

# Blockbuster About Jesus Raises Passions

H A R U N   Y A H Y A

The famous actor-director Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ* has finally gone on general release after months of debate. Watched with enormous interest in the USA, the film caused some cinemas to assume the air of churches. Millions of Christians have queued to watch this important work about Jesus (peace be upon him), the corner stone of their beliefs.

One of the aspects most concentrated on by film critics is the way that this film is not pure "entertainment," unlike classic Hollywood movies. On the contrary, there are suffering and even torture in a great many scenes. Christians believe that Jesus was killed by the Romans by being crucified, and Mel Gibson shows what a dreadful form of torture crucifixion and the cruelty that went before it were.

## THE JEWISH REACTION

The greatest reaction to Mel Gibson's film came from Jews, and is indeed still doing so. Why is that? The answer to that question lies in the history of Christianity as described in the Bible.

According to the Bible, Jesus is the savior whom the Jews had been awaiting for centuries, in other words the Messiah. When he began to preach his message, however, he both called on the Jewish people to believe in God and also criticized the hypocrisy of various men of religion who enjoyed great prestige among the Jews. For that reason, although a large part of the Jewish people came to love Jesus, the men of religion in question had enormous hostility towards him and decided to set a trap to kill him. Eventually they decided to complain to the Romans, who ruled Palestine at the time. Appearing before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, they told him Jesus claimed to be a king whereas their king was Caesar, and was causing political unrest. Pilate questioned Jesus, and seeing that he had committed no crime wanted to set him free. The Jewish religious leaders insisted, however. They demanded he be crucified, and Pilate accepted that demand. Again according to the Bible, it was the Jews who were actually responsible for the decision to execute Jesus.

This led to some Christians harboring an enmity for the Jews throughout history. One of the reasons for the emergence of "anti-Semitism," or hatred of Jews, is that Christians regarded the Jews as "Christ-killers."

The reaction of Jewish leaders to Mel Gibson's film in recent months has been that the film has revitalized this concept, which has persisted for the last 2,000 years. In many scenes in the film the hatred and anger of some Jewish religious figures towards Jesus are depicted. This is an important point of conflict which divides Christianity and Judaism, which have a great deal in common, and even sets them in opposition to one another.

## THE TRUTH REVEALED IN THE QUR'AN

However, there is a most important truth behind the current debate over Jesus between Jews and Christians.

This truth is revealed in the Qur'an. According to the verses of Almighty God, Jesus was not actually put to death by being crucified. The Jews set such a trap for him, but God foiled that trap with a miracle and rescued Jesus, with someone else being crucified in his place. This truth is described in Surat an-Nisa':

**And [on account of] their saying: "We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Messenger of God." They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. (Qur'an, 4:157)**

The expression, **"they did not kill him and they did not crucify him"** reveals that Jesus was not killed and crucified. The next statement also contains very important information: the person crucified was not Jesus, but somebody else, although those who performed the crucifixion believed that he was Jesus. That was because this

person resembled Jesus, or was made to look like him. (Only God knows for certain.)

This information in the Qur'an has been the subject of debate between Christians and Muslims for hundreds of years. Christians say that Jesus was crucified before hundreds of witnesses, that the gospels and other Christian authors are agreed on this, and that this is a certain and attested truth believed in by millions over hundreds of years.

The fact is, however, that some Christians have also accepted the fact that Jesus was not crucified.

## **CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE NOT BELIEVED IN THE CRUCIFIXION**

Christians have provided different answers to the question of who it was who was crucified. These possessed a belief regarded as "heretical" according to Catholic doctrine. That movement is known as "Docetism."

The most important information about Docetism comes from the document *Adversus Haereses* (Against Heresies) written by the priest Irenaeus (115-202) at the end of the second century CE. Irenaeus refers to one Basilides, one of the representatives of this movement. According to Irenaeus, Basilides, a historian from Alexandria, insisted in his writings between 130 and 150 CE that Jesus had not been crucified. He maintained that somebody else, one Simon of Cyrene, had been crucified and that God had miraculously altered Simon's appearance to resemble that of Jesus, and that the Jews and Romans thus thought they were crucifying Jesus himself. Basilides even wrote that Jesus watched as Simon of Cyrene was being crucified, and that he then moved away and was raised alive into the presence of God. (William Smith, D., *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, Volume 1, p. 768)

Where might this information have reached Basilides from? According to the writings of a 3rd century Christian theologian, Clement of Alexandria (150-215), Basilides claimed to have received secret information. According to his account, an individual called Glaucius, who had acted as interpreter for Simon Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, learned this secret from Peter, and Basilides heard it from him. Basilides wrote a new "Bible," in which the gospels were corrected in the light of the information he had received from Glaucius.

