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The Reality of Isa ibn Maryam in Islam

**His Birth, Message, Miracles, Raising,
and Status According to Revelation**

A source-led study of Isa ibn Maryam: his miraculous birth, true status as Allah's servant and Messenger, his call to Tawhid, his miracles by Allah's permission, the Injil, the crucifixion claim, Allah's raising of him, and the established fact of his future descent.

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Contents

1. Maryam and the Miraculous Birth	3
2. “I Am the Servant of Allah”: Prophet, Messenger, and Messiah	4
3. “His Word” and “a Spirit from Him”	5
4. His Message: “Allah Is My Lord and Your Lord, So Worship Him”	8
5. The Injil Revealed to ‘Isa	9
6. His Miracles—By Allah’s Permission	9
7. Why Miraculous Birth and Miracles Do Not Establish Divinity	10
8. “Do Not Say Three”: Divinity, Sonship, and Worship	11
9. “They Did Not Kill Him, Nor Did They Crucify Him”	14
10. “Rather, Allah Raised Him to Himself”	15
11. ‘Isa and Muhammad ﷺ: One Prophetic Foundation, the Final Messenger	17
12. His Future Descent: Established Fact, Detailed Elsewhere	18

A Muslim does not need to diminish 'Isa ibn Maryam عليه السلام in order to reject worship of him. The Qur'an itself gives him an honored rank: he is the Messiah, son of Maryam, a Prophet and Messenger of Allah, honored in this world and the Hereafter, and among those brought near. At the same time, the same revelation identifies him as a servant of Allah, records his call to worship Allah alone, rejects divine sonship and "Three," denies that his enemies killed or crucified him, and states that Allah raised him to Himself.

The Islamic position is therefore not built by choosing between honoring 'Isa and preserving Tawhid. Revelation requires both. Allah said:

قولوا آمنا بالله وما أنزل إلينا وما أنزل إلى إبراهيم وإسماعيل وإسحاق ويعقوب والأسباط وما أوتي موسى وعيسى وما أوتي النبيون من ربهم لا نفرق بين أحد منهم ونحن له مسلمون

"Say: We believe in Allah and what was sent down to us, and what was sent down to Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, Ya'qub and the tribes, and what was given to Musa and 'Isa, and what was given to the Prophets from their Lord. We do not make a distinction between any of them, and to Him we submit."

Source: Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:136.

Belief in 'Isa is part of belief in Allah's Messengers. Rejecting his true Prophethood is not Islam. Neither is raising him from the station Allah gave him into divinity or worship. The governing question is therefore not what later communities claimed about him, but what Allah revealed concerning him.

I. Maryam and the Miraculous Birth

The Qur'anic account begins by honoring Maryam عليها السلام.

Allah said:

وإذ قالت الملائكة يا مريم إن الله اصطفاك وطهرك واصطفاك على نساء العالمين

"And when the angels said: O Maryam, indeed Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the worlds."

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:42.

Islam's rejection of worshipping Maryam or her son is therefore not a rejection of their honor. Maryam is described by revelation as chosen and purified, and elsewhere the Qur'an calls her a truthful woman. Her honor is established by Allah, not by elevating her beyond servitude to Him.

Allah then gave her the glad tidings of 'Isa:

إذ قالت الملائكة يا مريم إن الله يبشرك بكلمة منه اسمه المسيح عيسى ابن مريم وجيها في الدنيا والآخرة ومن المقربين

"When the angels said: O Maryam, indeed Allah gives you glad tidings of a Word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, 'Isa son of Maryam, honored in this world and the Hereafter, and among those brought near."

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:45.

Maryam knew the ordinary human means by which a child is conceived, and she had not been touched by a man. Her question and Allah's answer make the nature of the miracle explicit:

قالت رب أنى يكون لي ولد ولم يمسنني بشر قال كذلك الله يخلق ما يشاء إذا قضى أمرا فإنما يقول له كن فيكون

“She said: My Lord, how can I have a child when no human being has touched me? He said: Thus Allah creates whatever He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:47.

The Qur'an therefore explains the fatherless birth through Allah's creation and command. The verse does not describe divine fatherhood. It says: الله يخلق ما يشاء — “Allah creates whatever He wills.”

