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## CHRISTOLOGY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL IN RESPONSE TO THE ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING OF JESUS CHRIST

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### ABSTRACT

The Orthodox Christian view on the Deity of Jesus Christ is one of the central areas of disagreement between Muslims and Christians. According to traditional Christian belief, God took on human form in the person of Jesus Christ who is fully human and fully divine. Since Islam forbids the idea that God might become incarnate and take on human form, especially for the express purpose of dying for sinners who have chosen to be lost, this doctrine is completely repugnant to Muslims and is unfathomable to them. One of the key issues that has split Christians and Muslims for hundreds of years is this one. There should be no doubt that Jesus Christ is portrayed as God in many biblical texts for anyone who examines the Bible. In this article, I am building a case for the deity of Jesus from the Gospel of John to respond to the main claims against the deity of Jesus.

**Keywords:**

*Christology, Orthodox, Muslims, Christians, Gospel of John.*



## **A. Introduction**

According to Christianity, Jesus is God manifested in human form. Islam contends that Muhammad, the final and most important prophet, surpassed Jesus as a simple mortal and a prophet of God. Each of these faith declarations is fundamental to their own belief systems, but they are diametrically opposed to one another.<sup>1</sup> This study follows a method of study suggested by scholars like Norman Geisler and Paul N Anderson on the gospel according to John to study Christology through missional lenses. According to Geisler a text-centered study on a particular word, phrase, theme or section within the text will do an “analysis of such aspects as Christological titles, Christological motifs, passages which may represent the ‘central structure of John's Christology, and Christological schemas.’”<sup>2</sup> Anderson who takes a similar view as Geisler suggests that analyzing a particular titles such titles as Messiah, logos, the prophet or king, the Son, God, *monogenes*, Holy One of God help in understanding Johannine Christology.<sup>3</sup> This paper attempts to briefly screen through the Missio-Dei motifs such as logos, the son of God, the son of man, a few other titles given to Jesus, the “I am” sayings of Jesus, and the signs performed by Jesus in response to the Islamic claims against the deity of Jesus.

## **B. John's Christology**

It's interesting to note that each of the four different gospels wrote about four different themes. John has focused his writing on demonstrating Jesus' divinity. J H Wright states that “the universal revelatory function of Jesus’ identity and mission is highlighted from the very beginning, repeated at intervals through the gospel and climaxes in the great prayer of Jesus in John 17”<sup>4</sup> Onyenuru P in *The Theology of the Gospel of John* says that, John employs many messianic titles to the person of Christ, like the Messiah (1:41), the Son of God (1:34), Son of man (3:13), Prophet (6:14), Lamb of God (1:29), King of Israel (1:49) to show how

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<sup>1</sup> Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (Baker Books, 2002), 233.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Küng, “Christianity and World Religions: The Dialogue with Islam as One Model,” *The Muslim World* 77, no. 2 (April 1987): 88–89.

<sup>3</sup> Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 1st ed. (Coronet Books/J.C.B Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996), 19–20, accessed June 8, 2018, <http://gen.lib.rus.ec/book/index.php?md5=401EF6EBBAD6B128A086E3F2C7DD88BC>.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (InterVarsity Press, 2013), 125.



Christ is the fulfilment of the promises of God and the redemption of Israel, the saviour of the whole world (4:42; 6:51; 8:12).<sup>5</sup>

John Primarily shows that Jesus Christ really is the Messiah and the Son of God (cf. Jn 20:31). The background of such an emphasis was the Arians who believed a fourth-century Trinitarian heresy, created by, and named for, Arius, a priest from Alexandria (c. 250 A.D.-336 A.D.). The heresy was that divine being was uncreated, unbegotten, and unique, and since the Logos was begotten, Christ was not true God but a creature who had a beginning, although a perfect creature surpassing all other creatures. The Holy Spirit was also a creature produced by the Son, inferior to, and different from, both Son and Father. This heresy was condemned by the First Nicaean Council in 325 A.D.<sup>6</sup> in James F. McGrath's opinion, John's Christology as, "the paradox of Johannine Christology is an aspect of John's development of traditions he inherited, utilizing motifs current in his day and age, and it is with this paradoxical portrait of Jesus that the Church of all subsequent centuries has had to wrestle."<sup>7</sup>

