
Sin and Salvation in Christianity and Islam

Dr. Andy Bannister

Director, Solas Centre for Public Christianity; Adjunct Speaker, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries

www.solas-cpc.org | www.solasmagazine.com | www.rzim.org

1. Introduction: Same Words, Different Meanings

- Islam often uses the same terminology as Christianity but means very different things by it
- This is especially the case when it comes to words like “sin”.
- Ideas have consequences. What you think about “sin” will effect what you think about “salvation”. And what you think about God will effect them all.

2. Adam, Eve and the Fall in the Bible and the Qur’an: Two Very Different Stories

- The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden.
 - Biblical account (Genesis 3:1-15)
 - Qur’an’s version (Surah 7:19-25):

(Allah said): “O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and enjoy (its good things) as ye wish: but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression.”

Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them, bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said: “Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest ye should become angels or such beings as live for ever.”

And he swore to them both, that he was their sincere adviser.

So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest to them, and they began to sew together the leaves of the garden over their bodies. And their Lord called unto them: “Did I not forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?”

They said: “Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost.”

(Allah) said: “Get ye down. With enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood,- for a time. Therein shall ye live, and therein shall ye die; but from it shall ye be taken out (at last).”

- Key differences ... ?

3. Sin and Evil: The Christian View

- Adam and Eve were made to be image bearers, but fell
 - The story of scripture is the story of God restoring that image
 - This was the role Israel, God's chosen people, were supposed to fulfil
 - Finally God steps into the picture himself in the person of the Messiah
- The "Big Biblical Story": old creation, fall, exile, Messiah, cross and resurrection, new creation
- The Bible and "theodicy" — an answer to the problem of evil

4. Sin and Evil: The Islamic View

- Is there a "Fall" in the Qur'an?
- Did Adam and Eve fall from Paradise itself?
- Sin as merely breaking a command
 - So nothing to be saved *from*.
 - The problem of sanctification and holy living for the Muslim.
 - Islam and the theodicy problem: what does the Qur'an say to the problem of evil?
 - Islam offers "salvation" but at the expense of justice.
 - The lack of hope and certainty in Islam.

5. Exploring These Themes in Dialogue and Evangelism

- Good questions to ask your Muslim friends

6. Further Reading

- **Bannister, Andy & Walker, Tanya, *Islam in Context: Opening the Door to Understanding* (RZIM Canada, 2013). You can download the PDF version free here: <http://bit.ly/IslamInContext>**
- Chatrath, Nick, *Reaching Muslims: A One-Stop Guide for Christians*. Oxford: Monarch, 2011
- Geisler, Norman L. and Saleeb, Abdul, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002.
- Moucarry, Chawkat, *The Search for Forgiveness: Pardon and Punishment in Islam and Christianity*. Leicester: IVP, 2004.
- Qureshi, Nabeel, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016 [2014].

