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JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE KORAN

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of
Concordia Seminary
Department of Systematic Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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OUTLINE

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 - A. Mohammed's sources for material on Jesus
 - B. Why material on Jesus was included in the Koran
- II. Mohammed's estimate of Christ according to the Koran
 - A. Concerning the deity of Jesus
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 - A. How the traditions of the Moslems have expanded the story of Jesus in the Koran
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JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE KORAN

There are twenty-five passages in the Koran, the holy book of the Mohammedans, in which the name "Jesus" appears. When perusing these passages one cannot help but be struck by the question, "What were the Koran's sources? Where did Mohammed get his knowledge of Jesus?" To answer these questions accurately has been the ambition of Islamic scholars for many years. There are many difficulties in the way of answering them. For one thing, Arabia has been opened up to western scholarship only in comparatively recent years. Furthermore, in many instances, it has been very difficult to carry on investigations in a great part of Arabia because of lack of cooperation from the government. For instance, in South Arabia there are many ruins which testify to the fact that in the past there must have been a substantial civilization or civilizations in this area. These ruins however, are known only very imperfectly because excavations have never been permitted, and only a very few travelers, most of them untrained in archeology, have ever been allowed to see them.¹ Then, too, the uninviting climate, the lack of trained men, the unavailability of funds have also held up this

¹Nabith A. Faris, The Arab Heritage, p. 30.

work. Nevertheless, in a general way, it is possible to discuss the probable sources of Mohammed's knowledge of Christianity, and in particular, of Jesus.

One thing that can be said with certainty about Mohammed's knowledge of Christianity is that whatever knowledge he had on this subject was unreliable. Especially is this evident in the Koran's references to Jesus. Men have endeavored to trace the growth of Mohammed's knowledge of Jesus from the Koran. This, at best, is a difficult task, because there is little agreement as to the chronological order of the chapters or suras in the Koran. It is probable that some of Mohammed's information about Christianity came from the Jews with whom he came into contact. We know that there were Jews living in North Arabia at an early date, probably as early as the seventh century B.C.¹ We also know that the Jews traveled to fertile Yemen for purposes of trade in pre-Islamic times, and that some of them settled at the small caravan stops along the trade route through Hejaz.² These Jewish settlements in Hejaz were there at the time of Mohammed and may have dated from as far back as 586 B.C.³ Some say that the Jews founded the

¹ C.C. Torrey, The Jewish Foundation of Islam, p. 10.

² Torrey, op. cit. p. 9.

³ Torrey, op. cit. p. 12.

city of Yathrib (later Medina). Whether they founded it or not, it is certain that there were Jews living there during the time of Mohammed, that these Jews were numerous enough to be divided into three tribes, and that Mohammed had frequent dealings with them. The Koran itself bears witness to the Jews in Yathrib. There were other large Jewish settlements in Teima and Khaibar, and still others scattered around Arabia. These Jews undoubtedly knew about the events that had transpired in Jerusalem at the time of Christ; knew also about the Christians and about Jesus, whom these Christians worshipped. It is entirely conceivable that Mohammed, with his natural interest in things religious, spent many hours in conversation with the Jews about their religion and the religions of others, including the religion of the Christians.

However probable it is that Mohammed received much of his information about Jesus from the Jews, it is even more probable that he obtained some of this information from Christians themselves. That there were Christians living in Arabia before the time of Mohammed we know beyond a doubt. As a matter of fact, there is every reason to believe that Christianity was well established in Arabia at one time. The doctrines of Christianity were known to at least some Arabs. We know from the story of

Pentecost, recorded in the Book of Acts, that there were Arabs present when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, that these Arabs heard the apostles speak in the various languages and that they heard the sermon of Peter. Doubtless these Arabs carried back the doctrines they heard to their homes. Furthermore, in the first chapter of the book of Galatians Paul writes that he went to Arabia. If Paul preached the Gospel during his visit there as he might have, the Arabs heard the Gospel from two sources very early in the Christian era. Zwemer, an authority on Arabia, thinks that a legend among the Arabs testifies to the visit of the great Apostle.¹ Besides the testimony of the Bible, there is also ample evidence from other sources that Christianity came to Arabia early. Arabian historians speak of the tribe of Ghassan in North Arabia as being attached to the Christian faith centuries before the Hegira. They say of these early Christians that they were lords in the time of ignorance and stars of Islam. Early Church writers record the fact that certain queen Mavia of Arabia was converted to Christianity in about the year 372 A.D.² Simon Stylites, an Arab by birth, preached the Gospel in Arabia. There is evidence that

¹ S.M. Zwemer, Arabia: The Cradle of Islam, p. 303.

² Zwemer, op. cit. p. 304.

his fame spread as far south as Arabia Felix. Sometime before the Hegira, Christianity in Southwestern Arabia made some progress. The Christianity, there, however, seems to have been largely dead formalism. There was much heresy, and schisms were so frequent that Arabia was called "mother of heresies".¹ Among these heresies it might be well to mention one which may have influenced the author of the Koran, that is, the heretical sect known as the Collyridians which flourished in the fourth century and worshipped Mary as a goddess.² Perhaps it was the influence of this sect which led Mohammed to place so much emphasis on Mary.

About the year 567 Yemen seems to have been in a "golden age" of Christianity. The King of Yemen at that time was a man named Abraha. This man was a Christian, and in keeping with his faith, he built a cathedral at Sana. He issued an order that all people, including the pagans, were to worship the Christian God in this cathedral. War followed this decree. The army of Abraha was defeated, his country was overrun, and Christianity was well-nigh wiped out in the area. The downfall of this Christian Kingdom is recorded in the Koran in the Chapter of the Elephant.³

¹ Zwemer, op. cit. p. 306.

² C.H. Becker, Christianity and Islam, p. 22.

³ Zwemer, op. cit. p. 308.

Besides the testimony of history to Christianity in Arabia, there are various legends about Christianity there. One of these legends states that Bartholemew preached in Yemen on his way to India. There is also a Greek tradition to the effect that a certain Theophilus, an Arian, went to King Himyar of Yemen and convinced him that he should become a Christian. This tradition goes into detail by recording that this king then built churches in the largest cities of Yemen.¹ Greek tradition further speaks of churches and even bishoprics at Aden, Zaphar, and Nagran.²

Even the pagans of Arabia knew some of the doctrines of Christianity. Early Arabia was an asylum for all religions,³ and many Christians for this reason fled there when they were persecuted. Pagan tolerance of the early Arabs knew no bounds. Every new doctrine that came along was added to what was already in their pagan system. The doctrine of Jesus was not an exception. There is abundant evidence from pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions

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Zwemer, op. cit. p. 307.

