

# Christian-Islamic Controversy

A Teachers' Textbook

By  
Gerhard Nehls  
and  
Walter Eric

Resource Material  
with Documentation of Original Sources

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Gerhard Nehls and Walter Eric

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# Introduction

**Welcome!** This Textbook is part of a **set of five Teacher-Trainer Manuals** that are linked with a **Student Handbook** (REACH OUT). The set includes:

Vol. 1	<b>Islamicms</b> (green)	Islam – Basic Aspects
Vol. 2	<b>Apologetics</b> (blue)	Christian – Islamic Controversy
Vol. 3	<b>Pragmatics</b> (red)	Tactical – Practical Approach
Vol. 4	<b>Didactics</b>	Training of Trainers Materials
Vol. 5	<b>Presentation File</b>	Display Materials for Teachers

## **Please keep in mind:**

These notes depict primarily the view of original Islam as seen from its sources. Much of this is not known to the Muslim “man in the street”. So please use this information with wisdom and in a Christ-like spirit.

*Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature.*

1Cor 14:20 (ASV)

## **THIS IS A TEACHER’S TEXTBOOK – NOT A DO-IT-YOURSELF MANUAL!**

A textbook is not to be read as another book. Its content has to be well worked through to be fully understood.

It supplies the trainer with comprehensive, yet basic information. He has to scrutinize this information and select his specific teaching materials. This should be adjusted to the students, the situation in which they are likely to work and the type of Muslims they are likely to meet. Anyone who like to read about this in more detail should contact us for our various teaching books, videos and CDs.

Some repetitions have been unavoidable. These are done for emphasis, or because they relate to different subjects as well. But these notes are not designed to stand on its own. You will learn a lot from Muslims as you seek to share the Gospel in a meaningful way. It is so important to know how Islam views Christians and Christianity. We need to understand the Muslim’s world view, their perception of religion and some cultural aspects, for these factors determine decisively our communication. There are practical forms of how to present the Gospel, the good news, to this specific group of people.

These notes, however, do not supply quick answers, nor do they promise instant results. Love and patience are always needed, and more so in Muslim evangelism.

### **Which translations of Bible and Qur'an did we use?**

All quotations from the **Bible**, unless otherwise specified, are from the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, 1984, by the International Bible Society.

All quotations from the **Qur'an**, unless otherwise marked, are from the translation by Abdullah Yussuf Ali, New Revised Edition, Amana Corporation, Brentwood, Maryland, U.S.A., 1989. This is one of the most acceptable translations to Muslims.

For practical reasons we have not included any Arabic texts in this edition.

Your instructors,

Gerhard Nehls and Walter Eric

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# 1 Laying the Foundation

From the time, when the New Testament Scriptures were collated and canonised ('recognised as genuine', Collins and Oxford Dictionaries), critical questions regarding the **authenticity** and **legitimate interpretation** of its text were raised. This is true today more than ever.

But we can also affirm with confidence that answers and explanations were given. Those who formulate such replies and responses to critical challenges are called '**Apologists**'; and thus the science of the defence of (Biblical) truth is named '**Apologetics**'. This concept has been aptly defined by Vergilus Ferm in the 'Encyclopaedia of Religion': It is "*an effort to anticipate the points of a possible attack, and to defend them by evidence and sound reasoning. Positively, a Christian view of God and the world is elaborated, aiming to make it so adequate and winsome as to obviate attack before it even gets started.*"

A more negative sounding word has also been used lately, and that is 'polemic', (which is "the art or practice of dispute or argument, as in attacking or defending a doctrine or belief", Collins Dictionary).

As we shall see in more detail later, Muslims forcefully argue that the Biblical Scriptures have been changed and corrupted. This is done to explain the fundamental disparity between the Bible and their own Scripture. Both are, according to the Qur'an, revelations from God and should, by that token, carry the same message.

## 1.1 Why do we need 'Apologetics'?

Muslims never questioned their own Scriptures, but sought all possible reasons to discredit the Bible. Many an argument was also adopted and adapted from liberal 'Christian' theologians.

A study of apologetics is therefore an indispensable tool to help investigate and refute accusations or queries that are levelled against the Scripture and its content. In the case of the dialogue between Muslims and Christians, very specific topics have come up, which we intend to look at in this manual. (see *Appendix 1* for a more extensive article on Christian Apologetics.)

### 1.1.1 Sharing also means defending

Most Muslims will immediately challenge our beliefs. Consequently there is no way to by-pass **Apologetics**, when sharing the Gospel meaningfully with Muslims. So we will investigate the allegations and see how we can solve the seeming problems.

## 1.1.2 Must we avoid Muslims who argue and dispute?

We do have to bear in mind that 'foolish arguments and quarrels' are not avoidable in Muslim evangelism. Already the Bible points to these:



Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful! Those who oppose him he must gently instruct in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to the knowledge of the truth and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil.

*2 Timothy 2:23-26*

This should however not be taken as an excuse to avoid factual reasoning and defence of the truth altogether. The Apostle Paul certainly thought it to be a valid way of evangelism:



As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned [**dialegomai**, dispute, reason with] with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.

*Acts 17:2*

So he reasoned [**dialegomai**] in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the market place day by day with those who happened to be there.

*Acts 17:17*

Every Sabbath he reasoned [**dialegomai**] in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

*Acts 18:4*

Paul talked and debated [**sumbibazo**] with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him.

*Acts 9:29*

Paul ... himself went into the synagogue and reasoned [**dialegomai**] with the Jews.

*Acts 18:19*

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively [**dialegomai**] about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions [**dialegomai**] daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

*Acts 19:8-9*

### 1.1.3 When we dialogue, we must present a meaningful argument!

Many Christians, when confronted with an argument they cannot adequately handle, withdraw or argue unreasonably. Instead of equipping themselves by obtaining and applying proper information, they can easily become insecure and emotionally upset. That hinders them from ‘instructing gently’ and tends to make them resentful.

Understandably both sides argue with a lot of **conviction**, but all too often with very little **knowledge**. Proper discussion is always based on knowledge.

Someone (Søren Kierkegaard) rightly said:



*Convictions are worse enemies of truth than lies.*

Convictions are firm beliefs, which all too often cannot be substantiated by the person who believes in and stands up for them. **Faith ought to rest on convictions, but the convictions must rest on a solid foundation.**

Virtually every Muslim with even the most basic instruction about his religion (and who lives within a somewhat Christian context) believes that today’s Bible is not trustworthy. He does not believe that Jesus died on the cross. He does not believe that he is divine, or the Son of God. Obviously they also cannot think of God as being triune! Christians believe all this! We have to bear in mind however, that **misunderstanding of the meaning of certain (religious) words** is at the root of most religious arguments.

To avoid emotional disputation, we need to **rectify false concepts** by defending Biblical truth with evidences and sound reasoning.

### We have to raise the Truth-Question

Conviction is not the right tool to substantiate truth. We have to establish what really happened in history, way back 1400 and 2000 years ago. Conviction cannot supply the answers. Historical facts can. Can we still check out these facts? Can they still be convincingly reconstructed? Yes, as we shall see later.

## 1.2 The Reason for the Islamic - Christian Controversy

The obvious reason is that the Qur'an contradicts many foundational Biblical truths. This raises the ultimate question whether the Bible or the Qur'an is the true revelation of God. Christians believe the Bible to be the Word of God, while Muslims are convinced that it is the Qur'an. Almost all somewhat learned Muslims endeavour to prove the Bible to be falsified in order to establish that the Qur'an is the only reliable surviving revelation from God. This given situation will overshadow just about every religious conversation between a Muslim and a Christian.

Above that we find in the Qur'an this astonishing verse:



And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'O children of Israel! I am the apostle of Allah (sent) to you confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving glad tidings of an apostle to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.

*Surah 61:6*

Ahmad had always been understood to be Muhammad, for the meaning of these two words is similar.

If Jesus really said this, it must be found in the Bible, must have been the reasoning, and since the Qur'an encourages the study of the 'former Scriptures' (S. 10:94, 21:7), Muslim scholars started to seek for passages referring to Muhammad in the Bible.

By doing that, they found a number of fundamental contradictions between the Bible and the Qur'an. The correctness of the Qur'an was, of course, never questioned. The only conclusion Muslim scholars came up with, was that the Bible, which was - according to the Qur'an - the Word of God, must have been changed by the Christians. A scholarly study confirms that:



As studies of Muslim Apologetics have shown, it was only with Ibn-Khazem, who died at Cordoba in 1064, that the charge of falsification was born.

In his defense of Islam against Christians, Ibn-Khazem came up against the contradictions between the Qur'an and the Gospels. One obvious example was the Qur'anic text, 'They slew him not, and they crucified him not' (S. 4:156). 'Since the Qur'an must be true', Ibn-Khazem argued, 'it must be the conflicting Gospel texts that are false. But Muhammad tells us to respect the Gospel. Therefore, the present text must have been falsified by the Christians'. His argument was not based on historical facts, but purely on his own reasoning [conviction, G.N.] and on his wish to safeguard the truth of the Qur'an. Once he was on this path, nothing could stop him from pursuing this accusation. In fact, it seemed the easiest way to attack the opponents. 'If we prove the falsehood of their books, they lose the arguments they take from them'. This led him eventually to make

the cynical statement: 'The Christians lost the revealed Gospel except for a few traces which God has left intact as argument against them'.

Many of the great Muslim thinkers had, indeed, accepted the authenticity of the New Testament text. Listing the names of these men seems a fitting conclusion to this essay. Their testimony proves that Christian-Muslim dialogue need not for ever be stymied by the allegation introduced by Ibn-Khazem. Two great historians, Al-Mas'udi (died 956) and Ibn-Khaldun (died 1406), held to the authenticity of the Gospel text. Four well-known theologians agreed with this: Ali at-Tabari (died 855), Qasim al-Khasani (died 860), Amr al-Ghakhiz (died 869) and, last but not least, the famous Al-Ghazzali (died 1111). Their view is shared by Abu Ali Husain Bin Sina, who is known in the West as Avicenna (died 1037). Bukhari (died 870), who acquired a great name by his collection of early traditions, quoted the Qur'an itself (S. 3:72, 78) to prove that the text of the Bible was not falsified.

*Can we trust the Gospel? by J. Wijngaard*

To this present day, Muslim teachers uphold the argument that the Bible has been corrupted. We are going to investigate this claim critically.

## 1.3 Where and how do Bible and Qur'an differ?

While there are a great number of contradictions and deviations, we can look only at some of the more striking and more fundamental ones:

**Bible**  
**Noah** had three sons who survived the flood

So the Lord said, 'I will wipe mankind whom I have created, off from the face of the earth - men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air - for I am grieved that I have made them'. But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord.

This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. **Noah had three sons**: Shem, Ham and Japhet.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God

**Qur'an**  
**Núh** had one son who drowned in the flood

So the Ark floated with them on the waves (towering) like mountains. And **Noah called out to his son**, who had separated himself (from the rest): 'O my son! Embark with us, and be not with the Unbelievers!'

The son replied: 'I will betake myself to some mountain. It will save me from the water'. Noah said: 'This day nothing can save from the command of Allah, any but those on whom He hath mercy! And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the Flood.

*Surah 11:42-43*

saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, 'I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth ... But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark - you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.

*Genesis 6:7-13 + 18*

**Abrahams's** father was Terah

**Ibrahims's** father was Azar

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

Lo! Abraham said to his father Azar ...

*Surah 6:74*

*Genesis 11:27*

**Moses** was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter

**Moosa** was rescued by Pharaoh's wife

When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying: 'I drew him out of the water'.

The wife of Pharaoh said: 'Here is a joy of the eye, for me and for thee. Slay him not. It may be that he will be of use to us, or we may adopt him as a son'. And they perceived not (what they were doing)!

*Exodus 2:10*

*Surah 28:9*

**Pharaoh, Haman and the Tower of Babel**

**Pharaoh** said:

According to the Bible,  
Pharaoh lived BC 1700 - see Exodus 1  
Haman lived BC 510 - see Esther 3  
The tower was built BC 2250 - see Genesis 11

'O Chiefs! No god do I know for you but myself; therefore, O **Haman** light me a (kiln to bake bricks) out of clay, and build me a lofty palace<sup>1</sup>, **that I may mount up to the god of Moses**. But as far as I am concerned, I think (Moses) is a liar!  
*Surah 28: 9*

Other translations read:

...high tower that I may ascend unto the God of Moses. *Sale*

...and make me a tower that I may mount up to Moses.

*Arberry*

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Palace' should actually read 'tower', as other translators confirm.



...a tower, that I may reach the avenues of the heavens and ascend unto the God of Moses.

*Palmer and Rodwell*

**Sacrifices**, particularly the blood of these, are basic and essential to forgiveness and atonement. During the OT times animal sacrifices had to be offered. These were symbols of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus, who ratified those sacrifices by the offering of himself.

For the life of a creature is in the **blood**, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

*Leviticus 17:11*

He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its **blood** behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it.

*Leviticus 16:15*

If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the Lord. He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. He is to slaughter the young bull before the Lord, and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the **blood** and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

*Leviticus 1:3-5*

John saw Jesus coming towards him and said: 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'

*John 1:29*

While they were eating, Jesus took

**Qurban** (= sacrifice) is a symbol, the blood of this avails nothing.

To every people did we appoint rites (of sacrifice) that they might celebrate the name of Allah over the sustenance He gave them from animals (fit for food). But your God is One God; submit then your wills to Him (in Islam) and give thou the good news to those who humble themselves.

The sacrificial camels we have made for you as among the symbols from Allah: in them is (much) good for you. **It is not** their meat nor **their blood** that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches him.

*Surah 22:34-37*

Regarding the meaning of the sacrifice, we have to ask what the word Qurban actually means: 'Approaching near', to whom? How? Why?

**The sacrifice offered on Idu'l Adha has its origin in the Bible:**

A few months after his arrival in Medina, Mohammed saw the Jews keeping the great Fast of the Atonement; and he readily adopted it for his own people.

Ashor, or the 'Fast of the Tenth', i.e. the tenth day of the seventh month [Lev.13:27]. It was a day of affliction and atonement; but popular tradition at Medina assigned to it another origin. When Mohammed asked the Jews what was the origin of the Fast, they said that it was in memory of the delivery of Moses out of the hands of Pharaoh, and the destruction of the tyrant in the Red Sea. 'We have a greater right in Moses than they', said Mohammed; so he fasted like the Jews, and commanded his people to fast also. Afterwards when the Muslim Fast of

bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body'. Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my **blood** of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'.

*Matthew 26:26-28*

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his **blood**. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.

*Romans 3:25*

Since we have now been **justified by his blood**, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

*Romans 5:9*

And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by **making peace through his blood**, shed on the cross.

*Colossians 1:20*

But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year; and never without **blood**, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance ... In fact the law requires that nearly everything be **cleansed with blood** and, **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness**.

*Hebrews 9:7 + 22*

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has **freed us from our sins by his blood**.

*Revelations 1: 5*

Ramadan was imposed, Mohammed did not command the Fast of Ashor to be observed, neither did he forbid it, i.e. he left it optional to keep up the one as well as the other. [At-Tabari, i. 1281 'Ashura is the tenth (or ninth) day of the first month, Moharram.

*"The Life of Mohammed" by Muir, p.191*

It is certainly revealing to notice that the Jewish 'Yom Kippur' or 'Day of Atonement' (Lev.16) falls on the same day or very close to Idu'l Adha, on which Muslims offer their Qurban.

And we ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice.

*Surah 37:107*

This contradicts Surah 22:37, but would be in keeping with the Bible and the annual Qurban sacrifice offered by Muslims on Eid-ul-Adha.

**John the Baptist** carried a name which was quite common in Israel.

The sons of Josiah: Johanan the firstborn, Jehoiakim the second son, Zedekiah the third, Shallum the fourth.

The sons of Elieoenai: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah and Anani - seven in all.

*1 Chronicles 3:15 + 24*

Ahimaaz the father of Azariah, Azariah the father of Johanan.

*1 Chronicles 6:9*

And Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the Thirty, who was a leader of the Thirty; Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad the Gederathite...

*1 Chronicles 12:4*

(See also *Ezra 8:12 and Nehemiah 6:18*)

**Mary, Mother of Jesus** is not identical with Miriam, sister of Moses. The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, a descendent of Levi, who was born to the Levites in Egypt. To Amram she bore Aaron, Moses and their sister Miriam (1450 BC).

*Numbers 26:59*

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they could come together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. (BC 4) *Matthew 1:18*

*Imram (Biblical Amram) was the father of Moses, Aaron and Miryam (Miriam) [by implication in S. 19:28; 66:12; 20:25-30].*

*But Miriam (or Mary), the mother of Jesus, was actually born about 1500 years later!*

**Yahya** carried a name, which no one had before

O Zakariya! We give thee good news of a son. His name shall be Yahya: On none by that name have we conferred distinction before.

*Surah 19:7*

This is a misleading translation. It actually should read: '... Yahya [or John] whose name no one had before'. John is, of course, an English name. 'Yohanan' is the Hebrew version, which was actually the name by which John was called. This was by no means an uncommon name.

**Miryam**, the sister of Aaron and Moses, was the mother of Jesus

At length she brought the (babe) to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: 'O Mary! Truly an amazing thing hast thou brought!

O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of evil, nor thy mother a woman unchaste!

*Surah 19:27-28*

**Jesus** is the Son of God, gives eternal life and is the only way to God. But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.

*Luke 1:30-33*

The high priest said to him, 'I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God'. 'Yes, it is as you say', Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: In future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven'.

*Matthew 26:63-64*

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand.

*John 10:27-28*

Jesus answered: 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me'.

*John 14:6*

**Crucifixion** is a historical fact. Carrying his own cross, he went out to The Place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him.

Jesus said: 'It is finished'. With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

*John 19:17 + 30*

When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals - one on his right, the other on his left.

**Isa** is no more than an apostle (messenger) of God.

Christ the son of Mary was no more than an apostle; many were the apostles that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food ... In blasphemy indeed are those that say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary. They do blaspheme who say: 'Allah is Christ the son of Mary'.

*Surah 5:78-79, 75*

The Jews call Uzair a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouths. (In this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth!

*Surah 9:30*

**Crucifixion** of Jesus never took place, neither was he killed

They [i.e. the Jews] said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of Allah'. But they killed him not, nor crucified him. But so it was made to appear to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow. For of a surety they killed him not.

*Surah 4:157*

Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit'. When he had said this, he breathed his last.

*Luke 23:33 + 46*

When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

*Matthew 27: 35-37 + 50*

**Trinity** is the Nature of God

I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us - yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses. He said: 'Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me'; and so he became their Saviour [Hebrew 'Yeshua' = Jesus]. In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.

*Isaiah 63: 7-11*

**Trinity** is blasphemy

They do blaspheme who say: 'Allah is one of three in a trinity'; for there is no god except one Allah. *Surah 5:73*

O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion; nor say of Allah aught but truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (nor more than) an apostle of Allah. And his word, which he bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from him: so believe in Allah and his apostles. Say not 'Trinity': desist. It will be better for you: For Allah is one Allah. Glory be to him. (For exalted is he) above having a son.

*Surah 4:171*

## Evaluation

Muslims naturally assume that it is the Bible that has been falsified. The obvious aim is not so much to discredit the Bible, but to justify the text of the Qur'an.

It is clear to the honest scholarly reader, that the writer of the Qur'an has not only completely misunderstood the Biblical message, but also included historically questionable 'Biblical' stories.

Consequently, we have to investigate, whether the Qur'an or the Bible show evidence of reliability, and thus prove trustworthy. After all, we deal with matters determining our eternal destiny!!

### 1.3 What present day Muslims say about the Bible and Jesus...

One would be able to fill volumes with statements similar to those quoted here. For the sake of brevity we just look at some brief extracts from publications by two Muslim authors, which are typical (The emphases are ours):



What is the present Bible then? you may ask. Is it not the Word of God? The answer is: **What used to be the Word of God has been so adulterated by human hands that the Word of God is hardly distinguishable from the word of man.** In some places we do still find a glimmer of the truth that Jesus taught - the gems of divine wisdom that he uttered for the good of his people - but these are few and far between in the jungles of **interpolations** and **contradictions** with which the Bible is dense.

**It will make any reasonable man wonder how this book ever came to be called "the Word of God". The present Bible, therefore, can never by any stretch of imagination be called "the inspired Word of God".**

**It is admitted by the most learned men in the Hebrew language that the present English version of the Old Testament contains at least one hundred thousand errors.** (This would be 3 errors per verse in the OT! Editor.)

*The Bible: Word of God or Word of Man, by A.S.K. Joommal*



Faith demands total allegiance to the Bible - with its faults, absurdities, everything. Reason, on the other hand is loath to accept matters that constitute an insult to the human intelligence.

Although an extravagant claim is put forward by Bible Societies and other fanatics that the Bible is the most read book in the world, the contrary is true.

The faith, therefore, as practised by present-day Christians, is a strange mixture of paganism, Paulianity and Churchianity.

A little chastisement on the Son of God, therefore, was taken as remission for the sins of all men together.

The doctrine of Atonement presents God in a bad light: as a cruel, merciless God who could not forgive the sins of men without exacting his 'pound of flesh'.

*The Bible: Word of God or Word of Man, by A.S.K. Joommal*



**The Taurat we Muslims believe in is not the 'Torah' of the Jews and the Christians**, though the words - one Arabic, the other Hebrew - are the same. We believe that whatever the Holy Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) preached to his people, was the revelation from God Almighty, but that Moses was not the author of those 'books' attributed to him by the Jews and the Christians.

Likewise, we believe that the **Zaboor** was the revelation of God granted to Hazrat Dawood (David), (peace be upon him), but that **the present Psalms associated with his name are not that revelation**. The Christians themselves do not insist that David is the sole author of 'his' Psalms. [The book of Psalms states that Asaph is the writer of 12 Psalms and 5 are ascribed to the sons of Korah][emphases are ours].

What about the **Injeel**? Injeel means the 'Gospel' or 'good news' which Jesus Christ preached during his short ministry. The 'Gospel' writers often mention that Jesus (sic) going about and preaching the Gospel (the Injeel):

1. And Jesus went ... preaching the gospel ... and healing every disease among the people'. (Matthew 9:35)
2. '... but whoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it'. (Mark 8:35)
3. '... preached the gospel ...'. (Luke 20:1)

The 'gospel' is a frequently-used word, but what Gospel did Jesus preach? Of the 27 books of the New Testament, only a small fraction can be accepted as the words of Jesus. The Christians boast about the Gospel to St. Matthew, according to St. Mark, according to St. Luke and according to St. John, but there is not a single Gospel 'according' to (St.) Jesus himself! We **sincerely** believe that everything Christ (May the peace and blessings of God be upon him) preached was from God. That was the **Injeel**, the good news and the guidance of God for the Children of Israel. In his life-time Jesus never wrote a single word, nor did he instruct anyone to do so. What passes off as the 'gospels' today are the works of anonymous hands!

*Is the Bible God's Word? by A. Deedat*



If it is possible for God to have a 'son', then why is it not possible for Him to have a grandson also? In this way He will be able to raise generations of he-gods and she-gods.

In His first experiment of creating mankind, God was a failure: 'And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. **And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart**'. (Genesis 6:5-6). So the questions are:

- a. Why cannot He be a failure in His second experiment of wiping sin off from the face of the earth by hanging his only begotten son?
- b. Since the son departed from the earth and is sitting snugly beside his daddy, has the sin decreased or increased? If the latter is true,

then

c. Has not God failed in His second experiment as well?

*The Bible: Word of God or Word of Man, by A.S.K. Joommal*

Surprisingly, the Qur'an shows a very different attitude towards the Bible. It actually totally defies just about all of the contemporary Islamic propaganda. Christians do not mind engaging in spiritual and intellectual arguments. The statements we just read, however, are patently untrue and malicious. Their presentations are blasphemous and contradict even the Qur'an. One feels tempted to simply ignore them for their utter dishonesty. But human beings are being deceived! Therefore we need to set the matter right.

