

**WHO DO THEY SAY THAT HE IS?**  
**#11: Who Do the Muslims Say That He Is?**  
**September 2-4, 2006**

<sup>4</sup>But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup>And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. *Ephesians 2:4-10 TNIV*

Introduction: Examining what other religious groups profess about Jesus Christ can help us understand better what we believe about him. Muslims believe that they are born sinless, then expected to atone for their own sins by willpower alone. We know that Jesus has atoned for our sins, and that inner transformation comes through faith in him.

- I. The Basics of Islam
  - A. Islam began during the late 6<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> Centuries in present day Saudi Arabia, then spread along trade routes through the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.
  - B. About 1 billion people worldwide call themselves Muslim.
  - C. The founder of Islam is Mohammed, an Arabian born in Mecca to a wealthy family in 570 A.D.
  - D. As a caravan trader, Mohammed traveled extensively in Syria and Persia and learned theology from obscure sects of Christians and Jews in the area.
  - E. Mohammed married a wealthy woman much older than he and began a spiritual quest that resulted in the discovery of monotheistic “revelations” dictated to others and recorded in a book called the Qur’an, or “the reciting.”
  - F. Mohammed proclaimed himself a “prophet” of Allah, the name he gave to the one God, and became an influential tribal leader in Mecca.
  - G. Those threatened by Mohammed’s power drove him away to the city of Yathrib, which Mohammed soon ruled (the city became known as Madinat an Nabi—“City of the Prophet”—or simply Medina.
  - H. Mohammed’s flight to Medinah became known as *hegira*, eventually marking the beginning of the Islamic calendar.
  - I. Mohammed’s followers retook Mecca in 630 when attacked.
  - J. The sacred writings of Islam are the Qur’an (114 *surahs*),

- K. the *Sunnah* (“path”) of the *Hadith*, and the *Shariah* (“law”).
- K. There are six key doctrines of Islam: (1) One God, Allah; (2) Angels, including Gabriel and Shaitan; (3) God-inspired scriptures, including Torah and Gospels; (4) Mohammed, the greatest of 28 prophets; (5) Last Day of judgement; and (6) *Kismet*, or absolute predestination or fate.
- L. There are “five pillars” of Muslim practice: (1) *Shahadah*, or statement of belief in Allah and Mohammed; (2) Prayers five times a day toward the Kaba in Mecca; (3) Alms, mostly to the poor at 2.5%; (4) *Ramadan*, or the holy ninth month, and (5) *Hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca.
- II. Who Do They Say that Jesus Is?
  - A. Muslims vehemently attack the Trinity (and thus also the Fatherhood of God) and believe that Jesus was merely a prophet among prophets inferior to Mohammed.

“Jesus . . . was only a messenger of Allah. . . Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that He would have a son.” *Surah 4:171*
  - B. Muslims believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, however. (S. 3)
  - C. Muslims believe that Jesus did not really die on the cross, but a disguised other (usually Judas) died in his place.

They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them.” *Surah 4:157*
  - D. Muslims believe that they must take care of their own sins through willfulness, else Allah not love them. (*Surah 4:111*)

Whoever goes astray, he himself bears the whole responsibility for wandering.” *Surah 10:109*
- III. Who Do We Say That He Is?
  - A. Since Islam is grounded in Judeo-Christian heritage, we largely agree with Muslim beliefs in one true God, judgment, and the resurrection of the body to eternal life.
  - B. But Christians profess that Jesus is the unique incarnation of Creator God in human history (John 1:14, etc.).
  - C. Unlike Muslims, we believe in a loving, personal Father God who has atoned for our sins through the death of His Son.
  - D. We believe that Jesus was the sinless lamb who literally died on the cross and was then resurrected bodily, thus conquering death for those who believe in Him. (John 1, 3)
  - E. We believe that God loves all people! (Rom. 5, 1 Cor. 15)

Conclusion: The great irony of Islam is that people are professed as responsible for their own sins, yet resigned to the fate of a vindictive God. We know that God is a loving Father who adopts us through Jesus, his only Son. We choose freely to respond to his revealed love: “We love because he first loved us.”