

Christ in Prophecy
Islam 3: James Walker on Jesus in the Qur'an
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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Muslims claim that they honor Jesus just as Christians do, and that this is one of the most important things that the two religions have in common. But is that true? Stay tuned for an interview with an expert on the subject.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. My colleague, Nathan Jones, and I have a very special guest in the studio with us today one who has been with us a couple of times before. His name is James Walker, and he is head of a great ministry called Watchman Fellowship, located in Arlington, Texas. The ministry is an independent Christian research and apologetics ministry that focuses on Christian cults, non-Christian religious movements, the occult and the New Age Movement. James is a fourth generation Mormon with over 25 years of ministry experience in the field of Christian evangelism, apologetics, interfaith evangelism, and discernment. Welcome to Christ in Prophecy, James. We are glad to have you with us.

James Walker: Thank you so much David. You ought to say former fourth generation Mormon, I want to get that part in as well.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, got that.

Nathan Jones: Oh, it is good to have you on James, so much.

James Walker: Good to be back with you guys.

Nathan Jones: Well I was excited to hear that the topic was about Islam because that is kind of a subject dear to my heart. We get people who write in all the time, Muslims from other countries, and they have questions about Jesus. So, much so that I ended up doing a video, a one-hour on the fate of Islam. And so when I heard that you wrote a book "What the Qur'an Really Teaches about Jesus." I wanted to know: What motivated you to want to write it?

James Walker: Well, I had Muslim friends first of all, and I know the Qur'an is an important book. I'm a Christian so it is totally from a Christian perspective. But I wanted to give Christians some tools and resources to be able to have a Gospel conversation with Muslims. Islam is growing tremendously in the United States right now.

Nathan Jones: Yes.

James Walker: There's a good chance that your chiropractor, your doctor, your next door neighbor, your classmate is going to be Muslim.

Nathan Jones: And TSA agent.

James Walker: Exactly, TSA agent. So, what you want to do is be able to--how can you leverage that relationship into having a Gospel conversation. And what I discovered is if you know just a few key passages in the Qur'an you can use that to open the door and transition them into looking at what the New Testament says about Jesus.

Dr. Reagan: Well, you know James you really succeeded. I read this book from beginning to end. In fact I can prove it because I have markings all the way through it.

James Walker: Somebody's written all in that book.

Dr. Reagan: I got all the good stuff underlined, which is almost everything. But it's really an outstanding book. It's down to earth. It's easy to understand. It's not in theological language. And I highly, highly recommend it. And one of the things I really like about it is that it focuses on Jesus and what the Qur'an says about Him. And as I told you earlier so many churches today are being sucked into a snow job by the Muslims in that they want their Imam to come and speak at a Christian church. And he comes and what he does is he immediately starts talking about how we love Jesus. How Jesus is all through the Qur'an. And by the time he gets through speaking people I call cultural Christians, who just go to church and don't know anything about the Bible, they are convinced that Islam is just another form of Christianity.

James Walker: It's not just the Muslim leadership. I mean we are getting this from some of our top politicians, from the news media. This whole idea is-- and you can understand the confusions, Christianity and Islam are both monotheistic religions. Both religions believe there is one God. So people make a logical mistake.

Dr. Reagan: They worship the same God.

James Walker: Exactly.

Nathan Jones: Yeah, you hear that all the time.

James Walker: But that's not the case. So, I do talk about there are somethings in my book I talk about that the Qur'an affirms, that we can agree with Muslims: that Jesus was born of a virgin, that He was prophesied by the other prophets, that He himself is a Prophet of God. And these are things that we would have in common with our Muslim neighbors. The Qur'an teaches this. But importantly there are critical differences: Jesus in the Qur'an did not die on the cross, He never rose from the dead, He's not the Son of God. When you look at these critical issues that are foundational to the Gospel of Jesus Christ it's not the same Jesus. It's not the same God. It's a different religion.

Dr. Reagan: And they get very upset if you start talking about Son of God.

