

Who is Christ?

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+ Announcer : My dear viewer you're most welcome to our program "Questions about faith", it is our pleasure to answer all your questions and inquiries. It is also our pleasure and honor to have reverent Father Zachariah Botros with us. You're welcome Father.

+ Father : Thank you, pleasure

+ Announcer : My dear viewer, in previous episodes we talked with the reverent Father about the triune God in Christianity. The reverent Father has explained very well how that Christianity does not believe in three gods and that Christianity does not associate any other gods with God, but believes rather in one God. We also spoke about God's personal attributes: the attribute of self-existence, of knowledge and of life. The attribute of self-existence is what we call God the Father, the attribute of knowledge is what we call God the Son, and the attribute of life is what we call the Holy Spirit. In this episode, however, we will be discussing a very important subject, which is: Who is Christ in Christianity. You're most welcome reverent Father.

The question which is very often repeated by our beloved Muslims is this: who is Christ in Christianity, what is the truth about the person of Christ? Is He God or is he the son of God? Is he a man, or the son of man? So would you please explain to the esteemed audience the truth? Let's deal with first part of the question. Is Christ God, or the Son of God?

+ Father : Well, I'm really grateful to this program I am also very happy to meet our beloved audience because this is a connecting link and common ground for both of us, and I ask God that he would make this fruitful, not mere information, that he might use the information as an illumination to peoples' lives.

+ Announcer : Amen, Amen.

+ Father : I want to comment on what I said the previous episode about Moses the Black, when I said he was trying to find the way to God and he went to the monks and he asked them. someone may ask: Do I have to go to monks in order to ask them? Where could I find them but we thank God this time is much better than the times before. Nowadays the Internet is full of websites that talk a lot about Christ, plus books, plus audio files, as well as chat rooms the pal talk. You can enter to any one of them and join a conversation that might prove helpful. You could just go in and listen. What I want to say is there is no such obstacle as trying to find monks and ask them. In pal talk you can just hear about everything.

And now back to your question, and that is: Is Christ God or the son of God? This may really confuse people, but in a previous episode I spoke about the

concepts and implications of the word “son”, I said there is a literal implication, in which simply son means offspring or children- a man marries a woman and had a child, and of course that is not what we believe about Christ at all- this is out at the question. But there are other implications such as in Arabic ibn assabil ابن السبيل “wayfarer” in the sense that he keeps to the road; the son of Egypt; the son of the Nile; the son of the desert- all these are meaningful implications. The adoptive son of so and so- here is another implication. And in the same way the son of God carries still another implication. So what implications does it have? The first one is the implication of the equality? That is to say so and so is the son of 10 years; that is 10 years old. Here it means his age equals 10 years, so it has a temporal implication. It may also have an emphatic implication. So one can say this guy is a man, son of a man, and that means a man through and through. Therefore we even say true light from true light, in talking about Christ, and that’s emphatic here. Christ is light from light, so the word son has variety of implications. So let us no confine it to the physical, procreative, or sexual implication; it rather carries another implication: that the son of God means the one proceeding from God, for example we may use the expression the daughter of a lip we mean that which one hears from the lips. Also “brain child.” “Brain child” which means a thought of issue in my brain revealed in words and images. So the son of God means God reveals in the flesh just as a “brain child” is revealed into a word that is written with ink on paper, the thoughts have been incarnated in ink and paper. Right.

+ Announcer : Yes, that’s quiet right.

+ Father : In the same way, God incarnated Himself in a body of a man, isn’t that right? There is a nice comparison that explains the concept of incarnation, the concept of the conception of Christ, the concept of God’s appearance in human body. This concept: who is its Father?

+ Announcer : God of course.

+ Father : God is the Father of this concept. Right?

+ Announcer : Of course.

+ Father : So when we say the son of God, we are talking the similar meaning. The same way we talk about the “brain child,” and so forth. So then in incarnation when we say that Christ is the Son of God we mean he is equal to God having the same nature of God. Since the son of a bird is also a bird, the son of a fish is also a fish, the son of man is also a man, and the son of God must have the same nature of God. So these are the implications. But you know

this subject requires a lot of open-mindedness, acceptance, and a broad vision. He can't be so close-minded and limited in your view points. "Son must be produced by procreation only." These are out-dated thoughts. One needs to be more civilized in one's thoughts. So the word "Son of God" means God revealed in a human body just the same way that a "brain child" is a thought revealed in written words with ink and paper. So Christ is God manifested in human body, and the part that is really shocking to the dear audience is what makes the master question: How can you say God was a man who ate and drank, felt hungry and went to sleep, as well as other things of course? How can you ever say that about him? How come do you worship a human body? What we maintain is that Christ has a human nature similar to what you have and what I have.

