
H. M. BAAGIL'S
MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN
DIALOGUE

حوار بين مسلم ونصراني
تأليف: اتش. م. باقل

A REPLY, REFUTATION
AND REBUTTAL

BY

A. YOUSEF AL-KATIB

TIME  BOOKS

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Abbreviations

English Translations of the Bible:

ASV.....	American Standard Version
BBE.....	Bible in Basic English
Darby.....	Darby Bible
ESV.....	English Standard Version
ISV.....	International Standard Version
KJV.....	King James Version
MKJV.....	Modern King James Version
NIV.....	New International Version
NKJV.....	New King James Version
RSV.....	Revised Standard Version

Books of the Bible:

1Ch.....	Chronicles
1Co.....	1 Corinthians
1Jn.....	1 John
1Ki.....	1 Kings
1Pe.....	1 Peter
1Sa.....	1 Samuel
1Th.....	1 Thessalonians
1Ti.....	1 Timothy
2Ch.....	2 Chronicles
2Co.....	2 Corinthians
2Jn.....	2 John
2Ki.....	2 Kings
2Pe.....	2 Peter
2Sa.....	2 Samuel
2Th.....	2 Thessalonians
2Ti.....	2 Timothy
3Jo.....	3 John
Acts.....	Book of Acts
Amos.....	Book of Amos
Col.....	Colossians
Dan.....	Daniel
Deu.....	Deuteronomy
Ecc.....	Ecclesiastes
Eph.....	Ephesians

Est	Esther
Exo	Exodus
Eze.....	Ezekiel
Ezr	Book of Ezra
Gal.....	Galatians
Gen	Genesis
Hab	Habakkuk
Hag	Haggai
Heb.....	Hebrews
Hos	Hosea
Isa	Isaiah
Jas.....	James
Jer.....	Jeremiah
Job	Book of Job
Joel	Book of Joel
John.....	Gospel of John
Jon	Jonah
Jos	Joshua
Jude	Book of Jude
Jdg.....	Judges
Lam	Lamentations
Lev	Leviticus
Luke	Gospel of Luke
Mal	Malachi
Mark.....	Gospel of Mark
Mat	Gospel of Matthew
Mic	Micah
Nah.....	Nahum
Neh.....	Nehemiah
Num.....	Numbers
Oba.....	Obadiah
Phm	Philemon
Php	Philippians
Pro.....	Proverbs
Psa.....	Psalms
Rev	Revelation
Rom.....	Romans
Ruth.....	Book of Ruth
Son	Song of Solomon
Tit.....	Titus

Zec.....Zechariah
ZepZephaniah

I. Introduction

A. The Attack

Dr. H. M. Baagil's *Muslim Christian Dialogue* sets forth a dialogue between a Christian seeking truth and a Muslim trying to guide the Christian towards the "light" of Islam. The book begins with the Muslim and Christian each defending his respective faith, but the Christian eventually gives in to the Muslim's arguments, concludes that the Bible has been corrupted and confesses that "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet." The book concludes with arguments attempting to prove not only that Muhammad is mentioned in the Bible, but that the Bible prophecies his coming.

In proselytizing against Christianity, Dr. Baagil's tract sets forth Islam's primary charges against Christianity: the corruption of Scriptures revealed to earlier prophets and the adoption of false and idolatrous doctrine. Dr. Baagil's treatise has been used by countless Islamic organizations to urge Christians to return to the pure, authentic, uncorrupted religion of Islam.

Yet Dr. Baagil's tract is flawed in numerous respects. It employs insidious and subtle twists of logic to support its conclusions and includes countless self-contradictions, false statements, circular arguments, illogicisms and erroneous biblical interpretations, in addition to employing the character of a truly obtuse Christian to engage in the dialogue. This Christian, who knows virtually nothing about the Christian Scriptures or orthodox Christianity, is unable to defend Christian doctrine before the Muslim and is so poorly versed that at one point, he even confuses the Holy Ghost and the angel Gabriel (p. 31).

