

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT CHRIST?

by Abd al-Masih

(All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version, Holy Bible ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. All Qur'an quotations are taken from The Koran Interpreted, by Arthur J. Arberry)

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF CHRIST?

The world is hurrying to its final goal. The end of all things has come near. Every devout and religiously interested person knows that Christ is coming again from God. The ignorant will be dismayed because they have neglected Christ and His true power.

You may also feel that your present and eternal life depends on the question: What is your relationship to Christ? If you perceive the true essence of Christ's personality, you will open yourself to him and he will fill you with joy. Then all matters of your life will be seen in a new light - for in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Christ, who comes in glory, will ask you: "What did you think of me?" Ponder his life with us as long it is still daytime, and you will find comfort for your heart and a solution for your problems through His grace and mercy.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT CHRIST'S MIRACULOUS BIRTH?

Never will any person be born like Christ, because he is the son of Mary. Ishmael is called son of Abraham, John, the son of Zachariah and Muhammad, the son of `Abd Allah`. In like manner, all people inherit their names from their fathers. Why then was Christ only named after his mother? The answer is that he has no father comparable to other fathers. He was born of a virgin. His birth depended on God's power and eternal purpose.

Seven hundred years before his birth, Isaiah the prophet prophesied the manner in which this birth would come about: "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel (that is: God with us)" (Isaiah 7:14). God fulfilled his promise because He is faithful and just, and nothing is impossible for Him.

Did you know that Christ is the Word of God? Read the inspired gospel words that proclaim: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God...and the Word became flesh and lived for a while among us" (John 1:1, 14). All the creative power of God that was at work in his holy words was united in Christ the Word. And if you meditate on the happenings surrounding His birth you would be amazed because no human is born like the Son of Mary and none is comparable to Him. He is unique in His birth.

Do you remember that God created Adam from clay? All of us are sons of Adam. Even the prophets are nothing but creations from this clay. All of us here below are earthly. But Christ is from above because He came down from heaven. He is

pure, without blemish, and clean, whiter than snow. But we are all guilty, defiled, and sinful because we are from the world and were not born of the Spirit of God.

In the Holy Bible we read a strange expression that Christ came into the world to save sinners. No man can take the place of Christ because we were all born of earth, but He was born directly of God.

He did not refuse us, troublesome people that we are, but chose to save this miserable world and to purify us mortals.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF CHRIST'S INNOCENCE?

Christ was born of the Spirit of God. From the time of His birth he remained innocent and pure, He did not sin - not even once, nor did He ever lapse. He never asked God for forgiveness as we do. We must confess our sins or else we deceive God and ourselves. David the prophet asked for forgiveness with tears, so did Abraham, the friend of God. But if you search in the Holy Bible or in the Qur'an, you will find no indication or verse saying that Jesus asked for forgiveness - not even once.

Now since Christ was without fault, He was not in need of purification or justification. He said to his enemies openly: "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?" (John 8:46). But not one of them was able to point out any fault in Him, in His words or in His deeds. In His final trial before the Roman governor, the judge was compelled to confess legally three times: "I find no basis for a charge against him" (John 18:38 and 19:4, 6).

Even more than that, one of the evil spirits who lived in a possessed person was dismayed at the approach of Jesus and cried out: "Jesus of Nazareth, you have come to destroy us. I know who you are - the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:24). Thus, it is well known in this world today and on judgment day that Christ is pure, perfect and holy in himself. No one is like Him - for all have sinned except for Him.

WHAT HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD FROM CHRIST'S TEACHINGS?

All the good prophets and messengers were inspired by the eternal word of God. But Christ is the Word of God in its essence, on which all the creative and loving powers of God center. Not only did He talk, but He also lived out what He said. The mightiness of God appeared clearly in his words and in his deeds, confirming one other.

In many instances, we read expressions about him like the following: "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their (traditionalist) teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:28-29). And when His opponents tried to seize Him through their servants, these servants were moved by His words and their consciences were touched. They did not dare to come near him. They returned to their leaders mumbling: "No one ever spoke the way this man does" (John 7:46).

Listen to some of the sayings of Christ which He uttered in all humility:

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes to me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

"Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 6:44).

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye', when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5).

If you meditate on these sayings, you will understand that Christ is the light of the world, giving peace and true life to those who obey his words.

