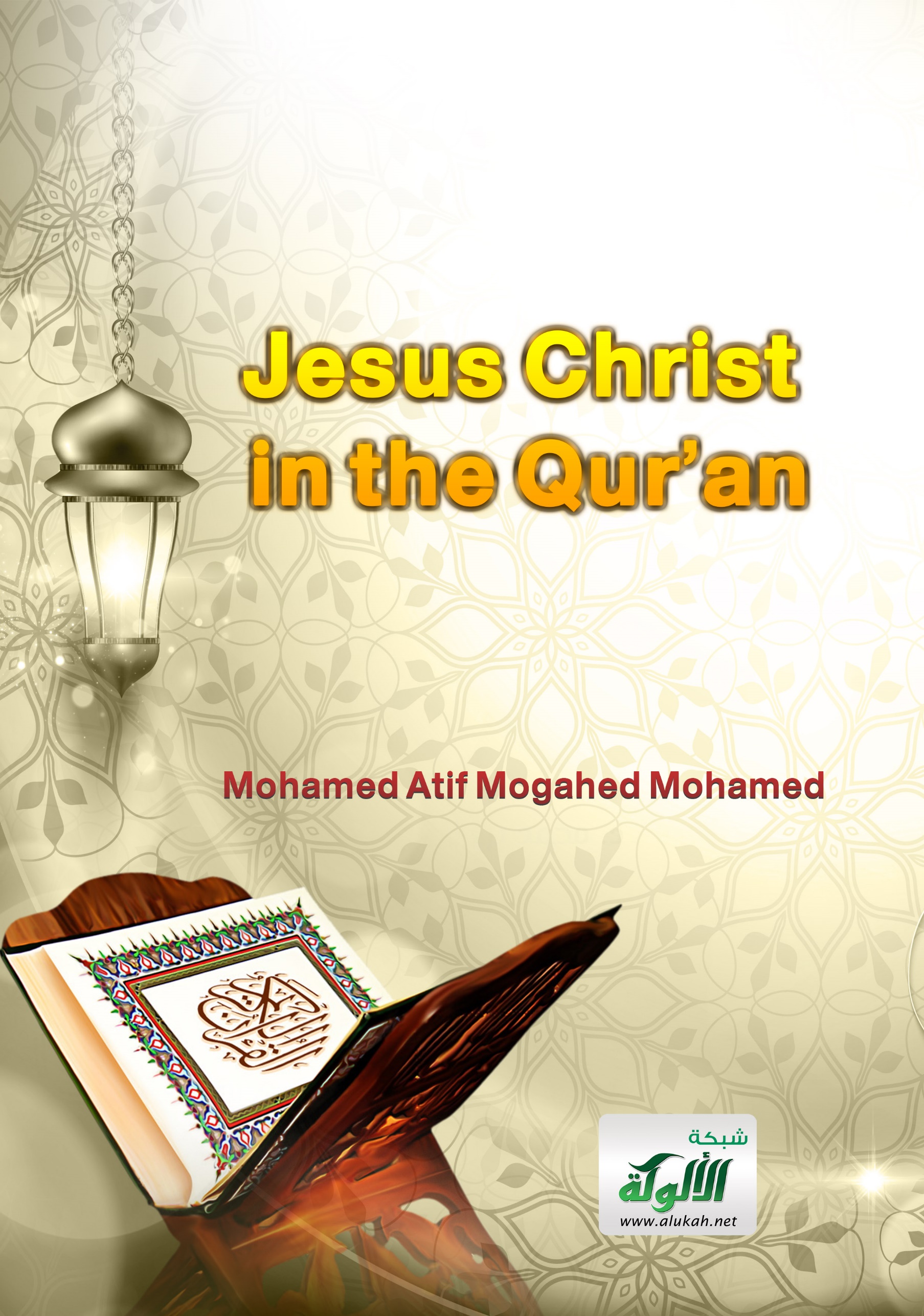
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**Jesus Christ in the Qur’an**

Mohamed Atif Mogahed Mohamed

**Jesus Christ in the Qur’an**

**Foreword:**

In 1978, my dear mother-in-law, Maggie Vallely, visited us in Welling, Kent, England. It was her first and last visit outside Ireland. I had the pleasure of taking her on the train to London and on the Underground to the department stores of Oxford Street. On her visit, she and I had interesting chats, after one of which she said to my wife, “Teresa, Mohamed believes in God!” How innocent!

I must admit that I have never got anything bad from my in-laws or from their relatives and friends. All of them are very friendly, trustworthy and helpful. With respect to basic values, we are on the same track. Despite differences in beliefs, my Egyptian side and my Irish side enjoy a warm relationship. In Egypt, my Egyptian side says, “Uncle John – Aunt Mary – Aunt Cathleen”, and my Irish side says, “’Ammu (uncle) ’Essaam – ’Ammu Ibraheem – ’Ammu ’Abdu – ’Amma (aunt) Aida – ’Amma Laila.” However, the fundamental difference in faith lies in the concept of God and the nature of Jesus.

