

Core Curriculum

4 Prophethood in Islam

4.8 **Jesus and Mary in Islam**

INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to our channel! If one were to think about the two most famous men in history, few would contest that they are the Prophets Muhammad (s) and Jesus (as). They are the most famous as they were the most influential figures in human history. Just by doing a google search, you will see that in the English language searches, Jesus has 29.5 million searches a month along side the Prophet Muhammad (s) who is searched 13.6 million times a month.

If we speak about women, no one can doubt that Mary (as) is the most famous and influential woman in the history of the Western world.

But much of the perception that exists concerning Jesus, especially in the Christian world, is that of his divinity. In other words, Jesus is not only the son of God, but he is also God in so far as he is the second person of the divine trinity, namely the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This thus makes Mary “the mother of God” according to this understanding.

Islam, which is the world’s second largest religion, does not believe in any of this. For Islam, Jesus is neither the son of God nor is he God. Islam does not believe God has sons and it does not believe in the trinity. God is absolutely One and Jesus is simply a Prophet of God who was created by the the Almighty. In this lesson, we will look into the place of Jesus in

Islam as well as his mother, Mary.

BODY OF TEXT

O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, "Three" [Trinity]; desist - it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs. (Chapter 4, verse 171 of the Holy Qur'an)

The Arabic rendering of Jesus is 'Īsā and the Arabic rendering of Mary is Maryam. According to Islam, Jesus is not God, which means that Mary is not the mother of God either. Furthermore, Islam also denies the concept of the Trinity. The Trinity is the belief that God has three persons, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Islam believes that God is wholly One, in other words, He is undivided and has only One Person.

If Jesus is not God, then what is he? According to Islam, Jesus is a Prophet and Messenger of God. He is not only a Prophet, but he is one of the greatest Prophets of the religion of Islam.

If Jesus was not God, it naturally follows that Mary was not the mother of God. Even though Islam does not consider either of them as divine, it still has the highest respect for them. About Jesus, the Qur'an says the following:

And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as guidance and instruction for the righteous. (Qur'an chapter 5, verse 46)

As a Prophet and a Muslim (a Muslim is someone who submits himself or

herself to God), Jesus guided people on to the Straight Path to Allah. The straight path to Allah means worshiping God in His Oneness and Unity, avoiding sins, having good moral character (akhlaq) with people and holding firmly to the unity of the Muslim community.

Jesus taught people through the Injīl or Gospel which was revealed to him by Allah. As Muslims (and here we mean by those who follow the shahāda), we believe the Injīl to have been a divinely revealed Book, however, we do not believe it remained unchanged but its message was, over time, changed. Belief in Jesus and Mary, as well as in the original Injīl, is part of Islamic doctrine and without belief in them, one cannot be a Muslim.

Similarly, the Qur'an holds Mary in very high status:

And [mention] when the angels said, "O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds. O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow [in prayer]." (Qur'an, 3:42-43)

Mary was not like other women. Like an exalted Prophet of God, the Angel Gabriel had revealed himself to her communicating the message of Allah to her directly. Although most Muslims do not consider her a prophetess, due to her high status with God, a minority of Muslims historically believed that she was indeed a prophetess.

Islam and Christianity, the Qur'an and the Bible agree on many things when it comes to Jesus. However, despite this, there are still some major differences. They include the following:

1. The divinity of Jesus insofar as God being Jesus or Jesus being part of a Divine Trinity. Islam rejects this belief.
2. The crucifixion and resurrection of the Christ. The majority of Muslims interpret Chapter 4, verse 157 of the Quran as meaning that Jesus was never crucified. The Qur'an says:

And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the

son of Mary, the messenger of Allah ." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.

1. Islam believes that Jesus did not abolish Judaic law or its ritual practices. He merely fulfilled it by reviving the spiritual and moral implications of the law. For example, Jesus explained that it was not enough for adultery to be banned, lustful looking at another person was also adultery, although in the heart. According to Islam, Jesus taught that outer practice had to be accompanied by inner sincerity, and not that outer practice was to be abolished.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh