

# Reflections on the 'Dublin Debate' with Muslim spokesman Adnan Rashid: 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012: 'Is Jesus God?'

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

To begin with let me apologise for the length and scope of this article but to do justice to the topic it was necessary to go 'in-depth' at times and also to refer to other lengthy 'outside' sources via web links so I have divided the article up into a number of sections and you might want to consider reading the article in stages namely one section at a time rather than trying to digest the whole in one fell swoop.

Just shortly after 7.00pm on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, in the Maxwell Lecture Theatre in the Hamilton Building, located on the Trinity College Dublin complex, the young and polite Muslim Student Association chairman for the evening made the formal introductions of Adnan Rashid and me to those who had assembled for the debate.

The lecture theatre is designed to hold about 100 people but we estimate there were probably about 150 squeezed into the official seating areas as well as those sitting on the steps of the aisles (health and safety in the UK would have had a field day!!) Again we would estimate that probably about 100 of those there would have been young Muslims including quite a few of Irish descent who have presumably converted most likely from Roman Catholicism to Islam

When I talk of 'we' I'm referring to my minister who very kindly volunteered without any prompting from me to drive me both down to the debate and then back home again and also another man from our church fellowship. I am truly grateful to them for their practical help and prayerful support and also to many, many people and fellowships both here in Ireland and further afield who faithfully prayed for me both before and during the debate and who subsequently have continued to pray for God's blessing upon the seeds of truth that were sown that night.

The chairman outlined the format for the evening – Adnan would speak for 20 minutes against the idea that '**Jesus is God**' (Phraseology used by the Islamic organisers of the debate) and then I would speak for 20 minutes in support of the debate topic that '**Jesus is God**' – I made plain very early on in my presentation that I would be making the case that the Lord Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second person of the One Tri-une God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Following the presentations Adnan and I, in that order would each

have 10 minutes to rebut each others presentation and then there would be about 45 minutes of questions taken from the audience.

As stated, Adnan spoke first to reject the claim that '**Jesus is God**' and he began by saying that I would be making a case for '**Jesus is God**' based upon what The Bible and in particular the New Testament say. For most of the rest of his presentation the time was then taken up by him quoting a variety of sources (supposedly in some cases 'Christian') to undermine and shred any credibility in those scriptures.

Amongst the supposed 'Christian' sources that he referred to were **Raymond E Brown, Bart Ehrman** and **Bruce Metzger**. He did make some brief biblical references that he thought refuted the idea of a Trinity (claiming that 'The Trinity' was an invention by Rome and that **1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7-8** which he described as '**the only Trinitarian verses**' should not be in the Bible) and that he thought showed that Jesus should not be regarded as '**God**' – scriptures such as **John 17:3** and **John 20:17**.

He quoted where the Lord said in **John 4:22** "**salvation is of the Jews**" to seemingly reject the idea that salvation could be through any Christian Trinitarian God. He also made reference to '**The Shema**', the great Jewish declaration recorded in **Deuteronomy 6:4** "**Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord**" believing that to be proof that no Trinity exists and he further claimed there is absolutely no evidence for a Trinity in the Old Testament.

In his rebuttal he appeared to try to employ Jehovah's' Witness thinking to reject the truth of **John1:1** that "**The Word**" was not only "**with God**" but also "**was God**" by referring to the absence of the definite article before the word "**God**" in the second usage.

He claimed that the disciples of the Lord Jesus had the same ability to forgive sins as He had and so it was not a sign of deity when Christ forgave sins. He claimed that Jeremiah pre-existed in the same way as the Lord Jesus but that didn't make Jeremiah divine and he referred to **Mark 13:32** and **Matthew 24:36** (some versions) as evidence that the Lord Jesus could not be God because He didn't know precisely when He would be returning.

When it came to questions from the audience in amongst them I was asked by one man '**do you make confession**', by another '**could God not just have forgiven sins without the need for a sacrifice**'; another young lady told how the words of the Lord on the cross "**My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me**" had greatly troubled her and had caused her to lose any

faith in the Lord that He is truly God and another Muslim man asked me to explain how Jesus could be sinless in the light of **Job 25:4** “**how can he be clean that is born of a woman?**”.

When the meeting was officially over, a young Irish convert to Islam, James, asked me, in the light of the fact that I had claimed in an American radio interview that Allah had in fact been the name for an Arabian Moon-god, to comment upon his (James’) claim that the Lord Jesus spoke Aramaic (correct) and that the Aramaic word for God was ‘Allah’ and so was the Lord praying and speaking to a Moon-god?

Later in the article I will address the issues raised by Adnan in his presentation and in his rebuttal and will also comment on the questions mentioned.

When it came to my own 20-minute presentation in support of the debate topic ‘**Is Jesus God?**’ I did, as Adnan had rightly forecast, make the case based upon what The Bible reveals and teaches, namely that the Lord Jesus Christ truly is God the Son, the second person of the One Tri-une God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Reverently I looked at what I called various ‘phases’ of the Eternal Existence of the Lord Jesus Christ and demonstrated from Scripture how each of them declared clearly that He is ‘**God**’. The ‘phases’ referred to were –

‘His pre-existence’;  
‘His Incarnation’  
(‘The announcements’ and ‘The arrival’);  
‘His boyhood’;  
‘His baptism’;  
‘His ministry’  
(‘Sayings’; ‘Miracles’; ‘Sin-pardoning power’; ‘Transfiguration’; ‘Sabbath claims’; ‘Testimony of Peter’);  
‘His death’;  
‘His resurrection’;  
‘His ascension’;  
‘His return’;

And I closed by proclaiming the ‘Redemption and Salvation’ He secured.

What a marvellous privilege to preach “**Jesus Christ and him crucified**” (Adnan actually referred to my presentation as ‘preaching’) to such a large gathering of non-Christian but spiritually-interested mostly young people. I had brought with me supplies of a special gospel booklet written for Muslims by a late

brother who laboured in London called ‘**But what is The Gospel?**’ together with copies of my own ministry tract ‘**Dear Muslim neighbour**’ and copies of my own testimony and quite a few of each of those materials were taken.

## **RESPONDING TO ADNAN’S PRESENTATION His ‘Christian’ sources**

I want now to comment upon Adnan’s presentation and rebuttal and to the questions I mentioned earlier. In response to Adnan’s presentation I stated right at the outset of my rebuttal that it appeared to me that Adnan was debating an entirely different topic from the one assigned. He was focussing upon what I referred to as ‘the authenticity’ and ‘the historicity’ of the Bible and in particular the New Testament and he had said very little about why Islam rejects the truth that the Lord Jesus is God. It actually took a Christian member of the audience to remind him that the Koran denies the deity and death of the Lord Jesus as he had made few specific references to the Koran on the issue and focussed rather on occasions on extolling its reliability over that of The Bible.

Let me address first the matter of the ‘Christian’ sources that Adnan referred to in his attempt to undermine The Bible. I should just say that my impression was that Adnan’s presentation was one he had given before (probably quite often) as he didn’t appear to refer very often to any notes and sure enough in subsequent ‘inquiries’ I came across details of a debate that he had taken part in with James White on ‘**The trustworthiness of The Bible versus The Koran**’ and it would appear to be a very similar presentation by Adnan as that given by him in Dublin.

So, rather than me attempting in this article to deal with complex ‘contextual matters’ etc perhaps I can direct those interested to the details of that debate including a link to listen to it. The link for those details is –

<http://winteryknight.wordpress.com/2010/03/19/james-white-debates-adnan-rashid-on-trustworthiness-of-the-bible-vs-koran/>

Earlier I wrote – “Amongst the supposed ‘Christian’ sources that he referred to were **Raymond E Brown**, **Bart Ehrman** and **Bruce Metzger**”. The names of the first and last of these were known to me but not the middle one so I’ll start with it - **Bart Ehrman**.

One member of the audience, a more mature Christian student, was able to point out to Adnan that **Bart Ehrman** was not a 'Christian' source but someone who had apostatised from Christianity. This is borne out by this extract from an entry on Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bart D. Ehrman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bart_D._Ehrman)

'He remained a liberal Christian for fifteen years but later became an agnostic after struggling with the philosophical problems of evil and suffering'.

In a short video presentation, when analysing relevant comments on the New Testament made by Adnan in another debate, James White states that Adnan would appear basically to be misrepresenting the views of **Bart Ehrman** – that video can be viewed on <http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php?itemid=3026> (Hint - I got much more of an understanding of the content of this video the second time I watched it.).

In that video James White also deals well with Adnan's use of and reference to 'The Gospel of Thomas'. I mention this because, in Dublin, Adnan decried the composition of the New Testament and claimed that other 'gospels' (such as 'Thomas') should have had equal rights to be included in it. Mr White also refers to and rebuts Adnan's misrepresentation of Christian/Biblical truth concerning 'The Trinity'.

Finally in relation to **Bart Ehrman** can I direct those interested to this link –

<http://winteryknight.wordpress.com/2010/04/06/must-see-craig-evans-vs-bart-ehrman-on-the-reliability-of-the-gospels/>

This was a debate between him and a Dr Craig Evans who according to this link –

'received his B.A. degree in History and Philosophy from Claremont McKenna College, his M.Div. degree from Western Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Biblical Studies from Claremont Graduate University in southern California'.

Moving on now I want to refer to the first of the two names that I recognised when they were cited by Adnan and that is **Raymond E Brown**. I was familiar with this name because Mr Brown was a Roman Catholic priest. Informative details of his life and death can be viewed on <http://www.americancatholic.org/news/raybrown/>

From my own perspective I take a fairly simplistic approach when it comes to Rome and The Bible – don't trust Rome. This is the same Rome that for centuries banned the reading of the Bible by anyone other than its clergy and hierarchy; that burned copies of The Bible; and that dug up and burned the

corpse of John Wycliffe even though he had been dead for a number of years and they did it because he had dared to translate the Bible into the 'common tongue',

Perhaps I could just quote something from the Council of Trent that has tended to be overshadowed by other arrogant and aggressive 'anathemas' that we are perhaps more familiar with. In a section headed **'Ten Rules Concerning Prohibited Books...Approved by Pope Pius'** we read the following under **Rule IV** –

**'Since it is clear from experience that if the sacred Books are permitted everywhere and without discrimination in the vernacular, there will by reason of the boldness of men arise therefrom more harm than good, the matter is in this respect left to the judgment of the bishop or inquisitor, who may with the advice of the pastor or confessor permit the reading of the Sacred Books translated into the vernacular by Catholic authors to those who they know will derive from such reading no harm but rather an increase of faith and piety, which permission they must have in writing. Those, however, who presume to read or possess them without such permission, may not receive absolution from their sins till they have handed them over to the ordinary. Bookdealers who sell or in any other way supply Bibles written in the vernacular to anyone who has not this permission, shall lose the price of the books, which is to be applied by the bishop to pious purposes, and in keeping with the nature of **the crime** they shall be subject to other penalties which are left to the judgment of the same bishop. Regulars who have not the permission of their superiors may not read or purchase them'.**

Despite modern-day appearances and attitudes to the contrary, Rome is not a trustworthy 'Christian' source when it comes to understanding and assessing the reliability etc of God's only written Word, The Bible.

In my research about the claimed biblical expertise of **Raymond E Brown** I came across a number of statements made by him that reinforce and justify my view that he is not a reliable 'Christian' source. On one particular web site I came across quotations cited that were made by **Raymond E Brown** and that were being used to bolster evidence against the Orthodox Christian understanding of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and the author of the article on the web site concluded by saying - **'I have shown that orthodox Christology not only has shaky New Testament foundations but that there is a significant theological gap between Jewish and Christian understanding of salvation'**.

These were 2 of the quotations attributed to **Raymond E Brown** as they were cited in the web article –

**'In the Gospels there is insufficient evidence that Jesus claimed the title Messiah or that he fully accepted it when it was offered to him'.**

**--Raymond E.**

**Brown**

**‘Jesus is never called God in the Synoptic Gospels, and a passage like Mk. 10:18 would seem to preclude the possibility that Jesus used the title of himself’.**

**--R. E. Brown**

In this article we read **‘In Hebrew messiah means "anointed one" and it was translated as *christos* by the writers of the Greek New Testament’.**

When it comes to the Lord Jesus Christ and the titles **‘Messiah’** or **‘The Christ’** He clearly claimed them for Himself.

