

Jesus (peace be upon him), is he alive or dead?

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While majority of Muslim scholars from both Shia and Sunni schools of Islam believe that Prophet Jesus was raised up alive, and he did not die, a minority of Muslim scholars take a differing view. They believe that Prophet Jesus died, and then he (spirit) was raised up. The Hadith material in all schools is overwhelming pointing to him being raised alive. The sayings of the Imams of the family of prophet, who were the storehouses of knowledge, clearly indicate that Jesus was raised alive.

I will restrict my discussion to the Qur'anic revelations about Prophet Jesus. Towards the end of this article, I will touch upon the topic of who is qualified to interpret Qur'an and what are the pitfalls when non-scholars attempt to interpret.

The Qur'anic verse often quoted states:

And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the Apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so, and most surely who differ therein are only in a doubt about it. They have no knowledge in respect of it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure. 4: 157

The next verse is significant. *"Nay! Allah took him up to himself; and Allah is mighty, wise. 4:158*

I discussed these two verses with an Arabic / Qur'anic scholar. He said that these verses are continuous with (La) punctuation in between them. This implies that the second verse re-iterates the subject of first verse. He said that Qur'anic Arabic rules of interpretation require that a clear statement be made in the second verse that Isa died a natural death. Otherwise, the second verse only re-iterates the previous statement of him not dying, and the word "raise" (Rafa'a) does not mean death.

Read the next verse (159) which is very significant

"And there is not one of the followers of the Book, but most certainly believes in this before his (Isa's) death, and on the day of resurrection he (Isa) shall be a witness against them." 4:159. The above translation is by M.H. Shakir.

A. Yusufali translates more clearly, and with similar meaning: *"And there is none of the people of the Book but must believe in him before his (Isa's) death; and on the day of judgment he will be a witness against them." 4:159*

Again in verse 172 of the same Surah: *"The Messiah by no means disdains that he be a servant of Allah," 4: 172*

Here present tense "disdains" (yastankifa) is used implying that he is living. Otherwise, if he were dead then past tense would be used.

The Qur'an is clearly indicating that before Jesus dies all the people of the book shall believe in his true position. This has not happened as of yet. This again supports that he was raised up and

he is alive. His death will occur some time after his second coming, and truth will be evident upon all.

The Qur'an is so clear about the status of Jesus that we do not need to rely on traditions to understand this particular point; however, the authentic traditions do give overwhelming support the Qur'anic viewpoint.

Al-Qur'an:

"And peace be on me the day I was born and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life." 19: 33

This statement was made by Prophet Jesus (p) when he was still alive, and it refers to a future time of his death.

Some people want to know if Prophet Jesus (p) is alive, where he is residing, and where is he getting his food from. This is not difficult for Allah swt. He created from nothing all life, the heavens, the earth and everything in between.

Let us ponder on this: According to the Qur'an, the People of the cave were alive, but in a "state of sleep" for several hundred years, and then Allah woke them up. Those who die as "Shaheed," about them Allah says, "nay they are alive and receiving sustenance, that you can not perceive." Our Prophet made bodily ascension to heaven and returned in such a short time that his bed was still warm; or that Angel Gabriel can in an instance come to earth from the heaven (zillion light years away!)

Hazrat Suleiman (Prophet Solomon) ordered the throne of queen Bilquis brought to him. One of his courtiers (Asif bin Barqiah) brought it in a twinkle of an eye (the whole throne.) see the Qur'an 27:40. Allah says he had the "knowledge of the book." The knowledge was part of "Kun Fa Yakun." (Be; and it Is.) Allah created the whole universe and everything in it by the power of 'kun fa yakun.'" Qur'an says Virgin Mary conceived Jesus without a father with the power of "Kun fa yakun."

Our knowledge and intellect compared to Allah's knowledge, wisdom and power is as comparing the intellect of an ant with that of a higher being like a human being. Many a people have been misled and gone astray by intellectualizing in areas of divine mysteries, that they were not qualified to make opinions. The most illustrative example of conjecture and reliance on ones own opinion is that of Iblis (Satan.) He figured out by his logic (and was very knowledgeable) that his origin was superior to that of Adam.

Those who rely on the Imams from the family of the Prophet do not fall in such traps. The Imams were storehouses of divine knowledge and wisdom. When Allah called our prophet (p) to himself during the night of Miraj, He says in Qur'an that He "shared his secrets" with the Prophet. That was **knowledge**. When Prophet (p) said: "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is the gate," he was saying that Ali had the same knowledge that Prophet had. Before Ali A.S. left this world, he said to people "ask me before I leave." He is known to have answered every question and solved every problem presented to him. The Imams that followed from his progeny received the same knowledge that he had.

Those who do not rely on the teachings and knowledge of the purified Imams from the family of the Prophet (P), are bound to fall into conjectures, assumptions, distractions, weak opinions.

About the Qur'an, we know that it contains total knowledge in it. It is part of "Lauhe Mhfuz" or the preserved tablet, which is actually Allah's total knowledge.

Prophet (p) said: "The Qur'an was revealed on seven letters (levels,) each letter has an outer (exoteric) and an inner (hidden) meaning, and Ali bin Abu Talib has the knowledge of outer and inner meaning. (Sahih Bukhari-Suyuti's Itqaan)

He also said: "I leave behind two weighty (great) things, the Book of Allah (Qur'an) and my Ahlul Bayt (members of his family bestowed with divine knowledge, wisdom and guidance), should you be attached to these, never, never shall you go astray after me. ..." Tafsir e Kabir-Tafseer Durre manthur.

On of Prophet's (p) prominent companion made this well-known (unfortunate) statement: "*Hasbana Kitabullah.*" "For us the Book (Qur'an) is sufficient," in response to Prophet having asked for pen and paper to write his Will so that people will not be misguided after him. Thus majority of Muslims rely on their own interpretation (conjectures) of the Qur'an (full of divine knowledge and divine mysteries), and rely upon Hadiths, some of which may be weak. This is a great tragedy for Islam.

In order to understand and correctly interpret the Qur'an, a good grasp of knowledge of Arabic language, knowledge of usage of words in the Meccan style at the time when it was revealed, knowledge of subtleties of Arabic grammar is needed,. In addition, the study of all the verses related to the topic is necessary. Finally, the circumstances of the revelation, history, authentic Hadiths and knowledge imparted by the Imams from the Family of the Prophet are essential elements in the understanding of the Qur'an.

"Allahu Aalam" Knowledge is with Allah

The End