## 1.4 ... and what the Qur'an says about the Bible

When four Jews of Medina asked Muhammad which of the prophets he believed in, he is reported (Siratu'l Nabi, vs. 396) to have replied:



We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord. **We make no difference between one and another of them.** And we bow to Allah.

*Surah 2:136*

The Qur'an further states:



Allah! There is no God but He - the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal.

It is He who sent down to thee (step by step) in truth, the Book, **confirming what went before it. And He sent down Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this as a guide to mankind.**

*Surah 3:2-3*

**O ye who believe! Believe in Allah** and his apostle, and the scriptures which he hath sent to his **apostle and the scripture which he sent to those before (him).** **And who denieth Allah,** his angels, **his apostles,** and the Day of Judgement, **hath gone far, far astray.**

*Surah 4:136*

It was **We** who **revealed the Law (of Moses); therein was guidance and light.** By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the prophet who bowed (as in Islam) to Allah's will, by the Rabbis and the Doctors of Law; for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book. And they were witnesses thereto: therefore fear not men but fear Me, and sell not my Signs for a miserable price. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers.

*Surah 5:44*





And in their footsteps **We sent Jesus** the son of Mary, confirming the Law that had come before him: **We sent him the Gospel: therein was<sup>1</sup> guidance and light.** And confirmation of the Law that had come before him. **A guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah.**

*Surah 5:46*

**Let the people of the Gospel judge by what Allah hath revealed therein.** If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) those who rebel.

*Surah 5: 47*

To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety; so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth, that hath come to thee. To each among you have we prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If Allah had so willed, he would have made you a single People, but (his plan is) to test you in what He hath given you; so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah. It is he that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute.

*Surah 5: 48*

**Say: 'O People of the Book! Ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord.** *Surah 5:68*

**This Qur'an** is not such as can be produced by other than Allah. On the contrary it is **a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book<sup>1</sup> - wherein there is no doubt – from the Lord of the Worlds.**

**If thou wert in doubt as to what we have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee<sup>2</sup>.** The Truth hath indeed come to thee from thy Lord so be in no wise of those in doubt.

*Surah 10:37 + 94*

Say: 'Bring ye the Law and study it, if ye be men of truth!'

*Surah 3::93*

Would this have been suggested in regard to a corrupted Book?!

O ye People of the Book! **Believe in what** we have (now) revealed, confirming what **was (already) with you.**

*Surah 4:47*

Would this have been suggested in regard to a corrupted Book?!

**Before thee** [i.e. Muhammad] also the apostles [i.e. prophets] **we sent** were but **men, to whom we granted inspiration. If ye realise this not, ask of those who possess the Message.**

*Surah 21:7*

Would this have been suggested in regard to a corrupted Book?!

Muslims are explicitly urged to argue their case with Christians respectfully:



And dispute ye not with the People of the book, except with means better (than mere disputation)... But say, We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in what came down to you; our God and your God is one, and it is to him we bow.

*Surah 29:46*

And when in doubt about their own Scripture they should ask a Christian's advice:



If thou wert in doubt as to what we have revealed unto thee, then ask those whom have been reading the Book from before thee<sup>2</sup>. The Truth has indeed come to thee from thy Lord, so be in no wise of those in doubt.

*Surah 10: 94(+37)*

When Muslims claim that the Qur'an teaches that the Biblical Scriptures have been changed, they can only find some support in two verses:



Ye People of the Book! Why do ye clothe Truth with falsehood, and **conceal the Truth, while ye have knowledge?**

**There is among them a section who distort the Book with their tongues; (as they read) you would think it is a part of the Book, but it is no part of the Book;** and they say 'That is from Allah. It is they who tell a lie against Allah, and (well) they know it!

*Surah 3:71 + 78*

These verses are self-explanatory, but still we like to note:

- The 'People of the Book' (i.e. Jews and Christians) concealed the "Truth of which they have knowledge" (!)
- **They pretend to "read from the Book"**, but they read something, which it contained not.

This presupposes that the Book was available to check out the Truth, but that there were some who twisted it. To conclude from this that the Bible has been corrupted is nothing short of deceit.

*We conclude that all the talk of a corrupted Bible is the Islamic way to make Muslims resistant to the Gospel. It is meant to undermine its authority for fear that it might be found more trustworthy than the Qur'an. Exposure to the Bible will show it to be more desirable in content, better evidenced, and subsequently more reliable.*

<sup>2</sup> The Jews and the Christians.

## Evaluation

Any sober-minded scholar with some integrity will have to admit, that the statements made by Islamic Apologists are in contrast to what they claim to be their absolute and divine guide: the Qur'an.

The Qur'an also states:



Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clearly from error.  
*Surah 2:256*

One would wish this to be a general practice within Islam.

We can clearly trace the reasons for the dilemma of the Muslims:

- **The Qur'an is assumed to be the Word of God**
- **The Qur'an also claims the Bible to be the Word of God** (or at least what is termed the Taurat, the Zabur, "...that given to (all) prophets from their Lord". and the Injil)
- However, **the Qur'an contradicts the Bible** (= dilemma).

The logical and rational reasoning should be to believe the historically older statements, as these were recorded at a time when the information was revealed.

Theological statements on a doctrine can hardly be verified by history. However, recorded historical evidence as well as archaeological discoveries and fulfilled prophecy are well able to confirm the Truth.

However, Islam chose to overlook or reject these. It is only logical then that many Muslims resort to an undignified and irrational emotional campaign to contradict these established facts to uphold their own position.

That is why, against all reason, practically all Muslims do not believe the evidenced facts or what the Qur'an says about the Bible, but rather what their **Maulanas** or **Sheikhs** teach them.

## 1.5 A Christian response to Muslim attacks on the Bible

*The Qur'an, the ultimate authority of all Muslims, teaches undeniably and emphatically that the Bible is the revealed Word of God.*

Because many Christians do not know the Muslims' thinking and argumentation, they are likely to be intimidated by their questions, especially

as they use arguments from the Bible, which Christians are not normally equipped to answer. Subsequently Christians react and withdraw into inappropriate squabbling. Christians should be able to correct misunderstandings Muslims have about the Bible. They should also be aware of problems within the Bible and how to assess them. There is a better way than merely reacting to Muslim objections. Let us look at it:

The Qur'an further states categorically:



**No change can there be in the Words of Allah.**

(Arabic: "La mubadillah likalima at-Allah.")

*Surah 10:64*

**There is none that can alter the Words of Allah.**

*Surah 6:34*

### **This leaves one of three options:**

- **God will not allow any change in His revelation, as the Qur'an distinctly states, hence the Bible could not have been changed.**
- **The Bible was changed before the time of Muhammad. In this case the Qur'an would not have stated the contrary.**
- **The Bible was changed after Muhammad. This cannot be, for thousands of Biblical manuscripts which predate Muhammad are still in our possession.**

Subsequently all the arguments levelled against the Bible by Muslims contradict the very Qur'an that Muslims profess to believe!

We would like our Muslim friends to consider the contrasting view carefully:

<b>The Qur'an demands faith in the Bible</b>	<b>However: Muslims refuse to believe in the Bible</b>
<b>The Qur'an demands faith in the Bible.</b>	<b>Muslims do not believe in the 'former Scriptures', claiming that these have been changed. This is not what the Qur'an teaches.</b>
<b>Islam teaches that Allah is the same as the God of the Bible.</b> (S. 29:46)	<b>The Qur'an doesn't confirm the former Scriptures in most fundamental theological issues.</b>
<b>The former Books were available at the time of Muhammad.</b> (S. 10:94; 3:93;21:7 and 3:71)	<b>While Allah is said to make no difference between the Qur'an and the former Scriptures, Muslims very much do.</b>
<b>The Book (Biblical Scripture) is the</b>	<b>Muslims perceive that 'Books'</b>

<p><b>ground on which Christians and Jews should stand.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(S. 5:71)</b></p>	<p><b>were given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Jesus. While inspiration of revelation occurred, nobody ever received a 'Book'. This reflects the Islamic concept of revelation.</b></p>
<p><b>These revelations were given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(S. 2:136)</b></p>	<p><b>Muslims wrongly assume that Jesus (Nabi Isa) received the 'injl' which no longer is in the Bible today.</b></p>
<p><b>We (i.e. Allah) make no difference between one and another of them.</b></p> <p><b>(S. 2:136)</b></p>	<p><b>In reality Muslims make a big difference between the books.</b></p>
<p><b>The Qur'an is confirming (so Muhammad thought) the former Scriptures, which as a matter of fact it does not.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(S. 3:3; 5:49;10:37 and 4:47)</b></p>	<p><b>Muslims rarely ever ask for confirmation from Christians when in doubt about their own Scriptures.</b></p>
<p><b>Muslims should not dispute with the Christians except in a manner that builds up.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(S. 29:46)</b></p>	<p><b>Public disputes with Christians (or rather against the Christian faith) has become very common in many countries in Africa.</b></p>

### **Recommended Literature for Chapter 1:**

**Christian Reply to Muslim Objections.** W. St. Clair-Tisdall, Call of Hope, 1904.

**Is the Qur'an Infallible?** Abdallah Abd-al Fad, Villach: Light of Life, (undated), pp. 171-185.

**Facing the Muslim Challenge.** **John Gilchrist, Life Challenge Africa, 1999, pp. 17-34.**

## 2 Inspiration and Revelation

Muslims and Christians have a different perception of what inspiration and revelation is. Obviously Muslims reason on **their** perception of inspiration and revelation, and Christians do likewise. We investigate.

### 2.1 The Islamic View

#### 2.1.1 The Qur'an is eternally preserved on heavenly tablets



This is a Glorious Qur'an. (Inscribed) in a tablet preserved.

*Surah 85:21-22*

#### 2.1.2 The same message was given to former prophets



Nothing is said to thee that was not said to the apostles before thee.

*Surah 41:43*

#### 2.1.3 The Qur'an was handed down by the angel Gabriel piece by piece over 23 years



Those who reject Faith say: 'Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once? Thus (is it revealed), that we may strengthen thy heart thereby, and we have rehearsed it to thee in slow, well-arranged stages, gradually.

*Surah 25:32*

#### 2.1.4 Subsequently the Qur'an is 'nazil' (= came down by inspiration)



Raised on high above ranks (or degrees), (he is) the Lord of the Throne (of authority). By his command doth he send the spirit (of inspiration) to any of his servants he pleases, that it may warn (men) of the Day of Mutual Meeting.

*Surah 40:15*

They ask thee concerning the spirit (of inspiration). Say: 'The spirit<sup>3</sup> cometh by command of my Lord; of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (o man!).

*Surah 17:85*

Thus **have we sent by inspiration to thee an Arabic Qur'an**, that thou mayest warn the Mother of Cities and all around her.

*Surah 42:7*

## 2.1.5 The Qur'an is considered to be revelation



Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds. With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth to thy heart and mind that thou mayest admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue. Without doubt it is (announced) in the mystic Books of former peoples.

*Surah 26:192-196*

Say thou: 'I am but a man like you; it is revealed to me by inspiration that your Allah is One Allah; so stand true to him, and ask for his forgiveness'. And woe to those who join gods with Allah.

*Surah 41:6*

Say, the Holy Spirit has brought the revelation from thy Lord. In Truth, in order to strengthen those who believe and as a Guide and glad tidings to Muslims.

*Surah 16:102*

## 2.1.6 But the inspiration was met with doubt



When we substitute one revelation for another - and Allah knows best what he reveals (in stages) - they say: '**Thou art but a forger**'; but most of them understand not.

We know indeed that they say: 'It is a man that teaches him'. The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear.

*Surah 16:101 + 103*

## 2.1.7 Summary of Qur'anic revelation

Allah reveals (not himself, but) his will (S. 42:51)

- by inspiration (S. 41:6; 42:7)
- i.e. by the Spirit (S: 16:102)

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<sup>3</sup> "The Spirit" This refers to Gabriel! It is the key to understand the concept of 'inspiration' in Islam.

- which is generally understood to be Gabriel
- The ‘Book’ came down in Arabic, bringing Good News and admonition (S. 41:4)
- to the ‘Mother of Cities’ (i.e. Mecca), (S. 42:7)
- but the people there accused the messenger (i.e. Muhammad) of forgery
- because “it is a man that teaches him” (referring to Salman, the Persian<sup>4</sup>)
- and because one ‘revelation’ was substituted for another (see ‘Abrogation’)

## 2.2 The Biblical Concept

### 2.2.1 Inspiration

We find the word ‘inspiration’ only once in the Old Testament (A.V.), in Job 32:8. It is ‘*neshamah*’ and actually means ‘breath’ (and is so rendered in other translations). Likewise it appears only once in the New Testament (A.V.), where the original Greek word is ‘*theopneustos*’, of which the purpose is given:



All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

A word much more used in Scripture is ‘to reveal’.

### 2.2.2 Revelation

In the original Hebrew text the word ‘*galah*’ is used, which means, translated, to uncover, unveil. The Greek word ‘*apokalupto*’ (for the verb) and ‘*apokalupsis*’ (for the noun) has the same meaning:



Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without **revealing his plan** to his servants the prophets.

*Amos 3:7*

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He **reveals deep and hidden things**; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

*Daniel 2:21-22*

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

*Deuteronomy 29:29*

Probably the best description of revelation is found in 1Corinthians 2:9-11.

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<sup>4</sup> Salman, the Persian, was befriended with Muhammad and is likely to have influenced him regarding Qur’anic teachings with Zoroastrian background.





No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.

But **God has revealed it to us by his Spirit**. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. **We have not received** the spirit of the world but This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in **words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words**. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

What in particular was and will be revealed by God in His Word?

<b>His Son</b> (Gal 1:16; Lu 17:30; 2 Th 1:7)	<b>His Glory</b> (Isa 40:5; Ro 8:18; 1 Pe 4:13)
<b>His Word</b> (1 Sa 3:7)	<b>His Righteousness</b> (Isa 56:1)
<b>Himself</b> (Jn 14:9)	<b>His Wrath</b> (Ro 1:18)
<b>His Judgement</b> (Ro 2:5)	<b>Anti-Christ</b> (2 Th 2:3)
<b>His Mystery</b> (Eph 3:3; Ro 16:25; Col 1:25-27)	<b>Thoughts of our heart</b> (Lu 2:35)
<b>His Cause</b> (Jer 11:20)	

### 2.2.3 How Muslims view Biblical Revelation

Mr. Ahmed Deedat in his booklet *Is the Bible the Word of God* explains:



We Muslims have no hesitation in acknowledging that in the Bible, there are three different kinds of witnessing recognisable without any need of specialised training. These are:

1. You will be able to recognise in the Bible what may be described as The Word of God.
2. You will also be able to discern what can be described as the Words of a Prophet of God.
3. And you will most readily observe that the bulk of the Bible is the records of eyewitnesses or ear-witnesses, or people writing from hearsay. As such they are the Words of a Historian. You do not have to hunt for examples of these different types of evidences in the Bible. The following quotations will make the position abundantly clear:  
**The first type:**

- a. I will raise them up a prophet ... and I will put my words in ... and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. (Dt 18:18)
- b. I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no saviour. (Isa 43:11)
- c. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the end of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. (Isa 45:22)

Note the first person pronoun singular in the above references and without any difficulty you will agree that the statements seem to have the sound of being GOD'S WORD.

#### **The second type:**

- a. Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani? (Mt 27:46)
- b. And Jesus answered him. The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. (Mk 12:29).
- c. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. (Mk 10:18) Even a child will be able to affirm that: Jesus cried, Jesus answered, and Jesus said, are the words of the one to whom they are attributed, i.e. the WORDS OF A PROPHET OF GOD.

#### **The third type:**

And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he (Jesus) came, if haply he (Jesus) might find anything thereon: and when he (Jesus) came to it, he (Jesus) found nothing but leaves ... (Mk 11:13)

The bulk of the Bible is a witnessing of this third kind. These are the words of a third person. They are not the Words of God or of His prophet, but the WORDS OF A HISTORIAN.

For the Muslim it is quite easy to distinguish the above types of evidence, because he also has them in his own faith. But of the followers of the different religions, he is the most fortunate in this that his various records are contained in separate Books!

**One:** The first kind - THE WORD OF GOD - is found in a Book called The Holy Qur'an.

**Two:** The second type - THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET OF GOD - (Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are recorded in the Books of Tradition called The Hadith.

**Three:** Evidence of the third kind abounds in different volume of Islamic history, written by some of high integrity and learning, and others of lesser trustworthiness, but the Muslim advisedly keeps his Books in separate volumes!

*Is the Bible God's Word? by A. Deedat*

We can see that to a Muslim God's revelation in history (1Co 10:1-6, 11-12) is no revelation at all. Neither is what other people have to say about God.

**Only** what God says Himself is considered revelation.

**But the Qur'an has that identical phenomenon:**



For me, [says Muhammad] I have been commanded to serve the Lord of this city.

*Surah 27:91*

Has Allah been commanded to serve the Lord of this city (which is, no doubt, Mecca)? Who was the Lord of the city at the time of Muhammad? It was Hubal, whose statue was kept in the Ka'ba. Surely the verse does not mean that Allah was commanded to serve an idol. Here Muhammad is writing, and he reports that he has been commanded to serve. This is done in the first person.

A substantial number of Qur'an texts were written in the second or third person (Allah being 'you' or 'he'); and not in the first (i.e. 'I' or 'we').

In the very first Surah we read:



Thee do we [second person] worship, and thine aid we [second person] seek. Show us [second person] the straight way. The way of those on whom thou hast bestowed thy grace, thou whose [portion] is not wrath and who not go astray.

*Surah 1:5-7*

We ask: Is Allah praying here? And if yes, to whom does he pray?

Other Surahs express a similar pattern:



Of the people there are some [other persons] who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day'. But they do not really believe ... In their hearts is a disease. And Allah [third person] has increased their disease; and grievous is the penalty they (incur), because they are false (to themselves).

*Surah 2:8-10*



Behold, thy Lord [third person] said to the angels: 'I will create a vice-regent on earth'. They [other persons] said: 'Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? ... He [third person] said: 'I know what ye know not'. And he [third person] taught Adam the nature of all things; then he placed them before the angels, and said: 'Tell me the nature of theses if ye are right'. They [other persons] said: 'Glory to thee of knowledge we have none, save what thou hast taught us: in truth it is thou who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom. He [third person] said: 'O Adam! tell them their natures. When he had told them, Allah [third person] said: 'Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heavens and earth.

*Surah 2:30-34*

Allah [third person] did indeed fulfil his promise to you ... He [third person] brought you in sight (of the booty) which ye covet ... He [third person] diverted you from your foes in order to test you but he forgave you: For Allah [third person] is full of grace to those who believe ... There did Allah [third person] give you one distress after another ... For Allah [third person] is well aware of all that ye do ... They [other persons] said: 'What affair is this of ours?' ....

*Surah 3:152-153*

It is Allah [third person] who has created the heavens and the earth ... ye have none, besides him to protect or intercede (for you) ... He [third person] rules (all) affairs from the heavens to the earth ... Such is he [third person], the Knower of all things ... He [third person] who has made everything which he [third person] has created ... he [third person] began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay ... He [third person] fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of his spirit. And he [third person] gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling ... And they [other persons] say: 'What! When we lie, hidden and lost, in the earth, shall we indeed be in a creation renewed?' ... Abraham [other persons] said: 'What then is the business on which ye (have come), O ye messengers (of Allah)?' ... They [other persons] said: 'We have been sent to a people (deep) in sin'.

*Surah 32:4-10 and 57-58*

These few examples may suffice to illustrate the point. We read of Allah in the third person singular ('he', 'him') or by name "...those who fear Allah..., Allah has set a seal ..." He is also called "our Guardian - Lord." We read that "Abraham said... - They said..." etc.

Proceeding from their understanding (not necessarily their book), Muslims assume that if the 'Books of Moses' were a book handed down to Moses, it should have been in the first person only = "I say...". The same would apply to a book given to David (Zabur) and Jesus (Injil). But **neither of these men was given a book**. This 'book concept' was Muhammad's idea when he saw that the Jews and Christians had one.

## 2.2.4 How God reveals



**I saw** the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up...

*Isaiah 6:1*

**Thus says the Lord...**

*Jeremia 13:8 etc.*

**The Word** of the Lord **came to me...**

*Jeremia 13:1 etc.*

**The oracle (or burden) of the Word** of the Lord to Israel by Malachi

*Maleachi 1:1*

I **saw** what happened to be...

*Revelations 15:2*

When I **saw** Him I fell at his feet as though dead. But **He laid his right hand upon me**, saying, fear not!  
*Rev 1:17*

To the married I **(Paul) give charge**, but not the Lord...I **say this** by way of concession, not of command ... **This is my (Paul's) rule** in all the churches...I have no command of the Lord, but I **give my opinion**...

*2Corinthians 7:10,6,17,25*

Revelation is not confined to oral communication. It equally includes experiences of more than one of our senses (e.g. I heard, I saw, an oracle or a burden). It also includes advice of the divinely-inspired writers.

## 2.2.5 God revealed Himself and His will

Besides His Word, God revealed Himself in Christ - the Word which became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14). He also revealed ...

... His will, ...intentions, ... prophecies, ... pronouncements,  
...instructions, ...laws, etc...

... to His servants, the prophets - but never in book form - over a period of 1400 years. They were direct orders and pronouncements, but there is also recorded history, from which the believers were to learn about God (1Co 10) and about the mistakes of man. There was also inspired poetry (Job, Psalms, Proverbs etc.) to stimulate worship and to attain to wisdom and knowledge.

## 2.2.6 Prophets were not typewriters

We do not know exactly how God effected the revealing part, but we do know that somehow the style, choice of words and even character of the prophets or recorders are recognisable. From a recorder's style expert philologists (linguists) are able to distinguish between the writing of, say, Amos and Daniel, or between Paul and John.

*God embedded His Message in the hearts and minds of His messengers, who clothed it in human wording under the control of His Holy Spirit.*



*Muhammad is the only witness  
not only to the Qur'an, but also  
to all the Hadith and by that  
the whole of Islam.*

## 2.2.7 The proof of Genuineness of Revelation

How can we discern which message comes from God, and which is a human fake?

**While we do not know the process of revelation, we do have the evidence for its genuineness: It is the fulfilment of the predictions of events in the distant future which, from a human perspective, would have been totally unforeseeable.**

(See chapter on 'Evidences') In addition we can observe a unity of thought within the revelations, which may be hundreds of years apart.

A Jewish theologian and a computer scientist of the University of Haifa (Israel) made an analysis of the Old Testament and concluded that this "has one real author, and he is not a mortal" (Prof. Moshe Katz and Dr. Menachem Wiener).

By the way, theologians and philologists have little difficulty sorting out which of the portions of the Qur'an were written in Mecca and which in Medina. They can even discern the time frame of the individual portions, because the style of the composition and its interwoven stories reflected the historical situation at the time of the revelation.

And as Christians believe the Bible, so Muslims believe in the Qur'an. It is a matter of faith - though unlike the Bible, the Qur'an shows no tangible evidences to back its claim.

## 2.2.8 Conclusion

While we acknowledge that we are inclined to find difficulties in the Bible, we have to categorically state that history, archaeology and fulfilled prophecy unanimously support the revelatory character of the Bible.

**Based on our studies of the Qur'an we can hardly arrive at the same conclusion, for no supernatural evidence of a divine characteristic or token can be substantiated.**

In an effort to do that, the late Mr. A. Deedat of the Islamic Propagation Centre International published a booklet named 'The Qur'an, the ultimate Miracle', based on a computer calculation of Dr Khalifa of the US who endeavoured to substantiate the divine origin of the Qur'an by claiming that it contained a mysterious numerical system. He concluded that the chances of the Qur'an being of human origin were 1:63.000.000.000.000.000.000.000 (1:63octillion)! That, of course, would rule out any human participation in its creation and composition. When we put

these numbers to the test by correcting illegitimate manipulations and blatant misrepresentations, we discovered that the chances of the Qur'an being of human origin, were 1:1,3. And that is absolutely human. After this was published, the booklet was soon withdrawn! It turned out to be rather counterproductive. If such desperate methods need to be applied to 'prove' a divine intervention, it is not well with Islam. We do not think that dishonest means contribute to the credibility of any spiritual statement.

