

Who is the Messiah?

He was born in Bethlehem in Judaea in the land called Palestine during the Roman occupation in the first century. Some thirty years later, Pilate, the Roman governor, sentenced him to death. He was crucified, died and was buried. However, on the third day, he rose again. His teaching and life influenced the history of the world uniquely. Today there are many opinions about him, but if we want to know the whole truth, it is the New Testament that gives us the most reliable information. He is known as *Yashua*, *Christos* and as Jesus. In the Qur'an and among Muslims he is known as *Isa Al-Masih* – Jesus the Christ, Allah's *Rasul* – Apostle, and His *Nabi* – prophet. Indeed Muslims know about his birth and something about his teaching from the reading of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions, however, the full details are available only in the New Testament section of the Bible.

Isa al-Masih, Jesus the Christ

We learn that his birth and life were unique. His authority was supreme. At the age of about 30 Jesus started his ministry, preaching with God's authority to people about the great things God had done for them. His arrival was not only confirmed by angels, but also by another

prophet, known in the Qur'an as *Yahya* (John the Baptist). When *Yahya* saw Jesus, he pointed to Him and said to those around him, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He was referring to the fact that Jesus was to be the sacrifice that God would provide, like the ram in the case of Ibrahim and his son, or the lambs sacrificed as sin offerings as mentioned in the Torah (Genesis 22:13; Leviticus 6:24-30).

The name "*Isa*" or "Jesus" or *Yashua* is itself important because of its meaning, "The Lord saves" (Matthew 1:29). This name was given to him not by his family, but by God

Jesus said, "I came, not to judge the world, but to save it" (John 12:47).

Himself. God was telling us that He planned to save us through the person of *Isa*. His title, "The Christ" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "*Messiah*", which in Arabic is "*Al-Masih*" and means "anointed for a special purpose."

He came from Heaven

Jesus as the Living Word of God came to this earth (John 1:14). His claim was that he came

down from heaven (John 6:38). He boldly said, "You are of this world but I am not of this world" (John 8:23). People around him were amazed at his teaching. They realized that their religious teachers used to quote others as their authority for any ruling they made, but Jesus was different. They recognized him as "one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:28-29). Other prophets used the introduction "the Lord your God says . . .", but Jesus said, "I tell you", or, "Truly, I tell you."

The Way to Life

Jesus is the answer to many who pleaded with God, "Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD" (Psalms 4:6). Jesus claimed, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25). This is something no other messenger or prophet in the Qur'an or in the Scriptures of Christians has claimed. Jesus is the only one whom God has appointed as the gateway to draw people to himself. That is why Jesus declared, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me" (John 14:6).

Redeemed and Free

Jesus said, "I came, not to judge the world, but to save it" (John 12:47). Many people in his day thought to make him their ruler and king, to

establish a worldly kingdom. He refused: "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36) and said that he "did not come to be served; he came to serve and to give his life to redeem many people" (Mark 10:45). He claimed the authority to free people from slavery and the punishment of sin. He said, ". . . everyone who sins is a slave of sin. If the Son sets you free, then you will be free indeed" (John 8: 34, 36).

The Open Invitation

There were many people during His first coming to this earth, unwilling to face up to his claims upon them; the same is true today. Many try to ignore Him. However, Jesus has clearly said, "He who is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23). We cannot sit on the fence or just hope that everything will be all right. Jesus is the final word of hope, which God has spoken to the people of this earth (Hebrews 1:1-2). People look for peace but there can be no peace until there is peace between God and people. This peace treaty is available to us all through Jesus.

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). No other in the Bible or the Qur'an has given such a clear assurance as Jesus has done. He said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For

my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

A plea

Dear Friend, call upon Him, the *Kalimatullah*, the Word of God. He is able to lift you out of the mire. He is there to set you free from the entanglement of life's mesh. It doesn't matter who you are. Please do not listen to voices that shout, God is too far to reach. He truly is near to even hear your whisper plea. This is the moment that you will never regret. Reach out and surrender to Him, the mediator, Jesus, and you'll see everything you need in Him.

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