of false prophets, but also stated that by their fruits a person could know them (Matt. 7:20). Since Muhammad and his converts believed that he followed in the footsteps of both the Old and New Testament prophets,<sup>3</sup> which included Jesus, his theology should be consistent with theirs.

Etymologically, the Arabic words that Muhammad used for God, Allah, means "the god". It later became the proper name for "the God" that Muhammad and Muslims worship(ped).<sup>4</sup> Most Arabic-speaking Jews and Christians used Allah when speaking of God in Muhammad's time.<sup>5</sup> Allah was initially used as a name for a pagan desert deity. In other words, Allah was already worshipped by the pagans and Bedouins long before Muhammad ever arrived on the scene. "Like his Greek counterpart, Zeus," wrote Reza Aslan (2006:7), "Allah was originally an ancient rain/sky deity who had been elevated into the role of the supreme god of pre-Islamic Arabs." According to Zwemer (1905:32-33), "In pre-Islamic literature, Christian or pagan, *ilāh* is

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3 Koran 2:136; 3:84; 4:163.

4 Watt, 1953: 26; Gibb, 1955:48; Hughes, 1994:141; Aslan, 2006:6; M.M. Ali 2012:110; Omar, 2012:28-29.

5 Corduan, 2012:112; Dashti, 1994:35; Guillaume, 1956:7.

used for any god and *Al-ilah* (contracted to *Allah*), *i.e.*, ὁ θεός, *the god*, was the name of the Supreme.” Guillaume (1956:7) adds that, “Some scholars trace the name [*Allah*] to the South Arabian *Ilāh*, a title of the Moon god, but this is a matter of antiquarian interest.”<sup>6</sup> Even though the name Allah was viewed by Muhammad as exclusive to “the god”, it by no means meant that it was the same deity that the Jews and Christians worshipped as “the God.”

The Old Testament emphasizes that God is “one” (Deut. 6:4). “Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him” (Deut. 4:39).<sup>7</sup> The New Testament also refers to God as one (Jam. 2:19), but also reveals what God’s oneness partially entailed. Both Jesus<sup>8</sup> and the Holy Spirit<sup>9</sup> were revealed to be one with God the Father. A composite of the testaments revealed one God who subsisted in three persons. As Robert Letham (2004:32) puts it, “While the Old Testament does not make explicit what is revealed by the coming of Christ and the writing of the New Testament, it does provide the essential foundation without which the full Christian doctrine of God could not exist.”

Consistent, however, with other movements in history, which rejected either the deity of Jesus or the personality of the Holy Spirit, is Muhammad’s rejection of the triune nature of God or simply the Trinity. Although the Jews did not advocate the triune nature of Yahweh, hints of the Trinity are found in the Old Testament as far back as Genesis 1:26, when Elohim (מֵיְהוָה) said, “Let Us create man in Our image according to Our likeness.”<sup>10</sup> Later, that

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6 Contemporary Christian author Dr. Robert Morey (1992:50-52) argued that Allah was the moon god, even citing Alfred Guillaume along the way, but never offered any corroborating evidence to support his argument. It is not that there was not a moon deity amid the pantheon of gods and goddesses, some extending back to the moon god of Babylon named Sîn. It is that there is no evidence that the Arabian Allah is associated with the moon deity. In fact, if there were any association with Allah with one of the pagan deities, it would most likely be the supreme deity in the Kaaba known as Hubal (Wellhausen, 1897:75-76). Winfried Corduan (2012:112-114) has offered an effective rebuttal based on etymology, history, and symbolism that dismantles Morey’s *et al.* argument that Allah is the moon god of ancient Arabia.

7 Cf. 2 Sam.7:22; 1 Chr. 17:20; Jer. 10:6-7; Isa. 40:18, 25; 43:10; 44:6, 8; 45:5-6, 18, 21-22; 46:9.

8 Jesus is described as “the exact representation of [God’s] nature” (Heb. 1:3 cf. Col. 1:15) Jesus was God’s Word manifest in the flesh, as God, and dwelt among humankind; one essence with the Father, but two persons (Jn. 1:1, 14, 18; 20:28-31). See Montefiore (1964:35); Bruce (1964:5-6); Pink (2004 reprint:36); Owen (1980 reprint:95); *TDNT* 1972:8.585-ff.

