

# Christians Respond to: Dr. Jamal Badawi's Jesus in the Quran and the Bible

By Dr. Robert A. Morey

Dr. Jamal Badawi is considered to be North America's premiere Muslim apologist and spokesperson, having debated and lectured extensively throughout the world at some of the most prestigious universities and institutions. Although a professor of business management at St. Mary's University, Halifax Nova Scotia, Badawi is perhaps best known for his achievements as one of the most capable and knowledgeable Muslim speakers in the world. Badawi is also regarded by Muslims as a scholar of comparative religion and inter-faith dialogue.

It therefore comes as no surprise to discover Badawi producing tracts and articles critiquing the Holy Bible's authority and authenticity, as well as the Christian belief that Jesus Christ is God's unique, divine Son. Due to his Islamic beliefs, Badawi cannot allow for a Jesus that is more than a prophet and hence must therefore interpret the Bible through Muslim lenses, disallowing the possibility of a divine Christ to emerge from its pages.

One such tract is Badawi's Jesus in the Quran and the Bible. Throughout this tract, Badawi attempts to discredit Jesus' uniqueness by producing verses from the Old Testament showing other prophets' abilities to perform the same miracles which Christ performed. This would demonstrate, or so Badawi thinks, that to attribute divinity to Jesus due to his unique qualities or miraculous ministry is unnecessary since this would make the other prophets divine as well.

Although Badawi may indeed be a scholar of Islam, he is far from being qualified to critique the biblical portrait of Jesus since his approach is far from being scholarly or unbiased. The misinterpretation and misquotation of biblical passages is apparent to any serious student of the Bible. Badawi often ignores the context of the verses he cites since when the text is read in relation to the entire passage, the very point he hopes to make is often clearly refuted.

In this paper we will give a concise refutation of just some of Badawi's points, exposing the deliberate mishandling of biblical quotations. From there we will briefly look at Muhammad's career, contrasting it with both the ministries of Christ and the Old Testament prophets. This will be done to show that the very method Badawi uses to deny the divine nature of Jesus is the very method which proves that either Muhammad was not a prophet or at best, was not as great as those prophets which preceded him.

Note- It should be pointed out that Badawi does not quote the biblical text but alludes to it by giving the specific chapter and verse. In similar fashion, instead of quoting the entire passage we will give the specific references to the verses which will allow the reader to check them personally. The only passages that will be quoted are those which help clarify a specific point in our rebuttal. Finally, we will not be responding in chronological sequence to Badawi's tract, but will be dealing with the main arguments presented by him.

## **RAISING THE DEAD**

JESUS- Luke 7:11-17, 8:40-48; John 11:43-44

## OLD TESTAMENT EQUIVALENT-

ELIJAH- 1 Kings 17:7-24

ELISHA- 2 Kings 4:18-37

### COMMENT

It is presumed since both Elijah and Elisha raised the dead, there is then no basis to argue for Jesus' divinity based on the fact that Christ was able to raise the dead since this would make the two divine as well.

Christians do not argue the fact that Jesus was the divine, unique son of God simply because he was able to resurrect the dead but on the statements which Jesus made in relation to his ability to resurrect individuals from death. Unlike Elijah and Elisha who beseeched God for the ability to perform the revivification of departed souls, Christ claimed to be the very source of life and the power which enables the dead to be resurrected:

Jesus said to her, " I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE; he who believes in me though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes shall never die..." John 11:25-26

Jesus said to him, " I am the Way, and the Truth, and the LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

" Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead SHALL HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD; AND THOSE WHO HEAR WILL LIVE." John 5:25

This is something which no prophet before Jesus would ever dare say. Yet Christ does, implying that he is more than a human messenger.

### ASCENSION TO HEAVEN

JESUS- Acts 1:9

## O.T. EQUIVALENT-

ENOCH- Genesis 5:24

ELIJAH- 2 Kings 2:11

## COMMENT

Unlike Enoch and Elijah who were taken into heaven by the power of God, Christ ascended by His own power and authority. In fact, Christ indicates that he will personally come back and take all believers by his own power into heavenly glory:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU. AND IF I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME AGAIN AND RECEIVE YOU TO MYSELF; THAT WHERE I AM, THERE YOU MAYBE ALSO.” John 14:1-3

## HOLY SPIRIT FILLED

### COMMENT

Christians often point to the fact that Jesus was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary. This presumes the fact that Jesus was unique and therefore the Son of God, since there was no human father involved in the birth of Christ but God’s own miraculous hand who personally caused this supernatural conception.

