



Jesus in the Qur'an

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Abstract

In the Qur'anic prophetic history Jesus occupies one of the most important roles as the Messiah, born of a virgin birth who is destined to come again before the day of Judgment. There also exist other similarities between the Christian perspective of Jesus and how the Qur'an describes his birth, message and the names he is called by. However, the striking difference is the repeated message the Qur'an conveys of the humanity of Jesus the prophet and the scripture's method of reasoning that argues against the Trinitarian creed. These modes of argumentation are the most unique aspect of the Jesus narratives in the Qur'an and an analysis of them will be highlighted in this article.

Introduction

The Qur'an presents to readers twenty three prophets who preceded the advent of Muhammad. Among them is Jesus whose prophesy occupies a major position in the accounts of Qur'anic prophetic history. Jesus' name is mentioned in the Qur'an more frequently than the name Muhammad and unlike the other prophets; Jesus narratives tell us of events that occurred throughout the entire

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span of his life. His prophetic history occurs within fourteen suras of the Qur'an which vary in content, context, length and in the aspects each separate account seeks to convey. ¹

The view that the Qur'an does not see Jesus as a prophet to whom scripture was revealed has been promoted as recently as this year, 2009 in the Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān by Reuven Firestone where he writes; "... and in the Qur'ān Abraham and Moses are the sole prophets explicitly identified as bearers of scriptures." ² However, the Qur'an in its own specific, technical and clear language gives accounts of the revelation of divine scripture to Abraham, to Noah, and also to David, to Jesus and to Muhammad within its 114 suras. The meanings of the Qur'anic Arabic that signify revealed scripture can be eluding and enigmatic to Orientalist scholars. In this essay, I will present a close reading of the Qur'anic prophetic accounts of Jesus and divide some of their most noteworthy material into the following six subsections: Miracles, Revelation of the Gospel, Outreach of Jesus, Crucifixion or Divine Sleight of Hand, Qur'anic Anti-Trinitarian Arguments and the Place of Jesus in Prophetic History. Special focus will be laid upon the method of reasoning employed in the Qur'anic text to convince readers as well as the uniqueness of form, structure, and content in these prophetic accounts.

Jesus in the Qur'an

Jesus is mentioned in twenty-five accounts that span across fourteen suras of the Qur'an. ³ In addition to his name there are at least fifteen titles which he is honorably called by. The titles by which he is respectfully addressed are Son of Mary, (Q. 2:293, 5: 46, 57:27) Messiah, (Q. 3:47, 4: 171, 172, 175, 4:157, 172, 175, 5:75) Servant of God, (Q. 4:172, 19:30) Messenger of God, (Q. 2:81, 2:254, 3:43) Prophet, (Q. 2:136, 3:39, 4:163) One of the Upright, (Q. 3:40,46) Blessed, (Q. 19:30-32) Parable, (Q. 43:57, 59) Sign, (Q. 19:21, 21:91, 23:50) One Brought Near, (Q. 3:45) Spirit, (Q. 2:81, 254,

4:169) Word, (Q. 3:40, 4:169,171) a Mercy, (Q. 19:21) and a Witness (Q. 4:159, 5:117). 4 The narratives of Jesus are found in six Meccan and eight Medinan suras which contradicts a popular Orientalist notion that Muhammad learned about Jesus from the Jews in Medina. Among these accounts include ayat where Jesus' name is not mentioned, however, important circumstances are provided to grasp the meaning of his prophetic history. The Qur'anic accounts of Jesus can be arranged in the following order:

Sura Name & Number	Ayat	Sura Period
Al-Baqara 2	87, 116, 136, 253	Medina
Aali Imran 3	45, 52, 55	Medina
An-Nisa 4	163, 157-158, 170 -172	Medina
Al-Ma'idah 5	17, 46, 72-73, 75, 78, 110 - 114, 116	Medina
Al-An'am 6	85	Mecca
At-Tawbah 9	30-32	Medina
Maryam 19	19-35	Mecca
Al-Anbiya 21	91	Mecca
Al-Mu'minun 23	50	Mecca
Al-Ahzab 33	7	Mecca
Ash-Shura 42	13	Medina
Az-Zukhruf 43	57-59, 61, 63-64	Mecca

