

JESUS

in the
Qura'n

Say: We believe in Allah and what is revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was entrusted to Moses and Jesus and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have surrendered. (3.84)

...Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Children of Israel! See! I am the messenger of Allah to you, confirming what was before me in the Torah, and bringing good news of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is the Praised One (Ahmad)...(61.6)



mwh London Publishers

ISBN 0 906194 13 X

JESUS

*in the
Qura'n*

Extracted from the book;
"JESUS - A Prophet of Islam"
by: Muhammad Ata-ur-Rahim

 **mwh** London Publishers

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the publishers.

© 1979 by MWH London Publishers

ISBN 0 906194 13 X

Printed by Kadri Printing Ltd. Tel: 739-5539



MWH London Publishers

233 Seven Sisters Road
LONDON
N4 2DA
England

JESUS IN THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an, the last of the Divine Books, revealed by the Creator to the last of the Messengers, is a source of knowledge about Jesus which is not generally known to most students of Christianity. The Qur'an not only leads us towards a better understanding of who he was, but also, through that understanding, it increases our respect and love for him. The last Revelation, coming as it does some six hundred years after Jesus's birth, tells what is important for us to know about his life and teachings, and places his role as Prophet in the vast perspective that the Unitarians realised lay behind prophecy itself. Qur'an gives that perspective which no other source can provide.

The Qur'an does not cover the life of Jesus in any great detail as regards specific events. The miracles and powers which he was given are referred to, but mostly in general terms. Similarly, the Book he was given by Allah, the Ingeel, is mentioned several times, but its exact contents are not indicated. However, the Qur'an is very specific as to his purpose, how he appeared on earth, who he was, and, equally important, who he was not, and how his mission ended.

Before looking at his life, it would be helpful to examine what his function on earth was, and how he fits into the pattern of what came before him and what was to come after him: it is stated again and again that Jesus was one of the long line of prophets who had been sent to the peoples of this earth; that he was a Messenger whose guidance and teachings were a reaffirmation and extension of the guidance which the prophets before him had brought, and were a preparation for the guidance which the prophet coming after him would bring.

The first mention of Jesus is made very early on in the Qur'an:

And truly We gave to Moses the Books and
We caused a train of messengers to follow after him,
and We gave to Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs
and We supported him with the Pure Spirit.* (2.87)

The following passage reminds us of the line of messengers, of which Jesus was a part. After mentioning Abraham, it continues:

And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob; each of them
We guided; and Noah did We guide in an earlier time,
and of his seed David and Solomon and Job and Joseph
and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good.
And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias.
Each one was of the righteous. And Ishmael and Elisha
and Jonah and Lot. Each one of them did We prefer
above the (other) creatures. (6.84-86)

And this list of messengers is by no means complete, for there are,

...messengers We have mentioned to you before and
messengers We have not mentioned to you... (4.164)

In fact, Sayidina Muhammad, peace of Allah be upon him, said that Jesus was one of one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets, between whom there is no cause for conflict or argument. Allah tells His Messenger in one passage of Qur'an:

Say: We believe in Allah and what is revealed to us
and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and
Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was entrusted
to Moses and Jesus and the prophets from their Lord.
We make no distinction between any of them,
and to Him we have surrendered. (3.84)

*The Pure Spirit refers to the Angel Gabriel.

All the prophets are well aware that they have been sent by Allah for the same purpose and with the same message:

And when We exacted a covenant from the Prophets,
And from you (O Muhammad) and from Noah
and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary,
We took from them a solemn covenant;
that He may ask the loyal of their loyalty.
And He has prepared a painful doom
for the unfaithful. (33.7-8)

O you Messengers! Eat of the good things,
and do right. See! I am Aware of what you do.
And see! This your life-transaction is one
life-transaction and I am your Lord,
so keep your duty to Me. (23.51-52)

He has ordained for you that life-transaction
which He commended to Noah, and that which
We inspire in you (Muhammad), and that which
We commended to Abraham and Moses and Jesus,
saying: Establish the life-transaction
and do not be divided in it. (42.13)

Thus, the picture which unfolds is not that of some remarkable man who appeared on earth as an isolated event in an otherwise chaotic world, but of a messenger who, like all the other messengers, was sent for his time and his age, a part of the ordered unfolding of the universe:

And We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow
in their footsteps, confirming what was before him,
and We bestowed on him the Gospel
wherein is guidance and a light, confirming
that which was before it in the Torah –
a guidance and an admonition to those
who are careful. (5.46)

And furthermore, a time which, as Jesus was well aware, had limits; a time which was bounded by the time before his,

and by the time after his:

... Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Children of Israel!
See! I am the messenger of Allah to you, confirming
what was before me in the Torah, and bringing
good news of a messenger who will come after me,
whose name is the Praised One (Ahmad) ... (61.6)

Jesus' conception and birth are recorded by the Qur'an in great detail. It would be illuminating to begin with his mother's birth and upbringing, for it helps us to see how she was made ready by Allah to be the mother of Jesus, and that she was chosen by Him.

