116826 - Was ‘Eesa (Jesus – peace be upon him) a Jew?

the question

Do muslims believe jesus was a jew? in the bible is says jesus was a jew.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

‘Eesa ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary – peace be upon him) was one of the noble Prophets of Allah, and one of the Messengers of strong will, whom Allah sent to the Children of Israel, and taught him the Torah and Gospel, and stated that he had come to confirm what was in the Torah, i.e., to reaffirm what was said in it, except that he abrogated some of its rulings, and permitted to his followers some of what was forbidden in it.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And He (Allah) will teach him [‘Eesa (Jesus)] the Book and Al-Hikmah (i.e. the Sunnah, the faultless speech of the Prophets, wisdom), (and) the Tawraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel).

49. And will make him [‘Eesa (Jesus)] a Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): ‘I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay, a figure like that of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah’s Leave; and I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allah’s Leave. And I inform you of what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely, therein is a sign for you, if you believe.

50. ‘And I have come confirming that which was before me of the Tawraat (Torah), and to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you, and I have come to you with a proof from your Lord. So fear Allah and obey me’”

[Aal –‘Imraan 3:48-50]

“And in their footsteps, We sent ‘Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), confirming the Tawraat (Torah) that had come before him, and We gave him the Injeel (Gospel), in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Tawraat (Torah) that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for Al-Muttaqoon (the pious)”

[al-Maa'idah 5:46]

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Tafseer (2/44):

Tawraat and Injeel: The Tawraat is the Book that Allah revealed to Moosa ibn ‘Imraan, and the Injeel is the Book that Allah revealed to ‘Eesa (peace be upon them both). ‘Eesa (peace be upon him) followed them both. End quote.

He also (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“confirming the Tawraat (Torah) that had come before him” means, following it, not going against what was in it, except in a few matters where he explained to the Children of Israel that concerning which they differed, as Allah tells us that the Messiah (peace be upon him) said to the Children of Israel: “and to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you”. Hence the sounder view among the scholars is that the Injeel abrogated some of the rulings of the Tawraat. End quote.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer (3/126)

Hence it is known that ‘Eesa (peace be upon him) believed in the Torah which was revealed to Moosa (peace be upon him) and followed it; he did not go against it except in a few matters.

The religion of Moosa, ‘Eesa and all the Prophets was, generally speaking, Islam, which means believing in the Oneness of Allah (Tawheed) and worshipping Him alone with no partner or associate, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:19]

“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:85]

And He tells us that Nooh (peace be upon him) said (interpretation of the meaning):

“and I have been commanded to be of the Muslims (i.e. those who submit to Allah’s Will)”

[Yoonus 10:72]

And He tells us of Ibraaheem (peace be upon him) (interpretation of the meaning):

“Ibraaheem (Abraham) was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim Haneefa (Islamic Monotheism — to worship none but Allah Alone) and he was not of Al-Mushrikoon”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:67]

And He tells us that Moosa (peace be upon him) said (interpretation of the meaning):

“ ‘O my people! If you have believed in Allah, then put your trust in Him if you are Muslims (those who submit to Allah’s Will)’”

[Yoonus 10:84]

And He tells us that Yoosuf (peace be upon him) said (interpretation of the meaning):

“ ‘Cause me to die as a Muslim (the one submitting to Your Will), and join me with the righteous’”

[Yoosuf 12:101]

So it cannot be said of Moosa that his religion was Judaism, rather his religion was Islam, and his followers were called Jews (al-Yahood) because they said Hidna ilayka i.e., we have repented and come back; or because they are called after Yehoodhah (Judah) the oldest of the sons of Ya’qoob (Jacob – peace be upon him). Similarly, the religion of ‘Eesa (peace be upon him) was Islam, not

Christianity. The Christians (al-Nasaarah) are his followers who supported him (nasaruhu).

But he (peace be upon him) was a follower of the Tawraat (Torah), who followed and affirmed it, because he was one of the Children of Israel, to whom Moosa (peace be upon him) had been sent, then Allah revealed to him the Injeel (Gospel) in which was a confirmation of what was in the Torah, as stated above.

What we have mentioned means that the religion brought by ‘Eesa was Islam, if what the questioner meant was to find out and ask about his religion.

But if he was asking about the lineage of the Messiah (peace be upon him) and the people among whom he was born and to whom he was sent, then the Prophet of Allah ‘Eesa (peace be upon him) was indisputably one of the Children of Israel, the Children of Israel who subsequently became known as the Jews, as we have indicated above.

What the scholars state here is that he is to be attributed to his lineage and people, so it may be said that he was one of the Children of Israel. As for the word “Jew”, it is used to refer to a specific religion, so it should be avoided when referring to ‘Eesa (peace be upon him), even though we know that his people were the Children of Israel who used to follow the law of the Torah before him, and he came to confirm what was in it except for a few rulings which he changed.

Ibn al-Atheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

‘Imraan ibn Mathaan [i.e, the grandfather of ‘Eesa (peace be upon him) and the father of Maryam] was one of the descendants of Sulaymaan ibn Dawood (Solomon son of David). The family of Mathaan were the leaders and priests of the Children of Israel. End quote.

Al-Kaamil fi’l-Tareekh (1/251).

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There is no dispute that she [Maryam – peace be upon her] was one of the descendents of Dawood (peace be upon him). Her father was ‘Imraan the prayer leader of the Children of Israel of that

time. End quote.

Al-Bidaayah wa'l-Nihaayah (2/52).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There is no doubt that the people of Moosa were the Children of Israel, and the Torah was revealed in their language. The Children of Israel were also the people of the Messiah (peace be upon him). The Messiah spoke their language. Neither of these two Messengers addressed anyone in any language other than Hebrew; neither of them spoke Latin, Syriac, Greek or Coptic. End quote.

Al-Jawaab al-Saheeh li man baddala Deen al-Maseeh (2/94).

He also said:

It is known from the consensus of the Christians that the Messiah did not speak anything other than Hebrew, like the other Prophets of the Children of Israel, and that he was circumcised on the seventh day like all the Children of Israel; he prayed facing their "qiblah" or direction of prayer, and he did not pray towards the east or enjoin praying towards the east. End quote.

Op. cit. (3/32).

For more information please see the answer to question no. 10277.

And Allah knows best.