That distinction is decisive. 'Isa's birth was extraordinary, but extraordinary creation does not make the created being divine.

Allah makes the argument explicit:

إن مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل آدم خلقه من تراب ثم قال له كن فيكون

“Indeed, the likeness of 'Isa with Allah is like the likeness of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was.”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:59.

The comparison concerns creation. Adam عليه السلام had neither father nor mother, yet he remained a created servant of Allah. 'Isa عليه السلام had a mother and no human father. The unusual manner of his creation is a sign of the power of the Creator; it is not a transfer of the Creator's divinity to His servant.

The same principle appears in the words spoken by 'Isa while still in the cradle. Before the Qur'an presents any later theological claim concerning him, it places a fundamental description on his own tongue:

قال إني عبد الله آتاني الكتاب وجعلني نبيا

“He said: Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet.”

Source: Qur'an, Maryam 19:30.

The first description is عبد الله — the servant of Allah.

That is not a diminution of 'Isa. Servitude to Allah is the honored station of the Prophets. The error lies in either denying the rank Allah gave him or exaggerating that rank until a servant is treated as the Lord.

2. “I Am the Servant of Allah”: Prophet, Messenger, and Messiah

The Qur'an gives 'Isa several legitimate descriptions, and they must be affirmed together.

He is:

- عيسى ابن مريم — 'Isa son of Maryam;

- عبد الله — the servant of Allah;
- نبي — a Prophet;
- رسول الله — a Messenger of Allah;
- المسيح — the Messiah;
- وجيها في الدنيا والآخرة — honored in this world and the Hereafter;
- من المقربين — among those brought near.

None of these descriptions should be erased, and none should be made to contradict the others.

Allah said:

إنما المسيح عيسى ابن مريم رسول الله

“The Messiah, ‘Isa son of Maryam, is only a Messenger of Allah...”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa 4:171.

The title al-Masih is therefore an Islamic, Qur'anic title. A Muslim does not reject it. But the Qur'an itself places the title beside the statement that he is رسول الله. The title does not mean that he is Allah.

The authentic Sunnah gathers these descriptions with unusual clarity. 'Ubadah ibn al-Samit رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

من شهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، وأن محمدا عبده ورسوله، وأن عيسى عبد الله ورسوله، وكلمته ألقاها إلى مريم، وروح منه، والجنة حق، والنار حق، أدخله الله الجنة على ما كان من العمل

“Whoever testifies that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone with no partner, that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, that ‘Isa is the servant of Allah and His Messenger, His Word which He conveyed to Maryam, and a spirit from Him, and that Paradise is true and the Fire is true—Allah will admit him to Paradise according to the deeds he had done.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3435. Authentic. The quoted Arabic above is the Bukhari wording. See also Sahih Muslim, no. 28, which transmits the same hadith with a wording variant.

This hadith is especially important because the Prophet ﷺ does not separate the descriptions into competing doctrines. In the same statement, ‘Isa is:

- Allah's servant;
- His Messenger;
- His Word conveyed to Maryam;
- and a spirit from Him.

Any interpretation of “His Word” or “a spirit from Him” that cancels عبد الله ورسوله has therefore contradicted the very text in which the descriptions are joined.

3. “His Word” and “a Spirit from Him”

Among the most frequently misunderstood descriptions of ‘Isa are the words of Allah:

يا أهل الكتاب لا تغلوا في دينكم ولا تقولوا على الله إلا الحق إنما المسيح عيسى ابن مريم رسول الله وكلمته ألقاها إلى مريم وروح منه فآمنوا بالله ورسله ولا تقولوا ثلاثة انتهوا خيرا لكم إنما الله إله واحد سبحانه أن يكون له ولد له ما في السماوات وما في الأرض وكفى بالله وكيلًا

“O People of the Book, do not exaggerate in your religion, and do not say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, ‘Isa son of Maryam, is only a Messenger of Allah, His Word which He conveyed to Maryam, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers, and do not say, ‘Three.’ Cease; that is better for you. Allah is only One God. Glory be to Him above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and Allah is sufficient as Disposer of affairs.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa 4:171.

The verse itself provides the governing boundaries.