Remember when the wife of Imran said: My Lord!
I have vowed to you what is within my womb
Accept it from me. See! You, only You,
are the Hearer, the Knower! And when she was
delivered, she said: My Lord! See! I am delivered
of a female – Allah knew best of what she was
delivered – the male is not as the female;
and see! I have named her Mary,
and I crave Your protection for her
and for her offspring from Satan the outcast.
And her Lord accepted her with full acceptance
and accorded her a goodly growth; and made
Zachariah her guardian. Whenever Zachariah
went into the sanctuary where she was, he found
that she had food. He said: O Mary! Where does
this come from? She answered: It is from Allah.
Allah gives without stint to whom He will.
Then Zachariah prayed to his Lord and said: My Lord!
Bestow on me of Your bounty goodly offspring.
See! You are the Hearer of Prayer. And the angels
called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary;
Allah gives you good news of (a son whose name is)
John, who comes to confirm a word from Allah,
lordly, chaste, a Prophet of the righteous.
He said: My Lord! How can I have a son when age has
overtaken me already and my wife is barren? The angel

answered: So (it will be). Allah does what He will.
He said: My Lord! Appoint a token for me.
(The angel) said: The token to you (shall be) that you
shall not speak to mankind three days except by
signs. Remember your Lord much, and praise (Him)
in the early hours of night and morning. (3.35-41)

John was the prophet who directly preceded Jesus. The miraculous birth of John is mentioned again in the Sura called "Maryam":

A mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zachariah. When he cried to his Lord a cry in secret, saying: My Lord! See! My bones wax feeble and my head is shining with grey hair, and I have never been unblest in prayer to You, my Lord. I fear my kinfolk after me, since my wife is barren. Oh, give me from Your presence a successor, who shall inherit of me and inherit of the house of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, acceptable (to You)! (It was said to him): O Zachariah!
We bring you tidings of a son whose name is John;
We have given the same name to none before (him).
He said: My Lord! How can I have a son when my wife is barren and I have reached infirm old age?
He said: So (it will be). Your Lord says: It is easy for Me, even as I created you before, when you were naught. He said: My Lord! Appoint for me some token. He said: Your token is that you, with no bodily defect, shall not speak to mankind three nights. Then he came out to his people from the sanctuary, and signified to them;
Glorify your Lord at break of day and fall of night.
(And it was said to his son): O John! Hold fast the Book. And We gave him wisdom when a child, and compassion from Our presence and purity; and he was devout, and dutiful toward his parents. And he was not arrogant, rebellious. Peace on him the day he was born, and the day he dies and the day he shall be raised alive! (19.2-15)

The story of the birth of Jesus is related in two different places in the Qur'an:

And when the angels said: O Mary! See! Allah has chosen you and made you pure, and has preferred you above (all) the women of creation. O Mary! Be obedient to your Lord, prostrate yourself and bow with those who bow (in worship). This is of the news of things hidden. We reveal it to you (Muhammad). You were not present with them when they threw their pens (to know) which of them should be the guardian of Mary, nor were you present with them when they quarrelled (about it). (And remember) when the angels said: O Mary! Allah gives you glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter and one of those brought near (unto Allah). He will speak to mankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is of the righteous. She said: My Lord! How can I have a child when no mortal has touched me? He said: So (it will be). Allah creates what He will. If He decrees a thing, He says to it only: Be! and it is. And He will teach him the Book and the wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. And will make him a messenger to the Children of Israel, (saying): I come to you with a sign from your Lord. See! I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by Allah's leave. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by Allah's leave. And I announce to you what you eat and what you store up in your houses. Here truly is a portent for you, if you are to be believers. And (I come) confirming what was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful some of what was forbidden to you. I come to you with a sign from your Lord, so keep your duty to Allah and obey me. Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path. But when Jesus became

conscious of their disbelief, he cried: Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah? The disciples said: We will be Allah's helpers. We believe in Allah, and bear you witness that we have surrendered (to Him). Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed and we follow him whom You have sent. Enroll us among those who witness (to the Truth). (3.42-53)

The story is also told in the Sura of "Maryam":

