

# WAS JESUS REALLY CRUCIFIED?

## DEAR MUSLIM FRIEND,

You may have wondered why Christians believe that Jesus (Isa) was crucified. There are three main Quranic teachings about Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead that you may or may not be familiar with:

## QURANIC TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

### ASCENSION

*"Behold! Allah said: 'O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow thee superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection: Then shall ye all return unto me, and I will judge between you of the matters wherein ye dispute.'" Quran 3:55*

You might hold to the belief that Isa did not see death but was raised to the heavens so that the blasphemers would realize that he was truly sent by Allah.

### IMAGE ON THE CROSS

*"And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Maryam, the messenger of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure. Nay! Allah took him up to Himself; and Allah is Mighty, Wise." Quran 4:157-158*

You might quote this reference and say that Jesus was not the one who was crucified by the Jews. Rather, Allah put the image of Isa on someone else (probably Judas Iscariot) at the time of crucifixion. Then Allah took Isa up to paradise and saved Him from the hands of the Jews. This means that Allah deceived the Jews in order to save Jesus.

From these verses, you might claim that the crucifixion did not actually happen; but that it was a story fabricated by Christians after Isa's death. Or, you might claim that Isa was crucified but did not die. He fainted on the cross and later recovered (this is also called the "Faint Theory").

### NATURAL DEATH

*"Isa said: 'So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life.'" Quran 19:33*

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**THE FACT IS** the Quran does not validate any of the multiple theories it offers, therefore the reader is left to question: **Was Isa crucified? Did he die? Did someone replace him on the cross, or did God raise him to heaven to avoid death? Which one is true historically?**

## **HISTORIC PROOF OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH**

There are at least 17 ancient texts written by non-Christian historians and witnesses that record the various aspects of Jesus' earthly ministry. Most of these writings originated in the first to the mid-second century, and are consistent with information presented in the Bible. These secular texts all confirm that Jesus was crucified and that He rose again. Here are some of these trusted sources from history:

### **FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS (AD 38–100+) A JEWISH HISTORIAN**

He wrote about Jesus in his Jewish Antiquities: "...we learn that Jesus was a wise man who did surprising feats, taught many, won over followers among the Jews and the Greeks, was believed to be the Messiah, was accused by the Jewish leaders, was condemned to be crucified by Pilate, and was considered by the author to have been resurrected" (Wilkins, Michael J. Jesus Under Fire, Zondervan 1995). The same historian, in his book The Jewish War (volume eight, chapter three), reports in detail about Jesus and his crucifixion under Pilate.

### **THE JEWISH TALMUD, A SOURCE DECIDEDLY NOT BIASED TOWARD JESUS**

This agrees with the Bible about the major events of His life. From the Talmud: "On the eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu...Anyone who knows anything in his favor let him come and plead on his behalf. But, not having found anything in his favor, they hanged him on the eve of the Passover." (Sanhedrin 43a)

### **CORNELIUS TACITUS (AD 55–120) A CITIZEN OF FIRST-CENTURY ROME**

He is considered one of the most accurate historians of the ancient world. An excerpt from Tacitus tells us that the Roman emperor Nero, "inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class ... called Christians ... Christos [Christ], from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty [the cross] during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus..." (Tacitus, A 15.44)

### **WHY DOES THIS MATTER?**

Most ancient historians focused on the lives of political and military leaders, not on obscure rabbis (teachers of the Torah) from distant humble provinces of the Roman Empire. These ancient historians (Jews, Greeks, and Romans), though not Christians themselves, confirm the crucifixion event presented in the New Testament.

## MORE VALID SOURCES ABOUT JESUS' CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH

In addition to historic sources, the New Testament of the Bible, where Jesus' life is related in detail, is a valid source of information about Jesus. As a literary document, it provides better material about the words and deeds of Christ than any other ancient classical writing.

The New Testament has far more manuscript portions than any other ancient text concerning the life of Jesus. In contrast to other classical works that have large pieces missing from their original manuscripts, no portion of the New Testament books is missing!

As for the Old Testament, there are 300 references, including 60 major prophecies, about a promised redeemer who was to die on the cross and then rise again.

### 1 IN 100,000,000,000,000,000.

The book *Science Speaks* by Peter W. Stoner and Robert C. Newman addresses these prophecies using the laws of probability. The book explains that the odds of Christ fulfilling **only eight of these 60 prophecies is equal to 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000**. Jesus did not fulfill just eight of these prophecies, He fulfilled all 60 major prophecies in the Old Testament prophecies that foretold His coming!

If you would like to read the list of the prophecies regarding Jesus, the Messiah, contact us with your request and we will provide you with a copy.

*"And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again." 2 Corinthians 5:15*

### YOU MAY ASK: "WHY WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED WHEN BOTH THE BIBLE AND THE QURAN CONFIRM THAT HE WAS SINLESS?"

*"He said: I am only a messenger of thy Lord that I may bestow on thee a faultless son."*  
Quran 19:19

*"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."* 1 Peter 2:22

Jesus was crucified for exactly this reason!

Because of His pure life, He was the only person who could be the perfect sacrifice to repair the relationship between God and man. Jesus willingly went to the cross and became the final Great Sacrifice for the sins of mankind, that began with Adam and Eve.

No ordinary man, not even a prophet of God, could have died on that cross to save us from an eternal life in hell. Only Jesus, who is God and the only sinless person to ever live, could die and rise again as the atonement, the substitute, and the ransom for our sins.

## **WHY THE CROSS WAS NECESSARY: GOD IS MERCIFUL, HE IS LOVE, BUT HE IS ALSO JUST.**

The cross was necessary to satisfy the demands of God's attributes of justice and love.

**JUSTICE REQUIRES PUNISHMENT,  
SEPARATION FROM GOD, AND ETERNAL  
DEATH TO PAY FOR OUR SINS.**

**LOVE REQUIRES FORGIVENESS  
OF THE SINNER.**

We must believe in Jesus by trusting what He did for us and following what He taught. Only then can we receive God's mercy, His assurance of forgiveness and eternal life. Allow Jesus to fill your heart with joy instead of sadness, peace instead of fear, and selfless love instead of hatred.

### **EXAMINE THE TRUTH FOR YOURSELF**

Jesus would be just like any other prophet without

- HIS SINLESS LIFE,
- THE CRUCIFIXION,
- AND THE RESURRECTION.

We encourage you to read about the life of Jesus in the Gospel (Injil), where you can learn more about why it was important for Jesus to die on the cross and then after three days rise from the dead victoriously.

Pray to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Call out to Him and ask Him to show you the True Way and to reveal Himself to you. Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies." John 11:25



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