

It is Biblically Wrong for Followers of Jesus to Confess Muhammad as God's Messenger

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If Muhammad's message points people away from the true gospel rather than toward it, how does this not fit the biblical description of a false prophet/apostle, and how is it therefore not biblically wrong for followers of Jesus to continue to confess him as God's messenger?

In Galatians 1:8, the Scripture admonishes us that even if an angel comes with another gospel, other than that which God Himself has revealed in Christ to save us, we should do away with it. Hence knowing that the message of Muhammad turns people away from the true Gospel of salvation in Christ how should we, as obedient children of God and ambassadors of Christ, view such a messenger? Confessing Muhammad as God's messenger brings us to the confession of *Shahada* in the Islamic faith.

In Islamic history, it appears that the present *Shahada* as practised by the Islamic community is a corrupted version of the one practiced in the early stage of Islam. (Yet remember that historically it is a strategy of deception to adulterate the message of salvation as faith which comes by hearing.)

In chapter 51:412 of *Riy-yadus-salihin* (The Basic Doctrine of the Islamic Faith) the *Shahada*, within its historical inception and initial context and content, even acknowledges Christ as the Word and Spirit of God, and salvation by grace alone. Yet even that assertion does not justify the inclusion of the *Shahada* in Christian belief or its practice as part of a new-found regenerated life in Christ. Confessing Muhammad as a true messenger from the Tri-Personal God, is a betrayal of God and his Divine will and purpose for humanity as we find it revealed in the Holy Scripture, the Bible.

We know that Al-Nawawi wrote *Riy-yadus-salihin* before his death in 1278 AD. Even so, the amazing claims that "within its initial context and content it [*Shahada*] even acknowledges Christ as the Word and Spirit of God and salvation by grace alone", are not from a reliable source for understanding the basic and doctrinal root of the revelation of God. God's biblical revelation existed well before Islam and it alone constitutes the foundation of true belief and redemptive work of God. No matter how closely the original *Shahada* agrees with the Christian doctrine of salvation, the validity of Al-Nawawi's thoughts must be evaluated through the eyes of God as revealed in the divine, inspired words written in the Bible.

Let me highlight some thoughts from the living Scriptures as to why it is biblically wrong for a follower of Christ to say the *Shahada* or acknowledge Muhammad as a prophet or a messenger from God.

Any time a follower of Christ says the *Shahada*, or acknowledges Muhammad as God's messenger, they are ultimately denying the Trinity and the deity of Christ. We continue to see in real life confusing situations and delusion, making it almost impossible to depart from imposed Arabic culture, other Islamic beliefs that contradict Scriptures, and a respect for Muhammad above that of the proper object of their faith, the person of Christ. Indeed, we have testimonies and examples of people not growing in the grace and knowledge of God our Saviour through acknowledging Muhammad as a messenger of God.

Acknowledging Muhammad as a messenger of God is in conflict with the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. Jesus Christ made it clear that He and God the Father are One, that God is Spirit, and that the Spirit who would come after Jesus would testify about Christ, namely that God in Christ was reconciling the world to Himself through the Spirit. We have the power to communicate this because we received it when we received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8) Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15). All the fullness of God dwells in Christ Jesus (Col 1:19) and God is completely in Christ in bodily form (Col 2:9). Muhammad contradicted all of this, and did not acknowledge that Christ was God in the flesh. He thus made his own status as messenger questionable. Muhammad did not accept the truth from God about Jesus, and the Scriptures clearly tell us that such a person is not from God (1 John 4:2-3, John 16:13-15). Muhammad denied that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). The *Shahada* is anti-Trinity because it denies the Tri-Personality of God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit, (1 Jn. 4:2-3, Jn. 16:13-15 & 1 Cor. 12:3). It is anti-*Shahada* to say that Jesus is God in human Body.

Every follower of Christ is a new creature through adoption by God as His child. God Himself is conforming us to the image of Christ, therefore to acknowledge Muhammad as God's messenger is not being true and sincere to the working within the new believer from the new birth, nor applicable in his new-found faith in the Son of God who became a man in order to reconcile humanity to Himself. Muhammad was never part of that grand design of God (2 Corinthians 5:17). Confessing the *Shahada* therefore nullifies the essence of the new birth through the Spirit as well as the indwelling of Christ in the new believer. The Scriptures admonish us that we need to *put off* all our former lifestyle and *put on* the new self in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:22-25, Col. 3:8-9). That is not done through a messenger; it is done through the Spirit. Therefore to import Muhammad as God's messenger into God's work is not fair to the new believer in Christ.

