

# Defending Christianity before our Muslim brothers



# What is Islam?

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- ▶ **Surrender**, refers to the peace that comes when you surrender all to God.
- ▶ **Angel Gabriel** in the **7<sup>th</sup> century** appeared to Muhammed, who being illiterate, dictated what was revealed to him by Allah to a scribe
- ▶ **1.6 billion Muslims**, or 23% world's population and **increasing**
  - ▶ **2.18 billion Christians**, but **declining**

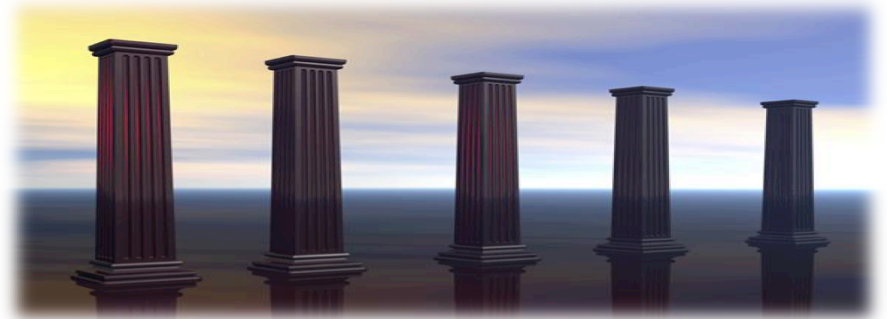


# 5 Pillars of Islam

**SHAHADAH**- reciting that 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammed is his prophet.'

**SALAH**- praying 5 times a day

**ZAKAT**- obligatory almsgiving



**SAWM**- fasting the holy month of Ramadan, from sunrise to sunset for 30 days not allowing any food to pass through their lips. For any *able bodied Muslims*.

**HAJJ**- a pilgrimage to Mecca where the Angel Gabriel is said to reveal the Quran.



# Branches of Islam

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## 1) Shia Islam – 10-15%

They believe early Islam passed through Muhammed's bloodline, **Ali, Muhammed's cousin**.

## 2) Sunni Islam – 80%

Muslims elected **Abu Bakr (Muhammed's best friend)** as the first khalifa (ie first leader) because when Muhammed died there was no appointed successor.

## 3) Neither category – 5-10%

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# Problems Muslims have with Christianity

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- 1) Trinity
- 2) St Paul
- 3) The Death and Resurrection
- 4) The Authenticity of the Bible
- 5) The Divinity of Christ

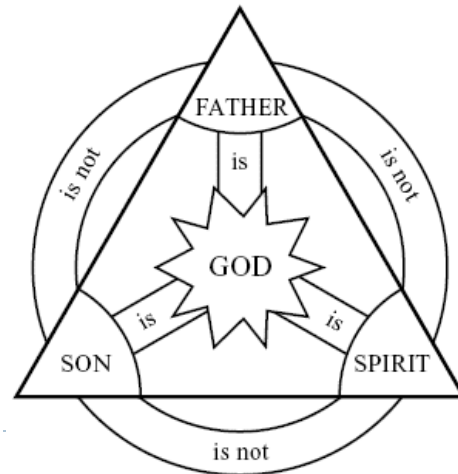


# The Trinity

Surat-al-Ikhlaas 112:2

“God is not a Father, and He is not a Son”

- ▶ Polytheistic blasphemy.
  - ▶ Worshiping three gods, but still desiring the dignity of being monotheists, so we invented the Trinity.
- ▶ Biological sonship; physical offspring, created god.
  - ▶ Jesus must inferior.



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**Atoms - e.g H<sub>2</sub>O** The three are separate but all the same,  
they are one.

***There are many things in this world that can be 3 in 1 so why not God? Science shows that there are things in this world so tiny that we can only view them through microscopes, and yet they are incomprehensibly complex. If the world is so complex that it baffles our minds, what about the One who created the world? The One who created our minds? I now think that if my Creator is so simple that I can understand Him, perhaps I have made Him in my image.***



# God is one being and three persons.

▶ Gen 1:26

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▶ **Being** = **what** you are

▶ **Person** = **who** you are

▶ Your being is that which makes you what you are, your person is that which makes you who you are. Yahweh is one being/essence, God, with three persons (hypostases): Father, Son, and Spirit.

