

## Confronting Islam with the God of Redemption

*"As I have loved you..." – Jesus*

As I begin this essay, the Islamic sect *Taliban* has speedily immobilized the Afghani national militia, moved into the now vacated U.S. Embassy, and effectively seized control of the affairs of the entire nation of Afghanistan. The focus of this essay is limited to concerns about the character and conduct of these victors, in regard to both its track record and, consequently, the likely trajectory of their designs into the future. Although the Taliban is an *Islamic* sect, its rabidly-religious fanaticism is leaving the rest of *Islamic* society in dread that its newly burgeoning society is suddenly collapsing back into primitive, lawless chaos. Indeed, the Taliban is refusing the peaceful exit of Americans and their sympathizers, the latter of which are being threatened with imminent death. Further still, the Taliban is continuing its custom of beating females who express the slightest hint of independence from male demands. Even worse, they are wresting young girls from parents to force them into marriage with unknown "husbands," while, on the other hand, abducting, raping, and killing adult women at will.

Right or wrong, when the average person hears the word "religion," they assume the term both ensures and advances good and moral character. So for audiences to witness a band of people who, in the name of a world religion, engage to the contrary in moral terrorization of innocent and defenseless people, the very concept of God is understandably undermined before a watching world (Romans 2:24).

I am glad to grant that the religion of Islam as a whole does NOT mimic the works of the Taliban in our era. Yet I expect that the condition that closed that sentence may arouse anger in certain parties. For example, critics may assert that both the commands in Exodus 27: 23-30 and the abuses of authority by the Catholic Church around the time of the Holy Roman Empire, exude comparable degrees of moral failure. Yet such associations fail. The first reason is the factuality of the "birth-pangs" Israel faced in clearing out a homeland at its *beginning*<sup>1</sup>. It had yet to become a secure faith society such as Islam has enjoyed for centuries. As for the latter, a cluster of *Christian* reformations, including Martin Luther's in 1517, **initiated inner renewals based on their (our) own Scripture**. Indeed, when the Church, for clear reasons, demanded reform, it faced its own medicine. One core aspect of Islamic failures today is its refusal to condemn and publicly denounce the conduct of the Taliban highlighted above in the name of Allah. Indeed Islam's chronic silence on such wickedness suggests its tacit approval at the very least.

Christians, **in themselves**, have **nothing to boast about** before God (Romans 3:27a). It is urgent that my clause, "*in themselves*," be entirely clear to all readers. Whatever it may be of a *positive* nature that marks a difference between Christians and non-Christians, with respect to the premise of this essay it is to the credit solely of "*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" and NOT **ourselves**. Said another way, Christians **can't** claim that we, *in ourselves*, are morally superior to Muslims ("**...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" – Romans 3:23). Nevertheless, it is an entirely different matter to declare, as rational reflection demands, that the God of the New Testament is vastly superior in character to Allah of the Koran; especially so in light of the haunting context which opened this essay.

Islam officially teaches, concerning the character of Allah, that in essence He is both indivisible and utterly opposite of any aspect of *physical* reality.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Allah "*has no partner or peer.*"<sup>3</sup> As

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<sup>1</sup> It should be understood that, at the time of Joshua, all of Israel's neighboring societies was more technologically superior than they were.

<sup>2</sup> <https://enterthesunnah.com/2020/07/11/on-the-attributes-of-allah/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://imam-us.org/essence-of-islam>

for His will, it “*is absolute, and He cannot be compelled to do anything. Allah does what He wills.*”<sup>4</sup> These assertions have enormous implications. In spite of my having yet to delineate the specifics of New Testament Christology, in light of what has here been stated, the contrast they convey between the Koran’s “revelation” of Allah on the one hand, and Biblical revelation of Yahweh on the other, could not be more extreme! Although it is true that Yahweh too chooses not to reveal the *entirety* of His essence (Isaiah 55:9), He does keep the door open in leading Israel into *greater* understanding. For example, He calls us to trust His moral character when His judgments make little sense (Isaiah 55:8, Habakkuk 1:2-4) by offering signs of His providential power through His numerous miraculous works.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore He assures the unity of His holiness and mercy by sending His only Son to die on the cross for our sins (John 3:15-18, Romans 8:32). Yet I am running ahead of myself. By the starkest of contrasts, according to the Koran, Allah limits revelation of Himself to the barest of assertions that His mercy is so, just because “He says so.” In addition, according to this paragraph’s opening words, Allah refuses to play the role of moral example as indicated by His apparent refusal to bind Himself to the standards that He imposes onto His followers. However, by utter contrast, I repeat, Yahweh, in an opposite manner sets Himself up as the premier example of how every person ought to live (John 13:15: 1 John 4:9-11).

The message of God that this paper brings to bear on the hellish account opening this essay is that the Gospel of Christ, in contrast to Islam, is not limited to *assertions* of abstract, innate, moral character. It entails in addition the *personal* entanglement of God Himself in *concrete* saving *actions* of the highest personal *cost*. The three accounts in Luke ch. 15 portray His mission with parables while Philippians 2:5-11 summarizes, from beginning to end, the train of *literal* events that accomplished that same goal. The ultimate claim of this message is staggering beyond words, while the implications which follow from it are equally momentous and relevant to our present social crises. That claim is that the transcendent Creator (John 1:1-3), through God “the Son,” emptied Himself of His majesty (Phpp. 2:6) by entering into creation in the flesh (John 1:14) for the purpose of becoming “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). Stated even more succinctly, God literally entered our world to personally rescue sinners from the power and penalty of our sins. Such, indeed, is the very meaning of the name Jesus: The names, “Yeshua” – “Jesus,” literally mean “*God to the rescue!*”<sup>67</sup>

Nothing whatever of the terrifying deeds cited in my opening paragraph can be justified by perpetrators who maim and murder the innocent and defenseless in the name of even *Islamic* “religion.” To the contrary, to borrow the Apostle Paul’s words, “*The name of God is blasphemed because of [their awful deeds]!*”<sup>8</sup> Indeed the character of the God of the universe is NOT represented by lawless thugs and rapists who terrorize their captives. And any religion that stands idly by in silence effectively assents to what is being witnessed in Afghanistan. The Gospel of Jesus Christ by contrast declares, by the example of the saving character and personal mission of the Triune God, that we as His beneficiaries in turn bind up the broken, defend the weak and defenseless, and lift up the falling in God’s name.

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<sup>4</sup> Op.cit. (1).

<sup>5</sup> See my paper, “The Pervasive Employment of Apologetics in the Bible” at my website: [www.christianityontheoffense.com](http://www.christianityontheoffense.com)

<sup>6</sup> Inspiration for this term comes from a sermon of the late Anglican theologian, Michael Green.

<sup>7</sup> Christianity is eager to field challenges from skeptics as to its claims that Jesus is God. World-renowned scholars testify to the corroborating evidence on this matter in Lee Strobel. *The Case for Christ*. (Zondervan, 2016). Most specifically consider interviews firstly with Dr. D.A. Carson in the article titled, “Did Jesus Fulfill the Attributes of God?” and secondly, “with Dr. Gary Collins titled, “Was Jesus Crazy When He Claimed to Be the Son of God?”

<sup>8</sup> Romans 2:24