According to many academic perspectives, John was speaking to an audience that was familiar with the concepts and expressions he used. The Gospel unmistakably establishes Jesus Christ's divinity to readers today. Onyenuru opines that, John aimed at producing faith in his audience, probably Hellenists, who are acquainted with Stoic philosophical beliefs in a "logos" that descends from the heavens (20:31).<sup>8</sup> Since the Jews understand creation to be from God, this claim of pre-existence validates the divinity of Christ. The pre-existence of Christ is vital to understanding the incarnation, and mission of Christ. It is the pre-existence that gives credibility to the work of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Onyenuru P, "The Theology of the Gospel of John" (n.d.): 3–4, accessed June 9, 2018, [https://www.academia.edu/25281487/The\\_Theology\\_of\\_the\\_Gospel\\_of\\_John](https://www.academia.edu/25281487/The_Theology_of_the_Gospel_of_John).

<sup>6</sup> James F. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology: Legitimation and Development in Johannine Christology* (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 234.

<sup>7</sup> James F. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 234.

<sup>8</sup> James F. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 234.

<sup>9</sup> Onyenuru P, "The Theology of the Gospel of John," 3–4.



## C. Christological titles of Jesus Christ in John's gospel

### a. Jesus Christ as Logos

Jesus being projected as the Word (logos) has always been a subject of scholarly discussion. Understanding the context of John is significant in understanding the usage of 'Word.' The gospel of John does not begin with the historical Jesus. The reader is introduced to the Word (logos) who is not identified with Jesus until the end of the prologue. The term Word was widely used in Greek literature, among the Stoics to describe the principle of divine reason which caused the natural creation to grow. Understanding this background will only help to know the significance of this. Philo of Alexandria in his writings used it as the instrument through which the world was created, different from John as without mentioning Word as a person pre-existing of the world and also denied the incarnation of the Word, whereas John specifically maintained that the Word became flesh.<sup>10</sup> It becomes necessary to explain to the Muslims the meaning of the Word, logos in the sense it in which it is used to explain the pre-existence of Christ by John. Understanding the word logos is key to understanding John's background.

Another explanation worth considering is from Michael W. Goheen who addresses John 1:14 as the temple theology, which says, "the Word became flesh, (*καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν*) which means, He pitched his tent and tabernacle in our midst, and we beheld his glory."<sup>11</sup> According to him, any first century Jew could understand that this was recommunicating about the glory of YHWH, and that looks like Jesus, and to talk about the Israelites' one God returning, it has to be talking about Jesus. The temple theology is also seen in John chapter 2 where Jesus is talking about rebuilding the temple in 3 days. And in chapter 13-14 John shows that Jesus is the true temple.<sup>12</sup>

According to Onyenuru, "the word is a stoic coinage for the pre-existent being that pervades all of the universe, and in a special way provides the rational order of the universe as well as supplies the standard for conduct and for the proper order of life for rational

<sup>10</sup> G. J. Wenham and D. A. Carson, eds., *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*. (Leicester, England ; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1328–1329.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2016), 185.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Goheen, *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 185–186.



creatures.”<sup>13</sup> He says, the logos is the wisdom who pre-exists all things (Prov. 3:21-26), and is also the creator of things (Prov 8:30). At a point in history, this pre-existent wisdom took flesh in the world.<sup>14</sup>

Bosch in his *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* also says that, for Jews, “faith comes from what is heard” (Rom 10:17), and *dabar* (Hebrew for “word”) refers, particularly to the spoken word. Logos (Greek for “word”), by contrast, primarily refers to “knowledge-through-seeing.”<sup>15</sup> The ‘Word’ is also understood as God’s Wisdom by the scholars. Evan F Kuehn in *The Johannine Logic of Augustine’s Trinity* discusses an explanation from Augustine that,

It is true that in the Word of God, which was in the beginning with God and was God, that is to say, in the Wisdom of God, there was timelessly contained the time in which that Wisdom was to appear in the flesh. So while without any beginning of time, in the beginning, was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God, without any time there was in the Word the time at which the Word would become flesh and dwell among us. And when this fullness of time came, God sent his Son made of woman that is made in time, in order that the Word might be shown to men incarnate; and the time at which this should happen was timelessly contained within the Word. The whole series of all times is timelessly contained in God's eternal Wisdom.<sup>16</sup>

Samuel Shahid brings an answer to the matter of ‘Word’ that it is interpreted as a ‘command from God alone by the Muslim, and not as the logos mentioned in John 1:1. In Shahid’s words,

The problem with this interpretation is that these titles “the Word of God or the Spirit of God” are only attributed to Jesus, in the corpus of the Islamic literature. No one else but Jesus was given these titles in Islam. Since the Word of God is in God, it is also eternal as God himself, otherwise, there would be a time when God was without

<sup>13</sup> Onyenuru P, “The Theology of the Gospel of John.” 4.