This piece of writing is meant to convey to my English-speaking relatives, friends and acquaintances what the Qur’an says about Jesus and his mother, Maryam (Mary), and how both are highly regarded in Islam – may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon both of them. Its contents are organized as follows:

**♦ Introduction: One Sender, One Basic Message**

**♦ Scenario 1: The Pledge**

**♦ Scenario 2: Miraculous Conception and Baby**

**♦ Scenario 3: Maryam Facing Community**

**♦ Scenario 4: Prophethood & Miracles & Responses**

**♦ Scenario 5: Finale & Pause**

**♦ Scenario 6: Fast Forward to the Judgment Day**

**♦ Scenario 7: Back in the Future: The Second Coming**

**♦ Conclusions & Implications**

**Introduction: One Sender, One Basic Message:**

One of the basic requirements of faith in Islam is to believe in all the messengers that Allah says He had sent before Mohammad – may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon all of them and upon all of their genuine followers till the Resurrection Day. The Qur’an contains a lot of statements affirming the requirement, e.g.:

♦ “The Messenger [Mohammad] believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and [so do] the believers. All of them believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], ‘We make no distinction between any of His messengers.’ And they say, ‘We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination." [Suurah 2/Aayah 285]

♦ **“**Say, [O believers], “We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."” [Suurah2/Aayah136]

 ♦ “O you who have believed, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger [Mohammad] and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray.” [Suurah 4/Aayah136]

♦ “(150) Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and wish to discriminate between Allah and His messengers and say, “We believe in some and disbelieve in others,” and wish to adopt a way in between – (151) Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. (152) But they who believe in Allah and His messengers and do not discriminate between any of them ♦ to those He is going to give their rewards. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.” [Suurah 4 - Aayahs150-152]

The Hadith reiterates the Qur’anic statements affirming the requirement, the brotherhood of Allah’s messengers and the oneness of their basic message. The following are some related Hadith statements:

♦ “… … …. Faith means belief in Allah, in His angels, in His sacred Books, in His messengers, in the Last Day and in Divine Destiny. … … ….” [*Sahih Muslim* – Hadith 8]

♦ “… … …. Faith is to believe in Allah, in His angels, in (the) meeting with Him, in His messengers and in Resurrection." [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 47]

♦ "Don't give me superiority over Muussa [Prophet Moses], …. [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 620]

♦ "Don't give superiority over any of Allah's Prophets, …. [*Sahih* *Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 626]

♦ "None [among Muslims] should say that I [Mohammad] am better than Younus Ibn-Matta [Prophet Jonna]."[*Sahih Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 625]

♦ "If one testifies that there is no God but Allah, without partners, and that Mohammad is His slave and messenger, testifies that Jesus is Allah's slave and messenger, His Word which He bestowed on Maryam and a soul created by Him, and testifies that Paradise is true and Hell is true, Allah will admit one into Paradise even if one’s good deeds are few." [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 644]

♦ "Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all the people to Jesus, the son of Maryam. The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one." [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 652]

According to the Qur’an and the Hadith, all the messengers of Allah have one basic message. The message involves the following: introducing Allah to people; telling them about His plan for them in this world and the Hereafter; making an offer, calling on people to be Muslims (to submit to Him), i.e. to believe in Him and obey His teachings contained in His message and presented and represented by His messengers; and warning them of the consequences of turning down the offer. In return, Allah rewards the believers with eternal bliss in Paradise, and hence saves them from the Hellfire. However, the laws (shari’ahs) vary among the messages in some respects; the last laws abrogate earlier ones.

**Purpose of the Qur’an’s stories:**

The Qur’an contains a selection of stories of past events and messengers, from Adam to Jesus. The stories are not fiction; they describe actual events. The mention of earlier messengers in the Qur’an is meant to serve specific purposes, such as:

♦ to provide Prophet Mohammad with examples of endurance as well as hardships experienced by fellow prophets, as a source of solace and comfort to him and to the faithful at difficult times;

♦ to demonstrate the oneness of the Sender, the oneness of the basic aims of the messages and the continuity of the chain linking the messengers, from Adam to Mohammad.

♦ to establish the truth of certain issues and the falsity of others;

♦ to show distortions made in earlier messages;

♦ to present the truth about disputed issues among the “followers” of earlier messengers;

♦ to give examples of the consequences of believing and obedience and the consequences of disbelieving and disobedience;

♦ to provide *Ahl Al-Kitaab* (the People of the Book = Jews and Christians) in particular with reminders so that they may compare and test the credibility of the Qur’anic revelations, which recognize the messengers they claim to be following.

Let us see what the Qur’an tells us about the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the son of Maryam / Mary. His story is not presented in one whole piece or one Suurah (chapter). Its parts are found in a number of Aayahs (verses) in certain Suurahs, as dictated by the actual occasion or context of the Qur’anic revelations. However, the related Aayahs together provide a vivid picture of the events that matter in Jesus’ life.

Jesus’ mother, Maryam (Mary) has a special status in Islam. Her name is mentioned in the Qur’an 34 times, in 13 Suurahs (chapters). Suurah No. 19 carries her name (Suurat Maryam), and Suurah No. 3 carries her family’s name (Suurat Aal-Imraan/Al-Imran).

Praised by Allah as one of two righteous women, Maryam, the mother of Prophet Jesus, is described in the Qur’an as a good example for women to follow in faith, chastity and conduct.

**According to the Hadith, Prophet Mohammad says about her:**

♦ "Maryam, ‘the daughter of 'Imraan’, [Jesus’ mother], was the best among women ... ... " [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 642]

♦ "… … …. No women have reached such a high level of conduct as Asia, Pharaoh's wife, and Maryam [Jesus’ mother] did. … … …." [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 623]

**As mentioned in the Qur’an, Jesus has the following names and attributes:**

♦ ’Eessa / ’Isa = Jesus

♦ Al-Masseeh = the Messiah

♦ Ibn-Maryam = the son of Maryam (Mary)

♦ Abdullaah = the slave / servant of Allah

♦ Rassuul-Allaah = the Messenger of Allah

♦ Nabiy = Prophet

♦ Kalimatullaah = the word of Allah (directed to Maryam)

♦ Ruuh = a soul (created by Allah)

♦ Wajeeh = distinguished (in this world and the Hereafter)

♦ Min Al-Muqarrabeen = one of those brought near to Allah

♦ Min Al-Saaliheen = one of the righteous

♦ Mubaarak = blessed

♦ Baarr = dutiful (to his mother)

The name “’'Eessa” (Jesus) is mentioned in the Qur’an 25 times.