It begins by prohibiting ghuluw—religious exaggeration. It calls ‘Isa a Messenger of Allah. It gives the descriptions “His Word” and “a spirit from Him.” It then immediately commands belief in Allah and His Messengers, forbids saying “Three,” declares that Allah is One God, and declares Him exalted above having a son.

The phrases must therefore be explained in a way that agrees with the entire verse, not in a way that destroys it.

What does “His Word” mean?

نحوه الله Qatadah transmitted from Ibn Kathir, وكلمته ألقاها إلى مريم Regarding

هو كقوله: كن، فكان

“It is like His saying: ‘Be,’ and he was.”

Ibn Kathir also transmitted from Shadh ibn Yahya:

ليس الكلمة صارت عيسى، ولكن بالكلمة صار عيسى

“The Word did not become ‘Isa; rather, by the Word, ‘Isa came to be.”

Source: Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, ed. Sami ibn Muhammad Salamah, Dar Tayyibah, 2nd ed., 1420 AH/1999, vol. 2, pp. 477–479, tafsir of al-Nisa 4:171.

This distinction is precise. Allah’s command is not the created person ‘Isa. Rather, by Allah’s command, ‘Isa came into existence.

Al-Tabari gives a different explanatory emphasis in this locus. He explains الكلمة as the message and glad tidings Allah commanded the angels to convey to Maryam, while also transmitting Qatadah’s explanation:

هو قوله: كن، فكان

“It is His saying: ‘Be,’ and he was.”

Source: al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, tafsir of al-Nisa 4:171, report no. 10854 and the surrounding discussion.

These explanations should not be collapsed into a claim that every early mufassir expressed the phrase identically. The decisive doctrinal point is narrower and clear: the created person 'Isa is not Allah's uncreated Attribute of Speech. His creation occurred by Allah's command, and the Qur'an itself had already explained his extraordinary creation:

إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ

“When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:47.

The “Word” description therefore does not change the Creator into the created, or the created into an Attribute of the Creator.

What does “a spirit from Him” mean?

The same verse describes 'Isa as:

وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ

“And a spirit from Him.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa 4:171.

This does not mean that 'Isa is a portion of Allah.

Ibn Kathir stated:

أي: من خلقه ومن عنده، وليست "من" للتبعيض

“Meaning: from His creation and from Him; and ‘from’ is not [here] for partition.”

He further explained:

وأضيفت الروح إلى الله على وجه التثريف

“And the spirit is attributed to Allah as an attribution of honor.”

Source: Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, ed. Sami ibn Muhammad Salamah, Dar Tayyibah, 2nd ed., 1420 AH/1999, vol. 2, pp. 478–479, tafsir of al-Nisa 4:171.

Al-Tabari transmits several early explanatory expressions concerning رُوحٌ مِنْهُ. The early tafsir record should not be flattened into the claim that every mufassir used one identical formula. What is decisive for this foundational article is the doctrinal boundary established by the texts: 'Isa is a created servant and Messenger, and “from Him” does not mean that a created spirit is a piece of the Divine Essence.

Thus the two phrases do not establish incarnation, partition, or divinity. They remain within the Qur'an's own declaration:

إِنَّمَا إِلَهُ الْوَاحِد

“Allah is only One God.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa 4:171.

4. His Message: “Allah Is My Lord and Your Lord, So Worship Him”

The central message of 'Isa is not left to inference. The Qur'an records it directly.

Allah said concerning him:

إن الله ربي وربكم فاعبدوه هذا صراط مستقيم

“Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path.”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:51.

And Allah said:

وقال المسيح يا بني إسرائيل اعبدوا الله ربي وربكم

“The Messiah said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:72.

The wording is explicit in two directions:

1. Allah is ربي — “my Lord” — the Lord of 'Isa.
2. Allah is ربكم — “your Lord” — the Lord of the people to whom he spoke.

Then comes the command:

فاعبدوه

“So worship Him.”

This is Tawhid: worship belongs to Allah alone.

The Qur'an therefore does not present 'Isa as a Messenger whose true message was that people should worship him. It records the opposite. He called people to the worship of his Lord and their Lord.

