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Common Muslim Objections to Christianity

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss five common objections that Muslims raise against Christianity. We evaluate each objection using historical evidence, evidence from non-Christian New Testament scholars, and claims from the Qur'an itself. We also talk about how these arguments perform in scholarly debates. We recommend several of our favorite resources on the topic. We conclude with a story from Rose about an interaction she had with a Muslim friend when she responded to one of these common objections.

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Transcript

[Music] Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is Muslim Objections to Christianity. I'm Wintery Knight.

And I'm Desert Rose. So in today's episode, we're going to discuss some of the most

common objections that Muslims raise when talking to Christians about spiritual matters. So Rose, you spent a lot of time discussing the truth claims of Christianity with Muslims.

What are some of the most common objections that they raise against the Christian worldview? Well, I would say probably the most common objection I hear from Muslims is that the Christian scriptures have been corrupted. They say they've been changed so much that the core of the message has been changed. We can't trust what we have in the Bible today.

Yeah, I like this objection because we can test for this, right? Right. Why do you think that they would make that objection? Well, the Quran actually affirms the Torah and the Gospels as being from God. But while affirming the Torah and the Gospels, the Quran also teaches major differences from the Torah and the Gospels.

So Muslims have concluded that the Torah and the Gospels must have been changed. That's the best explanation they can come up with for why the Quran affirms them but then contradicts them. Okay, so they're thinking that they're originally from God and they're originally accurate.

But what the Muslims will say is the one that you have today is no good because there have been changes introduced by a variety of different actors at different points in history. So let me ask you, do they point to specific differences in earlier texts to what we have today? And do they know who introduced those changes? And do they know when those changes were introduced? Well, no, they are not specific at all about what the changes are when the so-called changes occurred, who introduced them, anything like that. But skeptical New Testament scholars actually do have a list of changes they refer to.

Okay, well, before we go to that list, I know in computer science, we have a method of ensuring, like a simple method of ensuring the reliability of a transmission. So suppose I send a packet across a network. On the other side, one naive way of verifying that no errors were introduced because of line noise is just to send the same message three times or five times or 10 times.

And that way, what happens is if there is noise for one of the transmissions, you can rebuild the intended message from the other nine. Right? Right. So is there anything like that that would help us to know that what was transmitted in the first and second century is the same as what we have today? Absolutely.

Yes. So we have well over 5,000 Greek manuscripts from all over the ancient world. 5,000.

Yes, exactly. And actually well over 20,000 in other languages. There are a lot of manuscripts.

And what we find is that these manuscripts, which date to as early as the second century, have remarkable consistency throughout them over time. And they match with the Bibles we have today. So even if you had like a difference, like they're giving a number, you know, they're saying, oh, 5,000 soldiers arrived at this battlefield.

And then one or two other manuscripts, say 500, you know, somebody left off a zero. You've got maybe 18,000, 19,000 manuscripts that have it right. So you can just reconstruct or determine what was the correct message.

Right, exactly. Yeah, experts can determine with remarkable accuracy when and where that change or mistake would have been made. Right.

Do we have a like you said already that the Muslim interrogator doesn't have a list of changes? Typically, they don't have a list of changes for you because they're kind of just saying as in a broad brush, dismissive way. There are changes there there. But what if we asked a professional non-Christian New Testament scholar, what are the changes? Would they be able to point to any changes? Yeah, they are able to.

And we have several examples that are footnoted in our Bibles today. So they're not secrets, but they there are some changes that were made that were usually errors, you know, spelling and such things by scribes over time. Extra zero, missing zero.

Yeah. And, you know, an extra comma or, you know, a missing grammatical mark. I think I know what you're talking about now.

I have actually seen a debate on this. There's a there's a guy. Have you ever heard of this historian called Bart Ehrman? Yes, yes, I have.

He's not a bad guy. He went through Moody Bible Institute. He used to be a Christian, but he was like a really fundamentalist Christian.

You know, he wasn't the Moody is well known for being like this inerrancy Christian school. So he did a bachelor's degree there. And then he went to Princeton University to do a doctorate in New Testament.

