

"The Gospel of Barnabas" - A Muslim Fraud

by Paul K. Williams

David Sox, on pages 13 and 14 in his book *The Gospel of Barnabas* writes:

"In conjunction with the London-based Union of Muslim Organizations in 1981 a handsome little volume for English-speaking Muslim children was published entitled *The Prophets*. The prefatory 'Letter to Muslim Parents and Children' states: 'This book has been written for your children so that they may know something about our great prophets.' Chapter 9 deals with Isa (Jesus). Under the section 'Isa (peace be on him) Is Taken Up', we read:"

Some of the Israelites did not believe in Isa (peace be on him). They were jealous. They reported lies to the Roman governor against him. At last Judas, one of those disciples who were with him, decided to betray him. Saint Barnabas, one of his closest friends, has written about this. Isa (peace be on him) was staying in a disciple's house. Judas had told the Roman soldiers that they should catch the man whom he would kiss on the cheek. He went and kissed Isa (peace be on him). But the whole room became dark and there was confusion. When the room became bright, the soldiers caught Judas because Allah had changed his features. He looked like Isa (peace be on him). He protested. He appealed. But the soldiers laughed. They put a crown of thorns on him and said, thinking he was Isa (peace be on him), "Now you are the King of the Jews."

He was taken to the gallows and crucified.

Most of the disciples of Isa (peace be on him) were either confused or believed that it was Isa (peace be on him) who was crucified. Some of them went and buried him. Later on some of them dug up the grave and took away the dead body and told people that he had gone to Heaven.

Saint Barnabas, one of his nearest disciples, says in his written account, that he was not crucified and that he was alive. He came in the company of angels in order to tell his mother that he was alive so that she could get some peace of mind.

As stated, this story of the crucifixion is based on what these Muslims claim Barnabas wrote about Jesus. Thus we see why *The Gospel of Barnabas* is being touted by them as the "real" gospel.

David Sox tells the story of his investigations into the origins of this document. Here is a paragraph from his book which summarizes the story.

"As we have seen, there is overwhelming evidence that Codex 2662 is a medieval production: the handwriting, paper and its watermark alone are enough to decide the issue for any museum. The internal evidence is equally decisive: the tell-tale clues given in the "Jubilee Year" and "true book of Moses" episodes (see pages 29 and 43-44); a medieval Italian flavor to much of the writing; spectacular geographical and historical errors no first-century Palestinian writer could have made; and the enthusiasm of a "convert" which sometimes make Barnabas more Muslim than the Koran (50)."

The Gospel of Barnabas first appeared in the latter part of the sixteenth century in the hands of Fra Marino, a monk who had converted to Islam. The document was written in

Italian. It is likely that Fra Marino himself put it together, using a number of sources. It did not become known until this century. The manuscript is now in the imperial library of Vienna.

In recent years Muslims have been claiming that *The Gospel of Barnabas* was written by the Barnabas of the Bible and is the true story of Jesus. They take great delight in charging Christians with "hiding" this "gospel." It is worthwhile, therefore, for Christians to know at least a little bit about this fraudulent book.

(Reference: David Sox, *The Gospel of Barnabas*, 1984, London, George Allen & Unwin)

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