### **Recommended Literature for Chapter 2:**

**Is the Bible God's Word?** Ahmed Deedat, IPCI: 1989 (7<sup>th</sup> Print).

**Jam' al Qur'an, the Codification of the Qur'an.** John Gilchrist, Jesus to the Muslims: 1989.

## 3 Allegations against the Bible

We have already looked at the reasons which should persuade honest Muslims, based on their own foundation, the Qur'an, that the Bible must be considered the Word of God. Even so, we should expose ourselves to Muslims' critique against the Bible for two reasons. It helps us to understand their mind-set and shows the weakness of their own position. Based on what they learn about the Bible from their *Ulama* (= learned men), it would be considered insane for them to believe in it. Every Christian who is in a dialogue with a Muslim should be aware of this.

Besides, we should not think that ignorance is bliss. For our own sake we should face any genuine difficulty within the Bible and be liberated from subconscious doubts. Only then we will also be able to help those who believe the misrepresentations which Muslim teachers use to prevent their flock from 'going astray'.

Muslims have selected a number of Bible passages, which they question. Many of these are loaned from liberal 'Christian' Bible critics. We will here deal with all those that are commonly used. But before this, we ought to look at something else:

### 3.1 How the Bible was transmitted

1. The Biblical manuscripts were written **between 1400 BC - AD 96** (compare with the Qur'an, which was written between AD 610 and 632).
2. Before the printing press was invented, all documents had to be **written and copied by hand**. The materials then used were by no means as technically developed as ours today (crudely tanned hides were sewn together and used as scrolls (rolls) written with 'ink' of organic or inorganic colouring solutions, which were much more susceptible to physical, chemical or natural influences than ours today).
3. A piece of literature was written line after line **without parting the words and without any punctuation** of any sort.

In the Hebrew language only consonants were used. It may be compared with something like this:

THLRDSMYSHPHRDSHLLNTWNT

It is written without vowels or divisions in words. It actually means:

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

Can we imagine how difficult it is to read and understand these ancient texts?

4. When a scroll was read, it was rolled open to the relevant passage and later rolled up again. The **writing material was not even**. The raised



parts would naturally rub against the adjoining part of the scroll - and over a period of time some of the letters would be illegible.

5. The storage of scrolls or codices was hardly in a place which secured protection from vermin, insects or climate. Being **organic material**, insects would feed on it
6. There **were no numbers in use**. Letters substituted these.
7. Whenever a piece of literature began deteriorating, it was replaced by another **hand-written copy**.
8. When the New Testament documents were first written, the commonly used writing **material was papyrus**. This was very perishable and was only **later replaced by parchment** made from skins. While at first writing was done on scrolls, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, the **use of Codices** (singular = codex) (pages collated and bound in book form) replaced the scrolls.

Having this in mind: What are the chances of a book surviving 2500 years without changes until the printing press was invented (as is the case with the Psalms)? Let us assume that a scroll or codex will have to be replaced after 25 years of use. It would then have to be copied 100 times, not from the same original, mind you, but from the proceeding one. With each copy there is a very real chance of certain letters becoming illegible - a real problem if it cannot be reconstructed from the context, or even more when it represents a number (that cannot be reconstructed).

Despite all this the Bible survived! When in 1948 a great number of scrolls were found in caves on the East side of the Dead Sea at Qumran, they had been left in that cave about 200 BC (some 2150 years earlier yet amazingly well preserved!). A complete copy of the prophet Isaiah was among them. It is practically the same as in our Bibles today.

### 3.1.1 The Critics and the Bible

Yet - some problems have arisen. Though most are of a very insignificant nature, which has no bearings on the meaning of the text, some appear to present real problems.

Over the last couple of hundred years the Bible has been subjected to severe textual criticism, not by Muslims but by Christian scholars!

We must, however, distinguish between two types of Bible critique:

- **Text Criticism.** Linguists, historians and other specialists scrutinise all ancient manuscripts with the object of establishing the form and content closest to the original.

- **Higher Criticism** bases on a liberal view of Scripture. Assumptions are made which go beyond reasonable limits. Instead of seeking to establish the original meaning the message of the content and message is subjected to a critique.

Unfortunately, a textual critique of the Qur'an and the Hadith has never been encouraged or permitted. We believe this was not permitted for good reasons. It would, without doubt, have been disastrous for the credibility of these books.

Seemingly secure in their position, Muslims appear to delight in picking on the Bible and its 'corruption'. During the last 30 years in particular, the market has been flooded with titles like 'Is the Bible the Word of God?' They are a welcome tool to make unaware Christians insecure and to solicit trust in the allegedly unchanged and faultlessly preserved Qur'an. Before going into detail, we must take a look at the difficulties we face:

### **3.1.2 Difficulties we find in the Bible**

#### **Problems that arise from the manuscripts from which the Bible was translated**

- At the time when the New Testament was first translated, many of the more recently discovered manuscripts were not yet available. Thus we face more differences in the older translations.
- Advanced methods of Text Criticism were not known or applied. Hence:
- Copy errors and glossary comments have occasionally been incorporated into the text. Conflicting figures, which may be found in different accounts of the same event, have shown up because the letters (representing these figures) had become unintelligible and were subsequently copied wrongly. ן (t), for instance, denoted 400 and the very similar ן (ch) stood for 8. א (aleph) stood for 1 and with a dot over it for 1000, etc.

#### **Problems that arise from inaccurate translations**

Jonah was not in the belly of a 'whale', but of a 'sea-monster' (Mt 12:40). The 'don't touch me' of John 20:17 may well mean 'why don't you touch me'. 'Lead us not into temptation' could well be rendered in the passive (as in the ancient Aramaic text), meaning 'let us not fall into temptation', etc.

## Problems that arise from a false interpretation or understanding of a text

All too often one can find a difference between the original meaning and the interpretation of it in church doctrines. Just think the way the 'holy Eucharist' (Holy Communion) is interpreted and celebrated, or when and how baptism is administered, what salvation really is, or whether the creation of the world took place in 6 literal days, or whether the number carries a symbolic meaning etc.

How can a (rich) man pass through the eye of a needle? Are all rich people barred from heaven (Mt 19:24)? In the big city gates of old was a small pedestrian door, which was called 'the eye of a needle'. A camel could pass through it, but only 'on its knees'.

Or, how can anyone have a plank in his eye (Mt 7:5)? When we look down a well, we can see the reflection of the sky on the water below. It looks somewhat like an eye. Therefore it was called an eye. A splinter in it would just pollute it a little, but a plank would obstruct the well so that no water could be drawn.

## Problems that arise from a wrong perception of words

Hebrew was not a spoken language for a very long period of time. Due to that understanding of certain idioms or the meaning of particular words, particularly in the OT, has been lost (e.g. 'Selah' in the Psalms). Statements, which were originally made in Aramaic, were recorded in Greek, Babylonian statements in Hebrew etc. (Do you **love** me more than these? There is **one** word for love in Aramaic, and three in Greek (**agapao**, **phileo** and **eros**).

There is 'poetic language', like Oholibah's rebuke. It is said of her that she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys (Eze 23:20). Muslims have repeatedly labelled this as pornography, but the text speaks of Oholibah being Jerusalem (vs. 4) and committing spiritual adultery with the gods of Assyria (vs.7). The Bible very frequently refers to spiritual compromise as adultery or fornication.

Concepts were said and written by and for ordinary people, not for theologians or linguists, who hardly existed at that time. Therefore we must beware not to read something into the Bible, which it does not mean to say.

## Problems that have arisen from our defective knowledge of history, geography, and usage of language in Bible times

Artists have often pictured Moses with horns (e.g. Michelangelo). This was the result of the misunderstanding that the Hebrew word for 'shining' meant 'horn'.

Jesus was to be for three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Mt 12:40), but was seemingly only two in the tomb. This misunderstanding is based on the use of the words 'yom layelah' (day and night), which was used as a unity and did not begin at midnight, but at sunset.

## Problems that arise from the ignorance of condition under which revelation was given and written down

Example: God commanded the extermination of the Canaanites. How can a God of love order such a blood bath? Deuteronomy 20:10-18 gives the reason. It was to serve the spiritual survival of God's people.

## Problems that arise from the limitation of our minds to comprehend divine thought

Why do we pray when God knows everything anyway? Which concept is true, 'once saved - always saved' (Jn 10:28), or that one can fall away from grace (Gal 5:4, Heb 10:26-28). We also fail to comprehend the divine and human nature of Christ, eternity, miracles, the Trinity, even God's love and eternal punishment. We may well assume we understand, but only in eternity will we know the correctness of our understanding.

## Problems that arise from the dullness of our spiritual perception

...seeing they do not see, hearing they do not hear

*Matthew 13:13*

Except a man is born again he cannot see...

*John 3:3*

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God...

*1Corinthians 2:14*



*All these difficulties arise from human, not divine, imperfection.*

## 3.2 The New Testament Documents

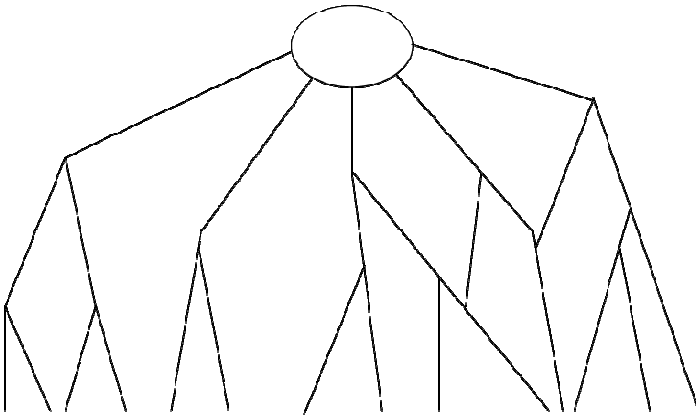
The last written book of the New Testament (in chronological sequence!), the 'Gospel according to John', was completed in his old age in the year AD 96. We do not know of any original NT documents. Although we have more than 5000 ancient NT manuscripts, only a relatively small percentage dates before the third Century. Papyrology (= research on manuscripts found on papyrus material) has

almost perfected forensic research methods to date these manuscripts, and now many a document that was formerly dated younger, has been re-dated. We know of one or two, which were written right back in the first Century, i.e. that these might well be first generation copies.

If one looks at different manuscripts of the same text, one may find here and there a different wording. Almost all are of a very minor nature, though.

It is obvious that copies were made of copies, which were made of copies etc. In their effort to eliminate any copy mistakes, scientists have used a kind of 'pedigree' system, within which they establish the chronological order of the documents within a certain 'strain'. The oldest is obviously closest to the original. Consequently, with each discovery of a yet older document, more errors were eliminated. These strains have been found in Syria, Alexandria (Egypt), Europe etc.

The following sketch may illustrate a model of such 'pedigree'. (Taken from 'Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism' by J. H. Greenlee):



*(Shorter lines represent codices based on a few source manuscripts.)*

### 3.2.1 The Canon of Scripture

We already very briefly came across the name 'canon' and discovered that it means, according to the Collins and Oxford Dictionaries, 'something recognized as genuine'.

The theological word 'canon' comes from the same root as that of the cannon, which is used to shoot. It is the Hebrew word '**qaneh**', meaning a pipe, originally a reed that was used to measure a distance and by that represented a standard. Our word 'canon' therefore represents a standard, by which the acceptance of the divine inspiration of a book is expressed.

It is obvious that different standards are applied by Christians and Muslims to ‘measure’ whether there is a divine origin of the Bible and the Qur’an. When Christians speak of the ‘Canon of Scripture’, they think of the reason that causes believers and scholars to ‘recognize as genuine’ the books of the Old and New Testaments. Muslims and adherents of other religions with a Scripture do the same with regard to their respective Books.

### **3.2.2 The Old Testament Canon**

We must assume that the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) was accepted by all Israelites from the time of its revelation to Moses on Mount Horeb. Neither Jews nor Christians and Muslims question that. Thereafter the ‘Historical Records’ (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther), the ‘Poetical Books’ (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs, Lamentation) and the ‘Prophets’ (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve ‘Minor Prophets’) were added to the list, most probably by common agreement. This canon was completed by the year 400 BC and was already translated into Greek around 200 BC. Since it is believed that this translation was done by 70 Rabbis it is called the ‘Septuagint’.

Together the Israelites counted 22 books according to the number of the Hebrew alphabet. Ruth and Judges were taken as one, Lamentations was considered part of Jeremiah and Ezra and Nehemiah were combined into one. This was also true of the twelve ‘minor prophets’. Each of the canonized books was accepted as inspired by God and consequently every one of the writers was considered a prophet. The early Church separated again those books that had been combined with others so that the OT in Christian Bibles now counts 39 books.

During the so-called ‘Interim Period’ (400 BC to the birth of Christ) other writings appeared (Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and the two books of the Maccabees). They are called the OT Apocrypha. These were not accepted into the Jewish canon. They also received no recognition by Christ. They were, however, added to the canon of the Roman Catholic Church as late as AD 1545. The rest of Christianity did not follow that move.

### **3.2.3 The New Testament Canon**

Fairly early, i.e. in the second part of the first century, the Biblical manuscripts were formulated in writing.

The four Gospel records, the Book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul and 1 John were soon copied, spread and accepted as Scripture in the various churches in Rome, Greece, Asia Minor, the Middle Eastern Countries and North Africa. Of course, this took a considerable time, much longer than it would have in our time. That was because the churches only began to come

into being, travelling took long and there were no printing presses at that time. There was never a serious dispute about the canon, i.e. recognition of these Scriptures as inspired Word of God. Other books of the NT were recognized a little later. Hebrews and Revelation were followed by James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John and Jude. By the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century the New Testament was virtually the same as we have it today.

The official recognition lagged a little behind, firstly because Christians were under severe persecution and could not communicate freely and openly, and secondly because a vehicle to do this, a kind of universal authority, was not existent. Church councils, in which the bishops of the various churches participated, could only be convened much later, and so the present canon of the NT was officially recognized between 325 and 393. *The divine authority of a (NT) book is accepted only after its divine revelation was generally accepted. No Church council declared the Bible to be authoritative, for the books of the Bible were accepted as authority long before Church councils existed.* ('How we got the Bible', by Neil R. Lightfoot).

During the late first and second Centuries a host of pseudo-Gospels, Acts and Epistles were composed, but not accepted into the canon. These are called the NT Apocrypha. In retrospect we can safely say that the acceptance of the NT books and the rejection of the Apocrypha was a decision made under the guidance of God, and we can accept it unhesitatingly today.

It must be added here that this was at a time in which the church wrestled with the definition of Biblical concepts (like the trinity, the divinity of Christ and others). Very unfortunately at times this led to 'splitting of hairs' and resulted in excommunications and schisms within the church over doctrinal issues. The veracity of Scripture in general was never really challenged, however.

## **Who or what determines what is canonical?**

All religions with scriptures consider their own to be genuine and inspired, i.e. the final authority in all matters of faith and practical living. On what basis is this done?

By the assumption that these respective scriptures had been inspired and are by that token expressing the divine will.

That all religions cannot come from the same divine source is evident when we compare the different scriptures. They plainly contradict each other. Even so each religion has produced its own reasons for which its canon is accepted. Thus the acceptance of a creed or a scripture is ultimately a question of conformity (I do it because everybody around me does it!) or by faith.

Are there no checks and balances? Jesus gives us a guideline. He said: "*If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak of my own*" (Jn 7:17), or "*the miracles I do in*

*my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep*" (Jn 10:25). He also said: "*you diligently study the Scriptures (i.e. Old Testament) because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life!*" (Jn 5:39).

Jesus never expected 'blind' faith. To help people believe, He could point to the miracles He had done and to the Scriptures which had been given hundreds of years before. These very Scriptures had pointed to His coming and work in much detail. This alone provides ample reason for believing Him and what is written about Him. That is hard evidence (please see also *Appendix 2*) in support of the canon of the Bible and is as valid today as it was then. It may have to be added that some Muslims claim that Muhammad had also performed miracles, but that is contradicted in the Qur'an itself where Muhammad claims that the only 'miracle' he was bringing, was the Qur'an.

One question needs to be answered: **How sure can we be that all the books of the Bible are divinely inspired and revealed, and none of the others?**

<b>Translator</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Pub. Date</b>
George Sale	The Koran	1734
Marmaduke M. Pickthall	The Glorious Qur'an	1930
Abdullah Yussuf Ali	The Holy Qur'an	1934
J.M Rodwell	The Koran	1861
A. J. Arberry	The Koran Interpreted	
N.J. Dawood	The Koran	1956
Sir Zafrulla Khan	The Quran (Ahmadiyyan)	1971

On the strength of the unique supporting evidences and the meticulous manner by which the Biblical books were scrutinised for their acceptability as the inspired and revealed Word of God, we do not find it difficult to accept the OT and NT by faith.

This is particularly valid when we compare these evidences with what other faiths may produce in support of their respective scriptures.

There is yet another factor which may help to establish the trustworthiness of a scripture. In a Court of Law a witness is judged by his **trustworthiness and integrity**. Jesus Christ could say to his hostile contemporaries: "*Can any*



*of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me?" (Jn 8:46).*

Even the Qur'an confirms Jesus' sinlessness. In Surah 19:19 we read that the angel who had announced the birth of Jesus to Mary, said: *"I am only a messenger from thy Lord (to announce) to thee the gift of a pure son."* Other translations read 'faultless' (Pickthall), 'holy' (Sale and Ullmann), 'most pure' (Arberry). In contrast to this it says of Muhammad: *"Verily, we have granted thee a manifest victory, that Allah may forgive thee thy faults of the past and those to follow..."* (S. 48:1-2).

*"Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and ask for forgiveness for thy [not 'the'!] fault, and for the men and women who believe" (S. 47:19).*

Even so, the texts of the OT and NT are not without problem. We already looked at some. We realised that historic, linguistic and other circumstances influenced the formulation of the text that is in our hands today. When we say that the Bible is the Word of God, we speak of what God had revealed before any other source, however minute, could have influenced it. On this basis we confidently confess to the flawlessness of the Bible.

### 3.3 Interpolations and Omissions in the Bible

Muslims claim that there are interpolations and omissions in the Bible. What is this and how founded are these claims?

**Interpolations** are words or texts which were added to an original.

**Omissions** are words or texts which were left out of an original.

If we find a specific text in one old manuscript and not in another, the question naturally arises, whether or not it belongs there.

Here are the **four** most common cases of dispute in the NT:

Great Ancient Codices		
Name	Date	Place
Codex Alexandrinus	5 <sup>th</sup> Century	British Museum
Codex Sinaiticus	4 <sup>th</sup> Century	British Museum
Codex Vaticanus	4 <sup>th</sup> Century	Vatican Library

### 3.3.1 Jesus commissions his disciples: Mark 16:9-20



When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it. Afterwards Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

*Mark 16:9-20*

At the beginning of this passage we read the following comment in the NIV translation (and similarly in others): “The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.”

The most reliable early manuscripts are the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus. Both have been correctly dated to have been copied in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, and both are almost complete Bibles. But they are not the oldest. Older, well-known manuscripts do contain the text in question.

Of particular interest is the justified assumption that the Codex Sinaiticus was actually copied from the Codex Vaticanus, and at least partially by the same copyist. The Codex Vaticanus shows an empty space of the size that could accommodate the missing part. Why was this provided, if the text was not at hand? But the empty space was not left open in the Codex Sinaiticus. According to the very well known and accepted church historian Eusebius the authenticity of the debated text of Mark 16 had been questioned during a short period of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. That had prompted some scribes to omit the text under debate, because its authenticity had been questioned.

The great majority of the ancient manuscripts (e.g. the Ephraemi, Bezae, Cantabrigensis, the Vulgate, Memphic, Sahidic and Thebaic manuscripts) did not omit this text, however.

Remarkable is the evidence of one ancient fragment. From the Curetonian manuscript the Gospel according to Mark was lost, except the last four verses - those under dispute. This text is also found in the most ancient manuscripts, like the Syriac and Peshito texts. The Memphitic, Sahidic and Thebaic texts of Upper and Lower Egypt contain it as well.

Another convincing argument for the genuineness of Mark 16:9ff is the fact that Justin Martyr (around AD 150) repeatedly mentioned this text in his writings. The same applies to his contemporary Irenaeus. He in turn was a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna and by that token a spiritual grandson of John the Evangelist. That happened 200 years before the time when the mentioned Codices were copied. These facts prove that the passage of Mark must be acknowledged as authentic.

### 3.3.1 The woman caught in adultery: John 7:53 - 8:11



Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus: 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They were using this question as a trap in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her'. Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no-one condemned you?'

'No-one, sir', she said.

'Then neither do I condemn you', Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin'.

*John 7:53 - 8:11*

Internal and external evidence indicates that this passage may not be the writings of John. It could be an interpolation, possibly by Papias, Elder of the Church of Hierapolis and companion of Polycarp of Smyrna (born AD 69), who was a disciple of John, the Evangelist. Although none of his writings have been preserved, quotations from him appear in the works of Eusebius.

Thus we can safely assume that, despite the possibility of this passage being an interpolation, it is in the authentic apostolic tradition and was canonised for that reason.

### 3.3.2 Prayer and fasting: Matthew 17:21

Speaking of demons which resisted the exorcism attempt by Jesus' disciples, He said:



...this kind does not go out but by prayer and fasting.

*Matthew 17:21*

In about half of the manuscripts, this text is included. Are Christians therefore no longer to pray or fast? This would be a very poor excuse indeed, since the practice of prayer and fasting is prescribed in many other places of our Scriptures (eg Mt 6), and the verse is used by Mark (9:29) in regard to the same event. As many others, the author of these notes (G.N.) has experienced that fasting with prayer in the case of exorcism is more effective.

### 3.3.3 Jesus taken up into heaven: Luke 24:51



While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

*Luke 24:51*

Luke made an almost identical statement in Acts 1:19. We conclude therefore that no change in historical detail or in doctrine has been brought about by the omission of the phrase. Besides, the Qur'an confirms this event (S. 4:158).

#### **We conclude**

None of the texts, and these are about all the significant problem passages, alter any basic fact or teaching of the Bible, whether these are included or omitted.

In the light of the circumstances mentioned before, and the abundance of available manuscripts and the minute portions which are affected compared to the whole of the NT, we have hardly a problem on hand. Besides, all the disputed events or statements are found elsewhere in the Bible.

## 3.4 Contradictions in the Bible

Are there any contradictions?<sup>5</sup> Yes. Let us refer back to the basic considerations and reasons for difficulties in the Bible to help us understand the issue.

All but one or two of these contradictions are found in the OT. Altogether we can detect eleven contradictions, eight of these constitute divers figures or numbers in the Old Testament books of Kings and Chronicles. They record the same events, yet different numbers. It may be added here that the Jewish canon places the books of the Kings among the ‘early prophets’ and the books of Chronicles are classified as ‘sacred writings’.

Some modern translations (like the NIV) have reconciled these differences by referring to the Septuagint and other pre-Christian translations, which show no different readings. One will do well to remember the conditions in which these texts were recorded and copied over and over again.

### 3.4.1 Contradictions based on numbers



Jehoiachin was **eight years** old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

*2Chronicles 36:9*

Ahaziah was **forty-two** years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri.

*2Chronicles 22:2*

Its thickness was a hand-breadth; and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily; it held over **three thousand** baths.

*2Chronicles 4:5*

And Solomon had **four thousand** stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in

Jehoiachin was **eighteen** years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Nehush to the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

*2Kings 24:8*

Ahaziah was **twenty-two** years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Athaliah; she was a granddaughter of Omri king of Israel.