And he just went off the rails. And what happened is he kind of got confronted with the kind of textual differences that you were just mentioning, you know, two angels in one gospel versus three angels reported in another gospel in or one angel, you know, or five thousand soldiers versus five hundred soldiers. And for him, those minor textual differences were like faith shattering.

So he didn't see the existence of God as being at the core and then the perfection of the Bible being on the periphery so that you could accept a couple of missing digits. And remember, we have manuscripts to reconstruct the originals. You know, for him, any kind of uncertainty shattered his rigid view of Christianity.

He actually went on to become a very skeptical New Testament scholar and he has a list. And the reason I know he has a list is because I listened to him debate Peter J. Williams, who is a conservative New Testament scholar on the Unbelievable Show. And I wrote a blog post about this and I will put it in the show notes.

But what happened with Peter J. Williams is Peter J. Williams asked him, I think, in the debate, you are an expert in the changes that were introduced in the text from the beginning when it was recorded to what we have now. Give me a list of the absolute most earth shattering faith destroying changes. And Bart did come up with a list and I'm going to tell them to you and you can listen to the debate.

He has four. So I want to know what you think about these four. So the first one is this is a passage in John, John 7, where it's John 7 53 to John 8, verse 11, where Jesus forgives or refuses to condemn the woman who is caught in adultery.

Bart says, well, this is a change that was introduced much later. It's not there in the earliest manuscripts. Okay, so how important is this? Yeah, well, well, without that story, I mean, Christianity would just completely fall apart, wouldn't it? I mean, that's the central gospel, right? I'm totally kidding.

I'm kidding. Because no, because I got a lot of stories about Jesus forgiving sin and being compassionate. I don't need that one.

And I'm not sure what this particular story has to say about the minimal facts case for the resurrection or the divinity of Jesus. This is talking about Jesus's forgiveness for sin. And we have a billion stories about that.

Yeah, well, and not only that, but this is not some earth shattering secret. It's in the margins and the footnotes of every Bible I've ever opened. This is well known.

And scholars, Christian scholars believe that this event probably did happen. But that ascribe fairly early on noticed that it was missing from the gospel of John and felt that it really needed to be known. It needed to be included.

And so it was added. That may not be the case. Maybe it was completely made up.

But again, that has no significant bearing on Christianity or any important Christian doctrine. The impression I get of Bart Ehrman is that he kind of makes a big deal out of these things. So what he's really saying, he's saying, I went to Princeton University and I discovered this John 7 passage was added later.

Aren't you terrified? And we're like, no, we're not. And he's like, you didn't know about it, did you? And we're like, yeah, we did. We read the margin notes that says that this was added later in every single modern Bible translation.

And he's like, no, you didn't. I mean, you're not supposed to read the Bible like that. You're supposed to put your finger over the margin.

So now I'm giving you a big surprise. And we're like, we're not surprised. And he's like, I have a million scary stories in my book about gospel transmission.

You should buy my book. And we're like, no, this is your best one. We just asked you for the best one.

And you gave us this. And it's in the margins of our Bibles. We already knew it's nothing.

It's a nothing burger. And he's like, it's not a nothing burger. OK, so he has another swing at this in the debate.

And like I said, y'all can go and listen to the debate and literally go, oh, so these are the scary big changes that go. And this is the big, big changes that Bart Ehrman is helping out the Muslims with and saying, no, they're not wrong. There are changes.

They're big and scary. OK, so his next one is the long ending of Mark. So a lot of people say, well, you know, there's a late addition to the gospel of Mark right at the end.

That's not present in the earliest manuscripts. What would you say? Oh, no, we can't do without the long ending of Mark. I mean, then we would have to get rid of snake handling.

Oh, my goodness. OK, again, that is in every Bible I've ever opened. This is not a secret.

It's in the footnotes. It's in the cell. So it's like, no, nobody knew about this.

Don't you see? It's a big scandal. And we're like, it's not a scandal. Bart, you need to calm down.

Everybody knew about this before you. So his third shot is in. I apologize for being so cranky about it.