9 The Holy Spirit was revealed to be God, as well (Acts 5:4; 1 Thess. 4:8).

10 See Hoekema, 1986:12; House, 1998:61-62; *NIDOTTE*, 1997:1.405; *TDOT*, 2003:12.394; Frame (2002:355).

reality is made more specific in the New Testament with explicit statements about either Jesus' or the Holy Spirit's deity made evident (like those seen above) or in formulas or allusions that could be interpreted and explained in triune language (see Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Thess. 1:3-5; 1 Jn. 4:2, *et al*).

Also consistent with a denial of the Trinity involved a denial of Jesus' Sonship. Jesus could not be God's son and share in God's nature, according to Islamic thought, (Koran, 19:88-92). To associate him in any way with God was considered blasphemous or an act of *Shirk* (Ali, 2012:106; Sodiq, 2011:109-110). God cannot have any partners and to acknowledge Jesus as God's Son would contradict that mandate, as well as implicate God in a sexual union with a consort (Koran, 6:101; *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 2000 3:427). Such notions about the Trinity, Jesus' deity, and Jesus' Sonship are, according to the Muslim explanation of events, all contrivances and perversions created by misguided Christians who failed to keep Jesus' original monotheistic message and had suddenly decided to placate the Greeks and Romans (Campbell, 2013:5-6; Mufassir, 1980:23; 1993:4). Therefore, "Say not 'Trinity': desist: It will be better for you: For Allah is One God: Glory be to Him: (Far Exalted is He) above Having a son" (Koran, 4:171 cf. 5:73). Muhammad's rejection of the Trinity, along with his refusal to acknowledge Jesus' deity and Sonship, is a major deviation from the teaching of the Bible and Jesus himself, which makes it impossible for him to be a continuation of biblical prophets, and especially not one who further builds upon what Jesus taught. Muhammad's theology on the nature of God was clearly at odds with both the Old and New Testament statements about Yahweh Elohim revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Muhammad and Deuteronomy 18

Muhammad and his followers believed that he was the fulfilment of the prophecy given by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-ff. A primary Koranic reference often used to justify such a conclusion is found in Surah 7:157.<sup>12</sup> According to A.Y. Ali (1997:389), "In this verse is a prefiguring, to Moses, of

<sup>11</sup> See for instance Jes. 9:5, 6; Joh. 20:28-29; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 1:8.

<sup>12</sup> In the *Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an* are several biblical verses listed in defense of Muhammad's alleged forthcoming (Deut. 18:18; 21:21; Ps. 118:22-23; Isa. 42:1-13; Hab. 3:3-4; Matt. 21:42-43; Jn. 14:12-17, 26-28; 16:7-14), none of which, when read in their immediate contexts, warrants their citation. They are merely assumed without any explanation.

the Arabian Messenger, the last and greatest of the Messengers of Allah. Prophecies about him will be found in the *Tawrah* and the *Injil*." The verse reads as follows:

Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear. Then those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him: they are the successful.<sup>13</sup>

Ali (1997:389, n.1127) alludes to Deuteronomy 18:15 for his support that when Moses gave his prediction, he had Muhammad in mind as "the only Prophet who brought *Sharī'ah* like that of Moses". That future prophet would be from the house of Ishmael, Isaac's brother, the father of Israel.<sup>14</sup> Muslim apologist Ajjola (1984:167-68) gave similar testimony. After explaining that Moses was the most spoken about prophet in the Koran, he went on to argue that Moses served as Muhammad's example, who was prophesied by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. "It was only the revelation [Koran 73:15] of the Holy Prophet, and that the earliest, which pointed out the fulfilment of the prophecy of Deuteronomy (18:15-18) in the advent of a Prophet like Musa." Finally, the popular Muslim and South Africa based provocateur Ahmed Deedat reasoned, based on negation rather than on what was actually in the Deuteronomy passage, to discount Jesus and exalt Muhammad, even to the point attributing a bogus quote to atheist George Bernard Shaw to support his contention!<sup>15</sup>

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13 Muhammad M. Pickthall (2006), *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. Revised and edited by Arafat K. El-Ashi, Ph.D. Beltsville, MD: Amana.