<sup>14</sup> Onyenuru P, “The Theology of the Gospel of John.” 4.

<sup>15</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Orbis Books, 2011), 422.

<sup>16</sup> Evan F Kuehn, “The Johannine Logic of Augustine’s Trinity: A Dogmatic Sketch,” *Theological Studies* 68, no. 3 (September 2007): 579–84.



a Word. In that case, he would be a mute God. That means that Jesus was singled out to be his incarnation, the manifestation of God's person and character. The story of the birth of Jesus, as it was recorded in the Qur'an, contradicts the Islamic claim.<sup>17</sup>

#### **b. Jesus as the Son of Man**

In the Gospel of John, Jesus calls himself “the Son of Man” 12 times. John L. Ronning says that the title ‘son of man is based on; *first*, “the son of man” in Ps 8:4, which looks back at the high position in which Adam was created; *second*, it is also based on “one like a son of man” in Dan 7:13, who is an eschatologized version of the son of man referenced in Ps 8:4; *third*, it is equivalent to Paul’s designation of Jesus as “the last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45), and “the [Adam] who was to come” (Rom 5:14). *Fourth*, he says that the claim implied by the use of the title was equivalent to that of “the Messiah” but it was enigmatic to his hearers, and thus served to veil Jesus’ messianic claim.<sup>18</sup>

He also says that this title in John’s Gospel can be placed into the categories suggested by the adaptation of Psalm 8:4-6 from Adam to Jesus found in Heb. 2:6-10, namely,

(1) The temporary descent of the Son of Man to a position “for a little while lower than the angels” (the incarnation and earthly ministry); (2) the glorification of the Son of Man (especially in his suffering); (3) the one who “brings many sons to glory” through believing in him; (4) the one to whom all authority is given.<sup>19</sup>

John Hick is of the opinion that the language of divine son-ship and divinity was in widespread and varied use in the ancient world and would have been familiar to the contemporaries of Jesus, Paul, and John in a wide range of applications'. The evidence is seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls referring to ‘one who 'shall be called the son of the Great God. He shall be hailed as the Son of God, and they shall call him the Son of the Most High.’<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Shahid, “Christianity Vis-à-Vis Islam,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 44, no. 2 (2002): 71.

<sup>18</sup> John L. Ronning, “The High and Lifted Up : Son of Man Christology of John’s Gospel” (n.d.): 9, accessed June 8, 2018,

[https://www.academia.edu/26681603/The\\_High\\_and\\_Lifted\\_Up\\_Son\\_of\\_Man\\_Christology\\_of\\_Johns\\_Gospel](https://www.academia.edu/26681603/The_High_and_Lifted_Up_Son_of_Man_Christology_of_Johns_Gospel).<sup>19</sup>, 2.

<sup>20</sup> John Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate: Christology in a Pluralistic Age* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 41–42.

**c. Jesus Christ as Son of God**

McGrath, in *John's Apologetic Christology*, says that, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is the eternally pre-existent Son who was sent from heaven into the world by the Father (John 3: 17; 4: 34; 5: 24, 30, 37). He remains conscious of the divine pre-existence he enjoyed with the Father (John 8: 23, 38, 42). He is one with the Father (John 10: 30; 14: 7) and loved by the Father (John 3: 35; 5: 20; 10: 17; 17: 23–6). The Son has the divine power to give life and to judge (John 5: 21–2, 25–6; 6: 40; 8: 16; 17: 2). Through his death, resurrection, and ascension the Son is glorified by the Father (John 17: 1, 5, 24), but it is not a glory that is thereby essentially enhanced. His glory not only existed from the time of the incarnation to reveal the Father (John 1: 14) but also pre-existed the creation of the world (John 17: 5, 24). Being God's 'only Son' (John 1: 14, 18; 3: 16, 18), he enjoys a truly unique and exclusive relationship with the Father. The exclusive Johannine language of God's 'only Son' has its real source in Jesus' preaching.<sup>21</sup>