This is reaffirmed in the Day of Judgment dialogue in Surat al-Ma'idah. 'Isa says:

ما قلت لهم إلا ما أمرتني به أن اعبدوا الله ربي وربكم

“I said to them only what You commanded me: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:117.

The statement is not merely a general teaching attributed to all Prophets. It is 'Isa's own Qur'anic message.

For that reason, the greatest way to honor the message of 'Isa is to believe him concerning the Lord he worshipped and the worship to which he called.

5. The Injil Revealed to 'Isa

Allah did not send 'Isa without revelation.

Allah said:

وقفينا على آثارهم بعيسى ابن مريم مصدقا لما بين يديه من التوراة وآتيناه الإنجيل فيه هدى ونور ومصدقا لما بين يديه من التوراة وهدى وموعظة للمتقين

“And We sent, following in their footsteps, 'Isa son of Maryam, confirming what was before him of the Torah; and We gave him the Injil, in which was guidance and light, confirming what was before it of the Torah, and as guidance and admonition for the people of taqwa.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:46.

Allah also said concerning what He would teach 'Isa:

ويعلمه الكتاب والحكمة والتوراة والإنجيل

“And He will teach him the Book, wisdom, the Torah, and the Injil.”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:48.

The Islamic belief is therefore straightforward: Allah gave the Injil to 'Isa عليه السلام. It was revelation containing guidance and light.

A necessary distinction should nevertheless be maintained. The Injil revealed by Allah to 'Isa is a revealed Book. Questions concerning the composition, authorship, canon, transmission, and manuscript history of later Christian textual collections are historical questions of another kind.

Project 009 does not need to solve those historical questions in order to affirm the Qur'anic fact. It is enough here to say what revelation says: Allah gave His Messenger 'Isa the Injil.

6. His Miracles—By Allah's Permission

The Qur'an affirms extraordinary miracles for 'Isa. Islam does not need to deny them in order to protect Tawhid.

Allah records 'Isa saying:

أني قد جئتكم بآية من ربكم أني أخلق لكم من الطين كهيئة الطير فأنفخ فيه فيكون طيرا بإذن الله وأبرئ الأكمه والأبرص وأحيي الموتى بإذن الله وأنبئكم بما تاكلون وما تدخرون في بيوتكم إن في ذلك لآية لكم إن كنتم مؤمنين

“I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I shape for you from clay something like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by Allah’s permission; I heal the one born blind and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allah’s permission; and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your homes. Surely in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:49.

The verse affirms the miracles and supplies their theological interpretation at the same time.

It says:

يَاذَنُ اللّٰهُ

“By Allah’s permission.”

Then, concerning bringing the dead to life, it repeats:

يَاذَنُ اللّٰهُ

“By Allah’s permission.”

Surat al-Ma'idah repeats the same control, with Allah reminding 'Isa that these miracles occurred بِإِذْنِي — “by My permission.” See Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:110.

The point is not that the miracles were unreal, metaphorical, or insignificant. They were signs from Allah. The point is that a miracle Allah causes to occur through a Messenger is not the same as independent divine power belonging intrinsically to that Messenger.

The miracle demonstrates Allah’s power and His support for His Messenger. It does not turn the Messenger into the Lord who granted the sign.

This distinction is especially important because the Qur'an itself places it inside the miracle narrative. The qualification “by Allah’s permission” is part of the revealed account itself.

7. Why Miraculous Birth and Miracles Do Not Establish Divinity

Two of the most striking features of 'Isa's life are his fatherless birth and the extraordinary miracles Allah supported him with. The Qur'an affirms both. It also prevents both from becoming arguments for divinity.

The fatherless birth

The Qur'anic answer is Adam:

إِنْ مِثْلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمِثْلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

“Indeed, the likeness of 'Isa with Allah is like the likeness of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was.”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:59.

If an unusual mode of creation established divinity, Adam's creation without father or mother would be an even stronger case. Yet Adam is a created Prophet and servant.

The conclusion is therefore not that the birth of 'Isa is unimportant. It is that its correct meaning is the one Allah gives it: a manifestation of His creative power.

The miracles

The Qur'an does not merely say that 'Isa healed and brought the dead to life. It repeatedly says:

بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

“By Allah's permission.”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:49.

The miraculous act is a sign. The independent Lordship belongs to Allah.

