

The Story of Jesus and Mary in the Holy Quran

(part 1 of 3): Mary



The Birth of Mary

“Indeed God chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran over the worlds. An offspring, like one another (in righteousness). And God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (And mention) when the wife of Imran said, ‘O my Lord, I have vowed to You what is in my womb, to be dedicated (to Your service), so accept this from me. Indeed, You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing.’ Then when she delivered her (Mary), she said, ‘O my Lord, I have delivered a female,’ and God knew best what she delivered, ‘And the male is not like the female, and I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge with You for her and for her children from Satan, the expelled (from the mercy of God).’” (Quran 3:33-36)

The Childhood of Mary

“So her Lord fully accepted her, and gave her a good upbringing, and put her under the care of Zechariah. Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer room, he found her supplied with food. He said, ‘O Mary, where do you get this from?’ She said, ‘This is from God. Indeed, God provides for whom He wills, without limit.’” (Quran 3:37)

Mary, the Devout

“And (mention) when the angels said, ‘O Mary, indeed God has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the worlds.’ ‘O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow down along those who bow down (in prayer).’ This is a part of the news of the unseen, which We reveal to you (O Muhammad). You were not with them when they cast lots with their pens to

(decide) which of them should take care of Mary, nor were you with them when they disputed.” (Quran 3:42-44)

The Good news of a new-born child

“(And mention) when the angels said, ‘O Mary, indeed God gives you the good news of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and in the Hereafter, and of those who are near to God.’ ‘He will speak to the people in the cradle, and in old age, and he will be of the righteous.’ She said, ‘My Lord, how can I have a son when no man has touched me.’ He said, ‘So (it will be,) for God creates what He wants. When He decides something, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is. And He will teach him the Book and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel. And (will make him) a messenger to the Children of Israel (saying), ‘Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. I make for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, then breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by the permission of God. And I heal the blind and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by the permission of God. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Surely, there is a sign for you in that, if you are believers. And (I have come) confirming the Torah that was (revealed) before me, and to allow you some of what was forbidden to you. And I have come to you with a proof from your Lord, so fear God and obey me. Indeed, God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is the straight path.’” (Quran 3:45-51)

“And mention in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to an eastern place. And she placed a screen to seclude herself from them. Then We sent to her Our angel (Gabriel), and he took the form of a well-created man before her. She said, “Indeed I seek refuge with the Most Merciful from you, if you do fear God.”^[1] (The angel) said, ‘I am only the messenger of your Lord to give to you (the news of) a pure boy.’ She said, ‘How can I have a son, when no man has touched me (in marriage), and I am not a prostitute?’ He said, So your Lord said, ‘It is easy for Me. And We will make him a sign to people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter (already) decided.’”^[2] (Quran 19:16-21)

The Immaculate Conception

“And she who guarded her chastity, so We breathed (a spirit) into her through Our angel, and We made her and her son (Jesus) a sign for the worlds.”^[3] (Quran 21:91)

The Birth of Jesus

“So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, ‘I wish I had died before this, and had been long forgotten. [Mary was worried that people would think badly of her as she was not married.] Then (baby Jesus) called her from below her, saying, ‘Don’t be sad. Your Lord has provided a stream under you.’ Shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you, and it will drop on you fresh ripe dates. So eat and drink and be happy. And if you see any human, then say, ‘Indeed I have vowed a fast to the Most Merciful so I will not speak to any human today.’ Then she carried him and brought him to her people. They said, ‘O Mary, indeed you have done a great evil.’ ‘O sister of Aaron, your father was not an evil man, and your mother was not a fornicator.’ So she pointed to him. They said, ‘How can we speak to a child in the cradle?’ (Jesus) said, ‘Indeed, I am a slave of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet.’^[4] And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I remain alive. And (has made) me kind to my mother, and did not make me arrogant or miserable. And peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I will die, and the day I will be raised alive.” (Quran 19:22-33)

“Indeed, Jesus is like Adam in front of God. He created him from dust, then said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was.”^[5] (Quran 3:59)

“And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign, And We gave them refuge and rest on a high ground with flowing water.”^[6] (Quran 23:50)

The Excellence of Mary

“And God gives as an example for those who believe, the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, ‘My Lord, build for me a home near You in paradise, and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds, and save me from the wrongdoing

people.’ And (the example of) Mary, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew (the spirit of Jesus) into her through Our angel (Gabriel). And she believed in the words of her Lord, and His scriptures, and she was of the devout ones.” (Quran 66:11-12)

Footnotes:

[1] The Most Merciful is one of the names of God in the Quran.

