



Presented by Abu Zakariya

Aims and Objectives

- This training is not geared towards getting a quick Shahadah.



Aims and Objectives

- Focus is on equipping you with the tools needed to tackle the fundamentals of Christianity.



Aims and Objectives

- What you will learn is flexible enough to complement your existing dawah techniques.

Aims and Objectives

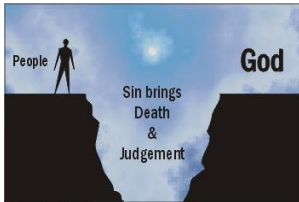
- Move away from an over-reliance on the memorisation of Bible verses and instead will give you a firm grasp of the theology that underpins Christianity, insha'Allah.

What is Christianity?

- How would you summarise Christian belief in a few short sentences?

What is Christianity?

1. Sin has separated mankind from God.



What is Christianity?

2. Sin is like debt, it can't just be forgiven by God.



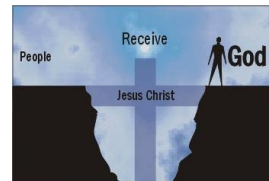
What is Christianity?

3. God sent His son, Jesus, to die for mankind.



What is Christianity?

4. His sacrifice paid the penalty for our sins and redeems us in the sight of God.



Summary of Christian Belief

“Salvation is based on a belief of the deity of Jesus and his death and resurrection.”

What is the Bible?

- Depends on who you ask.

What is the Bible?

For Jews it's the books of the Old Testament:



What is the Bible?

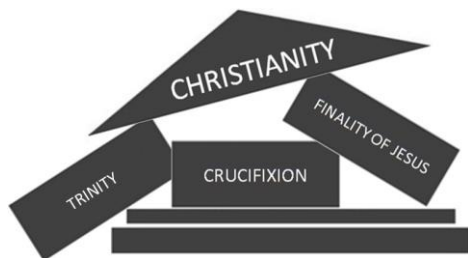
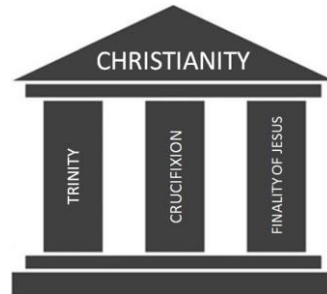
For Christians it's the books of both the Old and New Testament:



What is the Bible?

- It's a compilation of books by different authors, spanning thousands of years and multiple genres.

Foundations of Christianity

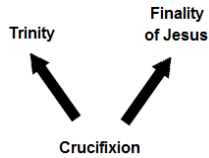


Agenda

- We will focus on the Trinity and finality of Jesus in our training today.

Agenda

- Since the Crucifixion depends on the Trinity and finality of Jesus, tackling these two topics automatically dismantles the Crucifixion:



The Trinity

What is the Trinity?

- How would you explain the doctrine of the Trinity in a few short sentences?

What is the Trinity?

- The doctrine of the Trinity defines God as one being who eternally exists as three distinct Persons — the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Put simply, “one God in three persons”.

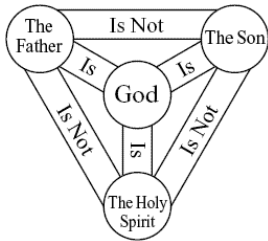
What is the Trinity?

- All three Persons of the Trinity are said to be co-equal and co-eternal, and “each is God, whole and entire”.

What is the Trinity?

- One “What” – God.
- Three “Who’s” – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

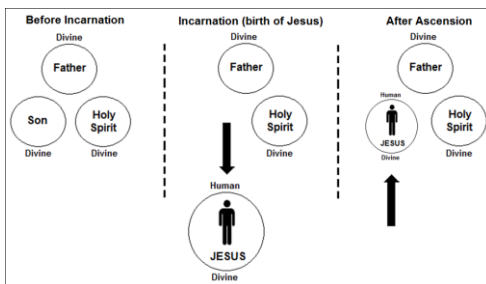
What is the Trinity?



- In God's plan of salvation for mankind, the persons have each taken on different roles:

- The Father sent the Son
- The Son redeems us by dying on the cross
- The Holy Spirit inspires believers

The Incarnation of Jesus



The Incarnation of Jesus

- Thus the Son, Jesus, is now the god-man, he has two natures – one divine, one human.
- Humanity has been permanently incorporated into the Godhead. The Son will forever have an inseparable divine and human nature.

Approach to the Trinity

- Tackle fundamentals rather than specific verses.
- We can use some Qur'anic principles as discussion points for dawah. We will highlight issues with their beliefs and offer them something better, Islam.

Principles of Belief

1. The purpose of revelation is guidance.

“And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance...”
[16:89]

Principles of Belief

2. Our beliefs about the unseen should derive from revelation.

That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. You knew it not, neither you nor your people, before this... [11:49]

Principles of Belief

3. Our interpretation of revelation should be consistent.

"As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]..." [3:7]

Principles of Belief

4. Our interpretation of revelation should not cause contradictions.

"Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction." [4:82]

Principles of Belief

5. We throw out man made religion.

"And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?" [2:170]

Summary of Principles

1. The purpose of revelation is guidance.
2. Our beliefs about the unseen should derive from revelation.
3. Our interpretation of revelation should be consistent.
4. Our interpretation of revelation should not cause contradictions.
5. We throw out man made religion.

Principle #1

"The purpose of revelation is guidance"

What is Revelation?

- Books of God revealed as guidance.
- If guidance results in confusion (or misguidance) then it defeats the purpose of revelation!

Trinity is a Mystery

- Many theologians have resigned themselves to classifying the Trinity as a holy mystery. The Catholic Church states the following:

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. [1]

Why So Confusing?

- The Trinity is inexplicable because Christians try to put a doctrine of “threeness” into a purely monotheistic context which does not fit.



A Mystery, Yet Essential

- Rejecting any aspect of the doctrine is enough for a Christian to be condemned as a disbeliever.
- The evangelical scholar Harold Lindsell and professor Charles Woodbridge wrote the following:

“The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who has tried to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind; but he who would deny the Trinity will lose his soul.” [2]

A Mystery, Yet Essential

- This shows a fundamental paradox with the doctrine: why would God reveal something that cannot be fully comprehended, and yet tie our salvation to it?