*2Kings 8:26*

Its thickness was a hand-breadth; and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily; it held **two thousand** baths.

*1Kings 7:26*

Solomon also has **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

*1Kings 4:26*

<sup>5</sup> This constitutes evidence found either inside (=internal) or outside of the Bible.

the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

*2Chronicles 9:25*

But the king said to Araunah, 'No, but I will buy it of you for a price; I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing'. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for **fifty shekels of silver**.

*2Samuel 24:24*

And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were **eight hundred thousand** valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were **five hundred thousand**.

*2Samuel 24:9*

And David took from him a **thousand and seven hundred** horsemen, and twenty thousand soldiers; and David hamstrung all the chariot horses, but left enough for a hundred chariots.

*2Samuel 8:4*

And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians the men of **seven hundred** chariots, and forty thousand horsemen, and **wounded Shobach**, the commander of their army, so that he died there. *2Samuel 10:18*

But King David said to Araunah, 'No, but I will buy it for the full price; I will not take for the Lord what is yours ... which cost me

nothing'. So David paid Araunah **six hundred shekels of gold** by weight for the site.

*1Chronicles 21:24-25*

And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to David. In all Israel there were **one million one hundred thousand** men who drew the sword, and in Judah **four hundred and seventy thousand** who drew the sword.

*1Chronicles 21:5*

And David took from him a thousand chariots, **seven thousand** horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers; and David hamstrung all the chariot horses, but left enough for a hundred chariots. *1Chronicles 18:4*

And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians the men of **seven thousand** chariots, and forty thousand foot soldiers and **killed also Shophach** the commander of their army. *1Chronicles 19:18*

## 3.4.2 Other contradictions

### Who incited David?



Again the anger of **the Lord Satan** rose up against Israel and he burned against Israel; and he **incited David** to take a census of Israel.

saying, 'Go and count Israel and Judah'. *1Chronicles 21:1*  
*2Samuel 24:1*

A possible explanation:



Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no-one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil'.

'Does Job fear God for nothing?' Satan replied. 'Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face'.

The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger'.

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

*Job 1:8-12*

Who smote Job? Satan – BUT with the permission of God! It is really a question of formulation. This could well apply to the passages above.

### The removing of foreign altars



**He removed** the foreign altars and **the high places**, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. Although **he did not remove the high places**, Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life. *1Kings 15:14*

His heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord; further-more, **he removed the high places** and the Asherah poles from Judah.

*2Chronicles 14:3 + 6*

### Which is right?

Asa and Jehoshaphat removed the High Places. They did not remove the High Places.

We suggest that they attempted to do so, were successful for a time but could not hinder a relapse. This is clearly stated in 2Chronicles 20:33:



The high places, however, were not removed, and the people still had not set their hearts on the God of their fathers.

*2Chronicles 20:33*

### 3.4.3 The two differing genealogies of Jesus

There are two genealogies (ancestry) of Jesus in the NT: one in the Gospel according to Matthew (Ch. 1) and one according to Luke (Ch. 3). These differ somewhat. Let us ask a Bible commentator for the answer:



In the genealogy described by Luke, there are two sons improperly such: i.e., two sons-in-law instead of two sons. The two sons-in-law who are to be noticed in this genealogy are Joseph, the son-in-law of Heli, whose own father was Jacob, Mt 1.16; and Shealtiel, the son-in-law of Neri, whose own father was Jechonias, 1 Ch 3.17 and Mt 1.12. This remark alone is sufficient to remove every difficulty. Thus it appears that Joseph, son of Jacob, according to Matthew, was son-in-law of Heli, according to Luke. And Shealtiel, son of Jechonias, according to the former, was son-in-law of Neri, according to the latter. Mary therefore appears to have been the daughter of Heli, so called by abbreviation for Heliachim, which is the same in Hebrew with Joachim, Joseph, son of Jacob, and Mary, daughter of Heli, were of the same family. Both came from Zerubbabel; Joseph from Abiud, his eldest son, Mt 1.13; and Mary by Rhesa, the youngest. See 5. 27. It is worthy of being remarked that **Matthew**, who **wrote principally for the Jews**, extends his genealogy to Abraham, through whom the promise of the Messiah was given to the Jews, but **Luke**, who **wrote** his history **for** the instruction of **the Gentiles**, extends his genealogy to Adam, to whom the promise of the Redeemer was given in behalf of himself and of all his posterity.

*Adam Clark Commentary, pp. 861 + 862 (emphasis ours)*



### 3.4.4 Can one see God?



No-one has ever seen God, but The Lord would speak to Moses  
 God the only (Son), who is at face to face, as a man speaks  
 the Father's side, has made him with his friend.  
 known. *John 1:18* *Exodus 33:11*

[God], who alone is immortal and  
 who lives in unapproachable light,  
 whom no-one has seen or can  
 see.

*1Timothy 6:16*

As a basic principle we state that Scripture interprets Scripture. Does God have a face like we do? The obvious answer is that face to face is not a physical expression. An explanation we find in Hebrews 11:27:



By faith ... he [Moses] saw Him who is invisible.

*Hebrews 11:27*

## Conclusion

No-one should lose faith in the Bible because of these contradictions. None of these have any bearing on the message of God's word. All have a reasonable explanation. They do not originate from God, but have crept in because of human deficiency. In the case of Muslims using these problems as anti-Christian arguments, we would suggest that those living in glass houses should not throw stones.

After having picked on the negative side, to be fair we also have to look at the other side, namely the evidence that supports the divine origin of the Bible. For this we refer the reader to the list of recommended literature at the end of this chapter.

## 3.5 Supporting Evidence

### 3.5.1 Fulfilled Biblical Prophecy

When we call someone a 'prophet', we mean that this person prophesies, i.e. foretells future events which are beyond human foresight. In contrast to this a fortune-teller predicts (mostly) personal fate and fortune for the immediate future. Unfortunately such a person is not disqualified once his or her predictions do not come true. Since anybody with some psychological skills and careful phrasing is able to predict a number of inevitable or likely happenings, and since there are always enough gullible people who greedily covet to know their future, they seem to be seldom out of business.

Biblical prophets, on the other hand, have to 'prove' their identity as speakers on behalf of God to the people:



You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

*Deuteronomy 18:21-22*

'Present your case', says the Lord. 'Set forth your arguments', says Jacob's King. 'Bring in [your idols] to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future hold'.

*Isaiah 41:21-23*

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

*Amos 3:7*

(Also: Isa 42:9; 44:7, 26; 48:3-5; Jer 28:9; Ze 4:9; Dt 13:1-4; Ps 105:17-19; Jn 13:19)

**From this we may safely imply that when God gave prophecies, they would also be fulfilled. This guaranteed that the message given by the prophet came from Him. And secondly, it was not to contradict earlier prophetic statements, for indeed, God cannot change his mind.**

Only a select few out of the abundance of fulfilled prophecies can be mentioned here. In each case we will have to ask the question whether this type of prophecy was predictable. The answer is an absolute **no**.

Could the prophecies have been added after their fulfilment, as a forgery? Again the answer is an absolute **no**.

We look at some prophecies regarding Jesus and their fulfilment (for more details on Jesus' Death see *Appendix 2*):

## **Prophecy of Jesus' birthplace and pre-existence**

**Prophecy (written ~ 700 BC):**



But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old from ancient times (actually from eternity).

*Micah 5:2*

**Fulfilment:**

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

**Prophecy of the virgin birth, divinity and unique sonship****Prophecy (written ~ 700 BC):**

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

*Isaiah 7:14*

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 9:6*

**Fulfilment:**

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins'.

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel - which means God with us'.

*Matthew 1:18-23*

**Prophecy foretelling that Jesus would come to save and to heal****Prophecy (written ~ 700 BC):**

Say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you'. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

*Isaiah 35:4-5*

**Fulfilment:**

She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

*Matthew 1:21*

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

*Luke 19:10*

No-one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven - the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

This is the verdict: light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.

*John 3:13-21*

**Prophecy concerning the time of his coming****Prophecy (written ~ 520):**

Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people (i.e. Daniel's people, the Jews) and your holy city (i.e. Jerusalem) to finish (or restrain) transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy (i.e. no more prophetic revelations added to the Bible after that) and to anoint (anoint = dedicate, exalt, crown) the most holy.

'Know and understand this: for the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and its inhabitants taken captives in Babylon) until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens' and sixty-two 'sevens'. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

After the sixty-two 'sevens', the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will

continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

*Daniel 9:24-26*

To understand this prophecy we have to obtain a little background knowledge and do a little arithmetic. The first Jewish temple had been built and completed by Solomon in 950 BC and was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 585 BC. In several stages many of the Jews had been taken captive to Babylon. Daniel was one of them. In Babylon he received the prophecy.

What are the 70 sevens? We take it to be years. What is the beginning date? When King Artaxerxes gave the orders to rebuild the temple, 49 years (seventy 'sevens') were actually needed to rebuild Jerusalem after Nehemiah got the royal permission by Artaxerxes (465-425 BC) to do so. This was granted in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (Ne 2:1, 8b), i.e. 445 BC. The book of Nehemiah states that Jerusalem was indeed rebuilt in troubled times, since many enemies were trying to hinder its restoration. The remaining 434 years bring us to the year AD 37. Although this is a couple of years after the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem, we must consider the fact that historical dates of this time were not quite as accurate as they are in more recent history, particularly because a calendar like ours today did not exist then. The event described does not fit any other happening in history and we must consequently conclude that the slip in the time frame is more likely to be found in history than in the Bible.

## Prophecy predicting the name "Jesus"

**Prophecy (written ~ 700 BC):**



I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us - yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

He said: 'Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me'; and so he became their saviour. In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

*Isaiah 63:7-9*

The word 'saviour' in Hebrew is 'Yeshua', the very name Jesus was given when He was born. "Jesus" is the English form of this.

**Fulfilment:**

She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

*Matthew 1:21*

## Prophecy of Jesus' humble entry into Jerusalem on a Donkey

Prophecy (written ~ 480 BC):



Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

*Zechariah 9:9*

**Fulfilment:**



As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them: 'Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away'.

This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet: 'Say to the Daughter of Zion, See, your king comes to you gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey'.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted:

'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

*Matthew 21:1-9*

## Prophecy of the Betrayal of Jesus

Prophecy (written ~ 480 BC):



Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

*Psalms 41:9*

I told them, 'If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it'. So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter' - the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.

*Zechariah 11:12-13*

**Fulfilment:**

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, 'I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me - one who is eating with me'. They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, 'Surely not I?'. 'It is one of the Twelve', he replied, 'one who dips bread into the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born'.

Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard'. Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him.

*Mark 14:10, 17-21, 43-45*

When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 'I have sinned', he said, 'for I have betrayed innocent blood'. 'What is that to us?' they replied. 'That's your responsibility'. So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, 'It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money'. So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

*Matthew 27:3-8*

**Prophecy of Jesus' mishandling at his trial****Prophecy (written ~ 700 BC):**

I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

*Isaiah 50:8*

**Fulfilment:**

When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. 'Is that any way to answer the high priest?' he demanded.

*John 18:22*

What do you think?' 'He is worthy of death', they answered. Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him.

*Matthew 26:66-67*

**Prophecy of the suffering and nature of Jesus' death****Prophecy (written ~ 700 BC):**

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

By oppression and judgment, he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked; and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

*Isaiah 53:1-12*



My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads; 'He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him, since he delights in him'.

Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.

Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

*Psalm 22:1-18*

### **Fulfilment:**



Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place'.

'You are a king, then!', said Pilate. Jesus answered, 'You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me'.

'What is truth?' Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, 'I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?' They shouted back, 'No, not him! Give us Bar-abbas!' Now Bar-abbas had taken part in a rebellion.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, 'Hail, O king of the Jews!' And they struck him in the face.

Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him'. When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!'.

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify! Crucify!'.

But Pilate answered, 'You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him'.

The Jews insisted, 'We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God'.

When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. 'Where do you come from?' he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. 'Do you refuse to speak to me?' Pilate said. 'Don't you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?'

Jesus answered, 'You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin'.

From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, 'If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar'.

When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as The Stone Pavement [which in Aramaic is Gabbatha]. It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour.

'Here is your king', Pilate said to the Jews.

But they shouted, 'Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!'

'Shall I crucify your king?' Pilate asked.

'We have no king but Caesar', the chief priests answered.

Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to The Place of the Skull [which in Aramaic is called Golgotha]. Here they crucified him, and with him two others - one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, 'Do not write 'The King of the Jews', but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews'.

Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written'.

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, divided them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

'Let's not tear it', they said to one another. 'Let's decide by lot who will get it'.

This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled which said, 'They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing'.

So this is what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son', and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'. From that time on, this disciple

took her into his home.

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty'. A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished'. With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled, 'Not one of his bones will be broken', and, as another Scripture says, 'They will look on the one they have pierced.'

*John 18: 36 - 19:37*

## Prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus

Prophecy (written ~ 1000 BC)



I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

*Psalms 16:8-10*

### Fulfilment:

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them,



'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee. 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again' '. Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

*Luke 24:1-11*

## Prophecy of the ascension

Prophecy (written ~ 1000 BC)



The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

*Psalms 110:1*

### Fulfilment:



So when they met together, they asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'

He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth'.

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee', they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.

*Acts 1:6-11*

## Still unfulfilled prophecy of the repentance of Israel and their turning to Jesus

Prophecy (written ~ 480 BC)



And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

*Zechariah 12:10*



*No critic in the world can explain away the evidence of these fulfilled prophecies. It is unique in all history and to all religious books.*

*It is God's seal, interwoven with His message to mankind, so that any earnest and honest seeker can be totally assured of its origin and truth.*

### 3.5.2 Eye witness reports

In any Court of Law the testimony of a witness plays an important role. The New Testament is to a large extent also an eye-witness report. How reliable are such reports? That is largely depending on the integrity of a witness. We will try to establish this concerning the witnesses that reported about the life and death of Jesus.

When the four recorders had written down the Gospel these were available for all to read. If they had told in them their own ideas contrary to what had actually happened, the whole of Israel would have stood up in protest against these, had they not recorded historical facts. And the Apostles actually challenged the people to interrogate the many eyewitnesses.

Paul referred to a kind of 'double security', as it were. It is (1.) 'in accordance with the Scriptures' [referring to fulfilled prophecy of the Old Testament] and (2.) supported by many witnesses **of whom at that time most were still alive to be questioned.**



For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures**, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that **he appeared to Peter**, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than **five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living**, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles ...

*1 Corinthians 15:3-7*

The Apostle Peter, mentioning his undeniable status as an eyewitness, pointed to fulfilled prophecy as even 'more sure'. A witness may not observe carefully enough or he may lie. Even many witnesses may do so. But in prophecy and its fulfilment there can be no flaw! After stating that his body will soon be put aside, referring to his imminent departure - **Peter** testifies:



We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **we were eye-witnesses** of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'. We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. **And we have the word of the prophets made more certain**, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

**For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

*2 Peter 1:16-21*

Equally striking is the statement that **Paul**, as a prisoner, made in his defence before King Agrippa and Governor Festus:



The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.

*Acts 26:26*

**Peter**, on the Day of Pentecost shortly after the crucifixion, said to a great multitude of Jews in Jerusalem:



Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

*Acts 2:22-24*

Let us for a moment imagine that what they said was not true. Would not all the listeners have protested and disregarded this sermon that was written down in the Bible? Please note that the Jews never denied the execution of Jesus by crucifixion. They only denied that He was the Messiah.

**Luke**, the only 'academic' among the Gospel narrators, begins:



Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye-witnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.

*Luke 1:1-3*

With equal conviction the disciple **John** wrote:



That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

1 John 1:1-4

There can be no doubt of the clear fact:

*Eye-witness reports confirm  
the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.*

But we still have further support.

### 3.5.3 Archaeology

In the magazine 'Commentary' of April, 1959 (vol.27, no.4), Prof. J.J. Finkelstein in a review of N. Glueck's book 'Rivers in the Desert', "*takes the occasion to administer a sound 'spanking' to all of us concerned with Biblical archaeology for making claims that the facts do not really support. He expects such claims from popularisers and from those with some particular axe to grind, but he does not think it right for those of us who are supposed to be scholars, who are able to handle the original data with critical understanding, to say the same things .... It may be stated categorically that **no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Archaeology confirms Biblical history***", was added by W.F. Albright, probably the best known Biblical archaeologist. Neither of these writers can be called Christian.



Nelson Glueck in archaeology has been a student of Albright and in matters of Biblical history was educated in the same sceptical atmosphere toward Biblical traditions prevailing both in this country and in Germany where he took his doctorate. In many ways his own archaeological achievements have kept him in constant contact with the Bible and in every case he has been led to the view that the Biblical traditions derive from a real history and they can be fitted within the framework which archaeological,

historical and topographical research provides<sup>6</sup>.

As for Glueck's reference about 'the almost incredible accurate historical memory of the Bible', he is there speaking of the date of Abraham, or 'of the period with which the Biblical writers associate him'.

*The Biblical Archaeologist Reader (Anchor Books, N.Y., 1961)*

## Archaeology confirms the Flood



As a preliminary consideration we should remind ourselves that the Hebrews were by no means the only ancient people who preserved a tradition of a great Deluge. Indeed, such a story is to be found in a hundred varying forms in countries as far separated as Greece, Mesopotamia, India, Malaysia, Polynesia, and the Western Hemisphere.

The evidence from Ur: Between 1922 and 1934 Sir C. Leonard Woolley directed some twelve campaigns of excavation at the site of the ancient Ur of the Chaldees in southern Mesopotamia. In 1929, in order to establish the true sequence of the levels of occupation in the mound, a section was cleared down to virgin soil.

At Ur Woolley found a continuous occupation from the Early Dynastic back through the Obeid Period. In the middle of the Obeid level he found a stratum of river mud or deposit some ten feet thick - conclusive proof that a deluge had interrupted the occupation of the place, at least temporarily, during the fourth millennium. Woolley is confident that he has here the evidence of Noah's flood.

*The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*

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<sup>6</sup> All emphasis ours.



## Archaeology confirms the falling of the walls of Jericho

From 1907 to 1909 picks and spades carefully felt their way through layer after layer of this massive mound of ruins. When the two leaders of the German-Austrian expedition, Prof. Ernst Sellin and Prof. Karl Watzinger, made known what they had discovered, they caused genuine amazement. Two concentric rings of fortification were exposed, the inner ring surrounded the ridge of the hill. It is a masterpiece of military defence made of sun-dried bricks in the form of two parallel walls about 1-12 feet thick throughout. The outer ring of fortification runs along the foot of the hill and consists of a 6 foot thick wall, about 25-30 feet high, with strong foundations. These were the famous walls of Jericho.



Prof. John Garstang as leader of the expedition noted every detail with the utmost precision. He described graphically the violence with which the inner circle of parallel fortification had been destroyed: 'The space between the two walls is filled with fragments and rubble. There are clear traces of a tremendous fire, compact masses of blackened bricks, cracked stones, charred wood and ashes. Along the walls the houses have been burned to the ground and their roofs have crashed on top of them'.

But what was it that brought down the walls? 'And they blew with the trumpets', says the famous and frequently quoted passage, 'and the wall fell down flat'. As he was examining the ruined walls, Garstang made a remarkable discovery. The stones of the outer ring had fallen outward and downhill, but the inner wall along the crest of the hill had fallen the opposite way, namely inwards. It had buried the buildings which lay behind it.

*The Bible as History, by W. Keller*

May these few samples stand for many more 'proofs': **Archaeology confirms the accuracy of the Bible.**

### 3.5.4 History

#### Josephus, the Jewish-Roman historian (after AD 70)



Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at first did not forsake

him; for he appeared to them alive again on the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

*Antiquities of the Jews*

Josephus was a Jewish general who defended Jerusalem against the Romans in AD 70 and later served under the Roman emperor. So it is actually a declared enemy of the Christian faith who confirms the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

It probably could have been expected that such a piece of literary evidence would be challenged by liberal critics. Hence even the Encyclopaedia Britannica made a remark questioning this witness. It speaks for itself that no reason for this assumption could be provided.

### **Cornelius Tacitus (born AD 52-54)**

*A Roman historian, in 112 AD, Governor of Asia, son-in-law of Julius Agricola who was Governor of Britain AD 80-84. Writing of the reign of Nero, Tacitus alludes to the death of Christ and to the existence of Christians at Rome.*

‘But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration, the fire of Rome. Hence to suppress the rumour, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also. (Annals XV.44)

Tacitus has a further reference to Christianity in a fragment of his Histories, dealing with the burning of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, preserved by Sulpicius Severus (2 Chron.30.6).

*Evidences that Demand a Verdict, by Josh McDowell*

With so much evidence both from within and outside the Bible it is no surprise that Muslims have turned to other ‘evidence’ to undermine the credibility of our Book.



## 3.6 The Gospel of Barnabas

### 3.6.1 Introduction

Muslims like to confront, challenge and bluff Christians with the so-called Gospel of Barnabas. Adam Peerbhai of South Africa has published a booklet in which he considers the discovery of the Gospel to be one of the greatest finds of mankind. In a very eloquent way he states that the Gospel of Barnabas is the greatest of all truths (as though there is more than one Truth about God and Jesus), and that it was history's greatest tragedy that it was suppressed for 2000 years. To Mr. Peerbhai it appears fantastic that though Saint Barnabas was one of the disciples of Christ (which he actually was not!), his Gospel does not appear in the New Testament, whilst less important ones like those of Mark, Luke and St. Paul (another false assumption!) do.

The Gospel of Barnabas is described as a document that the Church rejected and refused to circulate, because it did not agree with the rest of the body of Christian teaching on Jesus. According to this Gospel the coming of Muhammad was clearly foretold. One of the copies of this Gospel was rediscovered in a unique way and thus bears witness, so it is claimed, to the falsification of the Bible. We shall investigate these claims objectively.

### 3.6.2 The History of the Gospel of Barnabas

The Gospel of Barnabas (GoB) first appeared in Holland in 1709. This manuscript was written in Italian and supplemented with footnotes in poor Arabic. The source of the Gospel is unknown. It is now preserved in the Imperial Museum in Vienna.

George Sale translated the Qur'an from Arabic into English in 1734. In his preface, he mentions another copy of the same Gospel in Spanish. This document is lost and all we know about it is what Sale recorded on it. It is reported to have said in a statement on the title page that it was a translation from the Italian by a Spanish Muslim named Mustafa de Aranda (Aranda is a town in Spain).

In 1907 the GoB was translated into English by Laura and Lonsdale Ragg. In the introduction, they provide internal and external evidence to the effect that the GoB was a Medieval forgery. However, this commentary has been removed in all copies printed by Muslims, for their aim is to prove the opposite.

### 3.6.3 The Islamic Challenge

1. Muslims claim that the existence of the Gospel of Barnabas before the Middle Ages is confirmed by the Gelasian Decree (named after Pope Gelasius AD 492-495). In this decree the GoB is rejected by the Church as apocryphal with ten other writings under the names of Thaddaeus, Matthias, Peter, James (the younger), Thomas, Bartholomew, Andrew, etc. This GoB was written in Greek.
2. Muslims claim that the Decree of Pope Sixtus I (AD 465) also mentions the above apocryphal writings. He was Pope from AD 402-417. (There is, however, no mention of the GoB in this decree).
3. Muslims claim that the Decree of the Western Church likewise mentions the GoB in AD 482. This obviously refers to the Council of Rome. All that we know of this Council comes to us from the Gelasian Decree, and by that it is the same source as (1).

We do acknowledge that a GoB was mentioned in the Gelasian Decree. It certainly was not written by Barnabas, else the Church would not have rejected it. We have no mention of the GoB or any description apart from this. The above-mentioned Gospels were banned as heretical books, because they were either forgeries or of a very late date and consequently not apostolic.

