

Muhammad vs. Jesus:
The Debate on the Trinity
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Introduction: Do Muslims or Christians Worship the One True God?

I. Islamic Monotheism.

A. Even before Islam was established, tribes in Arabia acknowledged Allah (i.e., the god) as the chief god (e.g., Hubal - moon god) among many idols in Al-Kaba of Mecca.

“All was the chief god among the approximately 360 idols in Kaaba in Mecca... Allah is a contraction of Al-liah, the name of the moon god [Hubal] of the local Quraysh, Muhammad’s tribe... Allah’s symbol was a crescent moon, which Muhammad carried over into Islam. This symbol is seen on Mosques, minarets, shrines, and Arab flags.”

– David Hunt, In Defense of the Faith, pp. 37-38.

– See also Zwemer, Sameul M. The Moslem Doctrine of God. American Tract Society, 1905.

“As the chief deity in Mecca, Hubal was seemingly considered identical with Allah.”

– AG Lundin, Myths of the Peoples of the World (Moscow), 2:606.

B. Muhammad’s mission was not to introduce Allah as a new god, but to convince the Arab people to forsake all lesser deities and idols for “the god” (Allah).

Muhammad taught: *“Bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone with associates, and disavow al-Lat and al-Uzza [idols], and renounce rivals.”*

– Ibn Ishaq. The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq’s Sirat Rasul Allah. p. 115.

“Truly! Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him (Alone). This is the Straight Path.”

– **SURAH 3:51**, The Noble Quran (NOTE: All quotations are taken from “the Noble Quran”).

C. Muslims believe Islam is the *purest* form of monotheism (i.e., the belief in one god) of all religions.

“And your Ilah (God) is one Ilah (God - Allah), La ilaha illa Huwa (there is none who has the right to be worshiped but He), the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.” – **SURAH 2:163**

“Say (O Muhammad): “He is Allah, (the) One.” – **SURAH 112:1**

*“The Unity (i.e., oneness - ML) is the distinguishing characteristic of Islam. **This is the purest form of monotheism**, i.e., the worship of Allah Who was neither begotten nor beget nor had any associates with Him in His Godhead. Islam teaches this in the most unequivocal terms.”*

– Ajjijola, Alhaj A.D. The Essence of Faith in Islam, Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Publications, Ltd. 1978, p. 55.

II. Muslims Charge Christians That the Doctrine of the Trinity Is Blasphemy.

A. Muhammad condemned the doctrine of the Trinity (or Godhead) as polytheism (the belief in three separate gods).

“Surely, disbelievers are those who said: ‘Allah is the third of the three (in a Trinity).’ But there is no Ilah (god) (none who has the right to be worshiped) but One Ilah (God - Allah). And if they cease not from what they say, verily, a painful torment will befall on the disbelievers among them.” – SURAH 5:73

1. The unforgivable sin in Islam is “the sin of the shirk” or assigning “partners” (gods) with Allah:

“Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners (in worship) with Him, but He forgives whom He wills sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, has indeed strayed far away.” – SURAH 4:116; See also SURAH 18:110

a. Muslims charge Christians with setting up “partners” or two additional gods in addition to Allah (God) (e.g., Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit).

B. Some Muslims charge (due to the influence of Catholicism), that Christians believe the Trinity consists of the Father, Son, and Mary (“Mother of God”).

There are Muslims who charge that Christians have “made Mary a goddess, Jesus her son, and God almighty her husband.” – Shorrosh, Dr. Anis A. *Islam Revealed: A Christian Arab’s View of Islam*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988., p. 114.

1. Such a charge stems, in part, from the false teaching of Catholicism:

- In 431 A.D. Mary was given the title “Mother of God” by the Council of Ephesus.
- This is also taught today in “Catechism of the Catholic Church” where it also states that Mary “is clearly the mother of the members of Christ” (p. 251) & “Queen over all things” (p. 252).

Note: Such an elevated status of Mary is unwarranted having no basis in the Scriptures: Mary was “blessed among women” (Luke 1:42), not among god and goddesses!

2. The Quran gives an account of how Jesus refused to teach people to worship him and his mother Mary:

“And (remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): ‘O Isa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary)! Did you say unto men: ‘Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah? He will say: ‘Glory be to You!...’” – SURAH 5:116

C. Muslims reject the teaching that Jesus was God’s “only begotten Son” (John 3:16)

(or Son of God) on the basis that God does not physically beget or create another God.

1. The Quran plainly states that Allah does not beget.

“He begets not, nor was He begotten” - SURAH 112:3

2. Muslims misconstrue the biblical phrase “only begotten Son” (John 3:16) with a literal, physical, or fleshly sense of God begetting or producing a son.