²

F.V. Winnett, "References to Jesus in Pre-Islamic Arabic Inscriptions", in The Moslem World, XXXI, 4, p. 352.

³

I.P. Storm, "Early Christianity in Arabia", in The Moslem World, XXX, 1, p.7.

that Jesus was at least partially known by the pagans and that he was worshipped as a minor god.¹ It has been suggested that Jesus was worshipped as a moon-god by some of these pagans since the name Jesus is so often associated with the star and crescent in these inscriptions.² There are also indications that sacrifices were offered to Jesus by these pagan Arabs.

So we see that there were Christians in Arabia before the time of Mohammed and that certain Christian doctrines were known well enough, although in a greatly distorted fashion, to be absorbed into the native paganism. Therefore, Mohammed had ample opportunity to become acquainted with Christian and pseudo-Christian teachings. Indeed, the statement has been made that Mohammed was in contact with Christianity throughout his life.³ This statement need not necessarily be an exaggeration since we know that he met monks on his caravan trips for Khadijah, and that later on his favorite concubine was Miriam, a Coptic Christian. Moslems themselves admit that Mohammed received much of his information from Christian Jews, and even go so far as to state that Mohammed heard the Bible read in Mecca.⁴ It must have been from all these contacts that Mohammed

¹ Winnett, op. cit. p. 341 ff.

² Winnett, op. cit. p. 350.

³ S.M. Zwemer, The Moslem Christ, p. 11.

⁴ Zwemer, op. cit. p. 12.

got the Biblical material that appears in the Koran.

The next question that might arise when reading what the Koran says about Jesus is, "Why did Mohammed include this material in the Koran?" There may be several answers to this question. Certainly we cannot definitely say what lay in the mind of the Arabian prophet when he incorporated his knowledge of Jesus into his book. But we do know that it was Mohammed's idea to place himself in the stream of Biblical prophecy. Thus, he avowed that Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus were all prophets, but that he himself was the last and greatest of the prophets. His knowledge that Christians worshipped Jesus as true God made him make some very definite statements about the God-man of the Christians. The prophet realized that the worship of Jesus by Christians was a serious obstacle in the way of his declaring himself to be the greatest of the prophets - especially if he intended to win the Christians over into accepting him. Therefore, in order to show that Jesus was not God, but that he was merely the last prophet of God before himself, Mohammed placed this information about Jesus into the Koran to point these things out to the people he wanted to secure as followers.

II

Jesus is given very high titles in the Koran: titles such as "The Word," "Apostle" and "Illustrious". In addition he is referred to as bearer of good news, and even miracles are ascribed to him. From these titles and references to Jesus the impression is given that Mohammed had a very high estimate for the person and work of Jesus. But how high did this estimate go? Exactly how did Mohammed think of Jesus?

Before setting out to answer this question the fact should be noted that Mohammed had a very distorted conception of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The Koran gives a very strong impression that Mohammed's idea of the Christian Trinity was that the Trinity consisted of God, Jesus and Mary. One gets this impression from passages like surah 5:116, ~~where~~ where a conversation between Allah and Jesus is reported. This passage reads as follows: "And when God said, 'O Jesus, son of Mary! is it thou who didst say to men, take me and my mother for two gods, beside God?' He said, 'I celebrate Thy praise! What ails me that I should say what I have no right to? If I had said it, Thou wouldst have known it.'"¹ In another passage in the same surah Mohammed tries to disprove the deity of Jesus by mentioning the

¹

The translation of E.H. Palmer is used throughout this thesis.

fact that both He and His mother ate food; something which God would never need to do. The question of the reason for the mention of Mary in these passages presents itself. The obvious reason is because Mohammed thought that she was part of the Christian Trinity.

Though Mohammed speaks very highly of Jesus, he vehemently denies that Jesus is divine in any respect. To call Jesus divine would be giving God a partner, and since God has no partner, but is One, Mohammed rejects the idea that Jesus could have been more than an ordinary man. Anyone who said otherwise was a polytheist as far as Mohammed was concerned. He denounced all those who claimed that Jesus was God's Son as unbelievers. In surah 4:169 we read the following words which bear on just this subject. "O ye people of the Book ~~(Christians)~~⁽⁷¹⁾, do not exceed in your religion, nor say aught against God save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, is but an apostle of God and His Word, which He cast into Mary, and a spirit from Him; believe then in God and His apostles, and say not 'Three.' Have done! it were better for you. God is only one God, celebrated be his praise that He should beget a son." Then Mohammed adds the observation that

¹
Surah 5:19.

one God is enough; that He is a sufficient guardian because He is the almighty ruler over all.

Mohammed, in the Koran, tries to offer several proofs why Jesus could not have been God. The most common of these so-called proofs is the mere statement that it would be impossible, i.e., against God's very nature to have a son. "God could not take unto Himself any son! celebrated be his praise!"¹ In another passage Mohammed, to disprove the deity of Jesus, uses the argument that Jesus could not have been divine because if God had so desired, he could have destroyed him and his mother together with all the rest of the people here on earth.² The argument is that God is mighty and that Jesus is only a weak human being and cannot be compared to God, who is exalted far above any human being.

In still another passage, Mohammed states that Jesus could not have been divine because he was a prophet, and as such he died as all the prophets before him did. In this particular passage Mohammed reminds those who are inclined to believe that Jesus

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Surah 19:35

²

Surah 15:19.

was divine that Jesus partook of food as do all human beings, and, therefore, the implication is that he could not have been God because God had no need to partake of food to stay alive because He is eternal.¹

In the same passage Mohammed seems to indicate that his mother, Mary, was a witness against his deity. Mohammed had in mind that fact that since Jesus was born of a woman, he could have been nothing else but a human being because it was inconceivable to him that a creature could birth to God. To get this argument across, Mohammed often called Jesus "son of Mary" in his book. It is noteworthy that when he refers to the other prophets in the Koran, Mohammed does not mention the prophet's mother. But when Jesus is mentioned, Mary is often mentioned along with Him² to emphasize his human character.

