

IS THE CROSS AN OFFENCE OR A BLESSING?

Islam and Christianity have different answers to the question: "Is the cross of Christ a historical fact to be accepted or an error to be rejected?" These two religions have different beliefs regarding Christ's end. Did he die on the cross as the Gospel claims, or did he end his days in some other way as Islam asserts?

In the Qur'an we find this text: "O Isa (Jesus), I am causing you to die and am lifting you to myself" (Sura Al Imran 3:55). Muslim scholars differ about the meaning of this text. One group assumes it means that Jesus only slept and was raised while asleep. Others state that this means "receiving ones due", while others interpret it to mean a seizure, from the text "I am seizing you". One hypothesis is that Christ will not die until the antichrist dies, while others maintain that Christ actually did die.

Since Muslim scholars have many different interpretations, let us return to the Gospel to see what it records about this crucial event. The history, faith, salvation and eternal destiny of mankind depend upon the death of Christ.

The Gospel says that the apostles preached the good news at the dawn of Christianity. They declared that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

Most certainly, Islam gained its dislike of the cross from some heretical Christians who were living in the Arabian Peninsula. They adopted the "resemblance" theory and other tales to replace the true account of the crucifixion of Christ.

To resolve this issue we must consult history. We find that many people - Jews, Romans, followers and relatives of Christ - saw and testified to the death of Christ upon the cross, a death which was ordered by the Jewish priests and Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler in Palestine.

Christ's enemies gloated over him as he hung upon the cross. Upon his death, Christ was placed into a tomb hewn out of stone and according to Pilate's orders the entrance was sealed. They thought they were rid of Jesus and his signs and teachings, but by God's will and power he rose on the third day. After this event, millions have been drawn to faith in him, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Christ: "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). During the forty days after his resurrection from death he appeared to his disciples. After this he ascended to heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God Almighty.

Christ died on the cross for one purpose only: to redeem and cleanse all people from sin and to reconcile them with God. He was able to do so because he was full of love and holy throughout his entire life. Thus, Christ was worthy to take away the sin of the world. John the Baptist (Yahya) says of Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Those who deny Christ's crucifixion, death and resurrection are following speculations and fancies. History provides a stronger argument, because it contains the testimony of eyewitnesses to Christ's life and voluntary death as atonement for sin.

Dear friend, let us set aside unreasonable doubts concerning the historical fact of Christ's death and trust him, because he alone is able to cleanse and wash us from our sins. He who was born of God's Spirit has purchased for us a mighty pardon through his death.

Through Christ God tells you: "Fear not for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1).

If you wish to study this subject further, we are ready to send you a booklet free of charge on this subject. Please write us your address clearly and send it to:

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