▶ **Perichoresis**

▶ Mutual indwelling of the 3 persons of the Godhead

▶ Divine dance – movement of love that has broken forth into our existence in Jesus Christ, and has drawn all creation into this mysterious yet glorious divine life

▶ Relationship in the body (church) not worship

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# Perichoresis

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- ▶ ***The theologians in the early church tried to describe this wonderful reality that we call Trinity. If any of you have ever been to a Greek wedding, you may have seen their distinctive way of dancing . . . It's called perichoresis. There are not two dancers, but at least three. They start to go in circles, weaving in and out in this very beautiful pattern of motion. They start to go faster and faster and faster, all the while staying in perfect rhythm and in sync with each other. Eventually, they are dancing so quickly (yet so effortlessly) that as you look at them, it just becomes a blur. Their individual identities are part of a larger dance. The early church fathers and mothers looked at that dance (perichoresis) and said, "That's what the Trinity is like." It's a harmonious set of relationship in which there is mutual giving and receiving. This relationship is called love, and it's what the Trinity is all about. The perichoresis is the dance of love.***

**Jonathan Marlowe**

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- ▶ ***As human beings, we relate to one another in the “dance of life” on this planet. The relationships between the three Persons of the Trinity—“dynamic, interactive, loving, serving”—form the model for our human dance steps. Unfortunately, through sinfulness we corrupt the dance into a choreography of conflict. However, now through the Gospel, Christians have been brought into a special relationship with the triune God. Through Christ’s incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, and by the regenerating action of the Spirit, we prodigals have been brought home and embraced by our Father. Gathered into the household of faith, we now enjoy the feast of the fatted calf, and participate in the dance party that is taking place in the Father’s house. In this way we exemplify the reality and nature of God and bring his Good News to a world that has forgotten how to dance.***

**Michael Spencer**

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# Verses people have a problem with

## ▶ **“My Father is greater than I.” (Jn 14:28)**

- ▶ But when did Jesus say this?
  - ▶ Before going to the garden to be betrayed, before being spat on and scourged.

He *“did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross”* (Phil 2:6,8).

‘if you loved Me you would rejoice because I am going to the Father, I am going to My Glory that was covered during My Incarnation. For My Father is greater than this human nature that I assumed’.



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***“The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what  
He sees the Father do” (Jn 5:19)***

**Father’s function is the source**



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***Matthew 24:36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”***

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## God covers His Knowledge:

### ▶ God sometimes acts as if He doesn't know

1. He asked Adam, "Where are you" (Gen 3:9) and "Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat? (Gen 3:11),
2. He asked Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" (Gen 4:9)
3. Our Lord asked about Lazarus, "Where have you laid him?" (Jn 11:34)
4. He asked the paralyzed man, "Do you want to be well?" (Jn 5:6)
5. He asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (Jn 6:5)
6. He asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" (Jn 21).

- ▶ He will say to those who are perishing, "I do not know you" (Lk 13:25-27),  
"You do not deserve My knowledge of you." (Mt 10:33).

### ▶ Why did our Lord Jesus Christ cover His knowledge?

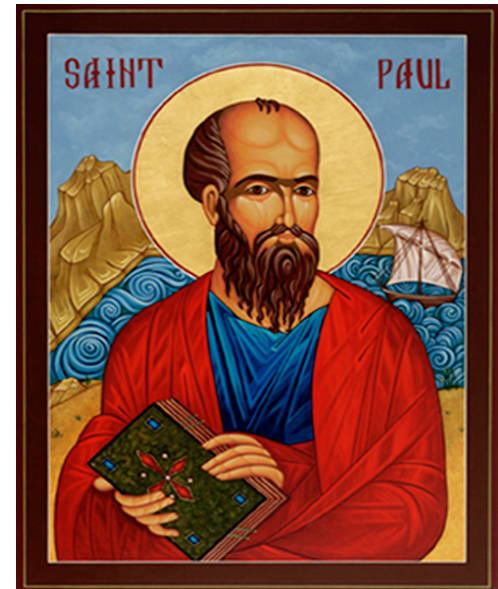
- ▶ To stop the inquiry of the disciples.

"Take heed watch and pray; for **you** do not know when the time is" (Mk 13:33),



# St Paul

- ▶ **The Quran teaches Muslims to revere Jesus and the disciples.**
  - ▶ People chosen by Allah to spread His true message, including the fact that Jesus was just a human.
- ▶ **People began to worship Jesus (blasphemy)**
  - ▶ spread by St Paul.
- ▶ They believe **St Paul wanted power and authority**
- ▶ St Paul was willing to **risk his life** repeatedly
- ▶ He was **top rabbi** of his time:
  - ▶ He went in the total opposite direction, choosing a life of meekness and poverty.



# Jesus' death on a Cross

They have 2 theories:

1) **The swoon theory:**

- ▶ “if God can raise Jesus from the dead, why can't He do the smaller miracle of keeping Him alive on the cross?”
  - ▶ Jesus never really died on the cross, He was crucified and came very close to death.
  - ▶ Taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb. After three days the coolness of the tomb revived Him; and He managed to roll away the stone, come out of the tomb, and appear to the disciples.