Further there is abundant evidence that the GoB, which Muslims propagate today, is not related in any way to the rejected GoB of the Gelasian Decree, because the now known copy can be dated to have been written around AD 1350. Muslims further claim that:

4. A copy of the GoB was found in the arms of Barnabas when his tomb was discovered in Cyprus AD 478. A legend has it that Barnabas appeared in a vision to the Bishop of Salanus (Cyprus) and said: You will find a cave and a coffin, because there my whole body has been preserved and a Gospel written in my own hand.

Unfortunately, the above statement ends halfway through the sentence, which continues in the original: "...which I received from the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew." So he was supposed to have held in his arms a "Gospel according to Matthew", and not a Gospel of Barnabas, as he tries to suggest from the omission.

A copy of part of the introduction of G. Sale's translation of the Qur'an gives us some valuable information:



The Muhammadans have also a Gospel in Arabic, attributed to St. Barnabas, wherein the history of Jesus Christ is related in a manner very different from what we find in the true Gospels, and correspondent to those traditions which Muhammad has followed in his Kōran. Of this Gospel the Moriscoes in Africa have a

translation in Spanish; and there is in the library of Prince Eugene of Savoy, a manuscript of some antiquity, containing an Italian translation of the same Gospel, made, it is to be supposed, for the use of renegades. This book appears to be no original forgery of the Muhammadans, though they have no doubt interpolated and altered it since, the better to serve their purpose; and in particular, instead of the Paraclete or Comforter, they have in this apocryphal gospel inserted the word Pericylte, that is, the famous or illustrious, by which they pretend their prophet was foretold by name, that being the signification of Muhammad in Arabic: and this they say to justify that passage of the Kôran, where Jesus Christ is formally asserted to have foretold his coming, under his other name of Ahmed; which is derived from the same root as Muhammad, and of the same import. From these or some other forgeries of the same stamp it is that the Muhammadans quote several passages, of which there are not the least footsteps in the New Testament. But after all we must not hence infer that the Muhammadans, much less all of them, hold these copies of theirs to be the ancient and genuine scriptures themselves.

*Section IV, p.98*

Of the Gospel of St. Barnabas (which I had not seen when the little I have said of it in the Preliminary Discourse, and the extract I had borrowed from M. de la Monnoye and M. Toland, were printed off), I must beg leave to give some further account.

The book is a moderate quarto, in Spanish, written in a very legible hand, but a little damaged towards the latter end. It contains two hundred and twenty-two chapters of unequal length, and four hundred and twenty pages; and is said, in the front, to be translated from the Italian, by an Arragonian Moslem, named Mostafa de Aranda. There is a preface prefixed to it, wherein the discoverer of the original MS., who was a Christian monk, called Fra Marino, tells us that having accidentally met with a writing of Irenaeus (among others), wherein he speaks against St. Paul, alleging, for his authority, the Gospel of St. Barnabas, he became exceeding desirous to find this gospel; and that God, of His mercy, having made him very intimate with Pope Sixtus V., one day, as they were together in that Pope's library, his Holiness fell asleep, and he, to employ himself, reaching down a book to read, the first he laid his hand on proved to be the very gospel he wanted: overjoyed at the discovery, he scrupled not to hide his prize in his sleeve, and on the Pope's awakening, took leave of him, carrying with him that celestial treasure, by reading of which he became a convert to Muhammadism.

This Gospel of Barnabas contains a complete history of Jesus Christ from His birth to His ascension; and most of the circumstances in the four real Gospels are to be found therein, but many of them turned, and some artfully enough, to favour the

Muhammadan system. From the design of the whole, and the frequent interpolations of stories and passages wherein Muhammad is spoken of and foretold by name, as the messenger of God, and the great prophet who was to perfect the dispensation of Jesus, it appears to be a most barefaced forgery. One particular I observed therein induced me to believe it to have been dressed up by a renegade Christian, slightly instructed in his new religion, and not educated a Muhammadan (unless the fault be imputed to the Spanish, or perhaps the Italian translator, and not to the original compiler); I mean to the giving to Muhammad the title of Messiah, and that not once or twice only, but in several places; whereas the title of the Messiah, or, as the Arabs write it, al Masih, i.e., Christ, is appropriated to Jesus in the Kôran, and is constantly applied by the Muhammadans to Him, and never to their own prophet. The passages produced from the Italian MS. by M.de la Monnoye are to be seen in this Spanish version almost word for word.

*Foreword of Sale's translation of the Qur'an*

### **3.6.4 A Christian Response to the Islamic Challenge**

It is impossible that a Gospel could be left out of the Bible without it having been carefully scrutinised.

The books of the New Testament were selected by the early church leaders, only if they met the criterion of being apostolic, i.e. corresponding to the teaching of Christ as the Apostles knew them, and contemporary to them. The GoB does not meet these requirements.

### **3.6.5 External evidence**

This may be defined as proof of the existence of a book gathered from sources outside itself (V.H.T. Gairdner, p.9). The only mention of a GoB is in the Gelasian Decree, which proves that it was rejected a considerable time after the canonisation of the NT, because of its lack of apostolic evidence and heretical content. The following facts show that there is no external evidence for the existence of the GoB:

1. Neither from the time of the Apostles to the Gelasian Decree, nor thereafter, was any mention of a GoB made.
2. The fact that certain Muslim scholars proved dishonest by removing the evidence from the Raggs' translation that proved the GoB to be a forgery; that they omitted half of a sentence supposed to be about Barnabas' tomb and a Gospel in his arms; and that they promoted the GoB as an anti-Christian argument, does not constitute external evidence either, but instead raises suspicion as to their honesty and motives.



*There is, in fact, no acceptable evidence for the existence of a genuine Gospel of Barnabas.*

Fra Marino (Brother Marino) is named in the Sale translation. He reports, how he obtained the GoB from the library of the then reigning Pope Sixtus V (AD 1585-1589). His account is not a story likely to be believed:



...having accidentally met with a writing of Irenaeus (a Church Father) wherein he speaks against Paul, alleging for his authority the Gospel of Barnabas, he became exceeding desirous to find this Gospel.

We note that **Irenaeus never mentioned a GoB, nor spoke negatively of Paul**. He recognised Paul's writings as inspired and claimed that our known four Gospel narratives were the only ones ever given by God (Gairdner, p.12). If we have a trustworthy piece of literature, this would be self-evident. It would not need any lies to substantiate its trustworthiness. Adam Peerbhai writes of Barnabas (in *Islamiscope*): His name is omitted from the New Testament for obvious reason.

Peerbhai has overlooked the fact, that Barnabas' name is mentioned 28 times in the New Testament, though not in the Gospels, because he was converted only after Pentecost. Lt.-Col. Rahim, in the foreword to the Islamic edition of the GoB, reports on Paul and Barnabas as follows: "They returned to Jerusalem and from then onwards they parted company and Barnabas mysteriously disappeared from the Bible's pages."

This is incorrect again, for nine years later Paul makes very positive mention of Barnabas in 1Co 9:6. Paul also restored his relationship with Mark (Col 4:10; 2Ti 4:11), the nephew of Barnabas. He had been the object of a dispute between Paul and Barnabas, which made them decide to part as associates on Paul's second missionary journey.

### 3.6.6 Internal evidence

This is supplied by the content of the book itself. Any writing is sure to bear the mark of a particular age. The style, language and subject matter of the book will betray it (Gairdner, p. 9). Also the knowledge of things which were not known at the time of writing gives a forger away.

Firstly we observe that **all quotations in the GoB** from the Old and New Testament **are taken from the Vulgate translation** (appr. AD 380). This Latin Bible has been used in the Catholic Church ever since. The above is an

example of an anachronism, because the GoB is supposed to date from before the Vulgate was written.



If someone brought you a film which he claims to have been made in 1905 and started to screen it and it looked every bit like an old film, with old clothes and fashions, you might believe him. If, however, in the middle of a scene ... you saw a Concorde going across the sky, you would say ... 'This film is a fabrication'.

*John Gilchrist*

This is an anachronism. How does the GoB measure up to this and other tests?

### 3.6.7 Problems in the Gospel of Barnabas

The following statements in the GoB speak for themselves:

#### The birth of Jesus was painless

This was believed in the Roman Catholic Church from appr. AD 1250, but is mentioned in the Qur'an (S. 19:23):



The virgin was surrounded by a light exceeding bright, and brought forth her son without pain, whom she took in her arms, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, laid him in the manger, because there was no room in the inn. vs.3

#### The Gospel was presented to Jesus by Gabriel

This is a totally Islamic concept:



Jesus having come to the age of thirty years, as he himself said unto me, went up to Mount Olives with his mother to gather olives. Then at midday as he was praying, when he came to the words: 'Lord, with mercy ...', he was surrounded by an exceeding bright light and by an infinite multitude of angels, who were saying: 'Blessed be God'. The angel Gabriel presented to him as it were a shining mirror, a book, which descended into the heart of Jesus, in which he had knowledge of what God hath done and what hath said and what God willeth insomuch that everything was laid bare and open to him; as he said unto me: 'Believe, Barnabas, that I know every prophet with every prophecy, insomuch that whatever I say the whole hath come forth from that book.

vs. 10

#### Jesus went up to Capernaum

(which is possibly the lowest lying town on earth; ~200m below sea level):





Jesus went up to Capernaum, and as he drew near to the city behold there came out of the tombs one that was possessed of the devil, and in such wise that no chain could hold him, and he did great harm to the man.

vs.21

### **Jesus went by boat to Nazareth**

(which is situated high in the mountains!)



Jesus went to the sea of Galilee, and having embarked in a ship sailing to his city of Nazareth; whereupon there was a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was nigh unto sinking.

vs.20

### **Jesus keeps the Forty days**

(i.e. Lent, to remember the death of Christ). This was introduced only after the 4<sup>th</sup> Century.



At this time there was a great disturbance throughout Judea for the sake of Jesus: for that the Roman soldiery, through the operation of Satan, stirred up the Hebrews, saying that Jesus was God come to visit them. Whereupon so great sedition arose, that nigh upon the Forty days all Judea was in arms, insomuch that the son was found against the father, and the brother against the brother, for that some said that Jesus was God come to the world; others said: 'Nay, but he is a son of God'; and others said: 'Nay, for God hath no human similitude, and therefore begetteth not sons; but Jesus of Nazareth is a prophet of God.

vss.91 + 92

### **Wooden casks (barrels) are mentioned**

(which were invented much later in Gaul).



Then said Jesus: 'Adonai Sabaoth!' Whereupon straightaway the soldiers were rolled out of the Temple as one rolleth casks of wood when they are washed to refill them with wine; insomuch that now their head and now their feet struck the ground, and that without any one touching them.

vs. 152

### **Barnabas is claimed to be an apostle of Jesus**

(whereas the Bible only introduces him after Jesus' death).



Barnabas, apostle of Jesus the Nazarene, called Christ, to all them that dwell upon the earth desireth peace and consolation.

vs. 1

### Three wise men from the east (Magi) are mentioned

There is no mention of three Magi in Scripture, which is a later assumption. (It was deduced from the 3 gifts mentioned in the Bible).



In the reign of Herod, king of Judaea, when Jesus was born, three magi in the parts of the east were observing the stars of heaven. Whereupon appeared to them a star of great brightness, wherefore having concluded among themselves, they came to Judaea, guided by the star.

vs.6

### Adam and Eve ate an 'Apple'

The Bible does not specify which fruit it was. The apple was introduced by European artists centuries later.



Then the serpent did so, and placed Satan near to Eve, for Adam, her husband, was sleeping. Satan presented himself before the woman like a beauteous angel, and said to her: 'Wherefore eat ye not of those apples and of corn?'

vs.40

### Ishmael was on the altar of Abraham

Again this is an Islamic concept, not a Biblical one. And even the Qur'an itself does not give the name of the son.



Then spake God, saying to Abraham: 'Take thy son, thy firstborn Ishmael, and come up the mountain to sacrifice him'. How is Isaac firstborn, if when Isaac was born Ishmael was seven years old?

vs.44

### Seemingly the Roman army in Mizpah was 600.000 men strong

In reality the whole Roman army at the time was no more than 300.000 soldiers!



Whereupon, in Mizpeh **assembled three armies, each one of two hundred thousand men** that bare sword. Herod spake to them, but they were not quieted. Then spake the governor and the high priest, saying: 'Brethren, this war is aroused by the work of Satan, for Jesus is alive, and to him ought we to resort, and ask him that he give testimony of himself, and then believe in him, according to his word.

vs.91

### Jesus takes the role of the preparer for the Messiah; Muhammad is the Messiah

This even contradicts the Qur'an!



Whereupon said the scribe: 'I have seen an old book written by the hand of Moses and Joshua (he who made the sun stand still as thou hast done), servants and prophets of God, which book is the true book of Moses.

Therein is written that Ishmael is the father of Messiah, and Isaac the father of the messenger of the Messiah. And thus saith the book that Moses said: 'Lord God of Israel, mighty and merciful, manifest to thy servant the splendour of thy glory'. Whereupon God showed him his messenger in the arms of Ishmael, and Ishmael in the arms of Abraham. Nigh to Ishmael stood Isaac, in whose arms was a child, who with his finger pointed to the messenger of God, saying: 'This is he for whom God hath created all things'.

Whereupon Moses cried out with joy: 'O Ishmael, thou hast in thine arms all the world, and paradise! Be mindful of me, God's servant, that I may find grace in God's sight by means of thy son, for whom God hath made all.

vs. 191



Then said the priest: 'How shall the Messiah be called, and what sign shall reveal his coming?

Jesus answered: 'The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendour. God said: 'Wait Muhammad; for thy sake I will to create paradise, the world, and a great multitude of creatures, whereof I make thee a present, insomuch that whoso shall bless thee shall be blessed, and whoso shall curse thee shall be accursed. When I shall send thee into the world I shall send thee as my messenger of salvation, and thy word shall be true, insomuch that heaven and earth shall fail, but thy faith shall never fail'. Muhammad is his blessed name.

vs. 97

## **Jesus – a messenger of the coming Messiah Muhammad, for whom the world was made**

What a blasphemy!



Jesus answered: 'I am indeed sent to the house of Israel as a prophet of salvation; but after me shall come the Messiah, sent of God to all the world; for whom God hath made the world. And then through all the world will God be worshipped, and mercy received, insomuch that the year of jubilee, which now cometh every hundred years, shall by the Messiah be reduced to every year in every place.

vs. 82

## **Adam saw the 'Shahada' in the sky**

This feat seems to be repeated over and over again according to some Muslim propaganda.



Adam, having sprung up upon his feet, saw in the air a writing that shone like the sun, which said: 'There is only one God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God'. Whereupon Adam opened his mouth and said: 'I thank thee, O Lord my God, that thou has designed to create me; but tell me, I pray thee, what meaneth the message of these words: Muhammad is messenger of God'. Have there been other men before me? vs.39

## Predestination is to be revealed to Muhammad



Then said Jesus: 'So secret is predestination, O brethren, that I say unto you, verily, only to one man shall it be clearly known. He it is whom the nations look for, to whom the secrets of God are so clear that, when he cometh into the world, blessed shall they be that shall listen to his words, because God shall overshadow them with his mercy even as this palm-tree overshadoweth us. Yea, even as this tree protecteth us from the burning heat of the sun, even so the mercy of God will protect from Satan them that believe in that man'.

The disciples answered: 'O Master, who shall that man be of whom thou speakest, who shall come into the world?'

Jesus answered with joy of heart: 'He is Muhammad, messenger of God, and when he cometh into the world, even as the rain maketh the earth to bear fruit when for a long time it hath not rained, even so shall he be occasion of good works among men, through the abundant mercy which he shall bring. For he is a white cloud full of the mercy of God, which mercy God shall sprinkle upon the faithful like rain'. vs. 163

## Jesus worries over the impending corruption of the Gospel

This is an expedient topic, as Muslims claim this is what happened.



Then lifting up his hands to the Lord, he prayed, saying: 'Lord our God, God of Abraham, God of Ishmael and Isaac, God of our fathers, have mercy upon them that thou hast given me, and save them from the world. I say not, take them from the world, because it is necessary that they shall bear witness against them that shall corrupt my gospel. But I pray thee to keep them from evil, that on the day of thy judgment they may come with me to bear witness against the world and against the house of Israel that hath corrupted thy testament. Lord God, mighty and jealous, that takest vengeance upon idolatry against the sons of idolatrous fathers even unto the fourth generation, do thou curse eternally every one that shall corrupt my gospel that thou gavest me, when they write that I am thy son. For I, clay and dust, am servant of thy servants, and never have I thought myself to be thy good servant; for I cannot give thee aught in return for that which thou hast given me, for all things are thine. vs. 212

## **Certain evil men spread the rumour that Jesus was crucified! Paul is a false teacher.**

Another convenient argument, see chapter 5.



After Jesus had departed, the disciples scattered through the different parts of Israel and of the world, and the truth, hated of Satan, was persecuted, as it always is, by falsehood. For certain evil men, pretending to be disciples, preached that Jesus died and rose not again. Others preached that he really died, but rose again. Others preached, and yet preach, that Jesus is the Son of God, among whom is Paul deceived. But we, as much as I have written, that preach we to those who fear God, that they may be saved in the last day of God's Judgment. Amen. [sic]

vs.222

## **Evaluation of 'The Gospel of Barnabas'**

There can be no doubt whatever, that the Gospel of Barnabas is a forgery. We cannot accept that those Muslims who propagate it are ignorant of this fact. We have to conclude once again that Muslim scholars use deception with insincerity in order to disqualify the Bible, which the Qur'an says is the Word of God which no man can change. The motive is clear. It is to protect the integrity of the Qur'an at the expense of the Bible. The judgement of such activity we are happy to leave with the reader.

### **Recommended Literature for Chapter 3:**

**Christians answer Muslims.** Gerhard Nehls, LCA 1992, pp. 12-69.

**Christian Reply to Muslim Objections.** W.St. Clair Tisdall, Call of Hope 1904, pp.29-99.

**False Charges against the Old Testament.** The true Guidance, Part II, Call of Hope 1904, 347 pp.

**False Charges against the New Testament.** The true Guidance, Part III, Call of Hope 1904, 296 pp.

**Let the Bible speak for Itself.** Walter Eric, LCA 1996, 34pp.

**No Distortion in the Torah and the Gospel.** Balance of Truth, Part I, C.G. Pfander, The Good Way, 87 pp.

**The Christian Witness to the Muslim.** John Gilchrist, MERCESA: 1988, pp. 266-303.

**The Textual History of the Qur'an and the Bible.** John Gilchrist, MERCESA, 1985, pp 52.

## 4 Allegations against Jesus Christ

There are three major areas of dispute. Muslims claim from the Qur'an that:

1. God does not consist as a Trinity of which Jesus is part.
2. Jesus is neither divine nor the son of God.
3. The Crucifixion of Jesus and the atonement he procured is a myth.

Let us look at these, one by one.

### 4.1 Objections to the doctrine of Trinity

One of the major points of contention between the Christian and Islamic teaching is the understanding of God and His personality. At the centre of this controversy is the concept of God being triune.

The Bible cautions us to recognize our human limitations:



Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens - what can you do? They are deeper than the depth of Sheol - what can you know?

*Job 11:7-8*

#### 4.1.1 No man can understand the nature or character of God

We will all agree that it is not possible for man, bound by time, to **understand** the nature or character of God who is the same from eternity to eternity. Indeed, what we think or say about Him is either a figment of our imagination, anthropomorphic thinking (i.e. we project human elements onto God), or what we could learn from God's self-revelation.

This self-revelation Muslims presume to be contained in a Book (the Qur'an). The Bible on the other hand says that God became incarnate, that He is visible and comprehensible in Jesus, His Son:



In the beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*John 1:1-3,14*

‘Logos’ has a deeper meaning than just ‘word’. It means ‘the expression of thought’ (W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, 1966, Lowe and Drydone, London).

‘Trinity’ denotes an essential characteristic of God. Though the word ‘Trinity’ is not found in the Bible, its meaning is. We will investigate this a little later.

In stark contrast to that, Islamic theology holds to the concept of *tawhid*, which declares the singleness of God. This doctrine has its roots in the rejection of polytheism (the assumption that there are many gods), but it is clearly used also in contrast to a misunderstood trinitarian teaching. Incidentally, the term *tawhid* is not found in the Qur’an, just as the term ‘Trinity’ is not found in the Bible.

Already in the early church the ‘Church Fathers’ grappled with a formulation of the Biblical concept of trinity. In the Creeds this attempt became rather technical. It speaks of ‘essence’, ‘persons’, and such like.

#### 4.1.2 What the Qur’an says about Trinity



O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion; nor say of Allah aught but truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of Allah, and his word, which he bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His apostles. **Say not ‘Trinity’: desist.** It will be better for you; **for Allah is One Allah.**

Glory be to him; (for **exalted is he**) **above having a son.** To him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a disposer of affairs.

*Surah 4:171*

**They do blaspheme who say, Allah is one of three in a trinity; for there is no god except the One Allah.** If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them.

**Christ the son of Mary was no more than an Apostle;** many were the apostles that passed away before him. **His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food<sup>7</sup>.**

*Surah 5:73 + 75*

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<sup>7</sup> The argument that Jesus and Mary were eating food is seemingly offered as a proof that they were not ‘gods’. Some of the early churches named Mary ‘Theotokos’, which means the Mother of God. Muhammad assumed that the Trinity consisted of God, Mary and Jesus.

And behold! Allah will say, 'O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men 'Worship **me** and **my mother as gods** in derogation of Allah'. He will say, 'Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right (to say).

*Surah 5:116*

### 4.1.3 Muslim objections to the Trinity of God

Apart from the Qur'anic statements against the Trinity of God, Muslims repeatedly make silly statements like this: "If Jesus is God, who was running the universe when He was in the womb of Mary, in the cradle or in the grave?"

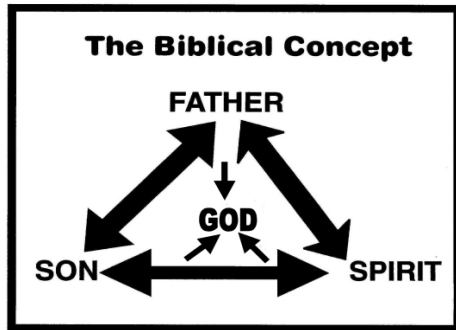
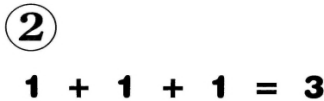
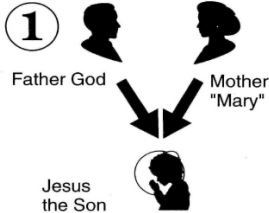
- Let an analogy give the answer: If I go down to the ocean with a bucket and fill it with water, what will happen to all the fish in the ocean? One may, of course, ask: 'Why, what has that to do with the fish?' The reply: 'Fish cannot live without water - and the water is now in the bucket!' For sure: **When God was in Christ, being omnipresent, He was still everywhere else, of course.**
- In the same vein Muslims reason that  $1+1+1=3$ , and not 1, suggesting that God, the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are three separate entities and not one, as the Bible teaches. We answer: 'How could you dare to use mathematical formulas to define the Creator of the universe? This just reveals a complete lack of reverence for God Almighty!'
- Muslims sometimes claim: The only reference to the Trinity in the Bible may be found in 1 John 5:7-8 (KJV): '*For there are three that testify **in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one, and there are three that testify on earth, the Spirit, the water and the blood***'. - The part of this text that is printed here in bold has been found not to belong to the original text. It is an interpolation and is no longer found in the newer translations. It is likely to have been a comment by a scribe, which was then copied into the text.

It is definitely untrue, however, that this text is the **only** reference to the Trinity in the Bible!



