

Eid al-Adha

Once a year a celebration is held in honor of the sacrifice Prophet Ibrahim was willing to make. This festival occurs at the end of hajj.

Sura Al Saffat (37):102-107 *And, when he was old enough to walk with him, he said, "Oh my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you. So look what you think!" He said, "O my father! Do that which you are commanded, Insha' Allah, you shall find me of As-Sabirun." Then, when they both had submitted themselves, and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead; We called out to him, "O Abraham! You have fulfilled the dream! Verily thus do We reward the Muhsinun. Verily, that indeed was a manifest trial. And we ransomed him with a great sacrifice."*

Why was Abraham willing to sacrifice his first-born son? Was it simply a test of his submission to God? Or, is there a deeper understanding of his sacrifice?

Abdullah Yusuf Ali provides an insightful commentary on Sura 37:103, calling Abraham's sacrifice "the symbol of which is that we should give up something very dear to us, if Duty requires that sacrifice." A man's son is indeed something very dear, and being willing to sacrifice him is the ultimate symbol of true love and devotion.

Another One, at another time, also sacrificed His son as a sign of true love and devotion.

God loves each of us. He created us for relationship with him. Yet our sins separate us from that relationship. Because God loves us so much, He also was willing to sacrifice His son, Jesus Christ, *'Isa al-Masih* who, like Abraham's son, also submitted willingly. In doing so, Jesus met God's requirement to punish the guilty for their sins, by willingly taking on Himself the sin of mankind.

Once a year you observe a man's love for God by being willing to sacrifice his son for him. Every day of the year we commemorate God's love for us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins so that we may be totally forgiven of them and be assured of a place in his kingdom to be revealed on the Last Day.

Why Would Jesus Die for Me?

In the Garden, Adam and his wife enjoyed all the luxuries offered by Paradise. They ate of the finest fruits, drank the purest water, and dwelled in a place of perfection where there was no death. As a test of God's authority, he forbade Adam the fruit of only one tree. Satan tempted Adam to transgress the authority of God (Sura Al A'raf 7:19-20). Adam was deceived by Satan, transgressed God's command, and was cast out of the Garden (Sura 7:24). When Adam was cast out of the Garden, he brought death to mankind (Sura 7:25). If Adam had not transgressed and remained in the Garden, man would never have known death.

This is exactly what the Bible says. The Apostle Paul writes, "just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." Adam's sin caused the death of all men, not just Adam himself. The Bible also says, "The wages of sin is death." We will all die, because Adam's sin brought death and sin to all.

Since a man was the cause of sin and death, so too a man was needed to atone for sin. This man also had to be perfect, sinless himself, righteous. Only one man in history has qualified as sinless, Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many." Further, the Bible explains why God would sacrifice His son for us: "For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

My dear friend, the God of all creation loves you, sacrificed His son for your sins, so you can become righteous and enter into heaven with Him for eternity. The choice to accept the sacrifice of Jesus is your choice alone. The Bible says, "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Ask Jesus to forgive you today and be your savior.



Crucifixion: Fact Or Fiction?



Was Jesus Crucified On The Cross?

WHAT THE QUR'AN SAYS

Sura 4:157 – *They said “We killed Christ Jesus, The son of Mary, The Messenger of Allah.” But they killed him not, nor crucified him. But so it was made to appear to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no certain knowledge, but only conjecture to follow. For a surety, they killed him not.*

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

Matthew 27:35 – *Then they crucified Him [Jesus]...*

Mark 15:24 – *And when they crucified Him...*

Luke 23:33 – *And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him...*

John 19:23 – *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments...*

The Qur'an denies the crucifixion of Jesus. The Bible affirms it as a fact. They cannot both be correct. How do we know which to believe?

EVIDENCE FOR CRUCIFIXION

❖ EYEWITNESSES

- A centurion, an officer over 100 men, guarded Jesus as he died on the cross (Matt. 27:54)
- The Roman soldiers who beat Jesus sat and watched Him die (Matt. 27: 27, 36)
- Chief priests, scribes, and elders all watched Jesus die (Matt. 27:41)
- Many unnamed women whom Jesus had known watched Him die (Matt. 27:55)

Thus, the death of Jesus was witnessed by a significant number of direct witnesses. This sort of eye-witness evidence would suffice in any court. But, is it possible that they only thought they saw Jesus die, when in reality it was somebody else?

❖ FAMILY

- Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home* (John 19:25-27).