I just feel like he's the boy who cried wolf, you know, trying to get attention by calling attention things that everybody already knows. I think what it is is he's going to a skeptical audience and saying, did you know that this was not the case? And they're saying, wow. So the Bible added stuff and the rest of us are like, yeah, this is all known to us, though.

You know, anyway, his third swing at the ball was he says in Mark chapter four, one verse forty one, there are two variants, one where Jesus is angry and one where he is compassionate. I think there's a discrepancy between what he was feeling when he healed the leper. Oh, my goodness.

Seriously, what was Jesus feeling like? Was he angry or was he compassionate? Right. For one thing, who cares? I mean, is he serious? The important thing is the healing of the leper, not not what Jesus is feeling when he's doing it. Exactly.

And can you not have two opposing sentiments at one time? I mean, I experience that all the time. Right. Exactly.

So another huge nothing burger that affects nothing that we care about, I think, as apologists, you know, we like the resurrection and the divinity, you know. And if he can't dispute those core Christian claims and you disagree with these kind of peripheral Christian claims, you would still be stuck with becoming a Christian. You know, there's no non-Christian who can account for a bodily resurrection and a divine Jesus.

So as long as these I want to make sure everybody sees the big picture. As long as these little changes that he thinks are introduced don't touch anything important, they don't matter. And you can say, oh, no, it has to be perfect.

But then you're just going back to Moody Bible Institute, Bart, who is insisting on everything being cut and dried and perfect. Life is not like that. And we don't insist that it be if we're serious about believing truth.

You know, exactly. The last one he suggested is there's a couple of variants, one that says in this is in Hebrews chapter two, verse nine, he says there's a variant that says Jesus died apart from God. And another one that says Jesus died by the grace of God or something like that.

Like the important thing is I'm giving you the chapter and verse he raised. Listen to the debate here, what he says. I'm not sure, you know, I entirely open a Bible and look at the footnote as well.

Yeah, look at the footnotes and see, you know, we report the differences when there are differences. Nobody's trying to hide anything. This is not a big scandal.

And these changes affect nothing. I mean, those aren't even incompatible. They could both be true.

Right. So, I mean, Jesus died apart from God because he was paying the penalty for our sin. And because of God's grace, it was ended as soon as the payment was complete.

And so regardless of which variant is original, that doesn't present a problem at all. So as you mentioned, I mean, none of this affects the case for the resurrection. None of this affects any core doctrines of Christianity.

But I really want to point out that's not the only response to the Muslim claim that the gospels have been changed. In fact, yeah, while all Christians do need to know the

bigger case for the reliability of the gospels, and I would love for us to do a whole show on the reliability of the gospels or the reliability of the New Testament or the whole Bible. We will.

I'm reading a book about it right now. You know, the guy just mentioned Peter J. Williams. Yeah, he's got a book out called *Can We Trust the Gospels?* And I got the audio version.

So we will do a show on this. That's excellent. That's really good.

That'll be fun. So, yeah, so while all Christians need to know the case for the reliability of the gospels and be able to make that case, I really actually encourage people to consider using another response when they're talking to Muslims in particular. This is sometimes called the Islamic dilemma.

There are actually several Islamic dilemmas because the Quran is such a mess. This Islamic dilemma, which is sometimes called the Quranic dilemma, is that the Quran affirms the inspiration, the authority, and the perfect preservation of the gospels. So that's really important.

Let me say that again. The Quran actually affirms the divine inspiration, the ongoing authority, and the perfect preservation of the gospels. You mean at time of writing? It affirms that the gospels that were in existence right then were perfectly preserved and inspired.

When they were revealed, they were divinely inspired. Muhammad affirmed, the Quran affirms, the ongoing authority. So not just at the time of writing, but ongoing through at least the time of Muhammad.

And the perfect preservation throughout all time because it says that the words of God, the gospels are the words of God and the words of God cannot be changed. You got footnotes for this? Yes, I do. Yes.

You know what? We should probably just include them in the show notes because otherwise I'll just be calling out numbers for the next 10 minutes and that'd be boring. With the ongoing authority, I want to make a point that the Quran was revealed to Muhammad in the seventh century AD. And so if the gospels were reliable and authoritative in the seventh century, then they are reliable now because our gospels are based on manuscripts that pre-date the seventh century.

