



## Tract Series: Insights that Inspire Hope

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## Signposts to Paradise

by

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### Insights that Inspire Hope




brought to the Temple to be circumcised, we read that Simeon *“took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, ‘Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel.’”* (Luke 2:28-32) These prophetic words confirm what an earlier prophet had foretold, that is, the Messiah is the one through whom God would bring *“salvation to the ends of the earth.”* (Isaiah 49:6)

The similarities between the biblical and Qur’anic accounts of Jesus’ birth are truly remarkable. But there is one detail we haven’t examined yet. Let us take a few moments to consider how Mary chose the name for her special son.

The Bible and the Qur’an state that his name was revealed through the angel (Matthew 1:21; Surah 3:45). Have you ever wondered why God chose the name ‘Jesus’? It can’t have been by chance or just a random act. God, who knows all things, must have had a reason, a purpose. He chose a name that would perfectly reflect the Messiah’s character and accomplishments. As Muhammad A Siddiqui observed in his book ‘Names for Muslim Children’, “The name is the real introduction of a man’s personality and the real representation of a man’s activities.”

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If we want to see how meaningful Jesus name is, we simply ask, “How did his actions match the meaning of his name?” Long before Jesus was born, a prophet foretold what the Messiah, the servant of the Lord, would do. he will *“bring my salvation to the ends of the earth”*. (Isaiah 49:6) It is not surprising to learn that the name ‘Jesus’ means God’s salvation! This basic meaning is acknowledged by Muhammad I. A. Usman, a respected Mufti, in his book, ‘Islamic Names’. (enlarged and revised edition)

The prophet Isaiah explains in greater detail what this salvation is all about. In Jerusalem God *“will remove the cloud of gloom, the shadow of death that hangs over the earth. He will swallow up death forever! The Sovereign Lord will wipe away all tears. ... the Lord has spoken! In that day the people will proclaim, ‘This is our God. We trusted in him and he saved us. This is the Lord in whom we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings.’”* (Isaiah 25:7-9) Many years later an angel would announce the birth of Jesus using similar words: *“I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior - yes, the Messiah, the Lord - has been born.”* (Luke 2:10)

If the Messiah’s mission was to save people, how did he accomplish it? Both the Bible and Qur’an describe the miracles of Jesus, how he healed people and saved their lives. Notice he didn’t

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unmistakable: To the one sinner Jesus said, “*Salvation has come today.*” To the other sinner he said, “*today you will be with me in paradise.*” Both men were deeply comforted by these words, much like the woman to whom Jesus said, “*Your sins are forgiven ... your faith has saved you; go in peace.*” (Luke 7:48,50) Notice, again, that Jesus lived up to the meaning of his name, i.e. as it is written, “*he will save his people from their sins.*”

My wish for every reader is that you too will have a confidence of going to paradise, by knowing the saving power of God’s Messiah.

May I encourage you to look at another meditation, entitled *Lighting Up the Darkness*<sup>1</sup> which explains in more detail how God’s Messiah would bring “light and salvation”. (Isaiah 49:6) Another interesting article on this theme can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/yz7ye78>

All biblical quotations are taken from the *New Living Translation*. All qur’anic quotations are from Yusuf Ali’s translation of the qur’an. If I can be of any assistance, please contact me at: [starsign77@hotmail.com](mailto:starsign77@hotmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> This meditation is available at: [http://injl.org/clarke/lighting\\_darkness.pdf](http://injl.org/clarke/lighting_darkness.pdf)

just cure mild ailments; he healed people who were critically and terminally ill. (Matthew 11:5; Surah 5.113) Jesus performed even more spectacular miracles. He raised people from the grave. They too, were saved by God’s Messiah. But it did not stop there. Jesus also saved people whose lives had been devastated and ruined by sin. The angel Gabriel explained why God chose the name Jesus; “*you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*” (Matthew 1:21)

Luke 19 is a wonderful example of this. A notorious sinner named Zacchaeus was dramatically transformed by his encounter with Jesus. What a joyful day that was! The final words of this story show that the Messiah was aware of the meaning of his name and what was God’s purpose for his life. “*Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.*” (Luke 19:9,10)

Zacchaeus was not the only sinner who heard Jesus speak reassuring words. The thief who was crucified next to Jesus confessed his guilt and asked, “*Jesus remember me when you come into your Kingdom.*” And Jesus replied, “*I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.*” (Luke 23:42,43) The similarity between the two stories is

## Signposts to Paradise

Like the Bible, the Qur’an says the Messiah’s miraculous birth was a sign from God. The Qur’an commends pondering the signs of Allah, saying they are “*for those who reflect ... those who hearken ... those who are wise*” (Surah 30:21-24). It is interesting to read how Christ’s mother responded to the angelic message about her miracle son, “*Mary, kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.*” (Luke 2:19)

Christians and Muslims around the world esteem Mary as blessed by God above all other women. She was a model of chastity, but her example can inspire us in other ways too, as we’ve seen in the way she pondered the meaning of the miraculous sign. Clearly her attitude of seeking wisdom showed her love and devotion to God.

The Qur’an says the birth of her special son had worldwide significance. It describes this miraculous birth as “*a Sign for all peoples*”. (Surah 21:91) In fact, the global scope of the Messiah’s mission was foretold by the prophets. When baby Jesus was