



Who is God?

What Muslims Believe

Allah is One

The absolute Oneness of Allah is primary to Muslims. The greatest sin is to associate any partner with Him. This sin is called *shirk*. Muhammad's message advocating one God was courageous because idolatry was the established religion of Arabia. Muhammad challenged this system and finally prevailed with the message of monotheism. Islam is rooted in this commitment to the belief in one God.

Allah Cannot be Compared

Allah is transcendent and cannot be compared to humans or any other created thing. Allah's character and attributes are revealed through His 99 Arabic names, the two most common being "The Merciful" and "The Compassionate." Allah is never described in Islam by using human family terms such as "father" or "son." In the Quran he reveals his will for mankind to obey, not his person for mankind to relate with and know.

Allah's Ultimate Attribute: His Will

Allah creates and sustains all life, spiritual and material. His will is absolute and cannot be questioned by his creation. He is our final judge without a mediator. The best chance on Judgment Day is for those who live lives of righteousness and submission to Allah's will—*Insha Allah* (God willing).

What Christians Believe

God: A Unity, not a Unit

The Bible teaches that God is One, but He is a complex unity, not just a simple unit. He is completely unique, a personal God who existed in relationship from eternity.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit

Scriptures reveal God as the ultimate Father, in name, character, and person, but always as the Creator, never with sexual references. God also reveals Himself as the Eternal Word, who became flesh when the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mary and conceived Jesus, the Messiah, who is also called the Son of God in the Bible. In His teaching, Jesus further reveals God the Holy Spirit, who was sent by the Father and Himself. The Bible presents a mystery of three persons revealed as one God. Although the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible, the term captures Bible truths about God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are God, not just three parts of God or three names for the same person. God reveals Himself as a Tri-Unity.

God's Ultimate Attribute: His Love

The Bible says, "God is Love." This love existed from eternity as the Father loved the Son even before the foundation of the world. God's love is expressed through creation. God does not simply choose to love; His Love chooses to act. "God so loved the world that He gave His Son..." (John 3:16)

How to Correct Misunderstandings

The Misunderstandings

Most Muslims consider Christians to be polytheists (people who believe in many gods) because of the Trinity. A popular misunderstanding of the Trinity is that Christians believe that a Father God had sex with a Mother God (Mary) to produce their "Son of God." No Christian believes this. Educated Muslims understand this false Trinity is not what Christians believe, but they still do not understand how the math can show God's unity. To them it is simple: 1+1+1=3; Father + Son + Holy Spirit = Three Gods. This is not what Christians believe.

Correcting the Misunderstandings

Rather than use an analogy of adding units (1+1+1=3), the Trinity has been explained as multiplied wholeness (1x1x1=1). The Bible says Jesus is the eternal "Word of God" revealed in flesh through the virgin birth. The Quran sets apart Jesus as the "Word of God" and "Spirit of God" and affirms his virgin birth and miracles, even raising the dead. Muslims also believe in the Second Coming of Jesus, because the "day of his return" is mentioned in the Quran. Muslims like to point out how the Quran honors Jesus. Yet such positive references to Jesus in the Quran are few compared to the complete story of Jesus preserved by God in the Injil (New Testament).



Prophets

What Muslims Believe

Muhammad, The Seal of the Prophets

To Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad, called the "seal of the prophets," is the last of over 124,000 prophets going back to Adam. His name means "praised one," and he is commended by Allah in the Quran.

Muhammad, The Reformer

Mecca was a center of idol worship in AD 610 when Muhammad first challenged the people to forsake idolatry and embrace Islam. Most Meccans rejected his message and many began to persecute the early Muslims, causing them to flee to the town of Medina in AD 622. (This flight is known as the *hijra* and marked the first year on the Islamic calendar.) Medina was more receptive to Muhammad and from this city, through battles and diplomacy, Islam was spread to the entire Arabian Peninsula before Muhammad died in AD 632.

Muhammad, the Perfect Example to Follow

Muslims try to follow Muhammad's example known as his *sunna*, or his way, in every detail possible. Everything is prescribed, from ritual washings before prayer to hygienic practices in the bathroom. Such detailed behavior is known through large collections of *hadith*, accounts of Muhammad's life, words, and behavior passed on by his early followers.

