

VICTORY

OF THE TRUTH



VICTORY OF THE TRUTH

Answers to Questions

asked by a

Muslim Sheikh in Saudi Arabia

By Iskander Jadeed

Contents

Preface 3

QUESTION 1 4
 ANSWER: 4

QUESTION 2 6
 ANSWER: 6

QUESTION 3 11
 ANSWER: 11

QUESTION 4 14
 ANSWER: 14
 The Love of God Intervenes 16
 Types of Sacrifice..... 19
 Sprinkling of the Blood of the Sacrifice..... 19
 The True Sacrifice of Christ of Which Those Were Symbols..... 19

QUESTION 5 23
 ANSWER: 23
 1 - David 23
 2 - Isaiah..... 23
 3 - Jeremiah 23
 4 - Daniel 24
 5 - Micha the Prophet..... 24
 6 - Malachi..... 24
 Conclusion 25

QUESTION 6 26
 ANSWER: 26

QUESTION 7 28
 ANSWER: 28
 The Trinity in Islam 30
 Immanuel "God With Us" 33

QUESTION 8 34
 ANSWER: 34

QUESTION 9 35
 ANSWER: 35

QUESTION 10 37
 ANSWER: 37

QUESTION 11 38
 ANSWER: 38

QUESTION 12 39
 ANSWER: 39

QUIZ..... 40

Preface

Dear Brother,

I wish you the grace and peace of God. I have received your gracious letter in which you mentioned that you would like to exchange ideas and good wishes which is our aim in the Victory of the Truth. Let us avoid mental torpor and religious fanaticism, and seek a dialogue to save humanity from chaos, and to deliver it out of darkness into the light. So a thousand welcomes.

After looking over the questions you sent to me, I paused at the second one which says, Who gave the councils the right to elect Jesus (Isa), and Mary, and the Holy Spirit to divinity?

I paused with great disappointment because your good intentions faded away with this question. What you have suggested has no bearing on dialogue or the deliverance of man. Your cruel words are aimed at the truth of Christianity as the true religion of God. It is all the more disappointing to see that you call yourself the defender of truth. You are far removed from reality, and hence against the truth. You have believed the teachings of the sectaries and accused the authentic Christianity of making Mary a Goddess.

Before I answer your questions, I must inform you that you have missed a mark in saying, "Please examine my questions and reply to them so that you may realize your crime and not that you are its victim". I have heard the words of Jesus who said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). To tell you the truth, the words of Christ have made me free from all chains and bonds, one of which was the desire for vengeance. The Holy Spirit of God made me stand firm in His word which says: "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:44-45).

Believe me, after I had finished reading your unkind words I prayed for you. Before I answer your questions, please accept my sincere greetings.

Iskander Jadeed

QUESTION 1

St. Augustine said: "I am a believer, because that does not agree with the mind". Then what is the difference between the insane and the one who suppresses the mind?

ANSWER:

You do not give your interpretation of this quotation. It is easy for a man to interpret any expression according to his own whim. The word "faith" compels man to accept whatever the mind cannot comprehend. The word of God says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). This does not differ from the definition of scientists for faith. They say that it is a belief which is built on testimony, not on the senses. Faith is trust in that which the believer hopes, the evidence of things not seen. Faith in the resurrection of the dead is built on God's testimony in His book, as is faith in heaven which we hope for but do not yet see. The inspired book testifies to its existence.

Here is further evidence as to the validity of this definition:

1. We believe in historical events according to the testimonies of historians, and in scientific realities on the testimony of scientists. We also believe in the creation, fall and redemption on the basis of God's revelation in his Holy Book which says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Hebrews 11:3). We also believe the doctrines of eternal life, conversion, justification, sanctification, the resurrection, and judgment on the last day. All these are accepted on the basis of God's testimony.
2. The Bible too describes faith, and the New Testament is called the testimony of Jesus. Jesus Christ did not come as a philosopher, but as a witness. He said to Nicodemus, "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness" (John 3:11). John the Baptist told the Jews, "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true" (John 3:31-33).

Christ's apostles were witnesses. Jesus promised them, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). They did not build their teachings on philosophy when they witnessed in Greece. Paul, the apostle, said that philosophy which is built on human wisdom is foolishness compared to the concerns of God. The apostles were not philosophers but witnesses, and they did not prove spiritual matters by human wisdom, but preached the word of God. One of the proofs for biblical teaching about faith is that credence which is built on testimony. The Word of God commands us to believe what the Spirit of God reveals concerning redemption. The Bible says, "He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5:10-11). This is the best expression about the reality of faith.

In brief, faith is the revelation of God with its foundation being the testimony of God. Whoever accepts this testimony confesses that God is true, and whoever refuses it makes God a liar. This is the worst of infidelity.

If we accept the testimony of people, God's testimony is greater. The Bible teaches this repeatedly. It is the foundation on which we build our faith, and it commands us saying, "Thus saith the Lord".

The Bible gives us another meaning for faith. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God, he promised them saying, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15). Faith in this promise is built on God's testimony. When Noah was warned about the flood, God ordered him to build and prepare an ark. Noah believed the Word of God and not because he saw signs of the approach of the flood.

God promised Abraham that his aged wife Sarah would give birth to a baby boy, to be an heir. The Bible says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

Apparently, this promise seems contrary to the thinking of the human mind. Notice one more verse, Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing (Genesis 18:11). Sarah passed her ninetieth birthday, and even though it was not possible, according to nature, Sarah believed and gave birth to a son by the power of God; they called him Isaac.

So on the basis of these events we define faith as accepting the truth. The faith of Christians, including Saint Augustine's is simply believing the events and the teaching recorded in the Holy Bible and relying on God's testimony.

QUESTION 2

“Who gave the councils the right to nominate Isa (Jesus), Mary and the Holy Spirit for divinity (the Deity)? If the councils have the right to do that, do they not have the right to deprive them of deity and propose others? Who gave them the right to make the Pope infallible? Who granted the church the right to forgive sins and excommunicate”?

ANSWER:

Before I answer the question, I would like to remind you of what the Qur’an says, “And dispute ye not with the people of the book except with better means” (Sura Ankabut (Spider) 29: 46). By thrusting this question you have departed from the teachings of the Qur’an. Remember that every Muslim is commanded to follow the teachings of the Qur’an. The answer to your question is:

1. Christianity does not deify Mary. Allow me to say that your question did not make a significant discovery. This question is in the Qur’an, “And God said to Isa (Jesus): Isa son of Mary, did you say to the people take me and my mother as two Gods, without God” (Sura Al-Maidah (Table) 5:116). This question was asked because some cults existed at the rise of Islam. They were idol worshippers. Some of those cults tried to join the church and called Mary a goddess. Historians say that they made Mary a goddess to replace their former goddess Al-Zahrah who they had worshipped, and called themselves the followers of Mary. This cult is far removed from the teachings of Christianity, and not one true Christian believes in its doctrine. Many Christian theologians and scholars appeared subsequently and fought the error with biblical arguments. This cult disappeared completely by the end of the seventh century.

By the way, I would like to mention to the friend who asked this question that even Islam was not free or protected from cults who attached themselves to it. There are many, and I will mention just a few.

- a. Al-Sebaaiah: The followers of Abdallah Ben Seba. They believed that Ali Ben Abi Talib was a God, and when he punished them by burning, they said, Now we know that you are God, because God punishes by fire.
- b. The Satanic: The followers of Muhammed Ben Naaman who was called Satan. They honored Satan.
- c. The Wingers: The followers of Abdalla Ben Muawiah. They believed that the Spirit of God was in Adam and then moved to Abdallah their leader who was called, The God with two wings.
- d. El-Bazighah: The followers of Bazigh Ben Mausea.
- e. E-Haitiyeh: The followers of Ahmed Ben Hait.
- f. E-Mizdariyeh: The followers of Issah Ben Subh who is called El-Mizdar.

They believed that God could make a mistake, lie, and be cruel and unjust. They said that the Qur’an is created by man and humans could make one like it. There are many more of those cults which we will not be able to list in this booklet.

Is Islam responsible for the existence of those cults? Would their existence threaten and change the Muslim religion?

2. The word “nomination” is unfairly used of the Lord Jesus Christ, because deity is not subject to human nomination. Even if you do not like this, the truth holds; Christ is true God of true God. He has proclaimed this truth himself and multitudes have heard him and millions from all nationalities, faiths and mentalities have read this witness. Scholars, wise men, scientists, people great and small have read his testimony and have opened their hearts and eyes before their ears to absorb the fullness of his glorious sayings about himself. They heard him with admiration and adoration.

A German writer said, “If Christ were only a teacher, the attention and trust of all who have heard him, would have been in vain. But because he is the Saviour of the world he needed to insist upon those

words which point to his wonderful personality, so that the people would believe in him, 'For whoever believes in him shall be saved'".

Bishop Sergius said, "Christ was unique. When we read the New Testament we find out that anywhere Christ went the questions were all about him". When the multitudes heard him teaching, preaching and working, they said, "Where is this wisdom and power from? Is he not the son of the carpenter? What is this? What is this new teaching, for he commands with authority... and even the evil spirits obey him"?

What are these questions about him? Do they not give us evidence that he is the most wonderful man who ever lived? He was unique and higher than all the children of Adam.