Yeah, you already said that. You said they go back to the second century and we have fragments earlier than that. Exactly.

Yes, exactly. And then with perfect preservation, I mean, Christians don't even affirm the perfect preservation of the gospels or of any of the Bible. We say, look at all the

manuscripts and use your brain and figure out what is the most reliable translation.

And there's not a ton of work to do because most variants are silly little spelling errors or grammatical changes. Right. I mean, we asked Bart for the best ones and he came up with nothing.

Right. So keeping in mind that the Quran affirms the inspiration, authority and preservation of the gospels, the next point is that the Quran contradicts the gospels on key issues. And just a few critical examples of the Quran contradicts the gospels on the deity of Jesus, the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus.

So there you have the gospel. Right. Yeah.

That is central Christianity that cannot be compromised. And yet the Quran contradicts the gospels on them after affirming the gospels. Some things got to give here either they're wrong that the gospels are inspired, authoritative and preserved perfectly, or they're right about that.

And then their own book is wrong. So their own book is wrong either way. Yes, either way, the Quran is false.

And maybe I'll just say that a different way. So if the gospels are trustworthy, then the Quran is not trustworthy because the Quran contradicts the gospels on key issues. Right.

But if the gospels are not trustworthy, then the Quran is also not trustworthy because the Quran says the gospels are trustworthy. Okay. So, you know, Islam stands or falls on the reliability of the Quran in a kind of a parallel way that that Christianity stands or falls on the reliability of the resurrection.

Right. And so if we can't trust the Quran, then Islam is false. Yeah, it seems to me like the footnotes going back to the like I'm looking at the footnotes right now in our notes and they're all citations of the Quran, the Quran, the Quran, the Quran.

Right. So we're going to put that in the show notes and people can check that out. But it seems to me that if you're quoting it accurately, then this is a terrible dilemma and something that we should definitely bring up.

What did you call that again? The Islamic dilemma. The Islamic dilemma. Yeah.

Every Christian needs to know this. If you ever encounter a Muslim and have an opportunity to have a spiritual conversation, this is the argument to use. It's very simple, very straightforward.

Nice. So all of that was for the objection that you Christians, your Bible has been changed from what was given early on to what you're reading today. And we countered that by citing Bart Ehrman.

And then we counter that by saying, hey, the Quran actually denies that that's available to you as an argument. It says it's perfectly preserved. OK, give me another objection, common objection from Muslims to the Christian worldview.

OK, so another common objection is that Jesus was not God and he did not claim to be God. Yeah, this objection comes from the Quran, chapter five, verse 116. And also verse 72 in chapter five.

And again, you know, if we know the Islamic dilemma that we just discussed, that is an excellent response because the Quran is problematic either way. But we can also talk about how the oldest, most reliable historical documents show Jesus repeatedly claiming to be God. And, you know, I like to ask Muslims, do you want to look at them with me? You know, let's look at the oldest, most historical documents and see what it appears to you that Jesus is claiming here.

Jesus, you know, Jesus accepted worship. He displayed divine attributes that Muslims and Christians agree are attributes only of God. He used divine names to refer to himself.

So this is not someone who was just a great prophet. This was someone who was either telling the truth or he was some sort of evil or psychotic maniac because he's referring to him. He's referring to himself in ways that were clearly names of God.

He did things that only God can do. So he backed up his claims with action. And something that I think is very significant is that his contemporaries who were there with him and his culture understood him to be claiming to be God.

So there are many times when they would pick up stones to stone him to death because of blasphemy. So whenever I'm discussing this challenge that the Muslims make saying that the Bible doesn't report Jesus claiming to be God or to have divine attributes, I try to go to the earliest sources. So the earliest source that we have is that early creed that we talked about in 1 Corinthians 15, 3 to 7. We talked about this passage in our episode on the minimal facts case for the resurrection.