14 Elsewhere (Koran 3:81, n. 416), Ali alludes to the Deuteronomy 18 passage again to defend Muhammad's rise to prophethood, along with the Arab nation uprising in Isaiah 42:11 through Ishmael's son, Kedar. Rather than paint a glorious picture of the Arabian uprising through Kedar, the Bible does just the opposite, by depicting its tribes as uncivilized warmongers (Ps. 120:5-ff.). According to Coogan (*The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, 1996:563), "[The Kedarites] raided lands on their eastern and western borders and controlled the eastern trade route from Arabia to the Fertile Crescent." Although Jeremiah describes Kedar as a "nation which is at ease, which lives securely" (Jer. 49:31), Isaiah tells of a people who wield the sword and bend the bow in preparation for battle, although unto eventual defeat (Isa. 21:15-17).

15 See Deedat (n.d.:23), where he attributes the following statement allegedly written by Shaw in *The Genuine Islam*: "IF A MAN LIKE MOHAMED WERE TO ASSUME THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE MODERN WORLD, HE WOULD SUCCEED IN SOLVING ITS PROBLEMS THAT WOULD BRING IT THE MUCH NEEDED PEACE AND HAPPINESS." In an email exchange, dated February 10, 2017, with Mr. Richard Dietrich of the International

There are several major flaws in all of these propositions.

First, the Prophet to come was to discourage involvement in the occult (Deut. 18:14). Israel was about to enter “The Promised Land”, which was inundated with practitioners of witchcraft, sorcery, and demon worship as methods of communicating with or palliating the gods (Lev. 17:7; Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37).<sup>16</sup> Yahweh forbade such activity for his people. Muhammad’s biography, however, demonstrates involvement in typical occult practices. An example is Muhammad’s initial experience of being visited by what he thought was a *jinn* (demon), who physically “strangled” and emotionally abused him into submission (Haykal, 1976:73-74). Another is Muhammad’s own testimony concerning two men who allegedly removed a “black drop” from his heart (Ibn Ishaq 72; Haq, 2009:1:170) that was interpreted by Muslim historian Tabari as “hatred”, “impurity” and “the pollution of Satan” (Watt & McDonald, 1988:63, 75). Even a more popular and belief-shaping event in Islamic history is Muhammad’s out of the body experience flight to Jerusalem, otherwise known as his Night Journey. It has similarities to astral projection in the occult.<sup>17</sup> While a biblical prophet’s task was to discourage involvement in the occult, it seems that Muhammad’s life encouraged it as a part of his life.<sup>18</sup>

Second, the Prophet to come was to be like Moses in the sense that he was to be an Israelite (vv. 15, 18), literally “brother” (Heb. אָח) to the Israelites, not an Arab or any other non-Jewish race. This would exclude Ishmael, as well, since Ishmael was not a Jew, even though he shared a familial tie with Isaac. Ali’s argument that only Muhammad brought Shariah (law) similar to Moses, as evidence for associating him with Deuteronomy 18, is outside the context of what Moses recorded. It is imposition, not exposition, of the text. For Moses’ prediction does not entail bringing another or additional law, but the revealing of another person, *like* Moses, to whom God would place His words in that prophet’s mouth. In fact upon Jesus’ arrival, who is viewed by most reputable Christian scholars as the Prophet spoken by Moses, He

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Shaw Society, it was asked if the book, *The Genuine Islam*, was actually authored by George Bernard Shaw. According to Mr. Dietrich, “That is a fake book and one that I have never seen, and although you can find extravagant claims by Shaw (hyperbole being his favorite way of getting attention) for all sorts of world leaders, including Mohammad, I doubt that you’ll find this one. If you do, it won’t be in that book.” In other words, not only is the book “fake”, so is the statement.

16 See Moscati, 1957:112-116; Finegan, 1989:132-134; Albright, 1994:119-140.

17 See Eliade, 1992:5; Grimassi, 2005:32, 118; Agrippa, 2005:631-32, 801.

18 Koran, 17:1; Ibn Ishaq (Guillaume, 1955:181-87), Bukhari (Khan, n.d.:5:142-49; 6:195-96), Kathir (5:550-575), and Muslim (2007:1:259-263).

would fulfil the law (Matt. 5:17), with the further effect that those found to be “in Christ” by grace through faith would be accounted as legally just before God (Rom. 3:21-26, 28; 4:5; Gal. 2:16). The law would serve as a magnifier and teacher of moral unrighteousness before God (Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19) that leads the responsive unto Christ (Gal. 3:24). It did not serve as a justifier of the person attempting to keep the law (Gal. 2:21; 3:10-11; Jam. 2:10), much less as a means of salvation (Gal. 3:16, 21; Eph. 2:8-9), since no one except Jesus Christ is humanly capable of perfectly keeping the law, which is absolutely necessary if one wished to stand before the perfect God who gave it. Accordingly, it is also clear that the Islamic claim of a biblical prophet succession from Moses through Jesus to Muhammad is impossible.