Christ's witness to himself would not stand if he were not God. He witnessed to himself, because he is true God. From his claims we find out that he is supernatural.

Here are some of Christ's attributes:

- a. Authority (Matthew 28:8)
- b. The unity with the deity (one God): (John 10:30; 14:11; 14:9)
- c. Eternal and everlasting: (John 8:58). This is the most solemn pronouncement about himself. His words "I am" are the same expressed God addressed to Moses, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." Then Moses said to God, 'Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they say to me, "What is His name?" what shall I say to them?' And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And He said, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you". (Exodus 3:12-14). The meaning of, I AM WHO I AM, is Christ revealing himself and saying that he is the selfsame God who appeared in the bush to Moses.

Christ spoke to John when he appeared to him on the Isle of Patmos, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8). The terms Alpha and Omega signify the first and last in the Greek alphabet and stand for Christ's eternity from beginning to end.

- d. God speaks through Christ. (John 14:10)
- e. Christ is in heaven and on earth (John 3:12). Here he is talking not only about his coming from heaven, but also about his pre-existence in heaven.
- f. Christ is the judge of the living and of the dead: (Matthew 25:31-41). By saying these words, Christ shows us that he is the Just Judge. He is coming back in great glory with his angels (Matthew 26:63-64).
- g. He is Omnipresent: He makes this claim to his disciples in Matthew 28:20; 18:20.
- h. He is the author and the finisher of the Law: (Matthew 5:21-48). Christ's works testify to his deity:
 - i. The resurrection of the dead (Luke 7:13-15; Mark 5:22; John 11:1-27).
 - ii. Forgiveness of sins (Mark 2:5-12).
 - iii. Omniscient (Luke 22:10-12).
 - iv. Authority and power over the works of nature: (Luke 8:22-25)
 - v. Sending the Holy Spirit (John 15:26)
 - vi. His being the creator of all (Colossians 1:16)

The Father gives witness to the deity of the Son Jesus Christ. He revealed that truth to his prophets who wrote the Holy books by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace". In Isaiah 7:14 it says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel". Again we are reminded in Matthew 1:23, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us".

The disciples gave witness to the deity of Christ. The testimony of those disciples and apostles who studied the ancient Jewish Law is very important. Their testimony came from their experience of being with Christ, hearing his teachings and seeing his miracles. They believed that God is one and did not feel that they had run counter to doctrines of the Old Testament. They found in Christ the spring of living water for their spiritual lives. Not even the proudest of them would deny that they had worshipped Jesus as Lord and Saviour and God. Here are some of their testimonies to the deity of Christ:

- a. Mark, the Evangelist, prefaces his Gospel by writing, "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God", and concludes it by saying, "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs".
- b. John, the Evangelist, and beloved disciple opens his Gospel by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made". In the original Greek "word" is Logos, interpreted as, "the power who masters the universe," or the "mediator between God and man". By him the universe was created. To silence all those who claim that it is impossible for God to become an incarnate being, he said, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).
- c. Peter, the apostle, said in the presence of the multitudes of Jews and Gentiles, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:22-36).
- d. Paul, the apostle, said by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:6-8). Jesus took upon himself the image of man and at the same time he was the God unknown to the children of men.

If people had known that Jesus was Lord of glory, they would not have crucified him. Paul said, Yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live (1 Corinthians 8:6). Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light (Colossians 1:12). And also, Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power (Colossians 2:8-10).

Stanley Jones said, "I believe that if God were exactly like Jesus Christ, he would be a good and a trustworthy God". When the world experiences all kind of calamities men wonder and ask, "Is there a good

God in this universe"? The reluctant and fearful minds turn to Jesus Christ with assurance saying, "If God is the same as Jesus Christ, he is for sure a true God". As Christians we confess that God is such. He is exactly like Christ in all his characteristics and attributes. As believers in the Holy Book of the most high God, we have to say and agree with God's word that Jesus Christ is God the omnipresent (existing everywhere) and Jesus Christ is "God with us" (Immanuel).

If all the geniuses, the great, the best educated scholars held a conference to try to reach a knowledge of the attributes of God, whom would they choose as the God and Master of the universe? They would find all the ethical and spiritual attributes in the image of Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt that the greatest news for humanity is revealed in 1 Timothy 3:16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory". The best news to broadcast to the non-Christian world is that the Almighty God about whom they know just a little is the same Almighty God whose attributes and characteristics are in Jesus Christ.

3. The word "nominating" cannot apply to the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is God. The following Bible verses are the evidence for the deity of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to the Samaritan woman, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him" (John 4:23).
 - b. Peter the apostle said to Ananias who had lied, "...Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3-4).

Perhaps your objection and disbelief is built on the teaching of Islam which claims that the Holy Spirit is the Angel Gabriel. Judaism and Christianity reject this doctrine because the Angel Gabriel is created while the Holy Spirit is the Creator. The Holy Bible says in Job 33:4, "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life". Also Psalm 104:30 says, "You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth".

Some Names of the Holy Spirit:

- The Spirit of the Lord
- The Spirit of Christ
- The Spirit of the Holy God
- The Holy Spirit
- The Spirit of Truth
- The Spirit of Holiness

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity. He is God with all his attributes.

4. The infallible Pope: We of the Evangelical and Protestant churches do not believe in this doctrine. Christ was and is the only infallible one. We are not under the Pope's leadership or authority. You had better ask one of his followers. This doctrine is also against the teachings of our Holy Bible which says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10)
5. The authority to excommunicate and to forgive sins. The New Testament does not give any teachings about excommunication. The Bible commands the church to put away wicked persons from the company of the believers until they repent. These are some biblical verses concerning "putting away the

sinner". "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore 'put away from yourselves the evil person'" (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). Also, "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ about forgiveness are, "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4). Again, the Lord taught, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:15-18).

James wrote: "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

6. If the church councils have the right to elect Isa, Mary and the Holy Spirit, do they not have the right to remove them from the office of Deity and elect others instead?

This part of your question is sheer mockery and makes light of God's Word. We must obey the Word of God which says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). The Holy Bible orders us to discontinue all our dealings and fellowships with the scornful.

QUESTION 3

Did the crucifixion fall upon just one person of the trinity without affecting the other persons of the trinity?

ANSWER:

It is very strange to hear a question such as this from a religious Muslim who has read the Qur'an. The Qur'an gave us the story of the Jews about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Qur'an says, "And their saying we have killed the Christ, Isa, the Son of Mary" (Sura Al-Nisaa 4:157).

The crucifixion fell upon the second person of the trinity according to the redemption covenant between the father and the son for the salvation of the whole world. That covenant is beyond our comprehension. We have to accept this teaching of redemption, because it is the essence of the Holy Bible. Yes, we believe in one God. This God is one being with all the characteristics and the attributes of the deity. There are three persons in one triune God, who are equal in power and in glory. The interpretation of this great mystery is beyond our capacity. This teaching is a part of the Christian faith, because the Holy Book of the Almighty God has taught it to every Christian believer.

Paul, the apostle, said, "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25). "And to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:9). "The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints" (Colossians 1:26).

Even before his incarnation Christ mentioned that the promise of redemption was in the plan of God. The Bible gives us an orderly outline concerning the redemption plan which had to be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of whoever believes in him:

1. He took our nature and was born of a virgin. The Bible says, "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people ... For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 2:17; 4:15-16).
2. He had to be born under the Law. "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:3-4). "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18).
3. He offered himself as a perfect atonement for all the sins of the world. "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked— but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall

prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:1-12).

Also, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13). "And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Ephesians 5:2).

God the Father promised to prepare a body, or a temple like the body of Adam, a body without decay and with no fault in him, "Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me'" (Hebrews 10:5).

God filled that body with the Holy Spirit and with grace and power. The Father promised to be always on the side of the Son, and to help him in his fight against the evil one, and crush Satan's head under his feet. He gave the Son all power in heaven and on earth, "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'" (Matthew 28:18).

Philippians 2:6-18 says, "Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, 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. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me".

John 5:22 says, "Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son".

God gave all the power to the Son to send the Holy Spirit for the rebirth of the believers, to illuminate, guide, comfort and sanctify them. "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13).

"For You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He shall give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" (John 17:2).

"But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).

"Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

The Father was glorified by the Son, and appeared through him and in him, and in his church. Christ had all the attributes of the Godhead. "That we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:12). "He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11).

Redemption flows from an agreement among the persons of the trinity! The Holy Bible confirms that the work of salvation by redemption had been accomplished in the mind of God before the incarnation of God the Son. "He has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all

things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:9-11).

"And to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:9-11).

The implications of God's saving plan by redemption are three:

1. The choice and appointment of the sacrifice
2. Preparing the means that are in accord with that achievement.
3. Using the means for his ultimate purpose.

All these were fulfilled in the redemption plan. God created an orderly universe. The stars of heaven appear, to the ignorant eye, without apparent order, but to the astronomer's eye they demonstrate a wonderful harmony.

The Creator, to him be the glory, is the Lord of order and harmony in all his creation. If God achieves that in nature, he would do greater and higher things in the spiritual realm. The Holy Bible makes it clear that God's arrangements are accomplished by grace. The Bible says that God made everything according to the counsel of his will: "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11).