In what follows, the events of the story of Jesus are presented in scenarios, with an eye on the chronological order and an eye on relevance. Each scenario includes the real characters involved and the Qur’anic verses that describe the related events. In the scenario of the Second Coming, some details are taken from the Hadith. The Hadith / Hadeeth refers to the authenticated records of what Prophet Mohammad said and did, e.g. *Sahih / Saheeh Al-Bukari, Sahih Muslim, Musnad Ahmad and Sunan Abi-Daawuud*.

**Scenario 1: The Pledge**

**Real Characters:**

’Imraan’s wife

Angels

Zakariyyah (Zechariah)

Baby Maryam (Mary)

A community of Bani-Issraaeel (the Israelites = descendants of Prophet Issraaeel / Israel / Ya’quub / Jacob, who is the son of Prophet Iss-haaq / Isaac, who is the son of Prophet Ibraaheem / Abraham)

In Scenario 1, Maryam, though a baby, is the main character in terms of significance.

Praising Maryam as one of two women representing good believers, the Qur’an says:

“(12) And [the example of] Maryam, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into [her garment] through Our angel, and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.” [Suurah 66]

**Events & Aayahs:**

The chain of events starts with ‘Imraan’s wife, who is pregnant. In her prayers, she takes a pledge to dedicate the baby inside her to the service of Allah. She gives birth to a baby girl, and she calls her “Maryam” (Mary). Answering her prayers, Allah accepts her pledge. Maryam is put under the care of Zakariyya (Zechariah), and she has been very well looked after and well educated.

A secondary plot branches off the main chain of events; it concerns Zakariyya. Having no children of his own, he prays to Allah to grant him a righteous offspring. Allah answers his prayer, promising him – despite his old age - a son to be called “Yahya” (John), a name never given to anyone before.

**The Qur’anic Aayahs describing the chain of events in the Pledge scenario:**

♦ Making the pledge in her payer, the wife of ‘Imraan says, "My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb, consecrated [for Your service], so accept this from me. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing."[Suurah 3 - Aayah 35]

♦ Having delivered her baby, the wife of ‘Imraan says, “(36) … … …"My Lord, I have delivered a female." And Allah was most knowing of what she delivered, "And the male is not like the female. And I have named her Maryam (Mary), and I seek refuge for her in You and [for] her descendants from Satan, the expelled [from the mercy of Allah]."[Suurah 3/Aayah 36]

♦ The Qur’anic story continues in Suurah 3, Aayahs 37-41:

“(37) So, her Lord accepted her with good acceptance and caused her to grow in a good manner and put her in the care of Zakariyya. Every time Zakariyya entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said, "O Maryam, from where is this [coming] to you?" She said, "It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account."

(38) At that, Zakariyya called upon his Lord, saying, "My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring. Indeed, You are the Hearer of supplication."

(39) So, the angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber, "Indeed, Allah gives you good tidings of Yahya (John), confirming a word from Allah and [who will be] honourable, abstaining [from women], and a prophet from among the righteous."

(40) He said, "My Lord, how will I have a boy when I have reached old age and my wife is barren?" The angel said, "Such is Allah; He does what He wills."

(41) He said, "My Lord, make for me a sign." He Said, "Your sign is that you will not [be able to] speak to the people for three days except by gesture. And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the evening and the morning."

♦ The Qur’anic verses in Suurah 3 flow back to the Maryam track:

(42) And [mention] when the angels said, "O Maryam, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.

(43) O Maryam, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow [in prayer]."

♦ Addressing Prophet Mohammad, Allah says, “(44) That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you. And you were not with them (Maryam’s relatives) when they cast their pens as to which of them should be responsible for Maryam. Nor were you with them when they disputed.” [Suurah 3]

**Scenario 2: Miraculous Conception and Baby**

**Real Characters:**

Maryam

Angels

Baby Jesus

**Events & Aayahs:**

The events take a critical turn in this scenario; though a virgin, Maryam is told she is going to conceive a baby boy. She is stunned by the news. The dialogue between her and the messenger angel shows her fear for her chastity and shows her strong religious character. Praising her character and picking her as one example of righteous believing women, Allah says in Suurah 66, “(12) And [the example of] Maryam, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, … … … , and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.”

The miraculous conception takes place with Allah’s permission, a conception involving a virgin female, without any male intervention. Maryam secludes herself in a remote place till delivery is due. The time comes, and under a date palm tree, she labours, wishing she died before that, but she is reassured and comforted. There, she gives birth to baby Jesus. She is told to shake the palm tree in order to make dates fall off the tree. So, she can eat dates, drink water from the stream by the tree and be contented. She is told not to speak to anybody.

**The Quranic Aayahs describing the scenario of the miraculous conception and birth of baby Jesus:**

“(45) … … … [The] angels said, "O Maryam, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Maryam - distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to Allah].” [Suurah 3]

The scenario is detailed in the following verses in Suurah 19 (Suurat Maryam):

“(16) And mention, [O Mohammad], in the Book [the story of] Maryam, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east.

(17) And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then We sent to her Our Angel, and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man.

(18) She said, "Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you, [so leave me], if you should be fearing of Allah."

(19) He said, "I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy."

(20) She said, "How can I have a boy while no man has touched me, and I have not been unchaste?"

(21) He said, "Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, 'It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed.' "

More scenario details from Suurah 3:

“(46) He (the son of Maryam) will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous.

(47) She said, "My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?" [The angel] said, "Such is Allah; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is.

(48) And He will teach him writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel

(49) And [make him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.

(50) And [I have come] confirming what was before me of the Torah and to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you. And I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear Allah and obey me.

(51) Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is the straight path."