His human need

Allah also directs attention to an ordinary fact about 'Isa and Maryam:

ما المسيح ابن مريم إلا رسول قد خلت من قبله الرسل وأمه صديقة كانا يأكلان الطعام انظر كيف نبين لهم الآيات ثم انظر أنى يؤفكون

“The Messiah, son of Maryam, was only a Messenger; Messengers passed away before him. His mother was a truthful woman. They both used to eat food. Look how We make the signs clear to them, then look how they are turned away.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:75.

The verse combines honor and human dependence. 'Isa is a Messenger. Maryam is a truthful woman. Both ate food.

Created beings require what sustains them. Allah is the Creator, Owner, and Sustainer who is free of created need.

The Qur'an therefore does not resolve the question of 'Isa by denying his miracles or insulting his mother. It affirms their virtues and then places those virtues within the fundamental Creator-creation distinction.

8. “Do Not Say Three”: Divinity, Sonship, and Worship

The Qur'an's positive account of 'Isa is accompanied by direct rejection of theological claims that raise him beyond his true station.

“Allah is the Messiah”

Allah said:

لقد كفر الذين قالوا إن الله هو المسيح ابن مريم وقال المسيح يا بني إسرائيل اعبدوا الله ربي وربكم إنه من يشرك بالله فقد حرم الله عليه الجنة ومأواه النار وما للظالمين من أنصار

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam,’ while the Messiah said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed, whoever associates partners with Allah, Allah has forbidden Paradise to him, and his refuge is the Fire; and the wrongdoers will have no helpers.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:72.

The verse does not leave the refutation abstract. It sets the false claim beside 'Isa's own message:

اعبدوا الله ربي وربكم

“Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”

The Qur'anic judgment upon the doctrine is explicit. This is a general revealed ruling concerning a belief. Applying legal judgments to particular named individuals is a separate question requiring knowledge of the person, the facts, the relevant conditions and impediments, and qualified judgment. Project 009 is explaining the doctrine, not issuing case-specific judgments on individuals.

Divine sonship

Allah said:

سبحانه أن يكون له ولد

“Glory be to Him above having a son.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa 4:171.

And Allah said:

ما كان لله أن يتخذ من ولد سبحانه إذا قضى أمرا فإنما يقول له كن فيكون

“It is not for Allah to take a son. Glory be to Him. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”

Source: Qur'an, Maryam 19:35.

Again the Qur'an connects the rejection of sonship to Allah's creative command. 'Isa came into existence because Allah creates what He wills, not because Allah fathered a child.

“Do not say Three”

Allah said:

ولا تقولوا ثلاثة انتهوا خيرا لكم إنما الله إله واحد

“Do not say, ‘Three.’ Cease; that is better for you. Allah is only One God.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa 4:171.

And:

لقد كفر الذين قالوا إن الله ثالث ثلاثة وما من إله إلا إله واحد

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘Allah is the third of three,’ while there is no deity worthy of worship except one God.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:73.

A source-critical article should state these Qur'anic propositions accurately without inventing a technical formula and attributing it indiscriminately to every Christian individual. The Qur'an's rejection is sufficiently clear without caricature.

The Day of Judgment dialogue

Allah also says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلهِينَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ
سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتَ قُلْتَهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمَ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا
أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ

“And when Allah says: O 'Isa son of Maryam, did you say to the people, ‘Take me and my mother as two deities besides Allah’? He will say: Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right to say. Had I said it, You would certainly have known it. You know what is within me, while I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, You are the Knower of the unseen.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:116.

'Isa continues:

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ

“I said to them only what You commanded me: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:117.

This passage condemns taking 'Isa and Maryam as objects of worship besides Allah. It should not be misrepresented as though the Qur'an were defining the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as “Allah, Jesus, and Mary.” The Qur'anic texts directly rejecting “Three” are 4:171 and 5:73; 5:116 addresses the separate but related reality of deification and worship.

Accuracy matters even in refutation. Allah said:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نَقَوْمَ عَلَى أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى

“Do not let hatred of a people cause you to depart from justice. Be just; that is nearer to taqwa.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:8.

Firmness in Tawhid does not require misrepresentation.

