

# Fate of Non-Muslims

**Description:** The Islamic stance on the fate of non-Muslims, who came before and after the advent of Islam.

By NewMuslims.com

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## Prerequisites

- An Introduction to Pillars of Islam & Articles of Faith (2 parts).

## Objectives

- To learn about the Jews and Christians promised Paradise in the Quran.
- To learn the correct meaning of two frequently misunderstood verses of the Quran.
- To learn about the Islamic stand on the fate of non-Muslims.

## Arabic Terms

- *Tawheed* " The Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah with respect to His Lordship, His Names and Attributes and in His right to be worshipped.
- *Shirk* " a word that implies ascribing partners to Allah, or ascribing divine attributes to other than Allah, or believing that the source of power, harm and blessings comes from another besides Allah.
- *Kafir* " (plural: *kuffar*) disbeliever.

## The Jews and Christians Promised Paradise in Quran

The Jews and Christians promised Paradise in the Quran were Muslims who were true monotheists, practiced *tawheed*, believed in their prophets, did not commit *shirk* with Allah, but died **before** the prophethood of Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him. A frequently misunderstood verse of the Quran refers to them:

**oeIndeed, those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians (before Prophet Muhammad) " those (among them) who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness will have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve." (Quran 2:62)**

The scholars of Islam agree this verse is not talking about those who believe Jesus is

the son of God, or equate Jesus to God, or those who believe Allah is poor and they are rich, or who reject Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him. This verse is talking about the original followers of Moses and Jesus who believed in their prophet and worshipped Allah alone, but passed away before the coming of Prophet Muhammad. In fact, the Quran contains a whole chapter, Surah al-Buruj (Quran, 85), which speaks of the Christian martyrs before the advent of Prophet Muhammad in the story of 'the People of the Ditch.'

As for the verse:

**oeYou will surely find the strongest among people in animosity to the believers to be the Jews and idolaters, and you will find the nearest in affection to the believers those who say: 'We are Christians.'"(Quran 5:82)**

The rest of the verse explains the correct meaning. It is referring to Christians who entered Islam, believed in Prophet Muhammad, and were affected by the teachings of the Quran. Scholars of the Quran say this verse was revealed regarding Negus and his associates who entered Islam when a group of persecuted Muslims migrated to Ethiopia from Mecca. The Prophet offered the funeral prayer for Negus in absentia when he passed away. In the past and even today mostly Christians enter into Islam. That is why Christians are said to be closer in love to the Muslims.

**oeThat is because among them are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant. And when they listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth. They say: 'Our Lord! We believe; so write us down among the witnesses. 'And why should we not believe in Allah and what has come to us of the truth? And we aspire that our Lord will admit us along with the righteous people.' Allah rewarded them for what they said with gardens under which rivers flow, they will abide therein forever. Such is the reward of good doers. But those who disbelieved and denied Our revelations they are the companions of Hellfire.'" (Quran 5:82-86)**

## The End of Non-Muslims

The Islamic stand on Jews, Christians, and other non-Muslims to be *kuffar* does **not** mean every non-Muslim is consigned to Hell. The People of the Book (Jews and Christians) in our times can be divided in two categories:

(I) Those to whom the message of Islam has reached, who know Prophet Muhammad, on whom God's proof has been established, yet they have chosen not to believe in him. According to Muslims scholars, they are *kuffar* in this world and after they die, they will reside in Hell-Fire forever **if** they die on disbelief, on rejection. Apart from the verses of the Quran quoted previously, the Prophet Muhammad said:

oeBy Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, he who amongst the community of Jews or Christians hears about me, but does not affirm his belief in that with which I have been sent and dies in this state (of disbelief), he shall be but one of the denizens of Hell-Fire.” [1]

oeWhen the Day of Resurrection comes a proclaimer will summon: Let every people follow what they used to worship. Then all who worshipped idols and stones besides Allah would fall into the Fire, till only the righteous and the sinners from those who worshipped Allah and others of the People of the Book are left. Then the Jews would be summoned, and it would be said to them: What did you worship? They will say: We worshipped 'Uzair, son of Allah. It would be said to them: You tell a lie; Allah had never had a spouse or a son. What do you want now? They would say: We feel thirsty, O our Lord! Quench our thirst. They would be directed (to a certain direction) and asked: Why don't you go there to drink water? Then they would be pushed towards the Fire (and they would find to their great dismay that) it was but a mirage (and the raging flames of fire) would be consuming one another, and they would fall into the Fire. Then the Christians would be summoned and it would be said to them: What did you worship? They would say: We worshipped Jesus, son of God. It would be said to them: You tell a lie; Allah did not take for Himself either a spouse or a son. Then it would be said to them: What do you want? They would say: we are thirsty, O our Lord! Quench our thirst, and they will also suffer the same fate.” [2]

(II) The second category: those for whom the message of Islam did not reach, or it may have reached them but was distorted, or they did not hear about Prophet Muhammad. They will be tested on the Day of Judgment. Those who obey will be saved, those who disobey will be doomed.

As can be seen, the fate of the two will be different in life after death, but in this world both are considered *kuffar* by agreement of Muslim jurists. What does it mean? First, it is obligatory to deliver the message of Islam to them. Second, Islam is the only true religion of all prophets with a universal plan of salvation; all other religions are false and unacceptable in the sight of Allah. Third, the regulations for non-Muslims apply to them. For instance, regardless whether the message of Islam reached a non-Muslim or not, a Muslim woman cannot marry a Jewish or a Christian man. Furthermore, they may not be buried in a Muslim graveyard. Their funeral prayer can not be offered by Muslims.

In conclusion, Islam is a universal religion. Its inclusiveness extends to the true followers of all prophets, including Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Yet, it is exclusive of those who distorted the pure teachings of the prophets, and who still choose to follow falsehood even after truth reaches them.

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Endnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Muslim*

[2] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

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