Al-Hadid	57	27	Medina
Al Saff	61	6-7, 14	Medina

Miracles

The Qur'an can be seen to introduce its accounts of prophetic history with an introductory phrase that sets these special narratives apart and calls attention to the upcoming news that follows: 5

"tilka rusul... those Messengers." (Q. 2:253)

We are told in this ayah that Jesus was given al bayinat, clear signs and proofs of his prophesy which also signify miracles. Then we are told that God strengthened him with rûh-ul-qudus, a holy spirit.

"These Messengers! We preferred some to others; to some of them God spoke directly; others He raised to degrees of honor; and to Jesus the son of Mary, We gave clear signs and evidences, and supported him with a holy spirit....(Q. 2:253)

The majority of the scholars of Qur'anic exegesis interpret, rûh-ul-qudus, a holy spirit, as the Archangel Gabriel which Muslim theology hails as the deliverer of revelation, of divine scripture to the prophets from God. 6 Al Bayinat is used to mean miracles in another sura also. (Q. 5:110). Here many miracles are described as signs brought to the Children of Israel through Jesus. So Al Bayinat conveys the meaning of miracles and signs from God as evidence of the validity of a prophet and his divinely revealed message, i.e. scripture. But now let us turn to the first three miracles related to Jesus.

There are three distinct miracles at the beginning of Jesus' Qur'anic prophetic history that can be said highlight and emphasize the unique nature of his prophesy. They represent the first stage of the miracles in his life and signs of the advent of a prophet:

1) A visit by an angel to Mary.

2) The birth of Jesus from a virgin.

3) The words he spoke in the cradle as a new born infant declaring his mission of prophesy.

The first miracle occurs even before his birth with the appearance of an angel in the form of a man who is sent to inform Mary, an unmarried young girl that she will bear a child. (Q. 3:45) She is understandably quite shocked whereas the angelic messenger's words, bearing these glad tidings are expressed in the Qur'an as yubashshirruki with the present tense verb bashshara which means to bring or to convey good news. 7 This ayah has been translated into English in a number of different ways including:

"Allah giveth thee glad tidings. 8

God gives you good news. 9

Allah bids you rejoice in a word from Him. 10

God gives you news of a word from Him." 11

Although five separate Qur'anic accounts narrate the birth of Jesus, this one is alone and unique in revealing the miraculous visit of an angel in the shape of a man delivering a message to Mary.

"Remember when the angels said: 'O Mary! Verily, God gives you the glad tidings of a Word from Him, his name will be the Messiah Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and in the Hereafter, and will be one of those who are near to God.'" (Q. 3:45)

The second miracle is the birth of Jesus which is described in five different accounts in the Qur'an (Q. 3:45, Q. 4:171, Q. 19:22-23, Q. 21:91, Q. 23:50). One of them stands alone by giving us a descriptive

and colorful view of the scenery and setting of this most fateful event that has fundamentally effected the lives of millions across the globe.

The ayah opens for us a window by where we can envision how Mary was led at the time of the birth of the child to a place of seclusion by the side of a stream.

“Wa Ja`alnā Abna Maryama Wa 'Ummahu 'Āyatan Wa 'Āwaynāhumā 'Ilā Rabwatin Dhāti Qarārin Wa Ma`īnin.

And We made the son of Mary and his mother as a sign, We gave them shelter on a peaceful hillside with flowing water.” (Q. 23:50)

Such specific details are only found in this ayah while the others tell us in various different ways of the omnipotent power of God to create. The birth of Jesus is specifically clarified in the text as being caused by a Word; God said for the birth to be and then it was. A Word that he said upon Mary and then the child was formed. (Q.