The Prophet ﷺ himself warned his Ummah against the path of exaggerated praise:

لا تطروني كما أطرت النصارى ابن مريم، فإنما أنا عبده، فقولوا عبد الله ورسوله

“Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians exaggerated in praising the son of Maryam. I am only His servant, so say: the servant of Allah and His Messenger.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3445. Authentic.

The lesson is precise: true honor remains within revelation. Exaggeration can turn praise into falsehood. But the opposite error is also false. The prohibition of exaggeration is not permission to insult or diminish a Prophet whom Allah honored.

9. “They Did Not Kill Him, Nor Did They Crucify Him”

The Qur'anic ruling concerning the attempted killing of 'Isa is explicit.

Allah said:

وقولهم إنا قتلنا المسيح عيسى ابن مريم رسول الله وما قتلوه وما صلبوه ولكن شبه لهم وإن الذين اختلفوا فيه لفي شك منه ما لهم به من علم إلا اتباع الظن وما قتلوه يقينا

“And for their saying, ‘We killed the Messiah, 'Isa son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah’—but they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; rather, it was made to appear so to them. Those who differ concerning it are surely in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except following conjecture. They certainly did not kill him.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa 4:157.

Four points should be kept distinct.

First, the verse explicitly negates their killing of 'Isa:

وما قتلوه

“They did not kill him.”

Second, it explicitly negates their crucifixion of him:

وما صلبوه

“Nor did they crucify him.”

Third, it states:

ولكن شبه لهم

“Rather, it was made to appear so to them.”

Fourth, the verse itself rebukes conjecture and lack of knowledge concerning the event.

That last point should discipline the Muslim's own narration. The Qur'an establishes what must be believed; it does not identify by name the person who was crucified, nor does it give a complete narrative of the mechanics by which the matter was made to appear to them.

Al-Tabari, when explaining the verse, states:

واختلف أهل التأويل في صفة التشبيه

“The people of tafsir differed regarding the manner of the resemblance.”

Source: al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, tafsir of al-Nisa 4:157. The differing substitution narratives appear in the report sequence beginning at no. 10779; the concise report from Mujahid is no. 10787.

Mujahid's report states that they crucified another man while thinking he was 'Isa. But the detailed narratives differ, and Project 009 does not need to select a named substitute.

The correct hierarchy is therefore:

Qur'anic certainty: 'Isa was not killed by them, was not crucified by them, and the matter was made to appear to them.

Later report detail: the identity of the person crucified and the exact mechanics of the resemblance.

The second category must not be elevated to the certainty of the first.

10. “Rather, Allah Raised Him to Himself”

Immediately after denying the killing and crucifixion, Allah says:

بل رفعه الله إليه وكان الله عزيزا حكيما

“Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa 4:158.

This is the direct Qur'anic statement. It should be allowed to stand as Allah revealed it.

A related verse in Surat Al 'Imran requires more careful explanation because of the word متوفيك:

إذ قال الله يا عيسى إني متوفيك ورافعك إلي ومطهرك من الذين كفروا

“When Allah said: O 'Isa, indeed I will take you and raise you to Me, and purify you from those who disbelieved...”

Source: Qur'an, Al 'Imran 3:55.

The early mufasssirin transmitted more than one explanation of متوفيك in this verse. A source-critical account should neither hide that fact nor turn it into uncertainty concerning the entire Islamic doctrine.

Al-Tabari states:

ثم اختلف أهل التأويل في معنى الوفاة التي ذكرها الله عز وجل في هذه الآية

“Then the people of tafsir differed concerning the meaning of the taking [al-wafah] that Allah mentioned in this verse.”

He transmits explanations involving sleep, taking from the earth without death, death, and an order-of-events reading in which the raising precedes the later death.

Al-Tabari then states his own preference:

وأولى هذه الأقوال بالصحة عندنا، قول من قال: معنى ذلك: إني قابضك من الأرض ورافعك إلي

“The most correct of these statements in our view is the statement of the one who said: its meaning is, ‘I am taking you from the earth and raising you to Me.’”