In **John 4:25-26** we read **"The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh who is called Christ; when he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speaketh unto thee am he".**

In **Matthew 26:63-65** we read **“And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God (cause you to swear under oath) that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said (meaning – Yes, it is as you say or You have said it yourself) ... Then the high priest tore his clothes saying, He hath spoken blasphemy!”**

Raymond E Brown apparently said **‘Jesus is never called God in the Synoptic Gospels’**. We read this in **Matthew 1:20-23** **“... the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is GOD with us”.**

Quite why Mr Brown limited himself to the Synoptic Gospels is baffling because of course the Lord Jesus Christ was most certainly called **GOD** in John’s gospel. In **John 20:28** we read **“And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and My GOD”.**

According to the second quotation **Raymond E Brown** apparently also said **‘a passage like Mk. 10:18 would seem to preclude the possibility that Jesus used the title of himself’.**

**Mark 10:18** reads **“And Jesus said unto him (the rich young ruler) Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one and that is God.”** I very much like Pastor John MacArthur’s comments on this verse in his Study Bible – He wrote –

‘Jesus challenged the ruler to think through the implications of ascribing to Him the title ‘good’. Since only God is intrinsically good, was he prepared to acknowledge Jesus’ deity? By this query Jesus did not deny His deity, on the contrary He affirmed it’.

At this point I am reminded of what Peter preached in the house of Cornelius **“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about DOING GOOD... it is he who was ordained by God to be the judge of living and dead. To HIM give all the prophets witness that through HIS name whosoever believeth in HIM shall receive remission of sins ” (Acts 10:38, 42-43).**

For me, **Raymond E Brown** is not as Adnan claimed a reliable ‘Christian’ source.

Moving on finally now to the third ‘Christian’ source that Adnan cited, namely **Bruce Metzger**, it is somewhat ironic that he would quote Mr Metzger to try and undermine the credibility of the New Testament in a debate that was meant to be dealing with the question **‘Is Jesus God?’**

Why do I think it ‘ironic’ – well, as I mentioned, the name of **Bruce Metzger** was familiar to me and for this reason. Early in my Christian life when I was gaining knowledge of the errors of various religious groupings I came across a booklet called **‘The Jehovah’s Witnesses and Jesus Christ’** by none other than **Bruce Metzger**.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses, like Islam, deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and at times Adnan was using the same arguments and scripture references as the Jehovah’s Witnesses to try and debunk the truth of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. (I should state that in the last section on **Raymond E Brown** and in this section on **Bruce Metzger** I have ‘capitalised’ certain words to emphasise and underpin the true deity of the Lord Jesus Christ).

I want to quote some portions from this booklet by **Bruce Metzger** which itself was a reprint of an article that he had published in April 1953 in a magazine called **‘Theology Today’**. **Bruce Metzger** wrote –

**‘It is manifestly impossible to attempt to refute in one brief article even a fraction of the distortions of BIBLICAL interpretation perpetrated in the voluminous writings of this sect. It is proposed rather to give consideration to one of the fundamental errors of the Jehovah’s Witnesses namely that which concerns the person of Christ.**

Today as of old, a proper response to the primary question “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” (Matthew 22:42) constitutes a veritable touchstone of historic Christianity... One of the continuing features of this sect... is a modern form of the ancient HERESY of Arianism (**Cecil – Arianism defined in ‘Dictionary of Theological Terms’ by**



**Alan Cairns as 'This heresy maintained that God the Father alone is eternal and made His Son to be the first creature' ... Attention will first be given to certain Biblical statements which TEACH THE TRUE DEITY of Jesus Christ'.**

**Bruce Metzger** then goes on to make the biblical case for **THE DEITY OF CHRIST** under 6 'bullet-points'. Excerpts from these points read as follows –

1. The Apostle Thomas addressed the risen Lord Jesus Christ with a confession of His deity (in) John 20:28. If Jesus were not truly divine as GOD is divine, Thomas erred seriously in thus adoring Him as GOD... if His Apostle had been in error it is passing strange that Jesus made no effort to correct him. In fact Jesus is represented not only as accepting such an open ascription of DEITY but as commending all those who share Thomas's faith (Verse 29).

2. While Stephen the first martyr was being stoned (he) said "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). Here Stephen invoked the Lord Jesus. It is obviously both foolish and SINFUL TO PRAY TO ANYONE EXCEPT GOD.

3. The Epistle to the Galatians begins (where) the Apostle declares that his apostleship was derived neither from men as a source nor through a man as a channel. Instead... he declares emphatically that it was through "Jesus Christ and God the Father... Paul clearly DISTINGUISHES Jesus Christ from men and RANGES HIM with God the Father... so habitually did Paul think of Christ as FULLY DIVINE that it comes naturally to him to refer even in passing to Jesus Christ and GOD in the same breath... When one considers Paul's strict Jewish monotheistic background and thorough rabbinical training one is all the more surprised to find Paul using language such as this... Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that Paul... assumes that everyone agrees with him about it... Here then is a truly amazing thing: the consensus of various groups WITHIN THE EARLY CHURCH was that Jesus Christ must be RANGED ALONGSIDE God the Father.

4. Not only do Thomas, Stephen, Paul and others REGARD JESUS AS GOD but according to John 10:30 Jesus Himself claimed "I and my father are one"... Here... He claims to be ONE with the Father IN ESSENCE; and the Jews understand Him to mean this for they took up stones to stone Him for blasphemy (verses 31-33)... The anger of the Jews against Jesus is explicable only on the basis of their understanding HIM TO CLAIM for Himself EQUALITY WITH GOD.

5. There are many other passages in the New Testament which reveal how deeply the TRINITARIAN pattern was impressed upon the thinking of primitive Christianity. Thus besides the direct and obvious (Trinitarian) statements in Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14 there are such texts as 1 Corinthians 6:11, 12:4-5; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 3:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:18-19; 1 Peter 1:2 and others (footnote: 'For a full list of such passages see J N D Kelley *Early Christian Creeds*: London 1950: p 23)

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6. Although Jehovah's Witnesses seek to differentiate sharply between Jehovah God and Jesus his creature (Cecil – their claim) , it is a remarkable fact that occasionally writers in the New Testament apply to Jesus Christ passages from the Old Testament which refer to Jehovah (a) Isaiah's promise in 60:19 Luke applies to Jesus in 2:32 (b) John applies Isaiah's vision of 6:1,3,10 to Jesus in 12:37-41 (c) In John 10:1 Jesus lays claim to Psalm 23:1 and Isaiah 40:10-11 (d) Paul quotes Joel's promise of 2:32 and

refers it to Jesus in Romans 10:9,13... Such passages as these (merely a sampling chosen out of many) agree with the representation THROUGHOUT THE GOSPELS that Jesus both CLAIMED and EXERCISED the PREROGATIVES of the LORD GOD Himself... forgives sins (Mark 2:10 etc) raises the dead (Luke 7:12-15 etc) controls nature (Matthew 8:26) will judge (Matthew 7:22-23) and willingly RECEIVES DIVINE HOMAGE (John 20:28-29). As has often been pointed out, Jesus' statement ("I and my father are one") is either true or false. If it is true then He is God. If it is false He either knew it to be false or He did not know it to be false. If while CLAIMING TO BE GOD He knew this claim to be false, He was a liar. If while claiming to be God He did not know this claim to be false, He was demented. There is no other alternative.

