

The Titles and Names of Jesus

by Paul Bramsen

The sermon explores the titles and names given to Jesus in the Qur'an and the Bible, highlighting their shared reverence and importance.

Scripture: John 1:1-4

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Christian Apologetics"

Description

Paul Bramsen emphasizes the importance of evaluating others based on their words and actions, highlighting how society categorizes individuals as trustworthy or hypocritical, worthy or foolish. He discusses how public opinion can greatly impact a person's reputation and influence, especially for leaders in positions of prominence. Bramsen contrasts the evaluations of Jesus in the Qur'an and the Bible, focusing on the similarities in designations such as Jesus being a righteous prophet and an apostle of God. He delves into the unique titles given to Jesus in both texts, portraying him as a spirit proceeding from God and God's Word, emphasizing the high regard Jesus holds in both Islam and Christianity.

Transcript

Everyone is known by his words and his actions. We say he is trustworthy or he is a hypocrite, he is worthy or he is a fool, depending on how we evaluate him. Evaluating others is an ongoing process of categorizing, labeling and identifying.

When a person reaches a place of prominence, this process accelerates. The more important the person is, the more intense the evaluation becomes. Often leaders develop a following of admirers and well-wishers, and if society is a free one, a group of enemies and offenders arises, too.

The news media labels people. We who listen or read such opinions may have our own ideas swayed. In a democracy, public opinion holds tremendous power. It can elevate or destroy a person, enhance his power, or completely discredit him. Often leaders are very conscious of the way people react to them. Every politician should consider the public opinion polls.

In forming opinions about men of God and religious leaders, believers base their opinions on what God tells us in His word rather than on public opinion. Both the Qur'an and the Bible evaluate and name the qualities of Jesus. In many ways the evaluations, titles and names given to Jesus are very similar in Islam and Christianity. It is important to consider these similar designations before we proceed to consider the differences.

One important description the Qur'an gives of Jesus is that he is the righteous prophet. (Sura 6:85) To be righteous means to fully obey God's revealed will in matters of morality, right speaking, right actions and to never disobey God's will in any way. A righteous person follows fully the laws that God has given. The Qur'an asserts that Jesus was such a man. The Bible also says that no one could accuse Jesus of doing any sin. He did no evil. His motives and actions were always pure and in perfect accord with God's will. (John 8:46)

The Qur'an calls Jesus an apostle of God. (Sura 4:171) The word "apostle" means one who is sent forth. Therefore, it is proper for Muslims to say Jesus was sent forth from God. Repeatedly the Bible also says this. (John 4:34; 5:24; 8:16 and many other references)

The Qur'an gives Jesus some very unique titles, not given to other prophets. The Qur'an calls Jesus a spirit proceeding from God. (Sura 4:171) This phrase could mean merely that Jesus was an apostle. But it could also mean that Jesus' spirit was God's own spirit coming directly from God. Christians believe this second explanation. They use various Bible references:

"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9b)

"I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

The Qur'an calls Jesus God's Word. (Sura 4:171) The Bible also specifically calls Jesus God's Word.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

"The Word became flesh and lived for awhile among us." (John 1:14a)

Not only were Jesus' words God's words, but Jesus himself is God's Word, God's message for mankind.

Thus, we can understand the very high place given to Jesus in both the Qur'an and the Bible. We would be very wise to show him the honor and praise he deserves.

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