# The Trinity:

## MISCONCEPTIONS



### 4.1.4 The Concept of Trinity was progressively revealed in the Old Testament (that is long before Christ)

In the first verse of the Bible we read: *“In the beginning God (Hebrew = Elohim) created the heavens and the earth.”* In the second verse we read: *“... and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”* In verse 26 we read: *“Then God (Elohim) said, ‘Let us make man ...’.”* In chapter 3, verse 22, we read: *“And the Lord God (Yahweh Elohim) said, ‘The man has now become like one of us knowing good and evil’.”* In chapter 11 verse 7 we read that God (Elohim) said: *“Come, let us go down and confuse their language ...’.”*

So from the very beginning we read of **Elohim** and **Yahweh**. Yahweh means “the Lord”; Elohim means “Gods”! The ending “...im” in Hebrew is the masculine plural form, in this case of El or Elah or Eloah. The name “El” is recorded 224 times in the OT, “Elah” is recorded 89 times, “Eloah” 45 times, whereas “Elohim” is found 2222 times! The question arising in the mind of any alert Bible reader naturally is: **Why is God speaking about himself in the overwhelming majority of cases in the plural form? Does this have something to say about the nature of God?** – Indeed, it does! And it is important to note that there is no ‘royal plural’ in the Hebrew language, as compared to English, where a king or queen might speak of himself or herself as ‘We’.

Now the Jewish confession of faith, as stated in Deuteronomy 6:4, strongly affirms the oneness, or rather unity, of God: **“The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”** The Hebrew original actually reads: *“Yahweh Eluhenu Yahweh echad.”* Literally translated it means: *“The Lord, our Gods, the Lord is one,”* or a unity. The word **echad** is always used when the writers meant to refer to a unity or oneness. One example is found in Genesis 2:24: *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become **one** (echad) flesh”* (Ge 2:24). Again in Ezr 2:64 the word is used for the congregation of Israelites gathered together: *“The whole (echad) company numbered 42,360.”* But speaking about one with the meaning of single, only the word **yachid** is employed (see Ge 22:2; Pr 4:3; Jdg 11:34) Are we not aware that there can be no unity without at least two components<sup>8</sup> joined to be one?

Let us have a look at just one more passage:



I will tell of the kindness of **Yahweh** ... he became their **Yeshua** (*this is the actual name Jesus had when on earth: Yeshua ha-Mashiach; translated it means Rescuer, Saviour*). In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; ... yet they (the Jews) rebelled and grieved his **Holy Spirit**.

*Isaiah 63:7-10*

**The Lord** became **Jesus** to help the people in their distress and **he saved** and **redeemed** them. But they rebelled and grieved **God’s Holy Spirit**.

Admittedly passages like this are little read and don’t meet the eye of a superficial reader. But they are there to be found by those who seek the truth in earnest.

At the same time we read that **God is one**: *“The Lord our God is one”* (Dt 6:4). This is as clear in the Old Testament as is **“...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one testament”** (Eph 4:5) in the New Testament.

Are we confronted with a contradiction? Not at all! God reveals both, His oneness and the diversity of His nature. Therefore He revealed Himself as the **Father**, in **Jesus** and through His **Holy Spirit**.

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<sup>8</sup> This is a question we might ask our Muslim friends in regard to their doctrine of “tawhid”.

## 4.1.5 The New Testament testifies to the triune nature of God

When we open the New Testament we find the Triune God revealing himself in the Baptism of Jesus:



As soon as **Jesus** was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw **the Spirit of God** descending like a dove and lighting on him. And **a voice from heaven** said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.  
*Matthew 3:16-17*

And in the last verses of Matthew, known as 'The Great Commission', Jesus instructs his disciples:



Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in the name** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
*Matthew 28:19*

Note that Jesus is not saying 'in the names' (plural), but 'in the name' (singular!), thus clearly indicating one God who has revealed Himself as the triune one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is also expressed by the Church whenever believers join together in the words of the grace:



May the grace of **the Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the fellowship of **the Holy Spirit** be with you all.  
*2 Corinthians 13:14*

For further reference we encourage to meditate on these Scriptures:

Eph 2:18; Ro 14:17-18; 15:16,30; 1 Co 12:4-6; 2 Co 1:21-22; Tit 3:4-6; 1 Pe 1:2; Heb 9:14; Jude 20-21.

## 4.1.6 Analogies for the Trinity

There are a number of analogies in circulation that try to illustrate how the trinity may be perceived. Someone may find these to be helpful, but one needs to be careful as they do not always present a convincing argument. Nevertheless these examples may help:

- **Man** is seen to be a trinity, consisting of body, soul and spirit.
- Another, quite different kind of trinity can be noted from the substance of **water**. Chemically it is always H<sub>2</sub>O (as God is divine). Physically it may be a liquid, solid (ice) or a gas (steam) (= as God manifested Himself as Father, Jesus and Spirit).

- The **sun** is seen as a ball of fierce brightness in the sky, but may also be experienced as a ray of light penetrating the darkness of a room, or as a beam radiating warmth and dispelling the coldness of the night.

But all **such comparisons** fall short in one respect or another and **are not the reason why** we believe in the triune nature of God in the first place!

### 4.1.7 The Glory of the Triune God

While Muslims are attacking the Biblical teaching of the triune nature of God, their theologians have a problem of their own, as Don McCurry puts it:



Most Muslims agree that the Word of God is eternal; but He or It is not part of Allah. If Muslims say the Word is uncreated, then two things exist eternally, (and that) by Muslim accounts, (is) an intolerable blasphemy. If they say the Word of God is created, then there was a time when God could not, or did not speak... As soon as He spoke, He changed from one state to another – an intolerable violation of their doctrine of the immutability of God.

*Healing the Broken Family of Abraham, 2001, p. 259*

In contrast, to us as the children of God, the incomparable beauty of the Christian faith lies in the fact that God relates to us, his creatures, on a personal level. He is not distant and detached, but lovingly seeking and saving the lost.

**Love** is only real when given freely by the lover to the beloved without any reserve or demands. **God is love!** This is evident throughout the Bible, but is particularly emphasized in the N T.

Based on this foundational truth (1Jn 4:8.16), we may well believe that even before creation began God expressed His love. The Father loved the Son, and the Son the Father, as Jesus testified, when He said to His Father: **“You loved me before the creation of the world”** (Jn 17:24).

There is no possible way that someone in Islam can relate to his God as intimately, joyfully and reassured of His love, as every true Christian believer may experience this towards his Heavenly Father. Indeed, as Christians we can “glory” in our triune God.

#### **Recommended Literature: Trinity**

**Making Sense of the Trinity.** J. Millard Erickson, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000, pp 17-40.

**Trinity and Unity.** Pope Shenuda III, Ruetikon: The Good Way. (undated)

**One God or Three?** Stanley Rosenthal, Bellmawr: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1978.

## 4.2 Objections to Divinity and Sonship of Jesus

As in our previous topic we need to clarify right from the outset that Jesus' divinity and sonship is neither based on philosophical or theological speculation, but on the clear revelation in God's book. Nor does it imply a physical begetting act from God, but simply describes a oneness which can best be communicated from God to humankind by the image of father-son relationship.

### 4.2.1 What the Qur'an says Jesus is degraded to mere prophethood



**They do blaspheme who say: 'Allah is Christ the son of Mary'. But said Christ: 'O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord'. Whoever joins other gods with Allah - Allah will forbid him the Garden, and the Fire will be his abode. There will for the wrong-doers be no one to help.**

**Christ the son of Mary was no more than an Apostle; many were the apostles that passed away before him.**

*Surah 5:72 + 75*

### The title 'Son of God' is denied to Jesus



In blasphemy indeed are those that say Allah is Christ, the son of Mary.

*Surah 5:17*

The Jews call Uzair (= Ezra) a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the Son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouths; (In this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth!

*Surah 9:30*

**It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it: 'Be', and it is.**

*Surah 19:35*

### 4.2.2 Start at a point of agreement

It would indeed be blasphemous to ascribe a physical begetting act to God Almighty. God never took a wife nor does he have nephews or grandchildren. Yet Jesus emphatically affirms his identity as the expected Messiah in the face of an angry Jewish crowd. We are told that the Jews picked up stones to kill Jesus when he confronted them with the claim:



I and the Father are one.

*John 10:30*

This oneness is also implied in a figurative sense when we use the expression Son of... Thus we may describe a traveller as a Son of the road, the Egyptian people are referred to as sons of the Nile, and in Malaysia a key is called “ana-kutshi” which literally means “the son of a lock.”

We are also aware that Jesus predominantly used the title son of man while on earth (see Mk 2:10; 8:31.38; 9:9; 10:33.45; 13:26; 14:41.62). However, even this title has a historical significance that far exceeds human limitations, as Daniel expressed in his vision:



In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one **like a son of man**, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language **worshiped him**. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

*Daniel 7:13-14*

### Jesus' Titles in the Qur'an

(Compiled from *Jesus in the Qur'an*, by Geoffrey Parrinder)

Arabic	English	Reference (Surah)
<b><i>Al-Masih</i></b>	The Messiah	3:40, 45; 156-172; 5:72-79; 9:30-31
<b><i>Abd</i></b>	Servant	4:170-172; 19:30-31; 43:57:61
<b><i>Nabi</i></b>	Prophet	19:30-31
<b><i>Rasul</i></b>	Messenger	2:81, 87, 253-254; 3:43-53, 156-171; 5:75, 79,111; 61:6
<b><i>Kalima</i></b>	Word	3:34, 39; 4:169-171
<b><i>Ruh</i></b>	Spirit	2:81, 87, 253-254; 4:169-171
<b><i>Aya</i></b>	Sign	19:21; 21:91; 23:50, 52
<b><i>Mathal</i></b>	Parable, example	43:57, 59; 3:52, 59
<b><i>Shahid</i></b>	Witness	4:157,159; 5:117

<b>Rahama</b>	Mercy	19:21; 3:40, 45
<b>Min al-Muqarrabin</b>	One brought near	3; 40, 45
<b>Min al-Salihin</b>	One of the upright	3:40, 46
<b>Mubarak</b>	Blessed	19:31-32

### 4.2.3 What Muslims should know about Jesus in the Qur'an

**He was born of a virgin**

She [Mary] said: 'How shall I have a son, seeing that **no man has touched me**, and I am not unchaste?'

*Surah 19:20*

**He is holy, faultless (sinless)**

He [Gabriel] said: 'Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son'.

*Surah 19:19*

**We note:**

**All other prophets in the Bible and Qur'an have sinned<sup>9</sup> (against popular belief of Muslims).**

**Adam**

So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest. They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us thy mercy, we shall certainly be lost.

*Surah 7:22-23*

**Moses**

And he entered the city at a time when its people were not watching; and he found there two men fighting; - One of his own religion, and the other, of his foes. Now the man of his own religion appealed to him against his foe, and Moses struck him with his fist and made an end of him. He said: 'This is a word of Evil (Satan): for he is an enemy that manifestly

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<sup>9</sup> We are indeed aware of the Islamic distinction between 'shirk' (adding a partner to Allah), 'kufr' (unbelief) or 'khatia' (sin committed on purpose), 'khit' (normal sin), 'ithm' (heavy sin) and 'dhanb' (stumbling, committing an error) etc. We are also aware that 'dhanb' is used here. This word had a stronger meaning before, but because it was used for Muhammad, the meaning in today's usage has shifted to mean just 'a little and unintentional fault'. This concept of sin does not agree with what the Bible teaches!

misleads.

**He prayed: 'O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do thou then forgive me!'** So (Allah) forgave him; for he is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

*Surah 28:15-16*

### **Abraham**

And who, I hope will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment ...

*Surah 26:82*

### **Jonah**

He (agreed to) cast lots, and he was condemned. Then the big Fish did swallow him, and he had done acts worthy of blame. Had it not been that he (repented and) glorified Allah, he would certainly have remained inside the Fish till the Day of Resurrection.

*Surah 37:141-144*

### **David**

And David gathered that we had tried him; he asked forgiveness of his Lord, fell down, bowing (in prostration), and turned (to Allah in repentance). So we forgave him this (lapse)<sup>10</sup>.

*Surah 38:24-25*

### **Muhammad**

Verily we have granted thee a manifest victory<sup>11</sup> that Allah may forgive thee thy faults of the past and those to follow; fulfil his favour to thee; and guide thee on the Straight Way.

*Surah 48:1-2*

Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and **ask forgiveness for the fault** and for the men and women who believe: For Allah knows how ye move about and how ye dwell in your homes.

*Surah 47:19*

**Christ Jesus** the son of Mary **was** (no more than) an apostle of Allah and **His Word** which he bestowed on Mary and **a Spirit proceeding from him**: so believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not 'Trinity': desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is One Allah. Glory be to him; (for exalted is he) above having a son. To him

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<sup>10</sup> This lapse was the murder of Uriah and the adultery with Bathsheba.

<sup>11</sup> The victory referred to, is the signing of the 'Treaty of Hudaibiyah'.



belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a disposer of affairs.

*Surah 4:171*

or as M.M. Pickthall translates it:

**He is:  
A Messenger of God**

**The Messiah, Jesus** son of Mary, **was** only a **messenger of Allah and His word** which He conveyed unto Mary, **and a spirit from Him**. So believe in Allah and his messengers, and say not 'Three' - cease! (it is) better for you! - Allah is only One God. Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that he should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender.

**The Word of God**

**A Spirit from God**

**He created Life  
He healed the sick  
He raised the dead**

And behold! **thou makest out of clay**, as it were, **the figure of a bird** by my leave. **And thou breathest into it and it becometh a bird**<sup>12</sup> by my leave. **And thou healest those born blind, and the lepers** by my leave. And behold! **thou bringest forth the dead**.

*Surah 5:110*

**He came with clear signs**

When **Jesus came with clear signs**, he said: 'Now have I come to you with wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some of the (points) on which ye dispute: Therefore fear Allah and obey me.

*Surah 43:63*

**He is a sign  
unto mankind and  
a mercy from God**

He said: 'So (it will be): the Lord saith, 'That is easy for me: and (we wish) to appoint him as **a sign unto men and a mercy from us**'.

*Surah 19:21*

**He is a sign  
to all people**

And remember her who guarded her chastity: we breathed into her of our Spirit, and we made her and her son a sign for all people.

*Surah 21:91*

Behold! the angels said: 'O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him: his name will be **Christ Jesus**, the son of Mary, **held in honour in this world and the hereafter** and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah.

*Surah 3:45*

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<sup>12</sup> This part is of the apocryphical 'Gospel of the Infancy': "*He took clay of the pools and made it sparrows, on the Sabbath. A Jew saw it and spoke to Joseph, who spoke to Jesus. Jesus clapped his hands and bade the sparrows to fly away*". (vs. XXVIII)

**He is illustrious in the world and the hereafter**

or as M.M. Pickthall translates:

(And remember) when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, **illustrious in the world and the hereafter** and one of those brought near (unto Allah).

**He was raised to heaven**

Nay, Allah raised him up unto himself, and Allah is exalted in power, wise.

*Surah 4:158*

**He will come back for judgment**

And (Jesus) shall be a sign (for the coming of the hour of judgement): therefore have no doubt about the (hour), but follow ye me, this is a straight way.

*Surah 43:61*

The Hadith supports this:

Abdullah-b-Amr reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Jesus, son of Mary, will come down to the world. He will marry and there will be his issue<sup>13</sup> and he will live for forty-five years and then die. He will be buried with me in my grave. Then I and Jesus, son of Mary, will stand up in one grave between Abu Bakr and Omar.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: By one in whose hand there is my life, it is certainly near that the son of Mary will bring down to you justice and administration; that he will destroy the cross, kill swines and abolish Jizya<sup>14</sup>.

*Al-Bukhari, vol LX, ch.44, vs.657, and vol IV p.436*

Each of these attributes given to Jesus in the Qur'an could be used as a stepping-stone to present the uniqueness of Jesus to the Muslims.

Now let us look at some of the Bible's testimony about Jesus:

#### **4.2.4 The Bible teaches the divinity of Jesus**

**The word was God and became flesh**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

The Word became flesh and lived among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only (Greek: *monogenis* = only born) Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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<sup>13</sup> Issue = children.

<sup>14</sup> A tax for the 'People of the Book', i.e. Jews and Christians.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him....

*John 1:1,10*

**Jesus declares his divinity**

Before Abraham was, I am. ('I am' = Yahweh, is the name of God)

*John 8:58*

But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

*Hebrews 1:8*

**Jesus' deity proven by his miracles**

**He gives eternal life**

**Jesus and his father are one**

**Jews accused him of making himself God**

Jesus answered: 'I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no-one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one'.

Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?'

'We are not stoning you for any of these', replied the Jews, 'but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God'.

*John 10:25-33*

**Jesus, the only way to God**

Jesus answered: 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

*John 14:6-7*

**Whoever saw Jesus, saw the father**

**Jesus has power to forgive sins**

Then Jesus said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven'. The other guests began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Jesus said to the woman: 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

*Luke 7:48-50*

**Jesus sends His angels for judgement**

The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will

throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

*Matthew 13:41-43*

**Disciples worshipped him as God**

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying: 'Truly you are the Son of God'.

*Matthew 14:32-33*

Jesus came and stood among them, and said: 'Peace be with you!' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe'. Thomas answered: 'My Lord and my God!'

*John 20:26-29*

**Jesus confirms himself to be the Son of God**

The high priest said to him, 'I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God'.

**Jesus reveals that he shall sit at the right hand of God**

'Yes, it is as you say', Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: In future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven'.

*Matthew 26:65-66*

**Jesus holds an everlasting dominion**

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

*Daniel 7:13-14*

**God bought His church with his own blood**

For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

*Acts 20:27-28*

**Jesus, the image of God**

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God.  
*2Corinthians 4:4*

**For and by Him were all things created  
All things hold together through Him  
God's fullness lived in Him  
He reconciled us to God  
He made peace by His cross**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

*Colossians 1:15-20*

**God mad the universe through the Son  
He sustains all things  
He purifies from sin  
He sits at God's right hand  
He is superior to angels**

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

*Hebrews 1:1-4*

**Jesus had the nature of God  
He is equal to God**

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.

*Philippians 2:5-6*

**Jesus Christ is God**

Theirs [i.e. the people of Israel] is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

*Romans 9:4-5*

**Jesus is true God and eternal life**

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true - even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

*1John 5:20*

**Christians wait for the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ**

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

*Titus 2:11-1*

... to those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.

*2Peter 1:1*

**The Old Testament spoke prophetically of Jesus' deity**

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

*Isaiah 7:14*

**His name is 'Mighty God'**

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders and he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 9:6*

**4.2.5 Problem texts that seemingly contradict the above verses**

There are various factors that have repeatedly motivated Muslims, as well as liberals, to deny the deity of Christ. They point out from the Bible that when Christ was tempted to worship Satan, He replied:



Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'.

*Matthew 4:10*

This statement is supposed to prove that Christ is not divine. We fail to see that.

Then there is the passage in Luke 18:19, where Jesus said to the enquiring ruler:



'Why do you call me good? ... 'No-one is good - except God alone'.

*Luke 18:19*

The obvious explanation is that Jesus was indeed perfect, and by that God.

Further we must view the situation in its context. The enquirer addressed Jesus as 'good rabbi' (teacher, sheikh). By implication Jesus said: A rabbi is not good, but God alone is! When you call me 'good', do you agree that I am more than a teacher?

At first sight the quoted passages seem to imply that Jesus rejects the honour and the title because they are not His. At a closer look, however, they even strengthen the fact that Jesus indeed challenged his contemporaries to acknowledge his divinity.

### **The key passage to all these seemingly contradictory verses is Philippians 2:6-10**



Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

*Philippians 2:6-7*

The man Jesus had limitations:



By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgement is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

*John 5:30*

His knowledge and power were limited. - So know his critics. They are fond of quoting:



No-one knows about the day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

For he 'has put everything under his feet'. Now when it says that 'everything' has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

*1 Corinthians 15:27-28*

If these statements are seen in the wider context of Scripture, everything will take its proper place, namely that Christ while in human form, suffered many of the limitations of man (Jn 5:19). For instance: He could be at only one place at a time. He was subject to human emotions ("Jesus wept" - Jn 11:35). He also had a somewhat limited knowledge, despite the fact that He performed miracles that are totally beyond human capacity. After all He was fully man. - The quoted passage (1Cor 15:28) is obviously referring to the functional aspect of Christ, not to his status.

#### 4.2.6 Jesus – the Son of God

To a Muslim the thought that God has a son is repulsive. Whenever they hear that Christ is the Son of God, they are led to assume that Christians believe that God had a physical relationship with Mary.

It is obvious to every Christians and should be so to every Muslim, that the term **Son of God** does **not** mean that God had a sexual relationship with Mary which resulted in the birth of Jesus (as the Qur'an indicates). Whoever doubts this should read the following:



In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you'.

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end'.

'How will this be', Mary asked the angel, 'since **I am a virgin?**'  
The angel answered, '**The Holy Spirit will come upon you,**



**and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.** For nothing is impossible with God'.

'I am the Lord's servant', Mary answered. 'May it be to me as you have said'. Then the angel left her.

*Luke 1:26-38*

There is, in fact, a remarkable similarity to the Qur'an:



Relate in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then we sent to her our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respect. She said: 'I seek refuge from thee to (Allah) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear Allah'.

He said: 'Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son'. She said: 'How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me and I am not unchaste?' He said: 'So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, 'That is easy for me, and (we wish) to appoint him as a sign unto men and a mercy from us'. It is a matter (so) decreed.

*Surah 19:16-21*

## God Himself called Jesus his Son



The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son ....

The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

*John 5:21-25*

Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from a cloud: 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!'

*Mark 9:7*

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!'

*Matthew 19:5*

Read also 2Peter 1:16-18!

## Jesus is equally referring to God as His Father in a unique sense



Just as the Father raises the dead, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.  
The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son.  
The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

*John 5:21,25*

## The Jewish people accused Jesus of just that. They said:

He was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. *John 5:18*  
We are ... stoning you ... for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God! *John 10:31*

What all this implies is that while Jesus had a human mother, God was his 'Father'. God 'took the role of a father': He initiated the pregnancy - yet not in a physical way.

Consequently:

*Jesus was Man from his mother's side. (He was hungry, he wept, he prayed, he suffered and died) Jesus was God from His Father's side. (He raised the dead, healed the sick, walked on the sea, stilled the storm, and rose from the dead)*

## He is the vital link between God and man



For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

*1Timothy 2:5*

Muslims object strongly to Jesus being called the begotten Son of God. This suggests that God begets, i.e. had a sexual contact with Mary.

This is the result of an unfortunate translation done in 1611. The original Greek text says: the **monogenesis** Son of God = the **only born** Son of God. Muslims rightly observed that not only Jesus is called the Son of God.

## But ... angels and spirits are also called 'Sons of God'



One day the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.

*Job 1:6*

On another day the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him.

*Job 2:1*

The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.

*Genesis 6:2*

## And ... people are called 'Sons of God'



Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become **children of God**.

*John 1:12*

He predestined us to be adopted as **his sons** through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

*Ephesians 1:5*



Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are **sons of God**.

*Romans 8:14*

*Jesus is the only born Son of God.*

*He is of the same kind as God – not creature but Creator. (Col 1:16;*  
*Heb 1:2)*

*He is God! Not another God!*

*He is the manifestation of Yahweh Elohim.*

Please note: Spirits are created; so was Adam, and consequently mankind. Christians are 'children' of God by adoption.

Every person wishing to live in time and eternity in personal touch with God, needs to be **born again** in order to be elevated from the status of creature to the divine realm:



Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desire.

*2Peter 1:4*

In this God shows His sovereign grace and power. It may be a mystery. But it happens! Daily! To millions of people!

### **Recommended Literature: Divinity and Sonship**

**The Christian Witness to the Muslims.** John Gilchrist, MERCSA, 1998, pp 40ff.

**The Great Deception.** Abd Al-Masih, Villach: Light of Life, 1995, pp 179ff.

**The Muslim Christ.** Samuel M. Zwemer, The Message for Muslims Trust, 1912, p 198.

**What do you think of the Messiah.** Charles Marsh, LCA 1992 (Tract).

## **4.3 Objections to the Crucifixion**

### **4.3.1 What the Qur'an says**



They said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of Allah'. - But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubt, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow. For of a surety they killed him not. Nay, Allah raised him up unto himself; and Allah is exalted in Power, Wise.