According to the Koran, Jesus himself never claimed to be the son of God; on the contrary, Jesus is represented as having emphasized his humanity, and as having preached that he was only a prophet who was sent to lead the people to God. The conversation between Allah and Jesus already alluded to is a case in point. This conversation is recorded as follows: ". . . and when God said, 'O Jesus, son of Mary! is it thou who didst say to men, take me and my

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Surah 5:79.

²

Cf. Surah 2:81; 2:254; 3:40; 5:155 et al.

mother for two gods, beside God?' He said, 'I celebrate Thy praise! What ails me that I should say what I have no right to? If I had said it, Thou wouldst have known it. . . I never told them save what Thou didst bid me, Worship God, my Lord and your Lord, and I was a witness against them as long as I was among them; but when Thou didst take me away to Thyself, Thou wert the watcher over them, for Thou art witness over all.'¹

However, in discussing Mohammed's estimate of Jesus it is necessary also to note some of the positive things that he had to say about him. Mohammed calls Jesus an apostle, that is, he was sent by God to perform a particular mission. In his capacity as an apostle or prophet Jesus is placed on the same level as the other great or major prophets of Islam. He is mentioned as following the footsteps of Noah and Abraham,² who are always mentioned as major prophets of Islam. The Koran further indicates that only the major prophets were entrusted with a book of revelation from God.³ Jesus also received a book from God, which certainly puts him in a class with the major prophets. In one passage, however, Jesus is mentioned

¹ Surah 5:116-117.

² Surah 57:26.

³ Zwemer, Islam: A Challenge to Faith, p. 89 and 92.

along with several of the minor prophets of Islam: "And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias, all righteous ones; and Ishmael and Elijah and Jonas and Lot, each one have we preferred above the worlds."¹ But other passages suffice to show that Jesus was considered by Mohammed to have been a major prophet. The belief of present day Moslems testifies to this fact.

As has been pointed out, the Koran denies vehemently that Jesus is the Son of God, yet in some passages this book speaks very highly of Him. However, after all is said and done, the titles and praise that are ascribed to Jesus cannot mean very much since he is regarded as no higher than the other major prophets of Islam. He is, for example, compared to Adam² because both were created from the dust by a divine fiat of God according to the Koran. Jesus, therefore, is an ordinary mortal. Indeed, it is said among Moslems that Jesus is inferior to Adam because whereas Adam had no father and mother, Jesus did have a mother. Incidentally, perhaps the reason why Mohammed compared Jesus with Adam is because somewhere he may have heard of Jesus spoken of as the second Adam; since in the New Testament Jesus

¹ Surah 6:85.

² Surah 3:52.

is compared with the first man.¹

And what was Mohammed's estimate of the followers of Jesus, the Christians? In the Koran Mohammed placed Christians and Jews into a special category. The adherents of these two religions are called "those who possess Scriptures" or "People of the Book". It seems that these possessors of Scriptures were not to be compelled to accept Islam, but that they had to pay tribute to Moslems. In case they refused to do so, they could be attacked.² Yet, Mohammed regards the Christians as unbelievers. In surah 5:76 for example, Mohammed implies that all Christians, since they have misbelieved by worshipping Jesus as God, will all be damned into eternal hell-fire. Then he goes on to exhort Christians to beg the pardon of God for having committed the grievous sin of ascribing a son to God, and the prophet of Islam encourages the Christians to do this by assuring them that God is merciful and forgiving. In another passage the Koran says of the Christians, "But monkery, they invented it; we only prescribed to them the craving after the goodwill of God, and they observed it not with due observance."³ In the same passage Christians are described as being "workers of abomination."

¹
I Cor. 15.

²
Surah 9:29 and Becker, op. cit. p. 28.

³
Surah 57:27.

II

The Koran refers to Jesus by various names, some of which have already been mentioned. Since the oriental mind attaches much significance to names,¹ it is profitable to consider these names in order to see whether it is possible to learn more about just exactly how the Koran portrays Christ. The names that the book of Mohammed gives to Jesus are: Jesus, Messiah, son of Mary, the Word of God, spirit from God, prophet and apostle. The most common of these names is "Isa" or "Jesus", which, of course, is his proper name. This name is generally used along with other terms for Jesus like the prefix "prophet" or "Messiah", and the phrase "son of Mary" is often added to the name "Jesus" when it is used in the Koran.

The origin of the spelling of the name "Isa" has long been a source of speculation. There are several theories as to the reason why this name was spelled in just this way. One of these theories is that "Isa" is derived from the name "Esau", which is the derogatory name that the Jews had for Jesus.² Another theory is that the word "Isa" was shaped in this particular way because Mohammed wanted assonance between this name and "Musa"

¹ Zwemer, The Moslem Christ, p. 23.

² Winnett, op. cit. p. 351.

the name for Moses. An argument against this theory is that the two names are used together only five times in the Koran. On the other hand, an argument for this theory is the fact that Mohammed often performed just such tricks with words, as in the case of his changing "Goliath" to "Jalut", "Saul" to "Talut" to make the two rhyme; also Mohammed called Cain and Abel "Habil" and "Kabil". In addition to these examples the names of two angels could be mentioned as cases in point; namely, Harut and Marut. A third and perhaps better theory for the spelling of "Isa" is the one advanced by Winnett, an authority in the field of Arabic inscriptions. He says that in pre-Islamic times Jesus was referred to by the pagan Arabs as "yth". There is strong evidence, according to him, that "yth" was pronounced as "Yitha" which closely corresponds to the Hebrew word "Yesha" or "salvation", and that "yitha" must be the counterpart of "yesha" from which "Isa" is derived.¹ To lend support to this theory Winnett further says that in some of these inscriptions "yth" is written "Ys" and probably pronounced as "Yisa", which is very close to the Koranic "Isa".² A Moslem commentator, Mualvi Muhammad Ali, simply says that "Isa" is the

¹ Winnett, op. cit. p. 392.

² Ibid.

Arabic form of the Hebrew "Yeshua", just as "Jesus" is the Greek form of the same name.¹

In many of the Koranic passages that refer to Jesus the different names for Jesus are heaped together. In surah 4:169 there is an excellent example of this particular phenomenon. This passage reads, "The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is but the apostle of God and His Word. . ." In fact, some of the names given to Jesus are rarely used alone. The name "Messiah" for example, is used eight times, but only once (in surah 4:170) is it used by itself.