Basilides was not the only Docetist to support this claim. In addition to him, various individuals or sects regarded as "heretics" by the Church also supported the view that Jesus was not crucified, but was replaced by someone bearing a resemblance to him. In *Was Christ Really Crucified?* The Christian writer Faris al-Qayrawani writes:

In the year A.D. 185 a sect of the descendant of the priests of Thebes who embraced Christianity claimed that "God forbids that Christ should be crucified. He was safely lifted up to heaven." Also in the year A.D. 370 a hermetic Gnostic sect that denied the crucifixion of Jesus taught that He "was not crucified but it seemed so to the spectators who crucified Him." Again, in the year A.D. 520 Severus, bishop of Syria, fled to Alexandria where he encountered a group of philosophers teaching that Jesus Christ was not crucified but that it only appeared so to the people who nailed Him on the cross. About A.D. 610 Bishop John, son of the governor of Cyprus, began to proclaim that Christ was not crucified but that it only seemed so to the spectators who crucified Him. (Faris al-Qayrawani, *Was Christ Really Crucified?*, Villach: Light of Life, 1994, p. 23)

As of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, however, when the absolute dominion of the Catholic Church was established, Docetists gradually disappeared just like the other movements regarded as "heretical." The teaching that Jesus was crucified confirmed its place as a fundamental dogma of the Christian world by being imposed by the Church.

Mankind only learned the truth about this subject by means of the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Mohammed. In the Qur'an God has revealed this about Jesus:

**"... They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them..." (Qur'an, 4:157)**

## **THE LIFE OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN**

According to the historical records of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Jesus lived approximately 2,000 years ago. He was a chosen messenger of God and is held in honor both in the world and the Hereafter. The Gospel of Mathew states that he was born either during the reign of Herod I or in a period of the regime change (4 BCE). According to the Gospel of Luke, he was born during the reign of Emperor Augustus (27 BCE-14 CE) when a census was being conducted in Judea (6 CE). Such information cannot be verified. However, experts analyzing various sources believe that Jesus was born around 7-6 BCE.

The true religion brought by Jesus, God's chosen Messenger who was rewarded with Paradise and special gifts, exists today. However, it does so in name only, for it has been tampered with and falsified. Likewise, the revelation given to Jesus by God exists only in name and certainly not in its original, for the Christian scriptures have been tampered with and altered. As we cannot acquire any true knowledge about Jesus from this source, we turn to the only source that can provide true information: the Qur'an, which God promised to protect until the Last Day. The Qur'an reveals much about Jesus' birth, life, examples of his encounters with other people, the situation of those living around him, and many other subjects. It also provides many examples of his efforts to invite the Jewish people to faith. The Qur'an relates the following words of Jesus:

**"I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you. I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. So fear God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord so worship Him. That is a straight path." (Qur'an, 3:50-51)**

Only a few Jews answered his call and became his followers. The Qur'an reveals the existence of these devout believers as follows:

**"When Jesus sensed unbelief on their part, he asked: 'Who will be my helpers for [the cause of] God?' The disciples said: 'We are God's helpers. We believe in God. Bear witness that we are Muslims. Our Lord, we believe in what You have sent down and have followed the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses.'" (Qur'an, 3:52-53)**

According to the New Testament, Jesus traveled to all corners of Palestine with his 12 disciples to call people to faith. On this journey, God allowed him to perform many miracles. He healed the sick and disabled, cured people suffering from leprosy, brought sight to those who had been blind from birth, and raised the dead. The Qur'an reveals these miracles in the verses below:

**"I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. I will create the shape of a bird out of clay for you and then breathe into it, and it will be a bird by God's permission. I will heal the blind and the leper and bring the dead to life, by God's permission. I will tell you what you eat and what you store up in your homes. There is a Sign for you in that if you believe." (Qur'an, 3:49)**

**Remember when God said: "Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown; and when I taught you the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you created a bird-shape out of clay by My permission, and then breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission; and healed the blind and the leper by My permission; when you brought forth the dead by My permission; and when I held back the Children of Israel from you, when you brought them the Clear Signs and those who did not believe said: 'This is nothing but downright magic.'" (Qur'an, 5:110)**

