

Ahmed El-Mahdawy's Challenge

By Kent Heaton

The Gainesville Sun (Gainesville, Florida) reported Friday, February 25, 2011 on a speech by Ahmed El-Mahdawy who is the administer of the Hoda Center mosque in Gainesville. During the speech El-Mahdawy suggested that people should realize the parallels between Islam and Christianity. "There is not a single thing that you will find in the Koran that is not in the Old Testament or the New Testament," he said. He further explained that Muslims believe in a single god and that Jesus Christ, Moses and others were Muslim.

Those attending the function were seeking to bridge the gap between the religion of Mohammed and the religion of Jesus. While the efforts are commended for the effort of bringing understanding and peace it should be noted the lack of clarity on the part of El-Mahdawy concerning the teaching of Jesus who understood fully that He was the Christ. Jesus prayed to His Father in John 17:3, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." You will not find that in the Koran.

If the gospel writer Matthew (who was one of the twelve apostles) is to be believed then Jesus knew He was the Christ. Matthew referred to Jesus as the Christ seventeen times in his gospel. Fifteen times in his gospel Matthew makes reference to Jesus fulfilling prophecy including seven times the life of Jesus fulfills the Old Testament writers. The gospel of Matthew is a documentary on the Jewish lineage of Jesus to prove that He is the Christ, the Son of God. "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). You will not find that in the Koran.

Another apostle of Jesus named John wrote of the character of Jesus as being God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (John 1:1-5). This sets Jesus apart from any man that has ever lived or ever will live. No man can embrace the character of God as Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:22). You will not find that in the Koran.

The apostle John records the great discourse of Jesus before His death (John 13-17). Jesus explained that He would be leaving to prepare a way of salvation and was questioned by another apostle named Thomas. He said to Jesus, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:5-6). This single verse sets Jesus apart from all religious leaders. Jesus unmistakably, undoubtedly, succinctly declared entrance to Jehovah God was through Jesus Christ and no other means is available. There is only one way, one truth and one life and no one – mark His words – no one will be allowed to come before the "Father except through Me"! That eliminates all others – every man who has ever lived.

One man named Jesus Christ is the only hope men have. He is the only one that eternal life can come. Only through His blood can a new life after death be given. And you will not find that in the Koran or any other book written by man.

(Editor's note: For the past two weeks, this bulletin has contained articles identifying public figures defending Islam. This is becoming a common practice as well-intentioned, but very misguided leaders in the "Christian world" seek a peaceful compromise with the Muslim world. In addition, Muslim leaders take advantage of this by de-emphasizing the differences between Islam and Christianity, and by down-playing the violent and fanatically intolerant nature of Islam. It is vital that Christians do not allow themselves to be deceived by this. We must never be lulled into thinking Islam is acceptable according to the will of God. It must be viewed as no more true than any other erring world religion like Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Wicca, and Animism. --prb)

Illustrating Grace

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Some think that the grace of God and works are incompatible. On the contrary, salvation is both by grace and works. Suppose a particular rich uncle said to his nephew, "I will give you a million dollars if and when you graduate from college, are married, and name your first child after me." When the young man meets those conditions, will he have actually earned the million dollars? No, it was a gift. He simply received it by meeting the conditions. So it is with the grace of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 is teaching that we have not been saved by boastful works which we might devise ourselves; however, we are saved by the works which God ordained. The very next verse which follows Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace..." (Eph. 1:7). Suppose that a man rented a large field from another and promised to pay a thousand dollars for the rental at the end of the year. The agreement is signed. If the harvest has been poor because of drought, pests, storms, poor fertilizing, or whatever, the man who rented the field may wish he had never signed the agreement. He may wish that the owner take half of the harvest instead of demanding cash. However, the agreement had been signed and there is nothing to do but abide by it. If, however, the owner should say that he would accept fifty bushels of corn instead of the money, compliance would put an end to the agreement. If the owner should say he would accept twenty bushels of grain, that is the end of the matter. If the owner should say that he would free the man from his debt if he would sing him a song, that ends the matter. It is the owner who must be satisfied.

God must be satisfied in the matter of our sin. When one believes and obeys the Lord, God declares a man free from his sin. God declares Himself fully satisfied because of what the Lord has done for us. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!

A Moments Wisdom

- Happiness depends chiefly on our cheerful acceptance of routine, on our refusal to assume, as many do, that daily work and daily duty are a kind of slavery.
- Blessed is the man who has some congenial work, some occupation in which he can put his heart, and which affords a complete outlet to all the forces there are in him.
- To find one's work is to find one's place in the world.
- It is better to undertake a large task and get it half done than to undertake nothing and get it all done.
- There is no future in any job. The future lies in the man who holds the job.
- The greatest composer does not sit down to work because he is inspired, but becomes inspired because he is working.
- The moment a man can really do his work, he becomes speechless about it; all words are idle to him; all theories. Does a bird need to theorize about building its nest, or boast of it when it is built? All good work is essentially done that way—without hesitation; without difficulty; without boasting.
- There are two changeless sources of solid happiness: first, the belief in God, and second, the habit of hard work toward useful ends.