

What the Koran says about Jews and Christians

Muslims believe the Koran is the infallible, pure word of Allah, eternal and perfect and delivered through the angel Gabriel to the final prophet Muhammad. The Koran cannot be changed (15:9), and Muslims are not allowed to disagree once Allah and Muhammad have decreed a matter (33:36). So what does Allah have to say about Jews and Christians?

You might be told that this first verse proclaims that Judaism and Christianity are equal to, and the same as, Islam, and that it guarantees that Jews and Christians who follow their faiths shall be rewarded in Paradise, just like Muslims:

Chapter 2, Verse 62

Verily, those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

But that is not what the verse means. Ibn Kathir explained this verse:

...Allah does not accept any deed or work from anyone, unless it conforms to the Law of Muhammad that is, after Allah sent Muhammad. Before that, every person who followed the guidance of his own Prophet was on the correct path, following the correct guidance and was

saved...When Allah sent Muhammad as the Last and Final Prophet and Messenger to all the Children of Adam, mankind was required to believe in him, obey him and refrain from what he prohibited them; those who do this are true believers...

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 1, pp. 249-250

The modern *Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan* gets to the heart of the matter:

Some modernists advance this verse as proof that all the religions, despite their apparent diversity in beliefs and rites of worship, are in essence one, and that it is not essential to believe in the prophetic mission of Muhammad and that deliverance depends on faithfully following one's own religion and doing good works. This is an absolutely erroneous idea.

Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan, Vol. 1, p. 71

So this verse actually means that, after the advent of Islam, righteous good deeds will be accepted only if they are done by Muslims.

Here we have one of many verses commanding Muslims not to be friends with Jews and Christians:

Chapter 5, Verse 51

O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as Auliya' (friends, protectors, helpers), they are but Auliya' of each other. And if any amongst you takes them as Auliya', then surely, he is

one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the Zalimun (polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust).

For a discussion of this particular verse, see the brochure *Don't Take Jews and Christians as Friends?*

The Koran states that the Jews are among the worst enemies of Muslims:

Chapter 5, Verse 82

Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) the Jews...

And here is what Allah commanded the Muslims to do with Jews and Christians:

Chapter 9, Verse 29

Fight against those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad), and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.

With this verse the Muslims were commanded by Allah to fight against the Jews and Christians until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued. The Jizyah is a tax imposed by Islam on all non-Muslims living under the "protection" of an Islamic government.

In explaining 9:29, this command from Allah was specifically noted in the modern *Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan*:

The command to fight the pagans was already given. Now Allah commands the believers to fight the Jews and Christians (if they do not accept Islam) until they pay the jizya and live under the rule of the Muslims.

Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan, Vol. 2, pp. 345-346

Allah says the Jews and Christians are liars, and Allah curses them:

Chapter 9, Verse 30

And the Jews say: 'Uzair (Ezra) is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: Messiah is the son of Allah. That is their saying with their mouths, resembling the saying of those who disbelieved aforetime. Allah's curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the truth!

In a paragraph titled *Fighting the Jews and Christians is legislated because They are Idolators and Disbelievers*, Ibn Kathir explained the meaning of this verse:

Allah the Exalted encourages the believers to fight the polytheists, disbelieving Jews and Christians, who uttered this terrible statement and utter lies against Allah, the Exalted.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Vol. 4, p. 408

Islam was to be made superior over Judaism and Christianity, whether Jews and Christians liked it or not:

Chapter 9, Verse 33

It is He Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religions even though the Mushrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) hate (it).

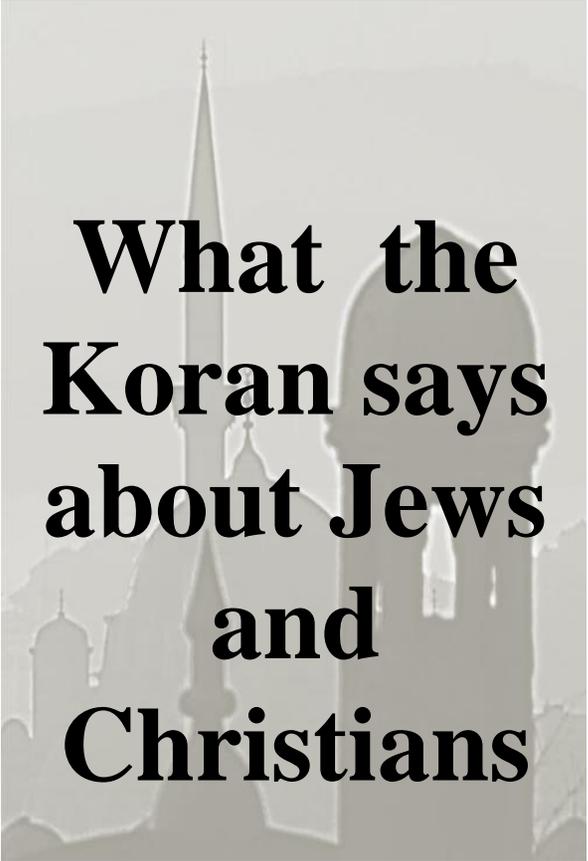
And the Koran states that Jews and Christians are among “the worst of creatures”:

Chapter 98, Verse 6

Verily, those who disbelieve (in the religion of Islam, the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad) from among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) and Al-Mushrikun, will abide in the fire of Hell. They are the worst of creatures.

A devout Muslim is expected to follow the unchangeable commands of Allah found in the Koran. As we can see, Allah's commands are quite a challenge to the idea of inter-faith harmony and dialogue. For additional aspects of this challenge, see the brochures *What Muhammad said about Jews and Christians*, *Don't Take Jews and Christians as Friends?*, and *Shirk: the Unforgiveable Sin of Christianity*.

Dr. Kirby is the author of six books on Islam. His latest book is *Islamic Doctrine versus the U.S. Constitution: The Dilemma for Muslim Public Officials*. His books are available on Amazon.com.



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