[2] Jesus is a sign of God’s power, where God showed people that He could create Jesus without a father, as He created Adam without any parents. Jesus is also a sign that God is well able to resurrect all people after their death, since the one who creates from nothing is quite able to bring back to life. He is also a sign of the Day of Judgment, when he returns to the earth and slays the Anti-Christ in the End Times.

[3] Similarly, just as God created Adam with no father or mother, Jesus’ birth was from mother with no father. All that is needed for God for something to happen is to say “Be” and it is; for God is capable of all things.

[4] Prophethood is the highest and most honorable position a human can reach. A prophet is one who receives revelations from God through Angel Gabriel.

[5] Adam was created when God said, “Be,” and he to be without a father or a mother. And so was Jesus created by the Word of God. If the unusual birth of Jesus makes him divine, then Adam deserves more of that divinity because Jesus at least had one parent, while Adam had none. As Adam is not divine, so is Jesus not divine, but both are humble servants of God.

[6] This is where Mary gave birth to Jesus.

(part 2 of 3): Jesus I

Jesus the Prophet

“Say, ‘We believe in God and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and to the prophet-descendants (of Jacob), and what has been given to Moses and Jesus, and what has been given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims (in submission) to Him.” (Quran 2:136)

“Indeed, We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. And We revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophet-descendants (of Jacob), Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and We gave the book to David.” (Quran 4:163)

“The Messiah son of Mary was only a messenger (like other) messengers that had passed away before him. And his mother was a strong believer.[1] They both used to eat food.[2] Look how We make the proofs clear to them, then look how they (disbelievers) turn away.” (Quran 5:75)

“He (Jesus) was only a servant whom We have favored, and We made him an example to the Children of Israel.” (Quran 43:59)

The Message of Jesus

“And in their (the prophets’) footsteps, We sent Jesus the son of Mary, affirming the Torah that had come before him. And We gave him the Gospel, in it was guidance and light, affirming the Torah that had come before it, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious.” (Quran 5:46)

“O people of the Scripture, do not go to extremes in your religion, and do not say about God except the truth. The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, is only a messenger from God and a word from Him (“Be” and it is), which He sent to Mary, and a soul from Him.[3] So, believe in God and His messengers, and do not say, “Three.” Stop, it is better for you. Indeed, God is one; exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And God is sufficient as a Determiner of all affairs. Never would the Messiah look down upon being a worshipper of God, nor would the angels who are close (to God).[4] And whoever looks down upon the worship of God and is arrogant, then He will gather them to Himself all together.” (Quran 4:171-172)

“This is Jesus, the son of Mary. And this is the statement of truth, which they doubt. It is not possible for God to take a son. Far is He above this! When He decides something, He just says to it, “Be,” and it is.[5] (Jesus said), ‘And indeed God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path.’ But the sects disagreed (over the straight path), so woe to the disbelievers from meeting a horrible Day.” (Quran 19:34-37)

“And when Jesus came with clear proofs, he said, ‘I have come to you with prophethood, and to make clear to you some of what you disagree about, so fear God and obey me. Indeed, God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path.’ But the groups disagreed among themselves (about the message of Jesus), so woe to

those who disbelieved from the punishment of a painful Day.” (Quran 43:63-65)

“And (remember) when Jesus, son of Mary, said, “O Children of Israel, I am the messenger of God to you confirming the Torah that came before me, and bringing good news of a messenger that will come after me, whose name will be Ahmad.[6] But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said, “This is clear magic.”[7] (Quran 61:6)

The Miracles of Jesus

“So she pointed to him. They said, ‘How can we speak to a child in the cradle?’ (Jesus) said, ‘Indeed, I am a servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet.[8] And He has made me blessed wherever I am, and has commanded me to me pray and give charity as long as I remain alive. And (has made) me kind to my mother, and did not make me arrogant or miserable. And peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I will die, and the day I will be raised alive.’” (Quran 19:29-33)