Events continue in Suurat Maryam (Suurah 19):

“(22) So, she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place.

(23) And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, "Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten."

(24) But he called her from below her, "Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream.

(25) And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates.

(26) So, eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, 'Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] human.' "

**Scenario 3: Maryam Facing Community**

**Real Characters:**

Maryam

Baby Jesus

Israelite community

**Events & Aayahs:**

The events get more complicated, for Maryam has to face the Israelite community with a baby, without having had a husband. In the encounter, she is accused of adultery. Following the early inspirational advice not to speak, Maryam points to her baby. The accusers think it is a joke, but to their surprise, the baby miraculously speaks in defence of his mother by introducing himself as a God-sent future messenger.

The narrative in Suurah 19 reads as follows:

“(27) Then she brought him [baby Jesus] to her people, carrying him. They said, "O Maryam, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented.

(28) O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste."

(29) So, she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child?"

Miraculously, baby Jesus speaks:

"(30) … … … Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet.

(31) And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakaah as long as I remain alive

(32) And [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant.

(33) And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive."

The chain of verses describing the brief - yet powerful - encounter ends with a significant concluding statement. It emphasizes that Jesus is the son of Maryam, that she is innocent and the accusation is false, that he is a miraculous human being and messenger, that he does not have a father of any kind, that Allah has chosen and prepared him for a mission to the Israelites, and that there is a dispute regarding his nature among those claiming to be his followers. This is the concluding verse:

“(34) That is Jesus, the son of Maryam - the word of truth about which they are in dispute.”

**Scenario 4: Prophethood & Miracles & Responses**

**Real Characters:**

Prophet Jesus

Israelites

Disciples

**Events & Aayahs**

This scenario’s events represent Jesus’ activities of delivering Allah’s message and the Israelites’ responses. Jesus introduces himself as Allah’s messenger and explains his mission to them. He is equipped with miraculous credentials proving his credibility and the truthfulness of what he says. The scenario sums up the responses of the Israelites to Jesus’ *da’wah* (call).

Despite his miraculous conception and his speaking in the cradle and despite the several miracles he performs, some Israelites reject his prophethood and message. It is typical of rejectors of Allah’s messengers to support their rejection by false accusations. For various reasons and interests, they may follow the accusations by harmful actions.

Let us see the Qur’anic verses that mention Jesus’ delivery of Allah’s Message and the responses of the Israelite community to it. The verses link Jesus to the messengers before him and the one to be sent after him. He tells the Israelites about his mission, what is required of them and what is going to happen to those that follow him and to those that do not.

♦ “(87) And We did certainly give Moses the Torah and followed up after him with messengers. And We gave Jesus, the son of Maryam, clear proofs and supported him with the Holy Spirit. … … ….” [Suurah 2]

♦ “(6) … … …. Jesus, the son of Maryam, said, "O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad." But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, "This is obvious magic."” [Suurah 61]

 ♦ “(49) … … … ''Indeed, I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed, in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.

(50) And [I have come] confirming what was before me of the Torah and to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you. And I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear Allah and obey me.

(51) Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is the straight path."

(52) But when Jesus felt [persistence in] disbelief from them, he said, "Who are my supporters for [the cause of] Allah?" The disciples said, "We are supporters for Allah. We have believed in Allah and testify that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].” [Suurah 3 - Aayahs 49-52]

♦ “(14) … … …. Jesus, the son of Maryam, said to the disciples, "Who are my supporters for Allah?" The disciples said, "We are supporters of Allah." And a faction of the Children of Israel believed, and a faction disbelieved. So, We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.” [Suurah 61]

♦ “(63) And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, "I have come to you with wisdom and to make clear to you some of that over which you differ, so fear Allah and obey me.

(64) Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path."

(65) But the denominations from among them differed [and separated], so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day.

(66) Are they waiting except for the Hour to come upon them suddenly while they perceive not?

(67) Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous

(68) [To whom Allah will say], "O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this Day, nor will you grieve,

(69) [You] who believed in Our verses and were Muslims.

(70) Enter Paradise, you and your kinds, delighted." [Suurah 43 - Aayahs 63-70]

**Scenario 5: Finale & Pause**

This scenario resumes the flow of events of message delivery and responses. As mentioned earlier, some people have believed while others have disbelieved. The believers declare their support to Jesus and submission to Allah. Jesus’ disciples ask him to pray to Allah for a feast/banquet from heaven so that they can eat from it and be witnesses to it as a miraculous event. Jesus prays for the banquet, and Allah answers his prayer.

As for the disbelievers, they plot against him. Foiling the plot, Allah raises Jesus to Himself, thus pausing his activities. Yet, the disbelievers falsely claim to have crucified and killed Jesus. The Qur’an asserts that they have not crucified or killed Jesus. It hints at a future return after the pause.

**The events of the Finale & Pause scenario are mentioned in the following Quranic verses:**

♦ “(52) But when Jesus felt [persistence in] disbelief from them, he said, "Who are my supporters for [the cause of] Allah?" The disciples said, "We are supporters for Allah. We have believed in Allah and testify that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].

(53) Our Lord, we have believed in what You revealed and have followed the messenger Jesus, so register us among the witnesses [to truth]." [Suurat 3 - Aayahs 52-53]

♦ “(112) [And remember] when the disciples said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven? [Jesus] said, "Fear Allah, if you should be believers."

(113) They said, "We wish to eat from it and let our hearts be reassured and know that you have been truthful to us and be among its witnesses."

(114) Said Jesus, the son of Mary, "O Allah, our Lord, send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven to be for us a festival for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You. And provide for us, and You are the best of providers."” [Suurah 5 - Aayahs 112-114]

♦ “(54) And the disbelievers planned, but Allah planned. And Allah is the best of planners.