Later, after citing many more biblical reasons for the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, **Bruce Metzger** wrote – ‘**The passages cited above are more than sufficient to prove that THE NEW TESTAMENT refers to JESUS CHRIST AS GOD... To be specific, the Christian knows Jehovah as God and Father through His Son, Jesus Christ WHO IS TRULY GOD and TRULY MAN**’.

Earlier I wrote ‘it is somewhat ironic that he (Adnan) would quote **Mr Metzger** to try and undermine the credibility of the New Testament in a debate that was meant to be dealing with the question ‘**Is Jesus God?**’. I hope that by these quotations from the writings of **Bruce Metzger** that I have demonstrated his clear commitment to the complete trustworthiness of the Scriptures, in particular the New Testament, and his clear conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ was both truly God and truly man.

**\*\*** At this point in the booklet **Mr Metzger** makes reference to the verses **1 John 5:7-8** which I mentioned earlier in these terms –

‘He (Adnan) did make some brief biblical references that he thought refuted the idea of a Trinity (claiming that ‘The Trinity’ was an invention by Rome and that **1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7-8** which he described as ‘**the only Trinitarian verses**’ should not be in the Bible)’.

He (Bruce Metzger) confirmed that this verse is disputed but added ‘**there is however abundant proof for the doctrine of the Trinity elsewhere in the New Testament**’ and certainly point 5 above bears testimony to this assertion.

Whilst there are Biblical scholars who dispute the authenticity of these verses there are others who argue for their authenticity. In my possession I have a copy of a little booklet ‘**Why 1 John 5:7-8 is in The Bible**’ written by G W Anderson and D E Anderson and published by the Trinitarian Bible Society. In it they quote the views of **Matthew Henry** (18<sup>th</sup> century), **Robert L Dabney** (19<sup>th</sup> century) and **Edward F Hills** (20<sup>th</sup> century) who support the inclusion of

these verses in the New Testament.

I did track down details of this booklet on <http://www.eden.co.uk/shop/why-1-john-5-7-8-is-in-the-bible-1184354.html> but unfortunately it is listed as currently 'out of stock', and subsequently, following inquiry, I was told that there are no plans to reprint it. However I found the text of the booklet posted online and it can be accessed on [http://www.scionofzion.com/why\\_1\\_john\\_5\\_7\\_8.htm](http://www.scionofzion.com/why_1_john_5_7_8.htm)

## RESPONDING TO ADNAN'S PRESENTATION The 'Trinity', 'Rome and the Bible'

Let me turn now to the claim by Adnan that '**The Trinity**' was an invention by Rome and couple it along with another claim Adnan made that '**Rome gave us Christians the Bible**'. Both of these claims are factually inaccurate and remind me of a saying by **Karl Marx** that appeared in an email I received very recently – **Marx** apparently said '**The first battlefield is the re-writing of history**' and in making these claims that was precisely what Adnan was trying to do.

By way of rejecting these false claims made by Adnan perhaps I could direct readers to the following two articles which overlap in some places but also serve to compliment each other. The articles are '**Did the Catholic Church give us The Bible?**' on <http://www.bible.ca/cath-bible-origin.htm> and '**Did the Roman Catholic Church give us The Bible?**' on <http://www.fountainofgrace.us/pastor-s-corner/pastor-tyon-s-apologetics/roman-catholicism/did-the-roman-catholic-church-give-us-the-bible/>

The truth is that The Roman Catholic Church did not give Christians the Bible and so it follows that Rome did not 'invent' The Trinity which is rather a truth clearly set out in the Scriptures. I took the opportunity to tell Adnan, and all those in attendance, that Roman Catholicism is not 'Christian', that it seriously misrepresents the true Christian view of Islam. and I encouraged people to take copies of my tract '**Dear Muslim neighbour**', that was available on the night, and that explains in detail just how Muslims have been misled by Rome as to what constitutes genuine Christianity.

Adnan also claimed that The Bible was only formally structured at the Council of Hippo in 390AD – these articles show clearly that the Bible as we ourselves

now know it was clearly 'defined' long before that date.

Adnan, as he has done in other debates, sought to dismiss the claims that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were ever written by these authors. He also claimed that they were completely at variance with each other.

In reply to his claims that the authorship of the four gospels is pure speculation and conjecture I'd like to quote some extracts from what Pastor John MacArthur wrote in the introductions to each of these four gospels in his Study Bible.

### **The Gospel according to Matthew:**

'The canonicity and Matthean authorship of this gospel were unchallenged in the early church. Eusebius (ca AD 265-339) quotes Origen (ca AD 185-254): *"Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the first was written by Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism"* [Ecclesiastical History 6:25]'. It is clear that this gospel was written at a relatively early date – prior to the destruction of The temple in AD 70. Some scholars have proposed a date as early as AD 50.'

### **The Gospel according to Mark:**

'Mark, for whom this gospel is named, was a close companion of the Apostle Peter... he is known as "John who was also called Mark" [Acts 12:12,25; 15:37,39]... Peter's close relationship with Mark is evident from his description of him as "my son, Mark" [1 Peter 5:13]... The early church fathers... unanimously affirm that Mark wrote this second gospel. Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, writing about AD 140 noted *"And the presbyter [the Apostle John] said this: Mark having become the interpreter of Peter wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not however in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter... wherefore Mark made no mistakes in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard and not to put anything fictitious into the statements"* [From the Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord (6)]. Justin Martyr writing about AD 150 referred to the Gospel of Mark as "the memoirs of Peter"... Irenaeus, writing about AD 185 called mark "the disciple and interpreter of Peter" and recorded that the second gospel consisted of what Peter preached about Christ. The testimony of the church fathers differs as to whether this gospel was written before or after Peter's death (ca AD 67-68).

Cecil – just in recent days I have received details of some very interesting articles relating not just to the Gospel of Mark but also to the Book of Hebrews. The articles are located on

(1)<http://www.thepoachedegg.net/the-poached-egg/2012/03/1st-century-new-testament-fragment-found-more-details-emerge.html>

(2)<http://www.christianpost.com/news/bible-scholars-skeptical-of-1st-century-gospel-fragment-discovery-70231/> and

(3)<http://www.christianpost.com/news/gospel-of-mark-fragments-reportedly-found-possibly-oldest-nt-artifacts-69778/>

Obviously it is early days yet in the 'life' of this story but it might possibly turn out to be one worth keeping an eye on.