Jesus performed great miracles, and many people were impressed by them. However, he always stated that these miracles happened only by the will of God and, according to the Bible, he always told the people he healed: "Your faith has saved you." In response, the people praised the Lord when they saw his miracles:

Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and laid them at his feet. And he healed them. The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel. (Matthew 15:29-31)

Despite the increasing obstacles and, in particular among the people who suffered from oppression and cruelty, the number of believers began to rise. At the time, Jesus and his disciples had wandered through all of the towns and cities in the land. Meanwhile, the priests and scribes (teachers of the law) began to scheme and plot against Jesus, who had been telling them of the wrongs inherent in the traditions that they had promoted for years, reminding them of the deviations in the order they had established and calling them to believe only in God and to live only for him. (Luke 22:1-2, John 11:47-53)

Like all other Prophets, Jesus called his people to believe in God, to submit wholeheartedly to Him, to live for His good pleasure, to refrain from sin and evil, and to do good. He reminded them of life's impermanence and of death's proximity, and told them that they would have to answer for all of their deeds in the Hereafter. He called them to worship God alone and to fear and mind only Him. The Bible also contains much advice and educational material (*mashaal*) in this respect. According to the New Testament, Jesus advised those who were "short on faith," brought them the good news of God's imminent dominion, and asked them to seek God's forgiveness. This dominion is the rule which the Jews expected to be established when the Messiah arrived, a rule that would bring

them renewed faith and deliverance.

Jesus remained true to the Mosaic law (the commandments of the Torah) and reprimanded the Jews for straying from them or their hypocritical practice. According to the New Testament, he told them: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me" (John 5:46). Jesus called people to return to the Torah. The Gospel of Matthew records his order to abide by the Mosaic law ("the holy law"):

I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. (Matthew 5:17)

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least in the kingdom of Heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 5:19)

The Qur'an says the following about Jesus:

**[Jesus said,] "I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you. I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. So fear God and obey me." (Qur'an, 3:50)**

## **THE CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS OF THE CRUCIFIXION IN THE GOSPELS**

Present-day Christians believe in the Holy Book known as the New Testament. Many sections of this book call people to believe in and worship God in a most sincere manner and recommend excellent moral principles. In that respect, much of the New Testament is compatible with the Qur'an. Therefore Muslims and Christians have a great many beliefs in common and believe in the same moral values. This is an important truth which represents the groundwork for the establishment of dialogue and cooperation between the two faiths.

However, God also reveals in the Qur'an that two fundamental teachings in the New Testament are erroneous.

The first of these is the belief that Jesus was crucified and was a kind of "sacrifice" for all mankind.

The second is the claim that Jesus is the "son of God." (God is surely beyond that. Far exalted is He above having a son.)

One interesting point is that the statements in the gospels regarding these two beliefs are actually contradictory.

## **THE FOUR GOSPELS**

The New Testament contains four separate "gospels" which describe the life and ministry of Jesus. The first three of these, the gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke are to a large extent parallel to one another. They are thus described as the "synoptic" gospels in the Christian tradition. (The word "synoptic" means "taking the same point of view, and describes the perspectives of the first three gospels.) Despite being the second gospel in the Old Testament, the earliest is the gospel according to Saint Mark. It is accepted that Matthew and Luke used the gospel according to Saint Mark as a source when writing their own gospels, making a few additions to it.

The fourth gospel is that of John, and this is very different to the line taken by the synoptic gospels. Some events described by John do not appear in the synoptic gospels, or are described in a contrary sense. Moreover, one event described by John is described totally differently from the way it appears in the synoptic gospels.

## **THE CONTRADICTORY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CRUCIFIXION**

As we have already stated, it is revealed in the Qur'an that the person who was crucified was not Jesus but, by a miracle of God, someone resembling him was crucified and Jesus escaped the trap.

The gospels of the New Testament insist that it was Jesus who was crucified. However, their accounts of the crucifixion conflict with one another to an extent far greater than in any other subject.

There are enormous discrepancies on this subject, both among the synoptic gospels and that of John. The account which begins with the Last Supper of Jesus and the disciples and continues with his arrest and trial is the subject of considerable contradiction among the gospels. Let us now examine the major points of these

contradictions:

- o The synoptic gospels maintain that there was a "ceremony of bread and wine" at the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples. Yet John never mentions this. Instead, he makes an entirely different claim that the disciples washed his feet as an expression of love and respect.

