

Episode 7

Who is Christ ?

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+ Announcer : My dear viewer, you are most welcome to a new episode of the program “Questions about Faith.” It is our pleasure to answer all your questions and inquiries; it is also our pleasure and honor to have with us the Reverend father Zachariah Botros. to answer the questions of our esteemed viewers; You’re most welcome, Reverend Father!

+ Father : Pleasure is all mine.

+ Announcer : My dear viewer, now we will be resuming our talk about God the incarnate Word, please send us any questions or inquiry, and I repeat we will be very happy to answer them. Reverend father, would you please give us a summary of what we have spoken about already, so that the audience can follow the drift of our conversation before we start asking the questions.

+ Father : All right, the main topic we spoke about was: Who is Christ? Who is Christ? Is Christ God? Is Christ the son of God? Is Christ man? Is Christ the son of Man? These are all questions that come to one’s mind because they are all titles. We were explaining who Christ is, and we must know that Christ is not only God, and not only man; Christ is God united with man. We gave an illustration several times to help the idea sink in, that iron when placed in the fire burns, and now it is united with fire, and it is iron and fire, but not iron plus fire, but in the sense of iron united with fire, or fire united with iron. But within this unity neither the iron becomes fire, nor the fire becomes iron; now we have something else: the iron is now no longer black, but red; as evidence of this unity it’s not like that any more, because that one when you try to burn someone with it won’t burn. It is incapable for setting other material aflame, but this one has taken on itself another nature, so it has two natures: the one that of iron which is malleable and the nature of fire that burns

+ Announcer : Yet retaining the characteristics ...

Father : Both natures and it has become total unity. But how come we say he is God, and yet at the same time He is the son of God.

+ Announcer : Yes.

+ Father : And of course this question requires a lot of explanation whenever it's asked. Christ is God appearing in the flesh and He is truly the son of God in the sense of in the nature of God. So in terms of His humanity he is man and the son of man in the sense that He is of the nature of man and He is truly human. This is the summary of all what we have said that Christ is God manifested in the flesh; the Word or the intellect of God manifested in the flesh, just as He was manifested in the tree of Moses, and just as God Himself revealed to the mountain in Sura 7 and to the tree in Sura 20, 27, and 28 God does appear in material objects. And we maintained that God appeared in a human being, and this is not necessarily blasphemous and there is still no other deity but God.

+ Announcer : And we cited more than just one commentator among the Islamic commentators who confirmed the same fact, and we cited the Quran as evidence.

+ Father : Imam Mohey Al-Din Al-Arabi, Imam Ahmed the chief of Al-Ha'itiyya denomination, Ibn-Al-Hait, the Mu'atazalites- all those people. Al-Qurashi.

+ Announcer : Now we come to our next question: At the beginning of your talk, you also said because of God's incarnation in Christ, Christ's name became the son of God. Isn't this nomenclature shocking to the Muslim audience, because there are many Quranic verses rejecting the claim that God has a child. How do you answer that?

+ Father : Certainly in Islamic thought such sensitive terms are shocking to the ordinary a Muslim; they would say: Here this the true sense of blasphemy. No it has another meaning.

+ Announcer : They totally reject this.

+ Father : Don't you say He is the son of God, that's the true sense of blasphemy. Of course there are some who don't want to discuss, they don't want to understand. They are afraid. But there are some who want to know. What is your opinion about it? Then they assess this opinion; is it correct? Is it logical? Is it reasonable? But the Muslim fears that it might be reasonable, because he will be confronted by hard decisions. What will he do if he discovers the truth? What can he do? And here there are so many question marks? Quiet problematic. If in doubt, just switch off! No need to bother yourself. Right? Exactly as this fellow said, "The devil is in the details." The

fact is that the Quran was categorically against God having a child has been mentioned in many Quranic verses. And I would like to reassure the Muslim audience that I am quite aware of that opinion. But we have something to say about this opinion as well. I just want them to understand that we are not manipulating or trying to escape the truth. Now regarding the Quranic verses that deny that God has any child: Sura 4, 171. Let's hear what it says, "God is only one God; glory be to him beyond His having any child." Glory be to Him beyond His having any child. And in Sura 6 verse 101, "How, [that is, how possibly] how can he have a child while he has no consort?" What does this consort mean?

+ Announcer : A wife.

