

What Lutherans Believe

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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A (very) Brief Comparison of Islam and Christianity

The Bible, Scripture

(Citations are from BibleGateway.com, ClearQuran.com, and Quran.com)

From Wikipedia:

The **Islamic view of the Christian Bible**, which Christians hold to be revelations from God, is based on the belief that the Qur'an says that parts of Bible are a revelation from Allah (God), but believe that some of it has become distorted or corrupted (tahrif), and that a lot of text has been added which was not part of the revelation.

Muslims believe the Qur'an, which Muslims hold to be a revelation to the Islamic prophet Muhammad, was given as a remedy and that it identifies three sets of books from the Bible as genuine divine revelation given to trusted messengers: the Tawrat (Torah) given to Musa (Moses), the Zabur (Psalms) given to Daud (David) and the Injil (Gospel) given to Isa (Jesus). They believe that the Qur'an, these books, and the Suhuf Ibrahim ("Scrolls of Abraham", which they believe is currently lost) together constitute Islam's scripture. Belief that this scripture is divinely inspired is one of Islam's fundamental tenets.

- Christianity believes 2 Timothy 3:16 and Revelation 22:18-19

The Nature of God

Islam is anti-Trinitarian:

- "I bear witness that there is no God but the Almighty God and that Mohammad is a messenger of God." (Quran, Sura 3:64)
- "For God hath said, 'Take not to yourselves two Gods, for He is one God.'" (Sura 16:53)
- "Verily God will not forgive the union of other gods with Himself." (Sura 4:51)
- Claims that Christians believe in three Gods - Father, Mother, and Son. (Sura 5:114, 116)

Christianity is Trinitarian:

- God speaks Himself in the plural. (Genesis 1:26, Isaiah 6:8, etc., etc., etc.)

- God speaks of the creation of “them” being in His image (Genesis 1:27)
- The Bible is full of passages that attest to the Trinity of God (Can you name some New Testament verses?)

The Nature of Mohammed

Both Islam and Christianity cite this verse:

- "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not give heed to My words which he shall speak in My name, I, Myself, will require it of him." (Deuteronomy 18:18, 19)
 - Christians know this refers to Jesus; Islam believes it is referring to Mohammed
- Islam believes that "Mohammad... is the messenger of God and the *Khatam* (seal, closure, end, or last) of the prophets..." (Sura 33:40)
- "The Prophet Mohammad said to his cousin Ali: 'Thy position from me compares to the position of Aaron from Moses, but there will be no prophet after me.'" (Hadith)
- Islam does not address Revelation 22:18-19, believing that it is *tahrif*, corruptions added to the Bible by enemies of Islam

Christianity considers Mohammed to be a false prophet, and ascribes no value to his work or person. This is, of course, offensive to Muslim sensibilities.

The Nature of Jesus

Islam believes:

- Jesus was a prophet, like Moses, Abraham, and Noah.
- Mohammad and the Arabs are descendants of Ishmael, which Islam claims Jesus said by their interpretation of Matthew 21:42-44 would supersede the Israelite nation.
- "The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was no more than Allah's apostle and His Word which He cast to Mary; a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His apostles and do not say: 'Three.' ...Allah is but one God..." (Sura 4:171)
- "...Then Allah will say: 'Jesus, the son of Mary, did you ever say to mankind: 'Worship me and my mother as gods beside Allah?'" (Sura 5:114)
- "It is not meet for God to have children." (Sura 19:92)

- "He begets not, nor he is begotten, and there is none like unto him." (Sura 112:3)
- "No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with him. [if so] then behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others! Glory to Allah! from things they attribute to Him." (Sura 23:91)
- Muhammad pointed to many biblical prophecies of Jesus' coming. Surah 3:38–48 speaks of angels informing Zechariah (John the Baptist's father) about Jesus' imminent birth. The Quran records that upon his visiting the virgin Mary, Zechariah tells her the unborn baby is sent by God and even states that He would be "the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, who will be held in honor in this world and in the next" (3:45). Interestingly, although the Quran rejects that Jesus was the "Son of God" (Surah 19:35), the Quran *does* teach Jesus' resurrection, that Jesus said He would be "raised to life again" (Surah 19:33–34). But there is no notion in Islam of Jesus being a Savior or Redeemer of God's people.

Christianity believes:

- Jesus was more than a prophet; He is literally God. (Matthew 17:5; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; Philippians 2:6; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 4:15)
- Jesus Himself claimed to be God. (John 4:26; 8:23; 10:30; 13:13; 14:7-10)
- The deity of Jesus Christ is ascribed to Him in how He is named throughout Scripture - "Alpha and Omega," "Immanuel", "My Lord and my God," and He possessed all the attributes of God: omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, immutability, etc.
- "He was God manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16)
- "...For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9)
- "...God was in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19)
- Jesus is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person..." (Hebrews 1:3)
- Jesus Christ *acted* as God:
 - He accepted worship. (Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 18:26; 28:9, 17; Mark 5:6; Luke 24:52; John 5:22, 23; John 9:38)
 - He forgave sins. (Matthew 9:6; Mark 2:7)

Salvation

The need for salvation, and the hope of life after death, are core themes in both the Quran and the Bible. But as we've seen above, the two books are completely incompatible in their understandings of Jesus Christ. The Quran teaches that Jesus was neither God nor the Son of God but was simply a prophet. This is such an important

Islamic tenet that the assertion that God “begets not” (taken from Surah 112:3) was inscribed on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem toward the end of the seventh century ad. While the Quran points to Jesus as sent from God, the Christian Bible is unique in presenting salvation as coming through God who became flesh.

In the Bible Jesus proclaimed that He was “the way, the truth and the life” and that “no one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). Furthermore, the Bible condemns the notion of salvation through any other than Jesus Christ: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Job expressed his hope of being resurrected to “see God” when his Redeemer would stand “at last on the earth” (cf. Job 19:25–26). Jesus proclaimed that He would spend three days and three nights in the tomb, just as Jonah had spent three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish (Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:39–40).

Christ appeared to multitudes after His death and resurrection (Mark 16; Luke 24:36–51; Acts 1:3). The Apostles, especially Peter and Paul, proclaimed that Jesus Christ was indeed resurrected from the dead (Acts 2:22–24; 1 Corinthians 15:1–8).

John 1 tells us that “the Word was God,” that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” that Jesus Christ was the Word and that grace and truth came through Him. The Christian Bible declares that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament—the “Rock” whom Israel followed in the wilderness, who spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai (1 Corinthians 10:4). The Bible makes plain that the Word came in the flesh, born of a virgin, and any who “do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh” are labeled “a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 John 7). John records that rejection of the Word made flesh was a deceit “already in the world” even during his time (1 John 4:3).

The Quran teaches the fear of Allah, who will send sinners to the fire of hell. Yet it offers no Savior whose atonement can do what sinning human beings cannot do for themselves. The Quran promises “the fire of hell as a permanent home” for those who reject Islam (Surah 9:68), even while acknowledging that Jesus was sent by God, and as such was to be believed and obeyed.

Christ’s clear message, recorded in the same canonized Bible praised by Muhammad and the Quran, is that He alone, as the Son of God and the Messiah, is the only hope for all of humanity to receive salvation and eternal life. It is through Christ alone that salvation is available to all who do “the work of God”, that is to believe in His Son whom He sent to save us (John 6:29). We have a Savior!