148661 - Response to the text in the Gospel of Matthew which is keeping him from becoming Muslim

the question

I have a question.

Christ spoke about Trinity and said that he was the son of God. Can you -- please -- explain this verse in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28, verses 16 to 20? Does that prove that Jesus Christ is the son of God? I was thinking of embracing Islam, but things like this are problematic for me.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We praise Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, for enabling you at this young age to search for the truth and to ask about it and discuss it, and not to be content to let your religion be that which you grew up in, following the way of your parents and grandparents. We ask Allah to complete His blessing upon you by guiding you to the truth which He wants for His slaves and opening your heart to accept it and submit to it.

Secondly:

It should be noted -- before answering your question -- that nothing in creation is like unto Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. Rather He is One, Unique, Self Sustaining; He has no spouse or child; He has no peer or equal. Rather He is independent of all of that in and of Himself, may He be glorified. The Messiah Jesus son of Mary is no more than a Messenger from Him, who came to the Children of Israel with glad tidings and warnings, and Allah made him a sign for the people as his mother bore him without a husband, but this sign does not make him a son of God, may He be exalted. Adam (peace be upon him) did not have a father or a mother, according to the consensus

of all religions, so if merely being born without a father means that it may be said that the Messiah was the son of God, then Adam (peace be upon him) is more entitled to that. And the creation of Eve (peace be upon her) was greater than the creation of Jesus son of Mary, but no wise person would say that she is the daughter of God. Hence Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, the likeness of ‘Eesa (Jesus) before Allaah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: ‘Be!’ — and he was.

60. (This is) the truth from your Lord, so be not of those who doubt.

61. Then whoever disputes with you concerning him [‘Eesa (Jesus)] after (all this) knowledge that has come to you [i.e. ‘Eesa (Jesus) being a slave of Allaah, and having no share in Divinity], say (O Muhammad): ‘Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves — then we pray and invoke (sincerely) the Curse of Allaah upon those who lie’” [Aal ‘Imraan 3:59-61].

Thirdly:

The text referred to in the question is:

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

[17]When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

[18]Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[19]Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them inthe name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

[20]and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

Matthew 28:16-20

Now let us discuss these verses which are inserted into the text and are not original to it.

Dr. Munqidh al-Saqqaar (may Allah guide him) said:

The first criticism that may be directed towards this passage is that despite its importance, it is not mentioned in the other three Gospels which all narrate the story of Christ entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Is his riding on the donkey more important than mentioning the trinity, which is not mentioned by anyone apart from Matthew?

Indeed, the final chapter of the Gospel of Mark mentions the advice that he gave to the disciples, but it does not mention the trinity that is mentioned only in Matthew, as Mark says:

“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

[16]Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned’”

Mark 16:15

This indicates that the idea of the trinity has been inserted and is not original.

This passage is something that has been added, according to the views of Western scholars also:

1.

Wells says: “It is not proof that the disciples of Christ embraced belief in the Trinity.”

2.

Adolf Harnack says in his book The History of Dogma:

“This concept of trinity which speaks of the “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” is something strange that was never uttered on Christ’s lips. It did not exist at the time of the Apostles. … Moreover, it was never mentioned until a later stage in the development of Christian teachings and Christ never spoke of it when he was preaching and teaching after he rose from the dead. Paul knew nothing of that either, because he did not quote anything that he attributed to Christ that urged spreading Christianity among other nations.”

3.

The fact that this idea was not an original one is confirmed by Bible scholars and historians of Christianity, as was stated by Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros -- the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baalbek and environs -- who said:

“The Bible scholars think it most likely that this injunction which the Gospel says was spoken by Jesus did not come from Jesus himself; rather it was the formula spoken to prepare people for Baptism in Greek society. Baptism in the early years of Christianity was given ‘in the name of Jesus Christ’ [Acts 2:38; 10:48] or ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’ [Acts 8:16; 19:5]. Hence historians regard it as more likely that the Trinitarian baptismal formula was a brief summary for preparing for baptism. Thus they went further and included with the name of Jesus ‘God the Father and the Holy Spirit’.”

Al-Laahoot al-Maseehi wa'l-Insaan al-Mu'aasir (Christian Divinity and Modern Man), Archbishop Cyrille Salim Bustros, 2/48

4.

When the historian Eusebius of Caesarea quoted this passage from the Gospel of Matthew, he did not mention therein "the Father" or "the Holy Spirit"; rather he said: "They went to all nations to spread the Gospel, relying on the power of Christ who said to them: 'Go and teach all nations in my name.'"

Tareekh al-Kaneesah (Ecclesiastical History), Eusebius of Caesarea, p. 100

5.

Another matter that confirms that is the fact that in the recently-discovered Hebrew manuscript of the Gospel of Matthew -- which was originally written in Hebrew -- this text is not present. This was regarded by Dr G. Reckart, Professor of Theology at the Apostolic Theological Bible College of Kaufman, Texas, as definitive evidence that this text has been added to the Gospel of Matthew. He said: "The Catholic Church has willingly lied about Matthew 28:19 and the Catholics in general (including the Eastern Orthodox) have lied to the world. Everyone who was baptized with this false baptism has died lost and without salvation."