Skeptical scholars date this around two or three years after the crucifixion of Jesus, and you can recover certain divine attributes from Jesus from that creed. Another passage I like is from 1 Corinthians but not the creed. And 1 Corinthians, the letter itself is dated 53 to 55 A.D. And the passage I like is 1 Corinthians 1 verses 21 to 25.

So you can look that up and see what you get from it. But it is early. The other one that I like is Philippians 2. Philippians 2 is written in 61 A.D. And if you look at, well, the whole letter is 61 A.D. And if you look at Philippians 2 verses 5 to 11, there's something about the divinity of Jesus there, like really specific something about the divinity of Jesus.

That's probably the best one for being very specific. Mark is the earliest gospel. There's

an atheist scholar named James Crossley, an NT scholar, a New Testament scholar named James Crossley, who dates it to 37 to 43, which is an incredibly early date.

So if he's right about that, check out Mark 12 verses 1 to 9 and Mark 13 verse 32. You can recover divine attributes of Jesus from those two passages. And if James Crossley is right, he's obviously outside the consensus.

But it's still considered the earliest gospel. So you're getting teachings about the divinity of Jesus there. One more is a lot of people think that there's a common source for Matthew and Luke called Q. People who do apologetics or textual critics will know about Q. There's a passage that's nearly identical between Matthew 11, 27 and Luke 10, 22.

So people think that goes back to Q. And Q is considered early because it predates Matthew or Luke. And it also talks that that passage is that's found in those two gospels, talks about the divinity of Jesus. So I will link to all of that in the show notes.

And I think that that's a pretty good way of responding to the idea that the divinity of Jesus is not there in the earliest reports of the life of Jesus. I'm going to the earliest reports. The divinity is there.

Excellent. That's a good response to that objection. What's another common objection from Muslims against Christian teachings? Yeah.

So another really common one is that Jesus was not crucified or killed. And this comes from Quran chapter four verse 157. Okay.

Yeah. So we can respond again with historical evidence. I mean, Jesus crucifixion, his death by crucifixion is based on unanimous historical evidence.

There was no objection to this within a hundred years of Jesus' life and death. This is verified by Christians and non-Christians alike, ancient historians from very close to the time of Christ, first and second centuries. Jews and Gentiles alike affirmed this.

It's still a virtually unanimous consensus among scholars of all worldviews today that Jesus was killed by crucifixion. And that includes atheists, agnostics, people who call themselves progressive Christians, those who have devoted their lives to even trying to turn people away from Christ and from Christianity. They'll still say, yeah, he was crucified to death.

Okay. But I like to encourage people to consider another response when they are specifically talking to Muslims. And that is the what I call the deceitful God, incompetent Messiah response.

And so, so again, according to the Quran, Jesus was not crucified or killed, but Allah made it appear as if he was. So this is the work of Allah that everyone in the first century

and beyond believed that Jesus was the one who was crucified and died by crucifixion. But if this is the case, that it didn't really happen that way, but Allah just made it look like that's what happened, then Allah is the greatest deceiver ever to exist.

And he is responsible for Christianity and for all of the billions of souls lost as a result. We're talking about the greatest deceiver ever who is responsible, personally responsible for this, you know, apparent heresy. Is this someone you can trust? Is this someone you want to follow? Yeah, that's not good.

I don't think so. And additionally, you know, most Muslims I've talked to don't know this, but the Quran actually does explicitly state that Allah is the best of deceivers. So if we, you know, how are we going to trust anything that comes from him? Yeah, this is a really, like, I feel this is a really terrible argument because I'm not sure how representative the people who debate against William Lang Craig are, but I've watched a lot of debates with skeptical New Testament scholars who don't agree with Christianity, certainly not conservative Christianity or even theism.

And in every case, William Lang Craig gives his first fact in his case for the resurrection is always the burial of Jesus. And in all my time of watching these debates, Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossen, Gerhard Ludemann, who we mentioned in our resurrection episode, Robert Price, these guys are on the far fringe left of New Testament scholarship and none of them denied the burial. So and none of them certainly deny the death of Jesus.

Right. Right. The Muslim claim isn't that there was no crucifixion and no burial.