4:171) In another ayah we are told of the creation of Jesus with the term spirit:

“Wa A-Atī 'Ahsanat Farjahā Fanafakhnā Fihā Min Rūhinā Wa Ja`alnāhā Wa Abnahā 'Āyatan Lil`ālamīna

And (remember) she who guarded her chastity, We breathed into her from Our Spirit and made her and her son a sign for all people.” (Q. 21:91)

The perception of this event in Christian theology is the main arena of disagreement with the fundamental spiritual belief of Islamic theology. Muslims believe and interpret Qur'anic theology as that only Almighty God brought existence into being from non-existence, and thus God the Creator He alone deserves to be worshipped and nothing else, at all whatsoever. So the Our Spirit and Word in this ayah is to say that God created them, not that they are part of Him

or His divine being according to Muslim belief. Ibn Kathir clarifies this aspect of the monotheistic beliefs of Islam by highlighting a Hadith documented by Ibn Abi Hatim to explain the relevance of this ayah:

"Jesus was not the word. Rather, Jesus came into existence because of the word."

Ibn Kathir continues to clarify the meaning of (Q. 21: 91) by saying that the ayah provides "...evidence that God is able to do all things and that He creates whatever He wills; verily, His command, when He intends a thing, is only that he says to it, "Be" - and it is! 12

Another ayah describes Mary's pain as she goes into labor and the childbirth is given some detail. This somewhat graphic scene represents part of the Qur'anic method of reasoning that Jesus' birth from Mary with the natural pain and blood was the birth of a human being and not a divine being.

"And "so it was ordained: she conceived him. She withdrew with him to a far place and the pains of childbirth drove her to cling to the trunk of a date-palm. She exclaimed: "I wish that I had died long before this, and had been forgotten and out of sight!" (Q. 19:22-23)

The third event of the first stage of miracles is when Jesus speaks while still a new born infant held in the arms of his mother. (Q. 3:46, Q. 5:110 Q. 19:30) Each of the three accounts of this miracle of a new born child speaking are quite different and bring their own insights and understanding of the perception of Jesus in the Qur'an. One is the previously described visit from the angel who tells Mary that her son will be a prophet and relates to her news of the miracles he will be given including speaking in his infancy. (Q. 3:46) A second narrative is an account of God enumerating His blessings bestowed on Jesus and one of them is the miracle of Jesus speaking while still a newborn baby. (Q. 5:110) Then finally the last account is the event itself as Mary returns to her hometown still unmarried yet holding a

newborn. Her only response to her neighbors when they immediately accuse her of the sin of promiscuity is to motion toward the child. Jesus speaks and his words are the third miracle, a declaration of his prophesy found in one of the two longest Qur'anic accounts of Jesus:

"... She pointed at him. They said: "How can we converse to one who is a child in the cradle?" He (Jesus) said: Verily! I am a slave of God, He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet; and He has made me blessed whosoever I be, and has enjoined on me prayer, and alms, as long as I live. And dutiful to my mother, and made me not arrogant, unblest. And peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!"¹³ (Q. 19:30-33)

There are many other miracles in the life of Jesus and they are mentioned throughout the Qur'anic accounts of his prophetic history. A consistent theme explicitly repeated in them is that these miracles were by God's will and command. Jesus in the Qur'an healed the blind and lepers, supplicated then life was given to a clay bird, bread descended down from the sky and life was brought back to the dead but according to Islamic theology and belief all of these occurrences were clearly only by God's permission. (Q. 3:49-50, Q. 5:110, 112-115)

Revelation of Gospel

The technical terms used in the Qur'an specifically to designate divinely revealed scripture are many. These terms include: Kitab, book or scripture (Q. 2:221, Q. 3:81, Q. 35:25, Q. 40:70, Q. 57:25) Tawrat, the Torah (mentioned over 18 times in the Qur'an) Zabur, the Psalms of David (Q. 4:163, Q. 21:105), Al suhuf al ula, the former pages, a generic term used for scriptures before the Qur'an (Q. 20:133, Q. 87:18) and Injil, the Gospel, (mentioned over 12 times in the Qur'an).¹⁴ Furthermore the Qur'an is called by many different titles such as Al Furqan, Criterion (Q. 2:185, Q. 25:1, Q. 3:4), also

the Dhikr, Remembrance (Q. 15:16, Q. 15:9, Q. 21:10) Kalam Allah, Speech or Word of God (Q. 9:6) Nur, Light (4:174) as well as the more general term of Kitab. ¹⁵