The name "Masih" or "Messiah" is from a Hebrew stem which means to anoint or to consecrate by unction.² The Biblical connotation of this word certainly refers to the deity of Jesus Christ. The Messiah was the Promised one of God who was to come from the seed of Abraham and save the people from their sins. Mohammed, of course, would never admit or perhaps he never realized that this name for Jesus carried such a connotation. Exactly what it did mean to him is difficult to say. Probably he used it for

¹ M. Ali, The Holy Qur-an, p. 155.

² W. Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon, p. 624.

no other reason than the one that he merely heard Jesus referred to by this name and without knowing what the word meant, used it in the Koran to identify Jesus. Moslem commentators have given various explanations as to the meaning of this word. The Imam Raghīb said that it means either "one who travels much" or "one wiped over with oil".¹ Of these two explanations the first one seems to have preference.² They generally connect it with the root "sah" meaning to wander or to go on a pilgrimage. This particular explanation is popular among the Moslems because the fact that Jesus traveled much and was virtually homeless makes a great impression on them. They like to think of Him as the leader of the wanderers.³ Besides the explanations for Messiah given here, there are about fifty others that have been advanced, every one of them designed so as to emphasize the humanity of Jesus.

The term "ibn Mariam", or son of Mary, is used twenty-three times in the Koran. The expression, unlike some of the other terms for Jesus, often stands

¹ M. Ali, op. cit. p. 154.

² Zwemer, op. cit. p. 35.

³ Ibid.

alone. One might well ask the reason why this particular expression was so popular with Mohammed. The most likely answer to this can be found in some of those passages in which Mohammed declaims the Christian teaching of the deity of Christ. In those passages¹ Mohammed likes to use "son of Mary" in referring to Jesus. Evidently, the prophet of Islam thought that the fact that Jesus was the son of a woman was proof beyond a doubt that he was human as are all those who are born of women. In other words, Mohammed probably used this expression polemically against all those who believed that Jesus was more than a mere man.

The expression "son of Mary" as such is not used of Jesus in the Bible, but, of course, there are many passages which refer to the fact that He was the Son of a woman. And yet, even though the expression itself is not used in the Bible, it became a popular expression among the later Christians, especially among the heretical bodies who gave more honor to Mary than they did to Jesus. The expression is found in the Epistles of Ignatius and also the Gospel of Thomas,² as well as in some of the other apocryphal gospels. As

¹ Surah 5:72; 9:31 among others.

² E. Bishop, "The Son of Mary" in The Moslem World, XXXIV, 3, p. 229.

has been mentioned before, there were Christian elements in Arabia before Islam, and among these elements were the heretical Collyridians who worshipped Mary as a goddess. It is quite probable that among them the expression "son of Mary" was common. Then, too, the Jews in Arabia that Mohammed came into contact with may have used the expression as a term of derision,¹ as the people of Nazareth used a similar expression when Jesus preached in their synagogue.²

The Gospel of St. John begins with the words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then John proceeds to identify the Word that he described as being God with Jesus Christ. Mohammed also uses the term "kalimah", or word, in speaking of Jesus. For instance, in surah 2:30 these words were recorded: "O Mary! Verily, God gives thee the glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name shall be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary. . . ." This verse is part of one of the accounts of the Annunciation of the birth of Jesus that are reported in the Koran. In other passages Jesus is called "His Word", i.e., God's Word, and "Word from God." He is also called

¹ E.F. Bishop, op. cit. p. 346.

² Matthew 13:55.

"the Word of Truth".¹ Missionaries have used these expressions as points of contact in preaching to the Moslems. However, when Mohammed uses "Word" to refer to Jesus, he certainly does not mean it to be taken in the Biblical sense. Rather he called Jesus "The Word" because Jesus as a prophet communicated the will of God to man. In the same sense Mohammed could have called himself "The Word". However, he ascribed to himself what he thought were higher names such as the "Seal" of the prophets. The other major prophets of Islam had similar titles. Adam, for example, is called the chosen of God, Noah the preacher of God, and Abraham the friend of God. In the same manner Mohammed gave to Jesus the appellation "Word of God", which was to be understood in a purely human sense.

There is one passage in the Koran which refers to Jesus as being "spirit" from God.² This passage in part reads, ". . . and His word, which He cast into Mary and a spirit from Him." Three other

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Surah 19:35.

²

Surah 4:169.

passages mention that the spirit of God was breathed into Mary when Jesus was conceived in her womb. The Arabic word used is "ruh" and can mean both spirit and inspiration.¹ The same word is used in regard to Adam who received the spirit from God. What this word really meant to Mohammed is also not easy to determine. It is quite possible that he meant no more by the word "spirit" than is meant by that word in a phrase like "the spirit of democracy." The Bible speaks of the third person in the Holy Trinity as being the Holy Spirit. Mohammed may have heard this from the Christians with whom he came into contact and adopted it for his own purpose.

The other names that the "Koran uses in reference to Jesus are the words "nabi" and "rasul", prophet and apostle or messenger. In the Bible these titles carry a special dignity. The prophets and apostles, according to the Bible, are men who have been sent by God with a special message to proclaim. The Moslems also regard these titles as having real dignity attached to them. But according to Moslem teaching there have been as many as 124,000 prophets and apostles sent by God, three hundred and thirteen of whom had a special message to convey.² An apostle is not the same as a prophet.

¹M. Ali, op. cit. p. 246.

²Zwemer, op. cit. p. 30.

The distinction is that a prophet is a man inspired and sent by God, but not having any special Book or dispensation to bring to the people. The apostle had to have the special book. Jesus is recognized as being both an apostle and a prophet. We may infer from this that Jesus was regarded by Mohammed to have been both faithful and truthful since those two qualifications have always been deemed essential to a prophet by Moslems.¹ Nevertheless, these titles, no matter how much honor may be attached to them, are indeed hollow when considered in the light of the fact that Jesus was not merely an apostle or prophet, but the Almighty Son of God Himself.

In addition there is another word or appellation that is ascribed to Jesus, that is, the word "sign". In surah 21:91 both Jesus and His mother Mary are called "signs". In another place he is called the "Sign of the hour",² which, according to Moslems, is a reference to the predicted second coming of Jesus, which is to precede the end of the world.³

¹

Zwemer, op. cit. p. 31.

²

Surah 43:61.

³

E.H. Palmer, The Koran, p. 425 note 3.