Third, the Prophet to come was not to speak “presumptuously” in the sense of arrogantly forecasting the future (Deut. 18:20-22). What he predicted needed to come humbly to fruition exactly as stated, otherwise that “prophet” was deemed as false and unworthy of any respect by the people with whom he spoke. All it took was one false prophecy to exclude him as a prophet of God. That said, we do not have to look far to find such a prediction when it comes to Muhammad. He believed that he was the fulfilment of Deuteronomy 18:15-ff., as well as did his followers. However, as already seen above, that would be impossible, since Muhammad was not a Jew and the prophetic lineage would have to stop with Jesus. Only if the context of the whole passage from Deuteronomy 18:15-22 is ignored, revised, or reinterpreted, using presupposed ideas about who the prophet is, can Muhammad be included in the discussion.

### **3. Muhammad in the New Testament as the Holy Spirit**

Koran 3:81 and 61:6 are interpreted in such a way by Muslims as the basis to further manipulate the New Testament, particularly in John’s Gospel, and persuade others who listen to them to believe that Jesus was referring to Muhammad, rather than the Holy Spirit. The standard Muslim argument goes like this. The Holy Spirit could not be the One spoken of in those references found in John’s Gospel, since He was already present and assisting Jesus. The Greek word for “Comforter” (*Paracletos*) has been corrupted from *Periclytos*, which literally means “Muhammad”. Finally lost Gospels, like Barnabas, attest to Muhammad’s coming. Each of these premises is



specious, as the following rebuttal will demonstrate.<sup>19</sup>

First, it must be understood that in Islam, the Holy Spirit is the archangel Gabriel and not the third person in the triune Godhead, as Christianity teaches.<sup>20</sup> That stated, the typical references cited to support the idea that Muhammad is spoken of by Jesus, and not the Holy Spirit, so as to avoid conflict with the misidentification with Gabriel, are John 14:16, 26, 15:26, and 16:7. All of the references, though, are quite clear and it takes a fair amount of textual gymnastics to arrive at conclusions that are completely at odds with a plain understanding of the verses. For instance, in the first reference, John 14:16, Jesus tells his disciples, “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; (17) *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.” The Muslim focuses heavily upon one word, “Helper”, sometimes translated “Comforter”, while neglecting the details in the rest of the passage. According to A.Y. Ali (1997:148), “the *future* Comforter cannot be the ‘Holy Spirit’ as understood by Christians, because the Holy Spirit already was present, helping and guiding Jesus”.

Nowhere in Scripture is the Holy Spirit ever confused with the archangel Gabriel. Moreover, when the archangel is referred to, it is always by name, which amounts to four references throughout the whole of Scripture (Dan 8:16; 9:21; Lk. 1:19, 26). When angels are mentioned in John’s Gospel, none of them are associated with Gabriel, with one occurrence associated with a thunderous sound from heaven (12:29), two occurrences of *angels* (1:51; 20:12), and the final reference (5:3-4) being absent “from the earliest and best witnesses” (Metzger, 1994:179). In other words, the argument that the Holy Spirit (i.e. “Gabriel”) was already present and helping Jesus, and therefore could not be the Holy Spirit of Christian understanding, is simply incorrect and makes no hermeneutical or exegetical sense.

Second, the Muslim argument that *Paraclete* has been corrupted from

19 See Ali, 1997:148, n. 416 and 1416, n. 5438; Zayed, 2012:63-65; Deedat, 1997:15-16, 21, 23-35, 39, 60-61.

20 See Ajjola, 1984:73; M.M. Ali, 2012: 16, n. 5, 17, 568; Hughes, 1994:133, 177. According to William Muir (1861:138), “It is not clear what ideas Mahomet at the first attached to ‘the Spirit’ here spoken of. They were perhaps indefinite...He had learned, and he believed, that Jesus was ‘born of the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost;’ and either knowingly rejecting the divinity of that blessed Person, or imperfectly informed as to His nature, he seems to have confounded Gabriel announcing the conception, with the Holy Spirit that overshadowed Mary. The two expressions became, in the phraseology of the Coran, synonymous.”

