

Qur'ân And Bible Compared

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Do Christians and Muslims believe in the same god? Is Allah of the Qur'ân the same God as depicted in the Old and New Testament? Those, who advocate dialogue between Muslims and Christians emphasize that both religions have common roots: Both revere Abraham as their ancestor. The Qur'ân as well as the Bible recounts the story of Adam and his wife transgressing in paradise, of Mose and Israel's marching through the Red Sea, Qur'ân and Bible tell us of Jesus, Mary and John the Baptist. But not everything sounding similar has the same content and meaning. Let us look at some of the most remarkable similarities and differences between Bible and Qur'ân, between the Muslim and the Christian creed.

GOD	
Christians as well as Muslims believe in One God, the creator of heaven and earth and the creator of each single individual. God has put down his will in writing in his holy book. On the Day of Judgement, he will call everybody to account at the end of the times.	
Qur'ân	Bible
1. Allah is the creator of the universe and of each single individual, but he is transcendental, i.e., he is seperated from creation. There is no connection between creator and creature (sura 55,1-78; 6,100-101).	1. God created man in His image and made him His counterpart. He revealed his character in His creation. Jesus is the the bridge between God and man (John 1:14-15).
2. Allah has no children. Jesus may not be worshipped as God. To believe in the trinity is polytheism. To worship more than one God is the most evil sin in Islam which can't be forgiven, since there is only one God (Allah means 'the God' or 'the goddess') (5,72-73+75; 4,171-172).	2. God's only Son is Jesus Christ. Jesus came to earth as a human being and is himself God. Father, Sohn and Holy Spirit are a single, triune God (John 1:1-2).

3. **Allah** is not the father of Jesus Christ. He is the omnipotent and merciful God. The Qur'ân accuses the Christians to worship three gods: God, Jesus and Mary. This was probably Muhammad's perception of the trinity as it was described to him by the Christians of his lifetime (9,30-31).

3. **God** is the father of Jesus Christ and the father of His children (Romans 8,15-17). The trinity consists of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Mary was a mere human being and does not belong to the trinity (Matthew 28:19).

JESUS

Qur'ân and Bible tell us about Jesus whom God has sent to Israel. The Qur'ân as well as the Bible call him 'Christ'. He was born from the virgin Mary, called the Israelites to faith, has ascended to heaven and will come again to earth at the ends of the ages.

Qur'ân	Bible
1. Jesus was created by Allah through his word ("Be!") and was moved by God's might into Mary. He is but a human being (3,59; 5,75; 5,116-117).	1. Jesus was created by the Holy Spirit within Mary. He was a real human being and true God at the same time and in one person (Luke 1:35).
2. Jesus was one of the most outstanding prophets of history, but Muhammad is the last prophet, the "seal of the prophets" (33,40; 61,6). Muhammad's coming is already announced in the Old Testament by Moses and Isaia. In the New Testament Jesus himself announces Muhammad (2,67 ff; 7,157).	2. Jesus entered the world as the Saviour and Redeemer who was foretold in the Old Testament. As the Son of God, he is the highest prophet, who announced the coming of the Holy Spirit as counselor (John 14:16). Muhammad is not announced in the Bible and does not fulfill the biblical requirements for a prophet of God (Acts 10:43).
3. Jesus has not been crucified and is not resurrected. The crucifixion would have been a humiliating defeat for Jesus. Even if he would have died on the cross, he could not have brought redemption to mankind. The Qur'ân does not state clearly what has happened at the end of Jesus' life. Probably, Allah carried him away to heaven in the face of his enemies. After that, another one was crucified in Jesus' place (4,157-158).	3. Jesus died on the cross as it was His Father's will. He was put into His grave and arose from the death on the third day. By this, he gained victory over sin and death, and he, the representative of mankind, brought about redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19).

SIN, FAITH AND FORGIVENESS

Both the Qur'ân as well as the Bible emphasize that it is God's will to believe in Him and to live according to His commandments. If man transgresses against those commandments and commits sin, he can be granted forgiveness through God's mercy. The Qur'ân as well as the Bible promise eternal life to those who believe.

