

## The Descriptive Titles of Jesus in the Quran (part 2 of 2): A "Word" and "Spirit" from God

**Description:** A discussion of the name, titles, and description of Jesus in the Quran. Part 2: A look at the some of the other titles given to Jesus, such as a "word", a "spirit", "mercy", and others.

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Category: [Articles](#) > [Comparative Religion](#) > [Jesus](#)

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### (3) "Word" from God

Jesus is referred to as a "Word" from God in three passages in the Quran. No other prophet has been described with such a title.

**"...O Mary! Behold, God gives you good news of a word from Him, who shall become known as the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary..." (Quran 3:45)**

**"...The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of God, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary..." (Quran 4:171)**

**"...God gives you good news of (a son whose name is) John, (who comes) to confirm a word from God..." (Quran 3:39)**

Christians believe that in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus is identified as "the Word" (*logos* in Greek) incarnated, or made flesh. **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth..."**

The Christian idea of the *logos* is completely different from the simple Islamic understanding of the 'Word.' The idea of the Greek *logos* may be traced back at least to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC philosopher, Heracleitus. He proposed that there was a *logos* in the cosmic process analogous to the reasoning power in man. The Greek speaking Jewish philosopher, Judaeus Philo of Alexandria (15 BC - 45 CE), taught that the *logos* was the intermediary between God and the cosmos. The writings of Philo were preserved and cherished by the Church, and provided the inspiration for a sophisticated Christian philosophical theology. "The identification of Jesus with the *logos*... was further developed in the early church but more on the basis of Greek philosophical ideas than on Old Testament motifs. This development was dictated by attempts made by early Christian theologians and apologists to express the Christian faith in terms that would be intelligible to the Hellenistic world and to impress their hearers with the view that Christianity was superior to, or heir to, all that was best in pagan philosophy."[\[1\]](#)

Islam provides a clear explanation of how Jesus was a "Word" from God. But first the

process of human procreation must be understood. The Might of God is behind everything. Whenever God decides to do something, like giving life or causing death, He says the word "Be" and it happens,

**"It is He who gives life and causes death; and when He decrees a matter, He but says to it, 'Be,' and it is." (Quran 40:68)**

The first step in human procreation is the biological union between male and female reproductive cells in addition to the will of God. Since Jesus was born without a father, he was not conceived by the male sperm cells. Instead his creation, similar to Adam, is solely attributed to the Word of God, 'Be.' God says:

**"Indeed the likeness of Jesus to God as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be,' and he was." (Quran 3:59)**

The Quran gives details of Jesus' conception. Mary was not impregnated by a man. Angel Gabriel, referred to in the Quran as the Spirit, brought the soul of Jesus - his soul was created by God like other human souls - to breathe it into Mary. On seeing the angel, she expressed with surprise,

**"My Lord,' said Mary, how shall I have a son when no man has ever touched me?" (Quran 3:47)**

The angel answered,

**"Thus it is: God creates what He wills: When he decrees a matter, He only says to it: 'Be,' and it is." (Quran 3:47)**

Gabriel then blew the soul of Jesus into Mary, **"so We blew into it (her womb) through Our angel." (Quran 66:12)**

In essence, Jesus is God's 'Word' because he came into existence by God's Word - 'Be' - as the Quran describes in another passage,

**"His word which He conveyed unto Mary..." (Quran 4:171)**

#### **(4) "Spirit" from God**

In the Quran, God attributes certain creations to Himself as a means of respect and honor. For example, God calls the sacred mosque in Mecca "My House" as a means of veneration. God says:

**"And We enjoined Abraham and Ishmael saying: 'Purify My House for those who circumambulate (it), and those who abide (in it) for devotion, and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves." (Quran 2:125)**

The Quran describes Jesus to be a 'Spirit' proceeding from God:

**"We breathed into her (Mary) from My Spirit." (Quran 21:91)**

**"...a Spirit created by Him."(Quran 4:171)**

**"We blew into (her womb) through Our angel." (Quran 66:12)**

Jesus was a spirit, or more correctly, a soul created by God, brought by Gabriel, a mighty angel of God, and breathed into Mary:

**"We blew into (her womb from her garment) through Our angel." (Quran 66:12)**

Jesus was not a 'part,' 'person,' or 'activity' of God that separated and dwelled inside Mary. He is called a 'Spirit' from God as a symbol of respect and honor, not divinity.

Likewise, God also gives Adam this characteristic of being His spirit. God said when He ordered the angels to prostrate to Adam upon his creation.:

**"So, when I have fashioned him (Adam) completely and breathed into him (Adam) the soul which I created for him, then fall down prostrating yourselves unto him." (Quran 38:72)**

Indeed Jesus is given an honored status in the Quran and is has been given certain titles and descriptions not given to other prophets, but this in no way should cause a person to believe that Jesus was anything other than mortal. This can be summarized in the following verse in which God says:

**"O People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against God, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is only a messenger of God and His Word which He bestowed on Mary and a Spirit from Him; believe therefore in God and His messengers, and say not, 'Three'. Desist, it is better for you; Indeed God is only one diety; far be it from His glory that He should have a son, To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and God is All-Sufficient as a Disposer of affairs." (Quran 4:171)**

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Endnotes:

[1] "logos." *Encyclopædia Britannica* from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9048773>)

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