III

Compared with the Christian Scriptures, the Koran gives only scant information on the life and work of Jesus. The Mohammedan holy book gives an account of the annunciation and birth of Jesus, devotes only a few short phrases to his teachings while He was on earth, and then devotes a few more passages to his death. In this section of this treatise, the aim will be to consider what the Koran has to say about the life and work of Jesus, and how the Koranic account of this subject compares to the account as we have it in the Bible.

The Koran records two accounts of the annunciation of the birth of Jesus. The first and longer of these two accounts was revealed in Medina and is located in surah 3:37-44, of the Koran. The shorter of the two accounts, on the other hand, was revealed in Mecca and is recorded in surah 19:16-21. Both of these accounts will be considered because the second account, though shorter than the first, gives details that are not found in the longer account.

According to surah 3:37 there were a number of angels at the scene of the annunciation of the birth of Jesus to Mary. The account in Luke records the fact that only one angel, Gabriel, appeared to

Mary to tell her the great thing that was to happen to her. According to some legendary accounts of the annunciation, however, Gabriel was accompanied by a number of angels on his way down to earth to deliver the message to Mary. The other angels waited outside while Gabriel by himself went into the house to talk to the Virgin.¹ Perhaps it was from some of these legendary narratives that Mohammed got the idea that there were a number of angels present at the annunciation. At any rate, according to the first account in the Koran, the angels spoke to Mary and told her, "O Mary! verily, God has chosen thee and has purified thee, and has chosen thee above the women of the world." Thus far the Koranic account compares favorably with the account in Luke, where we read in chapter 1:28, "Hail, thou art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women."

The angels continue their message to Mary, according to the Koran, with these words, "O Mary, be devout unto the Lord, and adore and bow down with those who bow. That is (one) of the declarations of the unseen world which we reveal to thee, though thou wert not by them when they threw

¹

H.A. Guerber, Legends of the Virgin and Christ, p. 28.

their lots which of them should take care of Mary, nor were ye by them when they did dispute." The "unseen" that is spoken of here is, according to at least one Moslem commentator, a hint or an allusion to the coming of the prophet Mohammed.¹ The casting of lots that is referred to in this passage is thought by Moslem commentators to refer to the priests, who are supposed to have settled their dispute over which of them should have charge of Mary by casting lots.² If this is the case, then here, too, there is a strong parallel to a similar incident in legendary accounts of Mary. According to the legend, Mary was asked by the priest to cast lots in order to determine who should spin certain cloths for the temple. We are told that the spinning of "the true purple and scarlet" fell to her lot.³

The message of the angels to Mary continues in the first account of the annunciation story in the Koran by stating that the name of the child that was to be born to her would be "Messiah Jesus the son of Mary." The child will be a remarkable child according to this message because he would speak to

¹ M. Ali, op. cit. p. 153.

² Ibid.

³ H.A. Guerber, op. cit. p. 25.

the people from his cradle, and he would be highly esteemed in this world and the next. The account in the Koran, agreeing with the account in Luke, has Mary expressing surprise that such a thing could happen to her. She says to the angels, "Lord, how can I have a son when Man hath not yet touched me?" ^{How} However, the answer that Mary receives to her question in the two accounts is far different. In Luke this answer is given to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." In this account there are unmistakable references to the deity of the babe which is to be born to her. He is called "holy" and "Son of God". In the Koran Mary receives this answer, "Thus God creates when He pleaseth. When He decrees a matter, He only says 'Be!' and it is; and He will teach Him the Book, and the wisdom, and the law, and the Gospel, and he shall be a prophet to the children of Israel." This passage obviously says nothing about the deity of Jesus; on the contrary, it emphasizes his humanity, by pointing out that Jesus will be taught, and that he will be a prophet, which to Mohammed meant nothing more than a man with a special revelation.

The second Koranic account of the annunciation is quite different from the first. According to this account, Mary left her family for a time and traveled to a remote place to the east.¹ There the fact that she would give birth to Jesus was announced to her by one angel. The angel is not named, but the assumption is that it was Gabriel, since he is referred to as "our spirit" by Allah. This angel "took for her the semblance of a well-made man." Here also there is a strong parallel with legendary accounts of the annunciation. Gabriel is described in legend as "a young man whose beauty could not be told."² The Koran goes on to relate that Mary was taken aback at the intrusion of this young stranger. She said, "Verily, I take refuge in the Merciful One from thee." He said, "I am only the Messenger from thy Lord to bestow on thee a pure boy." The account of Luke says that that which will be born of her will be "holy", but here that concept is watered down to "pure boy." Then also in this second account Mary asks the question, "How can I have a boy when no man has touched me, and when I am no harlot?" The angel answered her by saying, "Thus says the Lord, It

¹

Surah 19:16 and 22.

²H.A. Buerber, op. cit. p. 28.

is easy for Me!"

When reading this account, the impression is given that Mohammed's view of the conception of Jesus was that though it was an out-of-the-ordinary occurrence, it was a sensual and carnal conception, nevertheless. The impression is given that Gabriel was the natural father of Jesus. This also is the opinion of Gereck and Zwemer who both write extensively on this subject.¹

The difference between the two Koranic accounts of the annunciation of the birth of Jesus are several. In the first account there are a number of angels present at the annunciation, whereas only one angel, the spirit of God, is mentioned in the second account. The second account also says that this angel appeared as a well-made man, while the first account is entirely silent on this score. Probably the biggest difference, however, is the fact that the first account is an account complete in itself, while the second account is reported along with the story of the birth of Jesus which definitely gives one the impression that it took place only a short time, possibly an hour or two, after the annunciation.²

The Koranic narrative of the birth of Jesus is

¹ Zwemer, op. cit. p. 45 note.

² Cf. surah 19.

found in surah 19:22-34. As was mentioned above, this account is a continuation of the second account of the annunciation. The scene of the story is laid in a "remote place". Perhaps Mohammed had heard that Jesus was born in Bethlehem away from the place where Mary lived, and remembering vaguely that Jesus was not born in her home, Mohammed set the scene of the incident simply as "a remote place". Be that as it may, according to the Koran narrative, Mary was away from home all by herself when the birth pains came upon her. It seems that she used the trunk of a palm tree to support her body while in travail. Her labor was so intense that she exclaimed, "O that I had died before this, and been forgotten out of mind!" When a voice called out to comfort her. The owner of the voice is simply referred to as "he", and according to Palmer there are three possible owners of the voice; namely, Gabriel, the child Jesus, and the palm tree itself.¹ However, it seems that the likeliest explanation to this problem is that the child Jesus Himself spoke to his mother while he was being born. The narrative distinctly says that the voice came from beneath her. Then, too, later on in the narrative,

¹E.H. Palmer, The Koran, p. 259, note.