2) **The substitution theory** (what most Muslims will argue):

- ▶ “Jesus was substituted before being placed on the cross” ie Allah put Jesus' face on someone else.
- ▶ Quran says “Jesus was neither killed nor crucified but so it appeared”

Who? Most popular view: Jesus' face on Judas' body for poetic justice.





## **No man could survive**

The very reason they stabbed him in the chest was to make sure he was dead. The spear would have gone into His heart, killing him instantly.



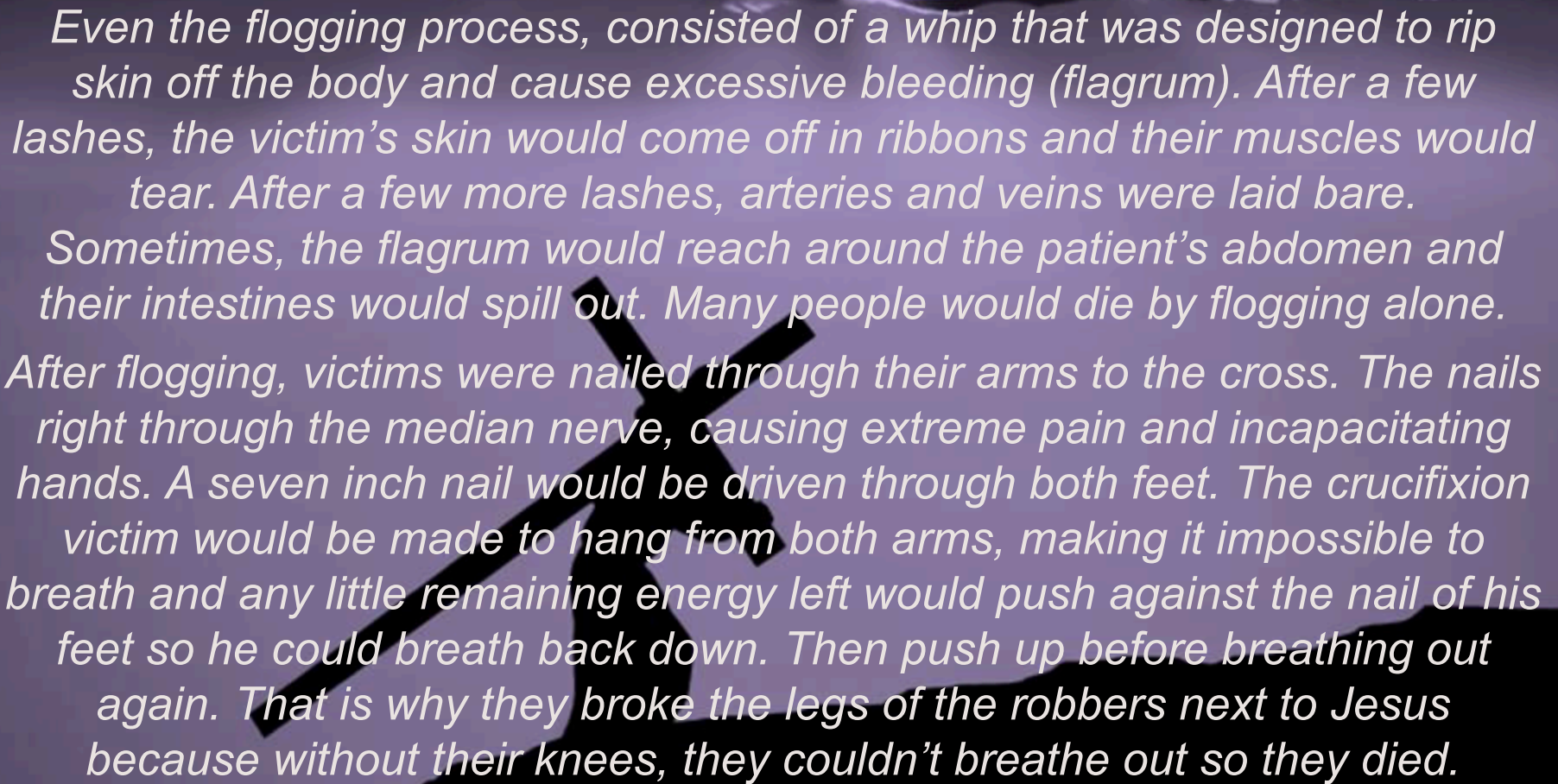
**Virtually no scholar, Christian or non Christian denies Jesus' death on the cross. Most scholars agree that they can be more assured of Jesus' death by crucifixion than anything else of His life.**



There is an entire history for the practice of crucifixion.

- No one in history ever survived a full Roman crucifixion.
  - Most humiliating, tortuous method of execution.