(55) [Mention] when Allah said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify you from those who disbelieve and make those who follow you [in submission to Allah alone] superior to those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me is your return, and I will judge between you concerning that in which you used to differ.

(56) And as for those who disbelieved, I will punish them with a severe punishment in this world and the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers."

(57) But as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, He will give them in full their rewards, and Allah does not like the wrongdoers.

(58) This is what We recite to you, [O Muhammad], of [Our] verses and the precise [and wise] message.” [Suurah 3 - Aayahs 54-58]

♦ “(156) And [We cursed them] for their disbelief and their saying against Maryam a great slander,

(157) And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.

(158) Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.

(159) And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus (as only a human messenger) before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.” [Suurah 4 - Aayahs 156-159]

**Scenario 6: Fast Forward to the Judgment Day**

**Real Characters:**

Angels

Adam and all his descendants

Prophet Jesus

**Events & Aayahs:**

Aayah 159, Suurah 4, introduces this Fast Forward scenario. The Aayah foretells a questioning that is going to take place on the Judgement Day. Jesus stands as a witness, and Allah questions him over his mission and the allegation of his divinity. In fact, on that Day, each of Allah’s messengers is going to be publicly questioned, and so are the people to whom he conveyed Allah’s message. In this respect, Allah says, “(6) Then We will surely question those to whom [a message] was sent, and We will surely question the messengers. (7) Then We will surely relate [their deeds] to them with knowledge, and We were not [at all] absent. (8) And the weighing [of deeds] that Day will be the truth. So, those whose scales are heavy - it is they who will be the successful. (9) And those whose scales are light are the ones who will lose themselves for what injustice they were doing toward Our signs / verses.” [Suurah 7/Aayahs 6-9]

As presented in Suurat Al-Maa’idah, the scenario foretells a future tremendous questioning event. This starts with Allah reminding Jesus of His blessings and favours upon him and his mother on earth. The start is a kind of recapitulation affirming the facts of his mission and miracles and Allah’s favours and support as well as the Israelites’ responses to his call. Then, comes the crucial question regarding the divinity allegation. The dialogue is beautiful, and the answer reflects wonderful humility, truthfulness and submission on the part of Prophet Jesus.

**Here are the Aayahs describing the future scenario of questioning Jesus on the Day of Judgment:**

♦ “(109) [Be warned of] the Day when Allah will assemble the messengers and say, "What was the response you received?" They will say, "We have no knowledge. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen"

(110) [The Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My favour upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Pure Spirit and you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and [remember] when I taught you writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, "This is not but obvious magic."

(111) And [remember] when I inspired to the disciples, "Believe in Me and in My messenger Jesus." They said, "We have believed, so bear witness that indeed we are Muslims [in submission to Allah]."

(112) [And remember] when the disciples said, "O Jesus, son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven? [Jesus] said," Fear Allah, if you should be believers."

(113) They said, "We wish to eat from it and let our hearts be reassured and know that you have been truthful to us and be among its witnesses."

(114) Said Jesus, the son of Mary, "O Allah, our Lord, send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven to be for us a festival for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You. And provide for us, and You are the best of providers."

(115) Allah said, "Indeed, I will send it down to you, but whoever disbelieves afterwards from among you - then indeed will I punish him with a punishment by which I have not punished anyone among the worlds."

(116) And [beware the Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?'" He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is the Knower of the unseen.

(117) I said not to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness.

(118) If You should punish them - indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them - indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

(119) Allah will say, "This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness." For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment.

(120) To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is within them. And He is over all things competent.” [Suurah 5 - Aayahs 109-120]

**Scenario 7: Back in the Future: The Second Coming**

**Real Characters:**

Al-Mahdi

Jesus Christ, the son of Maryam

Followers of all faiths

The Antichrist

**Events & Aayahs:**

Jesus’ Second Coming is actualization of related hints in the Qur’an. One hint is identified in the Qur’anic verse prophesying the birth of baby Jesus, who will speak in the cradle, will be a prophet, and will speak at maturity, approaching old age. As a miracle, speaking in the cradle is understood, but what is miraculous about speaking at the age of maturity? In the case of Jesus, the miracle is not the act of speaking itself, but it is the circumstantial timing of speaking; he is expected to come back to earth from where he is now after a pause of thousands of years to preach again.

Also, there is a hint in Suurat Annissaa’, verse 159. This says, "And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.” “His death” refers to the future death of Jesus. It could also refer to the death of each of his later followers that wrongly deify him. Either case is a future event, post-Qur’an revelation, thus eliminating any suggested references to the past. In addition, the words “believe in Jesus” refer to realizing his being man and Allah’s Messenger, without any divine attributes; this is how Jesus is exactly described in the Qur’an.

Also, in Suurat Azzukhruf, verse 61 reads: “And indeed, Jesus will be a known sign for (the coming of) the Hour, … … ….” According to the Hadith, Jesus’ Second Coming is considered in Islam one of ten signs marking the nearness of the Hour (Last Day of life on earth).

The Hadith gives some details of Jesus’ future comeback prior to the End of the world. It mentions the following events. Jesus will descend in the Middle East during the reign of Al-Mahdi, a righteous ruler from Ahl Albait (descendants of Prophet Mohammad. He will help rid the people of Almasseeh Addajjaal (Antichrist), assume leadership, ruling in accordance with Islamic teachings. With respect to himself, he will correct the long-held beliefs alleging his divinity. He will remove all the symbols associated with his divinity and worship. [*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* – Hadith 155] People will realize that he is not one-in-three or three-in-one; he is just a man and one of Allah’s mighty messengers, and he was neither crucified nor killed, and hence the Hadith’s metaphor of breaking the cross.