The Injil or Gospel is mentioned in the Qur'an four times with the name of Jesus (Q. 3: 48, Q. 5:46, Q. 5:110, Q. 57:27) and eight times along with the Torah or as a way of designating Christians, i.e. People of the Injil. (Q. 3:3, Q. 3:65, Q. 5:47, Q. 5:66, Q. 5:68, 7:157, Q. 9:111, Q. 48:29) The ayat with both Jesus and the Gospels mentioned are unequivocal confirmation that according to the Qur'anic text, Jesus received a divinely revealed scripture called the Injil which is of course Gospel in the Arabic language according to Arabic speaking Muslims or Christians : ¹⁶

"We sent Jesus, son of Mary, in their footsteps, confirming the Torah that had been sent before him: We gave him the Gospel with guidance, light..." (Q. 5:46)

Another quite specific Qur'anic Arabic term regarding divinely revealed scripture is tanzil. (Q. 25:32, Q. 17:106, Q. 16:102) The word means the act of sending down and as a noun is also another name for the Qur'an (Q. 56:80) ¹⁷ Tanzil is often translated as revelation. It occurs in two ayat in the form of a past tense verb with the words Torah and Gospels as the object of the verb. (Q. 3:3, Q. 3:65) This informs us that in the Qur'an both are seen as revelation. Thus only by an accurate understanding and mastery of the specific technical terminology of Qur'anic Arabic can one verify that the text confirms as revealed scripture; the Gospels, the Psalms and the Qur'an. Without these tools the academic conclusions of Firestone mentioned in my introduction are not surprising.

It is He Who has sent down the Scripture to you (Muhammad) with truth, confirming what came before it. And he sent down the Torah and the Gospel earlier as a guide for people...(Q. 3:3)

O people of the Book! Why do you argue about Abraham, while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed till after him? Have you then no sense? (Q. 3:65)

Outreach of Jesus

The Qur'an stresses the fundamental unity between the message of Jesus and the messages of the other prophets. In the Qur'an, there are no extensive detailed accounts of outreach in the prophetic life of Jesus. That he called his people to a monotheistic faith is emphasized but not much more elaboration is given in the text. Jesus was one of the Children of Israel and he called them to worship one God, to the unity of monotheism. And the reaction of many was to mock him and reject his message.

(Q. 43: 57-59, 63-64)

A major theme in the accounts of Jesus' outreach and faith is the centrality of the Torah. Clearly it is what his faith is based upon (Q 3:48, Q. 5:46, Q. 5:110, Q. 61:6)

And he calls out passionately with heart-felt earnestness to those listening to him and his disciples to come and aid him in spreading his message.

"...Man 'Anṣarī' Ilā Allāhi?...Who will come with me to help God? "
(Q. 61:14)

In the Qur'anic prophetic history, the message Jesus spreads is the same monotheistic faith of all the prophets, a continued religious way of life built upon the worship of one God. ¹⁸ Yet just as a few people followed Jesus, others called him a sorcerer. Furthermore, when this was revealed in the Qur'an, (Q. 61:6) undoubtedly it had to echo deeply in Muhammad as the idol worshipping Arab Quraish of Mecca also called him and his Qur'an; a sorcerer working sorcery.