The book is especially dangerous to the Christian or Muslim unschooled in Christian doctrine or having shallow biblical knowledge. Such a reader will fall prey to Dr. Baagil's traps, thus being led astray from the truth of the Gospel to an impotent form of religion that denies Jesus' salvific power.

B. The Rebuttal

At last—there is now an answer to Dr. Baagil's treatise. In this volume, A. Yousef Al-Katib sets forth a systemic reply to each of Dr. Baagil's attacks on Christianity. A. Yousef Al-Katib, himself a

Christian convert who spent more than five years in religious study before experiencing the miraculous power of Jesus to heal and to save, thoroughly replies to, refutes and rebuts each of Dr. Baagil's arguments on a detailed point-by-point basis. He reveals Dr. Baagil's innumerable self-contradictions, false statements, historical inaccuracies, circular arguments and flawed biblical interpretations.

The purpose of this booklet is to reply to, refute and rebut the false statements set forth in Dr. Baagil's book and to prevent Christians from going astray in their faith. This booklet is also aimed towards Muslims, many of whom will inevitably share many of Dr. Baagil's false beliefs about Christianity, the Scriptures, God's grace, and the promise of salvation through Jesus. This book seeks to set Muslims free of the errors so commonly propagated in Islam about Christianity and to set the record straight by demonstrating to readers the many errors in Dr. Baagil's reasoning, historical account and biblical interpretation. In this way, this book seeks to guide the reader to the light of Christ the Savior, Messiah and Son of God.

II. Contradictions, False Statements and Errors of Logic

A. Contradictions

1. Is "Christianity" Mentioned in the Bible?

Dr. Baagil's contradictions begin early on in his work. First, he says that Christianity is not mentioned in the Bible: "Neither the name Judaism nor Christianity is found in the Bible, not even in a Bible dictionary" (p. 10). But then he says that it is mentioned: "The word Christianity is mentioned only three times in the New Testament and first in Antioch" (p. 10).

2. Was Judah a Jew?

At first, Dr. Baagil says "yes": "Judah was nicknamed 'Jew' so that only Judah's descendants were called Jews originally" (p. 13). However, the author later states indirectly that Judah was not a Jew, since the *Qur'an* states "Or say you that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the twelve sons of Jacob were Jews or Christians?" (2:140). The author uses this to suggest that the twelve sons of Jacob were not Jews. However, this appears to contradict his earlier statement, which

is that Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, was nicknamed “Jew.” Why would Jacob be nicknamed “Jew” if he were not a Jew?

It is possible that the author would concede that Sura 2:140 does not negate that Judah was Jew. The *ayah* only asks a question without actually answering it. Rather, it goes on to simply state “Say: Do you know better or God? And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from God? And God is not heedless of what you do.” It is therefore possible that *Allah* was asking whether Judah was a Christian or a Jew, without stating that he was neither.

However, this is not the author’s interpretation of the *ayah*, since he uses it to support the argument that none of the Patriarchs were Jews.

3. God cannot be Seen

Dr. Baagil argues that there is a contradiction between John 5:37, which states that “the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form,” and John 14:9, where Jesus states, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” This seeming contradiction is resolved below (see “Seeming Contradictions in Historical Narration,” *infra.*), but for now, I wish to point out the Dr. Baagil’s internal inconsistency.

On page 24, Dr. Baagil juxtaposes the two Scriptures in an attempt to argue that the Bible contradicts itself and is therefore corrupt. Then, on page 30, Dr. Baagil argues that what Jesus *really* means in John 14:9 (“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”) is not that Jesus is God, but rather, that one “should believe in God by admiring his creation: the sun, the moon, all creation, and Jesus himself who was created by God” (p. 30).