We must read the Bible and find out what God says to us regarding spiritual matters, and understand by experience what redemption means. There is no doubt that the need for salvation is universal. Paul, the apostle, said, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

A long time before Paul, the prophet David said, "They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one" (Psalm 14:3).

And the prophet Isaiah wrote, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

If salvation is so important and so serious for man's life and his eternity, we ought to ask, "What is salvation? From what are we saved?" It is quite clear that Christianity is a path of salvation. The founder and builder of Christianity is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the whole world.

The gospels give the answer that it is salvation from sin. The angel said about Virgin Mary: "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

John the Baptist described Jesus thus, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus Christ said about himself, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Paul wrote, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

The Holy Bible teaches that the salvation of man stands on the basis of redemption. Therefore, salvation is not a mere philosophy, but it is really and inescapably the only way for taking away the sins of all who believe. Any theory or doctrine that does not stand on this foundation is false, worthless and unsound.

QUESTION 4

Why was Isa (Jesus) responsible for the sin of Adam, as you claim, and why was he required to make atonement for the sins of his heirs?

ANSWER:

No one can understand the truth unless he calls things by their real names. So I would like to remind you that the name of Christ is Jesus, not Isa. Thus said the angel of the Lord, Gabriel, to the Virgin Mary: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:31-32).

The Holy Bible teaches that God created man in his own image in righteousness and holiness. He gave man a covenant of everlasting life on condition that he obeys his commands. Notice what the book of Genesis says, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Genesis 1:27-28).

"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'" (Genesis 2:15-17).

Adam lived for a while in God's paradise in an innocent state, enjoying spiritual fellowship with the Lord God. The spiritual fellowship filled Adam's heart and mind with great happiness.

Adam was simple; simplicity draws one nearer to God. Even though he was a righteous man, God had to allow him to be tempted to see if Adam would keep his place by obeying the commandment or not. God's commandment put a limit between what was right for Adam and what was forbidden. In other words, God's purpose was to teach our forefather that there is a barrier or a great gulf fixed between right and wrong.

The test came from Satan who asked Eve a simple question, but it was filled with deceit. He asked Eve, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" As if he were saying: "Is it reasonable that God who loves you with this great love and surrounded you with his goodness and who gave you all this happiness – would he stop you from eating of all the trees that he gave you?"

Eve listened to Satan's cunning words, and answered, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die'" (Genesis 3:2-3). Notice how Eve added words to God's prohibition, "Nor shall you touch it". She mentioned something which God did not say. Satan expanded what he had said before, so that Eve would have further doubts of God's goodness, "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

The result was that Eve listened to the wily foe and fell. "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings" (Genesis 3:6-7).

Such was the fall of the first parents. Eve fell because she doubted the faithfulness and the goodness of God and disobeyed his commandment. That happened because Eve wanted to be like God. She was not satisfied in herself breaking God's commandment but also involved her husband, and both fell by disobeying God and committed the greatest sin in the history of mankind. Sin means "missing the mark". "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

God punished them according to his word, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

The meaning of death here is not physical death in the grave, but spiritual death, the separation of souls from fellowship with the Holy God. The result was everlasting suffering and pain of the human soul. Both had to be punished. "Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it": Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return'" (Genesis 3:17-19).

Eventually, God cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. They lived and suffered and had children outside of paradise. They did not only become sinners themselves, but the Holy Bible says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12).

In vain you say that the sin of Adam did not come down to us. Was not Adam the representative of the human race, when he made the covenant with God? All the promises that God gave to Adam were also for his heirs.

David endorsed this when he said, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5).

A famous English writer said, "Man is still the same, murderer, persecutor, and then weeps over what he did and builds the graves of his victims... It is enough for man to look deeper and deeper into his own soul and learn that the law of sin lives in him".

The prophet David said, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good "(Psalm 14:1). Isaiah the prophet described man thus, "Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace" (Isaiah 59:6-8).

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, portrayed the human heart, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

It is sad to look back at the history of crime to find out that human beings have lost their good nature, taking upon themselves a corrupt nature descended from the first crime committed by Cain against his brother Abel. Why did he kill him? Isn't it because our nature is wicked? Why does a nation go to war against another? It is all because the human heart is wicked.

Paul, the apostle, said, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The prophet Ezekiel said, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Ezekiel 18:20).

When Adam and Eve fell, they experienced spiritual death. They were spiritually separated from God. Clo-nius said, "...Adam and Eve were separated from God as result of the fall. They lost their spiritual fellowship with the loving Creator. They were even ashamed to be in his presence".

"And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:8).

They were not only ashamed, but also afraid. "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

The result was fearful judgment for our first parents. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

Has mankind lost hope? Did man's hope die when he lost paradise? No! Hope has not died. Our God is love, and he is a just Judge. By his everlasting love, God called to Adam, "Adam, why did you run away from me? You used to be very glad to meet me". God in his great love was seeking for man to restore him to his fellowship, because he had created him after his own image.

In time, God prepared the great plan of salvation and redemption for the children of Adam.

The Love of God Intervenes

God is perfect in all his characteristics and attributes. He is just and he is truth.

Man was expected to be punished in the fires of hell forever. God is not only Justice and Truth, but is also love. His love has no limit in forgiveness. This love embraces all mankind, from every race and tongue. Our creator is very rich in his mercy. He declared in the books of Jeremiah, "The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying 'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you'" (Jeremiah 31:3).

God's great love has prepared salvation for man to be redeemed and to live forever in glory. The prophet Ezekiel reports, "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'" (Ezekiel 33:11).

The Holy Bible teaches that God is Just, and his justice has to punish every sinner. Our Lord Jesus Christ has paid all our debts and given himself in our stead as a sacrifice to God the loving Father. By Christ's sacrifice on the cross, God's justice took its course and justified the sinners.

A famous attorney, concluding his defense for a criminal, said, "I have read in a book, that God in his eternal counsel asked Justice and Truth, 'Shall I create man?' Justice answered, 'No! Because man is going to trample on all your laws and scorn them.' Then Truth said, 'No! Don't create him, because he is going to be nasty and will follow after vanity.' Then Love said, 'I know that all of this will happen, but with all his faults and wickedness, I am willing to take charge of him through all the dark paths until I bring him back to you'".

God created man perfect, but man fell into sin through disobedience. The love of God is patient with him, and he prepared a perfect and complete salvation for fallen man through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Your question caused us to pause and reflect again of God's great salvation and the true way to find this salvation. What do we see of this salvation now in the life of mankind? For you to understand true Christianity you must understand God's redemption for fallen man.

When we read the story of Genesis revealed to Moses, a man of God, and think of what God did to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve after they sinned, we will touch the reality of God's love.

The Bible says, "Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

This story proves that the animals were slaughtered first in the Garden of Eden. Man started eating the meat of animals after the flood (Gen. 9:1-3) over 500 years after the fall. Before the fall man was a vegetarian. There was no slaughtering of animals until sin came to earth. God gave the skins to clothe Adam after he sinned to teach him that, "without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). By this incident God signaled the covenant of atonement sacrifices which were practiced later in the Old Testament. All the sacrifices were symbolic of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who sacrificed his own body for the whole world.

We know that the blood sacrifice which was offered by Abel was only a shadow of the redemption which was to come. That sacrifice accorded with God's plan. "Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering" (Genesis 4:4).

The ram that God provided Abraham for the redemption of his son Isaac, was only a symbol of the great ransom which was prepared by God from the beginning of Creation, Jesus Christ. "Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.' So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' Then he said, 'Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.' So the two of them went together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' So he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.' Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son" (Genesis 22:1-13).

Paul, the apostle, wrote, "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7b).

As we review history we see that the people of God lived hundreds of years in the shadow of the law which was given to Moses. That law gave them the opportunity to atone for their sins by offerings of animal sacrifices. God's judgment was very strict and he punished everyone who disobeyed the law.

God's purpose in sacrifice was an offering of a life to God for another sinful being; the offering of an innocent animal's life for the life of a guilty human. "And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite 'My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has'" (Job 42:7-8).

The sacrifices that Moses commanded are many different sort, and all contained atonement of blood. The book of Hebrews says, "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

The book of Exodus describes this symbol by saying, "And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.' And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words'" (Exodus 24:6-8).

As we read the history of sacrifices through the Holy Bible it becomes clear to us that all the sacrifices were symbolic of Christ and his sacrifice for the sins of the world.

The book of Hebrews testifies to this by saying, "Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer" (Hebrews 8:3). Hebrews also says about the priest, "And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins" (Hebrews 10:11).

The priests were supposed to continue offering them until the appearance of the one for whom they were waiting, the Messiah.

The sacrifice of Christ cannot be repeated because it was his own blood and by it he made eternal redemption possible.

The book of Hebrews proves this by stressing, "And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.' Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:15-26).

This fact is clear in the New Testament. John the Baptist announced, when he saw Jesus: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). He was pointing to the One who would become God's sacrifice for our sins. John, the beloved disciple, said, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

Jesus did not die a martyr's death, but gave himself up for all. Jesus said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

God revealed this fact to Isaiah, the prophet, centuries before the incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:5-7).

Paul, the apostle, often mentions the atonement of Christ. These are some references: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them'...Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:10,13-14).

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

These verses speak about Christ who saved us from the judgment of the law by carrying it himself and dying on a cross. By this death he saved us from the curse of the law. Such was the atoning sacrifice. Paul says, "God set him forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25-26).