### **The Gospel according to Luke:**

'According to tradition, Luke was a Gentile... That would make Luke the only Gentile to pen any books of Scripture. He is responsible for a significant portion of the New Testament having written both his gospel and the book of Acts. Very little is known about Luke. He almost never included personal details about himself... Both Eusebius and Jerome identified him as a native of Antioch... The Apostle Paul referred to Luke as a physician (Colossians 4:14)... Luke and Acts appear to have been written at about the same time – Luke first, then Acts. The book of Acts ends with Paul still in Rome which leads to the conclusion that Luke wrote these books from Rome during Paul's imprisonment there (ca AD 60-62). Luke records Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (19:42-44; 21:20-24) but makes no mention of the fulfilment of that prophecy either here or in Acts. Luke made it a point to record such prophetic fulfilments (cf. Acts 11:28) so it is extremely unlikely he wrote these books after the Roman invasion of Jerusalem... In addition many scholars set the date of James' martyrdom at AD 62 and if that was before Luke completed his history he certainly would have mentioned it. So the most likely date for this Gospel is AD 60 or 61.

### **The Gospel according to John:**

'Although the author's name does not appear in the gospel, early church tradition strongly and consistently identified him as the Apostle John... Irenaeus (ca AD 130-200) was a disciple of Polycarp (ca AD 70-160) who was a disciple of the apostle John and he testified on Polycarp's authority that John wrote the gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia Minor when he was advanced in age [*Against Heresies* 2.22.5; 3.1.1]... Clement of Alexandria (ca AD 150-215) wrote that John, aware of the facts set forth in the other gospels and being moved by the Holy Spirit, composed a "spiritual gospel" (see Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.7)... Because the writings of some church fathers indicate that John was actively writing in his old age and that he was already aware of the synoptic gospels (Cecil - Matthew, Mark and Luke) many date the gospel sometime after their composition but prior to John's writing of 1-3 John and Revelation. John wrote his gospel CA AD 80-90, about 50 years after he witnessed Jesus' earthly ministry.

Earlier I wrote that Adnan claimed that the four gospels '**were completely at variance with each other**'. Again this is a claim that Adnan has made in other debates and in a short video James White deals well with this allegation – the video can be viewed on <http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php?itemid=3026> (don't think you've gone to a wrong link because of an early mention of 'The Satanic Verses' – Mr White very quickly gets to issues on The Four Gospels).

Just to conclude this section perhaps I could direct those with a particular scholarly interest in a comparison between the Bible manuscripts and those of the Koran, and to an assessment of the impact of Islam, to a couple of articles written by the late Reformed Theologian Professor Francis Nigel Lee, available from the links below:

"Bible and Qur'an:

The Reliability of the Original Bible and the  
Original Qur'an":

<http://www.dr-fnlee.org/docs4/baq/baq.pdf>

"The Roots & Fruits of Islam"

[Professor Lee's final production, sent to  
his website manager on 14 December 2011, just 9 days before his death]

<http://www.dr-fnlee.org/docs/rfi/roots-and-fruits-of-islam.pdf>

## **RESPONDING TO ADNAN'S PRESENTATION The scriptures he quoted**

Moving on again I want now to address some of the scriptures that Adnan referred to that he thought showed that the Lord Jesus Christ was not and could not be 'God'. I mentioned them earlier as **John 17:3, John 20:17, John 4:22, Deuteronomy 6:4, John 1:1** and **Mark 13:32** linked to **Matthew 24:36** (some versions).

In **John 17:3** we read "**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent**". Does this verse preclude the Lord Jesus Christ from being 'God'? This chapter starts with these words "**These words spoke Jesus... Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee**" and in verse 5 the Lord prays "**And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was**". If only 'The Father' is 'God', as Adnan would claim, will He share His glory with anyone other than 'God'? **We read in Isaiah 42:8 "I am the Lord: that is my name and my glory will I not give to another"**. Only because the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God the Son can He share with His Father the "**glory**" that belongs alone to 'God'.

For further helpful writings can I direct readers to the article by Matt Slick of CARM, on the prayer of the Lord Jesus as recorded in John 17, located on <http://carm.org/responding-jehovah%E2%80%99s-witness-attacks-deity-christ> and I would encourage readers to also follow the links in that short piece to '**Hypostatic Union**' and '**Trinity**'. Although these articles are designed to counter the false teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses they do also have suitable application where Islam is concerned.

In **John 20:17** we read "**go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God**". Again I

would simply direct readers to this link <http://carm.org/religious-movements/islam/questions-muslim-about-jesus-being-god> where once again Matt Slick of CARM has done a good job of explaining the ‘correlation’ between the human and divine natures that reverently speaking were ‘embraced’ in the person of the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. Another article that readers may find helpful (this time it is actually in the context of refuting Mormonism) is located on <http://mormoninfo.org/john20:17>

In **John 4:22** we read the Lord’s words to the Samaritan woman He met at the well **“We know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews”**. I’m not definitely sure what Adnan’s specific line of thinking was in quoting this verse to refute the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ but of course this conversation eventually leads to the Lord Jesus declaring quite explicitly to this woman (as I quoted in an earlier part of this article when commenting upon the views of **Raymond E Brown**) that He was God’s promised Messiah – **verses 25-26 “The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, who is called Christ; when he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he”**. (Earlier I also quoted where He affirmed the same truth when He was being interrogated by the High Priest and the conclusion drawn by the High priest and other accusers was that He was guilty of blasphemy by not only affirming that He was the promised Messiah but that He was also the Son of God)

This declaration **“salvation is of the Jews”** I believe was also an affirmation by the Lord Himself that He was the ‘Promised Prophet’ of Deuteronomy 18:15, that He, the Messiah, had come through **“the Jews”**, the line of Abraham and Isaac, and not through any other line such as that of Abraham and Ishmael.

In **Deuteronomy 6:4** we read **“Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord”** and Adnan claimed that this verse ruled out any possibility of a Trinity and he added that there was no evidence of a Trinity in the Old Testament. I responded as follows.