When bolstering the argument that Jesus contradicts Himself when He states “you have not seen God’s form,” the author conveniently interprets Jesus to state John 14:9 that He and God are one; but when bolstering the argument that God can only be seen by looking at God’s creation, Dr. Baagil conveniently switches interpretations and argues that Jesus in John 14:9 is stating that he who has seen Jesus or any other part of God’s creation has seen evidence of God.

B. False Statements

1. Jesus Never Claimed to Be God

Muhammad A. Nubee's introduction states that "in the Bible Jesus (PBUH) never claimed to be God" (p. 3). While it may be true that in the Bible, Jesus never directly claimed to be God, in various places he indirectly claims to be God. Jesus states, for example:

- "I and the Father am one" (John 10:30).
- "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10:37-38).
- "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise" (John 5:19).

Moreover, Jesus claimed the divine name for Himself. He said to the Jews: "I tell you the truth. Before Abraham was born I AM" ('John 8:58). The name "I AM" is the name God called Himself in Exo 3:14. The Jews understood that Jesus was calling Himself by the divine name, which is why they took up stones to stone him (John 8:59), which is in accordance with the Old Testament punishment for blasphemy (death by stoning) (Lev 24:16).

2. God Sent Prophets to Each Nation

Dr. Baagil asserts that "God sent to *each nation* a Prophet as a Warner, and some of them with a Scripture as a guidance for that particular nation only. The *Suhuf* to Abraham, the *Torah* (part of the Old Testament) to Moses, the *Zabur* (Psalms) to David, and the *Injeel* (New Testament) to Jesus" (p. 26) (italics added).

The problem with this account is that Dr. Baagil fails to recognize that the prophets that he cites, Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus, were all from the same nation: the nation of Israel. All of these prophets were from the seed of Jacob and preached to the people of Israel. God did not send, for example, a prophet to China, a prophet to Mali, a prophet to South America, etc. God sent prophets through Israel, choosing Israel as a "model community" to show the world his path. He used Israel to bless the world, as revealed in the vision of Jacob's ladder at Genesis 28:13-14: through Jacob's seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed.

To suggest, as does Dr. Baagil, that God sent prophets to "each" nation is inconsistent with the common histories of the prophets, since

all of the prophets, including Moses, David and Jesus, were of the seed of Jacob and preached their messages primarily to the Israelites. Jesus was the only one of these who preached a message universal to all people, which, as described further below, Dr. Baagil also fails to understand.

3. Jesus's Universal Gospel of Faith, Repentance and Salvation

Dr. Baagil goes on to write that "Jesus himself said that he was sent only to the people of Israel (Matthew 15:24): 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (p. 26). Jesus here refers to his earthly ministry, which was directed to the Israelites, for since Abraham, Israel had been God's instrument for his message.

However, after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, a New Covenant was inaugurated that opened up the former Covenant to all people who would have faith and repent. Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman recounted by Dr. Baagil foreshadows this Covenant, for the woman's daughter was healed, even though the woman was a Canaanite (non-Jew), because she had faith (Mat 15:28).

This is made clear by Mark 16:15, where Jesus commands his disciples to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Dr. Baagil argues that "This contradicts what is mentioned above in Matthew 15:24 and Matthew 1:21 [Jesus shall "save his people from their sins"]. Secondly, Mark 16:9-20 has been expunged in many Bibles. The New American Standard Bible put this part in brackets and wrote the following commentary: 'Some of the oldest manuscripts omit from verse 9 through 20' ... This means also that the resurrection is not true as this is described in Mark 16:9" (p. 27).

First, while it is true that the earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not contain Mark 16:9-20, this does not, as Dr. Baagil contends, mean that "the resurrection is not true as this is described in Mark 16:9" (p. 27). It simply means that in some of the oldest manuscripts of an ancient text nearly 2,000 years old, a portion of the text has been lost. It does not necessarily mean that the word and events of Mark 16:9-20 cannot be true. It may simply be that church scribes and leaders attempted to piece together the missing text from other fragments or by relying on the other Gospels, or simply that the earliest manuscripts matched later manuscripts, but fragments from the earliest manuscripts are missing.