*Pericytytos* has absolutely zero textual-critical support. In the latest 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*<sup>21</sup>(2012) and the United Bible Societies 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Greek New Testament*<sup>22</sup>, neither apparatuses present any textual variations in any of the cited references listed above whereby the reader is faced with a choice between *Paracletos* or *Pericytytos*.<sup>23</sup> John uses *Paracletos* in each reference without question. There is no “corruption”. Moreover, of the references in the New Testament where *Paracletos* is used, all of which are by John, there is no variation apart from switching between cases at John 14:16 and 1 John 2:1 to *Paracleton*. One additional note regarding *Pericytytos* is that it is not found anywhere in either the Old or New Testaments. If there were the possibility that the two terms could be confused with each other, one would think that the latter term would at least show up one time, as a *hapax legoumena*, in the biblical corpus. It does not, however. Only *Paracletos* does and that only three times plus a change of case twice. Therefore, the whole Muslim argument based on linguistics is specious, having no textual support whatsoever.

Third, what Jesus says about the *Paraclete* is only applicable to the Holy Spirit and not to Muhammad at all. Jesus told his followers that the *Paraclete* would be with them “forever”. As Morris (1995:577) puts it, “The Spirit once given will not be withdrawn.” When Muhammad died in 632 A.D., he was “withdrawn” not only from his followers, but the rest of the world as well. Jesus then said that the *Paraclete* would be “in” the disciples of Jesus, as Jesus was “in” them (Jn. 14:20). Even though Jesus was about to go to the Father (Jn. 14:12, 28; 16:10, 17), he would not leave or forsake them by sending the Holy Spirit as “another Helper”, who would “abide” with them by being “in” them, denoting the intimate relationship Jesus and the Spirit have with believers.<sup>24</sup> “Another” (Gr. *allos*) signifies “of like kind” (Robertson, 1960: 5.252), since the Holy Spirit would act and speak in the same manner as Jesus, while “bearing witness” of (Jn. 15:26) and glorifying Jesus (Jn. 16:13-14). Although Muhammad may have influenced thousands, he never resided in anyone, because he could not, much less did he testify or glorify Jesus. Human limitation prevented his residence and if he testified of or glorified Jesus, Muhammad’s status, as a prophet, would be negated, since he would

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21 See the apparatus on pages 352-53 and 355-56.

22 See the apparatus on pages 369-70 and 373-74.

23 The same can be said of *TDNT*, 1967:5.773-814, *NIDONTT*, 1971:1.88-91, *EDNT*, 1993:3.23-27, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1979:168, and *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, 1996:330-331, 333-334, where there is no confusion or conflict over John’s usage of *Paracletos* versus *Pericytytos*.

24 See *TDNT* 2.543; Carson, 1991:502; Köstenberger, 2004:436-37;

be culpable of committing *shirk* or associating individuals or things with Allah. Jesus also told his disciples that when the Spirit came, he would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance everything that Jesus said (Jn. 14:26). The Spirit's mission, in other words, was about Jesus and no one else. Muhammad's focus, however, was not about Jesus, and when he spoke about Jesus, it was always in a polemical way to discount the testimony of those who did glorify Jesus. Finally, commensurate with the Spirit's testimony about and glorification of Jesus, Jesus said that the Spirit would guide his disciples into all truth. Interestingly, Jesus had earlier claimed to be "the way, *the truth*, and the life," and that no one would come to the Father, except through Jesus (Jn. 14:6). Nowhere in any of Muhammad's teachings, either in the Koran or the Hadith, does he make a remotely similar statement. Instead, according to his teachings Jesus is nothing more than a mere man<sup>25</sup>, who died for no one<sup>26</sup>, much less for anyone's sin, and who ultimately one day will return, defeat the anti-Christ<sup>27</sup>, die, and be buried alongside Muhammad in a special grave the Muslims have already preserved for him.<sup>28</sup> Clearly, Muhammad is not the *Paraclete*.