The Hebrew word translated as **“one”** is ***echad*** and it can allow for ‘plurality’ within whatever is being described as **“one”**. I cited the example of **Genesis 2:24** where we read **“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”**. Here two people/persons, who are united by marriage, are described as **“one (*echad*) flesh”**. So when God is described as **“one (*echad*) Lord”** that can allow for ‘plurality’ of persons.

There is a Hebrew word that means absolute ‘oneness’ and that is ***yacheed*** and I gave an example of its usage of God speaking to Abraham, as found in **Genesis 22:2** where we read **“And he said, take now thy son, thine only**

**(yacheed) son, Isaac whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering”.**

I then gave examples of where the second and third persons of the One Triune God are mentioned in the Old Testament. The titles **‘Son of God’** and **‘Son of Man’** (titles ascribed to and used by the Lord Jesus Christ) are found in **Daniel 3:25** and **Daniel 7:13**. In the light of **Hebrews 1:8-9** we also learn that the writer of **Psalm 45:6** was referring to **‘The Son’** (The Lord Jesus Christ) when he wrote **“Thy throne O God is forever and ever”**.

Old Testament examples of God the Holy Spirit that I cited were from **Psalm 51:11; 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:14; Judges 14:6** coupled with **Judges 16:20**. There is also the reference in **Isaiah 61:1** that the Lord Jesus directly appropriates to Himself in **Luke 4:18-21**.

Earlier I wrote ‘In his (Adnan’s) rebuttal he appeared to try to employ Jehovah’s’ Witness thinking to reject the truth of **John 1:1** that **“The Word”** was not only **“with God”** but also **“was God”** by referring to the absence of the definite article before the word **“God”** in the second usage.’ Jehovah’s Witnesses say something similar; that the absence of the definite article in the second usage of the word **“God”** means that **John 1:1** should read **“the Word was with God (definite article) and the Word was a god”** (no definite article therefore ‘the Word’ is something less than ‘God’). I pointed out that this was not a sound rule of interpretation and quoted the example of **John 13:3** where we read **“Jesus, knowing... that he was come from God (no definite article used) and went to God”** (definite article used) - would anyone doubt that in both cases here in John 13:3 the correct translation should be ‘God’ – I think not!

Earlier I wrote ‘He (Adnan) claimed that the disciples of the Lord Jesus had the same ability to forgive sins as He had and so it was not a sign of deity when Christ forgave sins’.

Only an offended party has the right and the ability to forgive the one that has offended them. If you offend me and then come and ask me for forgiveness for how you have wronged me I alone am the one who has the prerogative to either grant or withhold that forgiveness. No other member of my family or friends can dispense that forgiveness on my behalf. However my family and friends may well say to you – go directly to Cecil and seek his forgiveness.

It is the same where sin and God are concerned. God is the offended party. A sinner can only obtain God’s forgiveness by asking God directly for such forgiveness and only God Himself can dispense such forgiveness. As Christians we can ‘preach’ that such forgiveness is available through faith in



the Lord Jesus Christ but only God Himself can forgive the sin that has offended Him.

In one of His post-resurrection appearances the Lord said to His disciples **“Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be PREACHED in his name among all names” (Luke 24:46-47).**

In the book of Acts we read of a sorcerer called Simon who thought he could buy the power of the Holy Spirit and the Apostle Peter said to him **“Thy money perish with thee... repent therefore of this thy wickedness and PRAY GOD if perhaps the thought of thine heart MAY BE FORGIVEN thee” (Acts 8:20-22).**

Later on in the book of Acts we read what the Apostle Paul preached in Antioch **“Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren that through this man (The Lord Jesus Christ) is PREACHED unto you the forgiveness of sins. And BY HIM, all that believe are justified from all things” (Acts 13:38-39).**

Only God can forgive sins and, to demonstrate that He was God and could forgive sins, the Lord Jesus Christ said to Pharisees who were opposed to Him and who knew that only God could forgive sins, **“Which is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say Rise up and walk. But that ye may know that the son of Man hath authority upon earth to forgive sins (He said to the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them” (Luke 5:23-25).**

The Lord Jesus Christ, as God the Son, had power and authority to divinely forgive sins but His disciples could only preach that such forgiveness could be sought directly from Him (God). Forgiveness for sin comes directly and only from God as we read in **1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins (to Him) he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”**. What has come to be commonly called ‘The Lord’s prayer’ also incorporates this ‘principle’ as we read in **Matthew 6: 9&12 “Our Father, who art in heaven... forgive us our sins”**.

At this point let me refer to one of the questions I received from the audience. Earlier I wrote ‘When it came to questions from the audience in amongst them I was asked by one man **‘do you make confession’**. Well I basically replied by outlining what I have just said in the previous section – I emphasised the point that I didn’t go to any human being to seek God’s forgiveness (such as a ‘priest’) but prayed directly to God for such forgiveness.

Returning now to what Adnan said, earlier I wrote ‘He (Adnan) claimed that Jeremiah pre-existed in the same way as the Lord Jesus but that didn’t make Jeremiah divine’. I assume Adnan was referring to what we read in **Jeremiah 1:5** “**Before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations**”.

Does this verse teach that Jeremiah pre-existed before he was conceived in his mother’s womb? No, it simply means that because of His omniscience God “**knew**” that Jeremiah would one day be born (Just as God knows of the birth of every child that has been and ever will be born because children are God’s gift as we read in **Psalm 127:3** “**Lo, children are an heritage FROM the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is HIS reward**”) – prior to being conceived Jeremiah pre-existed only in the mind of God unlike the Lord Jesus who clearly pre-existed in a living relationship with His Father as **John 1:1** and many verses in **John 17** make clear.

Having been conceived but not yet born, God then “**sanctified**” and “**ordained**” Jeremiah – He decreed that the child, now conceived but yet to be born, would one day be His prophet and we might reverently say ‘the rest is history’. Jeremiah was a truly very privileged human being but only that and no more.

Earlier I wrote ‘he (Adnan) referred to **Mark 13:32** and **Matthew 24:36** (some versions) as evidence that the Lord Jesus could not be God because He didn’t know precisely when He would be returning’. I responded to this suggestion in more or less the same way that James White dealt with it on this video that can be viewed on [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_IJsTymWjo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_IJsTymWjo)

## **RESPONDING TO AUDIENCE QUESTIONS**

Coming now to questions from the audience I have already dealt with the question put to me ‘**do you make confession?**’

Let me move to deal with what I wrote earlier - ‘**could God not just have forgiven sins without the need for a sacrifice**’. In reply I made the point that God is both a ‘Holy’ and a ‘Just’ God.

