



BUREAU OF FUTURE WATCH

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FIELD STUDY

Jesus: Who He Is and Why It Matters

A Study Prepared for Muslims & Christians Who Seek the Truth

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From The Desk Of The Director

Islam and Christianity both hold Jesus in high regard. The Quran calls Him 'Isa, describes His virgin birth, names Him a prophet, a word from God, and a spirit from God, and affirms that He performed miraculous healings and raised the dead.

No sincere Muslim doubts that Jesus was a remarkable figure in history.

This study was written with careful consideration towards Islam and every Muslim who reads it. Not as a challenge to your sincerity, and not as an attempt to pull you away from your reverence for God. It is written because the question of who Jesus is sits at the centre of the most important conversation two people of faith can have. It is a question that deserves a serious, honest, and respectful examination rather than a dismissal from either side.

You will find no contempt in these pages. Islam's commitment to the holiness of God, its seriousness about how life before Him ought to be lived. In fact, they are the common ground from which the conversation begins.

What this study does ask is that you weigh the evidence presented here with the same honesty you would want applied to your own tradition. Not because you were told what to conclude, but because you searched it out for yourself and arrived at a confidence you can actually stand on. That is the only kind of faith worth having, and it is the spirit in which every study produced by the Bureau of Future Watch is written.

The question at the centre of this study is simple: Who is Jesus?

We will examine what He said about Himself, what the ancient prophecies said about Him centuries before He arrived, how those who walked with Him willingly paid with their lives for believing Him, and what His death and resurrection mean for every person who has ever asked what happens after we die.

Please read it carefully and examine each claim I make. This will ensure the conclusion belongs to you.



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The Path to God

A Desire Written Into Every Human Heart

Before this study examines the specific claims of Christianity about Jesus, it is worth pausing to name something both traditions share. The Muslim who loves *Sharia* and the Christian who walks in *sanctification* are both motivated by the same desire: to be near God. To live in a way that reflects His holiness, and to close the distance between what we are and what He is.

This desire is something written into human beings at the level of creation itself. It is not religious conditioning or cultural inheritance, though both of those shape how it is expressed. Augustine of Hippo, writing in the fourth century, put it this way: '*You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.*' The restlessness is found in *every* heart. The question is not whether human beings seek God, rather, what it costs to reach Him, and who pays it.

This study is written with respect for the seriousness with which Islam takes that question. A tradition that structures daily life around five prayers, that shapes law and community and personal conduct around *submission* to God, is a tradition that has not forgotten what is at stake. This seriousness deserves to be met with equal seriousness, not with contempt. The argument of this study is not that Islam is careless. It is that the path Islam offers and the path the Gospel offers rest on completely opposite foundations. And those foundations lead to completely different destinations.

The Same Tradition, the Same Stumbling Block

Islam and Judaism share more than is often acknowledged. Both are built on divine law. Both structure the relationship between God and humanity around obedience, submission, and the mercy of God at judgment. Both look back to Abraham as the father of faith. Both honour the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures. And both, in the end, arrive at the same point of departure from the Christian Gospel: the rejection of Jesus as the fulfillment of everything the law was pointing toward.

This is not a small difference. It is a fundamental disagreement about what God has done in history. The Torah was not the destination. The prophets said so repeatedly when they wrote, a new covenant was coming, written not on stone but on the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-33). The sacrificial system was not the solution, it served as the annual reminder that the problem remained unsolved, that something greater was required. The law itself, as the Apostle Paul argues in Galatians, was a guardian, a schoolmaster, holding the people of God until the one it was always pointing to arrived.

Galatians 3:24-25

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (KJV)

Both Judaism and Islam, in different ways and from different histories, stopped at the law and concluded that the 'schoolmaster' was the goal. The law is honoured, obeyed, and loved, but the one the law was escorting the world toward is not received. Jesus said it directly to the

religious leaders of His own day: 'You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life' (John 5:39-40). The scriptures were the map. They mistook the map for the destination.

The Muslim reader may feel that this comparison is unfair. Arguing that Islam is not simply a continuation of Judaism, and that the Quran is its own revelation. That is a fair distinction to raise, and I assure you, this study does not collapse the two traditions carelessly. But the structural similarity stands: both build the path to God on human performance measured against divine law, with God's mercy as the deciding factor at the end. That structure, however sincerely held, is what the Gospel of Jesus Christ directly addresses and directly replaces.

The Question of Assurance

Here is where the difference between Islam and Christianity becomes most personal, and most urgent.

In Islamic theology, the believer who dies does not know with certainty what awaits. Allah is merciful 'Al-Rahman, Al-Raheem' and the sincere Muslim trusts in that mercy. But mercy is *not* the same as assurance. The traditional understanding is that even the faithful Muslim may face a period of purification or punishment for sins before paradise is granted, if Allah wills it. The final verdict belongs to God alone, and it is rendered at judgment on the basis of a life fully examined.

That framework, honestly considered, functions as a payment model. The debt incurred by sin is settled through righteous deeds that outweigh the bad, or through a period of reckoning, all judged depending on the sovereign mercy of Allah. In each case, something is owed and something is rendered before the account is closed. Heaven, when it comes, comes after the books are balanced.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ does not improve on that model. It replaces it entirely.

Romans 4:4-5

Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

Paul's argument here is precise. The moment salvation becomes something earned, even partially, or through a period of suffering that settles the remaining debt, it is no longer grace. It has become wages. And wages are owed, they are not given. A God who owes you heaven because you have paid your dues is not a God who is giving you anything.

The Christian is not owed heaven. The Christian receives it freely, completely, on the basis of what Christ has already accomplished. The verdict is not deferred to judgment day, it is declared now to everyone who places their trust in Jesus. '*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*' (Romans 8:1). We are justified in Christ because He is the one who bore the condemnation, and the Father has declared His satisfaction by raising Him from the dead.