Dr. Reckart tells us of a number of New Testament texts which speak of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ only, as in the words of Peter in his famous sermon:

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"

Acts 2:38

The Samaritans baptized in the name of John the Baptist. When they heard Paul, "they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). Paul did not ask them to be baptized in the name of the Father and Holy Spirit; he was content with baptism in the name of Jesus.

6.

The history of the disciples confirms that they had no knowledge of this text, because they did not go out to call people as enjoined by Christ in this so-called text; rather he instructed them to avoid calling anyone except the Jews.

(a)

“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans.

[6]Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel’”

Matthew 10:5-6

(b)

This is in accordance with historical evidence going back to the second century CE, which contradicts the so-called Great Commission to call the nations and baptize them in the name of the trinity, as the church historian Apollonius said: “I learned from the earlier generations that Christ, before his ascension to heaven, instructed his Apostles not to go far away from Jerusalem for twelve years.”

(c)

The disciples followed the instructions of Christ and did not leave Palestine unless circumstances forced them to do so. “Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews” (Acts 11:19). If they had heard Christ instructing them to call the nations in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, they would have gone out in obedience to his words, without any objection, to tell

the nations of his message.

(d)

When Peter was summoned by the pagan Cornelius to find out about Christianity from him, then he became Christian at Peter's hands, the other disciples objected to that, but he said to them: "He said to them: 'You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean'" (Acts 10:28). But he did not say that Christ had instructed them to do that; rather he said: "… us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

[42]He commanded us to preach to the people" (Acts 10:41-42), i.e., to the Jews only. When he went back to Jerusalem, he was faced with more criticism, "the circumcised believers criticized him [3]and said, 'You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them!'" (Acts 11:2-3). Then Peter began to tell them of a dream he had seen that justified his eating with the Gentiles (Acts 11:4-10). And he told them how the Holy Spirit had come to him and told him to go: "the Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them and he also went with me" (Acts 11:12).

After this detailed and convincing argument from Peter, the disciples approved of his going to the uncircumcised. "When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, 'So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life'" (Acts 11:18).

Based on that, all these people, including Peter, knew nothing about the text of Matthew which enjoins baptizing all nations in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Why is that? Because Christ did not say it and they did not hear it. If Christ had said it, there would not have been any need for blame and rebuke.

7.

Moreover, the Disciples agreed with Paul that he would call the Gentiles while they would call the circumcised, i.e. the Jews. Paul says:

“On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles [lit. the uncircumcised], just as Peter had been to the Jews [lit. the circumcised].

[8]For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. [9]James, Peter[c] and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews”

Galatians 2:7-9.

So how could they go against the commandment of Christ -- if the text in Matthew is true -- and refrain from calling the nations, then leave that to Paul and Barnabas only?

All these facts prove the text in Matthew to be false and confirm that it is a fabricated text that cannot be soundly attributed to Christ.

Regardless of all that, there is nothing in the text to indicate that it is talking about three holy ones united in one being. Rather it is talking about three different essences mentioned together in conjunction, which indicates that they are different, distinct essences. The correct meaning of this passage at the end of Matthew’s Gospel is: Go in the name of God and His Messenger Jesus and the Revelation sent down to him with the teachings of God. The wording mentioned in Matthew is similar to another phrase which the Christians do not interpret it as referring to trinity. In Paul’s first Epistle to Timothy it says:

“I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels …”

I Timothy 5:21

No one understood this text as being indicative of the divinity of the angels, or suggesting that they are the third “person” [of the trinity]. . The same may be said about the text in Matthew as about the text of Paul.

Similar to that is the text in Exodus which calls upon the Children of Israel to believe in God and in Moses, without any notion that the two who are mentioned together are equal:

“…the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant”

Exodus 14:31

This style of expression is known in many languages and in many books. Something similar is mentioned in the Qur’aan:

“O you who believe! Believe in Allaah, and His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and the Book (the Qur’aan) which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before (him) …”

[al-Nisa’ 4:136].

However, we should draw your attention, O seeker of the truth, to the fact that even if we assume that these words were not an addition to the Gospel of Matthew, and that this is how they were narrated, that does not mean that Christ is the son of God, as the Christians say (exalted be God far above that). The same wording is used to refer to people other than Christ in many other contexts, but no one of your religion says that this means they are sons of God in a real, literal sense. Think about these words in the Gospel of Matthew:

“Blessed are the pure in heart,

for they will see God.

[9]Blessed are the peacemakers,

for they will be called sons of God”

[Matthew 5:8-9].

Are the peacemakers, based on what is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew, sons of God, as the same Gospel calls Jesus the son of God?

See also the answer to question no. 82361.

1. W. Petersen

2. Anchor Bible Dictionary

3. Beck Dictionary

4. History of Dogma [Adolf Harnack]

5. For Christ’s Sake, Tom Harpur

6. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911 edition

7. Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge

8. The Catholic Encyclopaedia

9. New Testament Studies, American Catholic University, Washington, 1923 CE.

Finally:

We ask God to open your heart to the truth and decree good for you, and to guide you to that which He loves and which pleases Him of beliefs, words and actions. We think that you will do what is right, and we are waiting for good news from you after you make the right decision.

If you have any further questions, we are ready to answer them, and you will never find our

answers to be anything other than academically authenticated, given sincerely with no intent to deceive. We want for you what we want for ourselves.

And Allah is the source of help.