In pre-Johannine Christian documents, Jesus is referred to as God's Son and agent or representative. "The key idea behind agency in the ancient world, and early Judaism, in particular, is that the one sent is like the one who sent him."<sup>22</sup> Jesus accepted the title, Son of God for himself a number of times in the Gospel of John. One such case is where he said, I and the Father are one (John 10:30). Another incident was where the leaders wanted to kill Jesus because he 'was a mere man' who was claiming to be God (John 10:33). Jesus did not renounce this claim against him but He agreed that He is God's Son (John 10:36). He said to the leaders that if He does what the Father did, then they should know that "the father is in me and I in the Father"<sup>23</sup> John Hick is of the opinion that the language of divine sonship and divinity was in widespread and varied use in the ancient world and would have been familiar to the contemporaries of Jesus, Paul, and John in a wide range of application'. The evidence is seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls referring to 'one who 'shall be

<sup>21</sup> McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 60.

<sup>22</sup> McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 60.

<sup>23</sup> Gordon D. Nickel, *The Gentle Answer to the Muslim Accusation of Biblical Falsification*, 2 edition. (Bruton Gate, 2015), 429.



called the son of the Great God. He shall be hailed as the Son of God, and they shall call him the Son of the Most High.<sup>24</sup>

From the Islamic point of view, the eternal sonship doctrine of Jesus and his deity is blasphemy. But, Jonathan E Culver refers to Ambrie in saying that this sonship in no way refers to a physical sonship, rather it is only an analogous term. Ambrie proves it from the Islamic scripture, Sura 18:4 that says, "...and to warn those who say, "Allah has taken a son."<sup>25</sup> The word used for son here is, the Arabic word *walad*, which means a physical or biological son. Christians also reject the idea of a physical or biological son when speaking of the Son of God.<sup>26</sup> So, what is mentioned in the Arabic Bible is not about Christians but about the monotheistic during Mohammad's time. The word *ibn* is what should be used when there is no biological meaning in it because the Quran, Surah 2:215 uses the word *ibn* in a term *ibnus sabil* to talk about the 'son of the road' referring to a traveler. But Jonathan in his writings brings out the fact that, Quran refers to Jesus as the *Ibnu Maryam* or son of Mary, which can bring questions.<sup>27</sup> "*Ibn* also frequently appears in Arab analogies, but with one qualification; a male figure is always the progenitor. Thus it appears that *ibnu Maryam* forms an exceptional case in Arab Custom. This brings the focus back to Jesus' miraculous and divine origin."<sup>28</sup>

### Other Titles of Jesus Christ

John proclaimed Christ to be "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). *John understood him as the Messiah from The Father's voice from heaven at the baptism and Jesus' later reconfirmation of his Messiahship to John in prison validated Jesus' claim to the Messiah (Matt. 11:2-5). Jesus uses for himself the same expression Yahweh uses to describe his name to Moses at the burning bush –I AM sent you (Exod. 3:14).*<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, 41–42.

<sup>25</sup> "Surah Al-Kahf [18:4]," *Surah Al-Kahf [18:4]*, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://quran.com>.

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan E. Culver, "Christological Reflection in the Apologetic of Hamran Ambrie (1921-1988) of Indonesia," in *Jesus and the Incarnation: Reflections of Christians from Islamic Contexts* (Oregon: Regnum Books International, 2011), 188.

<sup>27</sup> Jonathan E. Culver, "Christological Reflection in the Apologetic of Hamran Ambrie (1921-1988) of Indonesia," in *Jesus and the Incarnation: Reflections of Christians from Islamic Contexts* (Oregon: Regnum Books International, 2011), 188.

<sup>28</sup> Jonathan E. Culver, "Christological Reflection in the Apologetic of Hamran Ambrie , 188.

<sup>29</sup> Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 157–158.



### **‘I am’ sayings in the Gospel of John**

To state that your name is I AM who I AM is to say that 'I exist apart from every other, I am uncreated.' Thus God tells Moses 'My name is self-existent, I am eternal, without beginning or end.' When Jesus then calls Himself I AM, He is declaring that same self-existence.<sup>30</sup> The gospel of St. John clearly links Jesus to the names of God in the Old Testament. He does this both in recording the ‘I AM’ statements of Jesus and the corresponding miracles and events that back up those claims.<sup>31</sup>

Gary W. Sneller in his linguistic approach to the ‘I am’ sayings also says that the conceptual background of Johannine “I am” language is from the Old Testament. He states that “in John’s Gospel, the “I am” sayings with a predicate are meant to define Jesus’ role and mission as a fulfillment of Old Testament ideas and expectations.”<sup>32</sup> Seven distinctive “I am” sayings with a predicate are found in the Gospel of John: 6:35, “I am the bread of life, 8:12 “I am the light of the world, 10:7 “I am the door of the sheep, 10:1 “I am the good shepherd, 11:25 “I am the resurrection, 14:6 “I am the way and the truth and the life and 15:1—“I am the true vine.