It's that he never died. And there just isn't any historian who is credentialed and not a Muslim who agrees with that claim. Exactly.

Yeah. In fact, it was John Dominic Crossen who said that Jesus' death by crucifixion is probably the most certain historical fact of the ancient world. Right.

We know it without any doubt. Right. So that should make you uncomfortable.

You know how you and I talk about the existence of God and we say, let's appeal to the cosmic microwave background radiation. Let's appeal to the, you know, to the W map satellite. Let's appeal to scientific evidence.

And we are willing to proportion or form our beliefs against the boundaries of what science tells us. To me, it would be a big ask if somebody said to me, you have to believe what this ancient historical document says. And it disagrees with every single other source, every other historian, everything in history, every, every art, you know, every.

Nope. There's nobody who agrees with it. That's a big ask.

And I would be uncomfortable with that. I like when I'm in the mainstream. Yeah.

And Muhammad came along, you know, like 600 years after the crucifixion of Jesus with suddenly this brand new revelation. You know, that's a great point. It's not like he was there and he had a different perspective.

No, it was 600 years later. Yeah. You know, Jane Warner Wallace, he likes to raise that.

He likes to talk about the chain of custody. You know, he says so to me, if the claim when when you're writing the Quran at 600 A.D. is, oh, by the way, Jesus never died. He never died.

OK. And you go, OK. So if that's accurate, I would like to see a chain of custody and going back to 30 A.D. of documentation from primary sources and eyewitnesses that substantiate that claim.

What have you got? What have they got? Oh, nothing. They've got nothing. It just said a lot trick to everybody.

Yeah. A lot trick to everybody. And God suddenly decided to reveal it to Muhammad and Muhammad alone, which can be confirmed by absolutely no one because it was always in private 600 years later.

So there's no evidence for this whatsoever. Yeah. Whenever I bring up Islam with my mom, this is the argument I bring up and I go, have you got my historian yet? Have you got the historian who agrees with Muhammad about this? And she has not got the historian because there is no historian.

Exactly. She's more likely to find a Muslim who has done the research and chain and acknowledged, admitted that Jesus did die and then attributed to what David would humorously call the miracle of reinterpretation. You know, if the Quran says Jesus didn't die, it probably means he did die.

If it says to kill all the non-Muslims, it probably means, you know, just be stern with them. Right. Things like that.

Okay. So just everybody, this objection is too much. I don't want any of you being Muslims.

You can't. Okay. This is, I don't want you to believe things like this that are against all the evidence.

Stop it. Yeah. All right.

What is another common objection to Christians that you get from Muslims? Well, as you might imagine, if Jesus did not die, then he did not rise from the dead. So this is another

objection that Muslims raised. Jesus never rose from the dead.

And my response would be the minimal facts argument that we laid out, I think very clearly in episode one, the case made by Gary Habermas and Michael Licona in their excellent book, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Essentially, I guess just as a quick review, there are many facts. Actually, Gary Habermas says more than a hundred different facts that virtually all scholars of all different worldviews can agree really actually happened to Jesus and in his life and by Jesus.

And their argument, the argument by Habermas and Licona is that the best explanation for the facts that everybody agrees on is that there actually was a resurrection from the dead. And we looked at the best naturalistic hypothesis to explain those facts. And that was? That was that more than 500 people at one time had the exact same hallucination at the same time in the same way.

And then across 40 days, different groups of different sizes of different people at different times also had that exact same hallucination. And of course, we pointed out that hallucinations are individual events that occur in the mind. They are not group events.

They are not contagious. And most atheists and agnostics, most non-Christians acknowledges today. We talked about a debate with Gerd Lutemann in which he had made that argument.

Most atheists and agnostics will acknowledge today that that's a ridiculous theory. But the best that they have is that something happened. Something happened.

There is no viable naturalistic theory that exists today to explain the facts. This isn't for me. I'm a software engineer.

I write code. Things have to work. I cannot be grouped in with this something happened view.

That's not going to work. Right. So everybody go back and listen to the resurrection episode if you didn't already.