*Surah 4:157-158*

### **4.3.2 Islamic allegations**

The Muslim antagonist Ahmed Deedat once expressed:

*"We can forget about all the other arguments we have for which we may well find a compromise. There is one point, however, on which we will never be able to agree, and that is the crucifixion and death of Jesus!"*

These words emphasise just how strongly Muslims respond to God's offer of salvation! In fact, the salvation aspect of the cross is not even recognized in Islamic thinking. The Qur'an only seems to be concerned to save "Prophet Jesus" (Nabi Isa) from the shame of the cross and the evil hands of

the Jews by ascribing all power to Allah to miraculously transport Jesus into heaven. Muslims need to be confronted with the fact that Jesus had come into the world for the very reason to lay down his life willingly for the salvation of all men. His death was not a tragic accident, but a fulfilment of God's eternal plan of redemption (Mt 20:28; Jn 10:11.17-18).

### 4.3.3 The Substitution Theory

However, the Qur'anic position on that topic is by no means clear, as we shall see. What does the Qur'an actually teach in the above verse?

- The physical features of another person were changed to match those of Jesus
- Jesus was instead taken to heaven and remains there alive until his return shortly before the end of time
- The Jews actually intended to crucify Jesus. Therefore someone else was indeed crucified, and everyone who was watching that day truly believed it was Jesus himself hanging there.

Therefore **Muslims have to answer** many questions arising from the above points:

- If it simply was God's intention to save Jesus' from such a shameful death by taking him up to heaven, why should anyone else have been crucified in his place? And who should this other person have been?
- Many suggestions have been brought up by Muslim writers, but none is without serious implications. If Judas Iscariot was hanging there instead of Jesus, the Biblical records would be clearly contradicted (see Mt 27:5 and Ac 1:18). If Simon of Cyrene was mistakenly put to the cross, why did he not shout and protest his innocence?
- And what about all of Jesus' friends and relatives who were under the cross witnessing this cruel ordeal, if all of it simply was a matter of mistaken identity? We should remind our Muslim friends that Jesus still addressed his mother and John, the beloved disciple right from the cross (Jn 19:26-27). Surely a mother knows her son's voice even if she would have been mistaken by his agonised features!
- And lastly, we should ask our confused Muslim friends about the incredible consequences of this substitution theory on the very character of God: Wouldn't such an act make God the greatest deceiver of all times? Wouldn't God's moral character clearly be contaminated by allowing some innocent person be put on the cross instead?

### 4.3.4 The Swooning Theory

This is actually a very old idea that was first adopted by the Ahmaddiyya sect (see also page 75) founded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by their prophet Mirza Ghulam Ahmed (see *Islam – Basic Aspects*, p. 45). They try to strengthen this argument by pointing out that

- Jesus prayed that God would save him from death.
- The centurion (Roman soldier) did not ensure that Jesus was dead by neglecting to break his bones as was done to the two other criminals.
- The Jews doubted that Jesus was already dead and afraid that Jesus' prediction to come back to life after three days could be manipulated in one way or another.

#### To this we answer:

- Pilate felt quite satisfied with the centurion's report; why else would he have granted the body to Joseph of Arimathia (Mk 15:44-45).
- The soldier thrust his spear into Jesus' side to make sure that he really was dead (Jn 19:34).
- The Jews simply acted on Jesus' prophecy that he would be killed (be dead!) and then rise again on the third day (Lu 9:22).

Therefore the Swooning theory has no substance at all. It relies on reading between the lines, on appealing to pseudo-scientific evidence like the Shroud of Turin relic. This theory rather shows to what length human beings are willing to go in rather accepting all kinds of inconsistent proof than to submit to the clear Biblical records.

### 4.3.5 The Sign of Jonah

Another common argument used by Ahmed Deedat and many of his disciples is the sign of Jonah.



Following the study of the Bible, we come across a prophecy written in Luke, saying: 'For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth'. In studying the Bible, we understand that Jonah went in alive and came out alive on the third day from the belly of a whale. Luke makes the above prophecy of one entering the earth alive, living in it, and coming out of it alive as Jonah on the third day. When Jesus was carried away from the cross, he was made to lie in the

sepulchre, the heart of the earth and where he rested and arose on the third day. If this prophecy is true, then Jesus entered the tomb alive, lived in it, and came out of it alive as happened to Jonah, the Prophet that was afraid to preach God's message. Thus, again if the prophecy is true, the Messiah did not die.

*'The Light' by al-Haj Sultan Hafiz Abdool*

We are astounded that our learned friend believes the prophecy in Luke and is leaving what Muslims firmly believe, namely that Jesus was not placed on the cross as a matter of fact.

Let us have a look at the 'prophecy written in Luke'. Actually we don't find it there, for it is not recorded in Luke's account of the Gospel! It is found in that of Matthew:



Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, 'Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you'. He answered, 'A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

*Matthew 12:38-40*

Anyone acquainted with the Bible would hardly ask **how** Jonah - and subsequently Jesus - was in the heart of the earth. It is an established fact that **Jesus was prophesied to die**, that **he himself prophesied several times that he would die!** The question as put here is mischievous! It intends to make the Bible agree with the Qur'an.

### 4.3.6 Dead or Alive – How was Jonah in the belly of the fish?

Muslims often reason, that **as** Jonah was in the belly of the fish, **so** Jesus had to be in the heart of the earth. How was Jonah, asks Ahmed Deedat, was he dead or alive? Probably most people will say, Alive! Consequently Jesus must have been alive in the grave.

Are we really sure about this? Let us have a look at Jonah: In the past tense - i.e. when he, after his experience, wrote it down - he said: "*From the depth of the ...*" fish? No! From "*...sheol*" (= the abode of the dead, the underworld), also translated as grave (Jnh 2:2), he called for help!

Then he praised God by saying: "*You brought my life up from the pit.*" (Jnh 2:6). The word pit (Hebr. '**shachat**') is translated elsewhere in the Bible as corruption, grave, extirpation (complete destruction), ruined or spoiled.

It rather suggests that he was dead, like later Jesus, but was brought to life again by God. Maybe we have to rethink our traditionally accepted view<sup>15</sup>?

### 4.3.7 The Time Factor – How long was Jesus in the grave?<sup>16</sup>

What then did Jesus mean to say, when He taught the message of Jonah? He did not mean to foretell **how long** he would be in the heart of the earth, but rather that He would be buried and rise again! Even so, in addition the length of time is also indicated.

Muslims are likely to reply: OK! Let us count together. Jesus was killed on a Friday afternoon. Let us be gracious and call this **one day**. Then he spent the night between Friday and Saturday in the grave: **one night**. He was in the tomb Saturday: **another day** and at least part of the night to Sunday: **another night**. Early on Sunday he rose from the grave. That makes **two days** and **two nights**. Where is the third?

First of all we must realise that the words days and nights were always used with the identical number (three days and three nights or forty days and forty nights etc., and never for instance three days and two nights or five days and four nights. Consequently the Hebrew idiom **yom-layelah** (= day and night) corresponds to our use of the word a day meaning 24 hours or part thereof. (See also Jn 1:17; 1 Sa 3:12; Job 2:13; Ge 7:4; Ex 24:18; 34:28; Dt 9:9-10, 18, 25; 10:10; 28:66; 1Ki 19:8 and Mt 4:2).

A day began with the setting of the sun, i.e. about 6 p.m. Jesus died about 3 p.m. on Friday. This is considered a day. He was dead and in the heart of the earth the whole of Saturday, which would be the second day, and rose half way through the third day, i.e. at sunrise on Sunday, which constituted the

*In the use of the Hebrew language, a part of the day was taken for a full day.*

third day. That he rose **on the third day** is repeatedly confirmed in the New Testament (Lu 24:21; 1Co 15:4).

<sup>15</sup> We certainly don't want to be exclusive on this interpretation, however.

<sup>16</sup> Another explanation given refers to a special Sabbath ("Jubilee Sabbath") which fell on the year when Jesus was crucified. According to this calculation Jesus would have been put to the cross on a Thursday and risen from the grave on Sunday thus spending 3 days and 3 nights in the tomb.



Let us have a look again at the Gospel according to Matthew.



'Sir', they said, 'we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, '**After three days** I will rise again'. So give the order for the tomb to be made secure **until the third day**. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. The last deception will be worse than the first'.

**Matthew 27:63-64**

The Pharisees went to Pilate **after** the death of Jesus and said: Sir, we remember that while he was still alive, that deceiver said, '**After three days** I will rise again!' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure **until the third day**. Should they not have said: 'until after the third day'?

To substantiate the above we read in the book of Esther and find a passage where Esther says to Mordecai: "...*hold a fast on my behalf ... for three days, night or day, I and my maids will also fast as you do ... on the third day ... Esther said: 'If it please the king, let the king ... come this day to a dinner that I have prepared for the king'*" (Esther 4:16 - 5:5). They fasted three days but had dinner on the third day.

So we take it that Muslim theologians, when arguing against the crucifixion and death of Jesus, attempt to interpret the Bible to conform to the Qur'an in an effort to distort evidenced revelation backed by history.

### 4.3.8 Did Jesus really die on the cross?

But let us return to our topic: the crucifixion. The previously quoted Muslim apologist continues to say:



One synoptic writer<sup>17</sup> says that when Jesus was taken down from the cross a spear was hurled into the body of the Messiah, and blood then oozed out. From the point of view of modern science, if Jesus was dead on the cross, then his blood would have coagulated. We learn from today's sciences that the blood of the animal spills out if the master organ - the heart keeps palpitating. Thus if Jesus Christ had died, blood would never have oozed from his body, as the blood of the dead congeals or clots. Thus, the body of Jesus did not die but was alive.

Then, really did Jesus die? No. The two thieves did not die, nor did Jesus, for his heart was pumping the regular flow of blood which gushed out at the trusting of the spear into the body. Modern science marks its discovery and truth on such a hidden

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<sup>17</sup> It was not a synoptic writer, but we find this text in John 19:33.

matter to the blind Christian community. If one of the thieves had died, we would have presumably admitted Jesus' death, but neither of them had died.

*'The Light' by al-Haj Sultan Hafiz Abdool*

Only one of the Gospel recorders made mention of a spear piercing Jesus' side; this was John. Let us read what he recorded:



Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath: Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled, 'Not one of his bones will be broken', and, as another Scripture says, 'They will look on the one they have pierced'.

*John 19:31-37*

All the dishonesty of this repeatedly used argument, which aims to deceive Muslim people, becomes apparent. Trying to pose as an intellectual, the writer refers to modern science. He should rather have been honest about his ignorance. For one, an author should surely know that John is **not** a synoptic writer. And we read nothing in the Gospel about a spear being **hurled** or that blood oozed out or gushed out. What did come out was blood mingled with water, which **was** a sign that the blood had separated because Jesus **was** dead. - We would also like to know in which source the writer discovered that the two thieves did not die!

All this is nothing but swindle and deception, unworthy of a man of God. Unfortunately practically all Muslim teachers follow this trend, by that programming the minds of their ignorant followers, so that their minds, consciously or unconsciously, reject the Gospel - their only hope in eternity. What was quoted is, unfortunately, not an isolated case. We find a very similar story in the Mishkat:



The followers of Mirza Goolam Ahmed of Qadian (the Punjab) believe that Jesus Christ will not come again as he died a natural death and was buried at Srinagar in Kashmere. The Christians believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross but he reappeared again in flesh and blood and lives in heaven. The Qur'an says that Jesus was not crucified and killed, but he was raised up to heaven. The traditions say that he will reappear again to reclaim the lost humanity from the evil path. The Qur'an says: And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Apostle of Allah, and they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it was made dubious to them (4-157). I will take you and raise you up to Me and clear you of those who disbelieve (3:54). These verses do not deny Jesus being nailed on the Cross, but they negative [sic] his having expired on the Cross. There was no eye witness of his death but it was only a supposition that he died as a result of nailing. Time only will prove this assertion of the Qur'an.

*Mishkat IV, p.79 [Commentary]*

We need some explanation here. When the commentator of the Mishkat lets the Qur'an say: "*I will take you and raise you up to Me...*" (S. 3:54), he expediently camouflages the true meaning of the verse of the Qur'an.

In the first edition of Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'an, he translated the word "**mutawaffi-ka**" as "**I will cause thee to die**", which is correct. In his second edition, however, he changed it to "**I will take thee**". M.M. Pickthall translates: "**I am gathering thee**". Why this obvious deception? "**Tawaffi**" means to die (according to the following dictionaries: J. Catafago, E.W. Lane and ibn-Mukarram). Ibn-Abbas, one of the most esteemed companions of Muhammad, said: "**mutawaffi-ka is mumitu-ka**", i.e. "I will cause thee to die" (*Al-Bukhari*).

In Surah 5:117 Jesus is alleged to say the following: "... *I was a witness over them whilst I dwelt among them, when **Thou didst take me up...***" Again the word "**mutawaffi-ka**" is used.

Another passage strengthens this evidence. It says of Jesus:



So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again).

*Surah 19:33*

Many Muslims reason that Jesus' death will happen after his return to earth to defeat al-Dajjal, the Anti-Christ. Jesus is then expected to be buried next to Muhammad in Medina.

This interpretation can hardly be accepted, for almost the identical words are used in a verse just prior to the last quotation, but this time referring to John the Baptist:



So peace on him the day he was born. The day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life (again).

*Surah 19:15*

Why would he have died and not Jesus although the words used are almost exactly the same? Because it contradicts the repeatedly quoted verse:



But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts. With no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow. For of a surety they killed him not.

*Surah 4:157*

Since one cannot admit a contradiction of this importance and magnitude, camouflage has to be applied. The peak of dishonesty is reached when the commentator of the Mishkat concludes with regards to the last quoted text. These verses do not deny Jesus being nailed on the cross. This is only surpassed by the statement that there was no eye-witness of his death. We ought to wail and lament over the millions of God-beloved people who perish because many of their leaders are either ignorant or plainly dishonest people.

They may be likened to the Pharisees of whom Jesus said:



Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

*Matthew 23:13*

## A Biblical Reply

We have to remember again that the whole thrust of the argument against the crucifixion and death of Christ, like everything else in Islam, rests on the testimony of **one person**, who lived 600 years after the events, and that his testimony is **in contrast to all the other evidences**.

As we already established, Christians have extensive confirmation for the crucifixion of Jesus in the Bible, history and other sources. Almost a third of the Gospel narrative occupies itself with the last week of the life of Jesus and His death. All that is recorded is in total harmony with the doctrine of

atonement and the practice of offering sacrifices in the Old Testament, of which Islam knows nothing.

*The life and death of Jesus on the cross  
is clearly foretold in the Old Testament.*

The Muslims argument would be that all **this may seem** to have happened (S. 4:157), **but in reality** God took Jesus away and the one actually nailed to the cross only had the appearance of Jesus, but was not him. This argument is negated completely by the fact that

- If it only ‘appeared to be’ Jesus that hung on the cross, someone had to let it appear this way. This could only have been God. So God would be a deceiver of people - in this case of all Christians! The Qur’an itself rejects such an option: *Allah will not mislead a people after He hath guided them ...* (S. 9:115).
- All that happened was foretold by the prophets. He died according to the Scriptures of the OT (1 Co 15:3-4).
- Christ predicted his death a number of times.
- Eye-witnesses (the apostles) testified to this.
- After His resurrection, Christ appeared to more than 500 Christians, who testified to that fact and to whom he showed the marks of the nails and the spear.

In addition to these proofs from Scripture we have already shown that historians reported it (see previous chapter).

### **Recommended Literature: Crucifixion**

**The Cross in the Gospel and the Koran.** Iskander Jadeed, Ruetikon: The Good Way, pp 41.

**The Crucifixion of Christ: A Fact, not Fiction.** John Gilchrist, MERCSA, 1985, pp36.

**Was Christ crucified.** Faris al-Qayrawani, Villach: Light of Life, 1994, pp 95.

**What indeed was the Sign of Jonah.** John Gilchrist, MERCSA, 1985, pp 36.

## 4.4 Objections to the doctrine of Atonement

### 4.4.1 Introduction

In the Old Testament God ordained that after **sins** (not wilful ones! Lev 4:2) were committed the offender should seek **atonement** with God in order to be **reconciled** with Him. The way this should be done was commanded and described in great detail (Lev chapters 1-7 and 16.). It was by means of a **sacrifice**. In the New Testament the place of the animal sacrifice was taken by Jesus who then suffered in the place of the offender once for all (Heb 9:12, 14, 26-27; 10:10).

Muslims are conditioned to see a problem in atonement through sacrifice. It is reasoned that the offering of a substitute to be sacrificed for the repenting sinner is immoral in that it represents injustice. How can an offender be accepted by God and the innocent be punished instead? This is offensive to a Muslim's concept of justice. He argues, however, against his own faith, for the Qur'an affirms that prophets before Muhammad's time were indeed killed (S. 3:183).

The Biblical story of Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac on the altar (Ge 22) is reflected in the Qur'an (S. 37:107), although the son's name is not mentioned. This led to the commonly held belief by most Muslims that it was Ishmael. But this is besides the point here. The point, which is made by the Qur'an is: 'And we ransomed him [the son on the altar] with a momentous sacrifice'. So, the son was **ransomed** by a (ram) sacrifice. This is nothing short of the Biblical substitutionary sacrifice.

### 4.4.2 Muslim allegations

In his book Joommal makes some vicious and arbitrary statements:



The aim of the Jews in having Jesus crucified was to show that he was an impostor and thus prove the truth of the Word of God. The disciples of Jesus did not know what to do or say. They were in a dilemma. An admission of his death on the cross involved a belief in his having become 'accursed of God', but a declaration that he was alive was most hazardous, for Jesus might be re-arrested and hanged again. It was at this juncture that Paul's ingenuity came into operation and he devised a clever plan to which the disciples did not object, because it seemed the only way out of the predicament under the circumstances. Paul advanced the theory that Jesus had undoubtedly been subjected to an accursed death, but since he

himself was completely innocent having taken on his own shoulders the burden of the curse for the sins of men, this did not constitute infamy, but was, on the contrary, a very meritorious act. Thus the Christians now at least had something to say in reply to the Jews. This theory, however, which was originally formulated as an answer to the Jews, gradually developed into the Doctrine of Atonement as now preached by the Christian missionaries.

*The Bible: Word of God or Word of Man, by A.S.K. Joommal*

Joommal loves to quote Christian Scholars, obviously liberal ones. He refers to a book by a Prof. Dr. Arnold Meyer entitled 'Jesus or Paul'. From this he relates:



The Professor proves conclusively that the divinity of Jesus and the atonement are dogmas which owe their origin to Paul. 'Jesus and his Apostles', the Professor says, 'knew nothing whatsoever of these doctrines'.

*The Bible: Word of God or Word of Man, by A.S.K. Joommal*

(For an extensive response see chapter 5: "Did Paul invent Christianity?")



Meander in his 'History of the Christian Religion and the Church' says, 'that the doctrine of atonement as it is now believed by the Christian Church, was not definitely and distinctly formulated until the twelfth century'.

We also do not find any mention of atonement being made in either the Talmud or the Torah.

*The Bible: Word of God or Word of Man, by A.S.K. Joommal*

These are indeed ridiculous statements! The very Bible which they claim to teach proves them liars.

**The word 'atonement' appears 74 times in the Old Testament**, which had already been translated into other languages before the time of Christ. The word 'atonement', incidentally, is found only **once** in the New Testament.



We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation (or atonement).  
*Romans 5:11*

The entire 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Leviticus (1500BC) is devoted to the Day of Atonement, (atonement is mentioned in it 16 times!).

### 4.4.3 The conceptional problem of Muslims

Once again we note that a Muslim's view of sin is quite different to the Biblical concept.

**In the Bible sin is described as the principle that enslaves all mankind and compels each person to commit sin. It demonstrates man's attitude of independence from and rebellion against God.** (See *Islam – Basic Aspects*, pp. 114-121)

Whether it is a big sin like murder or a small sin like telling a lie in business or stealing something from the firm, both is evidence of a person's disregard for God and His will.

*Sin presupposes the absence of God in the centre of the will and conscience of man. Thus by its very nature sin alienates and separates every man from God.*

The divine standard of behaviour is God's holiness. Every thought, word or deed that falls short of this is called 'sin'. The originator of sin is Satan. The claim that the doctrine of atonement was never preached by Christ at any time is patently untrue. We are not quite sure whether we should blame this on the critic's ignorance or his intention to deceive. The very words of Jesus contradict such statement:



Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

*Matthew 20:28*

This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

*Matthew 26:28*

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

*John 3:16*

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live for ever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

*John 6:51*

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep ... just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep ... No-one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to



lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

*John 10:11, 15 + 18*

Turning back to the Old Testament, we have the classic prophecy of Isaiah 53, where it distinctly says:



Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all ... For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken ... the Lord makes his life a guilt offering ... He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

*Isaiah 53:4-6, 8, 10 + 12*

#### 4.4.4 Does this doctrine provide a licence to sin?

Our Muslim writer suggests:



This doctrine gives mankind licence for the free and unbridled commission of sins. All one has to do is to have implicit faith in Jesus having given his blood with which the past and future sins of mankind have been washed clean. This is a most comfortable, convenient and easy doctrine to follow. It does not require any hard, rigorous or practical form of worship from the believer. He must merely believe and have faith and his salvation is assured.

*The Bible: Word of God or Word of Man, by A.S.K. Joommal*

We are grateful to the author for letting us peep into his soul. Apart from displaying a kind of envy for the 'comfortable and easy doctrine', the author also lets us know that his (Islamic) worship is not an act of gratitude towards God, but is 'hard and rigorous'. This reminds us of the popular belief that a pill can only help, if it is bitter.

Does the assurance of having been forgiven – and the open door for further forgiveness – really provide a licence to continue in sin? This, of course, depends on the sincerity and devotion of a person towards God. Divine forgiveness is based on the genuineness of the person requesting that forgiveness. God expects a genuine response of love and willing obedience; hypocritical expressions of remorse and appeals for forgiveness, which are not followed by a sincere attempt at obedience, are not genuine, and do not

obtain forgiveness for the hypocrite. Why not? Because genuine faith results in action, and without faith it is impossible to please God.



Jesus said: 'If you love me, you will obey what I command. If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him'.

*John 14:15 + 23*

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

*Romans 12:1-2*

But the cowardly the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexual immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.

*Revelation 21:8*

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their sinful nature with its passions and desires.

*Galatians 5:19-24*

(See also Mt 15:19; Mk 7:20ff; Ro 1:28ff; Eph 4:31; Col 3:5ff etc.).

## **A law cannot justify the one who breaks it**

Muslims go to great pains to observe the extremely multifaceted law of Islam (Shariah, Fiqh) in the hope that this will lead to justification on Judgement Day. **But no law in the world makes a man righteous.** A law determines what is right and wrong, but cannot make a person right. It is simply the standard by which judgement shall be passed



You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

*Galatians 5:4*

## Faith alone leads to Justification



Consider Abraham: 'He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness'. Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you'. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

*Galatians 6:6-9*

Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law, no-one will be justified.

*Galatians 2:16*

## It is true that Christians are not under the law

Yet although Christians are not under the law, they are not lawless.



Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. No-one who is born of God, will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God.

*1John 3:4 + 9*

Christ is the end of the Law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

*Romans 10:4*

### 4.4.5 How can a righteous and holy God be forgiving and merciful?

By punishing sin, God expressed His **righteousness**, and by taking the punishment on Himself, He expressed His **mercy** and **love**. Apart from this there is no way that a **righteous** God can also be a **merciful** one as well! An event from history may illustrate this:

Shamuel was a Caucasian prince living a couple of hundred years ago. His people seemed to be involved in constant war with the Turks. Once he besieged a Turkish city with his army. As usual his mother accompanied him.