Conflicts with Purpose of Revelation

- What should we make of all this in light of the purpose of revelation?
- Revelation is an opening up, an uncovering. The most learned of biblical scholars admit the Trinity is a mystery, which directly conflicts with the very purpose of revelation: guidance.

Tawheed

- Unlike the Trinity, the concept of God being one distinct and unique personality is easy to grasp by anyone, whether child or adult, from the lay person to the scholar.

Tawheed

- Let's examine some reasoning that God gives to explain why Jesus cannot have been divine:

The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded. [5:75]

Tawheed

- Notice how God refers to Jesus as "son of Mary". This phrase is repeated throughout the Qur'an and reinforces the idea that he is a very human messenger and not divine.
- The mention of Jesus eating food is a simple but profound point, anything that needs sustenance cannot be God.

Tawheed

- The Qur'an doesn't rely on complicated arguments when addressing its reader, it is accessible to anyone regardless of age, intelligence and social background.

The Trinity

- This is the opposite of the situation with Trinitarians. They are in the awkward position of having to believe in something that cannot be comprehended, which creates tension between the heart and mind. Thus they can never truly be at peace.



Tawheed

- Tawheed, the pillar of Islam, is something that can be grasped by anyone. The believing Muslim has an inner peace that the Trinitarian cannot attain.



Tawheed

- It's interesting that one of the root meanings of the Arabic word 'Islam' is in fact "peace" – in essence Islam means "the attainment of peace by submitting to our Creator".
- The Qur'an describes this peace that Muslims have when they remember God:

Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest [13:28]

Principles Progress

- ✓ 1. The purpose of revelation is guidance.
2. Our beliefs about the unseen should derive from revelation.
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Principle #2

"Our beliefs about the unseen should derive from revelation"

Trinity mentioned by name?

- The term 'trinity' is not found anywhere in the Bible. Such terminology appears only in the writings of Church fathers much later.



Trinity mentioned by name?

- The position of the Roman Catholic Church is that the term 'trinity' was first mentioned late into the second century:

In Scripture there is as yet no single term by which the Three Divine Persons are denoted together...The word trias (of which the Latin trinitas is a translation) is first found in Theophilus of Antioch about A.D. 180... [3]

Fabrications in the New Testament

- Now, there is a mention of "threeness" in some versions of the Bible in a verse known as the Johannine Comma:

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the father, the word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" [1 John 5:7]

Fabrications in the New Testament

- This verse used to be in all Bibles; however modern versions such as the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and New International Version (NIV) have removed it.

Fabrications in the New Testament

| King James Version (KJV) | Revised Standard Version (RSV) | New International Version (NIV) |
|--|---|---|
| ¶ This is he that came by water and blood; even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. | ¶ This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. | ¶ This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. |
| ¶ For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. | ¶ And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. | ¶ For there are three that testify: |
| ¶ And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. | ¶ There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree. | ¶ The Spirit, the water and the blood, and the three are in agreement. |

Fabrications in the New Testament

- Here is the a footnote from the NIV regarding this verse:

Late manuscripts of the Vulgate testify in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one (not found in any Greek manuscript before the sixteenth century)

Fabrications in the New Testament

- In other words, it is a fabricated verse that was inserted into the New Testament over 1,500 years after Jesus.

Fabrications in the New Testament

- Trinitarians should reflect on this point: why is the only explicit mention of God being three, a later fabrication?



Fabrications in the New Testament

- Clearly, it had to be inserted into the Bible to lend support for the doctrine because it is unbiblical.

Is Trinity Concept Present?

- Trinitarians may try to argue that although there isn't any mention of the word 'trinity' in the Bible, the concept is present throughout scripture.

Is Trinity Concept Present?

- Let's look at some examples of proof texts that are commonly put forward by Trinitarians...

Is Trinity Concept Present?

- What do you think, are these valid proofs for the Trinity:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [John 1:1]

For in him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. [Colossians 2:9]

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19]

Refuting Trinity "Proof Texts"

- There are simple techniques you can use to refute any claim of a Trinity proof text...

Refuting Trinity "Proof Texts"

1. Show another quote by the same author which challenges the Trinity.
2. Point out that their quote is inadequate in supporting the Trinity as it is believed in today.

Refuting Trinity "Proof Texts"

- Let's apply these techniques to the so-called proof texts we saw from earlier.

1. Fighting Quotes With Quotes

- So-called proof text:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [John 1:1]

- Our response:

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father... Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. [John 17:1-3]

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" [John 20:17]

- Conclusion: Is John concrete evidence for the Trinity? No.

1. Fighting Quotes With Quotes

- So-called proof text:

For in him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. [Colossians 2:9]

- Our response:

"and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God". [Ephesians 3:19]

But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. [1 Corinthians 11:3]

- Conclusion: Is Paul concrete evidence for the Trinity? No.

1. Fighting Quotes With Quotes

- So-called proof text:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19]

- Our response:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [Matthew 28:18]

All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. [Matthew 11:27]

- Conclusion: Is Matthew concrete evidence for the Trinity? No.

1. Fighting Quotes With Quotes

- Christians usually quote from John or Paul in order to prove the Trinity from the Bible.
- So you don't need to memorise every single proof text and its refutation, just one strong example from John and Paul.

2. Inadequate Proof Texts

- This involves pointing out that their so-called proof texts fall short of supporting their beliefs about the Trinity:

"One God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all co-equal and co-eternal"

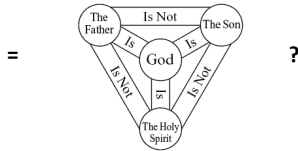
2. Inadequate Proof Texts

- Since the Trinity is a fundamental belief in Christianity, it's not unreasonable for us to request a clear statement from the Bible that comprehensively defines the doctrine of the Trinity as it is believed in today.