James Walker: Right. It's not just wrong according to Islamic theology. To say Jesus is the Son of God is to equate Him with God, which really that is correct it is. In Islam that is what they would call "shirk" it violates a principle of oneness, the "tawhid" they call it. So, it is not just wrong in Islam, it is tantamount to the unpardonable sin.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

James Walker: The Qur'an says it this way, "Allah neither begets, nor is he begotten." God cannot have a son. And in a Muslim way of thinking some Muslims even think that implies that God, by saying Son of God, you are implying that God had a wife or some consort of something.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Nathan Jones: Isn't there, in the satanic verses though, that the moon god Allah did have a consort in the son god and begot three goddesses? Which they almost killed a guy, right, for even writing about that?

James Walker: Well, again that's something that it gets into very, very iffy situation when you even bring that up to a Muslim, but that is exactly right. In the history of Islam and even in the Qur'an itself. The history of the Qur'an there are issues that would mitigate on that.

Nathan Jones: Okay.

Dr. Reagan: In fact the Qur'an gets--evidently Muhammad heard a lot of stories, and he got the stories all mixed up to some degree. For example the mother of Jesus is Miriam the sister of Moses.

James Walker: Well, the Muslims have an apologetic where they try to explain that's not the case. But it is pretty obvious and I have a section in the book that talks about that. Muhammad not only had he not read the New Testament, he was unable to read. He was almost certainly illiterate. And the Bible, the New Testament had not even been translated into Arabic at this time, during the life of Muhammad. So, he had no access. But on the caravan routes he would hear stories from Jews, from Christians, but also some from heretical sects. And apparently he mixes the stories up. So, in the Qur'an you have Maryam the mother of Jesus, also being the sister of Aaron. So, you have the problem of it is obvious mix up of confusing the two people.

Dr. Reagan: Well, if Jesus didn't die on the cross, from the Islamic viewpoint who did?

James Walker: Well, that's an interesting question? That is one of the questions we recommend asking the Muslim. The Qur'an doesn't answer the question. The Qur'an simply says mystery. They thought they had crucified Him, but indeed they crucified Him not. That's basically all the Qur'an says. In the centuries that followed the death of Muhammad theories came out, some of them were incorporated into the Hadith. Basically that it was another person, one of the disciples who was crucified in the place of Jesus.

Nathan Jones: I heard them say Judas, right?

James Walker: Well, that is one of the theories. Simon of Cyrene is another possible candidate. But the likeness of Jesus' face was placed on one of the other disciples you hear that as well. I call it the stunt double theory. But the idea is in turning the substitutionary atonement on its head you have in some cases they would say even Judah Iscariot dying for and on behalf of Jesus. And so, you had the exact opposite of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Reagan: And then they have some very strange ideas about what is going to happen when Jesus returns because they believe He's going to return right?

James Walker: Yes, they do believe so. Jesus will--He did not die so He was just caught up into Paradise, but they believe He one day will. He will return to earth. And there's various theories.

Dr. Reagan: He's going to break all the crosses.

James Walker: And break all the crosses.

Nathan Jones: Kill all the pigs.

James Walker: Kill all the pigs. And there are some variations between Shia and Sunni on exactly how the eschatology works out. But--

Dr. Reagan: He is going to marry when He comes back.

James Walker: He is going to set all things right. And He's going to put Islam in its place of domination in the world religions, and all of this is part of the end time events.

Nathan Jones: So, Muhammad then, the founder of Islam, basically took different stories he heard about Jesus and then I heard Zoroastrianism which is a Persian religion, and whatever he came up with and kind of mixed it all in a blender and created Islam?

James Walker: Yeah, you have like some of the miracles of Jesus are recorded in the Qur'an. But some of non-biblical miracles are there as well. Some which are found--yes, as a new born infant He's speaking from the cradle.

Dr. Reagan: Healing birds.

James Walker: Yeah, he brings birds to life. And there's all these stories. And some of these you find very similar stories being circulated by some of the heretical sects in non-Christian religions at the time of the 6th and 7th Century, the time of Muhammad on the Arabian Peninsula.