And make mention of Mary in the Book, when she had withdrawn from her people to a chamber looking East, and had chosen seclusion from them. Then We sent to her Our spirit* and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. She said: I seek refuge in the Compassionate One from you, if you are God-fearing. He said: I am only a messenger of your Lord, that I may bestow on you a faultless son. She said: How can I have a son when no mortal has touched me, neither have I been unchaste? He said: So (it will be) Your Lord says: It is easy for Me. And (it will be) that We may make of him a revelation for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a thing ordained. And she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place. And the pangs of childbirth drove her to the trunk of the palm tree. She said: Oh, would that I had become a thing of naught, forgotten! Then (one) cried to her from below her, saying: Grieve not! Your Lord has placed a rivulet beneath you. And shake the trunk of the palm tree toward you. You will cause ripe dates to fall on you. So eat and drink and be consoled. And if you meet any mortal, say: I have vowed a fast to the Compassionate, and may not speak this day to any mortal. Then she brought him

*This refers to the Angel Gabriel.

own folk, carrying him. They said: O Mary! You have come with an amazing thing. Oh sister of Aaron! Your father was not a wicked man nor was your mother a harlot. Then she pointed to him. They said: How can we talk to one who is in the cradle, a young boy? He spoke: See! I am the slave of Allah. He has given me the Book and has appointed me a Prophet, and has made me blessed wherever I may be, and has enjoined on me prayer and almsgiving so long as I remain alive. And (has made me) dutiful toward her who bore me, and has not made me arrogant, unblest. Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive! Such was Jesus, son of Mary: (this is) a statement of the Truth concerning which they doubt. It does not befit (the Majesty of) Allah that He should take to Himself a son. Glory be to Him! When He decrees a thing, He saith to it only: Be! and it is. And see! Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So serve Him. That is the right path. (19.16-36)

The place where Jesus was born is mentioned in one other passage in Qur'an:

And We made the son of Mary and his mother a portent, and We gave them refuge on a height, a place of flocks and water-springs. (23.50)

His childhood and early manhood are not mentioned. The response of the men who became his disciples is also described in the following passage:

O you who believe! Be Allah's helpers, even as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples: Who are my helpers for Allah? They said: We are Allah's helpers. And a party of the Children of Israel believed, while a party disbelieved...(61.14)

And again in greater detail:

And when I inspired the disciples, (saying): Believe in Me and My messenger, they said: We believe. Bear witness that we have surrendered (to You). When the disciples said: O Jesus, son of Mary! Is your Lord able to send down for us a table spread with food from heaven? He said: Observe your duty to Allah, if you are true believers. (They said:) We wish to eat from it, that we may satisfy our hearts and know that you have spoken truth to us, and that we may be witnesses to this. Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Allah, our Lord, send down for us a table spread with food from heaven, that it may be a feast for us, for the first of us and for the last of us, and a sign from You. Give us sustenance for You are the Best of Sustainers. Allah said: See! I send it down. And whoever disbelieves in you afterwards, him I will surely punish with a punishment with which I have not punished any of (My) creatures. (5.111-115)

When Jesus's teaching began to spread, some accepted the guidance, and some did not:

And when the son of Mary is quoted as an example, behold! the folk laugh out, and say: Are our gods better or is he? They raise not the objection save for argument. No! but they are a contentious people. He is nothing but a slave on whom We bestowed favour, and We made him a pattern for the Children of Israel. (43.57-59)

...and We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow, and gave him the Gospel, and placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him. But they invented monasticism – We did not ordain it for them – only seeking Allah's pleasure, and they did not observe it with correct observance. So We gave those of them who believe their reward, but many of them are evil-livers. (57.27)

The message he brought was simple:

When Jesus came with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), he said: I have come to you with wisdom, and to make plain some of that about which you differ. So keep your duty to Allah, and obey me. Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is the right path. (43.63-64)

His miracles are mentioned again:

When Allah says: O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My favour to you and to your mother; how I strengthened you with the holy spirit*, so that you speak to mankind in the cradle as in maturity; and how I taught you the Scripture and Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and how you shaped of clay the likeness of a bird by My permission, and blew upon it and it was a bird by My permission, and you healed him who was born blind and the leper by My permission; and how I restrained the Children of Israel from (harming) you when you came to them with clear proofs, and those of them who disbelieved exclaimed: This is nothing but mere magic. (5.110)

A misconception which arose from the circumstances of Jesus' birth is that he was therefore the "son of God":

They say: Allah has taken a son. Glorified be He! He has no needs! His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. You have no warrant for this. Do you tell concerning Allah what you do not know? (10.68)

*This refers to the Angel Gabriel.