(More miracles have been mentioned under: The Good news of a new-born child)

The Table Spread (of food) from Heaven by God’s Permission

“(And) when the disciples said, ‘O Jesus, son of Mary, will your Lord send down to us a table spread (with food) from heaven?’ He said, ‘Fear God, if you are indeed believers.’ They said, ‘We wish to eat from it and have our hearts be reassured, and to know that you have indeed told us the truth and that we be witnesses to it.’ Jesus the son of Mary said, ‘O God, our Lord, send us from heaven a table spread (with food) to be for us a festival for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You. And provide for us, You are the Best of providers.’ God said, ‘I am going to send it down to you, but if any of you after that disbelieves, then I will punish him with a punishment such as I will not put on anyone else.’” (Quran 5:112-115)

Jesus and His Disciples

“O you who believe, champion God’s (religion), like when Jesus son of Mary said to the disciples, ‘Who will champion God’s (religion) with me?’ The disciples said, ‘We are the

champions of God's (religion).’ Then a group of the Children of Israel believed and a group disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became victorious.”^[9] (Quran 61:14)

“And when I inspired the disciples to believe in Me and My messenger, so they said, ‘We believe, and bear witness that we are Muslims (in submission to God).’” (Quran 5:111)

“Then We sent after them Our messengers, and We sent Jesus son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We put in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. But We did not command monasticism, rather they invented it for themselves to please God with it, yet they did not observe it as it should be observed. So We gave those who believed among them their reward, but many of them are disobedient.” O you who believe, fear God and believe in His messenger, He will then give you a double portion of His mercy, and give you light by which you can walk, and He will forgive you. And God is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. (This We say) so that the people of the Scripture may know that they have no control over God's favor, and that (His) favor is in His Hand to give it to whomever He wills. And God is the Owner of great bounty.”^[10] (Quran 57:27-29)

Footnotes:

^[1] The Arabic word here indicates the highest level of faith possible, where the only one higher is prophethood.

^[2] Both the Messiah and his pious mother used to eat, and that is not a characteristic of God, who does not eat nor drink. Also, the one who eats defecates, and this cannot be an attribute of God. Jesus here is likened to all the noble messengers that had preceded him: their message was the same, and their status as non-divine creatures of God is similar. The highest honor that can be afforded to a human is prophethood, and Jesus is one of the five highly regarded prophets. See verse 33:7 & 42:13

^[3] Jesus is called a word or a soul from God because he was created when God said, “Be,” and he was. In that he is special, because all humans, except Adam and Eve, are created from two parents. But despite his uniqueness, Jesus is like everyone else in that he is not divine, but a mortal creature.

^[4] Everything and everyone else other than God is a worshipper or a slave of God. The verse is asserting that the Messiah would never claim a status above that of a worshipper of God, dismissing any claim to the contrary of his divinity. And indeed he would never disdain such a position, because this is the highest honor any human can aspire to.

[5] If the creation of Jesus without a father makes him the son of God, then everything created like Jesus without a predecessor should be divine too, and that includes Adam, Eve, the first animals, and this whole earth with its mountains and waters. But Jesus was created like all things on this earth, when God said, “Be,” and he was.

[6] This is another name of Prophet Muhammad.

[7] This can refer to both prophets, Jesus and Muhammad, peace be upon them. When they came with the message from God to their people, they were accused of bringing magic.

[8] Prophethood is the highest and most honorable position a human can reach. A prophet is one who receives revelations from God through Angel Gabriel. A messenger is a prophet who receives a book from God, as well as laws to convey to his people. Jesus attained the highest honor by being both a prophet and a messenger.

[9] The victory of the believers came through the message of Islam, and it was a physical and a spiritual victory. Islam removed all doubt about Jesus and offered conclusive proofs of his prophethood, and that was the spiritual victory. Islam also physically spread, which gave the believers in the message of Jesus refuge and power against their enemy, and that was the physical victory.