+ Father : Isn't it so? So, how he can have a child while he has no consort? Of course this is an objection. And in Sura 19, verse 35, it says, "It isn't God's role to adopt a child . Glory be to him." So there is no child. And in Sura 23, verse 91, "God has not adopted any child, nor is there any other deity alongside Him." And this is repeated in so many Suras, not just in these few suras. In Sura 2 verse, 116 the same thing is repeated. Sura 10, verse 68 the same thing, Sura 17, verse 111 the same thing, Sura 18 verse 4 also repeats it, as well as Sura 19 verse 88, and 91, and 92 repeats the same thing. Sura 21, verse 36 the same thing, Sura 25 verse 2, and Sura 72, verse 3.

+ Announcer : Namely all these Suras deny that God has a child, and we confirm the same thing. He does not have a child, we don't say child.

+ Father : That is right. This is a fact that our beloved Muslim friend must understand. We do not maintain that God gave birth to a child. We never maintained that and we never will, never. First of all, we say Ibn ابن, son, not "walad" child. Here is the Bible let them look up any place where it says that Christ is a child of God, or that God give birth to Jesus. We say "son" and the word son has so many other meanings, which we mean, and Lingually speaking it has several meanings, too. I believe I said that in a previous episode, but again for the sake of the new audience who had not attended the previous episodes- perhaps they would like to know as well, let us then mention some of those meanings which we mean because we do not mean a child walad ولد.

+ Announcer : You mean the natural physical birth,

+ Father : We do not mean the physical, procreative, sexual birth we don't have this in mind absolutely this does not occur in the Bible at all, because it's just inconceivable.

+ Announcer : Namely this confirms that this sentence has nothing to do with Christianity or the Bible, neither is it mentioned in the Bible either directly or indirectly...

+ Father : Not at all

+ Announcer : Nothing at all about natural birth, not at all .I would just simply like to communicate that what we believe has nothing to do with natural birth.

Father : Not at all. It's the pagans rather that maintain that, as I said in a previous episode, that the God of the moon in Kaba in Mecca ... the moon god married the sun goddess and gave birth to three, and they were Manat, Al-Lat, and Al-Uzza. Therefore the Quran maintains that God can never have a child; and this is absolutely true. We reject this idea of course as well. What we say is that Christ is the son of God, and the son of God not in any sexual or procreative terms. There are other meanings to the term son of God. The first one is of the same nature, of the same nature that is when we say this is a man, or this is the son of a man, or the son of a human being that means he has the same nature of human beings, and that is the son of a bird, that is: it has the same nature of birds, and that is the son of a fish of the same nature of fish, isn't it so? So when we say the son of God we mean: one having the same nature of God, that is the divinity united with humanity. One having God's nature so when we say, in terms of his divinity, Christ is the son of God, that is: of the same nature as God. This is the first meaning. The second meaning is that the word "son" means equal to; it indicates equality or equivalence. For instance in Arabic we say, "This young man is the son of 10 years," or "15 years" or "the son of 20 years"; it does not mean at all that the year married the month and gave birth to this child resulting in someone called the son of the year. No, when we say the son of 10 years it means that his age equals to 10 years, similarly the son of God means someone equal to or equivalent to God, of the same essence as He is, or one with God in the Godhead, not someone else other than Him- no no... of the same nature equal to Him. It may also provide emphasis to the meaning. The word son may be used metaphorically to

emphasize the meaning. we may say, “So and so is a man, son of a man.” Here a man son of a man means a man you would respect or admire, so that when we say that Christ is the son of God we mean He is God most definitely, and that’s why we say, “Light from light, true God from a true God.” This does not mean there are two Gods, but rather the same nature of God appeared in the flesh, and we mean most definitely God’s nature. Again the word son may indicate appearance, self-revelation as we say, “my brain-child.” I mentioned that in a previous episode, “My brain child.” Of course this does not mean that my intellect got married to my thought and gave birth to a child. This is inconceivable. But “my brain child” means the revelation of my mind, the manifestation or embodiment of my ideas, the utterance of a person, and the expression of what’s on his mind. Right now I am expressing what’s on my mind. As I speak this is embodied in audio and video. So I write this in a book, such as this book that I have authored. So this may come in the form of writing and be embodied in letters, isn’t that right? So then the word son can indicate revelation, or manifestation, the manifestation of thoughts. The word son as well may indicate issuance, appearance and issuance.

+ Announcer : But this needs some clarification, Father.

+ Father : Issuance means issuing from, coming out from, his source is, as one says also in the Arabic language: he has not uttered a daughter of a lip; that is, the word that comes from the lips. Issuance.

+ Announcer : That is a reference to the source.