The Difference in One Question

Ask a sincere Muslim: 'If you died tonight, do you know with certainty that you would be in paradise?' The honest answer, consistent with Islamic theology, is: I hope so. I trust in Allah's mercy. But I do not know.

Ask a sincere Christian who understands the Gospel: 'If you died tonight, do you know with certainty that you would be with God?' The answer, grounded not in personal merit but in Christ's finished work, is: Yes. Not because of anything I have done, but because of everything He has done.

That difference is not arrogance. It is the direct consequence of two completely different understandings of what salvation is and who provides it.

The Path Has a Name

The Muslim loves Sharia because it is a path toward God. A structured, serious, all-of-life response to the reality of God's holiness and humanity's obligation to live accordingly. That love is understandable. The desire behind it is right. The problem is not the desire. The problem is that no human being has ever walked the path perfectly. And a path toward God that no one can complete is not a path to God at all, it is a path that ends in the question: was it enough?

The Christian answer to that question is not the abolition of the path. It is the arrival of the one who walked it perfectly on our behalf. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17: *'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.'* Every moral, ceremonial, sacrificial requirement of the law was met in Him completely. He did not lower the standard, He satisfied it. And He offers that satisfaction to everyone who comes to Him, not as a reward for effort but as a gift received through faith.

This is why the Christian life after salvation is called sanctification -- the ongoing process of becoming more like the one who already is what we are becoming. The path does not disappear in the Gospel. It is walked in the power of the one who already completed it, by His Spirit living in those who belong to Him. The difference between Sharia and sanctification is not the seriousness of the commitment. It is the source of the power and the certainty of the outcome.

Matthew 5:17

'Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to destroy them but to fulfill.'

The law always needed a fulfiller. The sacrifices always needed a final sacrifice. The path always needed someone who could actually walk it all the way to God and then turn around and say, *'follow Me'*. That is what the rest of this study is about. Not the abolition of the desire to be near God, but understanding and seeing the revelation of the only one who can actually take you there.

Part One: The Evidence for The Deity of Jesus Christ

1.1 The Word Became Flesh

The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation holds that the eternal Son of God took on human flesh and entered creation as the man Jesus of Nazareth. This is not a claim that God became a man, or that a man was elevated to deity. It is the claim that the one who created the universe entered His own creation without ceasing to be what He had always been.

The Gospel of John opens with a deliberate echo of Genesis: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made'* (John 1:1-3). The Word that spoke creation into existence is here identified not as a prophet or a messenger, but as the agent of all creation and as God Himself.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The word translated '*dwelt*' in John 1:14 is literally '*tabernacled*' in the Greek. This is a direct reference to the Tabernacle in the wilderness, where God's glory resided among Israel. John is saying that what the Tabernacle was in type, Jesus is in reality. Jesus is the dwelling place of the living God among his people.

1.2 What Jesus Said About Himself

A common misunderstanding is that the high claims made for Jesus were invented by later followers. The Gospels, however, record Jesus making statements that in the Jewish context of His day constituted direct claims to deity.

In John 8:58, Jesus uses the divine name disclosed to Moses at the burning bush -- 'I AM' -- to describe His own eternal existence: *'Before Abraham was, I am.'* The response of his hearers was immediate: they picked up stones to kill Him for blasphemy. They understood the claim perfectly.

John 8:58-59

Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.' Then they picked up stones to throw at him...

In John 10:30, Jesus states, *'I and the Father are one.'* Again, His Jewish audience responded by taking up stones, explaining: *'for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God'* (John 10:33). The accusation is precise: they understood Him to be claiming *equality* with God.

In John 14:9, speaking to His disciple Philip, Jesus says: *'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.'* Jesus is making it very clear that He is not just a prophet, nor a messenger, but indeed, the one who has seen Jesus has seen the Father.

In Matthew 28:18, the risen Jesus declares: *'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'* This is not the language of a prophet. No prophet in either the Hebrew scriptures or the Quran speaks with this kind of universal and absolute authority.

A Word on the Title 'Son of God'

The Islamic objection to calling Jesus the 'Son of God' often assumes this means God had a physical son through biological reproduction, a notion even Christianity finds offensive and blasphemous.

The biblical meaning is entirely different. 'Son of God' in Hebrew usage is a relational term expressing the nature and character of the relationship. When Jesus is called the Son of God, it expresses eternal, spiritual relationship and ontological equality. It is not referring to physical descent.

Even the Quran uses the Arabic phrase 'kalimatullah' (Word of God) and 'ruhullah' (Spirit of God) for Jesus. These are titles not given to any other prophet. These point toward something uniquely extraordinary about the nature of Jesus.

1.3 The Things Only God Can Do

The preceding section showed that Jesus made extraordinary verbal claims about His own identity. This section moves from what He said to what He did, because the acts of Jesus are in many ways more decisive than His words. Words can be disputed or reinterpreted. Actions operating in a specific theological category are harder to explain away.

Judaism was not confused about which acts belonged to God alone. The Hebrew scriptures are precise on this point. Forgiving sins, giving life, judging the dead, receiving the worship of created beings, and commanding angels. These are divine prerogatives. No prophet exercised them, and no angel claimed them. Jesus exercised all of them, and the people who witnessed it understood exactly what they were seeing.

Forgiving Sins

In Mark 2, Jesus encountered a paralyzed man lowered through a roof by his friends. Rather than healing him immediately, Jesus said: *'Son, your sins are forgiven.'* The scribes sitting nearby responded with precisely the correct theological instinct: *'Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'* (Mark 2:7).

Notice that Jesus did not correct their reasoning. He did not say, 'You have misunderstood, I am speaking on behalf of God.' No, He accepted their logic entirely and then went further: *'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...'* He turned and healed the man (Mark 2:10-11). The miracle was the proof. He was not acting as God's intermediary in forgiving the man's sins. He was exercising His own authority to forgive sins.

