

And exalted is the Majesty Of our Lord: He has Taken neither a wife nor a son.

Surah (Jinn) 72:3

Both Muslims and Christians acknowledge that Jesus was sent by God as the promised Messiah. They affirm that Jesus is God's Word and "the spirit from Him" (Surah 4:171; John 1:1, 18). However, many Muslim friends see Christians as committing shirk — associating a partner with God, by calling Jesus the Son of God. In their view, such a belief is blasphemy.

In their discussions they quote the Quranic verses, "How can He have a son when He hath no consort?" (Surah 6:101). "He has taken neither a wife nor a son" (Surah 72:3).

They accuse Christians of believing that God is "the third of three" and warn: "Say not Three . . . For Allah is one God" (Surah 4:171).

They repeat that Allah will ask Jesus: "Didst thou say unto men: "Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?" Jesus will reply, "Never said I to them aught except what thou didst command me: "Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord"" (Surah 5:116, 117).

In fact, what the Quran wants to say is that the Trinity is not Allah, Son and mother, and that Jesus was not the result of intercourse between God and Mary. Christians are just as horrified by the suggestion as any Muslim.

The Bible does not say that God took a wife and then had a son, Jesus. Nor does it present the idea of a Trinity that is made up of the Father, the Mother and the Son. Jesus never said that his mother was to be taken as God.

The Quran does not reject Jesus as the "Son of God" in the biblical sense; it is rejecting a false teaching which Christians also condemn. The phrase "Son of God" is never used in the Bible in the carnal sense.

Allahu akbar — God is greater . God is greater than the limits we place upon him. For us to create the belief that Jesus was the Son of God would indeed be the utmost blasphemy, but if Christ is the great means by which God chose to disclose himself to the people of this earth, who are we to tell God that he can't do things this way?

The Word of God. What Christians believe is that God has manifested himself in Jesus. The Quran confirms that God did something very special in sending Jesus, his Word, into this world. Why did God do such a thing? The Quran is not clear, but the Bible is, and it says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5: 19) We do not call a mere man God. In fact, the theology of Christ begins with God and similarly the work of Christ was the work begun by God.

He has revealed himself . In the Bible we see that in the past God spoke to our forefathers through His prophets and at last spoke to us

through Jesus, His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). God who is *al-Batin* — hidden, became *az-Zaher* — manifest: in Christ (John 1:18). Many people, like the prophets Moses and Elijah, wanted to know God, but only had a verbal encounter with him. In Jesus, we see the full possibility of knowing God. It is not merely a message about God, but full communion with him. Jesus said: "he who has seen me, has seen the Father" (John 14: 9). Why? Because, as the Scriptures say, "in Christ all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3a).

The unique sonship. Some friends try to reinterpret the concept of sonship rather than deny it. They quote references from the Bible where other people are addressed as son, or sons. They use these examples to show that the expression "Son of God" when spoken by Jesus about himself, or by others, meant no more in his case than it means in its application to others in Scripture. A Muslim writer, Deedat, for example, quotes several texts from the Bible in his booklet, *Christ in Islam*, to show that the expression, Son of God "was a metaphorical descriptive term, commonly used among the Jews." To conclude his argument, he adds that in the Bible, "God has sons by the ton" (on page 28).

Our response is that Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God in the same sense in

which all true believers are sons of God. One cannot overlook the many occasions when Jesus' unique Sonship is implied. For example:

"All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is, except the Father, or who the Father is, except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Luke 10:22).

Jesus said that everyone should honour him as the Son of God, even as they honour the Father. Why? Because, "The Father judges no one but has given all judgement to the Son, that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him" (John 5:22-23).

Furthermore, God the Father himself bore witness to him: "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3: 17; 17:5).

We cannot ignore the overwhelming witness of Scripture to Jesus' unique Sonship. God spoke through Jesus, not only as a prophet but as "the Son", through whom he made all things (Hebrews 1:3). We affirm that there is only one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: as an Arab Christian would say, "Bismil-ab wal-ibn war-ruhi-l-quddus, Allahu wahid!" — "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, one God!"

By Steven Masood, (used by permission)

All Biblical quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Published in Great Britain by Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.

Qur'anic reference is taken from 'The Holy Qur'an, English translation of the meanings and Commentary, Revised & edited by the Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA. King Fahad Holy Qur'an Printing Complex, Al-Madinah, Saudi Arabia, ed. 1990.



If thou wert in doubt as to what
We have revealed unto thee, then
ask those who have been
reading the Book from before
thee....
(Surah 10 verse 94)

GOD IS