By entrusting the care of his mother Mary to the disciple John, Jesus as he died demonstrated a level of compassion no stranger or substitute could have shown.

❖ HOSTILE SOURCES

Thallos (55 A.D.): An ancient historian who wrote a three-volume history. In volume 3, Thallos mentions the darkness that occurred at *the death of Jesus*, just as recorded in Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:33, and Luke 23:44. Thallos certainly was no friend of Christians; he attempted to attribute the darkness to a solar eclipse, a natural phenomenon, rather than a miracle as scripture and tradition proclaimed. Julius Africanus rebuffed Thallos' argument years later by noting that Jesus was crucified during Passover, which occurs during a full moon. A solar eclipse cannot occur during a full moon.

Cornelius Tacitus (55-120 A.D.): This respected Roman historian had a disdain for Christians, calling them believers “in a most mischievous superstition.” Nevertheless, Tacitus confirms that this “sect” was formed from followers of “Christus,” who *suffered the extreme penalty* during the reign of Tiberias at the hands of Pontius Pilate.” The term “extreme penalty” refers to crucifixion, the most extreme form of punishment used during the Roman Empire.

Lucian of Samosata (115-200 A.D.): A well-known satirist and lecturer, Lucian refers to Christians as “poor wretches” and “foolish people” who “accept such things on faith alone, without any evidence.” He also calls them ones “who worship *the man in Palestine who was crucified* because he brought this new form of initiation into the world.” Lucian further mocks Christians for believing “that they are all brothers the moment they transgress and deny the Greek gods and begin worshipping *that crucified sophist* and living by his laws.”

These and other hostile sources clearly affirm the historical fact of Jesus' crucifixion hundreds of years before Jibril visited Muhammad.

PROPHECIES OF JESUS CONCERNING HIS CRUCIFIXION

As a holy and faultless man (Sura 19:19), 'Isa never lied. What then are we to think of the following predictions by 'Isa of His crucifixion, recorded in the uncorrupted Bible? (see “The Corruption of Christian Scripture”):

- Matthew 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem...and be killed, and be raised the third day.
- Matthew 17:22-23 Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.”
- Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.
- Luke 18:31-33 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles...they will scourge Him and kill him. And the third day He will rise again.

Clearly, Jesus prophesied his crucifixion, yet the Qur'an denies this.

THE APOSTLE'S REACTION: MARTYRDOM

The Apostle Paul wrote, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Paul, as well as all the other apostles of Jesus, with the exception of John, were so convinced of the death and resurrection of Jesus that they were willing to die as martyrs rather than recant this testimony. Many men are willing to die for something they believe to be true, but no man is willing to die for that which is known to be a lie.

The death and resurrection of Jesus was no lie, and the men who were eyewitnesses were willing to risk their lives for this truth.

EVIDENCE OF CRUCIFIXION FROM THE QUR'AN

In Sura 19:33 Jesus speaks as an infant and says: “So peace is on me The day I was born, The **day that I die**, And that day I shall be raised up to life (again).”

❖ Even in the Qur'an, Jesus predicts His death!

A few verses earlier, in Sura 19:15, the same statement is made concerning Prophet Yahya – “So Peace is on him the day he was born, **The day that he dies**, And that day he Will be raised To life (again)!”

❖ If Sura 19:15 speaks of the death of Yahya, then Sura 19:33 must speak of the death of 'Isa, son of Maryam!

In Sura 19:31 Jesus is also quoted as saying, “And He hath made me Blessed wheresoever I be, And hath **enjoined** on me **Prayer** and **Charity** as long as I live.”

❖ If Jesus never died, according to this aya he is obligated still to continue in zakat, an absurd notion since He is seated in heaven with God!

CONCLUSIONS

If Jesus was not crucified, and God substituted someone else instead, we must conclude the following three things about God:

1. God is unjust because He crucified someone unwillingly for crimes he did not commit.
2. God acted unjustly toward Mary, since she sincerely believed Jesus died on the cross. Allah fooled her.
3. God acted unjustly toward Christians for six centuries until Muhammad recited Sura 4:157, without leaving any credible evidence that Jesus *did not* die on the cross. God continues to act unjustly toward all people today by failing to provide such evidence.

This view makes God the author of the greatest lie in history. By fooling everyone present at the crucifixion and not leaving any credible historical evidence that Jesus *did not* die, this view makes God an enormous liar. Surely that is not worthy of God.