#### 4. Muhammad's Jesus

It is a common fallacy among the religiously aberrant to equate their view of Jesus with the Jesus of the Bible without ever doing an honest inquiry into what the Bible has to say about Jesus. When this occurs, the result is the creation of "another Jesus" that differs substantially from the biblical Jesus (2 Cor. 11:4). Muhammad and the Muslims are no exception in that respect. Although Muhammad and his followers have frequently written and spoken about Jesus, it is clear that certain biblical statements made by him and by those who followed him, especially concerning his sonship, are an affront to the Muslims and the image of Jesus they have created. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, if a person's view of Jesus is distorted, skewed, or simply erroneous, the rest of that person's belief system about God, sin, salvation, revelation, humanity, *et cetera*, will be equally distorted, skewed, or simply erroneous. Muhammad and the Muslim rejection of Jesus' sonship

25 Koran 4:171; 5:75; 43:59

26 Koran 4:157; 5:110; Ismail, 2008:30, 42, 60; Ajjola, 1979:43, 48

27 *English Translation of Jami at-Tirmidhi*, 2007:4.288, no. 2240; 292, no. 2244; 6.560; *English Translation of Sunan Abu Dawud*, 2008 4.526, 527, no. 4321; 4.529, no. 4324; 5.508; *English Translation of Sahih Muslim*, 2007:7.21.7373; 7.23.7381; 455

28 Dimashqi, 2006:151-52; al-'Areefi, 2010:308-310, 337, 353-354, 357, 359

take many different forms. For the sake of space, we will examine three basic arguments. Jesus was a creature. Jesus never called himself the Son of God. Allah can have no partners.

### **Jesus was a Creature**

Consistent with the ancient Arian heresy is the Muslim belief that Jesus was a created being. "The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be': and he was" (Koran 3:59). Ali (1997:142, n. 398) commented, "In Allah's sight Jesus was as dust just as Adam was or humanity is. The greatness of Jesus arose from the Divine command 'Be': for after that he was – more than dust – a great spiritual leader and teacher." *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (2000:2.175) rationalized,

Therefore, He Who created Adam without a father or a mother is able to create 'Isa, as well, without a father. If the claim is made that 'Isa is Allah's son because he was created without a father, then the same claim befits Adam even more. However, since such a claim regarding Adam is obviously false, then making the same claim about 'Isa is even more false.

The Bible, however, argues that Jesus was not a created being, but was God's Word in the beginning of creation, who was with God, and was God (Jn. 1:1). That because Jesus is God, "All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16). The concept "Son of God" has to do with Jesus' divine nature, which cannot be created, and has nothing to do with the naturalistic understanding of sonship and fatherhood that Muhammad, *et al.*, wish to impose upon the Biblical description of both God and Jesus due to an intentional or unintentional ignorance of what Scripture has to say about both.<sup>29</sup>

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29 Another typical argument presented by deniers of Jesus' sonship or deity is that the Scriptures have somehow been "corrupted" by wily and nefarious scribes of the past (see Yahiya Emerick's pamphlet (n.d.) "Who is Jesus?" for a classic example of misrepresentation of the fact concerning the Bible). That argument, though, is invalid, once a full understanding of the process of textual transmission and the subsequent criticism of the texts is considered. Not only do the informed realize what is in the biblical corpus with better than 99% accuracy (Robertson, 1925:21-22), if there is any question about an expression, translation, or interpretation of a specific passage, all one needs to do is consult the manuscript evidence. There is not one doctrinal belief effected by any variant found in either the Old or New Testaments. Not one! See Wallace, 2011:20, 54-55; Bruce, 2000 reprint: 19-20; Greenlee, 1995:61; Black, 1994:56; Geisler & Nix, 1986:474; Barclay, 1972:139; Kenyon, 1958:55.

## Jesus never called himself the Son of God

A second argument utilized by those who deny Jesus' Sonship is either an admission of agnosticism or simply duplicity. Jesus never claimed to be God's Son, so goes the argument, therefore, he could not be God's Son. Muslim apologist Reza Aslan (2006:136) recently repeated this line of reasoning when he wrote, "Nor, by the way, did Jesus call himself 'Son of God', another title that others seem to have ascribed to him." Mufassir (1993:8-9) argued similarly by appealing to the Koran as the final authority on the subject, rather than by making an objective appeal to the Bible. Citing Koran 5:78, 119-120, and 9:30, Mufassir wrote, "The Koran repeatedly emphasizes the fact that Jesus was a human being," and goes on to condemn the Trinity by citing Koran 4:171.

While it is conceded that several diverse characters all alluded to Jesus' Sonship, which included Satan (Matt. 4:3, 6; Lk. 4:3, 9), some demons (Matt. 8:29; Mk. 3:11; Lk. 4:41), a crowd of passers-by hurling insults at Jesus on the cross (Matt. 27:40), a Roman centurion (Matt. 27:54; Mk. 15:39), Mark (Mk. 1:1), Gabriel (Lk. 1:25), John the Baptist (Jn. 1:31), Nathaniel (Jn. 1:49), Martha (Jn. 11:27), John the Beloved (Jn. 20:31), and God the Father (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mk. 1:11; 9:7; Lk. 3:22), Jesus also claimed to be God's Son. The following citations are evidence of that fact.