Exactly the same nature that you and I have, yet without sin, but in this nature is manifested another nature: the Divinity- God is manifested in him. And as it say in the Quran it says: God manifested himself to the mountain. The mountain is not God, but rather the manifestation of God. God manifested himself in the tree, so it is God manifested in the tree. So if God can manifest himself in an inanimate object a mountain and a plant- the tree, is it too much for God to manifest himself in a man, who is much superior to plants and inanimates? You know it can't be simpler than that, but its closed-mindedness and its bigotry that make people afraid to believe these things he shuts them out, "No, no, no, this can't be right," One should have an open mind and when he starts to think, he will find there is nothing wrong with it. By the testimony of the Quran, God was manifested in a mountain which was an inanimate, and by the testimony of the Quran, God was manifested in a tree, which is a plant. O well, then it is a blasphemy to say that God manifested himself in a man, who is the king, the crown of creation? When one accepts things with simplicity, one will be able to understand the meanings very well.

+ Announcer : Reverent Father, our Muslim brothers ask us: Is it God or the Son of God? You sometimes say He is God, and others times you say the Son of God. Would you please settle on something? So we want to explain to them that there isn't this much of a difference which bothers you?

+ Father : Well just as I have been saying, we have a verse that explains this in a nutshell. In the first epistle of St Paul to his disciple Timothy, chapter 3, verse 16. Let's hear what it says: "Great is the mystery in us, God was

manifested in the flesh”. This is our doctrine: God was manifested in the flesh. So Christ is God, in terms of His Divinity. The Son of God; that is, the one issuing from God manifested in the flesh, that is in terms of humanity. And again from the divine point of view, He is the son of God; that is, having the same nature of God. We talked about the comparisons and that is the nature here of God. So here we take Son in the sense of having the nature of God, the divine nature, which dwelt in a nature of pure, human body in such a way as we maintain that His divinity has never separated from His humanity for a moment or for a twinkle of an eye. His divinity was united with His humanity without mixture, blending, or a change. The divinity remained divinity and humanity remained humanity. In a previous episode, a thought occurred to my mind while I was sitting. I put my hand into my pocket, I brought out two pens -isn't that right?– and I said, that black pen is a symbol of a metal – didn't I?– if I place it in a fire until it is red-hot, and once it becomes red hot it has a different shape, a totally different from the one before. It is still iron but iron united with fire, isn't it right? Is it blasphemous at all.

+ Announcer : Not at all.

+ Father : When we say that the iron was united with the fire we are not being blasphemous. This is not blasphemy at all it's a scientific fact. All right then.

This iron which was heated by fire is now pliable; we can bend it, turn it back again, and adjust it, hammer it- quiet normal. It's iron, but the fire is not affected, or is it? But the fire is still effective; if it touches somebody it will burn him, wouldn't it? So this was only iron; it didn't burn, but that one here was united with a fire and what we say here is: the fire was never turned into iron neither was the iron turned into fire- fire remained as it was and the iron remained as it was. But there was total unity. So that is exactly like the iron which represents the body of Christ, the fire represents the fire of divinity the nature of divinity the fire united with it. So now we call this iron heated by fire, heated iron, what was this called? Just iron. And what is this call? Iron heated by fire. You see what I mean? It was united with the fire and it became “iron heated by fire.” So Christ from the body of the Virgin Mary was only flesh, in her belly was only flesh, who's divinity residing in him, he became like this: And we noticed that by fire performs things other than the things iron performs, and likewise God, through Christ, performed divine works, apart from his

human nature. But in this human nature He is like the iron; he eats, he drinks, he feels hungry and does every thing, because He shared our nature with us, is this clear now?

+ Announcer : Yes, this is clear now, that means when we're told that we're mixed between God and Son of God is wrong there is no contradiction or discrepancy.

+ Father : It's the same as my saying: He is a man, Son of a man. Sometimes I might say he is a man, and at other times I can say He is the Son of man. Right. Is there any difference between the two?

+ Announcer : No there isn't its. It is a confirmation of a statement. Ok, now we come to the second part: is he a man or son of man.

+ Father : Well it is the same logic. The word son means of the same nature- the son of a bird is a bird, the son of a fish, is a fish the son of man is.. what.. of the same nature as man having the same human nature.

So in terms of His humanity Christ is a man, Son of Man– that is He has the same nature of man kind. He took on Himself the human nature from the Virgin Mary, and therefore we can call him man, and also Son of man, because He is the son of Mary, and that is why He is called in the Quran – Christ, Jesus Son of Mary – because Mary is human so He is Son of human. That is why he is called the Son of Man. But in terms of divinity, in terms of God, He has a divine nature, the same Godhead, nothing less. So He is of the same divine nature. So as a man He is a human He is not anything less, so that there is a human nature and a divine nature- they are united together forming the new nature of Christ which is a unique nature.