Mark 2:7, 10-11

'Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.'

Lord of the Sabbath

The Sabbath is not a human institution. It was established by God at creation (Genesis 2:2-3), embedded in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11), and regulated by God's own repeated instructions throughout the Torah. To say that one was Lord of the Sabbath was to say something that only the Creator who ordained it could legitimately say.

Jesus said it without qualification: 'The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath' (Mark 2:28). The word 'even' is significant. It is not 'the Son of Man may observe the Sabbath differently' or 'the Son of Man has authority to reinterpret the Sabbath.' It unequivocally says, He is lord over it. The Sabbath is His to govern because He is the one who gave it.

Mark 2:27-28

'And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.'

Accepting Worship

The Hebrew and Christian scriptures are unanimous on one point: worship belongs to God alone. When the apostle Peter was bowed to by Cornelius, he immediately refused: '*Stand up; I too am a man*' (Acts 10:26). When the apostle John fell at the feet of an angel in Revelation, the angel stopped him: '*You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you... Worship God*' (Revelation 22:9). Prophets and angels are consistent in that they deflect worship without exception.

Jesus does the opposite. In Matthew 14:33, the disciples in the boat '*worshiped him, saying, Truly you are the Son of God.*' No correction given. In Matthew 28:9, the women who encountered the risen Jesus '*came and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.*' Again, there is no correction for their actions. In John 9:38, the man born blind, when he understood who Jesus was, said, '*Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him.*' Jesus does not stop him.

The pattern is deliberate and theologically precise. Jesus knew exactly what worship was and to whom it was owed. His consistent acceptance of it is not an oversight on His part; He used it to demonstrate His divinity.

The Comparative Silence

Every other significant figure in the New Testament who was offered worship or divine honour refused it.

Peter: '*Stand up; I too am a man.*' (Acts 10:26)

Barnabas and Paul: '*We also are men, of like nature with you.*' (Acts 14:15)

The Angel to John: '*You must not do that! Worship God.*' (Revelation 22:9)

Jesus: silence, acceptance, and the words 'Do not be afraid'. This is the response of someone who belongs in the position being ascribed to him.

Authority Over Life

In the Hebrew scriptures, the power to give and take life belongs exclusively to God. Deuteronomy 32:39: *'I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.'* This is presented as a defining divine attribute.

In John 5:21, Jesus says: *'For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.'* He is not saying He channels God's power like a prophet might. He is saying He exercises the *same* authority the Father exercises, on His own initiative, according to His own will: *'to whom he will.'* In John 11, the raising of Lazarus is not presented as a prayer answered by God acting through Jesus. Jesus commands: *'Lazarus, come out'* (John 11:43). His own word raises the dead.

John 5:21

'For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.'

Authority to Judge the World

Judaism and Islam agree: the final judgment of humanity belongs to God. The Quran is explicit on this point, *'The judgment belongs only to Allah'* (Surah 6:57). The Hebrew scriptures return to this theme repeatedly: *'for God himself is judge'* (Psalm 50:6).

Jesus claims this authority for Himself. In John 5:22: *'The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.'* In John 5:27: *'And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.'* In Matthew 25:31-32, Jesus describes the final judgment in the first person: *'When the Son of Man comes in his glory... all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another.'*

He does not describe Himself as an agent executing God's judgment on God's behalf. He describes himself as the judge before whom all of humanity stands. In the Hebrew prophetic framework, that position belongs to one person: the LORD God of Israel. (YHWH)

John 5:22-23

'For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.'

Authority Over Angels

In Matthew 13:41, Jesus speaks of the final harvest of history: *'The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers.'* He does not say God's angels, He says His angels, from His kingdom. In Matthew 24:31: *'And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call.'*

In Jewish theology, angels are the servants of God. The Hebrew word *'malakh'* means messenger, and angels serve as agents of the divine will. For Jesus to speak of the angelic host

as His own, dispatched by His own authority from His own kingdom, is to speak the language of the One who commands them, not the language of a prophet through whom they might operate.

Sending the Holy Spirit

In John 15:26, Jesus says: *'But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.'* And in John 16:7: *'Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.'*

No prophet in the Hebrew scriptures, and no prophet recognized by Islam, ever claims to send the Spirit of God anywhere. The Spirit blows where it wills; prophets receive it, they do not dispatch it. Jesus claims the authority to send the Holy Spirit as His own gift to His followers from His own position of authority with the Father. This is not prophetic language. It is the language of One who shares in the divine governance of reality.

John 16:7

'Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.'

The Alpha and the Omega: First and Last

In Isaiah 44:6, God declares: *'I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.'* In Isaiah 48:12: *'I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.'* This title -- First and Last -- is one of the most exclusive divine self-identifications in the Hebrew scriptures. It places the one speaking outside of created time entirely. Nothing preceded him and nothing will follow him.

In Revelation 1:17-18, the risen Jesus says to John: *'Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.'* In Revelation 22:13, he says: *'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'*

The title that Isaiah applies exclusively to Yahweh, the God of Israel, Jesus applies to Himself. He is not borrowing the title loosely or poetically. He is making a direct identification. He is expressly saying, whoever the God of Isaiah is, I am that one.

Isaiah 44:6 / Revelation 22:12-13

'I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.' (Isaiah 44:6) -- *'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'* (Revelation 22:13)

Daniel 7: The Strongest Argument in the Bible

Of all the texts that illuminate the identity of Jesus, Daniel 7 may be the most powerful and the most frequently overlooked in Christian-Muslim dialogue. It is powerful because it predates Jesus by over five centuries and because the scene it describes is one that Jesus explicitly and repeatedly used to describe Himself.