We ought to examine carefully this verse which teaches us:

1. God offered Jesus Christ as an atoning sacrifice for all.
2. Every individual human being can receive this atonement by personal faith in Christ. This justifies all those who believe in Christ Jesus.
3. God displays his righteousness through the atoning sacrifice by showing mercy towards sinners. The righteousness indicated here is a unique characteristic of God not in the sense of the justification

which God grants to the believer. We see this from the context, thus: "that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus". This statement excludes such a sense of the word and confirms the willingness of God to do justly but in righteousness, since he is God, the author of the law and judge of the world.

4. The sacrifice is needed to reveal the mercy of God without violating the demands of his justice. If God had shown his mercy to sinners without the atoning sacrifice, he would not be just. For this reason the Apostle Paul says that God offered Jesus as atonement... "that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus". There was no necessity to make God merciful by changing his character. God never changes for He is the same yesterday, today and forever. God's testimony is the foundation of the Holy Bible from which we gather that Christ offered himself to the Father and bore the curse of God's law instead of the sinners, while taking on human nature. And we learn that God accepted his sacrifice, counting it sufficient to his justice. Therefore, he can forgive all who believe in Jesus Christ without doing violence to his holy Majesty or in any way breaking his moral law.

Types of Sacrifice

A contemplation of Christ's sacrifice leads us to survey the kinds of sacrifices offered in the Old Testament in accordance with the divine law delivered through Moses:

1. The sin offering (Leviticus 9) – the atonement of the people to bring them to a state of forgiveness thereby obtaining grace.
2. The trespass offering (Leviticus 5) – concerns sins which can be compensated for.
3. The burnt offering (Leviticus 1) – a sacrifice of perfection signifying someone wholly devoted to God.
4. The peace offering (Leviticus 7:11-16) – returning thanks due to God.
5. The Passover offering (Exodus 12) – God ordered Moses, Aaron and the people to sprinkle the blood on the doors, lintel, and side posts.
6. The red heifer (cow) offering (Numbers 19) – the ashes were used for cleansing from defilement.
7. The leper offering (Leviticus 14) – connected with the cleansing of the leper.
8. The heifer (calf) offering (Deuteronomy 21:3) – It is connected with purging oneself from the guilt of shedding innocent blood.
9. Offering for the Consecration of Priest (Leviticus 7) – It was offered when any of Aaron's sons was consecrated as a priest.

Note that all these sacrifices were to be without blemish so as not to dishonor God in the eyes of the people (1 Kings 8:13-14). Specifically, the unblemished sacrifice above all others was the symbol of the Lamb of God, Jesus, who offered upon the cross an atonement for the sins of the world and he is "without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19-20)

Sprinkling of the Blood of the Sacrifice

The sprinkling of blood in the Old Testament was one of the noblest ordinances, because it was a sign for the atonement. This sprinkling was the priest's duty who was appointed as the mediator between God and the people. The sprinkling of blood seven times after bringing it into the tabernacle (Leviticus 8:14) was a sign of the perfection of the atonement, since the number seven points to perfection. Thus, the New Testament says of the believers that they were cleansed from sin by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9; 1 Peter 1).

The True Sacrifice of Christ of Which Those Were Symbols

Men of God in the Old Testament realized the weakness of man and the impotence of the Law of Moses to save him from sin. They looked for a way other than the sacrifices and burnt offerings, which the apostle said, "cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience" (Hebrews 9:9) and which cannot please God. For we find in the book of Psalms 51:16-17:

- "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart— these, O God, You will not despise".
- The prophet Isaiah said: "'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?', says the LORD. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts?'" (Isaiah 1:11-12).

However, in the midst of this error, the son of God's love shone and proclaimed to his faithful followers that he prepared a decisive sacrifice for salvation through a divine mediator coming in the fullness of time: "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Job, sorely tried and afflicted found it necessary to have such a mediator between him and God (Job 9:33), for he says, "Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both".

The prophet Isaiah, seeing Christ with his prophetic eye, expounds on his redemptive work:

- "He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:8-12).

Saul of Tarsus, after having despaired of reaching the righteousness which is in the law, went seeking after that mediator spoken of by the prophets, until Christ met him on the way to Damascus. Paul recognized in him the mediator who became incarnate in order to save sinners by his atoning death on the cross, and was inspired to write:

- "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

In fact, the incarnation of the Word is the pivot of Holy Scripture because it is the basis of the divine redemption. It is a prerequisite of his fulfilling his office as Redeemer. For this reason the incarnation was the subject of a chain of divine revelations through the divine books which were inspired by God.

These revelations began with pointers to a Saviour who would come "when the fullness of the time had come" to save mankind from the curse of the law and be a great blessing to every nation. Then the revelations began to clarify, more and more, all that pertained to him. Starting with the mention of the "Seed of the woman", then the Seed of Abraham, then the tribe of Judah, then the house of David, then his birth of a virgin. These declarations stated that he would have divine characteristics and that he would redeem for himself a chosen people, over whom he would be ruler and king (Isaiah 9:6).

The amazing thing is that these announcements mentioned strange and precise circumstances peculiar to him, a feature which we cannot attribute to human ingenuity; among these are: Specifying the exact place of his birth –

- "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

He would be poor and lowly, yet glorified:

- "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (Isaiah 11:1-2).

That he would be a king, but without outward glory:

- "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

That he would be a priest:

- "The LORD has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'" (Psalm 110:4).

This means that Christ's atoning work is a priestly work from which certain things follow:

1. Being a priest makes him the representative of sinners set up by God for them to do for them what they cannot do for themselves. Since they could not attain God because of their sins and defilement, the divine love ordained a person with divine authority to appear before God in order to reconcile them with him.
2. The reconciliation cannot be accomplished without the atonement for sin. It is written, "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).
3. This atonement will be fulfilled by providing a sacrifice to take the place of the sinner, enduring the penalty of sin for him, namely death.
4. The priests of the Old Testament served in the same way as that which God appointed whereby the sinner received forgiveness of his ritual offenses. However, as we have seen, sin did not disappear. Were he to fall again in the same sin, he would have to offer a sacrifice again.
5. The priesthood of Aaron was thus a symbol and a shadow of the true priest and the true sacrifice promised from the beginning.
6. Christ is a true priest, and has all the attributes that are necessary for the priesthood. And because Christ took upon himself a human body, he became the representative of the human race. He offered a sacrifice and was able to sympathize with his people and he actually fulfilled the priest office perfectly.
7. The sacrifice which was offered by Christ our great High Priest, was not the blood of animals, but was his own blood.
8. It was the only offering which perfected forever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:14).
9. The sacrifice of Christ has ended all other sacrifices, for no longer is there a need for them.

From the foregoing, it is very clear that Christ's atonement is not a mere assertion as you claim, but a reality based on God's counsel and his love towards man. It may be that after this detailed explanation you will ask, "What made Christ come in the flesh and undertake the work of redemption?"

The answer: The incarnation of the second person of the Trinity and his death to redeem humanity was not an involuntary act. On the contrary, it was his choice to humble himself. For he said:

- "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father" (John 10:17-18).

That means that Christ was not forced to offer himself; rather he offered willingly to take away the sin of the world. In other words, God out of his amazing love for man provided for redemption giving his only Son who came to the world:

- "In as much then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

The Holy Bible tells us that Christ took up a body willingly in order to be a mediator and to reconcile man to God. The Bible says:

- "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

The Bible teaches us that Christ took a body willingly to be a mediator between God and man. This mediator had to be marked by the following attributes:

1. To be a human being – "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The reason the Word took human nature rather than angelic nature was to redeem us. It was necessary for him to be born under the law which we had broken, to fulfill all righteousness and to share our human life and experience our weakness, then to suffer and die a sacrifice as atonement for our sins.
2. To be without sin, for the sacrifice which was offered as an atonement had, according to the law, to be without blemish. Thus, the mediator who would offer himself for the world's redemption had himself to be without sin. For it is impossible for the Saviour from sin to be a sinner, because the sinner cannot reach God, and is not fit to be a sacrifice for sins nor be a source of holiness and eternal life for his people. Hence, it was necessary for our High Priest, the great Saviour, to remain "holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26).

We know that Christ was without sin, for this is attested by the apostolic word: "...because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth'" (1 Peter 2:21-22).

3. To be God. The blood of a man cannot blot out sin. Christ being God perfected the sanctified forever (Hebrews 9:26). Only God can conquer the power of Satan and rescue all those who were held captive by the devil. The person who could do all this work of redemption should be omnipotent, omniscient, in order to be a great high priest and judge of all. In order to be the source of spiritual life for all saints, he had to be one of whom the Bible says: "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

All these attributes which the Bible said were necessary for the mediator between God and man, combined in Jesus Christ. As a result of this Christ's mediation, which embraces what he did and is still doing for man's salvation, becomes a divine personal act. Likewise, all Christ's mediatorial work and sufferings belong to a divine person. The One who was crucified was the Lord of glory. This truth is clear from the following:

1. The Holy Bible ascribes his work, authority, veracity of his teaching, wisdom, and the value of his sufferings to his being: "God was manifested in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16).
2. If our mediator was only a human being, he would have been unable to save fallen sinners, and the result would be that the Gospel would be left without glory or might or sufficiency.
3. Only the God-man can redeem fallen mankind. The prophetic office of Christ requires that he possess all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge.

