

The study on the Samaritans' faith in the Messiah in the context of early Christians & its correlation with the Ebionites' Christology and missional applications to Muslims

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Abstract

The orthodox Christology in regards to Jesus' title and his divine nature brought up resistance to early Christian groups, called the Ebionites with no Chalcedonian theological backgrounds. There remained variations in the understanding of the person of Jesus in terms of Messiah, which shows His divinity and unique title apart from other *rasuls*, special prophets, in the Qur'anic text. For these reasons, this paper is designed to find correlations between the Samaritan Christians during the second temple period and Muslims today. The Samaritan woman appeared in the book of John 4, acknowledged Jesus as her Messiah, likewise, Muslims' reorientation to Jesus is expected from the monotheistic context despite Islamic cultural barriers and their religious commitment. In this paper, the author interweaves the Muslims' eschatological belief, as one part of Islamic perceptions of Jesus. In particular, their understanding of *Al-Masih* and *Al-Mahdi*, the paralleled context of the first century Samaritans' theology upon the Messiah that can offer the first doorstep to open the dialogue with Muslims in terms of their eschatology and understanding of the title of Jesus.

Key Word: Ebionites, Early Christians, Messiah, Samaritan, Eschatology, Islam, *Masih*, *Mahdi*