Crucifixion or Divine Sleight of Hand

That Jesus was crucified on the cross and killed is presented in this account of Qur'anic prophetic history as a case of one of history's greatest sleights of hand. The text tells us basically that the wool was pulled over the eyes of those present. The exact details of specifically how the witnesses were fooled is not stressed, emphasized or given much detail at all. Although, according to the Qur'anic text, the nailing of Jesus to a cross did not happen and this is quite explicit. 19

And because of their saying, "We killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of God," - but they did not kill him, nor crucify him, but it was made to appear like that to them: and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no certain knowledge to follow, nothing but conjecture. For surely; they did not killed him. But God raised him up unto Himself . And God is Ever All Powerful, All Wise. (Q. 4:157-158)

The Qur'anic text here goes on to mention that people will have differences and confusion regarding this event. This can quite possibly be understood to be an implicit reference to the sectarian divisions and denominations found in Christianity. The conclusion of this event is seen by Christianity to be the crucifixion whereas it is quite different in the account in the Qur'an. We find in the Qur'an a declaration that God caused Jesus to ascend. (Q. 4:157) Moreover, that God raised Jesus up is mentioned again in a different sura with the additional piece of information that it was in order to purify him from those who rejected him.

And remember when God said: "O Jesus! I will take you and raise you to Me: I will purify you those who disbelieve. (Q. 3:55)

Qur'anic Anti-Trinitarian Argument

It could be argued that the main theme to the accounts of the Qur'anic prophetic history of Jesus is a refutation of the doctrine of

the Trinity as well as the belief that Jesus is divine or a son of God. 20 Convincing evidence can be discovered of this premise by a close reading of each Jesus narrative in the Qur'an. For each of these accounts contain either an explicit or an implied method of reasoning that argues against the validity of the Trinity dogma. Perhaps the most explicit one of them all is an interrogative dialogue between God and Jesus:

"When God says, Jesus, son of Mary, Did you say to people, 'Take me and my mother as two gods besides God?' He will say, 'May You be exalted! I would never say what I had no right to say--if I had said such a thing You would have known it..." (Q. 5:116-117)

The longest account of the prophetic history of Jesus is found in the first sixty-four ayat in sura Al 'Imran. The sabab al nuzul, occurrence of revelation, of these ayat is tremendously insightful and relative to our topic at hand. These ayat were revealed upon the arrival of a Christian delegation to Muhammad in Medina in the 9th year of the Hijra sent from a large Christian community in a city called Najran in Yemen. 21 Now imagine the scene, a Christian delegation arrives seeking a peace treaty with Muhammad and his community. Then these ayat are revealed, recited to them, to the Muslims and then become a permanent part of the Qur'anic text.

There are many methods of reasoning found in these ayat. For instance, there is a comparison made between Jesus and Adam.

Verily, the likeness of Jesus before God is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then said to him: "Be!" - and he was. (Q. 3:59)

What is implied is that Adam was created with no father or mother whereas Jesus was created only with a father missing. Thus in as far as rating the miracles. The creation of Adam is a more amazing divine miracle than the creation of Jesus. However, no one is known

to have created a religion focused on the admiration of and prayers to and worship of Adam.

The preparation of Mary and her being totally devoted to religious service before the birth of Jesus is also depicted in these ayat. This could be seen as a period of ritual purification to re-adjust her soul and her being for giving birth to a prophet in such a miraculous manner. 22 And again we can see in this account a confirmation of the acceptance of the legal authority of the Torah as part of Jesus' faith.

And I have come confirming that which was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you, and I have come to you with a proof from your Lord. So fear God and obey me. (Q. 3:50)

Clearly Jesus expresses in this sura a call to worship God and not a call to worship him or any other entity. Which is once again the Qur'an revisiting and arguing its message again and again to prove its point that Jesus' prophesy is unified with the message of the other prophets in the Qur'an:

"Be mindful of God, obey me: God is my Lord and your Lord, so serve Him--- that is a Straight Path." (Q. 3: 50-51)

Unlike most of the other prophets in the Qur'an, Jesus is emphatically described as "only" a messenger:

"Mā Al-Masīḥu Abnu Maryama 'Illā Rasūlun Qad Khalat Min Qablihi Ar-Rusulu Wa 'Ummuhu Ṣiddīqatun Kānā Ya'kulāni Aṭ-Ṭa`āma Anžur Kayfa Nubayyinu Lahumu Al'-Āyāti Thumma Anžur' Annā Yu'ufakūna

The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a messenger ; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a virtuous woman .They both used to eat food . See how clear We make the signs to them, yet look how deluded they are." (Q. 5:75)

In this ayah we find an example of qasr, an Arabic literary stylistic used to limit and restrict something in order to define it. The word which is being restricted here is Messiah which is then followed by illa, an article of restriction meaning except or only, which is then followed by the specific term, messenger, that the Messiah is being limited to and defined as.²³ This is an emphatic way of speech to stress that Jesus, is no more than a messenger, i.e. is not divine.