Because of His ‘Holiness’ He has declared that sin is an offence against that ‘Holiness’ and in consequence He has prescribed a punishment or penalty for such offence. Because He is also ‘just’ this means that He cannot bypass His

own justice – He cannot overlook the offence caused by sin – His justice requires that the due punishment or penalty must be paid.

I cited an example of where a few days before he left office as President of the USA Bill Clinton ordered the release of a number of convicted criminals before they had fully served the sentences that had been passed upon them. Justice was not served in such cases – justice was bypassed. Unlike Bill Clinton who did not behave in a ‘just’ way, God must and always does.

So for God to be both ‘just’ and ‘forgiving’ the punishment and penalty of sin must be met and so in grace and mercy and love God the Father and His Son agreed that the Son would suffer as a substitute for sinners the punishment and penalty that was rightly due to them and on that basis God the Father would then forgive repentant and believing sinners.

This glorious truth of the substitutionary death of Christ for sinners and how consequently God **“might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:26)** is set out wonderfully by Paul **“For he (God the Father) hath made him (The Lord Jesus Christ) to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).**

Earlier I wrote ‘another Muslim man asked me to explain how Jesus could be sinless in the light of **Job 25:4 “how can he be clean that is born of a woman?”**’. I explained to him that Job was referring to those born by natural procreation resulting from intercourse between a man and a woman. I explained that all born as a result of such ‘interaction’ are automatically condemned (‘unclean’) because they are of the line of ‘Adam’.

I explained to him that this is why ‘the virgin birth’ of the Lord Jesus Christ was so crucial – He was not born by natural pro-creation resulting from intercourse between a man and a woman as that would have rendered Him ‘unclean’ and stained with ‘original sin’ but rather He was born as a result of the action of God the Holy Spirit moving upon ‘the seed’ of Mary resulting in the birth of One who was not of the line of ‘Adam’ and so not stained with ‘original sin’. He was sinless at birth, throughout His life and at His death and so His substitutionary sacrifice for sin was acceptable to His Father.

Earlier I wrote ‘another young lady told how the words of the Lord on the cross **“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me”** had greatly troubled her and had caused her to lose any faith in the Lord that He is truly God’. I sought to deal with her concern by outlining the scope of the atonement for sin that Christ was making – that there were 2 crucial ‘elements’ in His death on the Cross namely **‘propitiation’** and **‘expiation’**. To clarify this let me quote from an article I wrote many years ago in relation to the problems with

Seventh-day Adventism and which is located on <http://www.takeheed.net/News From The Front/news11.htm>

I want to ask a simple question – what was the purpose of a sin offering? In short – it was to remedy the problems caused by sin. And what are those problems? The scriptures show that they are twofold –

#### (1) GOD'S ANGER (2) MAN'S GUILT

For a sin offering to be effective it must turn away God's anger and it must remove Man's guilt.

What turns away God's anger? In Exodus 12:13 God said to His people "when I see the blood, I will pass over you". The applied blood of the SACRIFICED lamb ["WITHOUT BLEMISH" v 5] was able to deflect the anger of God poured out upon the land of Egypt. It was in theological terms 'propitiation' for God's anger.

What can remove Man's guilt? Only full payment of the prescribed penalty can remove the guilt for an offence committed. In theological terms this is 'expiation' of guilt. However Jewish law did allow for a SUBSTITUTE who was both willing and able to discharge a debt or penalty on behalf of someone within their family circle. Such a SUBSTITUTE was known as a "kinsman redeemer" [see Ruth 4:4].

On the Day of Atonement the SACRIFICED blood of "the Lord's goat" served as 'propitiation' and pictured the visible shedding of the precious blood of Christ ["as of a lamb WITHOUT BLEMISH" 1 Peter 1:19] at Calvary. Paul wrote concerning the work of Christ at Calvary "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" [Romans 3:25]

I wrote of the 'visible shedding of the precious blood of Christ' but there was another aspect of the work of Christ at Calvary. There was what I might term 'the invisible (to human eyes) suffering of the body of Christ'. Here I am referring to the 3 hours of unnatural but supernatural darkness that enveloped the death scene at Calvary. This I believe is where the Atonement effected by Christ surpassed the symbol.

We read in Hebrews 10:4 "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should TAKE AWAY sins" and verse 11 declares "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never TAKE AWAY sins". Whilst the sacrificial blood of animals acted [in the mercy and grace of God] as a temporary 'propitiation' for God's anger the animal substitute could not TAKE AWAY Man's guilt because it had no "kinsman" relationship to the one seeking forgiveness and cleansing from sin.

Christ, as "God manifest in the flesh" [1 Timothy 3:16] had that relationship and as such was both willing and able firstly as a SACRIFICE to visibly shed His blood to 'propitiate' God's anger [just like 'the Lord's goat'] because He was the sinless ["WITHOUT BLEMISH"] Son of God. Then secondly in the darkness, as an acceptable SUBSTITUTE [Son of Man] He was again both willing and able to invisibly suffer [see also Psalm 42:7 and Jonah 2:3] and TAKE AWAY, that is 'expiate' Man's guilt [just like 'the scapegoat' {Azazel}]. Hebrews 9:27-28 summed it up "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement, So Christ was once offered TO BEAR the sins of many".

No wonder the writer to the Hebrews in chapter 10 having told how the animal sacrifices could never "TAKE AWAY SINS" trumpeted forth THE GOOD NEWS concerning the work of Christ at Calvary in verse 12 "But this man [Christ] after he had offered one sacrifice for sins [in contrast to the oft repeated animal sacrifices] FOR EVER sat down on the right hand of God".

To emphasise the finality and complete perfection of this sacrifice [that it had solved the 'twin' problems of God's anger and Man's guilt] he went on to write in verse 14 "For by one offering he hath perfected FOR EVER them that are sanctified".

I believe the reality was that in those hours of darkness Christ was enduring 'the hell' that should have been the due 'reward' of those sinners for whom He was dying. He was in 'outer darkness' (outside the City of Jerusalem) He thirsted (just like the rich man in hell of Luke 16:24), the punishment laid upon Him by His Father is referred to as 'stripes' (Isaiah 53:4, 5, 6, & 10; 1 Peter 2:24) and the Lord Himself referred to the punishments that will be inflicted in hell as 'stripes' (Luke 12:47-48). Supremely there was that separation from and abandonment by His Father which will be the lot of all who die without Christ and are consigned to hell ("Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire" Matthew 25:41 and Paul wrote in Galatians 3:13 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us").

