

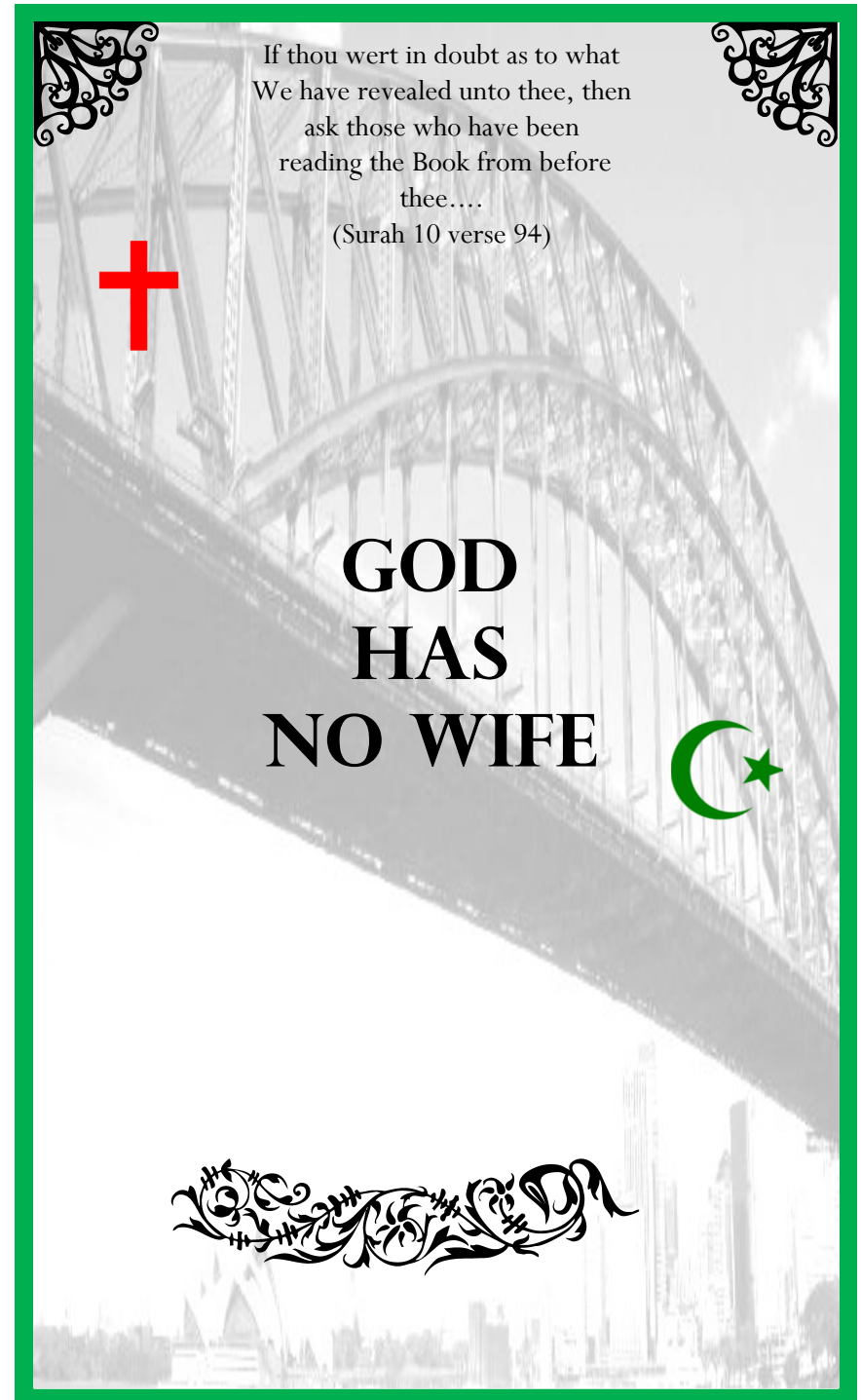
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*Published by John Saah, Allentown, PA
06/15*



In the time of Muhammad, the pagan Meccans believed that God had daughters. Also, according to Ibn Ishaq, there were Christians who believed that the Virgin Mary was God's mother and that Christ was the physical son of God. This is probably why, in the Quran, there are verses such as these:-

The Originator of the heavens and the earth! How can He have a child, when there is for Him no consort? ¹

And (we believe) that He — exalted be the glory of our Lord — hath taken neither wife nor son.²

Consequently, Muslims believe that words like father and son necessarily mean that the father must have a wife in order to have a son and they ask the question: *How could Jesus be the son of god when God has no wife?*

Can God have a Wife? Most Muslims do not appreciate the fact that a Christian does not believe in this type of sonship regarding Christ Jesus. The Bible nowhere speaks of God having a wife: there is not the least suggestion of a sexual relationship between God and any of his creatures. Such an idea is as utterly blasphemous and repulsive to Christians as it is to Muslims. Christians will be deeply horrified and grieved to learn that this is the view that Muslims have of their innermost faith. Obviously there has been a misunderstanding.