The Qur'an when it is reasoning a point never rests, but rather returns to the messages it seeks to convey again and again. This Qur'anic Arabic literary form is called Istiqsa al huja; meaning that the Qur'an argues its case thoroughly, in great detail and returns repeatedly to the same point employing diverse methods of reasoning and examples. In this instance, the belief in the Trinity is argued against, seeking to convince its proponents that to imagine that God could ever be given birth to is illogical and an anthropomorphism that Islamic theology rejects.²⁴ (Q. 112:1-4)

For instance, in the same ayah both Mary and Jesus are said to have eaten food, i.e. were just human beings. And over 50 ayat earlier in the very same sura, a somewhat puzzling and very direct question is put forth. That if God wanted to, who could prevent Him from killing Jesus, Mary his mother and every soul on earth? (Q. 5:17) From these examples it should be noted that we can see the multi-layered features of the Qur'anic method of reasoning that is implemented in its argumentative reply to the theology of the Trinity.

Place of Jesus in Qur'anic Prophetic History

Throughout the Qur'an the names of the prophets appear in lists both short and long sometimes with detailed accounts of their advents and missions. Jesus appears repeatedly as one of the

prophets in these narratives. (Q. 2:136, Q. 3:84, Q. 4:163, Q. 6:84-86, Q. 33:7 Q. 42:13) We read that God created Jesus in Mary's womb while she was in her chastity, then follows a general description of the messengers, the prophets as a group:

"This community of yours is one single community and I am your Lord, so serve Me." (Q. 21:92)

The foundation and fundamental principle of the prophetic unity is their outreach and complete sincere devotion to a religious way of life; the worship of one God, a strict monotheism. This is where the message of Jesus in the Qur'an is essentially identical to the message of the other prophets in this scripture. ²⁵ (Q. 43: 63-64, Q. 5:117-118)

And when Jesus came with clear signs, he said: "I have come to you with wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some of the points in which you differ. Be mindful of God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him Alone. This is the Straight Path (Q. 43: 63-64)

In this the prophets are on the same path and although via different scriptures, rituals and religious laws they call to the same way. It could be said that they were cut from the same cloth. Within the accounts of Jesus we read where he promises hellfire to idol worshipers, (Q. 5:72) paradise for martyrs (Q. 9:111) and performs prayer and gives charity. ²⁶ (Q. 19:31) Moreover his disciples say in the Qur'an that they believe and submit to God, which in Arabic is the linguistic meaning of the word Muslim. ²⁷

(Q. 5:111)

Similarly between Jesus and Muhammad is another bond that is asserted and emphasized in the Qur'an. Jesus we read gives a prophesy of a prophet after him and calls him by name, Ahmad.

Ahmad is a derivative from the same Arabic root word ha / ma / da that the name Muhammad is derived from. 28

“I am sent to you by God, confirming the Torah that came before me and bringing good news of a messenger to follow me whose name will be Ahmad.” (Q. 61:6)

The important tie and bond between the prophets and God is what is most commonly called in the English language, the covenant. We find this in the Qur'an either with a list of prophets or only a testament made to this profound spiritual covenant; an obligation for the prophets to spread a message.

“Wa 'Idh 'Akhadhnā Mina An-Nabīyīna Mīthāqahum Wa Minka Wa Min Nūḥin Wa 'Ibrāhīma Wa Mūsā Wa `Īsā Abni Maryama Wa 'Akhadhnā Minhum Mīthāqāan Ghalīẓāan

And remember when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you (Muhammad), and from Noah, from Abraham, from Moses, and from Jesus, son of Mary. We took from them a strong solemn covenant. (Q. 33:7)

The Arabic term here is mithaq. Even though one of the contemporary and very important English translations of the Qur'an published by Oxford has rendered this term into English as solemn pledge, (29) there are at least ten other translations of the Qur'an that conveyed the meaning of this word mithaq as covenant. 30 Unmistakably the same exact religious pact is referred to in the Old and New Testament and is most commonly translated and written in the English language versions of the Bible as covenant. Thus the word covenant more effectively brings across the sought meaning of the Qur'anic Arabic term mithaq, to English readers.