- o There is a similar discrepancy with regard to Jesus' arrest by the Romans. According to the claim in the synoptic gospels, Judas Iscariot gave Jesus up by indicating him to the Romans. According to John, Jesus gave himself up. The replies given to Judas by Jesus are also described contradictorily: According to Matthew, he said to Judas, "Friend, do what you came for," whereas according to John there was no dialogue between the two.

- o There is also disagreement with regard to what the disciples did after Jesus' arrest. According to Matthew, the disciples all fled, with only Peter watching Jesus from afar. Mark describes the odd detail of how only "a young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment" watched Jesus, and how he was caught but freed himself from the garment and escaped. Like Matthew, Luke writes that only Peter watched Jesus. John, on the other hand, writes that Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus.

- o The answers to the question of who judged Jesus are also different. The synoptic gospels describe how he was tried by the Jewish Supreme Court (the Sanhedrin). According to John, Jesus was tried not by the Sanhedrin, but by Caiaphas, the high priest that time, and his father-in-law Annas.

- o Jesus' trial by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, is also described very differently. According to the synoptic gospels, Jesus made no reply to the accusations made against him by Pilate, merely saying "Yes, it is as you say," when asked if he was the king of the Jews. John, on the other hand, says that Jesus made a long reply to Pilate, in a detailed statement saying, "My kingdom is not of this world... But now my kingdom is from another place."

- o Who carried the cross is also unclear. The synoptic gospels write that a man named Simon of Cyrene carried it, whereas John maintains that Jesus carried it himself.

- o The robbers who were crucified alongside Jesus are also described differently, as are Jesus' last words.

- o The gospels also describe the timing of the crucifixion differently. According to the synoptic gospels, it was on the second day of Passover. According to John, it was one day before the Passover.

It is clear that these discrepancies reveal an interesting picture.

That is because these events, which comprise the last day in the life of Jesus, from the Last Supper to the crucifixion, took place, according to the Christian tradition, before hundreds of witnesses. With the exception of the Last Supper, attended only by the disciples, they must all have taken place before large crowds. According to the gospels, the arrest of Jesus took place before hundreds of Romans and Jews. Again according to the gospels, the crucifixion happened in Jerusalem, before the eyes of the populace.

So why is it that there are such discrepancies between the accounts of these events that happened in front of so many eye-witnesses?

The answer is clear: The reason for these discrepancies in the accounts of the crucifixion is that the story is based on an error. It was not Jesus who was crucified. God saved this blessed prophet from the trap laid for him.

## **JESUS DID NOT DIE, BUT IS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

The Qur'an reveals that the unbelievers devised a plot to take Jesus' life. However, they have failed, for the Qur'an relates:

**They [unbelievers] planned and God planned. But God is the best of planners. (Qur'an, 3:54)**

As the verses reveal, they plotted and moved to kill Jesus. However, their plot failed and they ended up killing a look-alike. During this event, God raised Jesus up to His presence:

**And [on account of] their saying, "We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Messenger of God." They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about**

him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. (Qur'an, 4:157)

The subsequent verse says the following about Jesus' ascension:

**God raised him up to Himself. God is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 4:158)**

The reality revealed in the verse is clear. Those who attempted to kill Jesus did not succeed. The expression "**but it was made to seem so to them**" reveals this fact. God showed them a look-alike and raised Jesus up to His presence. Our Lord also reveals that those who made that claim had no knowledge of the truth.

Jesus was not killed.

The truth, clearly indicated in the Qur'an and the hadiths (sayings) of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), is that Jesus is still alive and will return to Earth in the End Times.

## **JESUS WILL RETURN TO EARTH**

The subject of Jesus' return to earth has been of great interest in the world in recent weeks. In order to learn the truth of this matter, one of course needs to study the signs in the Qur'an.

