

GLIMPSES FROM THE LIFE OF PROPHET ISA

Rating:

Description: Events from the life of Prophet Isa that teach us valuable lessons that can be applied to the lives of Muslims and Christians today.

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Objective:

- To examine several events in the life of Prophet Jesus (Isa).
- To understand that Jesus never called himself God.
- To understand that converting to Islam does not mean giving up belief in Jesus.

Arabic Terms:

- Isa* – The Arabic name for Jesus. A full explanation can be found here <http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/1447/>
- Sunnah* - The word Sunnah generally means whatever was reported of what the Prophet said, did, or approved of.
- Al-Fatihah* – The opening chapter of the Quran.
- Injeel* – the Arabic word meaning Gospel, in this case referring to the gospels of Jesus, before they were adulterated or altered over time.
- Zakah* - obligatory charity.

In Islam, *Isa* is a loved and esteemed man, a Prophet and Messenger calling his people to the worship of the One True God. Muslims and Christians share some very similar beliefs about Isa. A full description can be found in this article, <http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/1412/> and in other articles on the same website. However Muslims and Christians are worlds apart in one major detail. Muslims do not believe that Isa is God, or that he is the son of God, or that he is part of a Trinity.



Lesson 1

Muslims love Isa too

The status of Prophet Isa in Islam sometimes becomes problematic for many Christians converting to Islam. Often it is difficult for them to reconcile old spiritual beliefs for their newly adopted ones. The first important lesson that we can learn by glimpsing into the life of Prophet Isa is that he remains a very important person. One who loves Prophet Isa can embrace Islam without having to stop loving him. In Islam, loving all prophets and messengers is a key Tenet of Faith.

Prophet Isa is such an influential figure among both Muslims and Christians that it is possible for Muslims and Christians across the globe to build bridges of understanding, tolerance, and shared values through their love for this prophet.

Lesson 2

Isa never referred to himself as God

In both the Christian Gospels, what Muslims refer to as the *Injeel*, and in the sources of Islam, Isa never called himself God (Allah) or taught that he was anything other than a Prophet or Messenger from Allah to the people of Israel. Isa taught his followers to pray to God only, not to himself. Nor did he indicate that anyone should pray in his name.

The first of the ten commandments revealed to Prophet Moses (Musa) was Deuteronomy:4, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord". This was reiterated and endorsed by Isa in the Gospel of Mark (12:28 & 29). "And one of the scribes came, and ... asked him, which is the first commandment of all? And Isa answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.'"

In the Quran, Prophet Isa says, "... 'I have come to you with wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some of the (points) on which you dispute. Therefore, fear Allah and obey me. Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path.'" (Quran 43:63)

In the words from the King James Bible, when one of Isa's disciples asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." He replied, "When you pray, say: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us the wrong we have done as we forgive those who wrong us. Subject us not to the trial but deliver us from the evil one.'" (Luke 11:1-4, Matthew 6:9-13)

Isa was teaching his followers what Christianity refers to as "The Lord's Prayer", a prayer that Christians esteem in much the same way as Muslims think of the opening chapter of Quran, *Al-Fatihah*.

Lesson 3

A brotherly bond exists between Prophets Isa and Muhammad

Like Isa son of Mary, the Prophet Muhammad came to confirm the message of all the Prophets before him; he called the people to worship the One God. In his *Sunnah* Prophet Muhammad refers to the relationship that exists between all of the prophets of Allah as a brotherhood. But when he spoke about Prophet Isa, he said: *"I am nearest to the son of Mary in this world and the Hereafter. There is no prophet between him and me."*^[1]

He also said, *"Whoever testifies that there is none worthy of being worshipped but God, Who has no partner, and that Muhammad is His slave and Prophet, and that Jesus is the Slave of God, His Prophet, and His word^[2] which He bestowed in Mary and a spirit created from Him; and that Paradise (Heaven) is true, and that the Hellfire is true, God will eventually admit him into Paradise, according to his deeds."*^[3]

God says in the Quran: **"Jesus, Son of Mary, is only a Messenger of Allah, and a fulfilment of His command, 'Be', which He conveyed to Mary, and he is a soul from Him, like the souls of the rest of humans."**^[4]

Lesson 4

Social justice

Both Prophets Muhammad and Isahad strong and uncompromising visions of social justice. They both fought against inequalities and injustices in their respective societies, and they were both ardent defenders of the poor, widows, and orphans.

Prophet Muhammad said, *"The one who looks after and helps a widow or a poor person, is like a warrior fighting for Allah's Cause or like a person who fasts during the day and prays all the night."*^[5]

***"Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakah] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler – an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise."* (Quran 9:60)**

Prophet Isa also spoke out frequently on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged. The famous Sermon on the Mount is one example: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." (Luke 6:20-21)

In the gospel of Matthew, 25:31-46, Prophet Isa suggests that his followers will be known and judged by their actions of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and

visiting the sick and imprisoned. Isa says that whenever one performs one of these actions to the “least” of his brethren, it is as if he were performing it for the Prophet himself.

Prophet Isa’s sense of charity and justice is extraordinarily similar to the social justice taught and practiced by Prophet Muhammad.

Footnotes:

[1] Saheeh Al-Bukhari

[2] Allah created him through His statement, “Be!”

[3] Ibid

[4] Jesus was created by the word ‘Be’ from Allah. He never was the word itself. Allah describes this as ‘a spirit or a soul from Him’ to give him an air of honor. In other words, describing Jesus as the spirit of Allah is only a figure of speech.

[5] Ibid

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