“He [God] does not beget because begetting is an animal act. It belongs to the lower animal act of sex. We do not attribute such an act to God... God cannot create another God... He cannot create another uncreated.” – Ahmed Deedat in a debate with Anis A. Shorrosh cited in Shorrosh, Dr. Anis A. *Islam Revealed: A Christian Arab’s View of Islam*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988., p. 114.

3. Muhammad flatly rejected the notion that Jesus was God’s Son:

“And the Jews say: ‘Uzair (Ezra) is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: Messiah is the son of Allah. That is their saying with their mouths, resembling the saying of those who disbelieved afore time. Allah’s Curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the truth!” – **SURAH 9:30**

D. Muhammad taught that Jesus was not God and did not share in God’s divinity.

“Surely, in disbelief are they who say that Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary)...”
– **SURAH 5:17**

1. Muhammad even claimed that Jesus had forbade people from worshiping him and that He directed people to Allah:

“Surely, they have disbelieved who say: ‘Allah is the Messiah [Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)].’ But the Messiah [Isa (Jesus)] said: ‘O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.’...” – **SURAH 5:72**

2. The Quran teaches that Jesus was just a man, created from the dust just as Adam was (**SURAH 3:59**).

III. The Unified, Compound Oneness of God in the Old Testament Scriptures.

A. Muslims (and Jews) contend that God is *absolutely alone as only one person* according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

1. Many Muslims respect the Old Testament Scriptures and believe that the Quran is an extension of the Bible itself as the Quran teaches (**SURAH 29:46**).

2. Muslims will therefore use O.T. Scripture to make their case that God is absolutely alone as only one person.

B. Is God absolutely alone as only one person according to the O.T.?

Note: There are nine different Hebrew words in the Scriptures that can be translated as “one.”
– See Englishman’s Concordance.

Note: Sometimes words such as man or woman are translated “one,” but such words are never applied to God in the Bible, since God is not a man or a woman (Num. 23:19).

1. If God is only one person, as Muslims claim, which word from the Scriptures could they apply to God?
2. Only one of the nine Hebrew words that can be translated as “one” can refer to “complete solitary” or being absolutely alone (i.e., YACHIYD [yaw-kheed'] e.g., Gen. 22:2; Judg. 11:34; Ps. 68:6).
 - a. *Nowhere in Scripture can this word be found ever applying to God!*
 - b. This is because God is not absolutely alone as only one person.

C. God has a unified oneness about Him.

* The Hebrew word ECHAD (ekh-awd') teaches us much about God!

1. Sometimes ECHAD is used with reference to *the number one or quantity of one* (e.g., Gen. 2:21), but when it does it is never in reference to God.
2. ECHAD is often translated “one” to denote *a unified or compound oneness* (e.g., Gen. 3:22; 11:6; 34:16; 2 Chron. 30:12; Ezra 2:64; Jer. 32:29).

Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be **one** [ECHAD] flesh.

3. **ECHAD is the word used in this declaration of the unity of God:**
Deut 6:4 *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is **one** [ECHAD] LORD:*

D. God is referred to in the singular as well as in the plural in Scripture.

1. Singular nouns and verbs are used in reference to God or when He speaks to emphasize that He is *the one and only God* (e.g., Deut. 32:39).
2. Yet, we also find **plural** nouns and verbs to refer to God, the most common one being the Hebrew word ELOHIYM (el-o-heem') (a plural form of deity or god):

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning **God** [ELOHIYM] created the Heaven and the earth.

Note: ELOHIYM is translated over 400 times in the Scriptures as “gods” (plural!) (e.g., Gen. 31:30; Exod. 12:12).

Josh 24:16 (NASB) “And the people answered and said, ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other **gods**’ [ELOHIYM]

a. **God spoke in the first person plural when creating us!**

Gen. 1:26a “*And God said, Let us make man in **Our** image, after **Our** likeness*” (See also Gen. 3:22; 11:7-8; Isa. 6:8).

3. Two divine persons are both called God in the same passage in many passages of Scripture (e.g., Gen. 19:24; Ps. 45:6-7; Isa. 48:12-17; Hos. 1:6-7).

III. Christians’ Belief in the One Triune God.

A. Christians are not polytheists (people who believe in many gods), but are monotheists, believing in only one God.

Mark 12:29 (NASB) Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! **The Lord our God is one Lord**;
1 Cor 8:4 (NASB) Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that **there is no God but one**.

