

# SURAH 72 (AL-JINN)

FAITH: Islam | TEXT: The Holy Qur'an | VOLUME: The Meaning of the Holy Quran | AUTHOR: Rashad Khalifa (Translator)

## OVERVIEW

Surah 72, titled 'Al-Jinn' (The Jinn), presents a unique narrative perspective within the Quran: the testimony of unseen spiritual beings. The text begins with the Prophet Muhammad being inspired that a group of Jinn listened to the Quran recitation and were immediately convinced of its miraculous nature and guidance. These Jinn confess their previous errors, specifically the 'foolish' belief that God had a mate or son—a direct polemic against Christian theology and pagan Arab beliefs. The narrative describes the Jinn's realization that the heavens are now guarded by 'projectiles' (meteors) to prevent them from spying on divine decrees, signaling a shift in cosmic order due to the new revelation. The text categorizes entities (both Jinn and humans) into 'submitters' (Muslims) and 'compromisers' (those who deviate), with the latter destined for Gehenna (Hell). Crucially, the Surah emphasizes the limitations of the Messenger himself. Muhammad is commanded to declare that he possesses no power to harm or guide, nor does he know the unseen (ghayb) unless God reveals specific news to him. The Surah concludes by reinforcing that God alone is the guardian of the future and that the Messenger's sole duty is the faithful delivery of the message. For the believer, this text demands absolute reliance on God alone, rejection of any intermediaries or partners (including Jesus as Son), and the understanding that even spiritual forces are subject to God's judgment.

## KEY FIGURES

God (Allah), The Messenger (Muhammad), The Jinn (The group of unseen beings), The Foolish (Those who attributed a son/mate to God), The Compromisers (Those who deviate from the right path)

## DOCTRINES ANALYZED

### 1. ABSOLUTE UNITARIANISM (TAWHID)

**Assertion:** God is singular, exalted, and absolutely without offspring or partner.

"The Most High is our only Lord. He never had a mate, nor a son" (72:003)

**Evangelical Comparison:** This text presents a form of monotheism that is explicitly anti-Trinitarian. While Evangelicals affirm One God in Three Persons, Surah 72:3 categorizes the attribution of a 'son' to God as 'nonsense' uttered by the 'foolish.' This creates an unbridgeable gap with Biblical theology, which holds that acknowledging the Son is necessary for knowing the Father (1 John 2:23). The Quranic definition of monotheism here precludes the Incarnation.

### 2. SOTERIOLOGY OF SUBMISSION

**Assertion:** Salvation is achieved by hearing guidance, believing, and submitting (becoming a Muslim); deviation leads to Hell.

"As for those who submitted, they are on the right path. As for the compromisers, they will be fuel for Gehenna." (72:014-015)

**Evangelical Comparison:** The text outlines a binary outcome based on human/Jinn action: 'submission' leads to the right path, while 'compromising' leads to being fuel for Hell. There is no concept of vicarious atonement or substitutionary sacrifice. In Evangelicalism, salvation is a gift of grace received through faith in Christ's finished work (Ephesians 2:8-9), whereas here, the onus is on the individual to 'remain on the right path' (72:16) to receive blessings.

### 3. PROPHETIC LIMITATION

**Assertion:** The Messenger is a human servant with no supernatural power to harm, benefit, or save others.

"Say, 'I possess no power to harm you, nor to guide you.'" (72:021)

**Evangelical Comparison:** The text emphasizes the humanity and limitations of the Messenger to prevent idolatry. He cannot even protect himself without God (72:22). In contrast, Evangelical Christology asserts that Jesus has 'all authority in heaven and on earth' (Matthew 28:18) and is Himself the source of eternal life and protection (John 10:28). The Quranic messenger points to the path; the Biblical Christ claims to **be** the path.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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**Divergence Status:** Yes

**Theological Gap:** The fundamental incompatibility lies in the identity of God and the means of redemption. Surah 72:3 is a 'deflector shield' against the Gospel, labeling the core Christian confession (Jesus is the Son of God) as a lie invented by fools. While Evangelicals view Jesus as the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), this text strips the Messenger of all mediating power (72:21), leaving the adherent to face God directly through their own submission. The 'Jinn' are used here as a theological device to validate the Quran and invalidate the Christian view of God.

**Shared Values:**

Belief in One Creator God; Existence of spiritual beings (angels/demons/jinn); Reality of Judgment and Hell; Necessity of righteousness

**Friction Points:**

1. [Critical] Theology Proper (Trinity) – Explicit denial of God having a son (v. 3), rejecting the Father-Son relationship central to the Trinity.
2. [Major] Sola Fide (Faith Alone) – Salvation is contingent on submission and works ('remaining on the path'), with failure resulting in becoming 'fuel for Gehenna'.
3. [Major] Christology (Sufficiency of Christ) – The Messenger disclaims power to save or guide (v. 21), contrasting with Jesus' claim to be the Way, Truth, and Life.