2. Inadequate Proof Texts

Does:

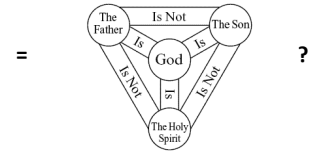
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2. Inadequate Proof Texts

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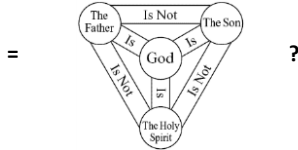
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2. Inadequate Proof Texts

Does:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19]



Concept Nowhere To Be Found

- When Trinitarians try and argue for the divinity of Jesus as conclusive proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, they miss a big point...

Concept Nowhere To Be Found

- Even **IF** we grant the claim that there are some statements in the New Testament which can be interpreted to imply that Jesus is divine in some capacity, this in no way takes away from our main argument:

Concept Nowhere To Be Found

- The simple fact is that nowhere in the Bible is there any explicit mention of a Trinitarian formula, the concept that God is three persons that are co-equal and co-eternal.
- Nor is God ever spoken of using terms like 'Being' and 'Persons' which is the language used by Trinitarians.

Concept Nowhere To Be Found

- The Trinity is supposed to be the central doctrine of Christianity and the true nature of God, and yet the Bible does not clearly support it.

Concept Nowhere To Be Found

- Often such proofs involve a patchwork of verses – the cobbling together of unrelated bits and pieces of scripture from across the Bible.

TRINITY

Concept Nowhere To Be Found

- If this doctrine is so important then shouldn't it be clearly explained all over the Bible, like other doctrines such as the death of Jesus for our sins and his resurrection from the dead?



Tawheed

- Unlike the Trinity, the word Tawheed exists in our earliest sources:

"And your god is one [waahid] God..." [2:163]

"Some of the people of Tawheed will be punished in the Fire (on account of their sins) until they are coals. Then the Mercy (of God) will reach them, they will be taken out and tossed at the doors of Paradise." He said: "The people of Paradise will pour water over them, and they will sprout as the debris carried by the flood sprouts, then they will enter Paradise." [Tirmidhi, vol. 4, book 13, #2597]

Tawheed

- Unlike the Trinity, the concept of Tawheed leaps out at you from every page of the Qur'an:

**Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One,
Allah, the Eternal Refuge.
He neither begets nor is born,
Nor is there to Him any equivalent."**

Tawheed

- Surah Ikhlas takes four lines, less than 20 words in the original Arabic, to spell out in crystal clear terms the nature of God, with more clarity than anything that Trinitarians can manufacture from the Bible.

Principles Progress

- ✓ 1. The purpose of revelation is guidance.
- ✓ 2. Our beliefs about the unseen should derive from Revelation.
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Principle #3

“Our interpretation of revelation should be consistent”

The language of the Bible

- When examining the Bible as a whole we find that the term “Son of God” is very common:

the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. [Luke 3:38]

I [David] will proclaim the LORD's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father. [Psalm 2:7]

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. [Job 1:6]

The language of the Bible

- Moreover many individuals are referred to as “God”:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. [Exodus 7:1]

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. [2 Corinthians 4:4]

The language of the Bible

- Notice the inconsistency of Trinitarians, why interpret any such references to Jesus literally and all others (David, Moses, Angels etc.) as a metaphor?

The Paradox of the Old Testament

- If we look to the New Testament, we find that Jesus was presented with numerous opportunities to spell out the doctrine of the Trinity in detail. The following example is perhaps the most noteworthy:

The Paradox of the Old Testament

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions. [Mark 12:28-34]

The Paradox of the Old Testament

- By simply repeating the commandment about God being One, Jesus is re-affirming the Old Testament view of God's purely monotheistic nature
- The teachings of Jesus are inconsistent with Trinitarian interpretations of the Bible.

The Paradox of the Old Testament

- This was the perfect opportunity for Jesus to correct the Jewish questioner's misconceptions about God, if the Trinity is true.
- Instead the exact opposite is the case, Jesus complemented the questioner ("You are not far from the kingdom of God")!

The Paradox of the Old Testament

- From this example it's clear that Jesus followed in the footsteps of the Prophets of the Old Testament such as Abraham and Moses.
- Core message was simple: there is one God Who is unlike His creation and He alone deserves our worship.

The Paradox of the Old Testament

- Does it make sense that God would send countless Prophets, over a span of thousands of years, with a consistent message of pure monotheism, only to all of a sudden reveal that He is a Trinity, a radically different message which contradicts His previous Prophets' teachings?

The Paradox of the Old Testament

- How do Trinitarians explain this juxtaposition between their beliefs and the Old Testament?

The Paradox of the Old Testament

- They claim that God reveals Himself gradually in stages; this is known as the concept of “Progressive Revelation”.
- This is the idea that the sections of the Bible that were written later contain a fuller revelation of God compared to the earlier sections. So the New Testament is to be used to better understand and interpret the Old Testament.

- Such an explanation must be rejected because the progression from a purely monotheistic concept of God Who is unlike His creation, to the Trinity where God becomes His creation, is anything but gradual.
- Rather it is a radical overhaul of everything that came before it.

- Another problem with this explanation is that the Trinitarian concept of God’s nature is open to development. When Trinitarians say that God exists as multiple persons, how do they know to stop at three, why not four or five?
- At best they can say that only three persons have revealed themselves so far. But how do you know there isn't a fourth waiting to reveal himself?

- Thus the Trinitarian can never lay claim to having an accurate understanding of God, because they can never be certain that God won't reveal something in the future that radically overhauls their current understanding.

Tawheed

- It’s important to reiterate that the Jewish understanding of the Old Testament commandments rejects all notions of God being a Trinity.
- Islamic Tawheed is consistent with the Jewish concept of God.

Tawheed

- In fact Rabbis state that if a Jew cannot find a synagogue to worship in, then it is permissible for them to pray in a mosque. They recognise that mosques are places of pure monotheism.
- By comparison, Jews are discouraged from praying in Churches, some Rabbis rule that it’s forbidden to even set foot in them.