In Daniel's vision (Daniel 7:9-14), the Ancient of Days takes his seat on a throne of fire. Ten thousand thousands serve him. The heavenly court sits in judgment. Then:

Daniel 7:13-14

*'I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, One like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one
Which shall not be destroyed.'*

Four details in this passage demand careful attention.

The Son of Man. This figure is described as *'one like a son of man'* read this as in a human form. But He comes *'with the clouds of heaven.'* In the Hebrew scriptures, cloud-riding is consistently a divine activity. Psalm 104:3: God *'makes the clouds his chariot.'* Isaiah 19:1: *'Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud.'* Deuteronomy 33:26: *'he rides through the heavens to your help.'* The cloud imagery marks this figure as divine in character even while appearing human in form.

Presented to the Ancient of Days. This is not a human being elevated by merit. This is a second divine figure presented before the first. The scene is one of two majestic beings in the heavenly throne room, one receiving an eternal kingdom from the other. The early Jewish community understood this as describing two divine figures. An understanding that makes this passage so theologically charged.

Universal, eternal worship. *'All peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.'* The Hebrew word *'pelach'* used here in Aramaic is the same word used for worship offered to God. This is not political allegiance. It is the worship of all humanity directed at this Son of Man figure. Given that both testaments insist worship belongs to God alone, the recipient of this universal worship can only be identified as *divine*.

The everlasting kingdom. His dominion *'shall not pass away'* and His kingdom *'shall not be destroyed.'* Every human kingdom falls. The Persian Empire followed Babylon. Greece followed Persia. Rome followed Greece. The only kingdom described in scripture as indestructible and eternal is the kingdom of God Himself.

Now consider what Jesus does with this passage. In Mark 14:61-62, while on trial He was asked directly by the high priest: *'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?'* Jesus answers: *'I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'* He answers a question about His identity by *quoting* Daniel 7 and placing Himself in the role of the cloud-riding Son of Man who receives eternal dominion.

The high priest's response is immediate and unambiguous: *'And the high priest tore his garments and said, What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy'* (Mark 14:63-64). The Sanhedrin condemned Him on the basis of this statement. They were not confused about what He was claiming. They completely understood Daniel 7. They understood that the Son of Man in that vision was a divine figure, and they understood that Jesus was claiming to be Him!

Mark 14:61-64

'Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy!"

Why the Blasphemy Charge Makes Sense

Under Jewish law, blasphemy was not simply speaking disrespectfully of God. It was the claim by a human being to occupy a position that belonged to God alone.

The Sanhedrin did not accuse Jesus of blasphemy because He was a good teacher who overstated his case. They accused Him because He repeatedly, systematically, and publicly claimed divine prerogatives (forgiving sins, receiving worship, exercising final judgment, commanding angels, and identifying Himself as the cloud-riding Son of Man of Daniel 7.)

If Jesus was merely a prophet or a teacher, the blasphemy charge makes no sense. Prophets were not charged with blasphemy for delivering God's messages.

The blasphemy charge is itself evidence. It tells us exactly what those closest to the situation understood Jesus to be claiming.

The sum of these divine prerogatives is not a collection of remarkable prophetic acts. It is a portrait of someone operating from a position that belongs, by the unanimous testimony of the Hebrew scriptures, to God alone. Jesus forgave sins on His own authority. He accepted worship without correction. He claimed lordship over the Sabbath. He said he gives life to whom he will. He described Himself as the judge of all humanity. He spoke of the angels as His own. He claimed to send the Spirit of God. He applied to himself the divine title 'First and Last' that Isaiah reserved for Yahweh. And He walked into the court of the Sanhedrin and placed Himself in the throne-room vision of Daniel 7.

These are not the acts of a prophet. They are the acts of the One the prophets were pointing to.

1.4 The Testimony of His Disciples

The disciples of Jesus were devout Jews who had been raised with the strictest possible commitment to monotheism. Their willingness to ascribe divine honours to Jesus is therefore the most striking testimony available. These were not pagans comfortable with many gods. They were men who had been formed by the Shema: *'Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one.'*

Thomas, the disciple who demanded physical proof of the resurrection before he would believe, was given that proof. His response was not *'My Lord and my teacher.'* It was: *'My Lord and my God'* (John 20:28). Jesus did not correct him.

The Apostle Paul, writing within twenty years of the crucifixion -- well within the lifetime of eyewitnesses -- describes Jesus as *'the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth... all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together'* (Colossians 1:15-17).

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews opens with: *'He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power'* (Hebrews 1:3). Not a messenger who carries a word from God. The one who upholds the universe by His own word.

Part Two: The Son Working With the Father

2.1 The Incarnation: What It Actually Claims

Before addressing the questions Muslim readers most naturally raise about Jesus, such as how He could pray, how He could obey, and how He could be sent, it is necessary to establish precisely what the Incarnation claims. Many objections to Christian theology are actually objections to a version of Christianity that Christians themselves do not hold.

The Incarnation does not claim that God changed into a man. It does not claim that a human being was elevated into a deity. It claims something more precise and more philosophically demanding: that the eternal Son of God, who had existed as God from before creation, voluntarily took on a fully human nature without abandoning or diminishing His divine nature. Two natures. One person. This is the settled position of historic Christianity, and it is the lens through which every apparently problematic statement of Jesus must be read.

The New Testament articulates this in three passages that deserve careful examination.

Philippians 2: The Descent

Philippians 2:6-8

'Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.'

This passage, which most New Testament scholars identify as a pre-Pauline hymn already circulating in the early church, describes a movement from above to below. The Son existed *'in the form of God'*, the Greek word *morphe* indicates the essential nature of a thing, not just the appearance. He possessed equality with God not as something seized or striven after, but as His own rightful possession. The key thing to examine is that there is no removal of divinity; rather, *Jesus takes on*, meaning He adds to Himself the form of humanity. By doing this, He removes nothing.