Our union in God is with Christ through the Spirit. It is not with Muhammad as a “messenger of God” but with the Spirit through Christ our Saviour. Therefore there is no active place for a messenger like Muhammad in the entire redemptive work of the cross, which had every detail determined by God before the foundation of the world, waiting for the fullness of time to be made manifest in Christ. Importing Muhammad backward in history and inserting him into God’s plan of reconciling humanity to Himself, or even seeking to accommodate Muhammad as part of this plan is unfair and adding to the gospel, because truly, Muhammad has nothing to do with God’s plan of salvation in Christ.

Every act within the redemptive work of salvation was absolutely completed, about six hundred years before “Muhammad the Messenger” came up with his teachings and practices. Is it not robbery, to confess allegiance to a man who, according to unreliable sources, claimed to be a messenger from God? I believe it is poison in the life of the believer to acknowledge Muhammad as God’s messenger.

Unfortunately, looking deeply at the foundation of this “messenger’s” message, we find that his message tends to turn people away from Christ who is God, and points people *away* from understanding the true content of God’s plan for the salvation of humanity. Indeed, Muhammad’s message negates the efficacy of the cross and foundation of Christianity.

Confessing the *Shahada* implies a different gospel and Galatians 1:6–13 warns us against inventing and advocating or even acknowledging such a “gospel,” even if the person appears as an angel of light. Applying Galatians 3:1 shows that a follower of Christ is being foolish if they recite the *Shahada* and acknowledge Muhammad as a messenger of God. It conveys a false concept to new believers in Christ, who are not well grounded in the message of the Cross or salvation or the programme of God reconciling the world to Himself.

At worst, confessing the *Shahada* allows a follower of Christ to be bewitched by the spirit of Islam, by forcing honour and respect for Muhammad above reverence to God’s infallible word and Jesus Christ. Rejecting Western influence on the gospel, but replacing it with Arabic influence, makes foolish the true gospel as the power of God unto salvation for the whole human race. It is unfaithfulness to the cause of Christ. Hence acknowledging Muhammad as a messenger of God is actually being bewitched (2 Corinthians 11:4). It is a different Gospel, a different kind of Spirit (2 Corinthians 6:11 – 18).

In I Corinthians 8:1-7 we read that knowledge gives us freedom to act as we like, but love restrains us for the sake of saving others. Acknowledging Muhammad as a prophet is hurting and

continuing to hurt many in practice as we see lives of Muslims who come to know Christ and change through the explicit presentation of God's plan of salvation made on the cross. Genuine new believers in Christ have changed and conformed to the image of Christ, whereas the spirit of Islam and Arabic culture has held them in bondage. The practice of acknowledging Muhammad as God's messenger causes these followers of Christ excruciating pain and we see them wounded and hurt as a result of such a confession. It makes them cast doubts on the object, author and foundation of their belief, who is the Great mystery of God revealed – God in Christ alone (John 17:3). Because these new believers lack this simple yet profound knowledge in their growth and maturity, they are unable to handle some of these innovative and creative hypotheses as they seek to live out their new faith in real life. They are confused by issues that are strange, complicated and often based on testimonies and hypothesis rather than the revealed word of God.

Confessing the *Shahada* and acknowledging Muhammad as the messenger of God leans towards syncretism (2 Corinthians 6:11–18). Acknowledging Muhammad as a messenger from God is adding to the Scriptures (I Tim 2:5-6). The act of salvation was completed and the Holy Scriptures were sealed (Rev 22:18-19) before Islam arrived over 600 years later. In considering whether a follower of Christ should confess Muhammad as a messenger of God, one should be aware of the biblical warning about false apostles, given in 2 Cor 11:11-15. God in Christ reconciling humanity to Himself does not need any new revelation. We need to let the truth of the gospel stand with no innovative corruption or addition. Confessing the *Shahada* adds an external corruption to God's plan of salvation as God intended it and as revealed it in the Bible.

For these reasons, I believe it is biblically wrong and unhelpful for followers of Jesus to confess Muhammad as a messenger of God.