

Christians in the Qur'ān: Some Representative Passages

shortened version, September, 2021

1. a positive view:

And you will find those who are nearest in love to the believers to be those who say, "We are Christians." That is because there are among them priests and monks and they are not proud. When they listen to what has been revealed to the Messenger [Muḥammad], you will see their eyes overflow with tears from what they recognize as the truth. They say, "Our Lord, we believe! Write us down among the witnesses." (*al-Mā'ida* [The Table], 5:82-83)

2. an ambivalent view:

If they [the People of the Book = Jews and Christians] had upheld the Torah and the Gospel and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten [God's provisions] from above and from below. A community among them are on target, but many of them do only evil. (*al-Mā'ida* [The Table], 5:66)

3. a negative view:

O People of the Book! Do not exaggerate in your religion, nor say anything about God except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was [only] God's messenger, and His Word which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers, and do not say, "Three." Stop! It is better for you. For God is one God. It is far from His glory that He should have a son. (*al-Nisā'* [The Women], 4:171)

4. searching for common ground:

Say: "O People of the Book! Come to a Common Word between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God." And if they turn away, then say: "Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered. (*Āl 'Imrān* [The Family of 'Imrān], 3:64)

5. Muslims should engage Christians in virtuous debate:

Do not argue with the People of the Book, except in the fairest manner—but not with those among them who are evildoers. (*al-'Ankabūt* [The Spider] 29:46)

6. Muslims must resist unbelieving Christians:

Fight against any who were given the Scripture, yet who do not believe in God or the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, who do not follow the religion of Truth. [Fight them] until they willingly pay the tribute [*al-jizya*] and have been humbled. The Jews say that Ezra is the son of God, and the Christians say that the Messiah is the son of God. That is what they say, but they are just like the unbelievers of ancient times who said the same thing. God Himself fights against them; how deluded they are! (*al-Tawba* [Repentance], 9:29-30)