Dr. Reagan: Well, let's go back to a point that you made right at the very beginning that was so important. And that is the fact that Christians often believe that because there is one God, and the Muslims believe there is one God we are worshipping the same God. Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God?

James Walker: I'm convinced absolutely not. In my book chapter after chapter I'm giving great questions to ask. If it's the same God let me ask you this my Muslim friend, "I worship the God who is the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ. Is that the same God of Islam?" You will not find any Muslim Cleric, any Imam, I've never met a Muslim who will answer yes to that. Again, to say that in their mind would be almost like the unpardonable sin. So, asking the right kinds of questions really opens the door that there is a huge difference. Now, I will grant you they do respect Jesus, and He is mentioned in the Qur'an. This is a great conversation starter. But asking the right questions.

Dr. Reagan: But He is one of many prophets.

James Walker: He is one of many prophets. And there is a passage in the Qur'an where it says we make no distinction between any of the prophets. But then a great question to ask was: In the Qur'an you find that Jesus was born of a virgin. In the New Testament we also find that Jesus was born of a virgin. In the Old Testament it is prophesied that the Messiah would be born of virgin. Let me ask you my friend what other prophet was born of a virgin? In Islam no other prophet, not even Muhammad was born of a virgin. So in that way could I ask you: Was Jesus then unique among all the other prophets? So, again asking the right questions.

Nathan Jones: And didn't they also believe that Jesus was sinless whereas Muhammad was sinful.

James Walker: Right, that. Muhammad had no assurance of his own salvation even. So, yeah, there are huge differences in that. So, one of the things I try to do is to try to find a way of transitioning the Muslim into reading the Gospels, or reading the Bible.

Nathan Jones: Because they are allowed to right, Muhammad encouraged it?

James Walker: Well, you find, it says in the Qur'an if you have doubts or questions you are to ask the people of the Book. And of course the book it is talking about is the Bible. So, they will resist that often, well the Bible has been corrupted they will try to say. But just say, "Well, is there anything of value there? Have you ever read?" Most Muslims have never read the story of the women at the well. They've never read the story of Jesus healing Lazarus, raising Lazarus from the dead. These are all brand new.

Nathan Jones: I found they usually haven't even read the Qur'an.

James Walker: Yeah, many of them have not. But if you could find some kind of way of getting them exposed. I think the power is going to be in the Word of God. If we can transition them into that. Even sometimes saying, one of my favorite passages to start off a conversation with a Muslim, we have a section in the book on this is Sura 3:50, because Sura 3:50 Jesus is speaking in the Qur'an and he says, "You must fear Allah and you must obey me." Well the issue is a great question asked would be: Where are the commands of Jesus found in the Qur'an? You will not find one command of Jesus anywhere in the Qur'an. If you are going to find this you must go to the Gospels. My friend, have you ever read the Gospels to see the commands of Jesus? What about Matthew's gospel, have you ever read that? And again to get them transitioned into that. Even if they argue that the Gospels have been corrupted if they make that argument, well is there anything of value left there? Let's read them together and see if we can find something of value.

Dr. Reagan: Well I know from talking to Muslims over the years that the one thing that will always impress them if you can get them into the Gospels is the love of God, because they just don't know anything--the Qur'an mentions many attributes of God, but never love. It's just never mentioned.

James Walker: You might hope that Allah is merciful, but that's why there is no assurance of salvation either.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, he's aloof, he's distant. He's just not the God of the Bible I'll guarantee you that. It's just not that.

Nathan Jones: And they look at Christianity actually as a polytheism, right? Because we believe in a Trinity.

James Walker: Misunderstanding the doctrine of the Trinity. And again asking the right questions and having the conversation to help them see that.

Dr. Reagan: Well what I want to do is, we are going to take a little break and then when we come back I want us to talk about Chrislam, about putting Islam and Christianity together. Okay? And also a little bit more about the God of Islam.