Qur'ân	Bible
1. Adam sinned in paradise by eating the forbidden fruit, but man was not cut off from communion with Allah through this transgression: There is no fall and no original sin in Islam (2,35-39).	1. Adam transgressed God's commandment in paradise by eating the forbidden fruit. With this, he brought sin, death and separation from God for all human beings into the world. Reconciliation with God is only possible through Jesus' death (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Romans 3:20).
2. Man is always capable of deciding to do right or to do wrong. He can please Allah by obeying to his commandments and by doing good deeds. If he transgresses against Allah's commandments and commits sin, this does not affect or touch Allah. In the first place, man sins against himself (7,19-25; 7,23).	2. Man's nature is evil after the fall. He is unable to do anything in order to atone for his sins. If he tries to keep God's law, it will lead him even deeper into sin. His single sins are always directed against God (Romans 3:10-12,20; Psalm 51:6).
3. Faith means to believe in Allah's existence, to be thankful towards him and to obey to Allah's commandments (2,177).	3. Faith means, to realize one's own sinfulness and damnation, to accept redemption for oneself through Jesus Christ and to live according to God's commandments by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:1-18).
4. The penitent sinner <i>hopes</i> to obtain Allah's forgiveness. The Qur'ân again and again praises Allah's mercy and grace, but in every single case the sinner <i>does not know for sure</i> , if he will obtain forgiveness. He <i>does not know for sure</i> in his present life, whether he may enter paradise after his death. Allah is too omnipotent that man could definitely predict his attitude and dealing with man (7,156; 3,31).	4. The penitent sinner <i>knows for sure</i> that God will grant forgiveness to him, since God has definitely promised in His Word to do so (1. John 1,9). Whoever appeals to Jesus' death and accepts His forgiveness, gets the <i>assurance</i> of eternal life (John 1:12; 1. John 3:1).

GOD'S WORD - HOLY SPIRIT

Muslims and Christians believe that God's genuine eternal word is laid down in His holy book. God's word tells us how God has made history with people in the past. God's word today gives men direction for their lives and their faith. God's Spirit contributed to God's revelation for mankind.

Qur'ân	Bible
1. The Qur'ân is the pure unaltered Word of Allah and a genuine copy of the original heavenly revelation. In contrast to the Qur'ân, the Old and New Testament have been corrupted in time. The Qur'ân corrects the Old and New Testament in all places where they differ from the Qur'ân (2,2; 2,97-98; 43,2-4; 2,83).	1. The Bible is God's reliable word. The Holy Spirit supervised its recording. The Bible can be corrected by nothing and remains God's valid word in eternity (Revelation 22:18).
2. The Qur'ân was directly revealed to Muhammad through mediation of the angel Gabriel. Muhammad's own personality played no role in this, and therefore the Qur'ân's genuineness is guaranteed (26,192-194).	2. Various personalities have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that the Bible is a mirror of their characters. The personality of the biblical authors becomes visible in the single biblical books (2. Timothy 3:16).
3. The Spirit of God participated at the revelation of the scriptures which were sent down to single men in history (the Torah to Mose, the Psalms to David, the Gospel to Jesus and the Qur'ân to Muhammad) (16,102). Single persons (like e. g. Jesus) were strengthened by the Spirit (2,87; 5,110); but the Spirit also strengthens the believers (58,22).	3. The Person of the Holy Spirit is God himself and belongs to the trinity. He convicts people of sin and guilt. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came over all flesh. The Spirit makes spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit grow in the believers (Genesis 1:26; John 14:16; Galatians 5:22).

Conclusion

Islam and Christianity have several points in common, when it comes to God, the Creator, the Last Judgment, eternal life and eternal death. Characters from the Old Testament like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Mose, David and Jona appear also in the Qur'ân. Even Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are mentioned in the holy book of the Muslims. Jesus Christ is called "word of God" in the Qur'ân, "spirit of God" as well as "Messiah". But to emphasize these similarities would reflect only a superficial understanding of both religions. Especially when it comes to Jesus Christ, the main important differences between Qur'ân and Bible become obvious:

As to the biblical testimony, Jesus Christ was not only a prophet, but God's only Son, whereas the Qur'ân clearly denies the sonship of Jesus. While the Old and New Testament state, that Jesus' suffering and his death on the cross were necessary to redeem those who are sold under original sin, the Qur'ân rejects the crucifixion of Jesus, but also original sin and the necessity of redemption for mankind. Crucifixion, redemption, the sonship of God and the trinity are cornerstones of biblical dogmatics, but at the same time for the Qur'ân aberrations of Christendom, and even more, they are blasphemy.

Whereas to the biblical testimony only those will inherit eternal life who believe in Jesus Christ being the Son of God and who accept his representative offering at the cross, the Qur'ân clearly states that it is only those who believe Muhammad to have been the last prophet of God and the Qur'ân to be the very truth. For Muslims, Christians with their belief in the holy trinity (which includes Father, Son and Mary, as the Qur'ân believes) commit the most evil sin, the sin of polytheism. Because of these essential theological differences between Qur'ân and Bible, it becomes clearly visible that the one omnipotent creator of the Qur'ân can not be the triune God of the Bible, the father of Jesus Christ.