He concludes:

فتأويل الآية إذاً: قال الله لعيسى: يا عيسى، إني قابضك من الأرض، ورافعك إلي، ومطهرك من الذين كفروا فجدوا نبوتك

“The interpretation of the verse, then, is: Allah said to ‘Isa: O ‘Isa, I am taking you from the earth, raising you to Me, and purifying you from those who disbelieved and denied your Prophethood.”

Source: al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, tafsir of Al 'Imran 3:55. The principal transmitted interpretations appear at reports 7133–7143; al-Tabari states his preferred explanation immediately thereafter, with supporting material continuing at reports 7144–7147.

Ibn Kathir likewise transmits the principal views and says:

وقال الأكثرون: المراد بالوفاة هاهنا: النوم

“Most [commentators] said: what is meant by wafah here is sleep.”

Source: Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, Dar Tayyibah, 2nd ed., 1420 AH/1999, vol. 2, p. 47.

The purpose of mentioning this disagreement is not to make a foundational article unnecessarily technical. It is to prevent an inaccurate assertion that the word متوفيك by itself proves that 'Isa died before being raised.

The verse must be read together with the wider evidence:

- his enemies did not kill him;
- they did not crucify him;
- Allah raised him to Himself;
- the early tafsir record contains explanations of متوفيك other than physical death before raising;
- and the authentic Sunnah establishes his future descent.

Taken together, these evidences establish the conclusion: Allah raised 'Isa alive, and he will descend before the Hour.

A necessary precision remains: the word **حيا** — “alive” — is not itself part of the wording **بل رفعه الله إليه**. “Raised alive” is the conclusion established from the combined evidence, not a literal translation of 4:158.

This distinction preserves both the clarity of the doctrine and the integrity of the text.

II. 'Isa and Muhammad ﷺ: One Prophetic Foundation, the Final Messenger

Islam does not place true belief in 'Isa against true belief in Muhammad ﷺ.

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

أنا أولى الناس بعيسى ابن مريم في الدنيا والآخرة، والأنبياء إخوة لعلات، أمهاتهم شتى، ودينهم واحد

“I am the closest of people to 'Isa son of Maryam in this world and the Hereafter. The Prophets are paternal brothers: their mothers are different, while their religion is one.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3443; Sahih Muslim, no. 2365, with wording variants. Authentic.

In another authentic wording, the Prophet ﷺ said:

أنا أولى الناس بابن مريم، والأنبياء أولاد علات، ليس بيني وبينه نبي

“I am the closest of people to the son of Maryam. The Prophets are like paternal brothers; there was no Prophet between me and him.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3442; Sahih Muslim, no. 2365. Authentic.

Their religion is one in its foundation: worship of Allah, submission to Him, and faith in what He revealed through His Messengers. This does not mean that every subsidiary legal ruling was identical in every Prophetic law. The hadith itself gives the analogy of brothers whose mothers differ while their fraternity remains.

The Qur'an also records 'Isa giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after him:

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

“And when 'Isa son of Maryam said: O Children of Israel, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you, confirming what came before me of the Torah and giving glad tidings of a Messenger who will come after me, whose name is Ahmad. Then when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: This is obvious magic.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Saff 61:6.

Belief in the Prophets is therefore not a license to accept one true Messenger while rejecting another true Messenger sent by the same Lord.

Muhammad ﷺ is also the final Prophet.

Allah said:

ما كان محمد أباً أحد من رجالكم ولكن رسول الله وخاتم النبيين وكان الله بكل شيء عليماً

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets. And Allah is Knowing of all things.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ahzab 33:40.

This finality is important when considering the future descent of 'Isa. His return does not mean that a new Prophet is sent after Muhammad ﷺ. 'Isa is a Messenger whom Allah had already sent before Muhammad ﷺ, and his descent does not reopen Prophethood.

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

كيف أنتم إذا نزل ابن مريم فيكم وإمامكم منكم

“How will you be when the son of Maryam descends among you and your imam is from among you?”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3449; Sahih Muslim, no. 155. Authentic.

Imam al-Nawawi رحمه الله explained the descent hadith:

وقوله حكماً أي ينزل حاكماً بهذه الشريعة لا ينزل برسالة مستقلة وشريعة ناسخة بل هو حاكم من حكام هذه الأمة

“His saying ‘as a judge’ means that he will descend judging by this Shari‘ah. He will not descend with an independent message or an abrogating Shari‘ah; rather, he will be a judge among the judges of this Ummah.”