Since it was God who replaced the male element in the birth process by causing Christ to be conceived supernaturally, without any sexual overtones whatsoever, Christ is rightly called the Son of God.

Badawi’s attempted rebuttal is to suggest that other prophets were filled with the Holy Spirit, and some like John the Baptist while still in their mother’s womb. (Luke 1:15) Hence, Badawi’s reasoning is that these men should also be considered the unique sons of God.

There are two responses to this assertion; 1) while some might have been filled with the Holy Spirit even while in their mother’s womb none of them were conceived by the Holy Spirit. 2) Christ was not only the only Holy Spirit conceived, virgin born child but he also had authority to grant the Spirit to whomever he chose to give it:

“And he (John the Baptist) preached, saying, ‘ after me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. ‘ “ Mark 1:7-8

“The next day he (John) saw Jesus coming toward him... ‘ This is he of whom I said, “ After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before “... this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit...” “ John 1:29a, 30, 33b

“And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him or knows him; but you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.” John 14:16-17

(Note- The Spirit was already present with the disciples in the person of Christ since earlier the Spirit had descended and remained upon Jesus. Matthew 3:16-17)

“But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me...” John 15:26

Finally,

“So Jesus said to them again, ‘ Peace to you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, ‘ Receive the Holy Spirit.’ “ John 20:21-22

It therefore becomes apparent that Badawi’s responses to these biblical comparisons are thoroughly inadequate and fails to take in the overall picture of Christ as presented in the New Testament.

## **LORD**

Badawi seems to imply that the title Lord in reference to Jesus is nothing more than a respectful way of saying master, since for him, this cannot possibly imply divinity since Jesus is no more than a prophet of Allah. To back up his assertion, Badawi often cites references in scripture wherein the title is used to refer to certain individuals such as Saul in 1 Samuel 24:8. Even angels are addressed as Lord in Acts 10:4.

The problem with this interpretation is that it presumes that the title Lord only means master, neglecting the fact that this is also commonly used throughout the New Testament as a synonym for Yahweh, the covenant name of God. Two examples demonstrates this point clearly:

Jesus answered him, “ The first of all commandments is: ‘ Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.’ “ Mark 12:29

The Lord is quoting the Shema found in Deuteronomy 6:4 where the term Lord is being used in place of Yahweh.

“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Romans 10:13

Paul is quoting the Greek Septuagint version of Joel 2:32 where the literal Hebrew text reads, “Whoever calls on the name of Yahweh shall be saved.”

Hence, for Badawi to presume that the title only means or should simply mean master in relation to Jesus is erroneous.

In fact, the evidence indicates that the writers used Lord in the absolute sense of Jesus being God, not simply a teacher or master:

“But why is this granted to me (Elizabeth), that the mother (Mary) of MY LORD (Jesus ) should come to me.” Luke 1:43

Here, Elizabeth calls the unborn child her Lord. For a Jewess to say that would imply that the babe was actually Yahweh God, since the Jews knew only Yahweh as their Lord.

“For there is born to you today in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the LORD.” Luke 2:11

“For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.” Romans 14:9

“These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because he is

Lord of lords and King of kings...” Revelation 17:14

That Jesus is the lamb is clear from John 1:29:

“The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, ‘ Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

This can only mean that Jesus is called Lord in the sense that he is God, not just a great master. Compare the title given to Jesus with this reference in 1 Timothy 6:15-16:

“which He (God) will bring about at the proper time- He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords “who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To him be honor, and eternal dominion. Amen.”

Hence, both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are referred to as King of kings and Lord of lords, clearly demonstrating Badawi’s misinterpretation and misunderstanding of biblical theology.

## **MULTIPLICATION OF FOOD**

JESUS- John 6:8-13

O.T. EQUIVALENT

ELISHA- 2 Kings 4:42-44

## **COMMENT**

Jesus’ miraculous ability to create bread from a few loaves, enabling him to feed thousands is astonishing all by itself. But even more astonishing is Jesus’ reason for performing the miracle, a reason which no prophet ever gave as the purpose of their miracles:

Jesus answered them and said, ‘ Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

“Oh not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set his seal on him.” John 6:26-27

Not only can Christ provide daily bread to sustain the physical body, but he alone provides spiritual nourishment which endures to eternal life:

“I am the LIVING BREAD which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is MY FLESH, which I shall give FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.” John 6:51

No prophet ever dared to speak like Christ.

Although Badawi also attempts to refute the biblical evidence for Jesus' divine claims we will not be addressing it since we have already provided in-depth responses to these allegations in previous studies which are available upon request.

What we will do is contrast Muhammad's life by the very criteria Badawi uses. In doing so, we will demonstrate that Muhammad does not measure up to the bible's test of true prophethood.

