

Jesus, the Word of God and the Messiah

The following texts are from the Qur'an:

The angels said: “Mary! surely Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the world. Mary! remain obedient to your Lord and humble yourself, and bow down with those who bow in worship. The angels said: Mary, surely Allah gives you good news of a Word from Him, whose name is the ‘Messiah, Isa son of Mary,’ held in honor in this world and the hereafter and of those who are near to Allah. (Al Imran 3:42-43 and 45).

The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, is but the apostle of God and His word, which He cast into Mary and a spirit from Him (The Women, 4:169).

In these two passages Jesus Christ is clearly referred to as the Word of God and as a Word from God (in Arabic: Kalimat Allah). One would think that the Qur'an is actually echoing the text of John 1:1 in these passages: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” However Islamic scholars have mounted extensive arguments to say that the Qur'anic title given to Jesus and the biblical idea that Jesus is divine are not at all in agreement. While some Muslims know that Jesus

is referred to as the Word of God in the Qur'an, the vast majority do not know what it means and even fewer realize that the same title is given to Jesus in the Bible. Some believers have used the “Word of God” texts in the Qur'an as a starting point for proclaiming the Good News of the Messiah to Muslims.

In addition, the Qur'an speaks of Jesus as the Messiah (see 3:45 and 4:169 above, as well as 4:157 and 4:171). Here again the vast majority of Muslims have no idea what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah, because, in the words of one author, “the meaning of the title is almost completely glossed over in Islam.” The word Messiah is the same as the word Christ in Greek. It refers to the one who is anointed as king. The term carries with it not just the concept of a good king but also one who is a savior, a deliverer, who will correct all wrongs and reign in righteousness.

► *Pray that Muslims all over the world would be inclined to ask questions and try to understand Jesus' titles: the Word of God and the Messiah. Meditate on the following texts and use them in prayer: John 1:1-4, 14 and Mt 16:13-17.*

PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLES Pakistan

The Burig people

Language: Purik, Trade Language: Urdu,

Population: 474,000

The Burig and the Baltistani Bhotia (or Balti) are two ethnic groups of Tibetan origin who live in the Karakoram Mountains of northern Pakistan. The only two known Tibetan groups that have converted to Islam, their Tibetan roots can still be seen in their clothing, food, folklore, and language. The Burig depend on glacial runoff to irrigate their crops, and where water is sufficient, they grow barley, wheat, millet, and a wide variety of fruits. Because many Burig live in the northern section of the disputed Kashmir territories of India and Pakistan, their region was closed to foreign travelers for 14 years. Recently, there has been increasing tension between their pre-Islamic traditions and Islam, leaving many torn between the two major elements of their ethnic identity.

► *Pray that as the Burig reconnect with their Tibetan heritage God would open their eyes, clearly revealing Himself to them. He desires for them to be before his throne (Revelation 7:9-12).*