

# Comparison between Christian and Islamic Teachings

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### 1.0 Introduction

Christianity and Islam are the two largest religions in the world and they have many points of contact. Both inherited from Judaism a belief in one God who created the world and cares about the behavior and beliefs of human beings.

This paper explores Christianity and teachings of Islam based on various doctrinal themes. These include God, Jesus,

### 2.0 Islam Teachings versus Christianity

#### 2.1 God

Islam teaches that there is one God - Qur'an 3:64 and rejects the concept of the Trinity. Christianity teaches there is one God - 1Co 8:6 but reveals that the Godhead is composed of three distinct personalities - Father, Son, Holy Spirit; one in essence and Substance. (Jn 1:1-5; Php 2:5-8; 2Jn 9; Mt 28:19)

#### 2.2 Jesus

Islam considers Jesus a prophet, like Noah, Abraham, Moses (and Muhammad), rejects the divinity of Jesus, denies his preexistence - Qur'an 4:171, believes in the virgin birth. However, Islam does not believe Jesus died on the cross nor was raised from the dead - Qur'an 4:157

Christianity declares that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God - Mt 16:13-18, teaches the preexistence of Christ (Jn 1:1-5; Col 1:16-17) and proclaims that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and was raised from the dead

#### 2.3 Salvation

For Islam, salvation comes by good works. Personal righteousness is weighed against personal sin, which ever is greater determines salvation - Qur'an 23:101-103. A Muslim can be forgiven by repenting of sin - Qur'an 39:53-54. Further, paradise is assured for one who dies as a martyr for Islam. In Islam, one becomes a Muslim by confessing "There is no other god but God; and Muhammad is the Prophet of God" (*la ilaha ill'Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah*) from the heart

Salvation in Christianity is by grace through an obedient faith - Ep 2:8-9; 3:4-7. Additionally, Jesus died on the cross as atonement for our sins - Ro 3:21-26 and He is the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

One becomes a Christian by:

- a) Believing that Christ died for your sins (Jn 8:24; Ro 10: 9-10)
- b) Repenting of your sins - Ac 2:38; 17:30-31
- c) Confessing your faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Mt 10:32,33; Ro 10:9-10)
- d) Being baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins

## **2.4 Eternal Judgment**

Islam believes in a resurrection of the dead and judgment at the Last Day

There is also paradise for the faithful, served by beautiful virgins - Qur'an 56:1-38 and hell for unbelievers, with eternal torment - Qur'an 56:39-56

Christians believe in a resurrection of the dead and judgment at the Last Day, the eternal City, New Jerusalem, in the new heavens and new earth for those whose name is in the Lamb's book of life (Re 21:1-7,9-27; 22:1-5). There is also believe on paradise for good one and hell for the evil ones.

## **2.5 The Word of God**

Islam believes in 4 inspired books namely the Torah (5 books of Moses), Zabur (the Psalms), Injil (the Gospel), and Qur'an. However, the first three have been corrupted; the Qur'an provides the final revelation of God's Word

Christianity believes that Old and New Testaments contains the revelation of God's Word - 2Ti 3:16-17; Believes that God's Word cannot be corrupted, but is preserved (1Pe 1:23-25; Mt 24:35; Isa 40:8) and believes that revelation of God's Word is fully and finally revealed - 2Pe 1:3; Jude 3.

## **2.6 Prayer, Fasting and Worship**

In Islam, there are set times to offer prayers (five times per day), there is set periods and procedures in which to fast (the month of Ramadan). There is also emphasis on ceremonial rituals such as washings and posture in prayer.

Christianity on the other hand calls for fervent and steadfast prayer, with no set times proscribed - 1Th 5:17; Col 4:2; has no particular place for fasting, but left up to the individual - Mt 6:16-18; Ac 13:2-3; 14:23. There is emphasis upon the spiritual aspect of worship - Jn 4:23-24; Ep 5:19; Col 3:16

## **2.7 War and Vengeance**

Islam allows war and vengeance for self-defense against persecution and allows use of war in promoting the faith against unbelievers and idolaters.

Christianity forbids war and vengeance when persecuted for righteousness' sake - Mt 5:10-12, 38-48 and forbids use of war to promote the cause of Christ and the gospel (2Co 10:3-5).

## **2.8 Morals**

Islam forbids alcohol and gambling - Qur'an 5:93-94 and also forbids eating pork. The religion allows up to four wives, may divorce and remarry them twice Qur'an 2:229

Christianity forbids drunkenness, covetousness, and other "works of the flesh" (Ga 5:19-21), allows all foods, if received with thanksgiving and prayer (1Ti 4:4-5) (with the exception of drinking blood and eating animals that were strangled, (Act 15:20,29; 21:25) and teaches monogamy, divorce only for fornication (Mt 19:9; 1 Co. 7:2).

## **2.9 Treatment of Women**

In Islam, men have more rights than women - Qur'an 2:228; Women do not attend public prayers at the Mosque and a husband may punish a wife by withholding what is due, and then beat her if necessary - Qur'an 4:34

In Christianity men and women are fellow heirs of the grace of life - 1Pe 3:7; Ga 3:28-29, Women do not have leadership roles in the church (1 Co 11:3; 14:34-37; 2Ti 2:11-12), and forbids withholding what is due, and requires treating the wife with tenderness and understanding (1Co 7:3-5; 1Pe 3:7).

## **3.0 Conclusions**

The comparative note explored in this paper may not an exhaustive one between the two major religions. However, the key teachings of both religions have been highlighted. Islam and Christianity. Undoubtedly, many other similarities and differences could be noted.

In considering such comparisons, one should note the following: Islam contains many different sects; not all professing Muslims might agree with some of the representations of Islamic beliefs made in this comparison. In a similar vein, not all professing Christians may agree with what has been offered as that which Christianity teaches.

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## **Suggested Citation in APA**

Wanjohi, A.M. (2011). *Comparison between Christian and Islamic Teachings*. KENPRO Publications available at <http://www.kenpro.org/papers/comparison-between-christian-and-islamic-teachings>

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