All the other prophets came with only a part of the divine light shining into the dark world, as the gentle moonlight does. They faded away like the crescent. But Christ is like the blazing sun, shining with all the power of its light. How can we follow the moon when the sun is rising? Christ is the true light! He fulfilled the prophecies and proclaimed the new law, which is love. He himself is love become flesh, so he was entitled to say: "I am the way and the truth and the life. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (John 14:6 and Matthew 24:35).

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT CHRIST'S POWER?

He who ponders Jesus' works will realize that he has unlimited abilities, for all heavenly power and authority were given to him in their fullness. He executed God's works openly and no one could do the things he did.

He healed the lepers by word of his tongue, and he opened the eyes of the blind by his kindness. He stilled the furious storm with mere words. He drove out demons by rebuking them and he satisfied five thousand people using only five loaves and two fish. No man ever did anything like this before.

Some prophets performed limited miracles in the name of their Lord, but Christ brought about his deeds in his own name, by his overwhelming authority.

There was a man called Lazarus who had died and had been buried. His weeping relatives came to Jesus for help. When he reached their village, Lazarus had already been buried for four days. Then Christ came forward to his grave and shouted with a mighty voice: "Lazarus come out!" And the dead one really came out!

You also, when you hear the divine voice of the one who makes you alive will be raised from the spiritual death of your sins. For Christ said: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

The day will come when all the dead will hear his voice and will be raised either to life with God or to a fearful judgment. And you too, if you open your heart to Christ's voice, will receive happiness and life eternal.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS?

Christ died - that is true and sure. He died after painful suffering. Christ knew beforehand by which death he would die. He prophesied openly concerning this.

Do you know where you will die? Will it be in your town or on the road or in your bed? Will you die through an accident or will you die a natural death? At what age will you pass away, in which month and on what day? What will happen to your relatives after you die?

We have absolutely no knowledge about our death. The prophets also did not know the hour of their appointed time. But the Lord Christ knew and foretold that he would die in the city of Jerusalem, after a trial by the Jewish elders and heathen Romans and after much suffering. He decided his own free will on which day he would die. It was the day of the big Passover feast in which people sacrificed sheep, so that Gods anger would not come upon them because of their sin. So Jesus died as the Lamb of God carrying the sin of the world, bearing our misdeeds so that Gods fiery wrath will pass over everyone who believes in him. He who believes in Christ will become pure and be justified for eternity.

Now Christ not only foretold the time, manner and meaning of his death, but he also assured his followers with absolute certainty that he would rise from the dead after three days. No one was able to hinder his triumphant resurrection and it truly came about.

Jesus also said: "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again" (John 10:18).

No man has knowledge of his appointed time to die and has no power for his own personal resurrection. Christ died - carrying the sins of the world and dying for our justification. He is the one who gives life - his own life to all who believe in Him. We find no man on our globe who died and arose as He did. Christ's death is Gods great blessing for all mankind.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER DEATH?

Christ truly died and was buried in a tomb, hewn out of solid rock. His enemies placed a huge stone at the door of the tomb and sealed it with the seal of the greatest nation of the time, so that his disciples would not be able to steal the body at night. They also set up armored guards before the door of the tomb.

But after three days, Christ arose from the dead and came out of the tomb. His disciples afterwards found it empty. They were astonished and fearful, trembling when they met the living Christ, because they thought that he was a ghost. But he talks to them with kind words and showed them the scars from the nails in his hands and feet. He ate in front of them and allowed them to touch him so that they could become convinced that he truly rose and that he had a real body.

All the prophets and messengers of God died. Their remains are still in their graves, crumbles and disintegrated. But Christ is alive, victorious over death.

Do you understand the meaning of Christ's resurrection from the dead? The almighty God proved with this great deed that he loves the crucified one, accepting his sacrifice on the cross for the world.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT CHRIST'S ASCENSION TO HEAVEN?

Did you know that Christ rose to heaven to sit at the right hand of God? He is the closest God's companion, no one is his equal. As he descended from heaven and took on a human body, in like manner he went back to heaven after defeating sin, perdition and the devil through his death.

He is the faithful and mighty mediator for all who approach God in his name. All who believe in his mediation, experience the filling of their heart by the Holy Spirit. They become renewed in their minds and are bestowed with divine life which is manifested in pure conduct. If you want to experience the living Christ and his redemptive work, open up your heart freely to the power of his Spirit. Then you will see him by faith and your life will enter upon a course in harmony with His plan and will.