Father and Son When Muslims come to realise this, they then ask: *Why use the term "Son of God" when it can lead to misunderstandings?*

Would it be wise to abandon the use of a term that had Christ's full approval? Jesus said to his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus' response was, "Blessed are you, Si-

[15] John 1: 14

[16] John 1: 1-2

[17] Qur'an 3: 45

[18] Romans 1: 4

[19] John 5: 23

[20] John 3: 36

[21] John 3: 17

[22] John 3:16

[23] Romans 5: 8

[24] E.g. Isaiah 53: 10,12.

[25] Psalms 2: 12

[26] John 5: 22

God cares about you and me "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" ²². "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" ²³.

According to the prophecies made before Christ Jesus came on earth, he had to sacrifice his sinless life for our sins ²⁴. Being executed did not mean that he was a failure. If he had not both died and risen, he would not have been the Messiah.

We urge you not to spurn His Love. Heed what King David said beforehand about him: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for His wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him" ²⁵.

Why? "The Father judges no-one, but has entrusted all judgement to the Son" ²⁶;

(Steven Masood)

All Bible quotations are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. Quranic quotations are from "The Meaning of the Glorious Quran", trans. Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall (Karachi: Taj company, n.d.)

References

- [1] Qur'an 6: 101
- [2] [2] Qur'an 72: 3
- [3] [3] Matthew 16: 15,16, 18. [4]
- [4] Qur'an 111: 1
- [5] Qur'an 2: 177
- [6] Qur'an 3; 7; 13: 39; 43:3
- [7] Qur'an 6:93; 42:8
- [8] Luke 1: 34-35
- [9] Abu-l'Abbas Ahmad ibn-Jabir al-Baladhuri, The Origins of the Islamic State, trans. Philip Khuri Hitti (Beirut: Khayats, 19660, p.99
- [10] John 8: 58.

mon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my father in Heaven" ³.

The words father and son need not be construed in a literal way, otherwise we would be forced to draw some strange conclusions from these examples;-

Muhammad had an uncle whose name was *Abdul Uza*, but in the Quran he is called *Abu Lahab* — the father of a flame. Does this mean that he gave birth to a flame? ⁴ A wayfarer is called, *Ibn as-sabeel* — son of the road. This does not mean that the road has a wife. ⁵

There are many other similar examples, such as: *Om ul-Kitab* — the mother of the book ⁶, *Om ul-Qurah* — the mother of villages ⁷, Muhammad's cousin Ali was called *Abu Turab* — the father of dust. A disciple of Muhammad was named *Abu Hurairah* — the father of a cat, because he was very fond of cats.

Even today it is quite common, particularly in eastern societies, for elderly men and women to call young people "my son" or "my daughter", even though they are not their real sons and daughters. Just as one understands these examples with common sense, we ask Muslims to interpret Bible passages about Jesus the Messiah without assuming a physical relationship.

Jesus as the Son of God What is really meant by Jesus' claim to be the "Son of God"? When the angel gave glad tidings of a son to Mary, she said, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" ⁸

Jesus and Adam "There came to the Prophet (Muhammad)

two Christian monks from Najran. The prophet proposed Islam to them, and they replied, "We embraced Islam before thou didst." To this the Prophet replied, "Ye have told a lie. Three things keep you from Islam: pork eating, cross-worship, and the claim that Allah has a son." *Al-Hassan* adds that the Prophet was never too quick but always waited for Allah's command. Hence the text revealed by his Lord: "Verily Jesus is as Adam in the sight of Allah" ⁹.

What difference is there then between Jesus and Adam? Christ Jesus was no ordinary man; He existed before his birth. He said, "Before Abraham was born, I am" ¹⁰. On one occasion, Jesus asked the Jews, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They replied, "The Son of David." Jesus' response was, "If then David calls him 'Lord', how can he be his son?" ¹¹ Thus He clearly declared His superiority over His physical forefathers, including Adam.

According to the Scripture, He is the Second Adam.

"The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven" ¹²

What is God like? We must understand what He is like. Is He stern? Is He kind? Does He care about you and me? How may we find answers to these important questions? The Injil tells us, "No-one has seen God; but God's only Son, He who is

nearest to the Father's heart, he has made him known" ¹³. Thus, He reveals to us what God is like: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" ¹⁴. Therefore, learning about Jesus will help us to understand what God is like. "The word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" ¹⁵. This passage tells us that Jesus is the eternal Word of God. HE is the one who can reveal God to us because, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning" ¹⁶.

It is easy to understand that since God is eternal, then His Word must also be eternal. No one on this earth has been called the Word of God other than Jesus. If Muslims can accept the idea that the eternal God gave expression to His eternal Word as the eternal Quran, then why should it not be possible to accept that God gave expression to His eternal Word in the Christ? The Word becomes incarnate as the Son of Man. Why hesitate? The Quran 600 years later acknowledged that Jesus was the Word from God ¹⁷.

This is the evidence "(He) was declared with power to be Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead" ¹⁸. This testimony to the death, burial, resurrection and sonship of Christ Jesus has been with us right from the beginning.

". . . He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent Him" ¹⁹. If we disobey him we risk God's anger: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" ²⁰. However, ". . . God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" ²¹.