Jesus is again referred to as "him". The fact that Jesus was too young to speak at this time is not an argument against this explanation because, as we shall note later, Jesus had the gift of speech very shortly after he was born.

The voice from beneath Mary tried to comfort her in her travail. It called to Mary's attention the fact that there was a stream for her, (for the purpose of quenching her thirst) and that she should shake the palm tree in order to obtain food for her sustenance. The voice also suggested an easy way to avoid embarrassment for herself. The suggestion was that if anyone asked her anything, she should simply inform the person that she had made a vow not to speak with anyone that day.

The account continues by describing the scene that took place when she brought the little child to her home. Her relatives accused her of wrong-doing and said admonishingly, "O Mary! thou hast done an extraordinary thing! O sister of Aaron! thy father was not a bad man, nor was thy mother a harlot!" To vindicate herself, Mary said not a word. She merely pointed to her child as if to tell them that the child will vindicate her. Her relatives then asked her how she expected them to converse with

a little child that was still in his cradle. But the child spoke. Not only did he speak, but he announced to those present that he had been sent by God and sent for several definite reasons.

The Koran reports this speech in these words, "Verily, I am a servant of God; He has brought me the Book, and He has made me a prophet, and He has made me blessed wherever I be; and He has required of me prayer and almsgiving as long as I live, and piety towards my mother, and has not made me a miserable tyrant; and peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised up alive." Here we see that Jesus while still in the cradle gave the people a short resume of his life, and thereby he protected his mother from slander. With this speech of Jesus the birth narrative in the Koran comes to a close.

It is interesting to compare the Koranic account with the Biblical account. Luke simply says of this great event, "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." Were all the embellishments that the Koran adds, then, simply a product of

Mohammed's imagination? Perhaps not entirely so. In the fourteenth chapter of the apocryphal Protevangel there is quite an elaboration of the Biblical account of the birth of Jesus. This account does not say that Jesus spoke directly after his birth, but it does relate how the withered hand of Salome was cured by her merely touching the infant Jesus. It is not improbable that apocryphal stories and legends such as this were circling about Arabia, and since it is a well attested fact that the Arabs were great story tellers, Mohammed may have heard stories about the birth of Jesus which resemble the story that appears in the Koran.

It is also noteworthy to mention that Mohammed seems to have had Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Miriam, the sister of Aaron, confused. In the quotation given above the relatives of Mary call her the sister of Aaron. Since both women had the same name, it is quite likely that Mohammed did commit this blunder. It might be added in this connection that if this is a blunder, it is not unique in the pages of the Koran.

Why did Mohammed include this rather lengthy narrative of the birth of Jesus in his "revelations"? Certainly he must have had some reason besides

the desire to entertain his listeners. Probably the answer to this question lies in some of the other things that Mohammed had to say about Jesus. It has already been pointed out that Mohammed vehemently denounced the belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and that he used the appellation "son of Mary" when referring to Jesus quite consistently to show that he was an ordinary man born of a woman. Here, then, Mohammed gives the account of the actual birth in order to definitely establish for his followers the human origin of Jesus. The implication is that since he had a human origin, he must be nothing else but human. He, of course, admits that Jesus had no earthly father. But neither did Adam. Mohammed's explanation for the extraordinary nature of the birth of Jesus would be that in the case of prophets such miraculous happenings are quite in keeping with the will of Allah.

We have seen that the birth of Jesus was miraculously announced according to the Koran, and also that there were miraculous elements connected with his birth. The fact that Jesus would speak to the people from his cradle had been prophesied by the angel to Mary at the time of the annunciation. But these are not the only miraculous elements

connected with Jesus in the Koran. In surah 2:255 we read, ". . . and we (Allah) have given Jesus the son of Mary manifest signs. . . ." The signs mentioned in this verse undoubtedly refer to the miracles of Jesus that he was to perform to show that he was a true prophet sent from God. One of these signs is mentioned in surah 3:43. Jesus is here represented in a prophecy as a doer of miracles. The prophecy is made that Jesus will tell the people that he will make a bird of clay, blow upon it, and the clay bird will then come to life by God's permission. The actual performance of this miracle by Jesus is not recorded in the Koran. However, there is a further reference to it in surah 5:110. Here Allah is represented as speaking to Jesus and reminding him that he had been given power to perform this and other miracles, and that the granting of this power was a great favor which Allah bestowed upon him. The miracle of Jesus' endowing a clay bird with life is spoken of as a past event. Therefore, even though the actual performance of the miracle is not recorded in the Koran, it assumes that Jesus did perform the miracle. This particular miracle is a popular legend ascribed to the infancy of Jesus. The story

of this miracle performed by Jesus as a little boy can be found recorded in the apocryphal First Gospel of the Infancy.¹ Apparently this legend also reached the ears of Mohammed.

The same prophecy which mentions that Jesus will bring clay birds to life mentions also some other miracles that Jesus will tell his listeners that he will perform. According to the prophecy, Jesus was to say, "I will heal the blind from birth, and lepers; and I will bring the dead to life by God's permission; and I will tell you what you store up in your houses." Here Jesus is represented by the angel as an extraordinary being who will have the powers of miraculous healing, restoring life, and the gift of prophecy. However, the Koran nowhere records the fulfillment of these prophecies.

There is one other miraculous incident which should be mentioned in this connection. It seems that this incident took place at a certain time when the disciples were in doubt as to whether Jesus was a true prophet or a usurper. To determine whether Jesus really was a prophet, they asked him, "O Jesus, son of Mary! is Thy Lord able to send down to us a table from heaven?" Jesus was very reluctant to answer this question according to this account and said, "Fear God, if ye be believers." But

¹
Chapter 15.

they persisted in their quest for a sign from heaven. They said, "We desire to eat therefrom that our hearts may be at rest, and that we may know that what thou hast told us is the truth, and that we may be thereby amongst the witnesses." Then Jesus granted their request. He prayed, "O God, our Lord! Send down to us a table from heaven to be to us as a festival - to the first of us and to the last, and a sign from thee, - and grant us provision, for Thou art the best of the providers." God answered the prayer of Jesus by saying in the words of the Koran, "Verily, I am about to send it down to you; but whoso disbelieves amongst you after that, verily I will torment him with a torment which I have not tormented anyone with in all the worlds."¹

Concerning this incident as recorded by the Koran, the kindest thing that can be said is that Mohammed got his Bible stories mixed up. It seems to have elements of the Lord's Supper, Peter's vision of the great vessel with divers four-footed animals descending from heaven,² and the feeding of the multitudes by Jesus.

