

The Wednesday Word, February 10, 2016: Allah and the Christian God Are the Same?

There was a measure of shock recently when Pope Francis announced that Allah and Yahweh were one and the same. But there was no need for anyone to be surprised. This has been the official Roman Catholic position for quite some time...see here.

So, are Allah and Yahweh one and the same? Could this be the case? The Koran, for example, claims that Allah is forgiving because he is merciful, (The Cow: 2:199). In the Bible, we read that Yahweh is also a God of forgiveness (Ps 130:4). Then, in Exodus 20:6, we read that Yahweh shows mercy. Thus, we observe that both Allah and the Father are forgiving and merciful. Does this then mean they are one and the same God?

A good question!

If Yahweh and Allah are one and the same, we would expect them to have the same view of sin and forgiveness. So, let's ask, on what basis does Allah forgive sins?

According to the Koran, He forgives sins because of the repentance of the penitent (S: 9:104). In addition to this, he is merciful and kind (S 3:89). Allah is, therefore, to be likened to a Judge, who clears a vile, guilty criminal because the guilty party asks for forgiveness. The criminal repents and says he has changed his mind about having done the crime and won't do it again. The judge is a kind and forgiving man so he releases the accused.

Sweet!

But, this verdict contains an alarming disregard for justice. Who will pay for the man's crime? Who indeed will be punished for it? The man may have repented, but the crime still stands. It seems, therefore, that Allah holds justice and the seriousness of sin in an exceedingly low esteem.

Conversely, the Christian God, Yahweh, forgives, not only because He is merciful, but also because He is Just. He has dealt with us, not merely out of kindness but out of Justice. To ensure that our sins have been justly done away with, He has set forth Christ Jesus as our sin offering (Romans 3:25-26). Christ, as our representative and substitute, took the wrath of outraged majesty and justice.

The Father's forgiveness is thus rooted in both love and justice: Allah's is not. Thus, they are not one and the same.

In the gospel, our right standing and acceptance with God do not rest on our decision to repent. Nor does it lie in our personal moral renewal whereby we pledge to do better. Our right standing before God is discovered exclusively in the doing, dying and rising again of the Lord Jesus. Punishment for sins is demanded by God's unchangeable nature of holy justice. He could not and would not set aside His lawful and righteous demand that the sinner is punished (Romans 6:23). So in love, Christ, God manifest in the flesh, came and was punished for the sins of His people. Our salvation is thus rooted in both the love and justice of God.

With respect, we note that Allah has not provided an atonement for his followers. No one has paid for their sins. Thus, we must conclude that Allah is not the God of Justice. He has provided no just way to righteously deal with sin.

When we put on our Gospel Glasses, we see that Yahweh and Allah are most definitely not the same God. They are diametrically opposed to each other. The god of the Koran forgives when he feels merciful but it's a forgiveness divorced from Justice.

Yahweh, on the other hand, gave and presented Christ, the God/Man, the very righteousness of God. He was numbered with the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12). Justice dealt with Him, not because He was a wretch, but because He was the substitute for His people. He was treated like a filthy sinner, or let's say it another way, He was treated as though he were us.

And that's the Gospel Truth!