Tawheed

- Like any religious book, the Qur'an has a scope of interpretation.
- However, the Qur'an is unique in the sense that the scope of interpretation is very small because we have the Sunnah which explains the Qur'an in detail:

[We sent them] with clear proofs and written ordinances. And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought. [16:44]

Principles Progress

- ✓ 1. The purpose of revelation is guidance.
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Principle #4

"Our interpretation of revelation should not cause contradictions"

Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- The New Testament mentions an incident with Jesus and a fig tree:

Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again..." [Mark 11:12-14]

Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- We are told that Jesus approached a fig tree because he was hungry, and became angry and cursed it when he realised it had no fruit.



Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- Such an incident makes no sense in light of the Trinitarian claim that Jesus is fully God.
- God is All Knowing, so if Jesus really is God then that would make him the creator of fig trees, in which case how could he have been ignorant of the fact that it was not the season for figs?

Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- Why would God curse the fig tree for producing fruit in certain seasons, something He Himself willed it to do?
- If Trinitarians want to argue that it was the limited human nature that made the mistake, then why did the divine nature act on the mistake of the human nature? Is this a case of the human nature overriding the divine nature? Is such a thing possible?

Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- The miracles of Jesus, Trinitarians say, are because of his divine nature. In which case one has to ask the question of why the divine Jesus cursed the tree. Why not just command it to bear fruit? Why ruin a perfectly good tree, come fig season this tree would have had fruit and others could have eaten from it.

Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- The fig tree story demonstrates that when it comes to the knowledge of Jesus, it seems that either the divine nature is lacking or completely absent.
- Jesus cannot said to be fully God because he lacks essential attributes of God, such as possessing All Knowledge.

Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- Such incidents bring to light the many contradictions of Trinitarian doctrine.
- For example, how can God be All Powerful and yet have weaknesses such as hunger?

Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- Moreover such divine shortcomings aren't just restricted to Jesus. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit also lacks God's perfect knowledge:

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” [Mark 13:32]

Trinity Conflicts with the New Testament

- Here Jesus categorically states that no one, which includes himself and the Holy Spirit, knows the Hour, but only the Father. Since they both lack the Father's knowledge, the Trinitarian claim that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are equal is false.
- The co-equality of the persons is a central pillar, without which the foundation of the Trinity comes crashing down.

Trinity Conflicts with God's Nature

- Bible says God is eternal and unchanging:

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. [James 1:17]

Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. [Psalm 93:2]

Trinity Conflicts with God's Nature

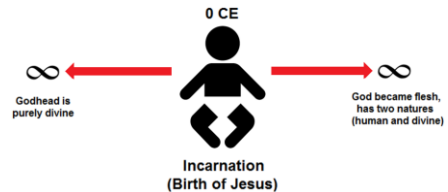
- If the Son took on a dual nature, that is, a limited human nature alongside his divine nature, whilst at the same time still being God, then the implication is that in becoming man, the nature of God changed.
- This conflicts with the knowledge from the Bible that God is eternal and unchanging.

God's Perfection Compromised

- Recall that at the incarnation humanity was permanently incorporated into the Godhead. The Son will forever have an inseparable divine and human nature.

God's Perfection Compromised

- This raises an uncomfortable question: **“Was God's nature more perfect before or after the incarnation?”**



God's Perfection Compromised

- Since God is the pinnacle of perfection, there is no need for Him to become anything. If something needs to be added to His nature, such as humanity or anything else for that matter, then doesn't that mean He lacked something before?

God's Perfection Compromised

- Which state is considered more "godly", the pre-incarnation God, or post-incarnation God? You can see that the doctrine of the incarnation puts Trinitarians in a blasphemous predicament.

The Qur'an

- Let us consider the nature of the revelation of the Qur'an:
 1. Revealed to a man who could neither read nor write.
 2. Revealed piecemeal over a period of 23 years.
 3. Surahs were not revealed sequentially. Al-Baqarah, for example, was revealed over many years, with its verses interspaced with the revelation of verses from other Surahs.
 4. Many verses were revealed in response to unexpected questions and situations that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) faced.
 5. The Qur'an did not undergo an editorial process, once the verses were revealed their positions within Surahs were immediately fixed.
 6. The Qur'an was an oral tradition, so its verses had to be recalled from memory. There was no written mushaf that could be consulted when "updating" the Qur'an with new verses.

The Qur'an

- In spite of these difficult circumstances, the Qur'an is internally harmonious and presents the reader with a consistent theology. Moreover it does not contain any contradictions.

Principles Progress

- ✓ 1. The purpose of revelation is guidance.
- ✓ 2. Our beliefs about the unseen should derive from Revelation.
- ✓ 3. Our interpretation of revelation should be consistent.
- ✓ 4. Our interpretation of revelation should not cause contradictions.
5. We throw out man made religion.

Principle #5

"We throw out man made religion"

Our Discussion So Far...

- The Trinity is not scriptural.
- Not present in name or concept.
- There are some verses which may support some aspects of the Trinity, but they are ambiguous at best.

The origins of the Trinity

- So then, where did the Trinity come from?



The origins of the Trinity

- We've already seen that terms like "son of God" were commonplace among Jews during the time of Jesus.

The origins of the Trinity

- Recall that the Old and New Testaments are filled with such language:

the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. [Luke 3:38]

I [David] will proclaim the LORD's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father. [Psalm 2:7]

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. [Job 1:6]

The origins of the Trinity

- What we can conclude is that such language, although highly exalted, was commonplace and is intended figuratively, it is not an indication of divinity.

The origins of the Trinity

- The disciples, the first believers in Jesus, were Jews.
- In fact Christianity started out as a movement within Judaism.

The origins of the Trinity

- Like Jews since the time of Moses, these first believers kept the Sabbath, were circumcised and worshiped in the Temple:

"One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon." [Acts 3:1]

The origins of the Trinity

- The only thing that distinguished the early followers of Jesus from any other Jews was their belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

The origins of the Trinity

- The turning point in history came when Christianity ceased being a small movement within Judaism and Gentiles (non-Jews) started to embrace the faith in large numbers.
- We need to look to the pagan world of the Gentiles in order to understand the mind-set of the people that received the New Testament message.

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- Since the time of Alexander the Great, Gentiles had been living in a Hellenistic (Greek) world.
- The Roman Empire itself was heavily influenced by Hellenistic religion, philosophy and culture. Greek gods and goddesses like Zeus, Athena and Artemis dominated the landscape.

