

Bismillahir Rahmaanir Raheem
In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Status of Jesus According to the Qur'an

Jesus (peace be upon him) is one of the Chosen prophets of God almighty. Belief in him as a prophet is required by the Muslims.

Prophet Jesus preceded the advent of the last Prophet of God, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&p) by nearly 600 years. Prophet Jesus descended from the lineage of Prophet Abraham, through Prophet Isaac. He was born to Mary through a miracle. Angel Gabriel came to her in human form and informed her that she will have a son and God had named him Jesus. She asked how she could have a son when no man had ever touched her. The angel replied, "So it be, it is easy for God. When He intends a thing, He says to it "Be" and it "Is." Jesus spoke to his people as baby in the arms of his mother, defending her virginity. He also announced that he was a prophet and servant of God, bestowed with a book (Evangeli) and was sent by God to guide the children of Israel. The Qur'an mentions his many miracles. He brought back dead to life, healed the lepers and the sick, all by the permission of God. Most of the children of Israel rejected him, except a few. His mission was to bring back the children of Israel to the true teachings of Torah. Their priests had hidden Torah, changed its words and used the religion for personal and financial gains. Prophet Jesus followed the Jewish tradition. He denied bringing a new religion.

The Second Coming of Prophet Jesus.

The Qur'an clearly states that Jesus did not die on the cross, but it was made to appear so to his people. The Qur'an states that Jesus was raised up to God. In Islamic tradition, Jesus will re-appear (his second coming) before the Day of Judgment. He, along with the representative of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them) will fight injustice and establish peace and justice on earth.

One of the fundamental differences between the Muslim and the Christian beliefs is the status of Jesus. While both Islam and Christianity believe in Jesus, the former regards Jesus as "the son of God," and "God in the flesh". The Qur'an teaches that Jesus was a chosen Prophet of God. God strongly rebukes the notion of Trinity and vicarious atonement, which was first proposed by St. Paul more than one hundred years after Jesus left this world.

Prophet Jesus is mentioned in the Qur'an about twenty five times. His mother, Mary is mentioned thirty four times.

The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, and then said to him, "Be" and he "was."

The truth (comes) from God alone, so be not of those who doubt.

If any one disputes in this matter with thee, now after (full) knowledge hath come to thee, say: "Come, let us gather together, our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our selves and your selves. Then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of God on those who lie."

(Surah Aali Imran. 3: 59-61)

The Event of Mubahila. In the ninth year of Hijra, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&p) sent message to Catholic Christians of Najrain asking them to believe in him as Prophet of God and

accept Jesus (peace be upon him) as prophet of God according to Islamic tradition. A delegation of Christian scholars visited the prophet. A verse of the Qur'an about the status of Jesus was revealed. The Christians did not accept its truthfulness. Then the above verse (underlined) was revealed. In a large public gathering, Prophet took only his daughter Fatima (S.A.), two grandsons Hasan and Husain (A.S.) and son-in-Law and cousin Ali (A.S.). The chief of the Christian delegation when he saw these five persons, he was awe struck with their heavenly appearance and counseled his followers not to invite the Prophet to invoke God's curses, saying that, if these Godly individuals pray to God, it surely will be accepted. I am afraid that in that case we will be destroyed. They made a peace pact, offered the Prophet gifts, and departed.

This event has two-fold significance.

1. It confirms the truthfulness of the message of the Prophet of Islam through the revealed scripture, the Qur'an
2. It also shows the spiritual excellence of the family of the Prophet (peace be up them all), because the Prophet and God Almighty preferred them to all other Muslims of the time.

Jesus and Mary in the Qur'an

The Qur'an and the traditions from the Prophet Muhammad and the Imams from his family are a source of knowledge about Prophet Jesus and his mother, Mary(peace be upon them all), which is not generally known to those who follow the Christian faith. The Qur'an not only leads us to a better understanding of who he was, but most importantly, it tells us who he was not. The information in the Qur'an increases our respect and love for Prophet Jesus. The Qur'an was revealed over 600 years after Prophet Jesus' birth. It provides a unique perspective that no other source does. Following are the Qur'anic statements regarding Prophet Jesus and his virgin mother, Mary.

Jesus son of Mary was a Prophet of God like other prophet.

