

A Reflection on the Difference Between Islam and Christianity – By Thailer Jimerson

In the vast ocean of social thought and media points, I can't help but feel myself drowning in the meditation of one topic in particular: Islam VS Christianity. Who would actually win in a battle? If Mohammed and Jesus were to go toe-to-toe in ring, who would come out the victor? *Honestly, probably Mohammed*. As a matter of fact, I know it would be Mohammed. He would completely decimate Jesus in the ring, mauling him to a bloody pulp. And you, the reader, please don't think I'm being facetious or blasphemous about God's Son. I say that Mohammed would win in the ring because I think I understand the nature of Islam and how it differs from the nature and essence of Christianity.

Don't get me wrong. My Jesus is not weak. It's just that Christ fights an altogether different battle. He perceives the problem as something different, and his tactics reflect that.

You might be wondering where I'm coming from or what exactly I'm trying to say. Here's my point: it would be an understatement to say that I dislike it when people make comparisons between the two faiths and dismiss them as, ultimately, the same. That because they are both religions wholly dedicated to the book, and since their followers both have committed atrocities, they are essentially the same. But is this true? No.

I know that there have been followers of Christ that have committed rather atrocious acts in the name of Jesus – but we must stop to ask whether such acts were in line with the character of our Founder to begin with. Would these acts (or even these so-called disciples) be claimed by the Lord? Broadly speaking, 'the church' has been guilty of some terrible crimes. But if we think that means that it's all Christianity's fault, that it's the chief cause - we need to be better acquainted with history. Sometimes we point out the crimes of the church as if were faith and religion to evaporate, all humanity's problems would be gone. Who can believe this? The atrocities of the church - again, using that broadly - have less to do with the faith than it does with the sin common to all of us, religious or not. "If this argument is true" writes Francis Spufford "show me then the non-Christian civilization where things are perfect."

See, it's actually in accord with the Bible's doctrine – that we're all miserable sinners – that so-called disciples would abuse the name of the Savior by which they're called, i.e. that they would live as hypocrites. So, if we're really to understand if

Christianity is responsible for the evil of its followers, we have to look at the heart, the model and the teaching of the Christian faith.

To make a long story short though, do you know what I see at the heart? ***At the heart of Christianity is a man dying for his enemies.*** Go back and read that sentence again. At the very heart of this faith, recorded in its authoritative documents called the New Testament, is a man who died for his enemies and taught his followers to do likewise (Mt.5.43-48; Jn.18.36).

This is why Mohammed would win in the ring. This is why we read even in the gospels of how Jesus “lost” to his enemies and was consequently crucified by them. And today, this is why radical Christians die for their enemies, while radical Muslims kill theirs. And in popular news, this is why Larycia Hawkins (professor at Wheaton College recently put on leave) is wrong to have claimed that Muslims and Christians worship the same God.

But in the fight that the true God of Heaven is waging, the goal is different than man’s carnal warfare. And therefore, we see Jesus fighting differently than Mohammed and his followers. Those spirited with Jesus Christ would rather die for their enemies than vanquish them because they understand their souls are already saved and secure and would rather do everything in their ability to ensure that the same could be said of their enemies - that their enemies would see the love and no longer be enemies but fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord.

If Islam and Christianity are essentially the same, why can I not say the same of Muslims? I mean, of course, I’m not saying all Muslims are terrorists – but all terrorists are Muslims. And that has to mean something.

We are not fundamentally the same. And we do not worship the same God. And here’s how we know: our God looks like Jesus (Jn.14.9). If your god doesn’t look like Jesus, we’re not worshiping the same Being.