His priestly office requires that he be honored as the Son of God, for his work to be efficacious. Only a divine person can use the authority that Christ was given in heaven and on earth as the mediator. Only a divine person can save us from the bondage of sin, and its deadly results, or raise the dead or grant eternal life. In truth we need a Saviour who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).

QUESTION 5

Did the prophets who preceded the coming of Christ believe in his deity? (If the answer is yes, it needs proof)

ANSWER:

Yes, the prophets who preceded the coming of Christ believed in his deity. This is clear in their testimonies which are recorded in their inspired books:

1 - David

- a. In the second Psalm he addresses the kings and rulers of the earth, "Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:10-12).
- b. Not only did David order us to worship the Son of God, but he also blessed those who trust in him, knowing that the Holy Bible made it clear that all who trust in man are cursed.
- c. Psalm 110:1 says, "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'".

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself quoted these words, when talking to some religious Jews. He asked them, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, 'The Son of David.' He said to them, 'How then does David in the Spirit call Him "Lord," saying: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'"? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" (Matthew 22:42-45)

2 - Isaiah

- a. "In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped" (Isaiah 4:2).

The "Branch" in the biblical language refers to Jesus Christ, and the prophets were in the habit of referring to him as the "Branch". For instance, when Jeremiah the prophet says, "In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5). "Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord" (Zechariah 6:12).

- b. Where Isaiah says, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!'" (Isaiah 6:1-3). Here the prophet is speaking of Jesus Christ as is borne out in the Gospel, "These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him" (John 12:41).
- c. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

3 - Jeremiah

When he says, "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, 'That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His

days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: The Lord our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

4 - Daniel

- a. He says, "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).
- b. He says further, "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate" (Daniel 9:24-27).

These are prophecies about the coming of Christ, and the divine works that he would accomplish. The Prophet Daniel in his first testimony calls Christ the "Son of Man". In the second one he calls Christ Most Holy. These are titles our Lord Jesus Christ used for himself: "...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens"' (Revelation 3:7).

5 - Micha the Prophet

He says, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

This is a prophecy about the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his birth in Bethlehem, and speaks of his eternal origin. "Coming forth" means his appearance as Second Person of the Trinity as when he appeared to Abraham as the angel of the covenant (Genesis 18). To Moses (Exodus 3); to Joshua (Joshua 13); to Gideon (Judges 6); to Manoah (Judges 13).

Christ is eternal, as eternal as God (See John 1:1-2).

6 - Malachi

When he says, "'Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,' says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:1).

These glorious words speak of the coming of John the Baptist to prepare the way before the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who preached, saying to the people: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2). The messenger of the Covenant is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, named thus because God's promises would be fulfilled in him (Hebrews 9:15).

We notice from the foregoing that the Old Testament prophets believed in the deity of Christ. The prophetic books declared that God is coming as a person clothed with a human nature to save the world. He is to

be descended from a woman, the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, from the house of David, born of a virgin, and he will offer himself as a sacrifice for the sin of the world.

Conclusion

We have strong evidence that the messenger of the Covenant is the Second Person of the Godhead, and in the Old Testament he is called also the Angel of Jehovah and Elohim and God. He is the same Christ mentioned in the New Testament, who came after John the Baptist. And Isaiah the prophet foretold his coming when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God... The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken'" (Isaiah 40:3,5).

If we look at the New Testament, we will see that the one who prepares the way is John the Baptist, and the one who is coming, whom Isaiah calls "our God" is indeed Jesus Christ. The Lord who is coming to his temple is Christ (Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:76; 7:27).

QUESTION 6

Could God not have saved Adam and his seed without the crucifixion of Christ?

ANSWER:

This question takes us back to the theme of atonement. For there is no salvation without atonement for past sins. The word "atonement" means to cover sin or veil it. In Christianity atonement is the work of Christ by his perfect obedience to the will of the Father. In short, salvation of the world from the curse of the law and the reconciliation of man was made by God's own blood which was shed on the cross.

It is helpful to look at the attributes of Christ from different angles; in relation to God from the aspect of love, holiness, and justice, and in relation to man from the aspect of his work in and for mankind.

So, it was said that the atonement of Christ is for the sin of man; it is a clear expression of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of the sinners from the curse of the law and from judgment.

It has also been said that the atonement of Christ is to please God and fulfill his justice. That is, a means of satisfying God and placating him. This expresses the results of Christ's sacrifice in removing God's wrath and his satisfaction at accepting the sinner for reconciliation.

Another view holds that the atonement is the covering of the transgressor's soul with Christ's blood so that he would not be charged for punishment.

Christ, who was slain in his place also bore his punishment. This is what John meant in saying, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Furthermore, atonement has opened the door of reconciliation between God and man without degrading the holy law of God. This is what Paul meant when he said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Jesus' redemption is expressed in the language of the Holy Bible by the word "grace". For our heavenly Father was not under obligation to provide a sacrifice for sinful mankind. Nor was the Son compelled to come in the flesh and take upon himself the redemption plan. It was the perfect Deity because of great love and richness in mercy who diverted the law's penal demands. God accepted the substitutionary sufferings which the incarnate Son willingly bore in place of the sinner. Our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed this truth when he said, "I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10:15). "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

In these statements our blessed Lord explained the reason for what he did. Though he was the Holy One, he accepted a human body and suffered, bearing our sins in his body on the cross.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul the apostle made clear the need for this substitutionary suffering, "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4).

In other words, the eternal death which was the judgment on us, was the wages of sin, Christ took on himself acting as our representative. This is in accordance with the prophetic saying, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

One hears many say that God forgives whoever he wants and punishes whoever he wants. This statement conflicts with the truth of God expressed in his warnings and promises. His justice demands an atoning sacrifice for pardon. This principle was known from the beginning; it runs like a crimson thread through the

pages of the Old Testament. It drips blood and cries in every generation, saying, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin". In truth, if God is to be perfect in all his attributes, it would not become him to forgive man his trespasses at the expense of his truth and justice. The ancient prophet said, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Ezekiel 18:20).

If God forgives a soul its iniquity, there must have been some grounds for his forgiveness: a reason which satisfies God's holiness as well as his justice.

This satisfaction was achieved in the Old Testament by offering blood sacrifices which typified Christ. Now in the New Testament it is achieved by the sacrifice of Christ, who fulfilled every righteousness.

Among the characteristics of the sacrifice of Christ is that it not only takes away the sin of man, but goes on to heal him of sin as a moral disease. For the one who accepts the crucified Christ receives new life. He begins to see the dreadful operation of sin and its fearful penalty and so does not practice it. This led the apostle to say, "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:9).

QUESTION 7

The Bible does not prove the Deity of Christ. Was Moses aware of it and did he conceal it from his people, or was he ignorant of it?

ANSWER:

Moses was not ignorant of the three Persons the Godhead, and he did not conceal it, but declared in several places in the five books he was inspired to write, which came to be known as the Torah; for instance:

- The first verse Moses wrote in the inspired record stated, "In the beginning (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The term "Elohim" as used in the Bible is in the plural, which indicates that God's unity is inclusive.
- Moses also wrote: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). The term "our God" in this text occurs in the plural form, while understanding that the intention is to underline his unity. What is remarkable is that God used the plural pronoun for himself in numerous verses recorded for us by Moses in his books. Among them his words: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). The sense of in Our image, according to our likeness is not physical, but in the moral, mental and spiritual.
- "Behold, the man has become like one of Us" (Genesis 3:22).
- "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language" (Genesis 11:7)

These passages point to the fact that God is one in essence, triune in persons. Before we study this doctrine or discuss it systematically, it may be better to become familiar with its history in the Church of Christ, and the ideas or concepts which it conveyed before it reached its final unalterable form.

The Christians at the time of the apostles and right up to the start of the second century did not think of reducing Christian doctrines to definite formulae. They were practicing these principles as they were enunciated in the Bible. When faced with difficulties or problems, they used to go back to the apostles or their successors. However, when Christianity scattered and spread in the world, and some new cults emerged, the situation changed. It became urgently necessary for the Church to pronounce her decisive word especially when the errors of Arius and Sabellius began to spread. These men opposed Christian doctrines regarding the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Prominent Christian leaders arose and exposed these heretical opinions. Among the most famous was St. Athanasius, who opposed those cults and issued the famous Athanasian Creed. The substance of this creed is as follows:

1. Whosoever wishes to be saved must before anything else accept the universal apostolic faith of the Christian Church.
2. Anyone who does not keep this faith intact will be condemned eternally.
3. This universal faith is to worship one God in three (Trinity), and the three Persons in one God.
4. We must not mix up the three Persons of the Trinity, and should not separate their essence.
5. The Father is a person (a hypostasis), the Son is a person, and the Holy Spirit is a person.
6. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, however, are one God. They enjoy equal glory and eternal majesty.
7. As the Father is, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit.
8. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not created.
9. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not limited.

10. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal. Not three eternals, but one.
11. They are not three that are not created, and not three that are unlimited, but one God, not created, one unlimited God.
12. Likewise, the Father is the Almighty God, the Son is the Almighty God, and the Holy Spirit is the Almighty God. Not three Gods who are Almighty, but one is the Almighty.
13. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. There are not three Gods, but only one God.
14. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord. There are not three Lords, but only one Lord.
15. While Christian truth makes us confess that each of these Persons is God and is Lord, it also forbids us to say that there are three Gods and three Lords. We believe in only one God, and he is the Lord.
16. The Father is neither made of any other, nor created. He is not born. The Son who is of the Father, is neither made nor created. He is born. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son. He is neither made nor created. He is not born.
17. Therefore; there is only one Father, not three; one Son, and not three; one Holy Spirit and not three Holy Spirits.
18. There is no Person in this Holy Trinity before or after another. There is no Person larger or smaller than the other.
19. The three Persons of the Trinity are eternal and equal.
20. Therefore, we ought to worship the one Godhead in the Holy Trinity, and the Holy Trinity in the one Godhead.
21. Therefore, whosoever wishes to be saved ought to believe in the Holy Trinity.
22. Whosoever wants to be saved must believe sincerely in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
23. The orthodox faith is to believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is (God-man) God and the Son of man.
24. Christ is God from the Father, born before all ages. Christ is man – born of the Virgin Mary in this world.
25. Christ is perfect God and perfect man. He was incarnated as a human being with a rational soul and a human body.
26. In his Deity – Christ is equal to the Father, and under the Father in his humanity.
27. Even though Jesus is God and man, he is only one Christ, not two.
28. He is one. It is not by the transformation of the deity into a human being, but by taking up of a human body in the deity.
29. He is one God. Not by mixing the essence, but by the oneness of the Trinity.
30. As the soul and the body constitute one human being, so God and man unite in one Christ.
31. He suffered for our salvation, and went down to Hades (the sphere of the spirits), and rose again from the dead on the third day.
32. Christ ascended to heaven and now sits at the right hand of the Almighty Father.

33. Christ is coming from heaven to judge the living and the dead.
34. When Christ shall come, all the dead will rise in their bodies, and each shall give an account for his own works.
35. All those who did good deeds shall have eternal life, and all those who did bad deeds to everlasting fire.
36. This is the universal Christian faith. No one can be saved unless he believes in it faithfully and firmly.

In summary, God is one God even though there are three Persons in a Trinity – Father – Son – and Holy Spirit: That is one essence in three persons. The Trinity's essence is not divided. Therefore, each of the Persons does not have a specific part of it, but each enjoys the same essence as the others. The human brain cannot comprehend all this nor grasp the mystery of their relationship, but the Holy Bible explains this mystery to us. Every philosophical thought or logical argument that comes from outside the Holy Scriptures, whether philosophical thoughts or logical arguments, is just a feeble attempt of exposition of what Scripture presents.

We know from history that the doctrine of the Trinity was familiar to the ancient Christians. They studied it – in the light of the inspired Holy Scriptures. They believed it and rested on it. They portrayed it in the canons of the Church. The most famous of these canons is the Nicene Creed, which reads as follows:

"I believe in one God, omnipotent Father, the creator of heaven and earth and everything visible and invisible".

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, born of the Father before all ages. The very God of very God. Light of light. The true God of true God. Born, but not created, of the divine essence as the Father".

"Everything was made by him, who for us men and for our salvation descended from heaven and was incarnated by the Holy Spirit. Born of the Virgin Mary. Took a human body, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered, buried and rose again on the third day. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He is coming back in great glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end".

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. Proceeding from the Father and from the Son. He is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, of whom the prophets spoke".

"I believe in one Church, universal and apostolic. I believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and await the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting. Amen".

The Trinity in Islam

It is certain that Islam fought polytheistic teachings (belief in many gods). These are the texts which Islam used to fight false teachings:

1. "Don't say three... God is one God" (Surat Al-Nisaa 4:171)
2. God said: "O I'sa! Son of Mary, did you say to the people, take me and my mother as gods besides God?" (Surat Al-Maidah 5:116).
3. "They are infidels who said that God is a third of three, there is no God, but one God" (Al-Maidah 5:73).

It is clear from these verses that Islam was opposing a teaching which meant joining God to other gods, or in many gods (polytheism). Christianity did not teach the association of God with other gods nor the existence of many gods. Witness the words of Christ: "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Matthew 4:10).

Therefore, it is clear that Islam was fighting a cult of three gods, and not the Christian Trinity. They were fighting another teaching and another doctrine.

Clearly, Islamic attacks against polytheism were aimed at a certain cult or cults. It arose at the outset of the Muslim era and this cult was not attacked by Islam only. Christians also attacked it vigorously until they destroyed it, as I stated previously in one of my replies.

Once more I would say, Christianity does not teach a multiplicity of gods and does not say that Christ is a god separate from God. What it does believe is that both Father and Son are one God without repetition or division. Christ affirmed this when he said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). Christianity does not teach that the blessed Mary is God. Mary did not claim divinity for herself. She confessed saying, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46-47).

As for the words of the Qur'an, in Surat Al-Maidah 5:73: "They are infidels who said that God is a third of three..." a quotation used by the enemies of Christianity such as the Marcionites. The people were driven out of the church and excommunicated because they taught the worship of three gods. They called them:

1. ADIL – The god who sent the Torah
2. SALIH – The god who replaced the Torah by the New Testament
3. EVIL – Satan

Islam also fought two other cults. The Manichees and the Disanieh. They believed in two gods, one god is for good. He is the essence of light. The second god is for evil. He is the essence of darkness. Those cults were the enemies of Christianity before Islam and after. They are still regarded by the Church as heretical, and outsiders, just as the Muslims regard the Kharijiah. These have departed from the Book and the Sunna such as, for instance, the group which claims that God indwelt Hakim the Fatimid ruler.

So, Islam did not fight the sound Christian doctrine of the Trinity, as some imagine, but fought such cults. For that reason, I would not consider that the verses in the Qur'an which were directed at those who believed in many gods were actually directed at genuine Christianity.

When we follow this subject in Islamic writings, we find that Muslim scholars respected as prophets have investigated the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and affirmed its true sense. Suffice it to quote that what was written in an old version of the book called *Usool Ed-Deen* (Sources of Religion). It was written by Abi Alkhair Ibn Al-Taieb, who lived in the age of Imam Aba Hamid Al-Ghazali. He said, "Some Christians said to Abi Alkhair Ibn Al-Taieb, 'The Gospel, by stating, "Go and teach the whole world and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" assumes belief in three gods.' To which Al-Taieb answered, 'No doubt that the Gospels are the core of Christian law, together with the Epistles of Paul and the writings of the other disciples. These writings and the sayings of the Christian scholars around the world testify that they believe in one God. And the names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are attributes of God himself. If I were to describe this in detail, I would be able to give detailed evidence. Therefore, I am persuaded to accept the validity of what Christians believe. This is the essence of their belief: They say that the Creator is one essence characterized by perfection. He has personal attributes which Christ unveiled. They are: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They point to the essential person possessing absolute mind as the Father or Creator. They point to the same essence possessing a rational mind as the Son. And they call the same essence possessing reasonableness of expression, being subject, as the Holy Spirit. The reference to essence in this context is what is self-existent independent of circumstance'".

The famous Muslim scholar, Imam Ab-Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, referred to the Christian doctrine of Trinity in his book, **Al-Radj Al-Jameel** (The Beautiful Response), saying:

"Christians believe that the creator himself is one in essence and has implications: When this existence does not depend on another it is the supreme or absolute existence. This is what the Christians call the Person of the Father. If this is considered as dependent on the existence of another, such as knowledge which is dependent on the knower, he is what they call the person of the son or The Word. If it is considered as dependent on His authority being derived, that existence is called the Person of the Holy Spirit, because the creator's being is conceived by Him. The result of this conventional expression is that the being of God is one in essence, even though it has attributes of the three persons of the Trinity".

He continues:

"The person of God is a bodiless being, not substantive; standing for the meaning of intellect and is called the Person of the Father. If you would consider the Authority expressing itself, meaning, endowed with reason, it is called the Person of the Son, or the Word. If you consider what proceeds from Him, this consideration is an expression of what proceeds, and is called, the Person of the Holy Spirit. By these terms the intellect is an expression of the Person of God only, and the Father is equal to Him. The endowed with reason is an expression of Himself, the Son or the Word is equal to Him. The conceived is an expression of God whose self was conceived on Him. The Holy Spirit is equal to Him".

Then he added, "If all these meanings are correct, then there is no problem in the semantics nor in the idioms of the speakers".

As for Imam Fakhr Addeen Al-Razi, he describes the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as follows:

The theologians mentioned that the Christians say, "one Essence, three persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three persons are one God. As the Sun signifies a disc, rays, and heat, so the Christians meant the Person is God the Father, the Son is the Word, and the Holy Spirit is the Life. The Christians also believe that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. The three persons are one God" (The Great Commentary, Part 12, Page 102).

Another writer has said the following in effect by quoting Ali Bin Wafa, "The self is taken to mean one thing, not a plurality. However, the Mutazila spoke of a plurality used by the ancients in respect of attributes. That is a conventional plurality (Or one of usage) which does not deny the essential unity such as the branch of a tree in relation to the root, or the fingers in relation to the palm".

