

## **THE POPE, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM**

At the footsteps of Danish cartoons, the profanity against Islam has once again come. This time it is from Pope Benedict XVI who has fired a salvo against Islam and its founder Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon all Prophets). The Pope has expressed his own inward feeling and hostile attitude towards Islam and its founder by quoting the words of 14<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologos to Ottomans. Pope repeated his words. "Show me just what Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) brought that was new, and there you will find things only EVIL and INHUMAN, such as his command to spread by the SWORD the faith he preached."

The Pope has exposed himself. He has shown his enmity and grudge by demonising the Religion of Islam and by calling Islam and Muslims EVIL. Perhaps his intention was to discourage the world wide Christians from embracing Islam.

Pope's understanding of Islam and Qur'aan is shallow, prejudiced and superficial. It may be that a deeper study of Qur'aan may itself result in his own reversion to Islamic Faith.

**Therefore interfaith dialogue is the urgent need of the hour.**

For this Interfaith dialogue, Muslims should have some working knowledge of Bible and Christian faith. It is unfortunate that because of lack of Interfaith dialogue our Christian friends have remained in spiritual spin, enigma and dilemma for the last 2000 years. They need help.

**Christian Faith:** An article of faith with the Christians is that if you confess with your mouth that "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that GOD raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Ref. Romans 10:9). But the crucifixion details that are mentioned in the Bible themselves create doubt. This can be seen from the following:

## **Crucifixion of Jesus:**

1) Evidence from the Bible is glaringly clear that Jesus never died on the cross. His crucifixion was a well prepared, pre-planned drama to make it look so to the angry Chief Rabbi and angry Jewish crowd. The acts were well executed and Jews were led to stop crying with anger against Jesus. But they were deceived so that they could get some how satisfied and passified.

2) Now look at the sequence of events which will prove the point. According to Bible, (Ref. Gospel of John 19:20-21) Jesus was put on the cross on the late Friday afternoon on the Day of Preparation and the special Sabbath would commence only after 2 to 3 hours. Preparations for cooking of meals for the next 24 hour Sabbath had to be made. And also when the Sabbath night would commence the Jewish Sabbath prayers had to be recited.

3) So the Jews who had gathered to witness the crucifixion at the fairly distant site of crucifixion started to return to their homes well before the evening fell because they had to prepare spices, perfumes and meals for Sabbath. Sabbath was about to begin after 2 to 3 hours only. (Ref. Gospel of Luke 23:56) and (Ref. Gospel of Luke 23:54)

4) Crucifixion of Jesus was a drama – well planned, well prepared and well executed. It was a hoax perpetuated on the angry Jewish Rabbi and their angry Jewish crowd. (Ref. Gospel John 19).

5) At the site of crucifixion there were three separate places for three persons to be crucified simultaneously. Jesus was put on the central cross whereas the other two robbers (Ref. Gospel of Mark 15:27) were put on his right and on his left. (Ref. Gospel of John 19: 18) In those days death through crucifixion used to take 3 to 4 days. It used to be a slow process of death as a sign of cruel punishment and to instil fear in the hearts of onlookers.

6) Now look further at the drama of Jesus crucifixion. According to Bible statement, Jesus was declared “dead” only with in three hours and no bones of his were broken. (Ref. Gospel of Matthew 27:45) Even Roman Governor Pilate was surprised to hear that

Jesus was dead so soon. (Ref. Gospel of Mark 15:44 and Gospel of John 19:28-37). In fact Jesus may have just fainted and lowered his head at the ninth hour (Ref. Gospel of John 19).

7) The declaration of Jesus's death within three hours or so was pre-planned and pre-arranged. His crucifixion was a brilliant drama and a hoax that was played on angry chief Rabbi named Caiaphas and the angry Jewish crowd. (Ref. Gospel of John 18:1-40) but the rumour had already spread that Jesus was dead.

8) According to Bible, then, as soon as the darkness started to fall one Joseph Arimathea was clandestinely allowed to take away the 'body of Jesus' with the express permission from Roman Governor Pilate. This too was already preplanned and pre-arranged. Joseph Arimathea took away wounded and fainted Jesus temporarily to the tomb in his nearby private garden and then he put a heavy stone on the entrance of the tomb. (Ref. Gospel of Matthew 27: 66).