"Say: We believe in God and what is revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was entrusted to Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have surrendered." (3:84)

All the Prophets were well aware that they were sent by God Almighty, with the same message and for similar mission:

"And when We made a covenant with the Prophets, and with you (Muhammad), and with Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary. We made with them a strong covenant; that He may question the truthful of their truth. And He has prepared for the unbelievers a painful punishment." (33:7-8)

"...messengers We have mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you..." (4:164)

"He has ordained for you the religion that He commanded to Noah, and that which We inspired in you (Muhammad), and that which We commanded to Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion and do not be divided in it!" (42:13)

Thus, the picture of Jesus in the Qur'an is that of a messenger who, like all the other messengers, came to the people of his time in fulfillment of God's comprehensive and universal plan:

"And We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, confirming what was before him, and We bestowed on him the Gospel wherein is guidance and light, confirming that which was before it in the Torah - a guidance and a warning to those who are careful."

(5:46)

“When God says; O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favor unto thee and unto thy mother. How I strengthened thee with Holy spirit, so thou speakest unto mankind in the cradle, as in maturity, and how I taught thee the scripture and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel.”

(5:110)

Jesus had knowledge of the past and the future:

“Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Children of Israel! See, I am the messenger of God to you, confirming what was before me in the Torah, and bringing good news of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Ahmad (the Praised One)...”

(61:6)

With those who bow (in worship). This is of the news of things hidden. We reveal it to you (Muhammad).

You were not present with them when they cast their lots, to decide which of them should be the guardian of Mary, nor were you present with them when they disputed it. And when the angels said: O Mary! God gives you good news of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, exalted in the world and the hereafter, and one of those brought near (to God). He will speak to humankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is of the righteous. She said, ‘My Lord! How can I have a child when no man has touched me?’ He said: ‘It is so. God creates what He will. If He decrees a thing, He says to it only, “Be” and it “is” ’.

And He will teach him the Book and the wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. And He will make him a messenger to the Children of Israel, saying: I come to you with a sign from your Lord. See! I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by God’s will. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by God’s will. And I announce to you what you eat and what you store up in your houses. Here truly is a sign for you, if you are believers. And I confirm what was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful some of what was forbidden to you. I come to you with a sign from your Lord, so keep your duty to God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is the straight path.

But when Jesus became conscious of their disbelief, he cried: Who will be my helpers in the cause of God? The disciples said: We will be God’s helpers. We believe in God, and bear you witness that we have submitted. Our Lord, we believe in what You have revealed and we follow him whom You have sent. Enroll us among those who bear witness.”

(3:42-53)

An account of the birth of Jesus in the Chapter of the Qur’an titled “Maryam” (Mary):

And make mention of Mary in the Book, when she withdrew from her people to a chamber looking East, and secluded herself from them. Then We sent to her Our spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. She said: I seek refuge in the Beneficent One from you, if you are God-fearing. He said: I am only a messenger from your Lord that I may bestow upon you a sinless son. She said: How can I have a son when no man has touched me, and I have not been unchaste? He said: It is so. Your Lord says: It is easy for Me. And We will make of him a sign for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a thing ordained. And she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far off place. And the pangs of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said: O! Would that I had become a thing passed into nothingness, forgotten! Then (a voice) cried to her from below, saying: Grieve not! Your Lord has placed a stream beneath you. And shake the trunk of the palm tree toward you. You will cause ripe dates to fall upon you. So eat, drink, and be comforted. And if you meet any person, say: I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent, and may not speak this day to any person. Then she brought him to her own folk, carrying him. They said: O Mary! This is an astonishing thing you have brought. O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a wicked man, nor your mother a harlot. Then she pointed to him.*

They said: How can we speak to one in the cradle, who is an infant boy? He spoke: See! I am the servant of God. He has given me the Book and has appointed me a Prophet, and has made me blessed wherever I may be, and has commanded me to prayer and charity for so long as I live. And has made me dutiful toward her who bore me, and has not made me arrogant and unblessed. Peace be on me the day I was born, and the day that I die, and the day I shall be raised alive! Such was Jesus, son of Mary: a statement of the truth about which they doubt. It does not befit God that He should take to Himself a son. Glory be to Him! When He decrees a thing, He says to it only: Be! And it is. And see, God is my Lord and your Lord, so serve Him. That is the right path.

(19:16-36)

Prophet Jesus' disciples are mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: *"O you who believe! Be God's helpers, even as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples, who are my helpers for God? They said, "we are God's helpers." And a party of the Children of Israel believed, while a party disbelieved...."*

(61:14)

Qur'anic description of "The Last Supper."

"And when I inspired the disciples: Believe in Me and My messenger, they said: We believe. Bear witness that we have submitted. When the disciples said, O Jesus, son of Mary, is your Lord able to send down for us a table spread with food from heaven? He said: Observe your duty to God, if you are true believers. (They) said: We wish to eat from it, that we may satisfy our hearts and know that you have spoken the truth to us, and that we may be witnesses to this. Jesus, son of Mary, said: O God, our Lord, send down for us a table spread with food from heaven, that it may be a feast for us, for the first of us and the last of us, and a sign from You. Give us sustenance, for You are the Best of Sustainers. God said: See! I send it down. And whoever disbelieves in you afterwards, him I shall surely punish with a punishment with which I have not punished any of (My) creation."

