

# THE KEYS



Church of St. Peter the Apostle

Anglican Catholic Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States

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The Rev. Canon Peter Geromel, OHI, DMin - Rector

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## The Rector's Rambling (In and Out of Brambles)

## *A Response to a Muslim Tract*

The Very Reverend Zachary Braddock, Dean at the Cathedral Church of the Epiphany in Columbia, South Carolina, received by air mail the following tract, encouraging those, presumably, in that congregation to convert or submit to Islam or Allah. I have decided to respond to this tract in the following article. I have attempted to transcribe accurately and consistently, including the typos in the original tract so there are many "Sic"s assumed throughout as it was not as well edited as it could have been. The original tract to which I shall respond is italicized.

*In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

We beg to differ. This "name of Allah" is not the name that is above every name, neither the "Most Gracious," nor the "Most Merciful." "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 9-11).

*Islam is Truth.*

On the contrary, Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14: 6).

*Worship ALLAH, the One and Only God - No one is worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."*

Here the writer seems to be making the point that even the messenger of Allah, Muhammed, is not to be worshipped. This is true in that the One God only is to be worshipped. The most powerful creature on earth is, in fact, Satan, who could offer Jesus the whole world. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Luke 4: 8).

*Who is Allah?*

It has been attested by some that "Allah" is the "moon goddess" of the Arabs. But it seems more likely to be the accurate rendering of "God" in Arabic, since it is used likewise by Arabic speaking Jews and Christians.

*The Almighty God calls Himself, 'Allah' in the Quran. The Arabic word has no plural and is gender free. Nouns are either 'masculine' or 'feminine' in some languages. Allah as 'Him' is a 'grammatical' gender in those languages. Thus Allah is not a male person.*

We agree. In the Articles of Religion, Article I states, “There is but one living and true GOD, everlasting, without Body, Parts, or Passions; of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all Things both visible and invisible. And in Unity of this Godhead, there be three Persons, of one Substance, Power, and Eternity; the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost.” So in agreeing, we go further. Certainly, there can be no “male” nor “female” in God, for those imply certain sexual “body parts” and certain particular “passions”. We agree that this is grammatically how God has revealed Himself. Yet we go further in that we “believe and confess” the Holy Trinity.

*Say: ‘He is Allah, the One and Only (God): Allah, the Eternal, the Self-Sufficient (the One one whom all creatures depend, while He is independent of all): He begets not, nor was He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.’ [Quran: verse 112]*

Here the Quran is being quoted and that quote is a sort of confession and creed to be recited. The only disagreement we have is the part which states, “He begets not, nor was He begotten”. On the contrary, hear this! “For wisdom, **the artisan of all things**, taught me. So in herself, wisdom is a spirit that is rational, **Holy, only-begotten**, manifold, subtle, easily moved, clear, **Undefiled**, manifest, **invulnerable**, loving what is good, keen, **Unhindered**, beneficent, man-loving, steadfast, **unfailing**, **Free from worry, all-powerful, all-surveying, And penetrating all spirits that are rational, pure, and most subtle**” (Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-23, NKJV emphases mine). The Orthodox Study Bible comments, “The Fathers agree that this passage illustrates the divine attributes of Christ, who is “the **image** [v. 26] of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15).”

*‘They do disbelieve who say: ‘Allah is one of the three in a Trinity, for **there is no God except One God.**’ [Quran: verse 5:73]*

This is not what Christianity dogmatically asserts. If we as Christians accept the term “Allah” as equivalent with the term “God” then “God/Allah” is not “one of the three in a Trinity”. We, indeed, affirm there is but One God, as in one Godhead, one Divine Essence or one Substance (Nicene Creed). As the Athanasian Creed proclaims, “But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal . . . And yet there or not three Gods, but one God.”

*Truly, **Allah is but One God.** Glory be to Him! He is far above from the need of having a son.’ [Quran 4:171]*

We agree, indeed, with the first part of this quote from the sacred text of Islam, but as to the second part, we do not deign to tell God what “He is far above” doing/being within His Triune Self. It is proclaimed in Isaiah, a text sacred to Christians and Muslims alike, “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Is. 55:9). We agree that there is no “need” in God, so if He has a Son, then it has nought to do with any “need”.

*Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) is NOT God or Son of God but a prophet of God.*

We agree that Jesus Christ is, indeed, a prophet. He proclaims Himself such when He says of Himself, “But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house” (Mark 6:4). Yet let us consider another text, where Jesus says, “But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee” (Matt. 11:9-10). Here Jesus is speaking of John the Baptist and saying that that Forerunner is both a prophet and “more than a prophet”. If John the Baptist is “more than a prophet” who is only a man and never as yet raised from the Dead, how much more than a prophet must He be whom John the Baptist went to “prepare the way” before? Indeed, in the Book of Hebrews it is said, “But to which

of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" (Heb. 1:13). This is to say that Jesus is more than a prophet and even more than an angel.

*'And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, 'Which is the first commandment of all?' And Jesus answered : 'The first of all the commandment is; 'Hear O Israel, **the Lord, thy God is One Lord:** and thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. '[Mark 12:28-30]*

Jesus, indeed, proclaims that "God is One Lord" but then goes on to say, "I and *my* Father are one" (John 10:30). So if Jesus believes there is only One God, but then says "I and *my* Father are one", what does that make Jesus?

*And the scribe said unto him, 'Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is One God; and there **is none other but He.**' [Mark 12:32]*

This is true. And almost immediately in response to this Jesus launched into one of His more subtle explanations as to why He is God. He said, "How is it that the scribes say that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: *The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.* Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?" (Mark 12:35-37 NKJV). Here Jesus is explaining that one does not usually call a descendent "Lord". One calls one's ancestor "Lord" or one calls God, "Lord." So if David's Son isn't higher on some level, if the Christ isn't higher than David, why does David, in the Psalms, call the Christ, the Messiah, "Lord"? The implied answer is that the Messiah (the Christ) is the Lord God, who is also David's son by lineage and human descent.

*'Ye men of Israel, hear these words; **Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God** among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: [ Book of Acts. 2:22. King James Version]*

Jesus of Nazareth is both God and man, "Perfect God, and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting" (Athanasian Creed). The use of this verse from Acts is a subtle argument for an old heresy, called adoptionism or Arianism, by which God the Father "approved" Jesus the man and then "gave Him a Name which is above every Name" (Phil. 2:9).

*Allah creates according to His Will and Plan. Adam, the first man, had neither a father nor a mother - he was human, not God. Similarly, Jesus who had a mother but no father, is human, NOT God, and NOT to be worshipped. Jesus (peace be upon him) is a prophet of God.*

This, I must admit, is a truly captivating argument from the Muslim perspective. It is sophisticated and almost deadly. It is an argument for the Virgin Birth, while denying the Divinity of Christ, using Adam as an example. Adam has neither Father nor Mother, so God the Father was the "Father" of Adam, and Adam has no mother. So why can't Jesus be without a human father like Adam and still be just a man?

Again, we cannot swerve from the truth of the Divinity of Christ, or everything falls. Let us take this verse, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). We acknowledge that Adam and Jesus the Christ have something in common. Both have no human fathers. Both have an impact on the whole human race. In Adam all die. In Christ the glorious promise of all being made alive is available to all. It is true that in one place of Scripture, in the "Acts of the Apostles," St. Peter says, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:10). Truly, if Jesus was just a man, born, by the will of Allah, without human father; if He was then "approved of God", Allah working "by him" many

“miracles and signs and wonders” in the midst of the public, surely, God/Allah could have deigned to make Jesus the man, the prophet of God, “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20), and very fittingly too since God/Allah does intend to raise up all in a General Resurrection on the Last Day. (This Christians and Muslims both agree on.) Nevertheless, “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But he spake of the temple of his body” (John 2:19, 21). This means that Jesus was God and raised Himself up on the third day, not that He was approved of God and therefore God raised Him, a fatherless man, and just a man, on the third day.

