

CHRISTIANITY

FOR
SCEPTICS, ENQUIRERS & BELIEVERS

A very warm welcome

Rob Scott will be speaking for us today

Notices

1. New? If you're here for the first time and would like more information about the London Bridge Talks, including our weekly email, please fill in a contact card, or scan the QR code to subscribe online.



2. Partnership. A weekly opportunity to discuss with others how what we're hearing applies to life in the City. We meet on Thursdays, 08:00 - 08:45, in the Two Ruba bar of the Hilton on Tooley Street. Contact Lizzie: lizzie@snca.co.uk.

3. Clapham Junction Church. Under God, and in partnership with others, St Nick's is hoping to launch a new church in Clapham Junction in September 2025. The church will be led by Tom Barnardo. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in finding out more information, please scan the QR code.



4. Coming up. Join us next week as we continue our series in Matthew's gospel. Tom Wright will be speaking on Matthew 15:1-20.

Muslims & Christians: Do we believe in the same God?

1 Introduction

- The Pope and Chief Imam...
- "Christians and Muslims worship one and the same God...I reject the idea that Muslims worship a different God than do Jews and Christians." Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response*, p14.
 - Do you agree? Does it matter?

2 Stories of the Prophets

- Comparing stories with some friends, eg Abraham:

"The *LORD* appeared to Abraham..." (Taurat, Genesis 18:1...15)

"And surely Our *messenger-angels* came to Abraham with good news [of a son]." (Hud/Surah 11:69...73)

3 The Uniquely Personal and Present God

- LORD = Yahweh
- Yahweh has a spirit who hovers over the chaotic pre-creation waters, and a powerfully active word which creates all things, including people "in his own image" (Taurat, Genesis 1:1-3, 26-31)
- Yahweh personally interacts with Adam and Eve, and walks with them in the Garden of Eden (Taurat, Genesis 2:15-25, 3:8-13)
 - Cf Surahs 2:30-39, 3:33 & 59 and 7:10-32 – created from dust, spoken to, but more about angels, Satan and "their slip"
- Yahweh sees and grieves over the world's wickedness, and talks with Noah and blesses him (Taurat, Genesis 6:5-9:17)
 - Cf Surahs 7:59-64, 10:71-73, 11:25-49, 23:23-30, 26:106-122, 54:9-16 and 71:1-28 – sent to warn
- Yahweh appears in a burning bush to Moses (Taurat, Exodus 3:1-6), comes down onto a mountain to speak to Israel (Taurat, Exodus 19-20), and passed before of Moses proclaiming his character (Taurat, Exodus 33:18-34:8)

- o Holy & merciful (cf New Testament/Injil, I John 1:5-7, 4:8-10)
- o “Yahweh” not known in the Qur’an
- ¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. ²And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. ³I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: “Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared. (New Testament/Injil, Revelation 21:1-4)
 - o Allah is above the heavens,
<https://islamqa.info/en/answers/11035/is-allah-above-the-throne>
- So, Yahweh is relational, personal, involved and present – also father (Zabur/Psalms 68:5, 103:13), husband (Isaiah 54:5-8, Hosea 2:16-23), and helper (Zabur/Psalms 54:4, 118:7)
- But “Muslims do not see God as their father...Men are servants of a just master; they cannot, in orthodox Islam, typically attain any greater degree of intimacy with their creator.” Shabbir Akhtar, *A Faith for all Seasons*, p180.

And, “Allah does not reveal Himself to anyone in any way. Allah reveals only his will...Allah does not reveal himself to anyone...that is the great difference between Christianity and Islam.” Isma’il Al-Faruqi, *Christian Mission and Muslim Da’wah: Proceedings of the Chambesy Dialogue Consultation*, p47-48.

- o So, Allah is unknowable and distant – Surah 50:16 notwithstanding

4 The Unique Revealer and Rescuer

- Yahweh says: ³²“Search the past, the time before you were born, all the way back to the time when God created human beings on the earth. Search the entire earth. Has anything as great as this ever happened before? Has anyone ever heard of anything like this? ³³Have any people ever lived after hearing a god speak to them from a fire, as you have? ³⁴Has any god ever dared to go and take a people from another nation and make them his own, as Yahweh your God did for you in Egypt? Before your very eyes he used his great power and strength; he brought plagues and war, worked miracles and wonders, and caused terrifying things to happen. ³⁵The Yahweh has shown you this, to prove to you that he alone is God and that there is no other. ³⁶He let you hear his voice from heaven so that he could instruct you; and here on earth he let you see his holy fire, and he spoke to you from it.” (Taurat, Deuteronomy 4:32-36)

- o Only Yahweh has spoken & has saved

- And: ²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings he [Jesus] took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. ³⁰And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure [exodus], which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.

³⁴As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" ³⁶And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen. (New Testament/Injil, Luke 9:28-36)

- o The Son speaks for the Father to the world & saves people through his exodus-mission

➤ The uniquely Trinitarian God

5 We can Know God and Be Rescued by Him Forever

- Differences should never lead to wars nor discrimination
- These differences do matter – to personally know God and be safe with him forever
 - o Not about Allah sending prophets to remind a forgetful humanity, but the personal God stepping into his world to rescue a fallen humanity
- "Ubaydullah went on searching [for truth] until Islam came; then he migrated with the Muslims to Abyssinia taking with him his wife who was a Muslim [due to persecution in Mecca]...When he arrived there he adopted Christianity, parted from Islam, and died a Christian in Abyssinia...when he had become a Christian 'Ubaydullah as he passed the prophet's companions who were there used to say: 'We see clearly, but your eyes are only half open,' i.e. 'We see, but you are only trying to see and cannot see yet.' He used the word *sa'sa'* because when a puppy tries to open its eyes, it only half sees." Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad*, tr. A. Guillaume (Karachi: OUP, 1967), p99
- Have you had your eyes opened?