What Christians Believe

Old Testament Prophecy

New Testament writers proclaimed Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law of Moses (Taurat) and the predictions of Old Testament prophets. These prophets are quoted in the New Testament. For instance, Matthew quotes various prophets concerning Jesus' birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), his mother being a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), and even the killing of baby boys by King Herod. (Jeremiah 31:15) The prophets also detail the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. (Isaiah 53; Psalm 16:8-11) The Bible points out that God carefully planned and carried out the details of the coming of Jesus in history. (Luke 24:27; Acts 3:18)

Christ's Warning About False Teachers

The Bible contains numerous warnings about false teachers and prophets. Jesus predicts the end times will be full of these. (Matthew 24: 11) Therefore, every teaching must be judged against the truth already revealed in the Bible. Jesus also promised that the Holy Spirit ("The Spirit of Truth") would guide truth seekers into all truth. (John 14-16)

How to Correct Misunderstandings

The Misunderstandings

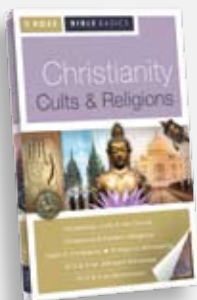
In conversation with Muslims, do not attack Muhammad. Since so much is determined by imitating their prophet, to insult Muhammad is to attack their entire life and culture.

Correcting the Misunderstandings

It is wise to find common ground and agree that Muhammad has much in common with Old Testament prophets. Like David and Solomon, he was a political and military leader with multiple wives. Like Moses and Joshua, he united tribes and led them in battle. Like Elijah and many other prophets, he destroyed idols and confronted the corrupt political and economic powers of his day.

Just as Old Testament prophets looked forward to the coming Messiah, Muhammad looked back with respect and admiration to Jesus as the Messiah. The Quran calls *Isa Al Masih* (Jesus) "God's word" and a "Spirit from Him." (Surah 4:171) It affirms His virgin birth and special role in the end times.

Followers of Jesus do not have to deny or embrace Muhammad in order to exalt the Messiah. It is important to lift up Jesus, not tear down Muhammad.

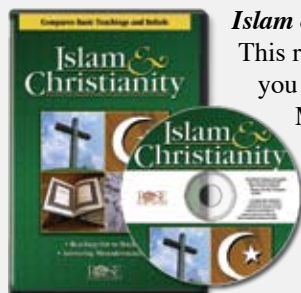
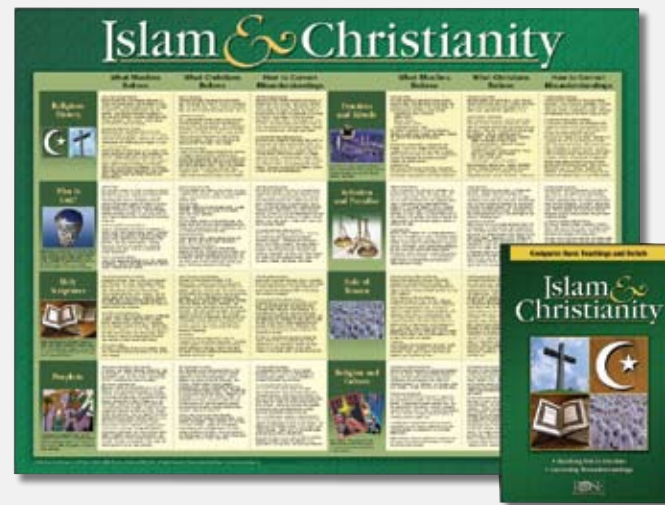


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Islam & Christianity

This chart allows you to compare the basic beliefs of Christians and Muslims at a glance. More than one billion people around the world follow the teachings of Muhammad and Islam. Learn what beliefs Christians and Muslims have in common and which are different. Know what Muslims have been taught about Christianity and how to answer their questions and concerns. Ages 12-adult. Wall chart size: 19" x 26", printed on heavy chart paper. Pamphlet has 12 panels and unfolds to 33" long, 8.5" x 5.5" folded.

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