

The Key Issue Dividing Christians And Muslims

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So much of the world's turmoil today extends from the religion of Allah, god of Islam, whose followers are known as Muslims. The central source of authority for Muslims is the Koran. In it we read many verses like the following:

Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, that which is past will be forgiven them; and if they return, then the example of those of old has already gone. *And fight with them until there is no more persecution, and all religions are for Allah. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Seer of what they do. And if they turn back, then know that Allah is your Patron. Most excellent the Patron and most excellent the Helper! And know that whatever you acquire in war, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you believe in Allah and in that which We revealed to Our servant, on the day of Discrimination, the day on which the two parties met. And Allah is Possessor of power over all things (Koran 8:38-41).*

O Prophet, *strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be firm against them. And their abode is hell, and evil is the destination. They swear by Allah that they said nothing. And certainly they did speak the word of disbelief, and disbelieved after their Islam, and they purposed that which they could not attain. And they sought revenge only because Allah—as well as His messenger—had enriched them out of His grace. So if they repent, it will be good for them; and if they turn away, Allah will chastise them with a painful chastisement in this world and the Hereafter; and they shall have in the earth neither a friend nor a helper (Koran 9:73-74, emphasis added).*

Efforts to suggest peace resides in these passages are made by Islamic clerics but the refutation appears everyday on the evening news reports.

The Key Issue

Abraham had two sons named Isaac and Ishmael. Muslims hesitate not to quote the Genesis account but reject what it says concerning the chosen descendant of Abraham

to be Isaac not Ishmael. Genesis 17:18-22 teaches, "And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. *But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham*" (emphasis added).

A footnote in the Koran by imam Maulana Muhammad Ali on "Section 15: Covenant with Abraham" quotes Genesis 12:2, 3; 15:4-5; 16:10; 17:2-6, 8, 10, 18, 20. He then adds, "Nothing is said regarding Abraham that is not said regarding Ishmael" (p. 54). Nothing maybe except where God said, "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac" (17:21a). And that is the point at issue detested by the Muslims.

The Muslim rebuttal to the powerfully plain point of Genesis 17:21a is "If the covenant was only with Isaac's children, the promise of an everlasting possession failed with the advent of Islam, so that even God could not keep His promise. But the fact is that the land of Canaan continues to remain as an everlasting possession in the hands of the seed of Abraham, for as soon as the Israelites or their representatives, the Christians, were deemed unfit to have the Holy Land in their possession because of their unrighteousness, that Holy Land was given to the Arabs, who were Ishmaelites, and to this day it remains in the hands of the Muslims, who are the true representatives of the house of Ishmael" (p. 54). The key issue dividing Christians and Muslims is that God made his covenant with

Isaac and his descendants, not Ishmael and his
(Gen. 17:21a).