+ Announcer : But many times they tell us that the Bible says that Christ Himself said about Himself that He is the Son of Man, and it is repeated so many times, and they believe that and saying so Jesus denied His divinity.

+ Father : Oh, no when He speaks as a man, He speaks as the Son of Man; that is, your partner in human nature. He approached us in love, but He also spoke about Himself as the Son of God. It was one of the reasons that He was crucified that He said about Himself that he is the Son of God, making Himself equal with God, as the Bible itself says. So the Son of God means equal to God, isn't that right?

+ Announcer : Second question says: let us handle one point at a time? Can you explain to us how Christ is God manifested in the flesh? I know you explained this indirectly but would you please explain it a bit more? Go ahead.

+ Father : We said that God can appear in material things. In the Bible God appeared to Moses in the bush, in a little tree, He appeared to Him and spoke to Him. The same thing is mentioned in the Quran in Sura 28 and Sura 20, and Sura 27, where it says, “Has Moses story has ever reached you? When Moses had completed the term? [that is, lived out his life] and was travelling away with his family, he glimpsed a fire on the slope of Mount Sinai. He told his family stay here I have glimpsed a fire, perhaps I may bring you some news from it, or an ember from the fire so you may warm yourselves. So when he came up to it, someone called out to him from the tree in the blessed hollow on the right bank of the valley.” You see how specific? He was calling from the right bank of the valley, not from heaven. And to make it more specific, he said, “From the blessed hollow.” That is, the blessed spot in the valley. And what did he say, “Moses, I am God, Lord of the universe, remove your sandals; you are in the Holy valley ‘Tuwa.’” Tuwa is the name of that valley. Until today it is called thus. And in Sura 20 he adds, “I am God alone.” It is the same story. “I am God alone.” And in Sura 27 he adds the following, “Blessed is He whoever is in the fire and whoever is around it.” Who can be in the fire, yet around it in the same time? He says: “I am God”. And pay a close attention here: he had used all emphatic particles. In Arabic when you want to emphasize something and make sure it is what it is, we use the emphatic “inna” and in the verse God says, “inni” “Behold, I am God, God of the universe. The one speaking to you now from here.” There is another style of emphasis, which is the repetition of the same word- repetition of the verb, the noun, or the pronoun which is also used in the Quranic verse. It says, “inni ana.” Here it is a repetition of the pronoun. He could have said, “ana rabbu al-`alamin,” انا رب العالمين or “inni rabbu al-`alamin,” انى رب العالمين but he says, “inni ana rabbu al-`alamin,” انى انا رب العالمين that is, this is unquestionable fact, very emphatic. So he used the emphatic *inna* then he also emphasizes by repetition, this also was used *inni ana*. In the third style of emphasize it’s the *qasr* قصر restriction, and this style means it can’t be any thing else other than what I say. For example you can say, “This is a glass, don’t thing about anything else other than a glass.” This has also been used in the verse. “There is no God but I.” Don’t thing there is any other God but Myself; that’s the restriction style. Here it uses the emphatic *inna*

to emphasize it is God, then used the repetition of the pronoun to indicate it is God, then the restriction style: Do not ever think that there is anything else, that there is another God apart from Me. In Sura 20. So God appeared in a tree and even spoke through it. The Mu'atazalites معتزلة have such a statement about this. They say that the word of God was incarnated in the tree and he spoke through it.

The Mu'atazalites said: “was incarnated in the tree and He spoke through it” the same as transfigured in the mountain and spoke from it. So if God can manifest Himself in a mountain, which is an inanimate, as we have just mentioned, and also manifested Himself in a tree, as we mentioned earlier, and He even spoke from it, so is it too difficult? Is it too hard for God? There are many Islamic factions that say this is not blasphemies and that there is no God but Allah. Who, for example? Let me tell you. Such as the followers El Nasiriyya الناصرية and El Ishaqiyya الاسحاقية in the book titled *Al-milal wa al-ahwa' wa annihal الملل والاهواء والتحلل*, volume 2, page 25.

+ Announcer : would you please repeat the reference so that they could refer to it.

+ Father : The followers Nasiriyya and Ishaqiyya in the book titled *Al-milal wa al-ahwa' wa annihal*, volume 2, page 25.

Let's hear what they say. They say, “The appearance of the Spiritual in the physical body cannot be denied by any intelligent person”. Oh dear, where do you get that from? They explain further. They say such as the appearance of Gabriel, who is spiritual, in the form of a desert Arab and taking on human likeness. Do you know on whose appearance Gabriel used to appear to Muhammad? In the image of Dahya Al-Kalbi ضاحية الكلبى . He used to be a smart and good-looking young man. So Muhammad himself and all the traditions say that he used to appear to him in the image of Dahya Al-Kalbi.