In any case, the existence of the earliest manuscripts of Mark 16:9-20 is unnecessary because Jesus' commandment to preach the Gospel to every creature is reiterated in other Gospel accounts, namely Matthew ("Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mat 28:19)) and Luke (Jesus said that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47)).

That Jesus intended his message for all nations was made evident by the historical fact that Jesus' disciples traveled across Asia, Europe and Africa to spread his message among the Gentiles. His disciples understood that His message was a universal one for meant for all nations. So should we also understand this.

C. Circular Arguments

1. The Bible is Corrupted when It Contradicts Muhammad, but it is God's Word when It Affirms Mohammed

a) Overview

A fundamental problem with this book is that it claims that the Christian and Jewish sources are corrupt and therefore cannot be trusted, yet it constantly takes verses completely out of context and proclaims: "God's scripture points to Islam!" But either the Christian and Jewish sources are corrupted and should not be trusted at all or they should be wholeheartedly embraced as the Word of God. It is disingenuous to claim that they are false and then pick verses that one believes supports one's position.

b) Examples

The farce of Dr. Baagil's position comes clearly to light when he quotes a Scripture to support one of his points, and yet the Scripture quoted simultaneously undermines another of his points. For example, on page 39, Dr. Baagil quotes a series of Scriptures to support his point that the doctrine of the Divine Sonship of Jesus and the Divinity of Jesus Christ are doctrines made by men (not God). He writes, that it is clear from Jesus' own sayings "that he never claimed divinity or identity to God: 'My Father is greater than I' (John 14:28); 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit' (Luke 23:46). 'But of that day and

that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father' (Mark 13:32)" (p. 39). It would seem that, because Dr. Baagil quotes from these Scriptures, it must be these Scriptures must be parts of the Bible that were not corrupted. Otherwise, Dr. Baagil would argue against them rather than quote them to support his arguments. However, if these Scriptures are the true and uncorrupted words of Christ, then they prove rather than undermine the doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus. If Jesus were not the Son of God, He would not call God "Father" in all of these Scriptures.

Similarly, Dr. Baagil seeks to prove his point about the fact that Jesus and God the Father are not one by pointing to John 14:9, where Jesus asks Philip, "how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9). Dr. Baagil's point is that by this phrase Jesus means that it is not possible for Jesus to show Philip the Father because unlike Jesus, who as incarnate, God is a spirit that no man has seen. Therefore, Jesus is distinct from the Father. We deal with this point as well as Dr. Baagil's convoluted interpretation of the Scripture and selective quoting thereof further below. For now, suffice it to say that Dr. Baagil's quotation of the Scripture in order to show that Jesus is not the Father undermines his argument about the Scriptures being corrupted. If they are corrupted, why then does he rely on them?

2. A Doctrine is True Because it is Stated in the *Qur'an*

One of the recurring problems in the book is that it bases the truth of certain statements on the fact that they appear in the *Qur'an*. This is problematic because the very purpose of the book is to prove the truth of the claims made in the *Qur'an*. Yet claiming the truth of a statement on the basis that it appears in the *Qur'an*, as where the author asserts that the name "Islam" was given by *Allah* Himself as mentioned in Sura 5:3 ("This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favor on you, and have chosen for you Islam as y our religion" (p. 10)), is based on a circular argument.

For example, Dr. Baagil writes that the contents of the *Qur'an* have been "guaranteed by *Allah* in *Surah* 2:2: 'This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt ...' and also in *Surah* 15:9: 'No doubt we have sent down the *Qur'an* and surely We will guard it (from corruption)'" (p. 13). However, these assertions are based on the premise that the *Qur'an* is the true and uncorrupted word of God, a premise that is in dispute in the book.