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- Gentiles from a polytheistic background would have naturally understood Christian preaching about the "son of God" in light of a Greek or Roman god having been begotten by another.
- We can see this mind-set manifested in the New Testament in an incident where Paul heals a crippled man:

The pagan world of the Gentiles

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"

Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.

The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. [Acts 14:11-13]

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- This is not an isolated incident. We read elsewhere that Gentiles believed Paul was a god because he survived a bite from a venomous snake:

The pagan world of the Gentiles

Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.

When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live."

But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.

The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. [Acts:28:3-6]

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- With this background in mind, we can appreciate how Judaic phrases like "son of God" took on a different meaning when transported out of their Jewish monotheistic context into pagan Greco-Roman thought.

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- It's easy to appreciate why Gentiles would see Jesus, an individual who performed miracles and was called the "Son of God", as more than a mere mortal.

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- The Trinity doctrine arose neither in a vacuum, nor strictly from the text of scripture.
- The Church emerged in a Jewish and Greek world and so the primitive Church had to reconcile the notions they had inherited from Judaism with those they had derived from pagan mythology.

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- It's interesting to note that the Greco-Roman religions were filled with tales of gods procreating with human beings and begetting god-men.
- The belief that God could be incarnate, or that there were sons of God, were common and popular beliefs.

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- For example, the chief god in the Greek pantheon, Zeus, visited the human woman Danae in the form of golden rain and fathered Perseus, a "god-man."
- In another tale Zeus is said to have come to the human woman Alcmena, disguised as her husband. Alcmena bore Hercules, another "god-man."

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- Such tales bear a striking similarity to Trinitarian beliefs of God being begotten as a man.
- In fact, the early Christian apologist Justin Martyr, considered a saint in the Catholic Church, said the following in response to pagan criticisms that Christianity borrowed from their beliefs about the sons of God:

The pagan world of the Gentiles

"When we say that the Word, who is our teacher, Jesus Christ the first born of God, was produced without sexual union, and that he was crucified and died and rose again, and ascended to heaven, we propound nothing new or different from what you [pagans] believe regarding those whom you consider sons of Jupiter." [4]

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- According to ancient Roman myth, Jupiter was the king of all the gods.
- So here Justin Martyr is telling Roman pagans that what the Christians believe about Jesus being the son of God is no different to what they believe about the sons of the god Jupiter.

The pagan world of the Gentiles

- Now that we have a basic background to the Greco-Roman world in which early Christianity arose, we can look to history to understand how the doctrine of the Trinity ultimately became victorious...

The Early church

- One of the most fascinating discoveries by scholars in modern times has been the realisation of just how diverse the early Christian groups were from one another.

The Early church

- Very early on in Christianity, almost from the get-go, different Christians in different churches in different regions had different views of Jesus:

1. Jesus was purely human

- This is the view that Jesus was born purely a human being with no divine aspect whatsoever.
- One such early Christian group were the Ebionites.
- Jesus was the Son of God not because of his divine nature or virgin birth but because of his righteousness, God "adopted" Jesus to be his son.

2. Jesus was purely divine

- Believed that Jesus had no human aspect at all and was purely divine.
- Group of Christians known as the Marcionites.
- Jesus did not have a flesh-and-blood body. He was not really human, he only appeared to be so.

3. Jesus was both human and divine

- This is the view that Jesus had two natures, divine and human.
- There were numerous sub-groups within this category:
 1. Subordinationists believed that Jesus was divine and that he was created by God the Father, thus Jesus was not equal to the Father but subordinate to him.
 2. Separationists believed that Jesus was always divine and that when Jesus became human he became an additional person. So Jesus existed as two beings, the man Jesus of Nazareth who was human and the Christ who was completely divine.
 3. Proto-Trinitarians believed that Jesus was always divine and when he became human he took on an additional nature. So Jesus is one person with two natures, one divine and one human.

Orthodoxy Vs Heresy

- The view of two natures became orthodoxy. Today it is the mainstream position in Catholicism, Protestantism and Eastern Orthodox Christianity.
- The official position of these churches is that all the other groups, with their different views about Jesus, are heretics, deviations from the truth of the orthodoxy of Trinitarianism.

Orthodoxy Vs Heresy

- Is it fair to casually dismiss these other views of Jesus as heretical?

Orthodoxy Vs Heresy

- Trinitarians like to quote early Church Fathers like Tertullian (c. 155 – c. 240 CE) who spoke of a “trinitas” (Latin for ‘threeness’). They cite them as proof that the Trinity was the standard belief of Christians in the early church.

Orthodoxy Vs Heresy

- However such claims are misleading. When we properly examine the writings of individuals like Tertullian we find that this is not the case:

Orthodoxy Vs Heresy

For the Father is the entire substance, but the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole, as He Himself acknowledges: "My Father is greater than I." In the Psalm His inferiority is described as being "a little lower than the angels." Thus the Father is distinct from the Son, being greater than the Son [5]

Orthodoxy Vs Heresy

- Notice that Tertullian taught that the Father is greater than the Son.
- In other words, one of the earliest sources in the Church who talks of a 'trinity' never actually taught a doctrine of three co-equal persons.

Orthodoxy Vs Heresy

- By Trinitarian standards today, Tertullian is a heretic. In fact the Roman Catholic Church did condemn him as a heretic!
- This demonstrates the foolishness of assigning labels like orthodox and heretic in the early church.

Orthodoxy Vs Heresy

- If the Trinity is so clearly taught in the New Testament as Trinitarians claim, then why didn't the greatest of Church fathers from the first three centuries hold to a modern Trinitarian view?



The Battle for Orthodoxy

- We've seen that early Christianity was diverse.
- Different groups engaged in a battle for dominance, leading to the victory of the one group that then successfully declared itself "orthodox".

The Battle for Orthodoxy

- The stakes are high. The group that emerged as victorious and declared itself orthodox would forever determine the shape of Christianity.
- How Trinitarians came to be the dominant, orthodox group of Christianity today will now be our focus.

The Arian Controversy

- In the early fourth century a debate raged within the Church with regards to the nature of Jesus.
- Arius, a priest and theologian, and Bishop Athanasius, a Church Father, were the chief proponents of both sides of the debate.