Then He *'emptied himself.'* The Greek word is *kenosis*, and it has generated significant theological discussion. What did He empty Himself of? The text is precise: he emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant and being born in human likeness. The emptying is not the abandonment of deity, it is the addition of humanity, as we have just shown above. He did not become less than God. He became something more than He had been in His mode of existence; He became God in human flesh, accepting all the limitations, vulnerabilities, and experiences that human nature entails.

This is why the Son could grow tired (John 4:6), feel hunger (Matthew 4:2), weep at a tomb (John 11:35), and ultimately die. These are the experiences of human nature He genuinely assumed. They are not performances or weaknesses that expose a reduced deity. They are the authentic consequences of the Incarnation.

Hebrews 1: The Eternal Glory He Never Abandoned

Hebrews 1:2-3

'...His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...'

Hebrews 1 holds both realities simultaneously. The same Son who made purification for sins by dying on a cross in human flesh is the one through whom God created the world and who upholds the universe by His word. The human and the eternal divine are not in competition. They belong to the same person.

The phrase *'exact imprint of his nature'* uses the Greek word *charakter*, the impression made by a seal, the precise reproduction of the original. The Son does not simply reflect God's glory from a distance, as a prophet might reflect divine wisdom, He is the radiance of that glory. He is what God's glory looks like when it shines outward. To see the Son is not to receive a message from God, it is to encounter God Himself.

Colossians 2: Fullness in a Body

Colossians 2:9

'For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily'

This single verse is among the most compact and decisive statements in the New Testament. It is not a portion of deity, not a divine influence or anointing, it is the whole fullness of deity! It shows us the complete and undivided Godhead dwelling in bodily form in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul wrote this to a community facing pressure from teachers who proposed various intermediary beings between God and humanity. They saw it as a spiritual hierarchy through which divine reality was filtered down to the material world. His response was direct: there are no rungs on that ladder between God and Jesus. The fullness is there, in the body, without remainder.

2.2 Answering the Three Objections

With the Incarnation properly understood, there are three questions that Muslim readers commonly raise, resolve themselves not as problems but as confirmations of the doctrine.

How Can God Pray?

If Jesus is God, why does he pray? Does God pray to Himself? The question arises if one imagines the Incarnation as God wearing a human mask. But the Incarnation claims something different: the Son *genuinely* took on human nature, including the human creature's posture of *dependence* on God. In His human nature, Jesus prayed. The prayer is real, as is the dependence. It is this dependence of human nature that the Son assumed, not to be mistaken as evidence that the Son is less than divine.

The high priestly prayer of John 17 is the most extended example. Jesus prays for His disciples, for those who will believe through their message, and for the completion of the work the Father gave Him. But notice what frames the prayer:

John 17:1-5

'Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.'

The prayer of John 17 does not contradict the deity of Jesus. It illuminates the reality of the Incarnation: the eternal Son, genuinely clothed in human experience, speaking from within it to the Father He had never ceased to be in communion with. And this pre-existent glory was not merely a status Jesus held; it was inseparable from a purpose He had carried before creation itself. Peter writes that Jesus *'was foreknown before the foundation of the world'* as the one who would give His life as a ransom (1 Peter 1:20). The cross was not a crisis that required a solution. It was the plan, settled in eternity, before the world had a history to redeem. The one praying in John 17 is not a man hoping to be exalted. He is the eternal Redeemer, who stepped into the created world to accomplish what had been purposed before time began, now asking the Father to bring Him home.

A Comparison That Helps

Consider a king who voluntarily enters a prison to understand the experience of his prisoners from the inside. While inside, he eats prison food, wears prison clothes, and lives under prison rules. If someone from outside sends him a message, he receives it as a prisoner receives it.

Has he ceased to be a king? No. Is his experience of the prison real? Yes. Is his reception of the message genuine? Yes.

The Incarnation is infinitely more profound than this illustration allows, but the structure is similar. The Son's prayers are the genuine prayers of one who has entered human experience fully and lives it from the inside, without ceasing to be who he has always been.

How Can God Obey?

In John 5:19, Jesus says: *'The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.'* In John 6:38: *'For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.'* These statements sound, to a Muslim reader, like the submission of a servant to a master. The exact language one expects from a prophet, not from God.

But obedience and subordination of nature are not the same thing. Within the eternal Godhead, the Son relates to the Father in a relationship of love, not compulsion. The obedience described in the Gospels is the obedience of the Incarnation. The Son, in human nature, doing what the eternal relationship between Father and Son has always involved: the Son acting in perfect accord with the Father's will, not because He is forced to, but because He and the Father are one.

Philippians 2 describes this obedience as chosen: He *'humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.'* The obedience is not a constraint imposed on a lesser being. It is the free self-giving of the eternal Son, expressed through the human nature He freely assumed. The Incarnation does not create the obedience; it gives the obedience a visible, human form.

John 5:19-20

'Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.'

The relationship described here is not a hierarchy in the sense of a superior commanding an inferior. It is the language of intimate, mutual knowledge and love. The Father shows the Son everything He is doing, not as an instruction issued to a servant, but as the natural sharing between two who are one. This is relational language, not subordinate language. It describes the eternal communion of the Trinity, now made visible through the life of the incarnate Son.

How Can God Be Sent?

The Gospel of John uses the language of sending repeatedly. Jesus speaks of the Father as *'him who sent me'* more than thirty times. Muslim readers reasonably ask: if Jesus is God, how is He sent? Sending implies a sender who is greater, a messenger who is lesser.

The answer again lies in the distinction between eternal nature and Incarnational role. To be sent is not to be diminished. An ambassador sent by a president carries the full authority of the office of the president. The sending defines the mission, not the status of the one sent.