+ Father : So when we say the son of God we mean the one issuing from God, the one coming from God, the one proceeding from God- that is issuance from God. And again the word son may indicate adherence, adherent to, united with as in, “No matter how he loves it, to give his wealth away to near relatives, orphans, the needy, the wayfarer son of the road ابن السبيل....” What does Ibn Al sabil mean? Al-Nasafi explains it, “Everyone who adheres to the road. He adheres to it that is inseparable from it as though it is his son.

+ Announcer : Right.

+ Father : So in His divinity, Christ is united with God and is inseparable from Him at all, despite His appearance to man He has never been separated from the essence of Godhead, because He is the essence manifested. When we say the son of God we mean He is truly God, inseparable from God because His

humanity has never been separated from His divinity even for a moment or a twinkling of an eye. Abbas Mahmoud Al-Akkad عباس محمود العقاد one of the great Egyptian authors.

+ Announcer : He is really famous and is also a modern author. He died a few years ago.

+ Father : Well, he wrote a book titled about God, in page 171. There is in Sura 4, 171 and also in this book on page 171; this is a good reminder. What does he say? He says the hypostasis, Al-Uqnum الاقنوم in Arabic, is a single essence, and hence the Word and the Father are a single existence.

+ Announcer : Would you please repeat again, Father? Go ahead.

+ Father : The hypostasis ... that meaning of the word Unqnum and you know I personally find a correlation between the Arabic اقنوم hypostasis and God's epithet الحي القيوم Al-Hay Al-Kayyūm, Al- Kayyūm means self-existent, existing by Himself inseparable from others and Arabic word اقنوم Uknum "hypostasis" it means exactly the same, self-existent inseparable from others. So he says that the hypostasis is a single essence. Thus the word, the word of God and the Father are a single existence. [The same as my word, or my intellect is the same as my existence] and as you say "the Father" you do not denote an identity separate from the Son.

+ Announcer : But this is identical to the Christian faith. We didn't deviate it ...from.. at all.

+ Father : And these are great thinkers. they know what they are talking about.

+ Announcer : Of course no one can deny his intellect.

+ Father : But when you say "the Father" you do not denote an identity separate from the Son, [because the father and the son are one]. And now he tells the reasons "...because there is no composition in the Godhead. [The Godhead is not composite; it's a single existence; that is, God is not composite of multiple identities or selves. It isn't a compound; but a single essence, one element with intellect, with existence, and with a spirit. So it is a single existence with personal attributes inherent to this existence, because you cannot imagine somebody without an intellect, you can't imagine somebody without life or spirit. Therefore you cannot imagine God without existence

+ Announcer : Without spirit or intellect

+ Father : For he has one single existence. These are rather personal attributes necessary and essential to the existence of the Godhead. Are you following? So here we mean by the word son something completely different from the literal meaning of the word, because when Muslim hears the Son of God they say, “O no, they are blaspheming.”

+ Announcer : Well if you would excuse me, please repeat the second sentence.

+ Father : The sentence of Abbas Mahmoud Al Akad.

+ Announcer : Yes.

+ Father : Ok, let us start at the beginning.

+ Announcer : That would even be better.

+ Father : Mr. Abbas Mahmoud Al-Akaad, may God rest his soul.

+ Announcer : The title of the book the book is ...

+ Father : The book of God ﷻ Allah, page 171

+ Announcer : 171.

+ Father : It says: The hypostasis is a single essence, thus the Word and the Father are a single essence, and as you say the Father you do not denote an identity separate from the Son. But why? Because there is no composition in the Godhead; that is, God is not composite of multiple identities or selves; He is one, with intellect and a spirit. His intellect is He Himself; His spirit is also He Himself. He is the same as His intellect He is the same as His spirit, and He is the same as His existence. So then God has an existence. He has an intellect and a spirit and these are inseparable and they are never separated from one another; and never will be. This is it very simply. So Christ is the self-revelation of this God with His existence and with his intellect , and with His spirit which is His life. He was manifested in human body just as He was manifested in the tree, just as He was manifested on the mountain. They are all the same; there isn't any difference.

+ Announcer : I believe it is very clear now, Reverend father.

+ Father : You know, my daughter, what the problem is? The Muslim brother is afraid if being convinced; he is afraid of hearing this. And I believe if a Muslim watches this programme in the middle of his family, he will object to it, and he will get up and turn the T.V. off. Why? Because they are afraid of one another. You are discussing this? Turn it off, turn it off, out of fear, but he may record it and watch it alone.

+ Announcer : What a great idea!