[10] God gives guidance to whomever He wills, regardless of background and race. And when people believe, God honors them and lifts higher than everyone else. But when they disbelieve, God demotes them even though before they might have been honorable.

(part 3 of 3): Jesus II

The Passion of Christ

“Then when Jesus felt their (persistence in) disbelief, he said, ‘Who will champion with me God’s (cause)?’ The disciples said, ‘We are the champions (of the cause) of God. We believe in God, and be a witness that we are Muslims (submitting to Him).[1] Our Lord, we have believed in what You have revealed, and we have followed the messenger, so write us down among the witnesses (to the truth).’ And they (who disbelieved) plotted, and God planned. And God is the best of the planners. When God said, ‘O Jesus, I will take you[2] and raise you up to Me and clear you of those who disbelieve, and I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve till the Day of Resurrection. Then you will all return to Me, and I will judge between you in the matters you used to disagree in.’” (Quran 3:52-55)

“And for of their saying, ‘We have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the messenger of God.’ But they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it was made to look like him to them.[3] And those who disagree over him are in doubt (of killing him), they have no knowledge of it except the following of guesswork, and they did not kill him for certain. But God raised him up to Himself.[4] And God is All-Powerful, All-Wise.” (Quran 4:157-158)

The Followers of Jesus

“Then whoever argues with you about him (Jesus) after the knowledge that has come to you, (then) say, ‘Come and let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then we all pray for the curse of God to fall on those who lie.’ Indeed, this is the true story. And there is no deity that deserves to be worshipped except God. And indeed, God is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. But if they turn away (from accepting the truth), then indeed, God is aware of the corrupters. Say, ‘O people of the Scripture: Come to a just statement^[5] between us and you, that we worship none but God, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us takes others as lords besides God^[6].’ But if they turn away, then say, ‘Be witnesses that we are Muslims (submitting to Him).’” (Quran 3:61-64)

“Surely, they have disbelieved those who say that God is the Christ, son of Mary. Say, ‘Who then has the least power against God if He were to destroy the Christ son of Mary, his mother, and everyone on earth?’ And God has supreme authority over the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them. He creates what He wills, and God is Able to do all things.” And the Jews and the Christians say, ‘We are the children of God and His loved ones.’ Say, ‘Why then does He punish you for your sins?’ Rather, you are only human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills. And God has supreme authority over the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them, and to Him is the return (of all).” (Quran 5:17-18)

“Surely, they have disbelieved who say, ‘God is the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary.’ But the Messiah said, ‘O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed, whoever sets up partners (in worship) with God, then God has forbidden him Paradise, and the Fire will be his home. And there is none to help the wrongdoers.’ Surely, disbelievers are those who say, ‘God is the third of three.’^[7] But there is no god (that deserves to be worshipped) except One God. And if they do not stop what they are saying, the disbelievers among them will suffer a painful punishment. Will they not repent to God and seek His forgiveness? For God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Quran 5:72-74)

“And the Jews say, ‘Ezra is the son of God,’^[8] and the Christians say, ‘The Messiah is the son of God.’ That is the fabrication of their mouths. They are imitating the claims of the disbelievers of before. May God destroy them, how they turn away (from the truth). They have taken their religious scholars and their monks as lords instead of God (by disobeying God and obeying them), and (they also have taken as their Lord) the Messiah, son of Mary. But they were commanded to worship only one God, none has the right to be worshipped except Him. Exalted is He above what they associate (with Him).”^[9] (Quran 9:30-31)

“O you who believe, indeed many religious scholars and monks eat away people’s wealth unjustly, and turn (others) away from the way to God. And those who treasure gold and silver, and do not spend it in the Way of God, then give them the news of a painful punishment.” (Quran 9:34)

The Second Coming

“And there is not one of the people of the Scripture but will believe in him before his death.^[10] And on the Day of Resurrection, he will be a witness against them.”^[11] (Quran 4:159)

“And he (Jesus) is a sign of (the coming of) the Hour, so do not doubt it.^[12] And follow Me, this is a straight path (leading to God and His paradise).” (Quran 43:61)