And probably the neatest and best thing for you is to just watch one of these debates with William Lane Craig on the resurrection and a skeptical scholar. See how much they concede and see how outlandish their hypothesis is. Some of them make a pretty – some of them are better than others.

Okay? I think that it's something to see so that you really understand where you stand when you say, "This is what I believe." You're in good shape. And I wish more Christians were curious about that so that they knew just how strong the ground that they're standing on is. Have you got any more arguments, common arguments for Muslims

against Christian beliefs? Yes.

Well, another common argument that I hear all the time, if I have a conversation of any length with a Muslim, they're going to bring up the Trinity. Oh, yes. And what they're going to say is that the Trinity is an inherently self-contradictory and illogical, incoherent concept that just – it makes no sense that Christianity cannot be true.

This objection is based on a misunderstanding of the Trinity. They believe that we believe that God is one, but he's also three gods. There's one God, but there's also three gods.

That's not what we believe at all. The Trinity is actually a very logical, very coherent doctrine, but it is also complex and beyond our experience as humans, but it is not contradictory. So we believe in one God who exists as three persons.

A God is not the same thing as a person. The being, God, what he is, is not the same thing as who he is, free person, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So it's not a contradiction.

Additionally, I point out that we ought to expect our Creator to be more complex than we are. We don't have the right to make God in our image. He has made us in His image.

And so you don't get to say, "Well, it doesn't make sense that there could be one being who exists as three persons, and so therefore it's a contradiction." It's not a contradiction. I also like to point out their parallel belief or doctrine, which is called tawhid, which means that God is in absolute unity. Allah is the one and only thing that has ever, that has existed for all eternity.

And so I like to point out that tawhid actually fails to explain how God could be the absolute singularity that has existed for all eternity if the Qur'an has also existed for all eternity, which they believe it has. And so, yeah, so they'll say, "Well, Allah is the only thing that has existed for all eternity, and He's an absolute singularity." And then I'll ask, "Well, did the Word of God, the Qur'an, also exist for all eternity?" And they'll say, "Yes." And I'll say, "Well, then how is it possible that Allah is the only absolute singularity that's existed for all eternity?" It doesn't make any sense. You're saying two things existed for eternity, but only one thing existed for all eternity.

That, my friends, is a contradiction. That makes sense to me. The Trinity explains all this, that God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Son being the Word of God.

So, you know, the Trinity is also, it's absolutely beautiful. The more I read about it and think about it and meditate on it, the Trinity affirms the relational nature of God, and therefore our relational nature. The Trinity explains things like how God can be Himself without being dependent on human beings, because, for example, God, as love, could not have loved if He was the absolute unity, and there were no other persons.

There were no other relationships. How could He be love? How could He be loving? He couldn't be that without any others, but He can if He existed as three persons. Something else I love about the Trinity, it shows that we glorify Him when we display unity in the midst of diversity by using our different roles and our different gifts, our uniqueness, to work together for the glory of God.

And so, in contrast to that, Tahid represents the teaching of Islam that unity is only accomplished by eliminating all diversity. You have to be exactly the same in every imaginable way, or you should be in the same in thought, the same in ideas, the same skills, or else you should probably be eliminated. Yeah, this is a bit of a tougher challenge in the sense that we don't have the historical or scientific data to say, "This is how the Trinity works.

Here's my mathematical model." So, I'll admit that. But I do think that they have the burden of proof to prove that there's a contradiction. And we have excellent answers as you laid out.

Do you have any book recommendations for people who are interested in understanding the Trinity? I do. Yeah, one of my favorite books on the Trinity is one that was assigned to me in seminary called "Making Sense of the Trinity." I believe the subtitle is "Three Crucial Questions." The author is Millard Erickson. Oh, yeah.

This is a great and very practical book, and Millard Erickson is excellent. So, I would recommend that, "Making Sense of the Trinity." I'd also recommend, specifically with regard to Christianity versus Islam, Nabil Qureshi's book, "No God But One." He has an entire chapter on the Trinity versus Tahid, and he explains both of them quite clearly. And he goes into great detail, but not deep in the weeds such that it's boring or anything like that.