The sending of the Son is not evidence of lesser nature, it is the mechanism of the Incarnation itself. The eternal Son, who shares the divine nature fully, enters human history through the Father's initiative and the Son's willing agreement. He did not count equality with God something to be held onto, but emptied Himself by taking on human flesh. The sending is the expression of that self-giving love, not a demotion in rank. John 3:16 frames it most clearly: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son." The giving and the sending are acts of love within the Godhead reaching outward toward humanity, not a chain of command descending through beings of unequal nature.

John 3:16-17

'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.'

The sending is the expression of love between Father and Son, reaching outward toward humanity. It is not evidence of inequality. It is evidence of the kind of God the New Testament reveals: a God whose inner life is relational, whose love is not solitary, and who enters history not as a force or a message but as a person.

2.3 Unity Without Confusion

The Incarnation creates a genuine theological tension that Christianity has never minimized: the eternal Son of God became fully human while remaining fully divine. Two natures in one person. This is not a comfortable resolution. It is not meant to be. It is the honest description of what the evidence requires.

Jesus is simultaneously the One who says *'the Father is greater than I'* (John 14:28 - speaking from within His human nature, in His role as the sent One) and the One who says *'I and the Father are one'* (John 10:30 - speaking of His essential divine nature). Both statements are true and not in contradiction, for they describe the same person from two different angles: the angle of the Incarnation, and the angle of the eternal Godhead.

The unity Jesus describes in John 17, *'that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you'*, is the template for Christian community precisely because it is first a description of the divine reality. The unity of Father and Son is not the unity of agreement between two separate beings who happen to hold the same views. It is the unity of shared nature, shared life, and shared love that has existed from before creation.

John 10:30, 38

'I and My Father are one.'... 'believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him.'

For the Muslim reader who is accustomed to thinking of God's absolute unity (*tawhid*) as the exclusion of all internal differentiation, this will remain a point of genuine theological difference. Christianity is not asking that difference to be dissolved. It is asking that the evidence of the prophetic testimony, the acts of Jesus, the early community's consistent witness, and the words of Jesus himself be weighed honestly before the verdict is reached.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the same God Jesus called Father, is, according to the New Testament, not a solitary divine monad but an eternal community of love. And the Incarnation is the moment that community opened outward to include humanity within it.

Part Three: The Messianic Prophecies

3.1 The Logic of Prediction

One of the most powerful lines of evidence for the identity of Jesus is the body of Messianic prophecy found in the Hebrew scriptures. These are the books that predate the birth of Jesus by centuries and millennia. These texts describe a coming figure whose characteristics, circumstances, and mission align with the life of Jesus with such precision that it is mathematically extraordinary.

A Muslim who takes the divine inspiration of prophecy seriously should be willing to examine this evidence. If God inspired prophets to foretell the future, then a series of specific fulfilled predictions is exactly what we would expect to find as authenticating evidence for the one those prophecies point to.

3.2 Key Prophecies and Their Fulfillment

What follows is a small selection of prophecies, their source texts in the Hebrew scriptures (the Tanakh), and their fulfillment in the life of Jesus. These are not vague or general predictions. They are specific.

Born of a Virgin in Bethlehem

Isaiah 7:14 (written c. 735 BC)

'Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.'

Micah 5:2 (written c. 700 BC)

'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me, The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.'

Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 record the fulfillment: Jesus born of a virgin in Bethlehem. The Quran itself confirms the virgin birth of 'Isa (Surah 19:20-21, Surah 3:47). The two traditions agree on the miracle of His birth.

The Entry into Jerusalem on a Donkey

Zechariah 9:9 (written c. 520 BC)

*'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'*

The fulfillment is recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12). Jesus deliberately arranged His entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, and the crowd responded with the language of Psalm 118: *'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'* The prophecy had been awaited for five centuries.

Betrayed for Thirty Pieces of Silver

Zechariah 11:12-13 (written c. 520 BC)

'Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.'

Matthew 26:14-15 records Judas Iscariot negotiating a price of exactly thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus. Matthew 27:3-8 records that when Judas tried to return the money, the chief priests refused to put it in the temple treasury, purchased a potter's field with it, and it became a burial ground. The specificity here, the thirty pieces of silver, thrown in the temple, used to buy a potter's field, combined do not yield to coincidence.

Pierced Hands and Feet

Psalms 22:16-18 (written c. 1000 BC)

*'For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.
They pierced My hands and My feet;
I can count all My bones.
They look and stare at Me.
They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.'*

This psalm was written approximately 1,000 years before the death of Jesus and describes in detail crucifixion, a method of execution that did not exist in David's time. The piercing of hands and feet, the public exposure, the casting of lots for clothing, all recorded as fulfilled in the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion (Matthew 27, John 19).

No Bones Broken

Psalm 34:20 / Exodus 12:46

'He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken..' (Psalm 34:20) 'Nor shall you break one of its bones.' (Exodus 12:46 -- the Passover lamb command)

The Roman practice during crucifixion was to break the legs of victims to hasten death. John 19:33 records that the soldiers who were given the command to do just that, found Jesus already dead and therefore did not break His legs. This fulfills both the specific detail of Psalm 34 and the typological pattern of the Passover lamb, whose bones were not to be broken.

Part Four: No One Took His Life -- He Laid It Down

4.1 The Islamic Position on the Crucifixion

Surah 4:157 states: *'And [for] their saying, 'Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.' And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.'*

The mainstream Islamic interpretation is therefore that Jesus did not die on the cross. A substitute was killed in His place, or He was rescued, and God raised Him up to heaven alive.

This is a sincere position held by millions of Muslims. But it creates an immediate problem: it requires that God deceived the eyewitnesses of the crucifixion, deceived the disciples who mourned His death, and deceived the early community whose entire message centred on a real death and a real resurrection.