**Semantic Warnings:**

**"Righteousness"**

**In Text:** Correct belief (Tawhid) and submission to the Quranic message.

**Evangelical:** The moral perfection of God credited to the believer through faith in Christ (Philippians 3:9).

**Example:** *In Surah 72:13, believing leads to righteousness/safety. In Romans 4:5, faith is counted as righteousness apart from works.*

**"Son of God"**

**In Text:** A biological or polytheistic partner/mate (rejected as blasphemy).

**Evangelical:** A title of nature and relationship, denoting Jesus' full deity and eternal distinctness within the Trinity, not biological offspring.

**Example:** *Surah 72:3 denies God has a 'mate' or 'son', assuming a carnal or polytheistic meaning.*

## SOTERIOLOGY

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**Salvation Defined:** Escaping the 'ever increasing retribution' and 'fire of Hell' (v. 17, 23).

**How Attained:** By listening to the Quran, believing in it, not associating partners with God, and submitting (Islam).

**Basis of Assurance:** Conditional assurance based on 'remaining on the right path' (v. 16).

**Comparison to Sola Fide:** The text demands belief plus submission/action. Verse 13 promises no fear for believers, but verse 23 threatens eternal fire for disobedience, creating a performance-based security system unlike the finished work of Christ.

## MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

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**Explicit Commands:**

1. Say: 'I was inspired...'
2. Do not call on anyone else beside GOD (v. 18)
3. Say: 'I worship only my Lord' (v. 20)
4. Say: 'I possess no power to harm you' (v. 21)

**Implicit Obligations:**

1. Believe in the Quran as wonderful guidance

2. Reject the concept of God having a son
3. Fear the unseen judgment/Hell
4. Acknowledge the existence and moral agency of Jinn

**Ritual Requirements:**

1. Exclusive worship in places of worship (Masjids) dedicated only to God (v. 18)

**EVANGELISM TOOLKIT**

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**Discovery Questions:**

1. In verse 21, the Messenger says he has no power to harm or guide you. If the Messenger cannot guide or protect you personally, who is your personal mediator before God?
2. Verse 10 mentions the Jinn didn't know if God intended good or bad for the earth. How do you find certainty that God intends good for you personally?
3. The text says God 'never had a son' (v. 3). What do you think Christians mean when they call Jesus the Son of God? Do you think they mean God took a mate?
4. Verse 15 says 'compromisers' are fuel for Hell. How do you know for certain you haven't compromised enough to be in danger?

**Redemptive Analogies:**

1. The Search for Guidance – Just as the Jinn recognized a voice of truth that guides to righteousness, Jesus is the Word (Logos) who is the Truth and leads to the righteousness of God. [John 1:1, John 14:6]
2. The Desire for Redemption/Good Intent – The uncertainty of the Jinn regarding God's intent is answered in the Cross. We know God wills to redeem because He sent His Son. [Romans 5:8, 1 Timothy 2:3-4]

**Spiritual Weight:**

1. Isolation/Lack of Mediation [Severe] – The believer is told their leader (the Messenger) has no power to protect or guide them (v. 21-22). They stand alone before an omnipotent God without an advocate.
2. Fear of Failure/Hell [Moderate] – The threat that 'compromisers' become fuel for Gehenna (v. 15) creates a constant anxiety about whether one's submission is sufficient or if they have inadvertently compromised.
3. Uncertainty of God's Intent [Moderate] – Echoing the Jinn in verse 10 ('We have no idea if something bad is intended...'), the adherent lives under a Sovereign whose will is absolute but whose personal affection is conditional on performance.

**EPISTEMOLOGY**

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**Knowledge Source:** Revelation (Wahy) given to a chosen Messenger.

**Verification Method:** The text implies self-verification through its 'wonderful' nature (v. 1) and the testimony of the Jinn.

**Evangelical Contrast:** Biblical epistemology relies on the historical witness of the Apostles and the closed canon of Scripture (Hebrews 1:1-2). This text relies on the private revelation of one man, validated by the narrative of unseen beings.

**TEXTUAL CRITICISM**

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**Dating:** Meccan Period (Traditional Islamic dating).

**Authorship:** Attributed to Muhammad (via Gabriel).

**Textual Issues:** Khalifa's translation uses 'Compromisers' for 'Qasitun' (deviators/unjust), reflecting his specific theological emphasis on exactness.