D. Illogicisms and Conclusions Not Supported by Evidence Presented

1. The Name “Christian” was First Given by Christians’ Foes

The author writes that the word Christianity was first used in Antioch and later by King Agrippa II to Paul in Acts 26:28 (“Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian”) (p. 10). The author concludes that “the name Christian was first given by foes rather than friends” (p. 10). However, no evidence is given whatsoever that those who employed the name “Christian” in Antioch, where the name was first used, were the foes of Christians.

2. Abraham the First to be Called Muslim

Dr. Baagil writes that the first to be called Muslim on earth “is not Muhammad but Abraham” (p. 10). However, no evidence whatsoever is offered to submit this claim or clarify who called Abraham. Was it Mohammed who first called Abraham a Muslim? Or did the companions of Abraham call him a Muslim? These questions remain unanswered.

3. God Sent a Prophet to Each Nation

This is an argument that is particularly difficult to reconcile with the reality that all of the Hebrew and Christian prophets were in the line of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Dr. Baagil writes that “God sent to each nation a Prophet as a warner, and some of them with a Scripture as a guidance for that particular nation only. The *Suhuf* to Abraham, the Torah (part of the Old Testament) to Moses, the *Zabur* (Psalms) to David, and the Injeel (Gospel) to Jesus” (p. 26).

The problem here is that Moses, David and Jesus were all among and within the same nation: Israel! Only Abraham can be said to be “outside” of Israel, since technically speaking, Israel refers to the twelve tribes of Jacob, yet even Abraham is within the line of Israel’s prophets. God never sent a biblical prophet from among the Arabs or other nations.

4. Pagan Influence Moved Sabbath Worship to Sunday

Dr. Baagil states that Roman paganism had influence in various Christian developments, including, for example, the Sabbath shift to

Sunday (p. 29). He fails, however, to present any evidence in support of this. In contrast, some Christians believe the early church began meeting on Sundays soon after Christ rose from the dead, in honor of Christ's resurrection on Sunday, the first day of the week. This would be supported with Paul's injunction to meet together on the first day of the week (Sunday) to present offerings: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (1Co 16:1-2).

III. Obtuse interpretations of the Scriptures

Another major problem with the book is the interpretations of verses in an obtuse manner that makes no sense and does not correspond to logic.

A. Abraham as "more an Arab than a Jew"

The author writes that "Abraham who was born in Ur of Chaldees could not have been a Jew. First because Ur of Chaldees was in Mesopotamia, which is now part of Iraq. He was then more an Arab than a Jew. Secondly the name Jew came after the existence of Judah, the great-grandson of Abraham" (p. 11).

This argument is flawed in several respects. First, the term "Jew" is not defined in the Bible as a "descendant of Judah." Nowhere is this implied or stated, nor is the term "Jew" defined in modern dictionaries as a "descendant of Judah." Rather, "Jew" is a loose term used in so many respects in modern English as generally encompass Jacob and all of his descendants. More broadly, it is used in the Bible to refer to one of faith, which would of course include Abraham. The Apostle Paul writes, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God" (Rom 2:28-29). Therefore, Judaism is of the heart, not of outward circumstances, such as birth or geographical origin. Abraham is viewed throughout the Scriptures as the father of faith: "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? ... For what does the

Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Rom 4:1, 4:3).

Therefore, Jews have been from all kinds of geographic origins throughout the Scriptures. Many were born in Egypt, for example, or even Babylon, yet this does not make them any less Jewish.

Dr. Baagil's argument is further flawed because the Old Testament never defines "Jew" or states that Abraham was or was not a Jew. Going back to the time of Abraham and Moses, no one was actually called a Jew; rather, they were called Hebrews, as in the case of Abraham (Gen 14:13).

Yet even if Dr. Baagil's argument was right, it does not prove anything. Whether the word "Jew" in the English language is used to encompass all those in covenant with God or only the descendants of Judah changes nothing in the Christian faith. One thing that is clear is that the Bible offers nothing to support Abraham as a Muslim who followed the teachings of Muhammad.

