

Isa, it says, did not die on the cross because it was made to *appear* to them that He was crucified. Who thought they crucified Isa? His enemies! Nothing is said anywhere in the Quran that Isa's followers believed the same thing. Yet every historical reference in existence tells us that Isa's disciples saw and taught that Isa was crucified. My Muslim friend, do you realize what this means? According to the Quran, God made it appear to everyone (including the disciples!) that Isa died on the cross, though He did not. Clearly, this portrays God as deceiving people. Please note the difference: Not "hiding the truth," but if you read the passage as it is written, it says he actively took part in making it "appear" that way. The most startling implication here is that He not only deceived Isa's enemies – He also deceived Isa's followers. For the Quran to place God in the position of deceiving those who have committed their lives to Him is also a serious contradiction of the nature of God as the Quran seems to teach elsewhere. Why would God deceive those who love Him? According to the Quran, God is good, He hates lies and deception. Yet this passage portrays God as actively working a deception, not only to Isa's enemies, but upon His friends.

### Pass or Fail?

It has been said that if one is to make *extraordinary claims*, then one must provide *extraordinary evidence* to support those claims. The Quran makes extraordinary claims about Isa because it contradicts every known historical reference about Him. Without being his contemporary, the Quran attempts to reshape the historicity of Isa the Messiah. That is extraordinary. It provides no evidence for its claims. That is extraordinary. It provides no references to any other writing, or record, to show that its claims are valid in history. That is extraordinary. We should ask a critical question when reading the Quran, Injeel, or any other document making such claims for God: *Does God work in history and not leave any real life evidence of His activities?*

So what do you believe about God? How does God feel about you? Do you know with absolute certainty that you will enter paradise with Him?

For more information, visit [www.aboutisa.com](http://www.aboutisa.com) and click on the link: *The Five Truths*, or email us your questions at [mail@aboutisa.com](mailto:mail@aboutisa.com).

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# Isa: Prophet of Islam?

A critical examination of the Quran's claims regarding the Messiah.

## Who Is Isa?

For centuries the identity of Isa was an almost non-debatable issue. The Torah and Injeel provided a long accepted tradition that Isa was the only Son of God.

In the 7th century, as Islam began its rise, what was generally accepted about the identity of Isa came into doubt. The Quran came into the world and caused some people to look differently at the claims Isa. The Quran claimed in no uncertain terms that:

1. Isa was born of a virgin, but God was not His Father.
2. Isa was a prophet but not the Son of God.
3. Isa was the Jewish Messiah, but then again, maybe not.
4. Isa taught Islam and the coming of Mohammed.
5. Isa never went to, or died on the cross, or rose from the dead.

These were dramatic departures in what was commonly understood by in Mohammed's day. Because the Quran claimed to come from God, who also gave the Torah and Injeel, it claimed great authority. Either the Quran revealed the truth about Isa, or it did not. How could one book, given nearly 600 years after the life of Isa, written in a culture that was alien to the one in which Isa and the prophets lived; and which had no written, or otherwise recorded history with the faith of Abraham, be correct about its claims?

Very simply, the Quran claimed to be the revelation of God. After all, if God said it, then the one recording or repeating the information was simply conveying what God said – and God would never deceive His own people.

## But Is It True?

It is important to understand why the Quran must make alternative claims regarding Isa than that which appears within the the Injeel. During the early period of his work, Mohammed enjoyed a measure of success among some Jews and Christians. Mohammed was, in fact, quite familiar with the claims of the Injeel, having traveled the Christian trade routes from Mecca to Syria as a merchant of his day. If we accept that Mohammed could not read, it does not necessarily follow that he was not familiar with Christianity and the claims of that particular faith. We know from his history that he was.

## Isa never died on the cross, or rose from the dead?

It is important to quote the Quran on this point:

*“And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the messenger of God; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa)...and they killed him not for sure.”*  
(4:157 Shakir translation)

This passage poses several problems:

1. It refutes every historical account of Isa's enemies, His friends, and neutral observers.
2. It refutes the historical accounts made by 1st and 2nd century historians.
3. It refutes Isa's prior claims that He would be crucified and rise again.
4. Most importantly, it puts God in the position of deceiving his people.