Part 2

Nathan Jones: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our interview with James Walker the President of Watchman Fellowship, a discernment and apologetics ministry located in Arlington, Texas. James has a new book out titled, "What the Qur'an Really Teaches About Jesus." So, let's get back to the question Dr. Reagan posed: Can you tell us what is Chrislam? And what's your opinion of it?

James Walker: Well, it is a pretty broad category actually. Chrislam is of course taking two things Christianity and Islam you try to put them together and make one new animal out of it, one new religion.

Nathan Jones: Is that possible?

James Walker: Which is both Christianity and Islam. I think it disrespects both religions. You know when you understand the theology, no Muslim can say Jesus is the Son of God. And no Christian can say Jesus is not the Son of God. To try to take those ideas just because both religions would look to the roots as being Abraham, they're Abrahamic religions. And both of are monotheistic religions. We cannot assume we are talking about the same God here. And there are attempts. Now there have been some official religions even, I think two religions out of Africa that are actually called Chrislam. But typically today the Chrislam moniker is used to talk about more liberal Christians who will try to get together and merge these two ideas. And what I would say I like dialogue with religion. I want to dialogue with Muslims. I want to talk about there are things that we have in common, but the differences outweigh all commonality. And so, what we want to do is built a bridge. And if all you do is talk about the things that we have in common you've not built a bridge, you've just built a monument. To cross over we have to talk about those things that separate us, and to say that both religions teach the same thing, I think disrespects both religions.

Dr. Reagan: You know all across America today we've got Christian pastors inviting Muslim Imams to come and share with their congregations. Has it ever occurred to them that it is kind of strange that they are never invited to go to a mosque and share?

James Walker: You'll rarely see that being on the other foot would you?

Dr. Reagan: Very rare.

James Walker: They are very rare.

Dr. Reagan: So, one time I was sitting at the Garden Tomb in Israel, by myself. I had a group over there but this was a day off and I just went over there to meditate. This man came and sat down next to me and he started asking me questions: Do you believe in God? And so forth. And I looked over and he had a piece of paper on his knee that was all written in Arabic. And I realized this was an Arabic Muslim, a Muslim who was out there sharing his faith. And I turned to him and I said, "Do you understand that this is a Christian site here? And you're here sharing your faith?" "Yes, I understand that." I said, "Well, why would you do that?" He said, "Because this belongs to us. The whole Holy Land belongs to us." And he said, "I can share my faith anywhere I want to." I said, "Well, what if I went over to the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount and walked in and got down by somebody who was there on a mat and began to share the Christian faith? What would you do?" He said, "I'd kill you."

James Walker: He said that?

Nathan Jones: That was honest.

Dr. Reagan: Oh, yes. And I immediately got up and went to the bookstore to tell them that this guy was there. By the time they came out he was gone. But that is the attitude. I mean, yeah, I can share mine, but you can't share yours.

James Walker: Yes. I've had similar discussion as well. You're free in Islam to convert as long as you are converting to Islam. But virtually any of the countries that are under Sharia Law it is going to be illegal; you are either are going to fined, or jailed, or punished worse if you convert from Islam to any other religion including Christianity.

Nathan Jones: It is a death sentence right, to leave Islam means to--

James Walker: In some of the countries, yes.

Nathan Jones: Isn't it a requirement even of a parent to kill their child if they leave Islam?

James Walker: Well, you do have the honor killings. Now, some of the more liberal Muslims in America will say, "Well, that is a misunderstanding of the Qur'an." So, I am not here to tell you what the Qur'an truly teaches. I don't think it teaches anything truly. But that is their interpretation of it. And one of the things we find in America most Muslims are not, here in America, are not going to interpret the sword verses that we are to kill all the infidels all the time. And if that's their understanding I don't think it is best strategy to talk them out of that. No, no really it says right here in your own Qur'an that you are supposed to kill the infidel.

Nathan Jones: And they're shocked usually when you read those Suras to them. Yeah.