B. The "Burden upon Arabia" is not the Duty to Spread Islam, but a Judgment

For example, the book states, "Isaiah mentioned in chapter 21:13: 'the Burden upon Arabia,' which means the responsibility of the Muslim Arabs, of course of all Muslims now, to spread Islam" (p. 18). Actually the responsibility of the Muslim Arabs to spread the Islam is not at all mentioned, hinted or implied in Isaiah 21:13. Rather, the "burden" being referred to is punishment. The "burden" (or oracle) mentioned in the original Hebrew "often carries a message of doom" (note at Isa 13:1, *The NIV Study Bible*. See 21:1-9; 46:1-2; 47:1-15; Jer 50-51). *The NIV Study Bible* heads the section with "A Prophecy Against Arabia." The burden should thus be ready not a duty but as a condemnation.

C. The Holy Spirit was the Angel Gabriel

1. Overview

The next sample of Dr. Baagil poor biblical hermeneutics relates to that of Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:26 and 27. Dr. Baagil interprets these verses to mean that the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel and by corollary, the angel Gabriel is a part of the Trinity.

Dr. Baagil writes:

“Mu. Maybe the following questions will give you a better understanding of the Trinity: What is the Holy Spirit?

“Cr. The Holy Spirit is the Holy Ghost, is also God. We are taught, the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God. We are not allowed to say Three Gods, but One God.

“Mu. Read Matthew 1:18.

“Cr. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

“Mu. Compare now with Luke 1:26 and 27.

“Cr. "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."

“Mu. So in the miraculous birch of Jesus, Matthew mentioned the Holy Ghost and Luke mentioned the angel Gabriel. What is the Holy Ghost then?

“Cr. The Holy Ghost is then the angel Gabriel.

“Mu. Do you still believe in the Trinity now?

“Cr. Then God is God, the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel, and Jesus is ..." (p. 31).

The verses referenced by Dr. Baagil are as follow:

- “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit” (Mat 1:18).
- “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary” (Luke 1:26).

2. Dr. Baagil’s Hermeneutical Problems

Dr. Baagil concludes that because Matthew states that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit, and the angel Gabriel was sent by God to Mary, that the Holy Spirit must then be the angel Gabriel. However, while the Scripture is clear that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit (Mat 1:18), it never states that she was with child by the angel Gabriel or that the angel Gabriel was the Holy Spirit. Rather, it simply states that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to deliver to her the good news of the miraculous conception. The Evangelist of Luke writes:

And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS (Luke 1:28-31).

If by this annunciation, we are to conclude that the angel Gabriel is the Holy Spirit, then by this logic if any woman is with child by her husband, and a postman is then sent to deliver a message to her, the postman must be the father of the woman's child. Of course, this is illogical and fallacious. There need be no relationship between one who delivers a message to a woman who the father of the woman's child.

In fact, the Gospel of Luke very clearly distinguishes between the Holy Spirit, by whom Jesus was conceived, and the angel Gabriel, sent by God to announce the good news:

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:33-35).

It is important to note here that the angel Gabriel states that the "Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35), *not* that he (Gabriel) would come upon her or overshadow her. Therefore, not only is there no evidence to suggest that the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel, as Dr. Baagil argues, but the testimony of the angel contradicts Dr. Baagil's argument.

D. Ishmael, Not Isaac, was Abraham's the Promised Son of the Covenant

Dr. Baagil writes that Ishmael rather than Isaac was Abraham's promised son of the Covenant and, furthermore, that it was Ishmael, not Isaac, whom Abraham was called to sacrifice. Dr. Baagil writes that "when the covenant [between Abraham and God] was made and sealed (circumcision and sacrifice) Abraham was ninety nine and Ishmael thirteen years old. Isaac was born a year later when Abraham was a hundred years old" (p. 52). The implication is that because Isaac

was not yet born when the covenant was made and sealed, then he could not be the promised son.