*Allah is not the private god of Muslim. Allah is the Creator and Sustainer of you and me, and everything in the universe. Associating partners with Allah is an act of falsehood.*

With the first part and the second part we, Christians, both agree, potentially. “Associating partners with Allah is an act of falsehood,” can be affirmed by a Christian with qualifications. For example, saints are not “partners” in some equal-partnership way with God but they are fellow “suppliants” along with us. When we ask the prayers of saints, we do not claim them as “partners” with Jesus in any other sense than that they are “fellow workers” with Him (1 Cor. 3:9) and that saints are “joint heirs with Christ,” (Rom. 8:7), and saints are only subordinately mediatorial in their connection with Christ when fulfilling their vocation as intercessors, as we too are intercessors. For we are all Christ’s Body and we all make intercession with Him. “For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus . . .” (1 Tim. 2:6). This term “partners” is ambiguous. If all Persons in the Holy Trinity are God, then they are not Partners *with* God, they are God. “Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost” (Athanasian Creed).

*Worship the Creator, not His creations!*

Agreed!

*Liberate yourself from falsehood!*

Agreed!

*Embrace Islam. Islam Is for Everyone.*

Embrace Christianity. Christianity is for Everyone.

#### News and Information

Wednesday, June 12, Mass at 6 pm for St Barnabas Day.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, Celtic Evensong at 6 pm. Evening Prayer from the Irish Prayer Book of 1926, with preaching on a Celtic Saint and Celtic Hymns.

June 19<sup>th</sup>, Vestry Meeting 7:30 pm with Mass at 7 pm.

Wednesday, June 26, Mass at 6 pm for St John the Baptist Day.

Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, Patronal Festival of St. Peter, transferred. Festive Holy Eucharist, 10 am.

*Going forward, we plan to have Solemn Evensong and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on First Sundays at 6 pm – with Reception of Holy Communion for those who did not receive earlier. And we plan to have Celtic Evensong – with Reception of Holy Communion as well – on Third Sundays. This will be from the Irish Prayer Book of 1926 with Celtic Hymns and Preaching on a Celtic Saint.*

JUNE, 2024						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
[30] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. FHE 6:00 p.m. HC  TRINITY V/ ST. PETER	<b>LEGEND: HC - Holy Communion; FHE – Festal Holy Eucharist; HE - Holy Eucharist; SS – Sunday School; PG - Prayer Group; EP – Evening Prayer; MP – Morning Prayer; P&amp;HU – Prayers and Holy Unction</b>					[1]
[2] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE 6:00 p.m. HC  TRINITY I	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]  12 noon HC	[7]	[8]
[9] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE 6:00 p.m. HC  TRINITY II	[10]	[11]	[12]  6:00 p.m. HC ST. BARNABAS	[13]  12 noon HC	[14]	[15]
[16] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE 6:00 p.m. HC  TRINITY III	[17]	[18]	[19]  7:00 p.m. HC 7:30 p.m. Vestry	[20]  12 noon HC	[21]	[22]
[23] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE 6:00 p.m. HC  TRINITY IV	[24]	[25]	[26]  6:00 p.m. HC ST. JOHN BAPTIST	[27]  12 noon HC	[28]	[29]

### IN THE LORD’S SERVICE

If you cannot fulfill your assigned duty because of an urgent reason, PLEASE SECURE A REPLACEMENT.

	June 2	June 9	June 16	June 23	June 30
<b>Coffee Hour</b>	G. Terrell	S. Darby	C. Kurstedt	V. Williams	C. deRosset
<b>Epistoler 8 a.m.</b>	D. Drysdale	D. Drysdale	G. Mauney	C. Von Claparede	G. Mauney
<b>Epistoler 10 a.m.</b>	T. Paisley	T. Paisley	G. Terrell	P. Williams	T. Paisley

**Altar servers and ushers will be assigned as available before each service.**

2024 Vestry (term end): George Mauney (‘25), Lisa Olver (‘24), Ted Paisley (‘24), Mike Slayton (‘25), George Terrell (‘26), Vicki Williams (‘26)