In the book *Al Milal wal Nihal*, we find Abou Huzail Hamdan, the Sheikh of the Mutazila and the leader of the school stating, "The Creator (may He be exalted) is a knower who knows and his knowledge is himself, almighty who has ability and his ability is himself, and alive with life and his life is himself". It is possible that Abou Huzail borrowed this concept from the philosophers who believed that the Creator's self is one, not admitting plurality. However, the attributes are not separate from his person, but indeed are the person. The difference between the saying, "a knower of knowledge is himself" means the first denies the attribute and the asserting of the self is in itself an attribute. Or that asserting an attribute is itself selfhood. If Abou Huzail succeeded in proving attributes to self then they must be the Persons of the Christian Trinity.

Ibn Sina, subnamed the chief, says, "The Necessary Existence (God) implies a mind, a rational being and rationality. He comprehends himself as well as other things. But his negative and positive attributes do not necessarily imply plurality of being. If it is absolute in itself, then it is a mind of itself. Also, the Necessary Existence (God) is absolute and separate from matter; therefore, he is a mind in himself. Since we consider his absolute identity as selfhood, then he is comprehensible to himself, and if his self has absolute identity, then he is a rational being in himself. Now, being a rational and comprehensible being does not necessarily imply duality in identity or reasoning".

The point brought across by Ibn Sina and Abu Hathiel in saying all this is that God is knowledge, knower and known. Man's mind cannot grasp this, or the fact that he is not a compound. He is a unity, pure and simple, free from compoundness.

The purpose of quoting some Muslim scholars was not to compare the trinity of God with their ideas, (the Bible teaches us differently), but to impress upon the inquirers that Christians do not believe in the plurality or complexity in the one God. The Christian faith teaches us that God exists in three persons and that the three persons of God are not just different appearances of the one and same God. Therefore, the sonship relation of the second Person in Godhead to the first Person does not imply a human birth as we usually think, but it is a term used to define the eternal relationship between the two Persons in that Godhead just as the term proceed defines the eternal relationship between the third Person in the Godhead and both the first and second Persons.

The term "Word" denoting Christ in the Bible, and later used in Islam, indicates the unity of the first and the second Person. If the Muslim would analyze the Qur'anic text, he would realize that the term "Word of God" is an eternal attribute of God's self one that cannot alter.

In summary, God is not merely one with three different appearances, as the inquirer imagined, but he is one in three Persons equal in power, majesty and glory. As his attributes are free of disharmony so are the three Persons in the Godhead.

Theology does not bar us from holding that the eternal Word took upon himself the appearance of flesh; yet did not become limited or finite, because he is an unlimited and infinite Spirit that cannot expand or contract.

Therefore, divine God did not change or alter the eternal and heavenly essence of God, nor is there any difference in the persons of the Godheads. They are one, equal in power and ability, even when Christ became man. For they are one in knowledge, with one mind and one will.

Christ said: "Whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner" (John 5:19). Paul said: "Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11). There is no difference in the Trinity of the one God. The Son incarnated and offered himself as atonement for the world. The Holy Spirit renews our hearts. The Father sent the Son as the God-Man with all perfect attributes of the Trinity. There is no doubt that this is more than we can comprehend. Paul said about God in Romans 11:33:

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

There is no doubt that Islam believes this truth. The Sheikh Muhyi Al-Deen wrote in a book called **Al-Bab** (The Door) on page 322:

"He who delves too deeply in the mind of God, has transgressed against God and his prophets. God has not commanded us to delve deeply in the knowledge of his being. If the servant cannot even know himself, how can he know or penetrate the truth of the Most High?"

He says on page 373:

"God cannot be comprehended by sight of the thought. Those who try to penetrate the mind of God are most wicked. They have come to the lowest levels of ignorance".

Immanuel "God With Us"

In the year of 905 A.D. a meeting of several Muslim sheikhs was held to discuss a letter. The subject of their discussion in the meeting was: "God with us". Sheikh Burah Alden said: "God is with us by his names and attributes, but not in his person". Sheikh Ibrahim said: "No! He is with us in his person and attributes". Another sheikh asked: "What is the evidence on your word?" Sheikh Ibrahim replied: "The Qur'an says, 'And God is with you'. So, we must believe in God's personal presence". Sheikh Ibn Al-Laban said: "'We are nearer to Him than you are, yet you don't see Him' This verse is an evidence of God's closeness to his servants. By saying, 'You don't see', the purpose is to stress the closeness of God to man". He added: "'We are closer to Him than the jugular vein.' This means that, he must be very close, even closer than that vein". Sheikh Ibrahim said: "Therefore, God cannot be very close to us with all his attributes apart from his person, too". Sheikh Muhammad Al-Maghraby Al-Shathly came into the conference and heard them. He said: "God is eternal and without a beginning. God is forever without an end. God has been with his creation from the beginning". All of them agreed with him, and the meeting was adjourned. All those scholars and famous sheikhs agreed on the presence of God, with all his attributes and his Person, as the Qur'an says: "And God with you", and "God is with the generous". The Holy Bible says in Matthew 28:20:

"...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age".

In conclusion, I would like to say that the incarnation of the deity in a human form is very possible. Islam believes, and confesses that God could be with his creation, by his attributes and in his person. This mystery is above the human mind and understanding.

How would the rest of the Muslims refuse to accept the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of the Word, of God's manifestation in the flesh?

QUESTION 8

If the forgiveness of Adam's sin needs such a tragi-comic drama, what does it take to forgive the sins of all men from Adam until now?

ANSWER:

I have already stated that Christ's sacrifice removed the sins of the world, so I need not indulge in repetition. Regarding your ridiculous "drama", it is to be found in the claim that God cast Jesus' image on another over whose identity even Muslim scholars disagree, and that it was he who was crucified.

These are some speculations as to his identity:

1. He was Titawus, the Jew, who entered a house to arrest Jesus. He didn't find him. God then made him resemble Jesus. When he emerged, the Jews thought he was Christ, so they took him and crucified him.
2. When the Jews arrested Christ, they appointed a guard to watch him. He cast his likeness on the guard and ascended up to heaven. They took the guard and crucified him while he was crying, "I am not the Christ!".
3. Jesus promised paradise to one of his friends, and his friend volunteered to take his place. So God put the likeness of Christ on that friend. The Jews took him out and crucified him, but Jesus ascended up to heaven.
4. One of Christ's followers (Judas) defected and came with the Jews to identify Jesus. As soon as he went inside with them to take Jesus, God cast the likeness of Jesus on him. The Jews then took Judas outside and crucified him.

Imam Abu-Jaafer Al-Tabari mentioned in Commentary a number of tales regarding this likeness allegation:

1. Some have said, "When the Jews surrounded Jesus and his friends, all took on the likeness of Jesus. The Jews were confused and so killed one of the others (after Salma)".
2. Another story: "Jesus came with seventeen disciples. The Jews surrounded them. God made the disciples in the likeness of Jesus. The Jews said to the disciples, 'You have bewitched us. You'd better tell us which one of you is Jesus, or we will kill you all'. Then Jesus said to the disciples, 'Who is willing to give his life today for paradise?' One of the disciples volunteered and went outside saying to the Jews, 'I am Jesus'. They took him and crucified him".
3. Another account, "The Children of Israel surrounded Jesus and nineteen disciples in a house. Jesus said to the disciples, 'Who is willing to take my image, die, and go to Paradise?' One disciple offered himself, and was taken outside and crucified, while Jesus ascended up to heaven".
4. Another, "David the King of Israel sent a man to kill Jesus. That man took men with him. Jesus was with thirteen of his disciples. When he knew they had arrived he made one of the disciples to look exactly like him. When the Jews saw that disciple, they took him outside and crucified him".

Who, then, was the man who was changed into the image of Jesus? Was he Judas or someone else? Here is the tragi-comic drama: namely, accusing God of cruelty, that he betrayed and delivered a poor and innocent man to be crucified and killed. Be it far from God to deceive anyone. "God does not deceive a people who believe in Him; that is the deception of a man on his fellow".

QUESTION 9

Why was the plan of atonement postponed until Christ came? What is the fate of all those who died before Christ's atonement?

ANSWER:

God in his counsel appointed a time and place and a sacrifice for the redemption of the world. This plan excludes the word "postponed" which you have used.

It is true that the world fell under the curse as a result of Adam's fall. God has decided that this curse ought to take effect before the restoration of all things by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was to come about in the wake of a universal destruction which was to change the shape of the earth. In this way, the results of the curse would be seen before the time of reformation.

Further, the coming of Christ would not have been appropriate before the coming of Moses, because the people in general had not rebelled en masse against God. In other words, they were not all under the darkness of idolatry.

Perhaps one of the reasons for Christ not coming before the flood or right after it is that God wanted to see the earth full of people, according to his word to Adam (Genesis 1:28).

Christ's coming was not appropriate before the Babylonian exile because the kingdom of Satan had not reached its high point. The kingdoms of the idol worshippers were not large before the exile. And so God saw fit that Christ should come in the reign of the greatest kingdom which history has ever known. That kingdom was the Roman Empire which was the visible kingdom of Satan in this world. By conquering this great empire, Christ would have defeated the kingdom of Satan, while it was at the height of its glory and power.