There is important evidence in the Qur'an regarding the second coming of Jesus. This may be set out as follows:

**1. "... I will place the people who follow you above those who are unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection..."**

The first verse indicating Jesus' return is given below:

**When God said: "Jesus, I will take you back and raise you up to Me, and purify you of those who are unbelievers. And I will place the people who follow you above those who are unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection. Then you will all return to Me, and I will judge between you regarding the things about which you differed. (Qur'an, 3:55)**

God mentions that a group of Jesus' true followers will dominate the unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection. Jesus did not have many followers during his tenure on Earth and, with his ascension, the religion that he had brought degenerated rapidly. Over the next two centuries, those who believed in Jesus were oppressed because they had no political power. Therefore, we cannot say that the early Christians dominated the unbelievers in the sense indicated by the verse given above.

At present, Christianity is so far removed from its original state that it no longer resembles the religion taught by Jesus. In this case, "And I will place the people who follow you above those who are unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection" carries a clear message: There has to be a group of Jesus' followers who will exist until the Last Day. Such a group will emerge in his second coming, and those who follow him at that time will dominate the unbelievers until the Last Day.

**2. "There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before he dies..."**

In the Qur'an, we read that:

**There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before he dies; and on the Day of Resurrection he [Jesus] will be a witness against them. (Qur'an, 4:159)**

The phrase "**there is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before he dies**" is very interesting. Some scholars believe that the "him/it" in this verse refers to the Qur'an instead of Jesus, and so understand it to mean that the People of the Book will believe in the Qur'an before they die. However, it is beyond dispute that the same word in the preceding two verses refers to Jesus.

Another point we need to make here has to do with the interpretation of "before he dies." Some believe that this stands for the People of the Book "having faith in Jesus before their own death." According to this view, everyone from the People of the Book will definitely believe in Jesus before he or she dies. But so far, millions of the People

of the Book have lived and died without ever believing in Jesus. Therefore, the verse does not speak of the death of this group, but rather of the death of Jesus. In the end, the reality revealed by the Qur'an is this: **"Before Jesus dies, all People of the Book will believe in him."**

This can only be possible with the return to Earth of Jesus and all the People of the Book having faith in him during this second life. That is in fact the promise in the hadiths. (Only God knows for certain.)

### **3. "He is a Sign of the Hour..."**

In the Qur'an, we are informed of Jesus' return to Earth. This verse states that Jesus is a sign of the Hour:

**He [Jesus] is a Sign of the Hour. Have no doubt about it. But follow me. This is a straight path. (Qur'an, 43:61)**

The great scholars of Islam interpret this pronoun as referring to Jesus, an opinion that they base on other Qur'anic verses and hadiths. In his commentary, Elmalili Muhammad Hamdi Yazir writes that:

No doubt he [Jesus] is a sign of the Hour, one that declares that the Hour will come, that the dead will be resurrected and stand up, because the miracle of Jesus' second coming and his miracle of resurrecting the dead, together with his revelation that the dead will rise, prove that the Day of Judgment is real. According to the hadiths, his arrival is a sign of the Last Day. (Elmalili Muhammad Hamdi Yazir, *Kuran-i Kerim Tefsiri* (Qur'an Tafsir); [www.kuranikerim.com/telmalili/zuhuruf.htm](http://www.kuranikerim.com/telmalili/zuhuruf.htm))

Jesus lived six centuries before the Qur'an's revelation. Therefore we cannot consider his first life as a sign of the Day of Judgment. The verse says that Jesus will return toward the end of time or, in other words, during the last period of time before the Day of Judgment. In that context, his return is a sign of the Hour's imminent arrival. (God knows best.)

### **4. "He will teach him the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel."**

The verses 45-48 of Sura 3 reveal that God will teach Jesus the "Book," the Torah, and the Gospel. Obviously, this book in question is very important. The same expression is also used in the verse given below:

**Remember when God said: "Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown; and when I taught you the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel." (Qur'an, 5:110)**

When we examine how "Book" is used here, we see that it refers to the Qur'an in both cases. The verses reveal that after the Torah, Psalms and the Gospel, the Qur'an is the final divine book. Another verse uses "Book" to denote the Qur'an, after mentioning the Torah and the Gospel. (Qur'an, 3:2-3)

In this case, the Qur'an is the third book that Jesus will be taught. But this will be possible only when he returns to Earth, for he lived 600 years before the Qur'an's revelation. The hadiths also reveal that Jesus will rule with the Qur'an, not the Gospel, on his second coming. This corresponds with the meaning of the verse. (Allah knows best.)