The Arian Controversy

- Arius promoted the idea that Jesus was in fact a creation of God and therefore inferior to God.
- Athanasius promoted the idea that Jesus was equal to God.

The Arian Controversy

- These disagreements about the nature of Jesus and his relationship to God deeply divided the Church in the Roman Empire.

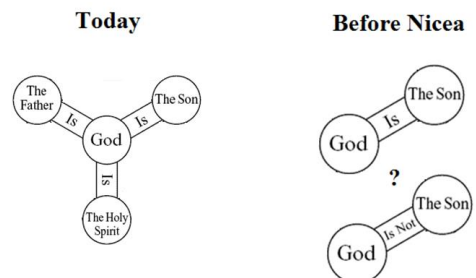
The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

- The Roman Emperor Constantine, seeking to unify the Church, convened the Council of Nicea in 325 CE.
- The question to be settled was, **“Is Jesus absolutely equal to God: always existing and of the very same substance, or not?”**

The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

- Bishops from all over the empire were summoned to the council where their differences would be debated with the aim of reaching an agreement.

The Council of Nicea – 325 CE



The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

- The Council of Nicea had three points of view represented at the meeting: the strict Arians, the semi-Arians and the strict Trinitarians.

The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

1. The strict Arians were a small minority who were led by Arius.
2. The strict Trinitarians were also a small minority, they were led by Athanasius.
3. The vast majority in attendance, however, took a middle position between Arianism and Trinitarianism. They rejected the idea that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of the same substance.

The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

- This is further evidence that the Trinity was not the orthodox position of the early Church, since the majority of attending bishops did not hold to a pro-Trinitarian view before the council.



The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

- The attendees of the meeting fiercely debated for over two months.
- During the Council proceedings, Emperor Constantine himself proposed a pro-Trinitarian, anti-Arian clause into the official creedal statement of the Church.

The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

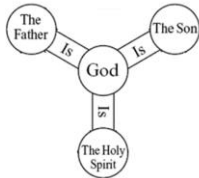
- Faced with the awe-inspiring presence of the emperor, there could be little opposition: the majority of the bishops at the council ultimately agreed upon a creed, known thereafter as the “Nicene creed”.

The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

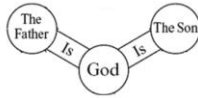
- When the creed was finished eighteen Bishops still opposed it.
- Constantine at this point intervened to threaten with exile anyone who would not sign for it.
- Two Libyan Bishops and Arius still refused to accept the creed. All three were exiled [6].

The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

Today



After Nicea



The Councils of Rimini and Seleucia – 359 CE

- The Council of Nicea however did not end the controversy, as many bishops disputed the Nicene creed.

The Councils of Rimini and Seleucia – 359 CE

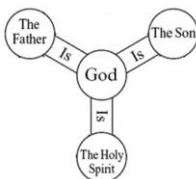
- In 359 CE the Emperor Constantius, the son of Constantine, summoned two councils, one in the East at Seleucia and the other in the West at Rimini.
- These councils were attended by more bishops than at Nicea and were thus more representative of the entire Church.

The Councils of Rimini and Seleucia – 359 CE

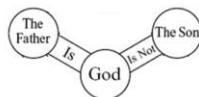
- Like his father Constantine before him, Constantius also involved himself in the council proceeding, exerting pressure on the attending bishops.
- An anti-Trinitarian, pro-Arian creed was adopted, and thus Arianism became Orthodoxy in the Church.

The Councils of Rimini and Seleucia – 359 CE

Today



After Rimini and Selucia



The Council of Constantinople - 381 CE

- The seeming triumph of Arianism was short lived. In 381 CE the Council of Constantinople was summoned by the emperor Theodosius I.
- The main business of the council was to re-establish the doctrine that had been set forth in the Nicene Creed.

The Council of Constantinople - 381 CE

- This council **“sealed the final adoption of the faith of Nicea by the entire Church.” [7].**
- And so the Nicene Creed first set out at the Council of Nicea 55 years earlier was ultimately victorious over Arianism in the end.

The Council of Constantinople - 381 CE

- One specific area where this Council developed the Trinity doctrine was in regard to the Holy Spirit.

The Council of Constantinople - 381 CE

- The council attributed four things to the Holy Spirit:
 1. A divine title, ‘Lord’.
 2. Divine functions such as inspiring prophets.
 3. An origin from the Father not by creation but by procession.
 4. Supreme worship equal to that rendered to Father and to the Son.

The Council of Constantinople - 381 CE

- Thus the Holy Spirit was voted as the third Person of the Trinity. The Catholic Church admits:

The apostolic faith concerning the Spirit was announced by the second ecumenical council at Constantinople (381) [8]

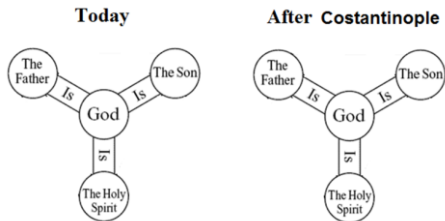
The Council of Constantinople - 381 CE

- At the close of the Council, Emperor Theodosius issued an imperial decree outlawing Arianism.
- Thus Arianism was extinguished not by the force of Scriptural truth, but by the force of Imperial involvement.

The Council of Constantinople - 381 CE

- After over 55 years of battle, the Nicene Creed permanently gained the upper hand and Trinitarianism became the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Council of Constantinople - 381 CE



The Council of Chalcedon - 451 CE

- Even after Arianism was defeated, debate raged on about the nature of the incarnate Jesus as he walked upon the earth.

The Council of Chalcedon - 451 CE

- While the Council of Nicea focused on the precise relationship of the Son to God the Father, the question that now had to be settled was:

“Did Jesus have a single nature, a mixture of human and divine, or a dual nature – human and divine, both distinct and not blurred together?”

The Council of Chalcedon - 451 CE

- This concept of a dual human and divine nature in the person of Jesus became official doctrine of the Church.
- Known as the Hypostatic Union, it is as essential component of modern Trinitarianism.