These are all of the miracles that are attributed to Jesus by the Koran. Compare this with the Gospels

¹ Surah 5:112-115.

² Acts 10:11ff.

which tell us that Jesus did so many wonderful works that all of them could not be recorded! However, even the listing of these scant miracles is quite a concession since Mohammed admitted that even he did not have the gift of performing miracles. Mohammed pointed to his revelations to show his superior apostleship.

As for the purpose of Jesus' coming down to earth, the material in the Koran is also scanty. It has already been shown that Jesus was considered a great prophet with a special message to deliver. It was pointed out that Jesus is ranked with the other great prophets of Islam. The Koran calls him "One of those made near", and also refers to him as "One of the righteous". M. Ali says of these phrases that they show that Jesus is considered by the Koran to be among the foremost line of the "righteous servants of the companions of the Holy Prophet".¹ As a prophet he was given a Book by Allah which is called the "Injil" or the gospel.² This quite in keeping with the teaching of Mohammed that each age had its own book.³

¹ M. Ali, op. cit. p. 155.

² Surah 57:26, 3:43, et al.

³ Surah 13:38.

The "Injil", the special book of Jesus, is also called by Mohammed "good news". By good news Mohammed meant deliverance from sin and punishment and the assurance of Paradise.¹ Mohammed's idea of the teaching of Jesus was that the son of Mary taught essentially the same thing as he did. He was apparently entirely ignorant of the fact that the teachings of Jesus differed from his own. Mohammed, of course, considered his own "good news" superior to that of Jesus since it was to confirm everything that came before. We can only say that if the preaching of fear of hell fire and physical pleasures as a reward of doing evil or good is superior to salvation by faith and the love of God for all men, then, indeed, the good news of Mohammed was superior to that of Jesus.

It should be mentioned that the word "Injil" is simply the transfer of the Greek word for Gospel, euaggelion, into the Arabic,⁽²⁾ and a corruption of it. The word is used twelve times in the Koran.

The mission of Jesus according to the Koran is not universal. The book represents him as being a prophet specifically for the Jews, or the children of Israel, as they are called. It was the duty of Jesus to correct

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Surah 44:9-13.

²

Foster, "Mohammed's Evangel" in The Moslem World, XXII, 1 p. 16.

those Jews which had fallen into error and to call them to repentance. Mohammed seems to have been under the impression that also the Jews had fallen into the sin of polytheism. In surah 9:30 these words are recorded: "The Jews say Ezra is the son of God. . ." Where Mohammed got this idea is far from certain but it may be that since the Jews were in the habit of referring to their learned men as "Rabbi", which is the cognate word of the Arabic "Rab" or "lord", possibly Mohammed thought that Ezra was worshipped as God by the Jews since the prophet may have heard Ezra referred to as "Rab" which to Mohammed was a title that should be reserved for God alone.

The teaching of Jesus consisted in giving guidance and light, in admonishing, and in confirming the law. He also had the privilege of permitting some of these things which had been prohibited. In speaking of the mission of Jesus, part of surah 5:50-51 says, ". . . Jesus the son of Mary confirming (that which was before him and the law, and we brought him the gospel wherein is guidance and light, verifying what was before it of the law, and a guidance and an admonition to those who fear." The admonition of Jesus according to the words ^{in surah 3145} of the Koran consisted in his saying, "I have come to you with a sign from

your Lord, so fear God and follow me, for God is my Lord, and your Lord, so worship him; - this is the right path." From this passage it seems that Jesus had one main teaching, and that teaching was to worship the one true God.¹

The Koran also says that Jesus was to play the role of peacemaker, which would consist in his settling the disputes of the people.² This Jesus was to do by explaining the things that were being disputed by the people. Jesus had been endowed with wisdom from Allah to do this. Also in surah 3:73 we are told that Jesus had the gift of judgment. Perhaps the purpose of this particular gift was to settle the disputes that came to his attention.

One of the most important of the teachings of Jesus according to the Mohammedans is his teaching concerning Ahmed. In surah 61:6 we find, "I (Jesus) am the apostle of God to you, . . . and giving you glad tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, whose name is Ahmed." The word "Ahmed" comes from the same verbal root as Mohammed.³ The prophet of Islam intended this to be a prophecy of Jesus concerning himself. Some authorities have rejected this particular verse

¹

Surah 3:45.

²

Surah 43:63.

³

J. Walker, Bible Characters in the Koran, p. 63.

of the Koran as an interpolation. But the other Moslem authorities have sought to identify this supposed prophecy of Jesus with his promise of a Comforter or Paraclete.¹ These authorities claim that the Greek "parakleetos" should really be "periklutos" meaning "praised" which is also the meaning of "Ahmed".² The reader can judge the validity of this argument for himself.

The Koran also acknowledges the fact that Jesus had disciples, and that these disciples were often very weak in faith. Their desire of a sign from Jesus has already been referred to above when the miracles of Jesus in the Koran were discussed. The Koran calls the disciples "hawariyyun", or washers of clothes. Commentators have said that they are called by this name in the Koran because by occupation they were washers of clothes.³ Perhaps this is some sort of a vague reference to the fact that the Gospels speak of the disciples as engaged in the washing of their nets as part of their occupation of fish catching.

Because the disciples were weak in faith, according

¹ John 16:17.

² J. Walker, op. cit. p. 63.

³ M. Ali, op. cit. p. 159.

to the Koran, Jesus asked them the question, "Who are my helpers for God?"¹ The disciples then assured Jesus that they were his helpers for God, and that they believed all that Jesus had revealed to them. Other than this episode and the episode referred to in the preceding paragraph, there are no further passages giving information about the disciples of Jesus.