+ Announcer : So in the image of a perfect man.

+ Father : Oh, yea, in the perfect physical image of a man. You see the point. So the followers of “Nasiriyyas” and “Ishaqiyya” say that the appearance of the spiritual in physical body is possible, and cannot be denied by any intelligent person. And they furnish evidence from the Quran that Gabriel used to appear in the image of Dahya Al-Kalbi, and Gabriel is spiritual and Dahya was a man with physical body, and he thus appeared to him. So this was group and of

course this is in a verse, in the Quran. This isn't just these people talking. In Sura 19. Now what does it say? "Mention in the book how Mary withdrew from her people to an eastern place. She chose to be secluded from them [that is: to be hidden] We sent her our spirit." And they say about this spirit that it is Gabriel, an angel granted, that is no problem "We sent her our spirit." Pay close attention to the coming part "Who presented himself to her as a full grown human being." "Presented himself" means he took upon himself human image, and not just any human image, no a full-grown human being,

+ Announcer : The spirit of God he is able to do much more than that.

+ Father : They don't say that's the spirit of God in order not to be putting words in to their mouth.

+ Announcer : The angel, ok. We will say it is the angel.

+ Father : I don't want them to say about us that we distort or twist the truth. So let's keep things as they are. Do you see my point? So let's keep it as an angel.

Still the angel is spiritual took on himself human body, which is exactly the followers of "Nasiriyya" and "Ishaqiyya" say. So this was that. And that is the reason they came to this conclusion: that God Most High.. pay close attention... that God Most High appeared in the image of people. The reference is *Al-milal wa al-ahwa' wa annihal*, volume 2, page 25. As completion to the previous statements, which was "The appearance of the spiritual in a human body cannot be denied by an intelligent person, such as the appearance of Gabriel in the form of man," and, they continue, "God Most High appeared in the image or the likeness of people. Sheikh Abu Al-Fadl Al-Qurashi الشيخ ابو الفضل القرشى, in his footnote commentary on the commentary of Al - Baidawi البيضاوى, volume 2, and page 143- again I'll repeat the reference that the people could follow: the footnote of Al-Sheikh Al-Qurashi on the commentary of Imam Al-Baidawi volume 2, page 143. So what did he say? He said, "The divinity appeared in Christ." Again, "The divinity appeared in Christ, and this is not necessary blasphemous, and still there is no God but Allah." You see how powerful? The divinity appeared in Christ! And this is necessary blasphemous, and still there is no God but Allah. Which sheikh is that? Sheikh Abu Al-Fadl El-Qurashi, in his footnote on the commentary Al-Baidawi, volume 2, page 143.

So the Quran itself testifies that the spiritual can appear in the physical, even people of knowledge, perception, and understanding testify that this is not blasphemy and that this could really happen. Now, why do our Muslim brothers consider this unlikely? Do you know why? Because he doesn't study, he doesn't read, he doesn't research. You know the issue and the problem is: the shallowness of knowledge. The Muslim brother unfortunately, unfortunately, was just raised, has just grown up, and was just taught that all these things are given facts and you needn't to think about them; they are beyond question- this is the way we found things. As children we were taught that the Christians are blasphemous, and they worship a man who eats and drinks and does this and that. And now minds are shut tight. Oh, no, no, no you are infidels. But where is your mind? I am not saying read our Bible, but read the Quran with awareness, read the Islamic commentaries with understanding and they will lead you, just as Christ said. "Search the scriptures [your scriptures] for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me". This is an open invitation to our beloved Muslim friends. I say please, read you own books, read your commentaries, think with the mentality of the 21st century, not the out-dated the Bedouin mentality of those ignorant by-gone people who did not know how to read or write.

Isn't this what you say, even the prophet himself was illiterate. Do we have to continue in that illiterate mentality, ignorantly? No, we should open our eyes.

+ Announcer : We thank you reverent father, may God bless you, and bless your ministry, we will also be having other interviews to communicate the truth to our loved ones in Islam.

My dear viewer, God loves you. God wants you to be saved and to come to Him. My dear viewer, God did appear in the flesh. That is a fact. We do believe that God appeared in the flesh, and your own book, please, refer to your book and your commentaries and you will find this a very evident fact highlighted to you. God appeared in the flesh.

My dear viewer, I repeat once again: it is our pleasure to answer any question or inquiry that you sent to us. You can write to us at our address, or if you want a Bible, we will send it to you. Thank you.. until we meet again.

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