The Council of Chalcedon - 451 CE

- It wasn't until the Council of Chalcedon that we see the emergence of an official doctrine of the Trinity in a form that is recognisable with what Trinitarians believe in today.
- This took place in the fifth century, over 400 years after Jesus:

The Council of Chalcedon - 451 CE

“We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man... acknowledged in Two Natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly...”

What About the Trinity Today?

- Even after centuries of discussion and debate, there is still major disagreement among Trinitarians over the doctrine.
- Let's look at some issues...

Issue #1 – The Holy Spirit

- As we've seen, the equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son was established at the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE.
- While it concluded that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father, it said nothing concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son.

Issue #1 – The Holy Spirit

- Here is the last section of the Creed of the Council of Constantinople:
And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified.
- This section of the creed was later translated into Latin with the addition, "and the Son":
And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified.

Issue #1 – The Holy Spirit

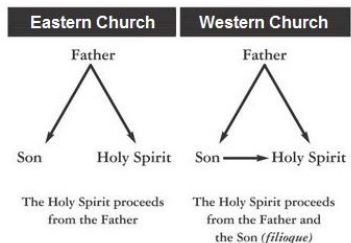
- This addition to the creed is known as the Filioque (Latin for "and the Son"), a phrase that has been the subject of great controversy between Eastern and Western churches.
- Whether one includes that phrase, and exactly how the phrase is translated and understood, can have important implications for how one understands the Trinity.

Issue #1 – The Holy Spirit

- The Western Churches believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and Son.
- The Eastern Churches believe that it proceeds from the Father only.

Issue #1 – The Holy Spirit

The Filioque Controversy



Issue #1 – The Holy Spirit

- This issue is responsible for the largest schism in Church history. It divided Christianity into Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.
- The Eastern Orthodox reject the Filioque because it makes the Holy Spirit a subordinate, or less important, member of the Trinity. Thus it compromises the co-equality of the Persons of the Trinity.

Issue #2 - The Crucifixion

- Who suffered and died on the cross, God or man?



Issue #2 - The Crucifixion

- If they claim God died, then this contradicts the Bible which states that God is immortal:

I lift my hand to heaven and solemnly swear: As surely as I live forever. [Deuteronomy 32:40]

who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. [1 Timothy 6:16]

Issue #2 - The Crucifixion

- This is why many Christians believe that it was the man that suffered and died, as the crucifixion is only meaningful with reference to his human nature, you cannot crucify the divine nature.
- In doing so, Christians separate the divine nature from the human nature at the crucifixion.

Issue #2 - The Crucifixion

- This, however, violates the Chalcedon Creed. Recall:

“... acknowledged in Two Natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly...”

Issue #2 - The Crucifixion

- Thus believing in one essential doctrine, the death of the man Jesus, violates another, the Trinity, because it separates his two natures that are supposed to be eternally united.
- Christians are forced to commit these heresies in their defences of the Trinitarian understanding of God.

Issue #2 - The Crucifixion

- Can such doctrinal confusion be God's perfect revelation, or is it the fallible work of man?

Issue #2 - The Crucifixion

- Today such confusion is rampant throughout Christian doctrine. This problem of holes appearing in one area of theology in light of other areas is a sure sign of human tampering of the religion.

Some Reflections

1. Doctrinal Evolution

- The Trinity doctrine as it is believed in today did not emerge as the official doctrine of the Church until the fifth century — over 400 years after Jesus.
- Even after centuries of formulating the doctrine, there is still major disagreement among Trinitarians.

2. Influence of Politics and Philosophy

- The doctrine did not come into the Church easily, but rather through a great deal of dispute.
- The debate were not dominated solely by scriptural discussion; politics and philosophy played significant roles.

3. Imperial Interference

- Imperial involvement in the controversy determined at any given moment whether Trinitarianism or Arianism was dominating the controversy.
- This must be a sobering thought, that the Nicene Creed won in the end is almost an accident of history. If Constantine or any subsequent emperors had favoured Arianism, then Arianism could be the official position of the Church today!

Tawheed

- By comparison, Tawheed underwent no such historical evolution.
- The entire Muslim creed was finalised during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh):

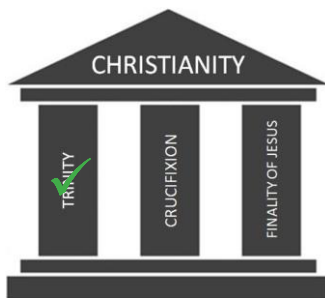
This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion... [5:3]

Tawheed

- Anyone that tries to introduce something new into Islam is rejected.
- This is the strict standard that Muslim scholars have held to since the beginning. These strict standards have been built into the religion since its inception, preserving the purity of Tawheed:

The tribes of Israel broke up into seventy-two sects. My ummah [nation] shall break up into seventy-three sects. All of them will be in the Fire except for one: [That group] which follows what I and my Companions are following. [at-Tirmidhi]

Progress



Finality of Jesus

Finality of Jesus

- Christians believe that Jesus completed God's plan of salvation for mankind.
- No more Prophets/Messengers after him.

- Christians place a big emphasis on looking to the Old Testament for signs/prophecies about the coming of Jesus.
- In Matthew's Gospel alone there are over 80 prophecies about Jesus quoted from the Old Testament.

- As well as prophesying about the coming of the Messiah Jesus, the Old Testament also foretells the coming of an Arabian messenger that could only be Muhammad (pbuh).

- We can use the 42nd chapter of the Book of Isaiah to prove to them that the Bible points to the coming of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Isaiah 42 is a Prophecy

- The 42nd chapter of the Book of Isaiah describes itself as a prophecy about the future. Isaiah states that:

...the former things have taken place, and new things I declare... [Isaiah 42:9]

His names

- Isaiah starts the chapter by drawing our attention to a very special person that God will send. He describes this person as:

...my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight... [Isaiah 42:1]

- It's interesting that at least three of the descriptions relate to names of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) – “servant”, “chosen one” and “in whom I delight”.

His names

- Prophet Muhammad is known as God's Servant, in Arabic “abd - ullah”.
- “Chosen one” is “Mustafa” in Arabic. This is another of the names of Prophet Muhammad.
- The one in whom God ‘delights in’ shows that this person is beloved to God. ‘Habibullah’ in Arabic, which means “Beloved of God”, also happens to be one of Prophet Muhammad's names.