Note that Isa's enemies, who had nothing to gain from the admission of a resurrection, *knew in advance* that such a claim would be made. *"Now on the next day, which is the one after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate and said, 'Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.'"* (Matt. 27:62-63)

First and second century historians referred to Christian teaching of Isa's life, death, or resurrection as common knowledge. This included Cornelius Tacitus, Flavius Josephus, Suetnius, Plinius Secundus, Tertullian and others. Isa Himself taught that He would be crucified and rise again. *"The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day."* (Luke 9:22)

Certainly if God decides to keep men from seeing an event, or perceiving it correctly, then they will not see it. The issue is not *what* God is capable of doing, or *if* He did it, rather, it is: *Would His nature let Him?* Consider carefully what the Quran implies in 4:157-158.

*“And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the messenger of God; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so...”*

such a claim. What makes the claim interesting is that nowhere in recorded history, in the Injeel, or any ancient writings dated prior to Mohammed's time, is there any quote or reference by Isa, anywhere, that He said another prophet was to come after Him. In fact, the Quran never provides reference to any previous revelation that anyone of Mohammed's day, or today, can reference, and study, and say, "Ah ha! This is the passage the Quran was referring to."

Some say that when Isa said He was sending a coming *Helper* (Paraclete) in John 14:17 (the Holy Spirit), that he was giving a prophecy about Mohammed. But they failed to read the rest of the sentence, which says, "[he] will be *in you*." Obviously, Mohammed is in no one.

There is a passage in the Song of Solomon (5:16) that Islamic apologist say is a prophecy about Mohammed. "*His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*" Specifically, the Hebrew word in for *lovely* is transliterated into Arabic as *Praised One*. Yet, in over 13 English translations, the word is almost always translated as, *lovely, beloved, and loved one*, and in one instance, *beautiful*. Forgetting for a moment that this is a poetic book that portrays God in a love relationship (something the Quran never does), there is strong case to be made against a prophecy about Mohammed in this passage.

When the Hebrew word *Makhmed* is transliterated from Hebrew into Arabic, some say it becomes *Mohammed*. But is this acceptable? Not at all, as trying to get a Arabic *proper noun* out of a *Hebrew adjective* is poor translation at best. My name is Tom. In Turkish, the pronunciation of Tom is spelled *Tam*, which means, "perfect, full, or complete." Using this methodology I could claim that I am perfect. To test this hypothesis I made this claim several times to my family, but I have yet to persuade them – even when I show them the etymology.

While the Quran claims Isa foretold Mohammed, it does not point to any passage from any previous revelation to support its claim. Yet Isa did something remarkably different. He quoted earlier passages and applied them to Himself. Specifically, in Matthew 22:44-45 Isa quotes Palm 110:1 and applies it to Himself when he asked His enemies, "*What do you say about the Messiah, whose son is He?*"

"*He said to them, 'Then how does David, in the spirit, call Him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet?' If David calls Him Lord, how can He be his son?'*"

In the 6th century A.D. Syria was a common center of Christian teaching. So familiar was Mohammed with Christianity that following his first revelation, Mohammed feared he was possessed. His wife, Khadijah, herself familiar with Christianity, along with her family, encouraged the young Mohammed, believing that he might be a prophet.

This is important to note, because Mohammed, from the earliest record, relied upon some measure of Christian teaching to try and discover if in fact he was such a prophet. Therefore, from his first revelation, Islam was predicated upon the assumed authority of Judaism and Christianity.

Everyone recognized that Mohammed was calling his people to something *different* than that which they had known – whether it was paganism, or Christian teaching. In order to see success, he had to approach his hearers from a common frame of accepted reference. Building Islam partly upon the "previous revelations" gave credibility to the new faith when Jews and Christians began opposing him publically.

### Testing the Quran

If God did reveal the Quran to Mohammed, then it should be able to pass a critical review of its claims – as should any document claiming such high authority. If we examine the Quran's claims critically, testing it for evidence and accuracy, will we come away praising God that His truth is proven without flaw; or will we come away with a different perspective? Let us look at the Quran's claims about Isa with an open mind, and a heart's desire only to please God, and follow Him as accurately as possible.