Jesus will follow Qur’anic guidance in acts of worship and administration of state affairs. The Islamic prohibitions will be enforced. Lasting for forty years, his reign will be one of peace, justice and security. There will be such unprecedented prosperity that none will need any charity. The Islamic faith will prevail so widely that there will be no collection of “jizyah” (tax paid by non-Muslims) - only zakaah will be collected from Muslims, but there be will no needy to take it. [*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* – Haidth 155] Eventually, Jesus will die and will be given a Muslim burial.

**Aayahs hinting at Jesus’ Second Coming:**

♦ Suurat Annissaa’, verse 159: "And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.”

♦ Suurat Azzukhruf, verse 61 reads: “And indeed, Jesus will be [a sign for] knowledge of the Hour, … … ….”

♦ Suurat Al-Imraan, verse 46: “He (the son of Maryam) will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous.”

**Hadiths on Jesus’ Second Coming:**

"The Hour will not come till after the son of Maryam descends among you as a just ruler; he will break the cross, kill the swine, and abolish the “jizyah”. Wealth will be so abundant so that nobody will need zakaah." [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* - Hadith 656]

“By Him, in whose Hands my soul is, the son of Maryam will soon descend among you as a just ruler; he will break the cross, kill the swine and abolish the “jizyah”. Wealth will be so abundant that nobody will need zakaah.” [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* - Hadith 425]

“How will you be when the son of Maryam descends among you? He will judge among people in accordance with the laws of the Qur’an, not of the Gospel.” [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* - Hadith 658]

**Conclusions & Implications:**

**Conclusions:**

1- The story of Jesus in the Qur’an demonstrates the special status of Jesus and his mother, Maryam, in Islam.

2- It affirms the link of all God’s messengers and prophets in one chain from Adam to Mohammad, in terms of oneness of source, oneness of basic message, namely submission (Islam) to Allah, and oneness of consequences of message acceptance or denial.

3- The story affirms the Islamic demand to love and believe in Jesus as a great messenger of Allah. One cannot be Muslim if one denies any of the messengers and prophets mentioned in the Qur’an.

4- The story affirms Jesus’ miraculous conception and birth, from a chaste virgin mother, without a father of any kind, neither physical nor divine. The Qur’an compares Jesus’ creation to Adam’s, who had no father or mother. “(59) Indeed, the example of Jesus … is like that of Adam. … … ….” [Suurah 3]

5- The story corrects the misconceptions and distortions woven around the nature, job and life and death of Jesus.

6- It recognizes that Jesus, like all of Allah’s messengers, is the slave or servant of Allah. He is not Allah or the son of Allah, and Jesus never claimed to be either. Allah empowered him to perform miracles as proof of being His messenger and prophet.

7- Regarding the allegation that Jesus is the "Son of God", the Qur’an says:

♦ “(88) And they say, "The Most Merciful has taken [for himself] a son. (89) You have done an atrocious thing. (90) The heavens almost rupture therefrom and the earth splits open and the mountains collapse in devastation (91) That they attribute to the Most Merciful a son. (92) And it is not appropriate for the Most Merciful that He should take a son." [Suurat Maryam]

♦ “(81) Say, [O Mohammad], "If the Most Merciful had a son, then I would be the first of [his] worshippers." (82) Exalted is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.” [Suurah 43]

8- The story recognizes that Jesus received revelations from Allah, called Al-Injeel (commonly translated as “the Gospel”). He was also taught Attawraah (the Torah), which had been revealed to Prophet Muussa (Moses). The two original revelations (Attawraah and Al-Injeel) do not exist now; the available contents are distortions, authored by human writers claimed to be inspired by God. So, Prophet Mohamed instructs Muslims not to believe or disbelieve such contents, which are not mentioned in the Qur’an.

9- The story tells us that the “trinity” concept is not true. Allah is not one in three, nor is He three in one; He is “Ahad”, i.e. One in One. In this respect, the Qur’an says: (73) They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the third of three." And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment. (74) So, will they not repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (75) The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.” [Suurah 5]

10- It rejects the crucifixion claim and the death of Jesus on the cross.

11- It provides hints prophesying the Second Coming of Jesus. Details of the Second Coming scenario are mentioned in the Hadith. They differ from that of Christian theological literature in terms of events and nature.

12- It mentions the prophecy of the coming of Prophet Mohammad as a messenger of Allah, after Jesus. The Qur’an calls Prophet Mohammad by the names “Mohammad” and “Ahmad”; these two Arabic names have the same meaning and stem.

13- None of God’s messengers is divine or is to be worshipped.

**Implications:**

The story of Jesus in the Qur’an has important implications for Muslims and for non-Muslims, including those claiming to be “followers” of Jesus. What does Islam want from both of them?

**Implications for Muslims:**

**There are important lessons for Muslims in Jesus’ story in the Qur’an:**

♦ Muslims are required to believe in Prophet Jesus as well as all of Allah’s messengers, without discrimination.

♦ They have to learn their religion so that they can be well aware of its teachings and their duties. An important duty is to spread the Message; Prophet Mohammad says, “Convey my message even if you convey only one Aayah.” [*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith 3461] How can one worship God or spread what one does not know?! In other words, they need to properly study the Qur’an and the purified Sunnah.

♦ Learning involves studying, reading, asking questions, thinking, comparing, testing and reaching conclusions. After all, we are being tested all the time in this life on earth. Allah says, “Do people think they will be left to say, ‘We believe’ without being tested?” [Suurah 29 – Aayah 2] He also says, “Every soul will taste death. And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned [Suurah 21 – Aayah 35]

♦ To make our deal with Allah succeed, we have to be aware of the related "terms and conditions". Such awareness should not be treated as we treat the "terms and conditions'' when we download some application onto our computers; we normally say "Yes" without reading a word. In the case of worshipping Allah, it has to be done with full awareness and thoroughness. On the Judgment Day, we will have to account for the minutest details, especially heart affairs. In addition to the required awareness, we need to consult Allah on all activities of carrying out the tasks of the deal. Consulting Him is to be done by checking His Guidance.