Jesus' place in the Qur'an also serves to encourage and strengthen the heart and will of Muhammad and the early Muslims. When they hear the story of Jesus and his monotheistic faith as well as how the

Qur'an tells that Jesus told of another prophet after him, no doubt their determination was strengthened. The Arabic literary feature of *iltifat* can be noticed as the plural of majesty is employed to highlight that God is Omnipotent and knew all of the details of the story of Jesus and Mary. In the Qur'anic discourse here *iltifat* plays the role of confirming that the validity and authenticity of the words in the Qur'an are not Muhammad's words but God's, as Muhammad was illiterate and could not realistically have known such specific details concerning Jesus' prophesy and life.

"Dhālika Min 'Nbā'i Al-Ghaybi Nūhīhi 'Ilayka Wa Mā Kunta Ladayhim 'Idh Yulqūna 'Aqlāmahum 'Ayyuhum Yakfulu Maryama Wa Mā Kunta Ladayhim 'Idh Yakhtaşimūna

This is an account of things beyond your knowledge that We reveal to you (Muhammad): you were not present among them when they cast lots with their pens as to which of them should be charged with the care of Mary; nor were you with them when they disputed." (Q. 3:44)

In the Qur'an we are told a prophesy that Jesus would return in a second coming. (Q. 4:159, 43:61) Although these ayat regarding the second coming of Jesus are not explicit or unequivocal they have been interpreted by the majority of Muslim scholars of exegesis to mean that his return is one of the final signs of the day of judgment. These interpretations are supported by several Hadith that explain the return in more detail, both the Hadith and the Qur'anic exegesis form the basis of the classical Islamic theological position regarding Jesus and the end of time. ³¹ Unfortunately, the specifics of Jesus' role in the last days are too detailed to address in this essay.

Conclusion

The Qur'anic employment of the prophetic history of Jesus serves more than one purpose. In a real sense it did play an important role

to encourage Muhammad and his companions that they were on the right path. I have shown that in this aspect it is quite similar to the accounts of the other messengers in the Qur'an.

The most unique aspect of the Jesus narratives is how via the application of a variety of modes of argumentation and reasoning, the Qur'anic text seeks to convince that the Trinity is not an authentic part of the divinely revealed scriptures. As Robinson has discussed in his work, how the structure of Qur'anic discourse is in the form of a speaker who is an All-knowing speaker and reports very minute details of the far distant and ancient past revealing what was running through the very inner hearts of prophets long gone.³² The Qur'anic reasoning uses comparisons between Adam and Jesus in an argument based on the logic in scripture trying to convince readers of the veracity of the Islamic monotheistic philosophy.

Another method of reasoning is to highlight the common humanity of Jesus, his birth accompanied by the pains of labor and that he was no more than a messenger according to the Qur'an. The essence of being a messenger and the covenant between God and the prophets is shown for many reasons and amongst them is to convince that Jesus was a man and not a God.

I have illustrated the authenticity of the Gospels as a divinely revealed scripture according to the Qur'anic text. I have focused on the Qur'anic Arabic terminology that is specific to revelation. The various miracles of Jesus are also detailed in the Qur'an and yet done in a way that consistently emphasizes them as being caused by God's will and command although done via Jesus' hands. The call of Jesus to his people was addressed and that the Qur'an does not focus a great deal of attention upon it. Neither is there much of any focus on how the crucifixion was made to appear as if it occurred when according to the Qur'an it was never done to Jesus.

