

Mary Is Not Divine

by Paul Bramsen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of worshiping God alone and not elevating people or things to a divine status, using the example of Mary and the teachings of the Qur'an and the Bible.

Topics: "Idolatry Warning", "Marys Role"

Description

Paul Bramsen emphasizes the awe-inspiring nature of the true God who creates, sustains, and judges all things, highlighting the tendency of humans to focus on visible beings or objects rather than the unseen God. He warns against idolatry and the elevation of individuals like Mary to divine status, contrasting the Qur'an's view with the Bible's portrayal of Mary as a faithful woman, not divine. Jesus himself rejected the idea of praising his mother, emphasizing the importance of worshiping God alone.

Transcript

The true God who creates, sustains and judges all that exists, must be a very awesome Being. When we think about Him, we feel utterly dwarfed and insignificant. We cannot grasp the reality of One we cannot touch, see, hear or feel. Our hearts do not know how to search for One who was, is and always will be here and everywhere.

Therefore, although we know God exists, we tend to focus our attention, admiration, honor, respect and praise on people or things we can see, touch, understand and at least partially influence and control. Frequently, we choose people who seem to be close to God. Their suggestions become our guides for living. We value their prayers for us because we believe they have a greater influence on God. We feel secure because of them. Sometimes our Imam or priest or pastor is such a person. Or maybe we choose an especially saintly relative or friend instead. Sometimes we focus on a dead loved one whom we believe lives in God's presence and can influence God on our behalf.

While this attitude may seem innocent enough, it is possible that this person we choose not only becomes a pathway to God for us but a reflection of God Himself. This is wrong. It is blasphemy and idolatry.

Nevertheless, Jesus' mother, Mary, has received such veneration. Even today some people offer prayers to Mary, burn candles or incense in front of her statues and ask her to intercede to her son, Jesus, in their behalf. People will travel across the world to visit places where she is believed to have appeared. Shrines are built to her and people claim that she heals their sicknesses when they worship at these shrines.

In the times when the messages of the Qur'an were being revealed, such Christian heresies were in existence. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Qur'an condemns such elevation of Mary.

According to the Qur'an, Mary had no divine qualities. She drank, she ate, she slept like all people do. (Sura 5:75) When it was God's time for her to expire, she died. She had a particularly painful time at the birth of Jesus. (Sura 19:22-26) She did not have sex with God to conceive Jesus. Mary must not be considered divine nor a consort for God or part of a trinity of God, Mary and Jesus. (Sura 19:35; 5:76-78) Such activity would have been improper for God and it belittles and blasphemes Him to even suggest such ideas. (Sura 19:35; 4:171)

Clearly the Bible, upon which I base my faith in God, does not elevate or glorify Mary. Apart from the virgin birth of Jesus, Mary is like any other woman who ever lived. She was awed and puzzled about her son, his work and his relationship to God, but was faithful to him. After his ascension into Heaven, she was one of several believers who formed the first church.

Jesus rejected the suggestion that people should praise his mother. He denied that there was anything divine about his human family. (Luke 11:27-28)

The Bible mentions only one time in Mary's life when she spoke words inspired by God's Holy Spirit. When she spoke these words, Mary was very humble, not exalting herself in any way, but giving glory, praise and worship to God.

Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations shall call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers." (Luke 1:46b-55)

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