4.2 John 10:17-18 and the Voluntary Death

Well before the crucifixion, Jesus made a statement that reframes the entire event. He was not a victim. He was not captured, overpowered, and killed against His will. He explicitly stated that no one had the power to take His life -- only he had the authority to lay it down!

John 10:17-18

'Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.'

This passage deserves careful attention. Jesus says three things: First, the death is voluntary, He lays it down, no one takes it. Second, the death is purposeful; it is the ground of the Father's love and the Son's obedience. Third, He has authority over both the death and the resurrection! *'I have authority to take it up again.'*

These are not the words of a man who would flee the cross or be rescued from it. They are the words of someone who understood His death as the central act of His mission, chosen freely, and accomplishable only by One who had authority over life and death.

4.3 The Weight of Historical Evidence

The historical evidence for the death of Jesus by crucifixion is exceptionally strong. Much stronger, in fact, than for many events of the ancient world that are not disputed.

The Roman historian Tacitus, writing around AD 116, mentions the execution of Christus under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius -- a hostile source with no theological interest in affirming the Christian account. The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the 90s AD, refers to the crucifixion in terms most scholars accept as at least partially authentic. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, dated to approximately AD 54-55, contains a creedal statement that scholars believe was transmitted to Paul within just a few years of the crucifixion itself:

'that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day' (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

This is what we as Christians preach today as the Gospel message.

The disciples did not go into hiding, proclaiming a substitution theory. They proclaimed a dead and risen Messiah! This was a message for which many of them were eventually killed. People do not die defending a belief they know to be a misunderstanding.

1 Corinthians 15:14, 17

'And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!'

Paul here stakes everything on a real death and a real bodily resurrection. The resurrection is not a spiritual event in his theology; he teaches it as the vindication of the crucifixion. The Father's public declaration that the sacrifice was accepted.

Part Five: Did Paul Corrupt Christianity?

5.1 The Islamic Argument Against Paul

One of the most common objections raised by Muslim apologists goes like this: Jesus was a prophet who taught the pure monotheism of Islam. His original followers preserved this teaching. But Paul of Tarsus, who never met Jesus in the flesh, invented the theology of the divine Christ, corrupted the original message, and replaced Islam with a new religion.

This argument is presented with confidence in Muslim apologetics, but does not survive scrutiny when measured against the actual historical record. We will address it point by point.

Before examining the argument, let's first address why Paul was chosen instead of someone else, a question that is rarely raised: why Paul?

There were many in Jerusalem who shared his hostility toward the early followers of Jesus. The Sanhedrin itself had sanctioned the persecution. Other Pharisees held the same convictions with equal intensity. Why did the risen Jesus appear to this particular man on the road to Damascus?

The answer, when examined carefully, looks less like coincidence and more like design. Paul was not merely a devout Jew. He was, by his own account, a Pharisee trained under Gamaliel -- one of the most distinguished rabbinic teachers of the era (Acts 22:3). He describes his standing in the tradition as exceptional: *'circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee... as to righteousness under the law, blameless'* (Philippians 3:5-6). He was not on the margins of Jewish religious life. He was at its most rigorous centre. This matters for a specific reason. The Islamic argument requires Paul to be an unreliable outsider who invented a theology disconnected from the actual teaching of Jesus. But God did not choose an outsider. He chose the most thoroughly trained, most scripturally equipped, most intellectually formidable opponent the early church faced. A man who had every reason to resist, every credential to refute, and every motivation to expose a fraud, if a fraud is what it was.

Furthermore, Paul was not a man easily deceived or swayed by social pressure. He had been arresting and consenting to the execution of Christians before his conversion (Acts 8:1-3). When he encountered the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, it was not a gradual persuasion or a community influence that changed him. It was a confrontation he could not explain away. And the remainder of his life, spent in poverty, beatings, shipwrecks, imprisonment, and finally execution, is the testimony of a man who did not convert for comfort or status. He converted because he met someone he could not deny.

Why the Choice of Paul Is Itself an Argument

If the resurrection was a fabrication by grieving disciples, Paul is the last person who would have been recruited and the last person who would have accepted.

He had the training to detect theological inconsistency. He had the authority to suppress the movement, and had the motivation to do so.

His conversion required an encounter powerful enough to reverse all of that. His subsequent life (and death) is the evidence that he never looked for a way back.

5.2 What Paul Actually Taught Was Not New

The argument assumes that the high Christology, which is the belief in Jesus as divine, originated with Paul and was absent before him. But the earliest Christian documents we possess show a fully developed theology of Jesus's divine identity that predates Paul's influence.

Paul's letters were written in the AD 50s. The Gospel of Mark, widely considered the earliest Gospel, dates to the 60s. But embedded in Paul's letters are pre-Pauline creeds and hymns that scholars date to the years immediately following the crucifixion. All of this within the living memory of eyewitnesses.

As we noted earlier in this study, Philippians 2:6-11 is one such passage. Most New Testament scholars believe Paul is quoting an existing hymn, not composing his own theology. That hymn speaks of Jesus as existing 'in the form of God,' equal with God, who 'emptied Himself' and 'humbled Himself' to death -- and was therefore given *'the name that is above every name.'* This is not Pauline invention. This is the faith of the earliest church, articulated in a hymn already in circulation when Paul quoted it.

5.3 Paul's Account Was Verified by the Apostles

The Islamic account imagines Paul as a rogue agent, inventing a new theology in isolation and successfully overwriting the authentic message of Jesus. This picture collapses under examination.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul gives a first-person account of his relationship to the Jerusalem apostles, the very men who had walked with Jesus. He reports that he met with Peter (Cephas) for fifteen days in Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18) and later submitted his gospel to James, Peter, and John, the acknowledged pillars of the Jerusalem church. Their verdict:

'James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me... They added nothing to me' (Galatians 2:9).