The subject of Jesus in the Qur'an has filled volumes and has been written upon in great length by Islamic scholars. Some of the most highly respected classical Islamic scholars have treated this topic in detail. ³³ I will conclude my article with a qasidah/Arabic poem by one of them, Ibn Qayyim Al Jawziyya, which is a very concise and profound scholarly expression of a classical Islamic scholars' refutation of the Christian Trinitarian philosophy. Ibn al-Qayyim is of course, one of the well known and prominent Muslim jurists who was born and died in Damascus (751 AH/1350 CE). Not only was he a jurist who had students of the caliber of Ibn Kathir, Ibn Qayyim was also skilled in composing Arabic poetry. Among his most famous poems was this one which has become known as "A'obbad al-Maseeh (O Christ-Worshippers!). And here it is translated into English.

"O Christ-worshippers! We want an answer to our question [from your wise ones],

If the Lord was murdered by some people's act, what kind of god is this?

We wonder! Was He pleased by what they did to Him?

If yes, blessed be they, they achieved His pleasure, But if He was discontented, this means their power had subjugated Him!

Was the whole entity left without a Sustainer, so who answered the prayers?

Were the heavens vacated, when He laid under the ground somewhere?

Were all the worlds left without a God, to manage while His hands were nailed?

Why did not the angels help Him, when they heard him while he wailed?

How could the rods stand to bear the True Lord when He was fastened,

How could the irons reached Him and [had] His body pinned?

How could His enemies' hands reach Him and slap His rear,

And was Christ revived by himself, or was the Reviver another god?

What a sight it was, a grave that enclosed a god,

Stranger still is the belly that confined Him!

He stayed there for nine months in utter darkness, fed by blood!

Then he got out of the womb as a small baby,

Weak and gasping to be breast-fed!

He ate and drank, and did what that naturally resulted,

Is this [what you call] a god?

High Exalted be Allah above the lies of Christians,

All of them will be held accountable for their libels!

O Cross-worshippers! For what reason is this exalted and blame [is cast upon those] who reject it?

Is it not logical to break and burn it, along with the one who innovated it?

Since the Lord was crucified on it, and his hands were fastened to it?

That is really a cursed cross to carry,

So discard it, do not kiss it!

The Lord was abused on it, and you adore it?

So [it is clear that] you are one of His enemies!

If you extol it because it carried the Lord of the Worlds,

Why don't you prostrate yourself and worship graves, Since the grave contained your god in it?

So Christ-worshipper, open your eyes,

This is what the matter is all about. " 34

This has been a concise review of some of the important points regarding the treatment of Jesus in the Qur'an. I emphasize that the analysis of the Qur'anic accounts of Jesus' prophetic history remains a very relevant topic in Islamic Studies. There is a great deal more to be learned by focused critical modern research and analysis of the methodology used as well as the conclusions of classical scholars in their works around the topic of the Qur'anic employment of the story of Jesus.

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Transliteration Guide

ء	'
ا	ā
as in	
آ	
ث	th
ح	H h
خ	kh
ذ	dh
ش	sh
ص	Ṣ ṣ

ض	Ḍ ḍ
ط	Ṭ ṭ
ظ	Ẓ ẓ
ع	'
غ	gh
ق	q
و as in وُ	Ū ū
ي as in ي	Ī ī

ى	á
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ملخص البحث:

يحتل النبي عيسى عليه السلام مرتبة مهمة في تاريخ النبوة وفق ما جاء في القرآن الكريم. فهو ذلك المسيح الذي ولدته مريم العذراء، والذي يتوقع أن يظهر في آخر الزمان.

هناك بعض التشابه بين وجهة نظر المسيحية حيال المسيح وبين ما جاء في القرآن الكريم عند ولادته عليه السلام، ورسالته وأسمائه التي تسمى بها.

ومهما يكن من أمر فإن الخلاف الجوهرى يبدو فيما جاء في القرآن الكريم عن آدمية عيسى عليه السلام، وأنه نبي ثم حجية القرآن التي لا مجال معها لموضوع الثالوث.

هذه العناصر هي التي يركز عليها هذا البحث من خلال تناول موضوع عيسى عليه السلام في القرآن الكريم.