James Walker: Exactly. So, I would say instead of me saying I'm going to tell you what the Qur'an really means, I'm not going to do that. It is what it is. And most American Muslims are not going to be at all terrorists. I would hate for--when you read my book I am going to try to encourage you to build relationships, Gospel conversations with Muslims.

Dr. Reagan: Let's talk about that for a moment because the last part of your book is very, very interesting. First of all you have the transcript of a debate that you had with a Muslim.

James Walker: Khalil Meek.

Dr. Reagan: And then you have interviews with three different Muslims who have become Christians.

James Walker: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And these are absolutely fascinating. Tell us why did you do that? And what is the deal with it?

James Walker: Well, my book is "What the Qur'an Really Teaches About Jesus." And I want to take this and make it practical at the end. So, okay. As a Muslim who's now made that transition to Christianity, you've made the journey from Islam to Christianity what role did it have of understanding who Jesus really is? What did you believe? Who did you believe Jesus was as a Muslim? Who do you believe Jesus is now as you're a Christian? So, I interviewed three different Muslims, a Shia Muslim who's come to Christ Elijah Abraham. Zia Hassan who was a Sunni Muslim. And a woman Zemara who was a student here in the United States, had some Christian friends on campus and a compelling story about how they begin to befriend here and

introduce her to the New Testament and get her into a Bible study. In fact with Zemara it was so recent she said, "Brother James, I must know I want to share what Jesus means to me now. But I need to know when the book is coming out." "Why?" "My parents don't know yet. They cannot find out." So, she said, "That will give me my deadline. Let me know when the book comes out. I will know then." What she did is she got the story right as we were going to press with the book. So the epilogue of the book at the back is her story of where she is now with her parents, and with what God has done in her life. It is amazing.

Dr. Reagan: Well, as I told you I was so impressed with one of the interviews that you had there that I actually read it to my staff one morning. Because it was about a fella who came to the Lord at a Baptist church, but he still had the Muslim mentality of what must I do to earn my salvation?

James Walker: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And so he started doing all kinds of works for the church because he wanted to justify himself before God. He did not understand grace through faith.

James Walker: It's difficult to understand grace. It is counterintuitive. You know you have to do something to earn it, or deserve it.

Dr. Reagan: Or the pride of man wants to do something.

James Walker: Exactly. Exactly. But that is Elijah Abraham and he was a Shia Muslim in Iraq, which is, that makes him a minority, so he is a minority there. And it is fascinating story of how he came to Christ. And yet, he had to become a nominal Christian and then realize that even though he was attending a Christian church he really wasn't a Christian.

Dr. Reagan: He said, "After a year or two I realized I was a Muslim Baptist, still trying to earn my salvation." I love the way Robert Jeffress at First Baptist always puts it, "Every religion in the world can be spelled with one word D-O. Do. Except Christianity and it is spelled D-O-N-E. Done."

James Walker: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And people don't understand that.

James Walker: When we say Jesus is the Savior sometimes it doesn't connect. We don't connect the dots. That means He does the work. You know James Walker is not the savior, Jesus is the Savior.

Dr. Reagan: Well, you know when Nathan put together this video about "The Fate of Islam" first of all it was a speech he gave at one of our regional conferences and we had such a tremendous response to it I said, "Let's put it together in a video." And the thing I like about it most is right at the end he tells about how to witness to Muslims in a loving way. And actually has testimonies there of many Muslims who have come to the Lord, and what it was that brought them to the Lord. Usually it was something about love that they read about in the Gospels.

James Walker: I am glad you did that Nathan. Let me tell you, and I think you probably discovered the same thing. You look at the growth of Islam 160% growth in a 10 year period in

the United States. And you wonder why are so many Muslims coming to America? And every place we turn. Have you ever thought that maybe this is our chance to share the Gospel?

Nathan Jones: Absolutely.

James Walker: If we are prepared. If it is illegal in their country. Hey, we don't have to get a passport, no airplane trip required they're our next door neighbor now. And what a wonderful. If we're prepared what a wonderful opportunity. Thanks for helping us be prepared.