9) According to Bible, as per pre arrangement and pre-planning another gentleman named Nicodemus had already prepared some 75 pounds of mixture of myrrh and aloes (a kind of ointment.) (Ref. Gospel of John 19:39). This mixture he had prepared well in advance and then he had brought it to the garden to apply it on the body of wounded Jesus. This alone shows that Jesus must have remained alive because this kind of ointment is not applied to the dead human body.

10) At night there was a violent earthquake which rolled away the stone. The tomb was then accessible (Ref. Gospel of Matthew 28:2-4).

11) Due to medication and first aid care, Jesus recovered considerably within the next 36 hours. Next day was Saturday, the day of Sabbath. So nothing happened and no body came to look for Jesus. (Ref. Gospel of John 19 and 20)

12) According to Bible, on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene came looking for him (Ref. Gospel of John 20:1). When she saw him alive, she was surprised! She thought Jesus was crucified so he must be dead. How come he is alive! (Ref. Gospel of John 20:1). She wanted to embrace Jesus but Jesus said "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet

returned to the father.....” (Ref. Gospel of John 20:17). (Meaning – I am still alive. I have not yet returned to Heaven). Then Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news – “I have seen the Lord (alive)!” “And she told them that he had said these things to her.”

So a statement by one woman Mary Magdalene who was under intense emotional grief led first, to a false rumour of death and then to a false belief that Jesus had risen from the dead. Why two births and two deaths for Jesus only? Incomprehensible!

13) According to Bible on the same Sunday evening Jesus walked to the gathering of his eleven disciples and said “Shalom” (Peace be with you). After this Jesus showed them his hands and side to show that he is wounded only and not dead. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. (Ref. Gospel of John 20:20).

14) According to Bible after a week Jesus appeared to his disciples again when at this time disciple Thomas was also there. Jesus said to them “Shalom” (Peace be with you). Then Jesus said to Thomas “Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out your hand, put it into my side. Jesus further said: “Stop doubting and believe.” (Ref. Gospel of John 20:27).

15) From these Bible statements any lawyer of the world can conclusively prove that Jesus never died on the cross. To believe it otherwise is to believe in a lie. Jesus crucifixion was a drama to fool the angry Jewish Rabbi and angry Jewish Crowd. It was a hoax. It was a deception. (for detailed reading please refer to Gospel of John Chapters 19,20 and 21)

## **What Qur’aan Says About Jesus’s Crucifixion**

1) Holy Qur’aan is the word of ALLAH and whose word could be more true than that of ALLAH! Death of Jesus is denied by Qur’aan. So the question of Jesus going into the grave does not arise. In the Holy Qur’aan word “EESA (Jesus) comes 97 times, word Maryam (Mary-mother of Jesus) comes 34 times and the word Injeel (Bible) comes 12 times.

2) Qur'aan at Surah An-Nisaa 4:157-158 says – “But the plotters boastfully said we killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the Prophet of ALLAH. No, they did not kill him, neither they crucified him. Only a likeness of him was shown to them. Those who are at variance concerning him are surely in doubt regarding him. They have no knowledge of him. They only surmise. Certainly they did not kill him. ALLAH raised him unto HIMSELF. And ALLAH is Almighty and All Wise.

## **Jesus and the Swords**

There are two occasions where sword is mentioned in the Gospels.

(a) During the very last days of Jesus's life on the earth, the Chief Rabbi and the Teachers of the Law (i.e. the teachers of 10 commandments) were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus (Ref. Gospel of Luke 22:2)

(b) In order to protect himself, Jesus had asked his apostles (disciples) for a sword. Jesus had said to the Apostles – “When I sent you without a purse, bag or sandals - did you lack anything? They replied “Nothing”. “Then Jesus said to them – “But now if you have purse, take it, and also a bag, and if you don't have a sword, sell you cloak (overcoat) and buy one. A short while later, the disciples of Jesus said – “See, Lord! here are two swords. “Then Jesus replied “That is enough”.(Ref. Gospel of Luke 22:34-38)

(c) At the another place Bible says – “Then Simon Peter who had a sword drew it and struck the Chief Rabbi's servant – cutting off his right ear. So Jesus commanded Peter – “Put your sword away. (Ref. Gospel of John 18:10-11).

## **Conclusion**

**So it is wrong to believe that Jesus is Lord and that he died on the cross and that GOD raised him from the dead.**

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