

Can Christians use the word “Allah”?

Asalamu Aleikum,

Many have asked the following question:

I have always been told that Allah is a false god, so how can you say that it is OK for Christians to use the word Allah to refer to God in Arabic?

That is a very good question!

This quotation may help to answer your question:

“...It’s interesting to observe that, in rejecting the Athenian’s erroneous concept of God, Paul did not reject the word they used for God, Theos, which was the common Greek word for God.

Some Christians unthinkingly say ‘Allah is not God.’ This is the ultimate blasphemy to Muslims, and furthermore, it is difficult to understand. Allah is the primary Arabic word for God. It means ‘The God.’ There are some minor exceptions. For example, the Bible in some Muslim lands uses a word for God other than Allah (Farsi and Urdu are examples). But for more than five hundred years before Muhammad, the vast majority of Jews and Christians in Arabia called God by the name Allah. How, then, can we say that Allah is an invalid name for God? If it is, to whom have these Jews and Christians been praying?

And what about the 10 to 12 million Arab Christians today? They have been calling God ‘Allah’ in their Bibles, hymns, poems, writings, and worship for over nineteen centuries. What an insult to them when we tell them not to use this word ‘Allah’! Instead of bridging the distance between Muslims and Christians, we widen the gulf of separation between them and us when we promote such a doctrine. Those who still insist that it is blasphemy to refer to God as Allah should also consider that Muhammad’s father was named Abd Allah, ‘God’s servant,’ many years before his son was born or Islam was founded!”

--excerpted from BUILDING BRIDGES by Fouad Accad (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, p. 22).

I think the issue is not whether it is appropriate for Christians to use the word Allah for “God”. Probably the issue is if “Allah” in the Qur’an is exactly the same as YHVH in the Bible. I would have to say absolutely not! But just as I do not stop using the word “God” in English because many false sects also use that same word, I do not need to stop using the word “Allah” just because the Qur’an uses the same word. Rather, I need to show Muslims the true identity of Allah in the Bible, instead of fighting with them over semantics, and therefore never getting to the real issues.

As followers of Christ we need to support one another and pray for one another, even if there are some minor differences in vocabulary as to how to share the only and unique message of the one true Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace to you.

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