The important thing is, "The word that was in the beginning with God, and the word who was God" did come... in the fullness of time to be "Immanuel – God with us" in order to redeem us. Eyes would see him, ears would hear him, and hands would touch him. Eyes would see "His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth". Those who believed in him received from his fullness, and grace for grace. The incarnate Word was the highest manifestation by which God has revealed himself to the human race. God not only revealed his power and greatness, but he also revealed to mankind the loving and compassionate heart of God, his mercy, pity, and love.

Yes! That was how the will of God was fulfilled. The world had to wait for a period of time before the rising light of redemption is revealed by Immanuel (God with us). But during that period, God was anxiously concerned with this sad and despairing world.

History informs us that when Christ became incarnate, there were three influential nations in the world: the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews. The Greek was cultured and refined, the Roman strong and dominant, and the Jew custodian of the Law of God. These three nations cooperated in the preparation of the way for Christ without knowing it. We believe that this involuntary cooperation was by providential ordering meant to prepare the way of the One who was coming "in the name of the Lord".

First of all, God used the Romans to prepare the way by uniting the civilized parts of the world and spreading security everywhere. Before then, bands of thieves and robbers roamed, spreading ruin so that it was impossible for any news originating in the Holy Land to spread beyond its narrow confines.

Likewise, the Greeks did their part unwittingly in preparing the way for Christ by spreading their beautiful and flexible language, which was at the time the main and official language throughout the Empire. That language was a fine tool for spreading the Gospel to all parts of the civilized world.

As for the Jews who were scattered throughout the whole world, they carried with them their Holy Books, because Moses commanded them to read them in the synagogues every Saturday (Sabbath).

One of the most important factors that helped in reaching these nations was the translation of the Holy Bible into the Greek language, thus enabling the heathen world to note the prophecies regarding the coming of the Christ (Messiah), and be ready to accept Him. It was truly a miracle that all these nations united in preparing the way of the Lord without realizing it.

The strangest thing of all was the eager expectation of the Jewish people prior to the coming of Christ. Observers suggest that this expectancy was due to the break in the revelatory process over a span of five centuries. One would expect people to forget and their hopes to grow weaker in these circumstances. This did not happen, for they were looking forward to the desire of all nations with increasing fervor.

There is no doubt that the Gentiles, who read the Holy Scriptures, also shared with the Jews in their expectation. This is evidenced by the coming of the wise men from the East to the Holy Land to pay homage to the Baby of Bethlehem's manger, Jesus.

It is worth mentioning that when the Word was incarnated in the manger of Bethlehem, some very important events happened, which revived hope in the hearts of those waiting for the Lord. Among them:

1. The return of the spirit of prophecy and revelation which had ceased after Malachi the prophet. Now that the inspirer of the prophets was here, this gift was revived – first in Zechariah the priest, then Elisabeth, then Mary the Mother of Jesus, then Joseph, the aged Simeon, the prophetess Anna, and finally in John the Baptist.
2. The great joy that spread over heaven and earth. The angels of heaven came down singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14). The citizens of heaven and earth were waiting for the incarnation of the Word, because they knew about the promises of redemption which God had prepared.
3. The entry of the Child, Jesus, to the temple. This fulfilled the prophecy of Haggai, "'I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:7-9).

QUESTION 10

The Trinity was known before Christianity in the worship of the heathen in Persia, Greece, Rome, India, China and Egypt. What is the secret of this?

ANSWER:

There is a great difference between the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and that of the heathen:

1. The Egyptians believed in a Trinity consisting of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, but these were three gods, not one.
2. Likewise, the Indians believed that there was an essence of a simple god without self awareness, devoid of any attributes. Three gods issued out of him to represent him and to be superior to others. The first god, Brama, was the creator and the origin of everything. The second god, Vishnu, was the keeper of everything. The third god, Shiva, was the destroyer.
3. The Persians believed in two great gods: The first god was Ormuzd. He was the god of good. The second god was Ahriman. He was the god of evil. They said that all good and spiritual things originate from the god of good, while all that is bad and material originates from the God of evil. And since they noticed that the struggle between the two is continuous, they had to say that these two gods are eternal and equal, and it is not possible for one to overcome the other.

In any case, the Christian Trinity does not bear any relationship to those heathen doctrines. And there is nothing in their conception which nullifies the Trinity. For instance, the name "Allah" preexisted Islam and yet this fact did not constitute a problem for the Qur'an. The Arabs before Islam mentioned him in their poems and writing. Does it detract from the Qur'an that certain practices from pagan times were enjoined on Muslims? Likewise, the Pilgrimage, processions throwing stones, and kissing the black stone, all of these were customs of the heathen Arabs even before Islam.

What do you say about the story of "Al-Asraa" and "The Traveling by Night" and the "Al-Maaraj – Climbing to Heaven"? There are similar stories in the religious books of Zoroastrians before Islam. Or does it impair Islam at all that the Jewish religion preceded it in the doctrine of Monotheism?

QUESTION 11

There is no evidence that the disciples who lived at the time of Jesus and followed him, believed in his Deity. Do you know Jesus better than the disciples?

ANSWER:

The New Testament informs us that Jesus, before his ascension to heaven gathered his disciples and said to them:

"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me".

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them:

"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high".

"And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:44-53).

According to these closing verses from the Gospel of Luke, we see that the disciples worshiped Jesus at the time of his departure. There are also many references in the Bible about individual disciples believing in Christ's deity:

1. John the beloved disciple said, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4)

'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,' says the Lord, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.' (Revelation 1:8)

2. The testimony of Thomas: "And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:26-28)

3. The testimony of Peter: "Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life'" (John 6:67-68).

"He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep'" (John 21:17).

4. The testimony of Paul the Apostle: "...of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God" (Romans 9:5).

QUESTION 12

The Torah (First Five Books) says, "For he who is hanged is accursed of God" (Deuteronomy 21:23). You are proud in carrying a cross on your chests. We insist that Christ is innocent of all your claims. He was not crucified. When do we agree?

ANSWER:

1. The Torah is right. Christ was hanged on a cross to remove the curse from those who did not keep all that was written in the books of the law (Torah).
2. A Christian is proud to hang a cross around his neck. Listen to what Paul said, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14).
3. The death of Christ is a reality based on the prophecies and testimonies of the prophets and the disciples of Christ who saw him dead, and saw him after his resurrection. History also is a witness to this reality. If we examine the inspired writings of the apostles carefully, we will find out that the New Testament, which was preached from the dawn of Christianity, was accepted and millions were saved. The New Testament is the Good News. Paul said about it:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Over five hundred years after the spreading of the Good News in the world, a man came opposing and refusing to accept this biblical fact, as if saying to all Christians worldwide: "You are wrong. There is a mistake in your Bible and your religion".

I was thinking of taking you on a journey viewing the subject of the Cross to show you all that the Old Testament prophets and the disciples of Christ, even what Christ revealed about himself. Also to the historians and all that the eyewitnesses have said. But I found it unnecessary, because the heavenly realm with all the books which have been revealed to us, and the earthly sphere with all its historical records testify to the crucifixion.

4. Concerning the last part of your question: I would like to say, the New Testament informs us that when Jesus directed his call to the Jews, he said, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37). He also said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25).

Coming to Jesus means: Accepting him as a personal Saviour, by the redemption that he has accomplished on the cross. Faith in Jesus includes faith in his Deity. If you really would like to agree, let us repeat together what the inhabitants of Jerusalem sang when Jesus came into Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" (Matthew 21:9).

Then we can join the multitudes of the redeemed in the hymns of redemption, saying, "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5-6).

THE END

AMEN!

QUIZ

Now that you have read the booklet, we invite you to answer the following questions and send your answers to us:

1. What is the definition of faith in Christian teaching?
2. Can the human mind grasp the invisible?
3. Give a few examples for the definition of faith.
4. Which heresy is referred to in Sura 5 Al-Maida (The Table) 116?
5. Give examples of Jesus' testimony about himself.
6. How did God the Father testify to Christ the Son?
7. What is the essence of the Apostle's testimony about Christ?
8. Who is the Holy Spirit according to Christian teaching?
9. What is the foundation for Christian atonement?
10. What do we learn through reading the Holy Bible?
11. Is anyone born without sin? What does the Bible say about this?
12. What does the name of Jesus mean? Is sin connected to him?
13. Is salvation incidental or is it an eternal plan of God?
14. According to whose image did God create the first man?
15. How did Adam and Eve fall to Satan's temptation?
16. What is the verse referred to in Psalm 14 and Jeremiah 17?
17. What is the wages of sin?
18. When did God first demand an atoning sacrifice?
19. What is God's purpose in asking for all sacrifices?
20. Who is the ultimate symbol for all sacrifices?
21. What does incarnation mean in Christian teaching and what is the purpose of it?
22. What does atonement mean in Christian teaching?
23. Do we find any reference to the unity within the Trinity in the Torah? Give one example.
24. What is the essence of the Athanasian Creed?
25. Is the trinity that Islam fights the true Christian Trinity?
26. What concept do philosophers and theologians of Islam have about the belief of the Trinity?
27. What is your opinion on the questions and answers dealt with in this book?

Please use our Email-Form to contact us or write to:

The Good Way

P.O. BOX 66

CH-8486 Rikon

Switzerland

www.the-good-way.com

Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.