There are two separate accounts of the death of Jesus recorded in the holy book of the Mohammedans.² Between these two accounts there is a discrepancy which is difficult to reconcile. The first account says in surah 3:48, "When God said, 'O Jesus! I will make thee die and take thee up again to me, and will clear thee of those who misbelieve.'" The words here are unmistakable. God is talking to Jesus and telling him what is in store for him; namely, that he will die and then be taken to God. The second account has this to say: "But they (the Jews) did not kill him, and they did not crucify him, but a similitude was made for them."³ Further along in the same account we read, "They (the Jews) did not kill him for sure! nay, God raised him up unto Himself." So according to the second account it is evident

¹ Surah 3:45.

² Surahs 3:47-50 and 4:115-156.

³ Surah 4:155.

that the Jews did not kill Jesus. Nowhere does this account mention that Jesus died. The words give the impression that Jesus was taken to heaven alive. This would agree with surah 19:33 where Jesus says from the cradle, ". . . and the day I shall be raised up alive." And yet, the first account definitely makes the statement that God would make Jesus die. Did Allah change his mind? What is the explanation?

Zwemer says that the explanation of the discrepancy between these two accounts has been the despair of even the Moslem commentators.¹ The predominant view of the commentators seems to be that Jesus did not die but was taken up to heaven alive.² The Moslem commentator Beidhawi, however, says that God caused Jesus to die for seven hours and then raised Jesus to heaven.³ There are also other stories among Moslems about this particular problem. In agreement with the second account it is said that another person was substituted for Jesus on the cross. According to one of these stories Jesus asked his disciples which of them would consent to assume his likeness and be crucified in return for a guarantee that he would enter Paradise.

1

Zwemer, The Moslem Christ, p. 49.

2

J. Robson, "Mohammedan Teaching about Jesus" in The Moslem World, xxix 1, p. 39.

3

Zwemer, op. cit. p. 50 note.

One of the disciples agreed and was crucified in place of Jesus, whereupon God took Jesus to heaven. Another story runs similar to this one. It says that the disciple who betrayed Jesus was changed into the likeness of Jesus, was arrested in place of Jesus, and the Jews, thinking that it was Jesus they captured, crucified the betraying disciple.¹

Evidently, the doctrine of the crucifixion must have been a stumbling block to Mohammed. And yet, he gives no indication of having known that the purpose of the death of Jesus according to Christians was to pay the ransom for sin. Therefore, it cannot be held that Mohammed definitely denied the crucifixion because of this doctrine. Mohammed's idea of the crucifixion seems to have been similar to that of some of the heterodox sects like the Basilidians and other Gnostics who said that Jesus was not crucified, but that his place was taken by Simon the Cyrenian, who resembled Jesus.² The lost Gospel of Barnabas claimed that Judas was crucified instead of Jesus.³

However, all of these explanations still leave the problem unsolved. Allah said that Jesus would die, and Jesus testified concerning himself that he would die. In order to solve this Moslems say that

¹ Robson, op. cit. p. 40.

² Walker, op. cit. p. 58.

³ Ibid.

the death of Jesus refers to his death after his second coming.¹ Here is a case of a whole doctrine being formed just to explain a discrepancy in the two accounts. The second coming of Jesus Christ is a doctrine that Moslems accept with no more basis in the Koran than the basis that has just been described. The second coming of Jesus, according to the Mohammedans, differs radically from the Christian doctrine. They say that Jesus will come again, settle down, raise a family, and then die a natural death.

This, then, is virtually all that the Koran has to say about Jesus Christ. The Mohammedan traditions have greatly expanded the Koranic story of Jesus, however. The traditions say much about the life of Jesus. They contain many extraordinary stories based on the Gospels, the apocryphal books of the Bible, and on oral tradition.² For instance, among other stories, the traditions say that Mary and Joseph, the Carpenter, lived in a mosque. The two persons were servants in the mosque, being employed as water carriers and cleaners. One day, the hottest and longest of the year, Mary's water jar was empty, and, therefore, she was compelled to go to the spring to refill it. There she found Gabriel in the form of a young man. He said to the maiden,

¹ Zwemer, op. cit. p. 50 note.

² Robson, op. cit. p. 42.

"O Mary, truly God hath sent me to give to you a pious child." The story goes on to imply that Gabriel had sexual intercourse with Mary, and that it was from this union that Jesus was brought forth.¹

The traditions also speak about the flight into Egypt, and how the infant Jesus performed miracles there, such as the one where he is said to have recovered some stolen money and exposed the thief. The story of the raising of Lazarus is also among the stories about Jesus in the traditions. This story, running true to form, is given with many embellishments. Concerning the ascension of Jesus into heaven, there is an account recorded in the traditions that when he was taken to heaven he abode there seven days and then was sent to earth again by God because of all the trouble that the Jews were making for the disciples. At the same time Jesus was instructed to visit Mary Magdalene because she was weeping bitterly over his death. One of these traditions confuses Mary Magdalene with the woman who had an issue of blood.² The whole traditional account of Christ's going to heaven and then coming down again may be a confusion of the story of the transfiguration.³ Other accounts in the traditions give the ages

¹ Zwemer, op. cit. p. 65.

² Mark 5:25-34.

³ Zwemer, op. cit. p. 105.

of Mary and Jesus, lists the parts of the world that the disciples of Jesus went to preach the Gospel, and even that Mary died before Jesus and that he attended her funeral.

Evaluating what the Koran asserts about Jesus, we can say that the book makes some very generous statements about him in that it ranks him with the great prophets. It ascribes to him a miraculous birth, the power to perform miracles, and the power to foretell future events, and even ascribes to him a special revelation. The Koran honors Jesus by recording the fact that he ascended into heaven to God. It ascribes to him truthfulness, wisdom and ability to judge.

Yet, all these things that are ascribed to Jesus mean nothing when viewed in the light of what is denied about his person. The Koran denies the deity and the eternal sonship of Jesus Christ, which is central in Christian theology. Jesus is a creature like Adam; He was created from the dust in exactly the same manner as all men are created from the dust, according to the Koran. Those that claim that Jesus Christ is more than a mere human being are branded as unbelievers worthy only of the fire of hell. The fact that Jesus died for the sins of the world is not even alluded to in the holy book of the Mohammedans.

Such a belief is an abomination to the followers of the author of the Koran. Therefore, no matter what the Koran may state concerning the dignity, purity, or power of Jesus, it means nothing because the most important thing, the deity of Jesus, is denied.

"He that believeth not shall be damned."

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