From the gospel's opening verses to its closing paragraphs, Jesus' divinity is proclaimed. Nowhere is this more evident than in the ‘I AM’ statements of Jesus. Throughout the gospel, Jesus is recorded making several declarative ‘I AM’ statements, proclaiming His divinity and equality with Jehovah. These ‘I AM’ statements, which give reference to the name of God given to Moses in the Old Testament, would have been clear statements of divinity to the Jews of Jesus' day. This is evidenced in chapter eight when Jesus says, "most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM", the Jews sought to stone Him for blasphemy.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Vas Avramidis, “I AM: Jesus’ Claim to Be Jehovah the God of the Israelites in the Old Testament” (n.d.): 1–2, accessed July 10, 2018, [https://www.academia.edu/2610011/I\\_AM\\_Jesus\\_Claim\\_to\\_be\\_Jehovah\\_The\\_God\\_of\\_the\\_Israelites\\_in\\_the\\_Old\\_Testament](https://www.academia.edu/2610011/I_AM_Jesus_Claim_to_be_Jehovah_The_God_of_the_Israelites_in_the_Old_Testament).

<sup>31</sup> Vas Avramidis, “I AM: Jesus’ Claim to Be Jehovah the God of the Israelites in the Old Testament”, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Gary W. Sneller, “‘I Am’ Sayings in the Gospel of John A Linguistic Approach” (n.d.): 3, accessed July 10, 2018, [https://www.academia.edu/10206382/I\\_am\\_Sayings\\_in\\_the\\_Gospel\\_of\\_John\\_A\\_Linguistic\\_Approach](https://www.academia.edu/10206382/I_am_Sayings_in_the_Gospel_of_John_A_Linguistic_Approach).

<sup>33</sup> Avramidis, “I AM,” 1.



#### D. Signs in the gospel of John

Signs are crucial a part of John's Christological presentation, which is deeply rooted in OT symbolism.<sup>34</sup> The use of the word, *sēmeion*, "sign," from Wis 10:16, to describe the significant actions of Jesus (John 2:11; 4:54; 20:30). According to this understanding, the Johannine signs would be 1. The changing of water into wine (2:1-11) 2. The cure of the royal official's son (4:46-54). 3. The cure of the paralytic at the pool (5:1-17) 4. The multiplication of loaves and walking on water (6:1-66) 5. The cure of the man born blind (9:1-41). The raising of Lazarus (11:1-44) 7. The lifting up of Jesus Christ in death and resurrection (chaps. 18-20).<sup>35</sup>

Signs displayed the glory of God in Jesus and revealed that Jesus was divine and authentic representative of God. The importance of the signs in the two divisions of the Fourth Gospel emphasizes their significance in John's Christology which led people to accept the messianic mission of Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

#### E. John's Christology in Response to the Muslims

Vít Machálek explains that the main point made in the Qur'an is that Jesus and his mother are not gods since Jesus is, in fact, a created being. The view rejected is that Jesus is "a god" or "God"; in the passages referred to, there is no mention of Jesus as "son of God" because God does not beget offspring.<sup>37</sup> Another issue is against the Christian belief in the divinity of Christ as the Son of God, which is an unpardonable sin of *shirk*, condemned throughout the Qur'an. The debate continues and each individual Muslim can take a different side of this issue based on his own understanding of the matter.<sup>38</sup>

Surah 4:171 says,

O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion and do not say anything of Allah than the truth. Verily the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only a messenger of Allah, and his Word which he bestowed on Mary, and a

<sup>34</sup> Andreas J Kostenberger, "The Seventh Johannine Sign: A Study in John's Christology," *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, no. 5 (1995): 89–90.

<sup>35</sup> Douglas K Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (April 1983): 205.

<sup>36</sup> Douglas K Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," 93–94.

<sup>37</sup> Vít Machálek, "The Trinity and Christians in Dialogue with Islam," *Communio viatorum* 56, no. 1 (2014): 63.

<sup>38</sup> Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 216.