### Isa was born of a virgin, but God was not His Father?

#### Isa was a Prophet, but not the Son of God?

This is a very important concept about Isa in the Quran. In the Injeel, Isa is said to be the only Son of God. One of the ways that God sets Isa apart from every other prophet is to make His birth unique. In the Quran, Isa is a prophet like any other. If Isa were only a prophet, in the same way Moses or Abraham were a prophet, *why would He need to be born of a virgin?* Even Mohammed, whom Islam regards as the greatest prophet, was not born of a miracle. Thus, if Mohammed is greater than Isa, what is the reason for Isa being born of a virgin? The Quran does not address this issue, but the previous revelations do.

In the book of Isaiah, God says through the prophet Isaiah, “*A virgin will be with child and bear a son, and His name shall be called, Immanuel...*” (7:14)

The Hebrew word “Immanuel” means, “God with us.” What’s more, the Hebrew word for “name” used in this passage is “*shem*.” It is also translated, “renown,” “authority,” and “character.” In other words, the person born of a virgin is renown as “God with us.” God gave this as a sign to His people more than 600 years before Isa was born.

The Injeel records that when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary he said that it was because of Isa being born from a virgin that He would be called the Son of God. “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High...” (Luke 1:32) From His very conception, Isa was set apart as something more than the other prophets.

If, as the Quran says, Isa was born of a virgin, but God was not His Father, then why was it necessary for Isa to be born of a virgin at all? Where is the advantage to Isa being born of a virgin if he was just a prophet, while no advantage is stated in the Quran?

### Isa was the Messiah, then again, maybe not.

The Quran states quite clearly on more than once occasion, that Isa was the Messiah. “*And remember when the angels said: O Mary, God gives you glad tidings of a word from him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary...*” (3:45)

What was meant by the word “Messiah?” The Quran *never* defines what is meant by the term. It simply uses it as the common reference to Isa. But it goes further; the Quran says that *the angels said* that Isa was the Messiah. But since the Quran never defines what is meant by the word, “Messiah,” and since the Quran applies the term to Isa in the context of Christian claims about Him, then there must be a common, historical understanding of what “Messiah” means.

The terms “Messiah” was understood by the Jews to be a reference to the one who would come and free Israel from his enemies, and establish an eternal kingdom with the Messiah at the head. Christians agreed, based upon what was read in the Injeel, saying that Isa was the promised Messiah; but that His first mission was to conquer our greatest enemy: *the sin that separates us from God*. In fact, without these two concepts, there is no use in saying that Isa was the

Messiah. This is where the Quran has trouble.

When Isa came the first time, He did not destroy Israel’s political enemies. Therefore, the persecuted Jewish population at the time did not consider Him to be the Messiah they were looking for. Yet *the Quran disagrees with the Jews* and calls Isa the Messiah. That only leaves one other historical definition for Isa’s Messiahship since the Quran does not define it.

Christians call Isa the Messiah because He first fulfilled His *spiritual* mission. Specifically, He defeated sin through His death on the cross on our behalf, and rose from the dead to prove His claims. For this reason, Christians have always called Isa the Messiah. Yet this reason is denied by the Quran, since it claims Isa never died on the cross. Thus, the Quran is left with a problem. Isa cannot be the Messiah if He does not fulfill the requirements of Jewish or Christian Messiahship. Therefore, why does the Quran call Isa the *Jewish Messiah*? Only according to the Injeel do we see that Isa fulfilled, and will fulfill, all of the requirements of Messiahship – past and future. Notice what Isa said about Himself:

*"He said to them, 'Who do you say that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.' And Isa answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in Heaven.'" (Matt. 16:15-17)*

Notice very carefully that Isa Himself tied His Messiahship directly with the concept that He was the Son of God. Not only did He accept this summation from His friends, He also accepted it from His enemies:

*"And the High Priest said to Him, 'I adjure you, by the living God, that You tell us whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God.' Isa said to him, 'You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.' Then the High Priest tore his robes, saying, 'He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy.'" (Matt. 27:62-65)*

### Isa taught Islam, and the coming of the Prophet Mohammed?

This concept is taken from the Quran in 61:6, which claimed that Isa said another prophet was coming after Him, his name being Ahmad (a variation on the name Mohammed). This is the only reference in the Quran that makes