And the high priest stood up and said to Him, "Do you make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said it *yourself*" (Matt. 26:63-64a).

He trusts in God; let Him deliver *Him* now, if He takes pleasure in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God' (Matt. 27:43).

And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am" (Lk. 22:70).

For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (Jn. 3:17-18).

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live (Jn. 5:25).

If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? (Jn. 10:35-36).

But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it" (Jn. 11:4).

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God" (Jn. 19:7).

Between what others said about Jesus, combined with what Jesus said about himself, the biblical evidence is overwhelming. Jesus claimed to be the Son of God.

## Allah can have no partners

The essential doctrine that all of Islam is centred is known as *Tawheed* (sometimes spelled *Tauhid*) or the strict belief in one God. So essential is the belief that a person's very salvation depends upon it. "The most fundamental ingredient of Islamic faith is belief in the oneness of God," wrote Quasem (2011:31). "Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him" (Koran, 112:1-4). Advocating that anything or anyone might be associated with Allah is considered an act of *Shirk* or the most egregious sin that anyone could commit.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, conceding that Jesus is God's Son is tantamount to concluding that Jesus shared God's nature, which is blasphemy.<sup>31</sup>

Aside from the fact that the Bible makes it clear that Jesus is the Son of God, as seen above, several fallacies have been utilized by Muhammad and his followers to prevent them from accepting what the Bible, as well as Jesus, has said about the subject. First, while Christians believe it is true that there is only one God, nowhere in Scripture is belief in one God a prerequisite to salvation. Otherwise, demons could be redeemed, since they believe in one God as well (James 2:19). Yet, that is not possible, since the destiny of the demonic is eternal fire (Matt. 25:41), not eternal salvation.

Second, just because Jesus is God's Son does not mean he is a "partner". Since God cannot be parted, fragmented, or dismembered, and since Jesus' Sonship denotes his divine nature, they both share the same essence of being which makes them what God is. To discuss God as a being is different from discussing God as a person, since there is only one essence ascribed to be God, but three persons that manifest that essence. To confuse the two is to confuse the discussion and miss what is really being talked about when God is the subject.

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30 "Because the sin of *Shirk* denies the very purpose of man's creation, it is to God the gravest of sins; the unforgiveable sin" (Phillips, 1990:27).

31 Ali, 1997:40, n. 119.

Third, although Jesus was begotten does not necessitate a natural explanation, given that Jesus' coming to be was a supernatural event. Luke's Gospel tells us, "And the angel [Gabriel] answered and said to her [Mary], 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God' (Lk. 1:35). The fallacy of ascribing the natural to the supernatural seems to be directly linked to the Muslim acceptance of the apocryphal "forgery", the *Gospel of Barnabas*.<sup>32</sup> Therein, not only is Jesus not the Son of God, he is not the Messiah, nor was he God incarnate.<sup>33</sup> In fact, Muhammad is revealed to be the Messiah and Saviour of all humanity, as predicted by none other than Jesus himself!<sup>34</sup>

Finally, Jesus taught that the most "egregious" sin that anyone could commit was to speak against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:32), not some misunderstanding about God's relationship with His Son. "Blasphemy" (Luke 12:10) against the Holy Spirit had to do with attributing the works of the Spirit to the works – and in this particular case the exorcising of a demon – of Satan. Since Muhammad and the Muslims are "required" to believe the Bible as they claim, they would know this.<sup>35</sup>

### Spirit of Anti-Christ

"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 Jn. 4:15). John's statement is closely tied to an earlier one made by him, in the same chapter, where usage of the term "confession" is part of an overall testing of the spirits associated with false prophets who have rejected the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh (vv. 1-2). "This denial", wrote Glenn Barker (*Expositor's*, 1981:12.340), "makes them not only precursors of Gnosticism but also of Docetism." Islam is tainted with both Gnostic

32 See Sale, 1880:xii.

33 See Lonsdale and Ragg's *The Gospel of Barnabas* (2010). Denial of Jesus' sonship (Chapters Intro, 53, 70, 93, 97, 138, 206, 220, 222). Denial of Jesus as Messiah (Chapters 42, 82, 96, 97, 191, 198, 206, 208). Denial of Jesus' deity (Chapters 198, 206).