Spirit from him. So believe in Allah and his messengers. And do not say "Three"! Desist, it is better. Verily Allah is only one. Glorified be he, than that he should ever have a son. To him is everything in the heavens and on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as an overseer.<sup>39</sup>

According to this verse, it is said not to believe in Jesus as one of three gods (an allusion to the Trinity). Secondly, Allah is only one God, thus Jesus cannot be another. Finally, the glory of Allah is too great for him to ever have a Son. (The Qur'an, on the few occasions it refers to the Trinity in whatever form Muhammad comprehended it, denounces it as a combination of Jesus and his mother Mary as two gods alongside Allah – cf. Surah 5:76-78; 5:110).<sup>40</sup>

Other passages of the Qur'an reject the deity of Jesus and the Christian belief in him as the Son of God, "The Jews say, "Ezra is the son of Allah "; and the Christians say, "The Messiah is the son of Allah " That is their statement from their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved [before them]. May Allah destroy them; how are they deluded?"<sup>41</sup> (Surah 9:30) and "It is not [befitting] for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, "Be," and it is" (Surah 19:35).<sup>42</sup> The three major allegations Muslims have against Christians are "1. God does not consist of a Trinity of which Jesus is part. 2. Jesus is neither divine nor the son of God. 3. The Crucifixion of Jesus and the atonement he procured is a myth."<sup>43</sup>

Christology has been one of the main and specific issues between Muslims and Christians since the days of Muhammad until now. According to the Muslims, "The image of God as the Transcendent Other appears to be sacrificed by the Christian notion of Jesus as the 'Son of God', and 'Trinity.'"<sup>44</sup> The image of Jesus in the Quran is one who corrects Christians of exceeding the bounds of 'the Islamic structure of prophecy'. Muhammad

<sup>39</sup> "Surah An-Nisa [4:171]," *Surah An-Nisa [4:171]*, accessed July 17, 2018, <https://quran.com>.

<sup>40</sup> Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 216.

<sup>41</sup> "Surah At-Tawbah [9:30]," *Surah At-Tawbah [9:30]*, accessed July 31, 2018, <https://quran.com>.

<sup>42</sup> "Surah Maryam [19:35]," *Surah Maryam [19:35]*, accessed July 31, 2018, <https://quran.com>.

<sup>43</sup> Gerhard Nehls and Walter Eric, *Christian-Islamic Controversy: A Teachers' Textbook* (Kenya: Life Challenge Africa, 2010), 76.

<sup>44</sup> "Islamic Christology and a Christian Response," accessed July 24, 2018, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2013/09/09/islamic-christology-and-a-christian-response/>.



denied the heavenly nature of Christ, and in Sura Q 112 says, “Allah begets not and was not begotten.”<sup>45</sup>

The Christology of John adequately proves the divinity of Jesus, unlike the synoptic gospels that are more historical in nature by choosing events from Jesus' life that best demonstrate that He is God, the Messiah foretold by the prophets.<sup>46</sup> Nicholas rightly states is saying that, together with Muslims, Christians insist that ‘it is impossible for God to have a son who is another God. “God is not corporeal and cannot beget a son in a literal sense; sonship in God is an ‘intellectual son-ship,’ so that ‘Word’ and ‘Son’ are interchangeable. God is eternal and so the generation of the ‘Son’ is eternal, never resulting in a self-standing entity next to God.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This article demonstrates the missio-dei themes in relation to Christology from the gospel of John. Christological understanding in the Gospel of John is discussing the missio-dei themes without leaving any room to uncertainty about the deity of Jesus. When the gospel is studied in its entirety, by a particular word, phrase, theme or section within the text itself it is uncomplicated to understand how John demonstrates the divinity of Jesus Christ. Studying the context in which the Gospel was written, the audience and the purpose of the gospel makes the reader understand the deity of Christ with clarity, and thus enable them to answer any controversies against that teaching. The false concepts among the Muslims in their understanding of Christ are answered in John's Christology. In response to the research interest on the ‘Perception of Jesus among the followers of Jesus from Islamic faith the core of the gospel reveals the necessity to understand the mission of God, that God the Father so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son (Jesus) who is fully God to save humanity. The personality of Jesus Christ and the efficacy of his salvific power is potent till the end of ages. No power was established after the concluding work on the cross of Calvary and both Bible and Quran attest to the incomparable power of Jesus Christ name.

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<sup>45</sup> “Islamic Christology and a Christian Response,”

<sup>46</sup> Avramidis, “I AM,” 1.

<sup>47</sup> Machálek, “The Trinity and Christians in Dialogue with Islam,” 59.



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