It's absolutely phenomenal about both and the problems with Tahid and the excellence and beauty of the Trinity and why the Trinity is not a contradiction. And those are both suitable for beginners? Yes. Well, I'll tell you what, "Making Sense of the Trinity" certainly is.

If you ask me, "No God But One" is not difficult at all, but I have had people tell me that they see it as more of a reference book. It's not a reference book. It is.

I read it cover to cover twice, and I refer back to it. I do refer back to it all the time, but it was a I thought it was a quick and easy read. But I guess I'll just have to give the disclaimer that I have studied theology for decades and have a seminary degree.

So I'm willing to acknowledge that I may not be the best person to ask about that. Okay. Now, I like a book called "Debating Christian Theism" that's published by Oxford University Press.

It's got a collection of essays, pro and con, on all of the core doctrines of Christianity. And one of them is a pair on the Trinity. So the one that's in favor of the Trinity is written by a guy named Senor.

I forget what his first name is. Thomas D. Senor. And then there's an argument against the Trinity by Timothy Winter.

So just to let you know, Oxford University is the best academic press there is. You know, you can certainly read both articles and form your own view. But I'm saying this isn't a slam dunk.

You know, we do have an excellent defense here to the charge. Okay. So just before we close out the episode, I was just wondering if you could give us like an example encounter with a Muslim who pressed one of these objections and how did it go? Absolutely.

Yeah. I think my favorite encounter kind of story to tell about this is when I was invited over to a friend's house for dinner. We had we had dinner all the time.

We got together regularly. She's a good friend. And I would I like to discuss spiritual topics with her as often as possible.

And she had actually originally come at me like when she introduced herself to me, she said, you know, hi, my name is so and so I'm a Muslim because the Christian scriptures have been changed. And that's why you need to become a Muslim because Christianity is wrong. That's how she introduced herself to me.

Wow. Pretty bold. Yes.

Very bold. Very confident. Her confidence withered quite quickly, though.

It was so fun to be a part of that. So we were having dinner. She was making dinner for me.

She was talking about how the Christian scriptures have been changed and of course had no details whatsoever about when that happened or how that happened. And so I introduced to her through kind of a series of questions, the Islamic dilemma. You know, I said, you know, you're so you're I was reading the Quran and this is what I found, you know, that it affirms the reliability of the gospels here.

Is that how you understand this passage and you know, and such and such. And you have several passages, right? Yeah, exactly. Right.

And then, you know, and she affirmed she she agreed. Yeah, yeah, yeah. To everything I asked her.

And so then I kind of, you know, brought down the hammer question. Well, well, doesn't this mean then that if the gospels are trustworthy and reliable, then the Quran can't be because the the Quran contradicts the gospels. But if the if the gospels are not trustworthy, then the Quran is also not trustworthy because it says the gospels are trustworthy.

Right. And she looked at me and she was like, oh, no, I don't know about this. And I said, well, well, I'll give you some time to think about it.

And she's like, I do not know. I do not know. I don't want to talk about this.

And I kind of, you know, started smiling. And I was like, I was like, yeah, yeah, exactly. I said, well, you brought it up.

You must have you must have some sort of explanation. And she goes, she said, you are making me sweat. Please stop talking about this.

Stop it. I don't want to talk about it anymore. So funny, I was just about to roll on the floor.

I was laughing so hard. Oh, boy. So she actually told me she said that she was serious.

She did not want to talk to me about spiritual things anymore. So this was someone who went from trying to convert me to Islam to let's just just agree not to talk about spiritual things. Well, I was kind of discouraged by that.

So a week or two later, I asked her if she'd be willing to go with me to meet with her imam. And so that I could ask him these questions and she she got this renewed confidence and said, oh, that's a great idea. Yes, my mom will be able to answer all of your questions.

And we went and he had similar kind of a similar meltdown and decided not to talk to me anymore. You and you're always making trouble. I know so much fun.

That's an adventure. Yes. Yes.

Very good. OK, I think that's a good place for us to end this episode. Listeners, if you enjoyed the show, please like, comment, share and subscribe.

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