His location

- Isaiah also reveals the location of this special person. He states:

Let the wilderness and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. [Isaiah 42:11]

His location

- The two key words used are **'Kedar'** and **'Sela'** which together pinpoint an exact location for this special person.
- Out of all the places on earth that Isaiah mentioned, he chose to highlight Kedar and Sela's location so we should pay special attention.

Who is Kedar?

- The Old Testament tells us that Kedar was one of the sons of Ishmael:

These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam [Genesis 25:13]

Kedar in the desert of Arabia

- We are informed that Ishmael dwelt in a place called Paran:

While he (Ishmael) was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt. [Genesis 21:21]

Kedar in the desert of Arabia

- Many Christian interpreters of the Bible hold that Paran is in Arabia. From Clarke's Commentary on the Bible:

He dwelt in the wilderness of Paran – This is generally allowed to have been a part of the desert belonging to Arabia Petraea, in the vicinity of Mount Sinai; and this seems to be its uniform meaning in the sacred writings.

- Moreover Strong's Bible Dictionary also tells us:
- **H6290 pà'rân** From H6286; ornamental; Paran, a desert of Arabia: – Paran.

Kedar in the desert of Arabia

- Kedar and his own sons are also specifically linked to Arabia:

Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your favored dealers in lambs, rams, and goats; in these they did business with you. [Ezekiel 27:21]

Sela Mountain is in Madinah

- Whilst it's true that Arabia represents a wide geographic region, the use of the word 'Sela' pinpoints an exact location.

"...let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy..."

Sela Mountain is in Madinah

- The place being spoken of is actually the city of Madinah because 'Sela' is the name of a famous mountain in Madinah. Madinah was the city of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh):

Sela Mountain is in Madinah



Sela Mountain in Hadith

- This mountain is mentioned in hadith:

"...by Allah, we did not see any cloud or any patch of it, and there was neither any house or building standing between us and Sala'..."
[Muslim, Chapter 169, Hadith 1955]

Muhammad (pbuh) a Descendent of Kedar

- It is worth mentioning that from Islamic sources, Prophet Muhammad's lineage can be traced back to Abraham through Kedar:

Muhammad (pbuh) a Descendent of Kedar



The Jewish Tribes of Madinah

- Islamic history records the fact that whenever a dispute arose between the Jews and Arabs in Madinah, they used to taunt their pagan Arab neighbours, by saying that:

"when our prophet arrives we shall obliterate you..." [Seerah of Ibn Hisham]

The Jewish Tribes of Madinah

- Now we can understand how the Jewish tribes knew that Muhammad (pbuh) would appear in the locality of Madinah!
- The answer is that the learned Jews were aware of this prophecy in Isaiah and were anxiously awaiting the coming of a new prophet.

Who he will be sent to

- Isaiah emphasises the universal mission of the coming person by mentioning that he will be made a:

...covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles [Isaiah 42:6]

- Gentiles means non Jews. The Qur'an confirms that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent to the whole of mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike. In the Qur'an God tells us:

We have sent you [O Prophet] as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner for the whole of mankind, but most people have no knowledge. [34:28]

Who he will be sent to

- Isaiah further states that God will:

...lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them... [Isaiah 42:16]

Who he will be sent to

- The pagan Arabs at the time of Prophet Muhammad fit this description perfectly because they had not been sent a messenger prior to Muhammad (pbuh).
- The Qur'an bears witness to this, God states that Muhammad was sent to:

... warn a people to whom no warner has come before... [32:3]

- Isaiah emphasises that this special person will be sent to:

...those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our gods,'... [Isaiah 42:17]

- The whole of Arabia at the start of Muhammad's Prophethood consisted of idol worshippers.

He will be a warrior

- Isaiah states that this special person will be a warrior and will:

...go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. [Isaiah 42:13]

- Throughout history God has dealt sternly with those who are sent guidance and persist in disbelief. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had to engage in many battles with the idol worshipping enemies of God and ultimately prevailed against them.

What he will achieve

- Isaiah gives us a list of momentous achievements for this special person. Chief of these is that the idol worshippers:

...will be turned back in utter shame... [Isaiah 42:17]

- Not only did Prophet Muhammad conquer Makkah, the Pagan capital of Arabia, but by the end of his life, in just 23 short years of Prophethood, Arabia had shunned idol worship and now worshipped the One true God.

A warning from God

- Finally, Isaiah closes with an admonishment:

“Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see...

You have seen many things, but you pay no attention; your ears are open, but you do not listen...

Which of you will listen to this or pay close attention in time to come?” [Isaiah 42:18-23]

- Are the “deaf and blind” Isaiah is talking about in these verses, those of the People of the Book who reject Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)?

How Christians Interpret Isaiah 42

- They may try to argue that Isaiah 42 is a reference to Jesus.
- Can this be the case?

Kedar and Sela Rules Out Jesus

- Recall the location mentioned by Isaiah:

Let the wilderness and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. [Isaiah 42:11]

- What link does Jesus have to the deserts of Arabia and Sela mountain? Moreover the vast majority of Arabia today is Muslim, Christians account for only a small percentage.

War Language Rules Out Jesus

- Recall that this person will be a warrior who will:

...go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. [Isaiah 42:13]

War Language Rules Out Jesus

- Jesus did not triumph over his enemies, according to Christians he was crucified by them. Moreover Jesus wasn't interested in fighting, he was not a man of war, he was a pacifist according to the New Testament. He said such things as:

“for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” [Matthew 26:52]

“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...” [John 18:36].

Defeating Idolaters Rules Out Jesus

- Recall that Isaiah mentions idolatry being defeated:

But those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our gods,' will be turned back in utter shame. [Isaiah 42:17]

- This cannot be a reference to Jesus because his people, the Israelites, were monotheists and not idol worshippers.
- Moreover Christianity did not become widely accepted by the pagan Gentiles (non-Jews) until the Roman Empire embraced the religion in the 4th century, over 300 years after Jesus.

Further Reading



References

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