Subject: Finding the God of the Bible
Central Theme: Contrasting the Gods of Islam and Christianity

Objective: Every person can know the difference between Allah (the god of Islam) and Yahweh (the God of the Bible) by asking three personal questions:

1. Does God know me?
2. Does God love me?
3. Did God die for me?

Introduction: On Oct. 4, in an interview from the Oval Office with El Arabiya TV, President Bush said this in response to the charge that the Arab world sees the president as anti-Islam: "Well, first of all, I believe in an almighty God, and I believe that all the world, whether they be Muslim, Christian, or any other religion, prays to the same God. That's what I believe." The Koran seems to support the president's view:

Do not argue with the people of the scripture (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) except in the nicest possible manner—unless they transgress—and say, "We believe in what was revealed to us and in what was revealed to you, and our god and your god is one and the same; to Him we are submitters." (29:46)

While it appears the president's comments were intended to soothe the minds of Muslim viewers, they had just the opposite effect on me. The god of Islam and the God of the Bible clearly are different. In fact, whether you're Christian or Muslim, every person can know the difference between Allah and God by asking three personal questions:

The first question is this: Does God know me?

Allah. The Koran teaches that Allah is the transcendent creator, all-powerful and all-knowing. He knows who you are; in fact, he has fatalistically determined your thoughts, words and deeds – good and evil – and even your eternal destiny, which is why Muslims so often say, "If Allah wills it." So, Allah does indeed know you.

But Allah is not truly personal, knowable, or approachable. The Koran depicts him more judgmental than gracious. He exists as a singular unity who has no "partners." In fact, to call Jesus the Son of God is to commit the unpardonable sin, or *shirk*. Of the 99 names for God in the Koran, Father is not one of them. In Islam, it is considered blasphemous to "presume" that one can know God or claim any sort of close, personal fellowship with Allah. He reveals his will, not himself.

Yahweh, the God of the Bible, also is depicted as is the transcendent Creator. He is all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere present. He knows us; but more than that, He is knowable and approachable to us. He created us in His image – with personality, thought, and will – for the purpose of enjoying an everlasting, unbreakable, intimate relationship with Him. He exists as a Trinity in eternal relationship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In fact, God is so knowable, He came in the flesh as Jesus of Nazareth.

- Jer. 24:7 -- I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD. They will be My people, and I will be their God because they will return to Me with all their heart.[
- Jer. 31:34 -- No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying: Know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them"—the LORD's declaration. "For I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin."[
- John 7:28-9 -- As He was teaching in the temple complex, Jesus cried out, "You know Me and you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on My own, but the One who sent Me is true. You don't know Him; [29] I know Him because I am from Him, and He sent Me."
- Heb. 8:11 -- And each person will not teach his fellow citizen,and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.
- John 1:1-3, 14 -- [1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was with God in the beginning. [3] All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. [14] The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the • One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- John 8:19 -- Then they asked Him, "Where is Your Father?" "You know neither Me nor My Father," Jesus answered. "If you knew Me, you would also know My Father."
- John 17:3 -- This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.
- Abraham was called "the friend of God."

Does God know me? Allah and Yahweh are depicted as supreme beings who know everything and everyone. But … only the God of the Bible is truly personal and knowable.

The second question we can ask to know the difference between Allah and Yahweh is: Does God love me?

Allah. The Koran teaches that Allah loves those he chooses to love and hates those he chooses to hate. “Allah loves not those that do wrong,” says the Koran (Surah 3:140), neither does he love “him who is treacherous, sinful” (Surah 4:107). “Those who reject faith and do wrong – Allah will not forgive them nor guide them to any way – Except the way of Hell, to dwell therein for ever. And this to Allah is easy (4:168-169). See also 5:49 and 40:10. Other types of people Allah hates:

- Transgressors (2:190)
- Ungrateful and wicked creatures (2:276)
- Those who reject faith (3:32; 30:45)
- Those who do wrong (3:57, 140; 42:40)
- The arrogant, the vailglorious (4:36; 16:23; 31:18; 57:23)
- Those given to excess (5:87)
- Wasters (6:141; 7:31)
- Treacherous (8:58)
- Ungrateful (22:38)

Yahweh, the God of the Bible, on the other hand, loves all people (John 3:16). He demonstrated, or proved, His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). John wrote, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sin” (1 John 4:10). Even though God hates sin, He loves the sinner and takes no pleasure in punishing him (Eze. 18:23).

Does God love me? Only the God of the Bible loves all people.

The third question we can ask to know the difference between Allah and Yahweh is: Did God die for me?

The Koran teaches that Allah did not, would not, and will not die for you, nor would he send anyone to die for you. In fact, the Koran teaches that Jesus did not die on the cross, but was taken up into heaven, and Judas was crucified in His place. Further, the Koran teaches that there is no need for God to provide a sacrifice for sin because ignorance of Islam, not sin, is man’s problem. (The possible exceptions are apostasy from Islam and refusal to convert to Islam.) Staying away from major sins (whatever those are) will automatically result in one’s “small” sins being overlooked by Allah (4:31).

Yahweh, the God of the Bible, on the other hand, loves us so much He sent His Son to die for us. This was determined in eternity past, before you and I were ever born and before any of mankind had fallen into sin; Jesus is declared to be the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). But even more than dying for us, God the Son rose from the dead, conquering sin and death, and He offers us forgiveness of sins and eternal life by His grace through faith in Him.

Did God die for us? Only the God of the Bible sent His Son to die for us, securing eternal life for those who trust in Him.

So, are Allah and Yahweh just two different names for the same God, as President Bush suggested in his television interview? Absolutely not:

- Allah is distant and unknowable. The God of the Bible is close and personal.
- Allah does not love every person; Yahweh does.
- Allah did not, would not, and will not die for you, nor would he ever send anyone to do so. But the God of the Bible loves you so much He sent His one and only Son to die for you. And He stands ready to grant you everlasting life if you will receive Him by faith.

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