♦ Thus, good knowledge of Allah's Message is necessary for proper worship. Prophet Mohammad calls on Muslims to learn their religion. Encouraging them, he says, "If one embarks on a journey for knowledge, Allah makes it a means to Paradise."[*Sahih Muslim*: 2699]

♦ Allah commands the faithful to recite the Qur’an and to reflect upon its Aayahs (verses / signs); He says, “(29) [This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Mohammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.”[Suurah 38] Also, according to the Hadith, the Muslim will be held to account for his/her knowledge. [*Sunan Attermithiy* – Hadith 4/612]

♦ The story of Jesus stresses the importance of supplication / prayers, asking God for help, and it links answering prayers to faith in Him and righteousness. Supplication is considered the essence of worship. So, Muslims must not supplicate any of Allah’s messengers or their followers; only Allah is the One to ask for help.

♦ The story should remind Muslims not to go to extremes in praising Prophet Mohammad. Calling on them not to do so, he says, “Do not flatter me as the Nassaaraa (Christians) have done with Jesus, the son of Maryam. I am only a slave of Allah. Call me ‘Anbdullaah’ (the slave of Allah) and His messenger.” [*Sahih Al-Bukhari* – Hadith 3445]

However, the Prophet calls on fellow Muslims to pray for him, and so does Allah. The Qur’an and the Hadith’s call to pray for the Prophet has great significance. In addition to being a source of rewards, it is a constant reminder that Prophet Mohammad is not God or His son, but he is only His salve and messenger.

**All what the Muslim has to do is to follow the guidance in the Qur’an and the purified Sunnah. Examples:**

 ♦ In addition to the basic Islamic requirement of belief in all of Allah’s messengers and messages, Muslims are instructed to argue with Ahl Al-Kitaab in such a good way that does not incite hatred or enmity. The Qur’an says, “(46) And do not argue with the People of the Scripture/Book except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."” [Suurah 29 – verses 46]

♦ Islam does not prevent Muslims from being good to people from other faiths, including idolaters. Allah says, “(8) Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly. (9) Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.” [Suurah 60 – Aayahs 8-9]

♦ Islam generally demands of Muslims to spread the Message to all, starting with their own families, ending with those they can reach. Teaching how to spread the Word, Allah says, “(125) Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.” [Suurah 16]

-The Qur’an even bans calling the gods of disbelievers bad names; “(108) And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah … … ….” [Suurah 6 - Aayah 108]

♦ Naturally, Ahl-Alkitaab fall into the category of general beneficiaries of rights as relatives, as neighbours, as poor / needy citizens, as signatories to treaties / pacts / pledges and as disputants in court cases. As Islam declares that “there ought not to [nor can there] be compulsion in faith”, Ahl-Alkitaab enjoy the right to freedom of worship.

♦ Like others, Ahl-Alkitaab are to be protected from injustices, wrongdoing or harm to their lives, property and honour.

♦ It is permissible to trade and work with them, to share and care, and to exchange advice on matters of doing good and preventing evil. It is recommended to give presents on good occasions, e.g. weddings, births, … etc., and to offer help and condolences on sad ones. All the recommended and permissible initiatives are part of good conduct towards relatives, neighbours, workmates and acquaintances as well as others. They are ways of helping in promoting good and virtue and combating vice and evil.

♦ However, Islam generally bans involvement in activities that displease Allah. According to Prophet Mohammad, the Muslim must not agree to do anything that involves disobedience to Allah. So, the Muslim is to gracefully stay away from occasions or acts inconsistent with Islam, regardless of source, be it Muslim or non-Muslim.

♦ Prophet Mohammad’s conduct towards Ahl Al-Kitaab is the example to follow. The Prophet stressed the importance of protecting *thimmis* / Ahl Al-Thimmah (non-Muslims under Muslim rule). Like all citizens, Ahl Al-Thimmah have the same rights and duties; as for matters of faith, they are independent.

♦ According to the Hadith, warning fellow Muslims, Prophet Mohammad says:

“If a Muslim wrongs a *thimmi* (non-Muslim under Muslim rule), robs him of his rights, burdens him with what he cannot bear or takes something off him without consent, I will be his indictor on the Day of Judgement.”[*Sunan Abi-Daawuud*, Hadith 3052].

“Whoever kills a *thimmi* will not be able to smell the Paradise fragrance, which can be smelt from as far as a forty-year walk.” [*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Hadith 2995]

**Implications for Ahl Al-Kitaab:**

♦ Ahl Al-Kitaab are especially called upon to examine Allah’s last Revelations and heed the advice to embrace Islam, the religion of all of His messengers. The Qur’an and the Hadith present to them sufficient evidence, reminding them of Allah’s basic message of Islam, as submission to Him, from Adam to Mohammad. Suffice to require belief in Prophet Moses and Prophet Jesus as a condition of valid faith. In fact, there is no story of the life of Prophet Mohammad in the Qur’an as is the case with Prophet Moses and Prophet Jesus.