### **5. "The likeness of Jesus in God's sight is the same as Adam."**

The verse **"The likeness of Jesus in God's sight is the same as Adam."** (Qur'an, 3:59) could also indicate Jesus' return. Muslim scholars who have written Qur'anic commentaries point out that this verse indicates the fact that both Prophets did not have a father, for God created both of them with the command "Be!" However, the verse could also have another meaning: Just as Adam was sent down to Earth from God's presence, Jesus could be sent down to Earth from God's presence during the End Times. (Only God knows for certain.)

### **6. "...The day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised up again alive..."**

Surah Maryam also mentions Jesus' death in the following verse:

**[Jesus said,] "Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised up again alive." (Qur'an, 19:33)**



When this verse is considered in conjunction with Surah Al `Imran verse 55, an important reality emerges: While Surah Al `Imran states that Jesus was raised up to God's presence and does not mention that he died or was killed, Surah Maryam speaks of the day on which he will die. This second death can only be possible after he returns and lives on Earth for a period of time. (Only God knows for certain.)

#### **7. "... you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown ..."**

Another piece of evidence for Jesus's return is the word *kahlaan*, used Surat al-Ma'ida 5:110 and Surah Al `Imran 3:46. These verses say:

**Remember when God said: "Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown (*kahlaan*)..."(Qur'an, 5:110)**

**He will speak to people in the cradle, and also when fully grown (*kahlaan*), and will be one of the righteous. (Qur'an, 3:46)**

*Kahlaan*, which is used only in these two verses, only in reference to Jesus, and to express Jesus' adulthood means "someone between the age of 30 and 50, someone who is no longer young, someone who has reached the perfect age." Islamic scholars agree that it denotes the age of 35 or above. They base their views on a hadith reported by Ibn `Abbas that Jesus was raised up to God's presence in his early 30s, and that he will live for 40 years when he comes again. Therefore, they suggest that this verse is evidence for Jesus' return, since his old age will occur following his second coming. (Muhammed Khalil Herras, *Fasl al-Maqal fi raf'i `Isa hayyan wa nuzulihi wa qatlihi ad-Dajjal* (Cairo: Maktabat as-Sunnah, 1990), 20.)

In short, the miracle of the second coming of Jesus, revealed in a great many hadiths, is also mentioned in the Qur'an.

Jesus did not die, and will return to Earth again.

### **THE CHRISTIAN ERROR OF THE TRINITY**

The Qur'an specifically points to the positive beliefs and moral characteristics of Christians. God has revealed that for Muslims, Christians are "the people most affectionate to those who believe" and "not arrogant." (Qur'an, 5:82) According to Islam, Christians are not deniers, but are a People of the Book, together with the Jews. In other words, they are faithful people who believe in God's earlier revelations.

However, the Qur'an does point to one major error by Christians. That is the error of the Trinity, the ascribing of divinity to Jesus. God warns Christians in this regard in the Qur'an:

**People of the Book! Do not go to excess in your religion. Say nothing but the truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God and His Word, which He cast into Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers. Do not say: "Three." It is better that you stop. God is only One God. He is too Glorious to have a son! Everything in the heavens and in Earth belongs to Him. God suffices as a Guardian. (Qur'an, 4:171)**

Indeed, when we look at the historical facts, it can be seen that the Trinity is a myth which entered into Christianity at a later date.

### **MONOTHEISM: THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY**

Christianity was originally born among the Jews living in Palestine. All of those around and who believed in Jesus were Jews and lived according to the laws of Moses. The most fundamental feature of Judaism was monotheism, the belief in one God.

However, Christianity began to grow rather different after the ascension of Jesus into the presence of God and with its spread from the Jewish world into the pagan one. Monotheistic belief, the essence of the law of Moses, underwent a great change and Christians began regarding Jesus as divine.

The belief in the "Trinity" emerged at the end of this process. This concept describes, for Christians, a three-way



belief in God as "Father, Son and Holy Ghost." The Trinity is one of the fundamental conditions of faith for traditional Christians. The belief in the Trinity regards our Almighty Lord from a superstitious perspective and is a mistaken concept which ascribes divinity to Jesus, sent by God to mankind as a prophet. Despite harboring a great many inconsistencies and being totally incompatible with monotheism, it occupies a central role in the Christians' corrupted system of beliefs. Someone who does not believe in the Trinity, and therefore that Jesus is the son of God, is not regarded as a real Christian by the supporters of traditional Christianity.