All who refuse Christ refuse God himself who offered Jesus as atonement for the world. God fulfilled the prophecy which he revealed to the prophet David, addressing Christ who ascended to him: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" (Psalm 110:1). All who refuse God's love that was proclaimed in Christ condemn themselves. For everyone who refuses God's grace, deserves and is required by his refusal, to remain under God's wrath since he deliberately has refused God's only way of salvation.

Until the resurrection of Christ, death was the greatest enemy of mankind. But Jesus defeated death and re-appeared alive. He will never die in eternity. Everyone who clings to him will partake of the power of His life that overcomes evil. Did you understand the blessing in Christ's resurrection, and have you accepted it?...Accept it now!

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF CHRIST'S RETURN TO EARTH?

Christ is love in its essence itself. He loves all people, especially those who live in the spirit of His love, who become loving and forgiving as God forgave them in Christ. He longs for us and wants us to be with Him forever. Jesus openly prophesied his second coming in the same manner as he foretold his death and resurrection. Every wise person makes himself ready to meet him, knowing that Christ will come with great glory. He will separate those who have accepted his redemption from those people who are hard-hearted, who are proud and do not confess that they are sinners in need of Christ's forgiveness.

Dear friend, hasten to accept Christ so that you may not fall into the final judgment. For he is the only one able to deliver you from the coming wrath.

All faithful believers anticipate for Christ's coming. Even the Jews and Muslims know that he is coming soon. Some people believe that Christ will reign over the world for forty years. Some estimate his reign to be one hundred years. Others are sure it is a thousand. But the Bible assures us that Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords and that he has no end. His kingdom is forever. He said: "I am a king. For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18:37).

WHAT HAVE YOU UNDERSTAND FROM CHRIST'S NAMES AND HIS TITLES?

Some prophets have special titles. Abraham is the friend of God, Moses, the spokesman of God and Christ, the word of God and a spirit from him. But in the Gospel, we read the direct revelation, when a voice from heaven came saying: "This is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Matthew 17:5).

What does the expression "Son of God" mean? A child usually has the same image as his father. In the same way we see in Christ the attributes of God, as Jesus said to his disciples: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). You may say God forbid! He is only a prophet. But we ask you: Why do you not follow his commandments? You are already judged if you have not truly repented and become changed in your thoughts and deeds.

It is a great mystery that Jesus appeared as a slave of God to free those enslaved in sin. He came into the world as a humble human being to show us what true humanity is. So it is not might and glories that save us, but Christ's love alone. Anyone who carries a sword appears strong, but he who controls himself is stronger. Greater of all is he who lays down his life as a ransom for many. For this reason, the apostle John confessed saying: "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Christ was incarnate in the form of a human being, so that we might understand that God is a Father who is kind, loving and forgiving and not a conquering, destructive or indifferent person. Thus, Christ gave us a new understanding of God. And Jesus did not only teach us the divine attributes, but he lived out Gods love before us, that we might understand the motto of the new age: Eternal love.

WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TOWARDS CHRIST'S OFFER TO YOU?

The Son of God says to you with his gentle voice: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

When Jesus called His disciples with words like these, they got up, left their homes, families and jobs and followed Christ, trusting in His call. As they followed him they came to understand and believe in him and surrendered their lives to him until they were finally filled with the power of His Holy Spirit. Christ is alive

today and awaits the same reaction from you because He calls you personally to leave everything and follow Him. Then you will get to know Him more and more and you will commit yourself to His mercy. He in turn will anoint you with His pure spirit to become changed in your words and deeds. Then you will be a truthful, useful, humble and loving person. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will keep your heart and mind until the coming of Christ which is close at hand.

Quiz

Dear reader, if you have studied this book, you will be able to answer the following questions. If most of your answers are correct, we will offer you the book, "The Person of Christ in the Gospel and the Qur'an" or another book of your choice.

Questions:

1. What is miraculous Christ's birth?
2. Why did Christ always remain innocent?
3. What is the secret of Christ's words?
4. Which deeds of Christ impressed you most?
5. What is strange about Christ's death?
6. What does Christ's resurrection from the dead mean?
7. Where is Christ staying now and what is He doing?
8. What did you understand about the second coming of Christ?
9. Why did God call Christ His Son?
10. What do you yourself think about Christ?

Write your answers clearly and send them to our address:

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT CHRIST?

Dear Friend, perhaps you have agreed with the teaching of the gospel or have refused the good news from heaven. Whatever the situation might be, we would like to hear your thoughts about Christ. If you would like to write to us, we are ready to send you different items from our wide assortment of literature, free of charge, so that you can get to know Christ and his holy life better.

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