Nothing was added or corrected. The men who had physically walked with Jesus examined Paul's message and affirmed it. If Paul had been teaching a corrupted version of Jesus' self-understanding, these men, men who had heard Jesus speak, watched Him heal, and seen the empty tomb, would have been the first to know and the first to say so.

5.4 The Twelve Apostles Taught the Same Doctrine

The charge against Paul only works if the original Twelve apostles taught something different. They did not. The Gospel of John, written by the apostle John, who was among Jesus's closest companions, opens with the declaration that Jesus is the eternal Word, fully God, the agent of creation. The Gospel of Matthew records Jesus claiming universal authority and accepting worship. The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus forgiving sins, an act that the bystanders correctly recognized as divine.

Peter's sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2 declares that Jesus is Lord. A title that in the Greek Old Testament translates the divine name YHWH. Peter is not offering a mild prophet. He is announcing that the crucified and risen Jesus occupies the throne of the universe.

Acts 2:36

'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.'

The 'corruption' theory requires a conspiracy by all twelve apostles, by Paul, by the authors of all four Gospels, by the entire early church across multiple countries and cultures, all of whom maintained exactly the same story while being tortured and killed for it. This is not a theory that historical evidence can sustain.

5.5 What the Quran Cannot Explain

The Quran's account creates a historical difficulty that Muslim scholars have never fully resolved: if the original followers of Jesus held a purely Islamic theology, where is the evidence of that community? Where are the documents? Where are the early Christian writers who represent the 'pure monotheistic' version of Christianity that Islam claims existed before Paul?

What we actually find in the historical record is a consistent, high-Christology faith community from the very earliest period! Communities in Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Rome, Alexandria, all held the same fundamental conviction about the divine identity of Jesus. The universal agreement of these diverse, geographically separated communities points not to corruption but to a shared foundation in what Jesus Himself taught and demonstrated.

A Question Worth Sitting With

If Paul invented a divine Christ and corrupted the original message of Jesus, how do we account for the fact that the men who walked with Jesus -- Peter, James, John, Matthew -- taught exactly the same thing?

If the disciples of Jesus taught a merely human prophet, where are their writings? Where is the community that preserved the 'original' Islam-compatible Jesus?

The historical silence where an alternative early Christianity should exist is not evidence. It is the absence of evidence! And absence of evidence for a necessary claim is a serious problem for the theory.

Conclusion: The Question That Cannot Be Deferred

We have covered significant ground in this study. We examined Jesus's own claims to divine identity, claims His hearers understood immediately and responded to with attempts to stone him for blasphemy. We looked at the relationship between the Father and the Son as Jesus described it, a relationship of eternal unity and love that transcends the prophet-God relationship of any other figure in religious history. We surveyed specific prophecies written centuries before the birth of Jesus and fulfilled with a precision that is impossible to attribute to coincidence. We examined John 10:17-18 and its declaration that no one took Jesus's life -- He laid it down. And we considered the historical and theological case against the charge that Paul invented Christianity.

The cumulative weight of this evidence points in one direction. Jesus is not simply one prophet among many. He is the one to whom all the prophets pointed. He is the Word who became flesh. He is the one who entered death on his own terms and conquered it three days later.

The question the Gospel places before every person, whether Muslim, Jewish, secular, or religious, is the same question Jesus Himself posed: *'Who do you say that I am?'* (Matthew 16:15). It is a question that cannot be answered with indifference. Either Jesus is who He claimed to be, in which case nothing else in the universe matters more. Or He was gravely mistaken about Himself, in which case he cannot be trusted even as a prophet.

The Islamic tradition honours Jesus as a prophet and a servant of God. But a prophet who claims to be God, accepts worship, promises to raise the dead by His own authority, and declares that no one takes His life, that prophet cannot be placed in the same category as Moses or Muhammad. He must be evaluated on His own terms. And His own terms are precisely what this study has presented.

One final word is necessary before this study closes. What you have read here is not an exhaustive account of Jesus and His ministry. The prophecies examined in Part Three represent a fraction of the Messianic testimony embedded across the Hebrew scriptures. The divine prerogatives catalogued in Part One are a selection from a far larger body of evidence. The arguments considered in Part Five touch only the surface of a conversation that has occupied scholars and seekers for two thousand years.

The eyewitness who stood closest to Jesus understood this better than anyone. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who reclined at His side at the last supper and stood at the foot of the cross, who ran to the empty tomb and saw the burial cloths lying there, that man, having written an entire Gospel about the life of Jesus, closes it with this:

John 21:25

And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

The man who was there, who saw it with his own eyes, says the record we have is just a glimpse of Jesus' ministry. But not a diminished glimpse, for the Gospels contain everything God determined we need to know and trust and respond to. But a glimpse nonetheless. What Jesus

said and did in His years on earth was so vast, so layered, so saturated with meaning and miracle and divine intention, that the full account exceeds the capacity of human literature to contain it. That is the Jesus this study has introduced. There is immeasurably more to find!

John 14:6

'Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

If Jesus truly is who He claimed to be, then every sincere seeker of God owes it to themselves to examine His words carefully. It cannot simply be received politely and set aside.

That is the weight of the Gospel.

That is the question the evidence demands you answer.

God Bless,

Mr. G - D.D.B.F.W

For Further Study

The following resources are recommended for those who wish to examine the evidence more deeply:

- The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel -- a journalist's investigation of the historical evidence for Jesus.
- Jesus Among Other Gods by Ravi Zacharias -- a comparative examination of Jesus's claims in the context of world religions, written by a scholar of Indian origin with direct engagement with Islamic thought.
- The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable? by F.F. Bruce -- a scholarly examination of the historical reliability of the Gospels and letters.
- No God But One: Allah or Jesus? by Nabeel Qureshi -- written by a former Muslim who examined both faiths from the inside. A deeply personal and rigorously researched account.
- The Gospel of John -- read it without commentary first. Let Jesus speak for himself.