Dr. Baagil's argument is flawed for the following reasons:

- In biblical covenants, including God's covenant with Abraham, God makes certain promises that He fulfills in the future, in exchange for certain behavior from his covenant people. The idea of promise is null if the action has already transpired. In other words, God would not have had to promise to Abram that he would have an heir who would come from his own body (Gen 15:4) and that Abram's descendants would be as numerous as the stars (Gen 15:5) if Abram already had an heir from his own body and his descendants were already as numerous as the stars.
- Even if the act promised had to have already been fulfilled at the birth of Isaac, as Dr. Baagil implies, then the fact that Isaac had not yet been born when the covenant was made cannot serve as evidence that he is not the promised son because at the time that the covenant was made, Ishmael too had not yet been born. Rather, Ishmael was born later, out of desperation on the part of Sarai, who gave her maid Hagar to Abram to be Abram's wife and to conceive children (Gen 16:1-3).
- God later commanded circumcision of Abraham and all his male descendants as a sign of His covenant with Abraham (Gen 17:10). It is true that Ishmael was alive when God required this sign of the covenant and he was among those who were circumcised (Gen 17:23), but this does not prove that he was Abraham's promised son. All throughout Scripture, God makes covenants and seals them with signs before the thing promised comes to pass:
 - For example, Jesus promised a new covenant to His disciples and sealed it with the cup of the new covenant (Mat 26:27-28). The cup was a symbol of the new covenant to come about through the shedding of Jesus' blood, which had not yet been shed at the time the covenant was sealed at the last supper.
 - Similarly, God established a covenant with Noah, his sons, their descendants and every living thing that came out of the ark (Gen 9:8-10) whereby God would never again cut off all flesh through a flood (Gen 9:11). He

set a rainbow in the clouds as a sign of the covenant (Gen 9:12-13). God's promise to never again destroy the earth through a flood was necessarily to be fulfilled *after* the covenant had been sealed through a rainbow.

- In this same way, the circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham to make Abraham a great nation, with descendants as numerous as the stars (Gen 15:5), which had not yet come to pass at the time the covenant was sealed.
- If Dr. Baagil is correct in that a covenant is to be made and sealed after God's promise has already come to transpire, then what is to be made of the God's promise that Abraham's descendants would inherit land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen 15:18)? This was part of God's covenant with Abraham, but it had not yet come to pass at the time God's covenant with Abraham was sealed at the circumcision of Genesis 17:10. Dr. Baagil's logic is problematic in that God's promise to give Abraham this land had not been realized, just as his promise to give Abraham and Sarah an heir, had not been realized at the time of the circumcision.

E. Jacob Performed Hajj

Dr. Baagil writes that a Christian "will shiver in hearing that Pilgrimage or Hajj as is now done by Muslims by circumambulating around the sacred stone Ka'bah in Mecca, had been performed by many Prophets, even by Israelite Prophets" (p. 16). He then gives the following example of Jacob:

Gen 35:1 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."

Gen 35:2 And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments."

Gen 35:3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone."

Gen 35:4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem.

From these Scriptures, Dr. Baagil concludes that Jacob performed Haj in Mecca and, just as Muhammad did, “removed all idols around the sacred stone Ka’bah in Mecca” (p. 16). There are several problems with this interpretation:

- Nowhere does it state in the Scripture that Bethel is Mecca. In fact, if you continue to read on, the Bible clearly states that Bethel is in the land of Canaan (“So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him” (Gen 35:6)). According to the biblical scholar and geographer Edward Robinson, ancient Bethel is modern day Beitin in Palestine, based on its fitting the location described in earlier texts, and on the philological similarities between the modern and ancient name, arguing that the replacement of the Hebrew el with the Arabic in was not unusual. Bethel was therefore in modern-day Israel, not modern-day Saudi Arabia.
- Nowhere does God instruct Jacob to perform a “pilgrimage”;
- Nowhere is the Ka’bah stone mentioned.