(And remember) when Allah said: O Jesus! See! I am gathering you and causing you to ascend to Me, and am cleansing you of those who disbelieve and am setting those who follow you above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me you will (all) return, and I shall judge between you as to that in which you used to differ. As for those who disbelieve, I shall chastise them with a heavy chastisement in the world and the Hereafter; and they will have no helpers. And as for those who believe and do good works, He will pay them their wages in full. Allah loves not wrong-doers. This (which) We recite to you is a revelation and a wise reminder. The likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, then He said to him: Be! and he is. (3.55-59)

And they say: Allah has taken to Himself a son. Be He glorified! No! But whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His. All are subservient to Him. The Originator of the heavens and the earth! When He decrees a thing, He says to it only: Be! and it is. (2.116-117)

And they say: The Compassionate has taken to Himself a son. Be He glorified! No, but (those whom they call sons) are honoured slaves; they do not speak until He has spoken, and they act by His command. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede except for him whom He accepts, and they quake for awe of Him. And one of them who should say: Look! I am a god beside Him, that one We should repay with hell. Thus We repay wrong-doers. (21.26-30)

And they say: The Compassionate has taken to Himself a son. Certainly you utter a disastrous thing, whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split open and the mountains fall in ruins, that you ascribe to the Compassionate a son! When it is not fitting for (the Majesty of) the Compassionate that He should choose a son. There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes to the Compassionate as a slave. (19.88-93)

The Qur'an denies the divinity of Jesus:

They indeed have disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. Say: Who then can do anything against Allah, if He had willed to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother and everyone on earth? Allah's is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. He creates what He will. And Allah is able to do all things. (5.17)

And when Allah says: O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say to mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? he says: Be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right. If I used to say it, then You know it. You know what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Your mind. You, only You, are the Knower of Things Hidden. I spoke to them only what You commanded me, (saying): Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. I was a witness of them while I lived among them, and when You took me You were the Watcher over them. You are Witness over all things. If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them (they are Your slaves). You, only You are the Mighty, the Wise. (5.116-118)

And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah. That is their saying with their mouths. They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved of old. Allah (Himself) fights against them. How perverse are they! They have taken as lords beside Allah their rabbis and their monks and the Messiah, son of Mary, when they were ordered to worship only One God. There is no god except Him. Be He glorified from all that they ascribe as partner (to Him)! If they could they would put out the Light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah disdains anything except that He shall perfect His Light, however much the disbelievers are against it. (9.30-32)

The Qur'an rejects the concept of Trinity:

O people of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter anything concerning Allah except the Truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and do not say "Three" – Stop! (it is) better for you! – Allah is only One God. It is far removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is enough as Defender. The Messiah will never scorn to be a slave to Allah nor will the favoured angels. Whoever scorns His service and is proud, all such will He assemble to Him; then as for those who believed and did good works, to them He will pay their wages in full, adding to them of His bounty; and as for those who were scornful and proud, them will He punish with a painful doom; and they will not find for them, against Allah, any protecting friend or helper. (4.171-173)

The Qur'an rejects the crucifixion of Jesus, but affirms the ascension:

And because of their saying: We killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, Allah's messenger – They did not kill or crucify him, but it appeared so to them; and look! – those who disagree concerning it are in doubt about it; they have no knowledge of it except pursuit of a conjecture; they did not kill him for certain; but Allah took him up to Himself. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise. (4.157-158)

Finally,

They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! Whoever ascribes partners to Allah, for him Allah has forbidden the Garden. His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers. They surely disbelieve who say: Allah is the third of three; when there is no God save the One God. If they desist not from saying it, a painful doom will fall on those of them who disbelieve. Will they not rather turn to Allah and seek forgiveness of Him? For Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. And they both used to eat (earthly) food. See how We make the revelation clear for them, and see how they are turned away! (5.72-75)

Of these messengers, some of whom We have caused to excel others, and of whom there are some to whom Allah spoke, while some of them He exalted (above others) in degree; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's

Sovereignty) and We supported him with the holy spirit.* And if Allah had so willed it, those who followed after them would not have fought one with another after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, some of them believing and some disbelieving. And if Allah had so willed it, they would not have fought one with another; but Allah does what He will. (2.253)

But,

You will find the most vehement of mankind in hostility to those who believe (to be) the Jews and the idolaters. And you will find the nearest of them in affection to those who believe (to be) those who say: Look! We are Christians. That is because there are among them priests and monks, and because they are not proud. (5.82)

*This refers to the Angel Gabriel.