B. Christians believe that the nature or essence of the one God (i.e., “Godhead”) is comprised of three Persons.

Acts 17:29 (KJV) Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the **Godhead** (*Divine Nature - NKJV*) is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

1. The Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit together comprise God.
2. Each Person is referred to as God because each one is God by nature or essence (John 6:27; Col. 2:9; Acts 5:3-4).

Example: One God in three persons is like $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ (1 to the third power), not $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$ gods!

3. God would not be God to exclude any one of the 3 persons that make up God! (e.g., See **Triangle Symbol**).

a. The three Persons are united to comprise the One God, *undivided and indivisible*.

Example: Jesus, even while on earth, was God in the flesh or the “I AM” (John 8:24, 58). Yet, Jesus *always was accompanied* by the Father and the Holy Spirit (e.g., John 10:37-38; Luke 4:1).

C. While all three Persons comprise who God is, each person is *distinguishable* from the other, **coexisting simultaneously**.

Matt 3:16-17 (NASB) 16 And after being baptized, **Jesus** went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending as a dove, and

coming upon Him, 17 and behold, **a voice out of the heavens**, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

IV. Equality Among All Three Persons of the Triune God (i.e., Godhead).

A. Each Person of the Godhead is *equally Divine* (i.e., possessing all attributes of God).

1. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are **just as much** God as the Father is!

2. Jesus "*thought it not robbery to be **equal** with God*" (Phil. 2:6).

John 10:30 "I and my Father are one."

Col 2:9 (NKJV) For in Him dwells **all the fullness** of the Godhead bodily;

a. Jesus confessed to be the Christ, the Son of God, even God Himself or the "I AM" (John 8:58; See also Mat. 16:15-17; 26:63-64; Luke 4:16-21; John 4:25-26; 5:18-23; 8:24; 10:36-38; 17:1-5).

3. Jesus is God's "*only begotten Son*" not by creation (for Jesus is eternal - John 8:56-58), but by a special Divine relationship from all eternity (John 1:1-3).

a. "Begotten" (John 3:16) does not mean procreation or physical birth (as in Mat. 1:2; Gk *gennaō*), but instead **one and only of a kind, unique** (from Gk word *monogenes*).

b. Unlike any other, Jesus is God's one and only image of Himself, the "*brightness of His glory and the express image of His person*" (Heb. 1:3).

4. Only Jesus, the Messiah did God designate as His Son (Heb. 1:5; Ps. 2:7-9; 2 Sam. 7:14), enthroning Him as King.

5. Jesus received worship because He was God (e.g., Mat. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38).

6. Equality of the Father and the Son is seen in the salutations of New Testament epistles (e.g., Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; etc.).

7. *Each person of the Triune God is emphasized equally in prayer.*

2 Cor 13:14 (NASB) The grace of the Lord **Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit**, be with you all.

a. Each person must be equally Divine, for if this was not the case, they would not be grouped together with God, each imparting a blessing.

D. Each person is equally God, yet each is of a different rank by "the Divine order."

1. Jesus submitted to the Father's will and obeyed His commands (e.g., John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 14:31): *How then could they be equal?*

2. According to the “Divine Order” each has a different position in the hierarchy of God.

1 Cor 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and **the head of Christ is God.**

3. Just as man and woman are equal in Christ (Gal. 3:28), so also are the Father and the Son equal (John 5:18; 8:58; 10:30).

a. The different rank a woman has does not make her any less of a Christian (or human for that matter).

b. Neither does the different rank of Christ make Him any less Deity!

4. **The Father has first rank, then the Son, and then the Holy Spirit (e.g., John 16:13-15), yet each are equally God.**

5. The different rank that each person holds simply means that there are different roles and responsibilities that each one fulfills.

Example: (1) Husband and Wife: Different rank, different roles and responsibilities (Eph. 5:23; 1 Tim. 5:8 / Eph. 5:22; Gen. 2:18; 1 Tim. 5:14).

6. In the case of the Triune God, each Person of the Godhead is distinguishable from the other by the different role that each one fulfills.

a. God the Father is “*the Father of our spirits*” (Heb. 12:9).

b. God the Son is *our Savior* who humbled Himself to die on the cross for our sins (Phil. 2:7-8).

c. God the Holy Spirit is the *Revealer of Truth* (John 16:13).

V. The Unified Work of the Triune God.

A. The Trinity worked together as a team in the Creation (Gen. 1:2, 26-27; Job 33:4; John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

B. The Trinity works together as a team to provide our salvation (Mat. 28:18-20; Eph. 2:17-19; Titus 3:4-7).

Conclusion: God Is Three Persons, Yet One God, for Nothing Is Impossible with God!

Luke 1:35, 37 (NASB) 35 And the angel 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**... 37 "*For nothing will be impossible with God.*"