(5:111-115)

Jesus, a servant of God:

"And when the son of Mary is quoted as an example, behold! The folk laugh aloud, and say: Are our gods better, or is he? They raise not the objection but for argument's sake. No! But they are a contentious people. He is nothing but a servant on whom we bestowed favor, and we made him a pattern for the Children of Israel."

(43:57-59)

"...and we caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow, and gave him the Gospel, and placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him. But they invented monasticism - which We did not ordain for them - seeking only God's pleasure, but they did not for those who disbelieve, I shall chastise them with a heavy chastisement in the world and the hereafter; and they will have no helpers. And as for those who believe and do good works, He will pay them their wages in full. God loves not the wrongdoers. This We recite to you is a revelation and a wise reminder. The likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, and then He said to him: Be! And he was."

(3:55-59)

"And they say: The Beneficent has taken unto Himself a son. Certainly, you utter a disastrous thing, whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split open and the mountains fall in ruins, that you ascribe to the Beneficent a son! When it is not fitting for the Beneficent that He should take a son. There is no one in the heavens and the earth but that he comes to the Beneficent as a servant."

(19:88-93)

“And they say: God has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him! No! However, whatever is in the heavens and earth is His. All are subservient to Him, the Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a thing, He says to it only: ‘Be’ and it ‘Is’.”

(2:116-117)

The Qur’an further rejects that Jesus was “divine” or “God incarnate”:

“They indeed have disbelieved who say: God is the Messiah, son of Mary. Say: Who then can do anything against God, if He willed to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone on the earth? To God is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them. He creates what He will. And God is able to do all things.”

(5:17)

The scenario on the Day of Judgment regarding Jesus’ teachings is foretold:

“And when God says: O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say to humankind: Take my mother and me for two gods besides God? He there is no god save the One God. If they desist not from saying it, a painful doom will fall on those of them who disbelieve. Will they not rather turn to God and seek forgiveness of Him? For God is Forgiving, Merciful. The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger; messengers had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. But they both used to eat food. See how We make the revelation clear for the people, and see how they are turned away!”

(5:73-75)

The Qur’an rejects the doctrine of the crucifixion of Jesus, but affirms his ascension to God:

“And because of their saying: We killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, God’s messenger - they did not kill him or crucify him, but so it was made to appear to them; and look! Those who disagree concerning it are in doubt about it; they have no knowledge of it except pursuit of a conjecture; they did not kill him surely; but God took him up to Himself. God was ever Mighty, Wise”.

(4:157-158)

The above are some of the verses in the Qur’an about Prophet Jesus son of Mary. For a complete review of the subject, please study the following verses of the Qur’an.

- 2: 87 We gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs
- 2:136 That which was given to Moses and Jesus
- 2:253 We gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs
- 3:45 Whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary
- 3: 52
- 3: 55 Jesus, I will take thee to Me
- 3: 59 Likeness of Jesus ...
- 3: 84 That which was given to Moses and Jesus
- 4: 157 We (Children of Israel) slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary

- 4: 163 Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, Jesus and Job
- 4: 171 Jesus son of Mary, was only the messenger of God
- 5: 46 We sent , following their footsteps, Jesus
- 5: 78
- 5: 110 Jesus son of Mary, remember My blessings upon thee
- 5: 112
- 5: 114 Jesus son of Mary said, "O' God, our Lord, send down to us ..."
- 5: 116 O Jesus son of Mary, didst thou say ... to take you and your mother as two gods...?
- 6: 85
- 19: 34 This is Jesus son of Mary, a statement of the truth ...
- 33: 7 We took a covenant from the Prophets ... Jesus son of Mary ...
- 42: 13 He has prescribed for you the religion ... that We ordained to Abraham, Moses, and Jesus....
- 43:63, 64 When Jesus came with clear signs ... God (alone) is my Lord and your Lord ...
- 75: 27 We sent after them Jesus son of Mary, and We gave him the Evangel, and put into the hearts of those who followed him, kindness and compassion ...
- 61: 6 When Jesus son of Mary said, "O' children of Israel, verily I am a messenger of God to you, confirming what is before you of the Torah and bearing the glad tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name is Ahmed," but when he came to them they said, "this is manifest sorcery."
- 61: 14

(The End)

Dr. Syed H. Akhtar

Austin, Texas

12-3-10