♦ Encouraging Ahl Al-Kitaab, Islam shows them how special they are. For example, Islam permits Muslims to eat the food of Ahl-Alkitaab and to marry their women. The Quran says, “(5) This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. And [lawful in marriage are] chaste women from among the believers and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before you, when you have given them their due compensation, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse or taking [secret] lovers. And whoever denies the faith - his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”

♦ Ahl Al-Kitaab have blood relationship with Muslims, starting with Prophet Ibraaheem (Abraham). Also, their faiths are supposed to be originally connected, as early as Adam. The Qur’an says, “(13) He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Mohammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. … … ….” [Suurah 42 – Aayah 13]

♦ Of Ahl Al-Kitaab, Al-Nassaaraa (those claiming to be supporters / followers of Jesus Christ) are particularly considered to be closer to Muslims; as stated in the Qur’an, “(82) … … …, and you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, "We are Nassaaraa.” That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant. (83) And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, “Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses.” [Suurah 5 – Aayahs 82-83]

♦ Regarding the mention of the word “Nassaaraa”, interestingly, I have not seen the Qur’an or the Hadith call the followers of Christ “Masseehiyyuun” (Christians), which is used in Arabic at modern times. The word used in the Qur’an and the Hadith is “Nassaaraa”, plural of “Nassraani”. It refers to those that claim to be supporters / followeres of Jesus Christ.

♦ The Nassaaraa are strongly advised to examine the concept of Trinity. Evidently, the Nassaaraa that revert to Islam find the Trinity concept to be unacceptable and indefensible. The allegation that it is a matter of faith and mystery does not remove the illogicality of the concept.

♦ The Nassaaraa are also strongly advised to conduct comparative investigation between what they say about Jesus and what the Qur’an says about him.

♦ Naturally, Ahl-Alkitaab are designated as special targets for Islam due to their frequent mention in the Qur’an and the Hadith and due to the shared interest, claims and literature. Besides, Prophet Mohammad came after Prophet Jesus, with no messengers in between. Even disputed claims and beliefs should be a motive for enlightened discourse and critical examination.

♦ It would be useful to whom it may concern to watch or listen to what newcomers to Islam say about their personal journey to Islam. YouTube is full of related videos about women and men from all walks of life. For example, Al Hiwar TV, a UK based channel, has a program called “My Journey to Islam”, in which a number of people speak about their journey to Islam. There is also Eddie Rezovic’s The Deen Show, which interviews several Christian scholars that have reverted to Islam. The following are interesting links:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8efNU97ovwg

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeUyp2wiyxk

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mo7OiDh3fD4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATwSrnWqER0

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOZSrPF5GNo

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7EVrCNxXNA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k94n1GfBbcw

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCuY6xfbGMM

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnDdpuxiIPA&feature=youtu.be

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfeUmoujeyo

https://www.discoveringislam.org/idris\_tawfiq.htm

https://www.discoveringislam.org/yusuf\_estes.htm

**Implications for all, Muslims and non-Muslims:**

♦ Nothing should be protected from being tested. Allah, Himself, calls on those with functioning heads to test His own Words to check if they are from Him or not, if they are the best and most useful guidance or not and if they are telling the truth or not compared to rival claims. After all, Allah tests all humans on earth to show them their responses to His call and how valid their faith and deeds are and to reward or punish each one accordingly.

♦ Islam calls on all human beings to properly examine God’s last Revelations. It advises them to accept Allah as their Lord, Prophet Mohammad as His last messenger and the Qur’an as His true Revelation. As is the case with the chain of Allah’s messages, genuine acceptors will be rewarded with eternal bliss in Heaven, whereas rejectors will be tormented in the Hellfire for ever.

♦ Reading the Qur’an with understanding is essential for making any judgement. To understand a Qur’anic statement properly, the reader has to see it in its contexts, i.e. in the light of Arabic language usage, in the light of related statements in the Qur’an itself, in the light of the Hadith and in the light of other related branches of knowledge, and in the light of the real circumstances in which the statement was revealed. In other words, the statement or text must not be taken out of context.

♦ Also, the reader needs to be aware of how the Qur’anic content is organized. It is not in chronological order; for example, the Opening Suurah / Chapter was not revealed first; and the Qur’an was not revealed in one piece. It was gradually revealed over a period of 23 years, in problematic situations. So, for a particular ruling or theme, one has to consult the whole Qur’an as well as the Hadith for relevant data. Besides, though helpful and important, the English translations do not reflect the Arabic original 100%.

**For a better understanding of any religious text, it is important to be aware of the following:**

♦ Not to be driven by traditional loyalty, bias or practices;

♦ Not to be influenced by media demonization and distortions;

♦ Not to rely on impressions or information in one’s head;

♦ Not to mix a faith with its followers - followers’ behaviour may or may not be consistent with their declared faiths;

♦ Not to take statements out of their contexts;

♦ To check arguments for and against views / claims;

♦ To check dictionaries for varied meanings of words;

♦ To check meanings of words in contexts;

♦ To think and test, not to cut and paste;

♦ To compare competing views and claims by proper comparative analysis that takes specific contextual conditions into consideration;

♦ Not to claim knowledge of adversaries’ intentions - let us not be concerned with intentions;

♦ To shun stereotyping individuals and communities in terms of colour, race, ethnicity – according to Islam, all humans are decedents of Adam, who was created from dust, and what matters is how good deeds are and how pure faith and intentions are;

♦ To observe civilized etiquette of debating and differing, shunning insults and violence;

♦ Not to assume a position of superiority or arrogance – teaching a basic etiquette of argumentation, the Qur’an says, “… either we or you are rightly guided or are in clear error…” Eventually, in the absence of agreement on the truth, “You have your faith, and I have my faith.”;

♦ To be open-minded, ready to listen and read, and ready to examine;

♦ Not to dismiss the claim to the existence of God and resurrection and subsequent punishment and reward - to dismiss the claim, without proper testing, has serious consequences after Resurrection;

♦ Not to put religion against science - the bulk of available scientific data should raise relevant questions that need to be answered regarding whether the universe is designed or is accidental, regarding whether the structures and operations of creatures are a testimony to the existence of a Great Creator and regarding the application of scientific inquiry into the claims of religions;

♦ To have a bit of humility and sincerely say: God, if you are there, please guide me to the truth.