## **THE PRESSURE ON THOSE WHO DENIED THE TRINITY**

One interesting point is that the various individuals and movements which have opposed belief in the Trinity and maintained that Jesus was only a prophet of God were subjected to great pressure during the course of Christian history. These monotheists fiercely opposed those who said that Jesus was the son of God, and openly stated that this was "ascribing partners" to God. For that reason, they were for hundreds of years described as "heretics" and even "enemies of Christianity," and those who supported them met with the same reception. Yet those who believe in the oneness of God have always been in a minority compared to the proponents of the Trinity in the Christian world.

Even those neutrals who have researched the subject have established that real Christianity is the monotheistic Christianity that was suppressed throughout history. A large part of the independent Bible researchers, which began in the 18th century in particular, concluded that the Trinity, confession of sins and other Christian dogmas had no place in true Christianity. In their studies of the Old and New Testaments and other Christian sources, experts have revealed that traditional Christianity has very different features to that of the time of Jesus, and was shaped centuries after that time.

## **CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE DENIED THE TRINITY**

It is under the influence of these sources that some Christian sects today reject the Trinity. The Unitarian Church, for example, which maintains churches all over the world, is one major Christian community which rejects belief in the Trinity. Although they may hold various different views, the members of that congregation deny that Jesus is the son of God and say that Christianity demands belief in a single God. Many of them emphasize the mistaken nature of the claim that Jesus was crucified to redeem the sins of the world.

One can find opponents of the Trinity among Christians of various different persuasions and churches. The opponents of the Trinity are growing in numbers, particularly in America, every day, and there is a rapid rise in the numbers of people who are openly expressing the truth in the Christian world. Among these, the "Worldwide Church of God" is particularly noteworthy. Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of the church, maintains that the Trinity is a pagan doctrine which entered Christianity from pagan cultures.

The most noteworthy point on this subject is that there is no trace of the belief in the Trinity, portrayed as the foundation of Christianity, anywhere in the Bible. It appears neither in the Old Testament, the holy book of the Jews, nor in the New Testament, the Christian sacred text. Belief in the Trinity depends on the interpretation of a number of statements in the Bible, and the word itself was first used by Theophilus of Antioch at the end of the 2nd century. This belief became fully incorporated into Christian belief long after that. For that reason, Bible researchers and those opposed to the Trinity concentrate on the questions of *"Should not belief in the Trinity, described as the basis of the Christian religion, be openly stated in the Bible?"* and *"If this belief were really true, should not Jesus have openly spoken of it?"* The answer they provide is clear: No belief which does not appear openly in the Bible and was thus unknown to the first Christians can form the basis of Christianity. This is nothing more than a myth which formed after Jesus and under the influence of Greek culture. It has nothing to do with the essence of Christianity.

This truth can be seen from a careful reading of the Bible.

## **THE BASIS OF THE BIBLE IS ALSO "BELIEF IN ONE GOD"**

It is revealed in the Qur'an that Jesus issued the following message to the Jews:

**... "O Tribe of Israel! Worship God, my Lord and your Lord..." (Qur'an, 5:72)**

The expressions of Jesus calling to oneness of God are present even in the gospels of the New Testament, which were exposed to distortion and falsification. For instance, Jesus answered a teacher of law who asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" as "The most important one is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind

and with all your strength.' (Mark 12:28-30)

The following passage, again from the gospel according to Mark, shows that Jesus prevented not just the ascription of divinity to him but even praise of him:

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good-except God alone." (Mark 10:17-18)

In fact, this passage alone is sufficient to show that belief in the Trinity is a violation of the New Testament. Rejecting praise and stressing that only God is worthy of praise Jesus openly stated that he too was a servant of God.

In fact, Jesus is a prophet of God, sent to tell people of the oneness of God following the corruption of the revelation brought by Moses and that there is no other god but him. He called upon the Jews, who had corrupted the true religion brought by Moses, to abandon their bigoted traditions and superstitions and to submit solely to God. This message of Jesus to the Children of Israel is revealed thus in the Qur'an:

**And when Jesus came with the Clear Signs, he said, "I have come to you with Wisdom and to clarify for you some of the things about which you have differed. Therefore fear God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord so worship Him. This is a straight path." (Qur'an, 43:63-64)**

**"I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you. I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. So fear God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord so worship Him. That is a straight path." (Qur'an, 3:50-51)**

It is the duty of Muslims, Christians, Jews and everyone in the world to abide by this divine call.