Nathan Jones: Well, I think we mentioned three of the ways to witness to a Muslim. One is that God loves you, they never hear that from Allah. The life of Jesus Christ, that He sacrificed Himself for us, they never saw that with Muhammad. They see many different ways that we can reach people, but primarily it is the love. And I love the grace part, because when you talk to a Muslim they seem so burdened by the works they have to do. There's no assurance of salvation. Even after the afterlife they might still go to Hell. But when you tell them that Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins, that He loves them, and that by grace they are saved it is like you see a weight lifted off their backs, and they come to Jesus Christ.

James Walker: One of the techniques I talk about in the book, again I am all about asking questions, I don't make statements so much. I start with the question. My friend, have I ever told you about how I became a Christian?

Nathan Jones: Oh, testimony.

James Walker: Now for a lot of Muslims they'll say, "Well, you were born in America, of course." "No, no to be born in America makes you an American."

Dr. Reagan: The Middle East mentality you are whatever you were born.

James Walker: Right, I'll say, "Well to be born in America makes you an American. To become a Christian you have to be born a second time." And it's almost like John chapter 3, what do you mean be born again? And you open the door.

Dr. Reagan: That's true

James Walker: This was my life, and this is how I realized that I could never even on my best day be good enough. I needed help. I needed a Savior. That's what Jesus became to me. And it just a way. When I first started this years ago trying to reach out to Muslims. I thought, "Oh, they are going to be so resistant. Oh, I'm Muslim I don't want to talk about this. I'm Muslim I'm not interested." I found the opposite.

Nathan Jones: They are searching.

James Walker: I'm Muslim. I'm very interested. And they do. By in large really want to talk about that. They are curious about what we believe.

Nathan Jones: What do you think about when you hear in these closed Islamic countries about Jesus Christ coming to Muslims in dreams and visions and then coming to the Lord? Is there any truth or substantiation to that?

James Walker: Yeah, I kind of typically resist that kind of thing just because it might--

Nathan Jones: Yeah, it is outside of our--

James Walker: But I am not going to resist it because if God, God is going to use whatever means possible to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So, who am I to say God can't do this. Hebrews 1 talks about this is a way in times past God spoke to the Fathers through various means. And if it illegal to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ who am I to say God can't do this. But I've heard many, many stories of this. Nabeel Qureshi who recently passed away, dreams was an important part of his transition to Christianity.

Nathan Jones: Wow.

James Walker: *Seeking Allah Finding Jesus*, that was his book.

Dr. Reagan: Have they been able to use the *Jesus Film* at all in the Middle East?

James Walker: Yes, it has been translated in hundreds of languages. It has been very, very effective. Again it gets them into the other part of the story that they don't hear, that the Muslim hasn't heard about Christ.

Dr. Reagan: Wow, that's amazing. Well, James I just really appreciate this book. It is just outstanding and I am anxious for as many people as possible to read this because it will really open their eyes to what the Qur'an has to say and how they can approach a Muslim in a loving way and talk to them about Jesus. We are going to take a break for just a moment, folks.

Part 3

Nathan Jones: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our interview with James Walker the President of Watchman Fellowship in Arlington, Texas. Hey, James I refer people to your site all the time, can you tell people how can they get in touch with your ministry?

James Walker: Sure, the easiest way is our website at watchman.org. We have tons of good information there.

Dr. Reagan: Boy, you sure do and folks it's not only just about Islam, it is about all the types of cults in Christianity, as well as alternative religions. And you can find all kinds of information there and I highly recommend that site. Well thank you, James for being with us today.

James Walker: Thanks, Dave.

Dr. Reagan: You've been a real blessing and I pray the Lord will continue to bless you, your family and your ministry. And folks, in just a moment our announcer will tell you how you can get a copy of James' great new book about the false Jesus of Islam.

I hope our program has been a blessing to you, and I hope, the Lord willing, you will be back with us again next week. Until then this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program