F. Paul’s Islamic Ablution

The author implies that Paul, a Muslim at the time of Jesus, undertook the Islamic ablution by “purifying” himself: “Acts 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them” (p. 15). This would imply that Paul, like Jesus and all the other Jews, were genuine Muslims, except that Paul later went astray and started preaching that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God (or did he preach Muhammad with the Epistles later being forged?).

The reality is that ablution existed in both Judaism as well as in Islam. The fact that Paul “purified” himself does not indicate that the Paul followed Muhammad’s teaching. Rather, he was following the teaching given by God to Moses:

Exo 30:17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

Exo 30:18 "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it,

Exo 30:19 for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it.

Exo 30:20 When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die.

Exo 30:21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them--to him and his descendants throughout their generations."

Purification was thus required of Aaron and his sons when going into the tabernacle of meeting or nearing the altar. On this basis, Paul, as recounted by Dr. Baagil, purified himself before entering the temple (p. 15).

G. There are At Least Two Christian Gods

Dr. Baagil similarly misinterprets John 1:1 ("In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God") by writing that there must be at least two Christian gods (p. 34). He fails to understand here that Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30), not two separate gods.

From Isaiah 45:8 ("I, the LORD, have created [the heavens, the earth]"), Dr. Baagil concludes, "God alone was the Creator and no one else, not even Jesus, participated in the creation" (p. 34). Again, in this conclusion, he fundamentally misses and misinterprets the Christian doctrine that Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30). This misunderstanding impedes Dr. Baagil from properly understanding how John 1:1 ("the Word [Jesus] was God") can be reconciled with 1 Timothy 2:5 ("For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus").

A. Was Jesus Coequal to the Father?

1. Overview

One of the most difficult aspects of Christianity for a Muslim to accept is the idea that Jesus is both God and the Son of God. First, this strikes the Muslim as impossible: how could God be a man? God transcends creation and is omnipresent. He is not limited to physical form. Second, it strikes the Muslim as a contradiction: how could Jesus be both God and God's son? Third, it borders too closely to idolatry to the Muslim: because the Muslim cannot accept a man as God (or as God incarnate), the worship of Jesus as God is coequal to idolatry.

The various questions discussed above are treated throughout this discussion. At this time, however, we treat the points made by Dr. Baagil on page 30 of his treatise, where he seeks to undermine the Christian teaching that Jesus and God the Father are one.

2. Overview and Explanation of Dr. Baagil's Argument

Dr. Baagil writes:

“Cr. But Jesus is God according to John 14:9: “. . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”

“Mu. See to the context now, what is before and after this: John 14:8): "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." (John 14:9): "Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hast seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

“So finally Jesus asked Philip how to show the appearance of God to the disciples, which is not possible. You should believe in God by admiring his creation: the sun, the moon, all creation, and Jesus himself who was created by God. He said (John 4:24): "God is a Spirit..." and (John 5:37): “. . . ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." How can you see a spirit then? What they saw was Jesus and not God.

“Also Paul said (I Timothy 6:16): ‘. . . whom no man hath seen, nor can see. . .?’ So what you can see is never God" (p. 30).

Dr. Baagil's point is therefore the following:

- When Philip said to Jesus to “show us the Father” (John 14:8), Jesus did not simply reply “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9); Jesus also added “so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?” (John 14:9).
- According to Dr. Baagil, by this phrase Jesus means that it is not possible for Jesus to show Philip the Father and, by inference, that Jesus is not the Father because one can see Jesus but cannot see the Father. Therefore, Jesus is distinct from the Father.
- Dr. Baagil tries to bolster this interpretation by pointing to John 4:24 (“God is Spirit”); John 5:37 (“You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form”); and 1 Timothy 6:16 (“whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power”).