34 "Jesus answered: 'The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendor. God said: 'Wait Mohammed; for thy sake I will to create paradise, the world, and a great multitude of creatures, whereof I make thee a present, insomuch that whoso shall bless thee shall be blessed, and who shall curse thee shall be accursed. When I shall send thee into the world I shall send thee as my messenger of salvation, and thy word shall be true, insomuch that heaven and earth shall fail, but thy faith shall never fail.' Mohammed is his blessed name.

Then the crowd lifted up their voices, saying: 'O God send us thy messenger: O Mohammed, come quickly for the salvation of the world!'" (*The Gospel of Barnabas*, Chapter 97).

35 See M.M. Ali 2012:147.

and Docetic points of view.<sup>36</sup> According to John, the person who refuses to “confess” that Jesus has come in the flesh, and by implication that Jesus is the Son of God, exhibits a spirit of anti-Christ (v. 3). It is a spirit that seemed to permeate society, as there were already “many” anti-Christes walking about during John’s day (1 Jn. 2:18). It is also a spirit that John concluded would lead a person to deny God the Father through a denial of Jesus as the Christ (1 Jn. 2:23). To recognize the identity of one was to recognize the identity of the other. To reject Jesus as the Christ or the Son was to reject God as the Father and that regardless of how sweet sounding the person might be or regardless of his official capacity. As F.F. Bruce (1970:105) wrote, “No matter how charming, how plausible, how eloquent the prophets in question may be, the test of their witness to Christ and His truth is the test by which they must be judged.”

The “witness” of Muhammad and the Muslims by now should be evident. Although they lauded Jesus in some respects as a great prophet, that is where the best of the accolades end. Muhammad and his followers outright rejected Jesus as the Son of God (Koran, 3:59; 9:30; 43:59). To “confess” otherwise was an act of *Shirk* or blasphemy of the worst monstrosity (Koran, 19:88-89). Instead of confessing Jesus’ sonship, which would have been an admission of his divine nature,<sup>37</sup> Muhammad chose to reject that confession and follow the understanding of anti-Christ thought. The only thing lacking in such a condemnation is the fact that Muhammad was not a part of the Christian community that “went out” from it (1 Jn. 2:19). Instead, “Muhammad leads his followers to the portal [of “glorious perfection and Divine majesty”, found only in Jesus], but he fails to open the door” (Zwemer, 2010:247). He, in fact, put a lock on it, whereby neither he, nor they, could enter it.

## 5. Conclusion

After perusing through the data, we may now answer our three questions in the introduction and draw a definitive conclusion. First, does Muhammad’s theology comport with either Old or New Testament theology? The answer is absolutely not. Yahweh is not Allah, Allah is not Yahweh, when biblical, and Islamic definitions are understood, and that despite the crossover in

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36 See Schmidt, 2013:81; Armstrong, 1991:159; Rodinson, 1971:159; Gibb, 1955:85, 97, 101-102, 107.

37 See Barth, 2010 reprint:IV.2.42-ff., 69-ff.; Oden, 2006: 2.58; Frame, 2002:658, 660; Baker, 1996:411; 660; Grudem, 1994:547; Chafer, 1993:1.382-ff.; Hodge, 1977 reprint:1.471; Cullmann, 1963:270; Calvin, 1960:1.149; Berkhof, 1941:91-92.



terminology whereby some Arabic Jews and Christians used the term Allah when speaking about God.

Second, is Muhammad the prophet spoken of by Moses in Deuteronomy 18? The answer is absolutely not. Muhammad's occultic inclination excludes him from positive association with that prophet. Instead, given the testimony of Jesus and careful exegesis of the relevant biblical texts, "the Prophet" whom Moses spoke of was Jesus himself.

Third, who did Muhammad believe Jesus to be? Was he God's Son, incarnate in the flesh, or a mere man? According to Muhammad and his followers, Jesus was nothing more than a mere man and not the Son of God at all. Such a confession, however, was not only antithetical to Jesus' confession, but the confession of others as well, whether they were Christian and/or non-Christian.

Therefore, based on the evidence, Muhammad was not a prophet of God after the order of the biblical prophets. Instead, based upon what he believed about himself, as well as what he believed about the biblical prophets, which included Jesus, coupled with Islamic history and legend spoken about Muhammad in contrast to the warnings issued in both the Old and New Testaments, Muhammad doesn't fit the description of a true biblical prophet.

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