*Even the flogging process, consisted of a whip that was designed to rip skin off the body and cause excessive bleeding (flagrum). After a few lashes, the victim's skin would come off in ribbons and their muscles would tear. After a few more lashes, arteries and veins were laid bare. Sometimes, the flagrum would reach around the patient's abdomen and their intestines would spill out. Many people would die by flogging alone. After flogging, victims were nailed through their arms to the cross. The nails right through the median nerve, causing extreme pain and incapacitating hands. A seven inch nail would be driven through both feet. The crucifixion victim would be made to hang from both arms, making it impossible to breath and any little remaining energy left would push against the nail of his feet so he could breath back down. Then push up before breathing out again. That is why they broke the legs of the robbers next to Jesus because without their knees, they couldn't breathe out so they died.*

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*The crown was woven and then pressed down around the head ripping the skin of His scalp too.*

*The blood loss results in extreme thirst as the body craves water to restore the lost blood. Jesus said, "I thirst" (John 19:28). The heart beats so hard trying to compensate for the loss of oxygen (due to the lack of blood) in the body that it eventually ruptures. Then they pierce His heart to confirm His death.*

*The disciples went from being afraid of associating with Him to dying and proclaiming Him. If Jesus had just barely survived the cross, he would have come to them broken and on the verge of dying- not the kind of appearance that would inspire a total transformation and a lack of fear of death. Without the disciples' boldness there would be no Christianity.*

*Christian and non Christian sources from the first century testify to Jesus' death on the cross. Virtually everyone believes that His death is among the surest facts of history.*



## Rebutting the substitution theory:

This is a conjecture

‘What if’ doesn’t constitute much of an argument.

What is the claim? Where is the evidence?



There is no evidence for this theory, yet the death of Jesus is grounded on the historical fact of eyewitness testimony, the medical evidence, the appearances of Jesus, and the emergence of the early church



# Jesus' Resurrection

- ▶ Christianity hinges on this fact
- ▶ The empty tomb:
  - ▶ **75% of scholars** who study the subject acknowledge this.
  - ▶ If Jesus' body had still been in the tomb, the **Jewish authorities in Jerusalem could have easily ended Christianity** by parading Jesus' body throughout the city.
  - ▶ Jewish leaders. When asked about Jesus, they said they would say **disciples had stolen his body, agreeing that the tomb was empty.**



- ▶ Testimony to the resurrection.
  - ▶ The disciples and foes (Paul and James). **Liars make poor martyrs.**
  - ▶ What would be the motivation of the disciples to make this up/ to hide the body/to speak of their flaws and sins to the all
- ▶ Why would it be recorded that the first to see the risen Christ were females in a time where **females were deemed inferior** to men?

**Other explanations and theories require investigators to twist, strain or ignore facts.**





# The Authenticity of the Bible

“The Bible has been corrupted”

▶ **But when?**

1. 600 AD – Asia, Africa & Europe with no evidence of change
2. Manuscripts still exist from the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> century
3. Jewish and Christian converts: Muslims should have retained their texts

▶ **How?**

- ▶ Practically

▶ **Why?**

- ▶ Couldn't God preserve the Bible as He did the quran?






# The Authenticity of the Bible

- ▶ 40 authors over 16 centuries; unmistakable unity.
  - ▶ One author
- ▶ Indestructibility
- ▶ Manuscripts all over for comparison
  - ▶ Stylistic differences in translation (not Greek/Hebrew)
- ▶ 2<sup>nd</sup> century, full NT from 4<sup>th</sup> C



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1. Codex Alexandrinus – 5<sup>th</sup> C
  2. Codex Sinaiticus – 4<sup>th</sup> C (in british museum)
  3. Codex Vaticanus – Vatican library
  
  4. Dead sea Scrolls
  5. Massoretic texts
  6. Septaguint
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▶ I danced in the morning  
When the world was begun,  
And I danced in the moon  
And the stars and the sun,  
And I came down from heaven  
And I danced on the earth,  
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

▶ *Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all,  
wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all  
in the Dance, said he.*

▶ I danced for the scribe  
And the pharisee,  
But they would not dance  
And they wouldn't follow me.  
I danced for the fishermen,  
For James and John -  
They came with me  
And the Dance went on.

▶ I danced on the Sabbath  
And I cured the lame;  
The holy people  
Said it was a shame.  
They whipped and they stripped  
And they hung me on high,  
And they left me there  
On a Cross to die.

▶ I danced on a Friday  
When the sky turned black -  
It's hard to dance  
With the devil on your back.  
They buried my body  
And they thought I'd gone,  
But I am the Dance,  
And I still go on.

▶ They cut me down  
And I leapt up high;  
I am the life  
That'll never, never die;  
I'll live in you  
If you'll live in me -  
I am the Lord  
Of the Dance, said he.

