

This project came from research conducted for my senior honor's thesis and focuses on essential differences between Yahweh and Allah. After careful study, it was determined that, while many differences could be discussed, two essential differences were beliefs about the Trinity and Christology. For these reasons, Christians and Muslims do not worship the same God. While the two religions may have agreement on minor issues, it can be argued that the essential differences bring them into inherent conflict, and that the differences cannot be harmonized. For instance, either Jesus is divine or he is not, but he cannot be both, and both religions believe that their understanding on this issue is essential to their doctrine of God. For the Christian, God is triune, but Islam is a strictly unitarian faith. This difference directly affects how each religion views the God it worships. The doctrine of the Trinity directly impacts other aspects of God's nature, including His love and his self-sufficiency. The Islamic rejection of the trinity and its belief in a unitarian deity also have direct implications for how Allah is able to love and relate to his creation. Also essential is that the Trinity allows for the deity of Christ, while the Muslim denial of it makes it impossible for them to believe in Christ as divine. This, for Christians, is essential to their faith. Denial of the trinity implicitly is a rejection of the deity of Christ, and a denial of the deity of Christ is an implicit rejection of the Trinity. Christ's divinity and his work in salvation is the second essential issue. Christ being fully divine as well as being fully human is essential to his salvific work, meaning that the Muslim denial of this aspect is, in fact, denial of the means by which God provided for salvation. Also important for the Christian is that Christ is God's ultimate revelation of who He is, and Christ's death on the cross was God's most decisive demonstration of His love. Allah, as Islam describes him, is incapable of revealing himself in this way. In fact, for Muslims, this claim is the greatest form of blasphemy that can be committed. This conflict of belief systems cannot be reconciled. For these

reasons, the two descriptions of deity provided by each religion are irreconcilable with one another. What one affirms the other denies; what one considers essential is for the other blasphemy. Religions are defined by their doctrines pertaining to their deity. For this reason, what a person believes on this issue is foundational to their faith. A proper understanding of the religious teachings of both religions is important so that open and honest dialogue may be pursued in a respectful manner. It is important so that Christians can share the Gospel with their Muslim neighbors.