+ Father : You know, out of love I say this. Behind their back just go ahead and record it. Then you can watch it alone. But as you watch it, it is very important to lift your heart up to God as you hear the words, and say to Him, “Lord this sounds logical, and I don’t see anything different from what we’re already believe, but for this to sink into my heart, and touch my very being, I want you, God, to touch me, I want you to talk to me, I want you to illuminate your light into my heart and my life, so that my faith would be based on a personal dealings between you and me- direct dealings.

Make this link with the Lord my beloved, make this link with Him. God is your Father; He loves you, He is looking for you, and He is asking, “Where is my son?” where’s my prodigal son, tell him, “Here I am God. I am lost. I am weary. I want to know the truth & want to know you, I want to enjoy your person.” And God will certainly not abandon you.

+ Announcer : Amen, Amen.

+ Father : He will not abandon you. On the spot, you will feel God is speaking to you and shining his light upon your heart and He will show you things too deep for your understanding. lift up your heart right now and say to him, “Lord have my life, Lord, save me from my plight, Lord, deliver me from the darkness, from the confusion, from the distress, show me the right path, reveal to me your affectionate heart, and your love. Speak to me, let your light shine upon my life, touch me with your loving hands, with your affection that my heart would set be ablaze with your love as well. Say, “Amen,” and trust that He hears your prayer as you speak even if you say this secretly. He will hear those whispers. May the Lord bless you and be with you.

+ Announcer : Amen. Now we come to our last question, Father. One of our Muslim audiences asked: What do you specifically mean by the expression

“Christ the Son of God”? Of course, you have answered the question implicitly, but we want to clarify it to the viewer to understand what we mean specifically.

+ Father : Most important of the viewer to understand is that by the word Son of God we do not mean any sexual, physical or marital relationship. This is the most important thing I focus on for the sake of my Muslim brothers. This is not what we maintain; neither do we accept it nor does it occur in our Bible. There isn't a single letter throughout the Bible to that effect. And I challenge anyone to take the Bible and browse through it from beginning till end and find such a statement in it, never. This is what I want to implant into the mind of the Muslim is that we do not say that – God forbid – there was any relationship, be it material or physical, between God the most high and the Virgin Mary never-it has never not even occurred to our minds. So this the formals part

+ Announcer : Never, this is totally unacceptable.

+ Father : Now the expression the Son the God has figurative meanings, symbolic, implying that He has the same nature as God, equal to God, or that He is the manifestation of God, in human body, the same way your thoughts are manifested on paper in ink. Then one must ask, “God, reveal the truth to me. Please show me this.” There must be a link, a contact, a personal relationship with God but not just through the programme. We speak and he listens, and he stands outside the circle. No I want him to step into the divine circle, and build a relationship with God, and let God speak to him, the way He spoke to me and you. Weren't you also living under the same way of thinking?

+ Announcer : Yes I totally rejected

+ Father : Weren't you fanatic against these thing, weren't you? You considered those people blasphemous, infidels. Right? But who enlightened you heart?

+ Announcer : Christ. Yes, He of course.

+ Father : When he perceived your longing that you want to know Him, that you want to enjoy Him, and you want to know the truth, He spoke to you in a personal relationship, individually. And God is willing to do that. for the Muslims to whom we want to set a stage and say , “God loves you; He is close to you, He is ready to speak to you, He is willing to shed His light upon your

life and God is ready to reveal more to you a hundred-times more than what we have ever said now.”

+ Announcer : what is the advice that you would give to all our viewers to reach the truth? What can they do?

+ Father : They can pray. They can ask God. Prayer in the Muslim concept may be to make his ablutions, to kneel down, and recite some verses or Suras, but this is not what I mean. This won't help you learn about God. I am not saying anything against prayer; the religions obligation. If you want to do that just go ahead. What I mean is that in Islam there is something called Du`a' دُعَاء, so lift up a Du`a to God. Tell Him, “God, guide me, show me the path, and show me the truth. Is this what I hear true, or not? Show me.” And God will let His light shine upon him.

+ Announcer : At the conclusion of our episode, we thank you, Father, for these great clarifications. May the Lord glorify His name, and use you more and more. My dear viewer, God is a Father; He is affectionate, and He is loving. Ask God with all your heart, and trust that you will receive an answer, if you are sincere and honest. God will never let you down. Ask Him with all your heart to show you the right way leading you to Him. He will reveal Himself to you in various ways. Muslim brothers and sisters everywhere, please do not miss the chance, trust that we love you all, and we would love to answer all of your questions. Write and we will answer you.

Thank you, and we will see you again.