Source: al-Nawawi, *al-Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj*, *Kitab al-Iman*, chapter: *Bab Nuzul 'Isa ibn Maryam Hakiman bi-Shari'ati Nabiyyina Muhammad ﷺ*, commentary on Sahih Muslim, no. 155.

Thus the future descent of 'Isa occurs under the final Prophetic law; it does not constitute a new independent Prophethood or Shari‘ah.

12. His Future Descent: Established Fact, Detailed Elsewhere

The future descent of 'Isa ibn Maryam is established by authentic Prophetic texts.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

والذي نفسي بيده ليوشكن أن ينزل فيكم ابن مريم حكماً عدلاً

“By the One in Whose hand is my soul, the son of Maryam will soon descend among you as a just judge.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3448; Sahih Muslim, no. 155, with wording variants. Authentic.

The hadith continues with further details concerning what will occur after his descent. Those details are authentic and important, but they belong to the dedicated study of 'Isa's role at the end of times rather than to this foundational account.

For Project 009, three points are sufficient:

1. his descent is a real future event established by authentic Sunnah;
2. it confirms rather than overturns the finality of Muhammad ﷺ;
3. he does not return with a new independent Prophethood or abrogating Shari'ah.

The full chronology, his role in relation to al-Dajjal, and the other events connected to his descent require their own evidenced treatment.

Conclusion — Believe in Him as Allah Described Him

The Islamic belief concerning 'Isa ibn Maryam عليه السلام is neither denial nor deification.

Allah honored Maryam and caused her to conceive 'Isa without a human father. The birth was miraculous because Allah creates whatever He wills and says كن فيكون — “Be,” and it is.

'Isa declared:

إني عبد الله

“Indeed, I am the servant of Allah.”

Source: Qur'an, Maryam 19:30.

He was a Prophet, a Messenger, the Messiah, and one honored in this life and the Hereafter. Allah gave him the Injil and supported him with true miracles. Those miracles occurred بإذن الله — by Allah's permission.

He called his people to the foundation of the religion:

اعبدوا الله ربي وربكم

“Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:72.

The Qur'an calls him Allah's Word conveyed to Maryam and a spirit from Him, while the same verse calls him a Messenger and immediately forbids exaggeration, “Three,” and divine sonship. The explanations of the early mufasssirun make clear that the created 'Isa is not Allah's uncreated Attribute of Speech and is not a portion of Allah.

The Qur'an rejects the claim that Allah is the Messiah. It rejects divine sonship. It rejects saying “Three.” It condemns worshipping 'Isa and Maryam besides Allah.

At the same time, the Qur'an does not permit a Muslim to reduce 'Isa to a false prophet, a myth, or an insignificant figure. Belief in him is part of belief in Allah's Messengers.

His enemies did not kill him and did not crucify him. The matter was made to appear to them. Allah raised him to Himself. The authentic Sunnah establishes that he will descend before the Hour.

And his relationship to Muhammad ﷺ is not one of rival religions. The Prophet ﷺ described the Prophets as brothers whose religion is one and stated that there was no Prophet between himself and 'Isa. The Qur'an records 'Isa giving glad tidings of a Messenger after him named Ahmad, while Muhammad ﷺ is the Seal of the Prophets.

The governing principle is therefore simple but exact:

Honor 'Isa as Allah honored him. Believe what Allah revealed about him. Affirm his Prophethood, his miracles, his revelation, and his future descent. But do not direct to a created Messenger the worship, divinity, or sonship that revelation reserves and affirms for Allah alone.

True honor does not require exaggeration. True Tawhid does not require disrespect.

The safest and most truthful description of ‘Isa is the description revelation itself joins together:

وَأَنَّ عِيسَى عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ، وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ

“And that ‘Isa is the servant of Allah and His Messenger, His Word which He conveyed to Maryam, and a spirit from Him.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3435. Authentic. The quoted Arabic above is the Bukhari wording. See also Sahih Muslim, no. 28, which transmits the same hadith with a wording variant.

That is the reality of ‘Isa ibn Maryam in Islam.