

WEEK 3 OF 6

Jesus in Two Faiths

The Qur'anic 'Isā vs. the Biblical Christ

Christianity & Islam • September 27, 2026

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church • Tampa, Florida

Review & Introduction

Weeks 1 & 2 Recap

- Week 1: Muhammad, the Qur'an & Why This Matters
- Origins of Islam, structure of the Qur'an, key terms
- Week 2: Tawhid vs. the Trinity
- God's absolute oneness in Islam vs. one Being, three Persons in Christian orthodoxy
- *Reading: White, chapters 1–4*

Today: Week 3

“Jesus in Two Faiths”

- What the Qur'an affirms about Isa
- What the Qur'an denies about Jesus
- The Qur'an's irony: titles given to Jesus but not Muhammad
- The biblical Christ: Logos, Kenosis, Hypostatic Union
- Reference: White, Chapter 5

‘Isā in the Qur’an: What Islam Affirms

Prophet (Nabi / Rasul)

One of the five greatest — alongside Noah, Abraham, Moses & Muhammad (Surah 33:7)

The Messiah (al-Masīh)

The title al-Masīh appears 11 times in the Qur’an — yet its meaning is never explained

Surah 3:45

Virgin Birth

Born of Maryam without a human father; angel announces conception (Surah 19:16–22)

Surah 19:20–21

Miracles

Healed the blind and leprous, raised the dead — "by My permission" (bi-idhni Allah)

Surah 3:49; 5:110

Spoke from the Cradle

As a newborn infant declared his own prophethood to those who questioned Maryam

Surah 19:29–33

Created a Bird from Clay

Breathed life into a clay bird — parallels the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (2nd c. apocrypha)

Surah 3:49

What the Qur'an Denies About Jesus

Not Divine

“They have certainly disbelieved who say that Allah is Christ, the son of Mary.”

Surah 5:17, 5:72

Not the Son of God

“It is not befitting for Allah to take a son (walad).” The distinction between walad (physical offspring) and ibn (relational son) is ignored.

Surah 19:35; 4:171

Not Crucified

“They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but it was made to appear so to them.” (Full treatment in Week 4)

Surah 4:157

Not Part of the Trinity

“Do not say “Three.” Desist — it is better for you. Allah is but one God.” The Qur'anic Trinity is: Allah, Mary, Jesus.

Surah 4:171; 5:73, 116

★ *The Qur'an's Jesus will return at the end of days — but as a Muslim, to break crosses and abolish the jizya. (Sahih al-Bukhari 3448)*

The Qur'an's Irony: Titles Given to Jesus, Not Muhammad

The Qur'an gives Jesus three extraordinary titles it does not give to Muhammad. (James White, ch. 5)

Kalimat Allāh

Word of God

"The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary."

Surah 3:45; 4:171

Rūh Minhu

Spirit from Him

"...and a spirit from Him." The same verse that denies the Trinity gives Jesus this exalted title.

Surah 4:171

al-Masīh

The Messiah

Used 11 times for Jesus in the Qur'an. Never applied to Muhammad. Never defined. Borrowed from Jewish-Christian tradition without explanation.

Surah 3:45; 4:157, 171...

Muhammad receives none of these titles. The Qur'an's own testimony inadvertently elevates Jesus above its own prophet.

The Biblical Jesus

Logos • Hypostatic Union • Kenosis

The Logos: John 1 & Colossians 1 — Christ as Eternal Word

John 1:1–18 — The Word

- “In the beginning was the Word” → Pre-existence, not creation
- “the Word was with God” → Distinction of Persons (pros ton theon)
- “the Word was God” → Identity of essence (theos — anarthrous, predicate)
- “All things were made through him” → Creator, not creature (v. 3)
- “The Word became flesh” → Incarnation, not illusion (v. 14)

Colossians 1:15–20 — Supremacy of Christ

- “Image of the invisible God” → Not a copy, but the exact representation
- “Firstborn over all creation” → Prototokos = preeminent, not first-created (cf. Ps 89:27)
- “All things were created through him and for him” → He is the agent AND goal of creation
- “He is before all things” → Temporal and ontological priority
- “In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (v. 19)

Kenosis & the Hypostatic Union

Philippians 2:5–11 — The Kenosis

- “In the form of God” (morphe theou) → Pre-existence, full deity
- “Emptied himself” (ekenosen) → Not of his deity, but of divine prerogatives & glory
- “Form of a servant” → Fully human, not a disguise
- “Every knee shall bow” → Universal exaltation — Isa. 45:23 applied to Christ

Chalcedonian Definition (451 AD)

“One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures WITHOUT confusion, change, division, or separation.”

- Two natures: fully divine, fully human
- One Person (hypostasis): the eternal Son
- Without confusion — natures remain distinct
- Without separation — forever united in one Person

Answering the Muslim Objection: “God cannot become man”

The hypostatic union answers: God did not change or diminish. The eternal Son assumed a human nature — adding to himself, not subtracting from himself. Two natures, one Person. This is not the God of Tawhid constrained by physical limitation; it is the Trinitarian God freely condescending to redeem.

Discussion Questions

- 1** The Qur'an gives Jesus titles it withholds from Muhammad — Word of God, Spirit from God, the Messiah. Why might the Qur'an do this, and what does it suggest about its sources?
- 2** If the Qur'an's Jesus is merely a prophet, how do you account for the virgin birth, the raising of the dead, and speaking from the cradle? What prevents those things from implying more than prophethood?
- 3** The Muslim objection: "God cannot become a man — that is beneath God's dignity." How does the hypostatic union respond? What assumptions about God's nature does the objection rely on?
- 4** The Qur'an's critique of the Trinity in Surah 5:116 addresses Allah-Mary-Jesus, not Father-Son-Spirit. Does this affect the force of the Islamic argument? How should we respond charitably but clearly?

The Cross & Salvation

Two Irreconcilable Gospels

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Surah 4:157

The Qur'an's denial of the crucifixion — 40 words against the unanimous witness of history

Historical Evidence

Tacitus, Josephus, the Talmud, Paul, and all four Gospels: the crucifixion is the best-attested fact in ancient history

Two Views of Salvation

The Qur'anic scales of deeds vs. penal substitutionary atonement — why assurance is impossible without a mediator



Reading: James R. White, “What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur’an” — Chapters 6–7