

A Parable: The Messenger and the Prince¹

By Abu Daoud²

“There was a king, and in his kingdom there were two cities that were having grave problems. One city sent a messenger to the king to ask for help. The king sat down and wrote a letter to the city and sent the messenger back.

“The other city sent a messenger to the king, and the king sent his son to that city to address the problems there. Which of these two cities has received the greater honor?”

I told this parable to a Muslim friend today, and here was his answer, “The city that received the prince has received the greater honor. When he arrives he will see what the problems are and take immediate action; the people of the city cannot disobey him. The city that received the letter from the king - in that city maybe the mayor will read it and tear it up, or maybe he will read it and not take action right away”.

I responded, “And this is the difference between Islam and Christianity: we believe that the Word of God is a person; Muslims believe that the Word of God is a book”.

The point of the parable might not be obvious to people not used to thinking in terms of honor.

The point is not that God has given two religions, and that one of them is superior. Rather it is that the God of Christianity shows more honor and generosity to humanity than the God of Islam.

For those who talk with Muslims regularly, I encourage you to learn this short parable and ask your Muslim friends what they think about it.

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