Jesus on the Day of Resurrection

““When God will say, ‘O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Pure Spirit (Gabriel) and you spoke to people in the cradle and in old age; and when I taught you the Book, wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel; and when you made out of clay the likeness of a bird, by My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird by My permission, and you healed the blind and the leper by My permission, and when you brought the dead to life by My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from (killing) you when you came to them with clear proofs, but the disbelievers among them said, ‘This is nothing but plain magic.’” (Quran 5:110)

“And God will say (on the Day of Resurrection), ‘O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to people, ‘Worship me and my mother instead of God?’^[13]’ He will say, ‘Glory be to

You! It is not for me to say what I have no right (to say). If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is (hidden) in myself and I do not know what is in Yours. Indeed, You are the Knower of the unseen.’^[14] I did not tell them except what You commanded me, ‘Worship God, my Lord and your Lord.’ And I was a witness over them while I was among them, but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a Witness to all things. If You punish them, they are Your servants, and if You forgive them, indeed You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”^[15] God will say, ‘This is the Day when the truth will benefit those who were truthful. To them belong gardens with rivers running through it (in Paradise), where they will stay forever. God is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. That is the great success.’ To God belongs the heavens and the earth and whatever is within them, and He is Able to do all.” (Quran 5:116-120)

Footnotes:

^[1] The name given for the disciples in the Quran is *al-Hawariyyun*, which means the purified ones, like the color white. It is also reported that they used to dress in white.

^[2] Jesus was raised up in a state of sleep. The word that is used here is *wafah*, which can mean sleep or death. In Arabic, sleep is called the minor death. See also verses 6:60 and 39:42, where the word *wafah* refers to sleep and not to death. Since verse 4:157 denies the killing and crucifixion of Jesus, and since each human dies once but Jesus is supposed to come back to earth, the only remaining interpretation of the verse is sleep.

^[3] The resemblance of Jesus was put on another, and it is he, not Jesus, who was crucified. According to several commentaries on the Quran, the one who was crucified was one of the disciples, accepting the resemblance of Jesus, and martyring himself to save Jesus in return for paradise.

^[4] Jesus was raised in body and soul, and did not die. He still lives up there, and will return towards the end of time to earth. After fulfilling his assigned role on earth, he will eventually die.

^[5] This is what all the prophets of God have called to and agreed upon. And so this statement is not exclusive to one group, but is the common grounds for those who want to worship God.

^[6] When one obeys another human in disobedience to God, he has taken him as a lord instead of God.

^[7] In reference to the Trinity.

^[8] Although not all Jews believed it, they failed to condemn it (see verses 5:78-79). When a sin is allowed to persist and spread unopposed, the whole community becomes liable.

[9] The religious scholars are the ones possessing knowledge, and the monks are the ones immersed in ritual and worship. Both are considered religious leaders and examples, and through their influence they can lead people astray.

[10] The pronoun in “his death” can refer to Jesus or to the individual from the people of the Scripture. If it refers to Jesus, it means that all of the people of the Scripture will come to believe in Jesus on his second return to earth and before his death. Jesus then will confirm that he is a prophet from God, not God nor the son of God, and will ask all people to worship God alone and submit to Him in Islam. If the pronoun refers to the individual from the people of the Scripture, then the verse means that each one of them will see just before his death what will convince him that Jesus was a true prophet from God, and not God. But that belief at that time will not benefit him, since it comes not out of free choice, but when he sees the angels of punishment.

[11] See verses 5:116-118.

[12] The second coming of Jesus will be a sign that the Day of Judgment is near.

[13] The worship of others with God is the same as worshipping them instead of God. Both mean that worship is directed and given to someone other than God, yet God is the only One who can be worshipped.

[14] God, as Jesus said, knows that Jesus did not call for his own worship or his mother’s. The aim of the question is to point to those who worship Jesus or Mary that if they were true followers of Jesus, they would stop that practice, because Jesus never called to it. But if they persist, then let them know that Jesus will disown them on the Last Day, and that they have not been following him, but only following their personal preferences.

[15] In other words, You know who is worthy of punishment, so You will punish him. And you know who is worthy of forgiveness, so You will forgive him. For indeed, You are the Mighty who has the power to punish, and You are Wise in dispensing all affairs, so you forgive those who deserve forgiveness.