

Feature

Jesus, the One True God

A former Muslim himself, Nabeel Qureshi shares how to lead Muslims to the truth about Jesus.

by MARK KELLY



ORLANDO. SAN BERNARDINO. Chattanooga. Boston. Fort Hood. How have Islamist massacres on American soil affected your attitude toward Muslims you see at the store or in your neighborhood? If you're like other Americans, you probably struggle with suspicion or even outright prejudice. More than 4 in 10 Americans (43 percent) admitted to Gallup pollsters that they harbor prejudice toward Muslims. According to Gallup, Muslims also are the most likely U.S. religious group to have personally experienced discrimination.

But even if Christians agree we need to share the love of Jesus with our Muslim neighbors, most of us have no idea where to begin. And most Christians who do have a Muslim friend are not schooled well enough — in either the teachings of Islam or even their own faith — to help their friend find answers to the questions.

That's the reason Nabeel Qureshi wrote *No God but One: Allah or Jesus?*

Raised Muslim in the United States, Qureshi at one time zealously defended the religion of his youth and sharply criticized Christianity. A friend at college, however, seemed to have solid answers about the Christian faith and challenged Qureshi to examine Islam more closely.

As Qureshi dug deeply into his friend's questions about Islam, he began to wrestle with serious issues. He learned more about Muhammad's life and saw he did not have the godly character of a true prophet. Qureshi wrestled with the erratic content of his holy book and the atrocities committed in the name of Islam over the centuries.

Qureshi also realized Muslims are kept from seriously considering Jesus because they have been told falsehoods about Him. In addition, they've been told that Christianity teaches the worship of multiple gods and that the Bible has been corrupted.

Ultimately, Qureshi decided to follow Jesus, even though it cost him the love of his family and many

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friends. In 2014, he wrote *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* to describe how friendships, investigations, and supernatural dreams led him on a dramatic journey from Islam to Christianity. He wrote *No God but One: Allah or Jesus?* to help Muslims find answers to the questions they are asking.

The book is an excellent resource for Christians who want to help Muslim friends think through Islam and Christianity — and understand the truth about Jesus.

UNDERSTAND THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES.

Qureshi notes that both Christians and Muslims trace their faith back to the one true God of Abraham. He points out that Islam even reveres Jesus as the virgin-born, sinless, miracle-working Messiah who one day will return physically to earth.

Yet, at the same time, he says, Islamic teaching denies Jesus' deity and both His death and resurrection. The Muslim teaching about the nature of God also differs fundamentally from the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

"Both Muslims and Christians believe there is no God but one," Qureshi says. "What we think God is like, however, has a tremendous impact on how we see the world he created. ... The Islamic view of God and the Christian view lend themselves to different answers, and how we answer these questions changes how we see ourselves, other people, and the world around us."

Qureshi points out that Islam and Christianity offer different answers to these crucial questions:

- Why did God create humans — to share intimacy with them or to test them?
- What does God think about people? Are they His servants or His children?
- How does God want us to live — focusing on love or focusing on law?
- What does God tell us about the afterlife — to anxiously anticipate unknown judgment or to have joyful faith in His grace?

The doctrine of the Trinity is crucial to understanding the difference between Islam and Christianity, Qureshi says. While Christians



worship a triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — Islam understands God as a “monad,” an indivisible, unified being.

“This is not a trivial difference,” Qureshi explains. “Since mankind is made in the image of the triune God, love is woven into our very nature. This has far-reaching implications. It is what makes God relational, what makes his love eternal. It is how God can be in us through the Holy Spirit, while being over us as the Father, and suffering for us in the Son.”

ANSWER THE CRUCIAL QUESTIONS.

Qureshi tries to help Muslim seekers answer two key questions:

1. What are the differences between Islam and Christianity? Qureshi digs into five issues that strike to the heart of Islam:

- Giving people a law to follow cannot solve the problem of sin.
- A removed God cannot give the world love and community.

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“God is more beautiful than this life itself, and the one who loves him is ready to die when death comes, not just to glorify him but to hasten to his arms.”
— Nabeel Qureshi



- The prophets promised God would come to us Himself.
- Only one Scripture speaks to the individual’s heart.
- Inexcusable atrocities have been committed in the name of Islam’s holy war.

2. Can we know whether Islam or Christianity is true? Qureshi examines the historical evidence on five issues:

- Did Jesus die on the cross?
- Did Jesus rise from the dead?
- Did Jesus claim to be God?
- Is Muhammad a prophet of God?
- Is the Quran the Word of God?

“The three core claims of Christianity ... are very firmly grounded in history,” Qureshi asserts. “By contrast, neither of the core truth claims of Islam ... are compelling. Muhammad’s character does not make one think he was a man chosen by God, nor was he prophesied in the Bible. The Quran ... cannot be shown to be inspired.”

As a Muslim seeking the truth, Qureshi says, “I wanted to base my beliefs not on blind faith, ... and not even on my family’s heritage. I wanted to ground my faith in reality. If I wanted to take the records of history seriously, I had to abandon my Islamic faith and accept the gospel.”

Pursuing the truth about one’s faith is very difficult, however.

“It is virtually impossible to study these matters objectively,” Qureshi explains. “Not only do we all have a vested interest in defending the faith we and

our social circles have believed for years, but our beliefs also color the way we receive information.”

Qureshi’s assumption that Islam was true affected how he interpreted the historical evidence.

“No matter what facts [were] provided, I either made them fit my Islamic paradigm or I found some way to dismiss them,” he says. “Although we can never completely overcome our biases, the most important step we can take is to pursue fair-mindedness with intentionality.”

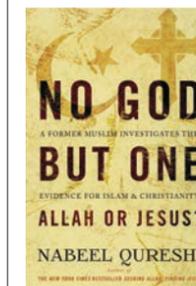
DECIDE IF FOLLOWING JESUS IS WORTH IT.

However, even after someone has concluded that the historical evidence proves Christianity is true, a Muslim seeker still must answer one more question: Is following the truth about Jesus worth it?

“Leaving Islam can cost you everything: family, friends, job, everything you have ever known, and maybe even life itself,” Qureshi warns. “Is it really worth sacrificing everything for the truth?”

“When we consider the gospel, we find the deep secrets of the world unfolded,” Qureshi says. The gospel is the answer to our individual pains, to the world’s sufferings, and to life’s mysteries.

“It is worth all suffering to receive this truth and follow [Jesus],” he adds. “God is more beautiful than this life itself, and the one who loves him is ready to die when death comes, not just to glorify him but to hasten to his arms. Though we will die, we will live.”



Excerpts are from *No God but One: Allah or Jesus?* by Nabeel Qureshi, published by Zondervan, a division of HarperCollins Christian Publishing, NabeelQureshi.com.

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