

HOW DO THE THREE MONOTHEISTIC FAITHS COMPARE TO ONE ANOTHER?

Introduction – The three monotheistic faiths share a common worldview. They believe in one God who is all powerful and all wise, who created the universe from nothing. He is the definition of goodness and will judge the world by righteousness. They differ over a variety of issues, e.g., the identity of Jesus.

Exodus 34:5-7

A. Judaism originated with the covenants with Abraham, Moses, Aaron, and King David. It created a theocratic state of Israel. It offered forgiveness of sins to the children of Israel through the sacrificial system connected to the temple in Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 12:8-11; 13-14

Leviticus 16:29-34

1. Modern Judaism is based more on the rabbinic oral tradition which was originally compiled into 62 volumes of the Mishnah in the second century A.D. Later more rabbinic interpretations were compiled into the lengthy Talmud in the fifth century A.D.
2. Forgiveness of sin under the original Law of Moses was dependent on a functioning temple in Jerusalem, an Aaronic priesthood, and specific prescribed sacrifices.
3. The temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the invading Romans and has never been rebuilt. Now the third holiest site in Islam, the Golden Dome, is built over the place where the temple used to stand.
4. Therefore, no Jew has been forgiven according to the law of God since 70 A.D.
5. The Hebrew scriptures end expecting a coming Messiah (Malachi 4, Psalm 2, Isaiah 53).
6. Only Christianity offers a satisfying answer to the expected Messiah and a once-for-all sacrifice for sins.

Hebrews 9:24-28

Romans 1:2-4

B. In Islam, Muhammad began his spiritual ministry about 613 A.D. He said he was the last prophet of God. He said he was given a direct revelation from God by the angel Gabriel. The Koran is considered a word-for-word record of this revelation. To understand Islam, one must take into account later collections of sayings of Muhammad called *hadith*. The various schools of thought differ over which ones they consider to be most valuable for interpreting the Koran.

What did Muhammad say about Jesus in the Koran?

1. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary (Surah 3:45, 47).
2. Jesus performed miracles and healings (Surah 3:49). Muhammad said the only sign/miracle he gave was the Koran itself (Surah 29:50-51). Some *hadith* claim he performed some miracles.
3. God has no son, including Jesus, who was only a prophet of God (Surah 23:91; 4:171).
4. Jesus should not be worshipped (Surah 5:116-117).

5. Jesus did not die of crucifixion and was not raised from the dead. Instead, God took Jesus directly to Heaven (Surah 4:157-158).

We have already considered the clear historical evidence that Jesus was crucified and raised. This contradicts Muhammad's view, which means they cannot both be true. Muhammad offers no proof for his position except a direct revelation from Allah.

6. Muhammad said Jesus prophesied of his coming (Surah 61:6). He did not say what Jesus said. Islamists have no realistic references in the gospels to this. I believe Jesus did speak of Muhammad.
Matthew 7:15-20

C. Let us compare the teaching and fruit of Muhammad and Jesus.

1. Jesus taught his followers to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecute them. Jesus forbids his followers to resort to the sword or violence (Matt 5:45).

Luke 22:47-53

2. Muhammad called for jihad against unbelievers.
 - a. There are passages in the Koran that talk about tolerance toward Jews and Christians, which were spoken by Muhammad in his early days before his first jihad (Surah 2:256; 29:46).
 - b. Muhammad taught that the Koran revealed a progressive truth over time. "Whatever a verse (revelation) do we abrogate or cause to be forgotten. We bring a better one or a similar one to it. Know you not that Allah is able to do all things" (Surah 2:106).
 - c. Muhammad was involved in continuous battles during the last years of his life and he said this was Allah's will for believers.
 - 1) "Oh Prophet! Urge the believers to fight. If there are 20 steadfast persons among you, they will overcome 200, and if there are 100 steadfast persons they will overcome 1,000 of those who disbelieve, because they are people who do not understand" (Surah 8:65).
 - 2) "Then when the sacred months are drawn away, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them, and ambush them. But if they repent and perform the prayer, and pay the alms, then let them go their way" (Surah 9:5).
 - 3) "Fight those who believe not in God and the last day and do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden – such men as practice not the religion of truth, being those who have been given the Book – until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled" (Surah 9:25).
 - d. Some Muslims say jihad is a spiritual struggle, not real war. This comes from a *hadith* collected in the 12th century, some 600 years after Muhammad's death.
 - e. In the 150 years after Muhammad's death, Muslims conquered all the Middle East and North Africa. They carried on continuous war against the west and east for 1,400 years. This ended with the Ottoman Islamic Empire siding with Germany in World War I. The Turkish Republic began in 1924 and the last caliph was exiled to France where he died. The previous Islamic lands

were colonized by European powers after World War I. Recently in a small section of Syria, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed himself the new caliph or leader of Sunni Islam.

- f. Some Islamists say Christians also have engaged in similar jihad in the crusades of the Middle Ages. The crusades resulted in about 20 battles in Palestine over 100 years. The Islamic jihad lasted 1,400 years and resulted in at least 758 battles against the West. There is no moral equivalent here.

Conclusion – You will know them by their fruit, Jesus said. Most of the history of Christianity has been one of persuasion, not force. While Christians have built hospitals and societies to help the poor all over the world, Islam has tried to impose its religion by force when it had the military power and opportunity. Christians claim the right to self-defense in war, but not to spread Christianity.

Christ and the church are a fulfillment of the Hebrew scriptures and Judaism. Islam is a violent perversion of monotheism that must be rejected on moral grounds. Whose example and teaching will you choose to follow: Jesus or Muhammad?

Reference: Jesus and Muhammad: Profound Differences and Surprising Similarities, Dr. Mark A. Gabriel, former professor of Islamic history at Al Azhar University in Cairo Egypt