### **RAISING THE DEAD**

Muhammad- Never

### **HOLY SPIRIT FILLED**

Muhammad- Never

It should be noted that the biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit is that He is fully God, being the third Person of the Trinity (Matthew 28:18-20; Hebrews 9:14), whereas in Islam he is not God but the angel Gabriel. So even the identity is garbled up.

### **ASCENSION**

Muhammad- Never

Even the alleged night journey of Muhammad cannot be substantiated. The Quran only mentions his journey to Jerusalem and the Aqsa Mosque (S. 17:1), with the hadiths indicating that his heavenly ascent was simply a dream since his body never left the room. It should be also pointed out that the sura presents a historical anachronism since there was no mosque at Jerusalem during that time, seeing that the Solomonic temple had been destroyed in A.D. 70. Furthermore, Masjid-ul Aqsa was not erected until A.D. 691 by Abdul Malik, raising the question as to what temple did Muhammad allegedly visit?

Another point worth mentioning is the fact that Muhammad died a slow and painful death. The hadiths record that he was a victim of poisoning and illness. In contrast, we are told that Moses died in the peak of health and was personally buried by God at the age of 120. Deuteronomy 34:5-7

With Jesus, God raised him from the dead to immortal glory, never to experience the sting of death again. Acts 3:13-16; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 1:17-18

This strongly suggests that Muhammad was unlike Moses and Jesus, since he died disillusioned and lonely, leaving it up to his companions to bury him. Hence, as the Quran acknowledges, he was an apostle with no outstanding qualities, a mere mortal like us. ( S. 3:144; 18:110 )

### **MULTIPLYING FOOD**

Muhammad- Never

At this point a Muslim might contest the fact that Muhammad never performed any miracles since both the Quran and hadiths document his miracles.

For instance, the Quran in 54:1, 3:13, as well as 8:9 mention Muhammad splitting the moon and the angelic intervention at the Battle of Badr. These miracles are further attested to in the hadith literature.

There are several responses to these alleged miracles. 1) The clear witness of the Quran is that Muhammad was given no miracles whatsoever ( S. 6:37, 109; 10:20; 13:7, 27; 17:59; 21:5-6; 28:48 ). To say that it does mention specific miracles of Muhammad is to imply an internal contradiction within the Quran. 2) The assumption that S. 54:1 is referring to the alleged miraculous moon splitting at the hands of Muhammad is not unanimously held by Muslim scholars themselves.

For instance, Yusef Ali in his commentary indicates that there are three possible interpretations commonly given by Muslims themselves. The first being that this is a sign which transpires on the last day. This is supported by the verse itself since it speaks of, “ the hour ( of judgement ) “ as being , “ nigh “ , i.e. at hand.

Others view this allegorically, in the sense that the matter addressed has become as clear as the moon’s splitting.

The purported angelic aid at Badr is unverifiable since no one saw any supernatural beings descend on the battlefield. Furthermore, unlike the miracles of Jesus which are attested to by both ancient pagan and Jewish writings, we have no witnesses apart from the Muslims themselves to verify the historicity of this event.

The appeal to hadiths for the proof of miracles leaves more problems for the historian. This is primarily due to the late dating and composition of these Islamic traditions. For example, no literature compiled stems from the seventh century, but dates from the ninth century on. This leaves a gap of nearly two hundred years from Muhammad’s death in A.D. 632 to the first collection of traditions by Bukhari (d. A.D. 870 ). Even Ibn Ishaq’s biography on Muhammad, Sira Rasulallah which purportedly dates to the eighth century, only exists in edited form by Ibn Hisham from the ninth century.

Hence, due to the great time factor involved it is not hard to see how stories of Muhammad’s miracles could be forged and circulated, seeing that no eyewitnesses were present who could prevent any myths from taking place.

We must say with all due respect that Badawi’s attempt to discredit the biblical portrait of Jesus does not hold weight under a careful, scholarly exegesis of God’s Word, the Holy Bible. In fact, the criteria which Dr. Badawi employs actually serves to discredit Muhammad as a genuine prophet of God. Therefore, we strongly urge him to abandon his unfortunately unscholarly method if he wishes to maintain his belief in Islam.

To conclude, in his zeal to disprove the divinity of Christ, Badawi overlooked a very interesting fact; even though the Holy Bible presents certain prophets who were capable of performing some of the many miracles of Christ, none could combine all these qualities together. This honor belongs to Jesus alone, demonstrating clearly his preeminence and superiority over all, being the Christ the Son of the living God.

AMEN