I believe this cry of "**My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me**" was in part uttered to serve as a stark warning to sinners who die in their sins without Christ of just what awaits them in eternity.

Another reason for His utterance of these words was to demonstrate once more how Old Testament scriptures pointed to Him as the promised Messiah. On the road to Emmaus the Lord lifted the spirits of disconsolate disciples who were grieving over the events of Calvary. He did by taking them through the Old Testament to demonstrate how those harrowing scenes of crucifixion etc had been foretold by "**Moses and all the prophets**" (Luke 24:27).

In the light of the Lord's life and death etc whilst here on earth our understanding of passages in the Old Testament that pointed specifically to Him has been greatly heightened and this applies to these words of His on the cross – "**My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me**". For a helpful explanation of this can I direct readers to the article located on

[http://www.mountainretreatorg.net/faq/why\\_hast\\_thou\\_forsaken\\_me.shtml](http://www.mountainretreatorg.net/faq/why_hast_thou_forsaken_me.shtml)

## RESPONDING TO THE 'AFTER-QUESTION' FROM JAMES

I want now in this section to respond to what I wrote earlier – 'When the meeting was officially over, a young Irish convert to Islam, **James**, asked me, in the light of the fact that I had claimed in an American radio interview that Allah had in fact been the name for an Arabian Moon-god, to comment upon

his (James') claim that the Lord Jesus spoke Aramaic (correct) and that the Aramaic word for God was 'Allah' and so was the Lord praying and speaking to a Moon-god?'

Let me first say that the American radio interview that James had listened to can be heard via this link

**[Cecil interviewed on VCY America \[3/11/2005\]](#)**  
**[about 'Witnessing To Muslims'](#)**

Secondly let me refer to my source for the information concerning the usage of 'Allah' as the name for an Arabian Moon-god. This came from a 1994 booklet called '**The Moon-god Allah in the Archaeology of the Middle East**' that was written by Dr Robert A Morey. Towards the end of his booklet Dr Morey wrote –

'The evidence reveals that the temple of the Moon-god was active even in the Christian area. Evidence gathered from both North and South Arabia demonstrates that Moon-god worship was clearly active even in Muhammad's day and was still the dominant cult... The Moon-god was called 'al-ilah' i.e. the god, which was shortened to Allah in pre-Islamic times. The pagan Arabs even used Allah in the names they gave to their children. For example both Muhammad's father and uncle had Allah as part of their names... Muhammad was raised in the religion of the Moon-god Allah. But he went one step further than his fellow pagan Arabs. While they believed that Allah i.e. the Moon-god, was the *greatest* of all gods and the supreme deity in a pantheon of deities, Muhammad decided that Allah was not only the greatest god but the *only* god... This is seen from the fact that the first point of the Muslim creed is not "Allah is great" but "Allah is the greatest" i.e. he is the greatest among the gods. Why would Muhammad say that Allah is the 'greatest' except in a polytheistic context? ... This Allah was the Moon-god according to the archaeological evidence... Is it any wonder that the symbol of Islam is the crescent moon? That a crescent moon sits on top of their mosques and minarets? That a crescent moon is found on the flags of Islamic nations? That the Muslims fast during the month which begins and ends with the appearance of the crescent moon in the sky? ... Islam is nothing more than a revival of the ancient Moon-god cult'.

It may come as no great surprise to learn that Dr Morey's booklet stirred up much controversy and personal animosity towards him and you can read his response to that in a very revealing article located on

**<http://www.stevequayle.com/News.alert/Jihad/021029.reply%20to.Shabit.att.html>**

Moving now to the question of the Aramaic word for 'God' – **James** stated that it is 'Allah' and so he asked me was the Lord Jesus praying to a Moon-god?

Well, as I told **James** at the time, I am no linguistics expert but I have subsequently investigated the words we read in **Mark 15:34** "**And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? Which is being interpreted My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**"

Pastor John MacArthur notes in his Study Bible '**Eloi... sabachthani. The**

**Aramaic words of Psalm 22:1. Matthew who also recorded this cry gave the Hebrew words'** and in his notes for **Matthew 27:46** Pastor MacArthur wrote '**Eli... sabacthani**. Eli is Hebrew; the rest is Aramaic'. In another Bible that I own this notation is found '**The pronunciation of the first word of His cry from the cross, Eloi (Aramaic) or Eli (Hebrew) is very similar to the Hebrew pronunciation of "Elijah" or its Greek counterpart "Elias"**'. This would explain why some onlookers thought He was calling upon 'Elijah' as we read in the next verse of each gospel.

It would appear therefore that the Aramaic for 'God' is 'Eloi'; but even if the generic Aramaic for 'God' were to be 'Allah', as **James** claimed, it is evident from His life and ministry that the Lord Jesus Christ would never have been praying to any 'Moon-god'.

Whilst here on earth the Lord Jesus Christ obeyed the law of God perfectly in every detail and that would have included the following prohibitions recorded in **Deuteronomy 4:13-19** "**Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves... lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a carved image... the likeness of any beast... the likeness of any winged fowl... the likeness of anything that creepeth... the likeness of any fish... And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven and when thou seest the sun AND THE MOON and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them and serve them"**.

Rather, the Lord Jesus Christ, whilst here on earth as the perfect God-man worshipped and prayed to the One who is 'Spirit' (John 4:24) and to the One with whom He had an eternally pre-existent living relationship (John 17:5).

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHT**

This debate is now 'history' but I want to close by firstly thanking the students of the Islamic Society for courteously affording me the opportunity to present what I believe to be the truth concerning the person of my Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then secondly I just want them to consider something that really wasn't touched on very much during the debate and that was the subject of The Koran. Adnan spent a vast amount of time seeking to undermine the credibility of the Bible and in particular the New Testament and in contrast he regularly extolled what he perceived to be the absolute reliability and trustworthiness of The Koran.

Some years ago I gave a talk analysing Islam from a Christian standpoint and there was a section in that talk where I spoke about The Koran. I invite all seriously interested, in particular the young Muslims who attended the debate, to listen to what I said by clicking here **DAVID, LINK TO AUDIO HERE PLEASE** and then to consider whether The Koran is truly as reliable

and trustworthy as Adnan claimed.

The Apostle Paul often debated those, with whom he disagreed on matters of faith, but he did so out of love for them and not out of any enmity, and I close with his comments on one such occasion as they echo my own feelings on this occasion **“Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Galatians 4:16).**

**Cecil Andrews – ‘Take Heed’ Ministries – 13 March 2012**