One night he planned a surprise assault, but the enemy was lying in wait. His secret plans had been betrayed. The battle was lost. Distressed, Shamuel announced that the traitor, when caught, would be punished with 100 lashes of a whip. In great secrecy another attack was planned – but the result was the same. They had been betrayed again. But this time the traitor was caught. It was Shamuel's mother.

In anguish he withdrew to his tent for three days and nights. What should he do? What would be the right thing to do? If he were to spare his mother, all could rightly claim that justice was governed by expediency. Were he to punish her, however, all would say: 'Look at that merciless and cruel man! He does not even show pity for his own mother!' At last he appeared. His men gathered around him curiously. Then he addressed them: 'We lost two battles because of treason. We lost many a man as a result of this. I find no excuse for the traitor. The crime was committed, and so punishment shall be executed according to my law with 100 lashes! Righteousness and justice must be upheld!'

His mother was led into the circle. She was pale, trembling with fear. The executioner lifted his whip - but before the first lash came down on her, Shamuel cried: 'Wait! This is my mother; I am her flesh and blood. I will take the punishment for her!' He went into the circle, took off his garment and commanded: 'Executioner, dare not strike more lightly than with the last prisoner. Do your duty!' Lash after lash came down, until he collapsed unconscious. Against expectation Shamuel survived his ordeal. Will we ever know how his mother felt about what she had caused to her son? She must have been overcome by shame, wonder and love at her son's behaviour.

*Dear Abdallah, by G. Nehls, p. 38*

This event, perhaps more than any other in history, illustrates the way Jesus stepped in for us to take our place: *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* (2 Co 5:21)

## God's righteousness and love met at the cross of Christ.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses (against God's law) unto them.

*2Corinthians 5:19*



### **Recommended Literature for Chapter 4: Atonement**

**Christians answer Muslims.** Gerhard Nehls, LCA 1992, pp. 10-12.

**Christians ask Muslims.** Gerhard Nehls, LCA 1992, pp. 2-16 and pp. 44-48.

**Christian Reply to Muslim Objections.** W. St. Clair-Tisdall, Call of Hope 1904, pp. 3-28.

**Cross and Crescent – Responding to the Challenge of Islam.** Colin Chapman, Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1995, pp 190-203.

## 5 Questions that demand an answer

### 5.1 Have Christians elevated Jesus to the status of universality?

From its inception Islam has tried to deny Christ's claim to be the Saviour of all mankind, although the Bible explicitly points to Christ as the only means to salvation:



Jesus answered: 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.

*John 14:6*

#### 5.1.1 Islam has assigned Muhammad the place of Jesus



Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of Allah, and the seal of the prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.

*Surah 33:40*

We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not.

*Surah 34:28*

To achieve this, Islam has tried to demote Christ to a national prophet to Israel. By this he would lose significance for any other nation.

Muhammad's claim to be sent to all mankind only developed during the last years of his life (630 – 632). This is conveniently left out by Muslim contenders.

Islam argues that Christ is nothing more than a national Prophet:



He answered, 'I was sent **only to the lost sheep of Israel**.

*Matthew 15:24*

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because **he will save his people** from their sins. (His people = Jews)

*Matthew 1:21*

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to **the lost sheep of Israel**'.

*Matthew 10:5-6*

Do these Scriptures deny the universality of the Gospel? Why did Jesus Christ restrict his message to the Jews?

In His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:22), Jesus stated that Salvation is **from** the Jews, not **for** the Jews!

Only the Jews could understand the significance of Jesus. No Roman, Indian or Japanese could have accommodated Him, because He was embedded in the history and the inspired writings of Israel alone. The **Jews** were waiting for Him. He had to be a **Jew** (Deut.18:15); he even had to provide His genealogy to prove His descent from the tribe of **Judah** and the house of **David** (Ge 49:10; 2 Sa 7:13). Every Jew expected the Messiah, even though they did not recognise or accept Him when He appeared (Ro 9:4-5; Jn 1:4). (See: *Who is 'al-Masih', the Messiah*, p. 115)

The Jews were meant to proclaim Him universally. “**All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you!**” (Ge 12:3), was God’s promise to Abraham and the ‘great nation’ (vs. 2), which would be his offspring. This is reflected in many passages of the OT:



God said to Israel: I will make you a light **for the Gentiles**, that you may bring my salvation **to the ends of the earth.**

*Isaiah 49:6*

My house will be called a house of prayer **for all nations.**

*Isaiah 56:7*

They will proclaim my glory **among the nations.** And they will bring all your brothers, **from all the nations**, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem.

*Isaiah 66:18-20*

May **the nations** be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide **the nations** for the earth.

*Psalms 67:4*

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known **among the nations** what he has done.

*Psalms 105:1*

The Great Commission became the foundation of the spreading of the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

At first the Apostles and the early Christians - almost all Jews - found it very difficult to cross the barriers from Judaism to the Gentile world. They proclaimed the Gospel to the Jews only - until God spoke to Peter on the housetop in Joppa (Ac 10); to Saul on the way to Damascus (Ac 9); and to Philip in the loneliness of the desert road in the Gaza district (Acts 8). Then the Holy Spirit guided them further afield (see also Ac 1:8 and Lu 24:47).

Even the Qur'an knows about this. We read about Mary and Jesus:



We made her and her son a sign for all peoples.

*Surah 21:91*

And again it says of Jesus:



And (it will be) that we may make of him a revelation for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a thing ordained.

*Surah 19:21 - Pickthall*

Conclusively the Bible states:



Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

*Acts 4:12*

## An Illustration

Without an irrigation system a desert has no water; so a dam is constructed. Without pipes or channels, however, the water from the reservoir cannot flow onto the fields. Christ called Himself the Water of life. **The channels for the life-bringing water** were the Jews. So the Apostles were, likewise, the final sluice-gates which issued the water to the fields that represent the world. (W. Backeberg) It is consistent that **in His lifetime, Christ prepared the channels that would bring the water to the fields**. This makes Him universal.

Even so, in the early part of His ministry, Christ discerned great faith in a Roman captain. He then said:



'I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

*Matthew 8:10*

When his work was fully accomplished, He gave His last order, the Great Commission, as it is known:



Then Jesus came to them and said: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.

*Matthew 28:18-20*

*We are aware that Islam has good reason to reject the Bible, or at least parts thereof: because the Bible indeed does contradict the Qur'an.*

## Conclusion

We do have to realise that all the Biblical fundamentals, which are rejected by Islam and thus by Muslims, are interlinked. What would the crucifixion mean if Jesus is not God? Atonement is based on the sinlessness of Jesus which in turn is based on him being one with God in the Holy Trinity.

Instead of checking for themselves which book carries the evidence of divine revelation, it is a foregone conclusion to Muslims that the Qur'an, being the last revelation, must be right. This includes the assumption that the Bible must have been corrupted even against the passages of the Qur'an which confirms the Bible to be God's unchangeable Word.

We have to hold Muslim theologians accountable of either ignorance or, still worse, deceiving their followers against better knowledge. They prevent them to seriously consider the message of the Gospel by injecting fear of eternal punishment for doing so. Added to that is the pressure of the Umma (Muslim community) to prevent any exposure of Muslims to the truth of the Bible. **The Islamic polemic is based on the fear that Muslims, when hearing the Gospel - and comparing it with Islam - might turn to Jesus Christ.**

This has indeed happened in the lives of many Muslims that have dared to expose themselves to the message of God's Word. Not only is there evidence that Christ is the only Saviour, but His offer is infinitely more attractive to live and die with than that of Islam.



## 5.2 Do Christians believe in ‘Inherited Sin’?

Muslims are confused about the term “inherited sin”. Islam in general holds that a baby is born with a clean slate with no sin at all and people only add sin later through failure or omission. What is “inherited sin” anyway? What does this imply?

In Psalm 51:5 we read: “...*in sin did my mother conceive me*”. If we look at the text carefully, we see that it is not the conception to be sin, but that **in a state of sin** conception took place. And there is a world of a difference between these two views!

There are just two more passages in the Bible touching on this subject:



Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

*Romans 5:12-18*

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

*1Corinthians 15:22*

No man will be condemned because Adam sinned! Man will be condemned because he sinned against God himself. It is really incorrect to speak of inherited sin. Perhaps we should better name it **original sin**.

Adam and Eve were the first sinners, and since then one generation after another - up to now - inherited a **sinful nature**, which is the compelling drive to sin. Indeed:

***We are not sinners because we have sinned.  
But: We sin because we are sinners by nature.***

So no man inherited any **sin** from his forefathers. It is the **desire to sin** that was “inherited”.

We must hasten to add, however, that God gave for the ‘sickness’ a remedy:



As one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s righteousness led to acquittal and life for all men.

*Romans 5:18*

The one who accomplished this act of righteousness is Jesus. We note that this does not imply a kind of automatic justification by God. Although one

man's sin led to his children's sin, each man individually consents to the actions **he or she** does. Likewise forgiveness is not automatic, but is obtained by the resolution to turn away from sin and the sincere prayer for forgiveness. (1Th 1:10; 2 Ti 2:19).

### **We conclude**

It would be more appropriate to state that we do not believe in inherited sin, but in original sin as manifest in our sinful nature from birth.

## **5.3 Why are there so many different versions of the Bible?**

Muslim polemics are challenging Christians about the number of different 'versions' of the Bible. This challenge is based on the false perception that every now and then certain Christians 'revise' the Bible and by that create a new version. The Catholics have theirs, the Jehovah's Witnesses have another, and the Protestants have created many more, so the argument would go.

We should be aware that Muslims also have different versions of the Qur'an: one by Yusuf Ali, and others by Dawood, Arberry, Pickthall, Rodwell, Muhammad Ali and many more. "Wait a minute", they will answer, "these are **translations, not versions!**" What they mean to say is that a version would contain a somewhat different text, not just another translation of the original sources.

We must realise that a document, once written, is static. It does not change anymore. A spoken language, on the other hand, is dynamic. It changes all the time. Words change in meaning; new words are added, while other words gradually disappear. Take Matthew 6:6 as an example. Jesus teaches his disciples on prayer and we read: "*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door...*" – Thus readeth the King James Version, originally translated in 1611, better known as the Authorized Version. We have no doubt, however, that Jesus was not referring to the toilet, as we understand the word 'closet' today, but rather an inner room where we can pray undisturbed from the noise of the world around us. Therefore a translation into today's English would read: "*But when you pray, go into your room, close the door...*" (New International Version)

In order to present the meaning closest to the original it is therefore imperative to upgrade commonly used translations to keep them relevant

and understandable to the contemporary reader. This is done to **preserve** the meaning in the best possible way - **not to change it!**

*Muslims must realize that our versions of the Bible are simply contemporary, though slightly differently worded translations from the same Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek manuscripts, and all have the same meaning in the language of their time.*

A comparison of the different versions will soon let them realise that it is just a matter of wording the same content a little differently. In contrast to that Muslim Qur'an translators have bent over backwards to 'interpret' the Qur'an rather than to preserve the most accurate meaning. In addition they prefer vocabulary that is not commonly used, and a style and diction that supposedly adds respectability by using Shakespearian English even though most Qur'an translations date from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## 5.4 Is Muhammad mentioned in the Bible?

To this question most Christians will probably raise their eye-brows in amazement: "Why should Muhammad's name be found in our Scriptures when we know fully well that he lived only several hundred years after Christ?"

Muslims view the matter from an entirely different perspective: "It is unthinkable that the Bible would prophecy the coming of hardly known personalities such as King Cyrus (Isa 45:1), yet remain silent about a messenger as prominent as the founder of Islam. After all Islam is without doubt one of the largest religions in the world today!"

Moreover they base their expectations on two prominent verses in the Qur'an:



Jesus, son of Mary said... 'I am indeed the Messenger of God to you, confirming the Torah that is before me and giving good tidings of a messenger who shall come after me whose name shall be Ahmad.  
Surah 61:6

Those who follow the Apostle, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures) - in the Law and the Gospel.  
Surah 7:157

In their zeal to pursue the direction into which these verses were leading them, Muslim scholars have come up with a multitude of Bible texts which they perceive to be irrefutable evidence in favour of their assumption. Books

and booklets offered to Christians targeted for conversion to Islam bear promising titles as *Islam in the Bible*, *A Prophet of Islam* and *Let the Bible speak*. Others are even more straightforward: *What the Bible says about Muhammad* and *Muhammad, The natural Successor to Christ*.

Christians are even more perplexed to read that Muhammad is supposed to be ‘the rejected cornerstone’, the mysterious ‘rider on the white horse’, ‘the prophet’ as announced by Moses, and even ‘the comforter’ which Jesus promised to his followers.

Let us just look at the two most common ‘proof texts’, one in the Old and one in the New Testament, and find a factual and reasonable response to the Islamic claims.

### 5.4.1 The Old Testament prophecy of ‘The Prophet’



The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. ... I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.  
*Deuteronomy 18:15,18*

Muslims argue that this prophecy fits Muhammad perfectly since the Ishmaelites are the brothers of the Israelites, just as Ishmael and Isaac were brothers. Moreover, Muhammad shows many a similarity with Moses, so they say.

As always the Christian witness should first of all turn to the relevant passage in Scripture. Scripture interprets Scripture; and the Bible explains itself by its own context, are the two guiding principles.

So, what does the Bible say about ‘that prophet’? When John the Baptist was asked whether he was ‘that prophet’ (Jn 1:21), he replied in the negative. The lesser-known Apostle Phillip told his brother: “*We found the one Moses wrote about in the Law!*” (Jn 1:45).” He meant Jesus. Some time later the people who listened to Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem said: “*Surely, this man is ‘the prophet’*” (Jn 7:40).” And in Acts 3:17-23 Peter, in addressing his Jewish listeners at Solomon’s Colonnade, distinctly applied this prophecy to the person of Christ. Speaking of him he said:



...even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

For Moses said, ‘The Lord, your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him

will be completely cut off from among his people.

*Acts 3: 20 – 23*

Since the time the prophecy was given, people waited expectantly. Simeon and Anna were waiting in the Jewish temple for him (Lu 2:25, 36). They naturally expected him to be a Jew. But now Muslims argue that the Ishmaelites are the brothers of the Jews and that consequently ‘that prophet’ must be an Arab. It is advisable in such a case to take our Muslim friend to the first verses of Deuteronomy 18 where we read:



The priests, who are Levites - indeed the whole tribe of Levi - are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. ...They shall have no inheritance among their brothers...

*Deuteronomy 18:1-2*

It is quite clear from these verses that ‘they’ refers to the tribe of Levi and ‘their brothers’ to the remaining eleven tribes of Israel. That is confirmed by verse 15, which literally translated reads:



...a prophet from among you, from brothers of you like me, (he) will raise up for you Yahweh.

*Deuteronomy 18:15*

This is further demonstrated in a similar verse from Judges 20:13:



But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. (NIV)

But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel. (KJV)

*Judges 20:13*

Here ‘their brethren’ are specifically stated to be the other tribes of Israel as distinct from the tribe of Benjamin.

To make sure that the Israelites would not confuse this kind of brotherhood with an extended kinship relationship, God explicitly commanded them to appoint their king from one of the tribes of Israel.



He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite.

*Deuteronomy 17:15*

Thus no Ishmaelite, Moabite, Edomite or whoever he may be could be made King of Israel. It had to be a member of one of the 12 tribes.

**Muslims assume Muhammad to be ‘The Prophet like Moses.** Several comparisons have been made. Let us consider just a few:

- Moses was married and so was Muhammad, but Jesus was not.
- Moses was given a comprehensive law for his people. Muhammad, likewise, so it is claimed, received a perfect code of laws, complete in itself, for all people and for all times.
- Moses and Muhammad were at first rejected by their own people, but returned after years in exile to assume religious and political leadership among their people.

Obviously the first point is quite true, but does it mark a significant parallel between Moses and Muhammad? We might just as well state that Moses and Jesus conveyed their message in the Hebrew-Aramaic language while Muhammad only spoke Arabic, or that both Moses and Jesus knew their parents while Muhammad never met his father.

It will be more helpful to enlighten our Muslim friend on some of the **peculiar** parallels in Scripture:

- Moses and Jesus both left Egypt to enter their ministry. Matthew saw this as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Hosea (11:1): “*Out of Egypt I called my son.*” (Mt 2:15)
- Both Moses and Jesus forsook great wealth to share the misery of their people. Of Moses we read: “*He considered abuse suffered for Christ greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt*” (Heb 11:25). And the apostle Paul reminds us: “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.*” (2 Co 8:9)
- Again Hebrews 3 draws the parallel between the two declaring Jesus “*faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house.*” Yet it continues: “*Jesus has been found of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.*” (Heb 3: 2-3)

(For other similarities between Moses and Jesus we refer to J. Gilchrist’s excellent book: *Facing the Muslim Challenge.*)

### **5.4.2 Is the name Ahmad found in the N.T.?**

We recall that according to Surah 61:6 Jesus himself announced the coming of Ahmad, which is another rendering of the name Muhammad, meaning ‘the praised one’.

Muslims allege that Christians changed the Greek word for ‘comforter’ or ‘counselor’, which is ‘parakletos’, from the original word of ‘periclytos’ which again means the ‘praised one’.

*We must make it clear right from the outset that there is not a single NT manuscript suggesting the word ‘periclytos’ (Ahmad), to be part of this text in John 14. It is mere speculation to support the strange prophecy allegedly made by Jesus.*

It should come as a shock to any sincere Muslim to realize how freely their religious scholars use deceit to even change the Bible, while accusing Christians of that very felony.

Once again the Christian witness is advised to turn to the relevant verses in the New Testament and have a careful look at them. They are found in the Gospel according to John, Chapter 14 - 16, where Jesus says:



I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

*John 14: 16-17*

But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

*John 14:26*

When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

*John 15:26*

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you.

*John 16:7*

At times it may be appropriate to ask a Muslim who presents such an argument, to read the relevant passage with you, but in accordance with his assumption replace the words ‘comforter’ and ‘spirit’ with the word ‘**Muhammad**’. This will reveal the folly of such an assumption. Christ in such a case would have said: *“I will ask the Father and he will give you another Muhammad to be with you forever - the Muhammad of truth. The world cannot accept Muhammad, because it neither sees Muhammad nor knows Muhammad ... for Muhammad lives with you and will be in you.”* This obviously does not make any sense at all!

What the text really explains is that

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus promised to send the Counsellor to <b>his immediate disciples</b>, not only to the later believers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He will give <b>you</b> another Counsellor</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is <b>never called 'the praised one'</b> as this would imply, but gave comfort and counsel to his disciples on many occasions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He will give you <b>another</b> Counsellor</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muhammad died in 632 AD, but the <b>Counsellor is to remain forever</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to be with you <b>forever</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muhammad is claimed to be a <b>universal messenger</b> to all mankind. This is in clear conflict with Jesus' words here</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Spirit of truth <b>whom the world cannot receive</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muhammad obviously was not known to the disciples of Jesus, but the text emphasizes that <b>they would know the Spirit of truth</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you <b>know</b> him</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In what ways</b> are they to know him?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• he dwells <b>with you</b> and he will be <b>in you</b></li> </ul>

This obviously does not refer to an ordinary human being, but to the Holy Spirit.

### We conclude

All this clearly shows that the Islamic claim that Muhammad is foretold in the pages of the Bible does not have a shred of evidence, but is founded on self-construed arguments simply produced to prove the strange claim of the Qur'an about Ahmad.

## 5.5 Why do Christians fail to follow Biblical forms of worship?

When observing Christians, Muslims sometimes ask questions like: "Why do Christians not wash their hands before they pray?" – Or: "Why do you Christians wear shoes in your place of worship? Have you forgotten that God commanded Moses *'Take off the shoes from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground'* (Ex 3:5 and Ac 7:33)?"



They also wonder: “Why are Christians neglecting to fast as Jesus did?” – “Is it true that some Christians are not even circumcised?” – “Are Christians not obliged to attend to pilgrimage as Muslims and Hindus do?” – And: “Why are Christians eating pigs, when the Bible explicitly forbids eating that type of meat (Le 11:7 and Dt 14:8)?”

These and other questions are based on one principal problem:

*Muslims are using Islamic perceptions  
to assess Christian behaviour.*

Because certain behaviour is observed or forbidden in their religion, Muslims expect Christians to comply. The emphasis on external matters (see under the topics of Hadith and Sunnah, vol. 1, *Islam – Basic Aspects*, pp. 75-82), which is so typical of the Islamic way of life, is further strengthened by the fact that certain of their practices are also mentioned in the Bible. “You Christians are not even obeying your own Book. We Muslims are more faithful to the Bible than you Christians are”, is a common accusation. One is well advised not to address such issues lightly, but at the same time detect the deeper seated issue and then give a more comprehensive response. First of all we must categorically state that **Biblical faith is not based on “Do’s and Don’ts”** as is Islam. Ceremonial laws and the regulations of Judaism are not binding to Christians. When Christians follow certain **forms** in their worship, this should not be construed to be the **content**. Jesus in his ‘Sermon on the Mount’ and elsewhere addressed the deeper significance of intent above outward forms. These forms always had a symbolic function, and pointed to a specific meaning. Because of this Christians should be less form-orientated and more content-conscious. Let us look at some examples:

**Circumcision** was the covenant sign between God and the Jews. Although it was outwardly done, the significance is that it should be seen as a ‘circumcision of the heart’. This is explained in Eze 36:26 and Ro 2:25+29, Gal 5:6 and 6:15. For New Testament believers it is therefore no longer the physical aspect of removing the foreskin of a boy (Ge 17:10+12). Instead, the ‘spiritual circumcision’ is seen to be indicative of a regenerated heart and mind as a result of our faith in Christ.

**Prayer** is no longer to be performed in the direction of Jerusalem, nor is an annual pilgrimage to the Temple on Mount Zion required of Christians (see Jn 4:21). Followers of Christ are urged to seek God’s presence in the

privacy of their inner room (Mt 6:6), because *God is Spirit and those who worship Him should worship Him in spirit and in truth* (Jn 4:24). Christian believers are repeatedly warned of spiritual hypocrisy by merely observing outward forms like the washing of hands instead of seeking a pure heart (Mt 15:1-11).

**Fasting.** The Biblical perception of fasting is also unlike the one of Islam. It is not a duty to be performed, not a merit to gain favour with God or, as more modern interpreters like to present it, an exercise to show our identification with the poor and suffering. Dutiful fasting carries with it a great danger of spiritual pride in the temptation to show off a superior standard of spirituality compared to other believers. In Matthew 6:16 and Isaiah 58:3-10 a fast that pleases God is depicted. It is based on a free decision to seek the face of God in true humility and repentance, as David did (2 Sa 12:13-16.21-23). Or, as Jesus did before selecting and calling the twelve disciples, we may do it to be equipped for a particular task (Ma 4:2+19; Mk 9:14-32).

**Forms of Worship.** These may vary significantly among Christians. Some churches call people to worship by beating drums, others sound church bells; some churches use an organ, others a piano, guitars, flutes or any other music instruments and drums. Christians all sing to God as part of their communal worship, but some stand, others remain seated, some clap, others behave rather sombre.

In some churches believers do take off their shoes as they enter the house of worship and men and women sit separately, while in others they will sit mixed and do not remove their shoes. In some churches benches for kneeling are provided, in others people pray while standing or are seated.

Jesus did not institute one particular format of worship, but gave us great liberty to express our cultural preferences. Certainly every Christian will want to express his worship to God, for such worship brings praise to our great Redeemer, purifies the hearts and minds and renews strength for daily life as a Christian. The essential part of Christian worship is the same in all churches. In all services of worship the Bible is read and applied in a sermon, God is praised, thanks to Him is given, confession of sins is made, and prayer for others and ourselves is offered. Jesus did not give detailed rules about the form of our worship. He did not prescribe one form of service, which every Christian must follow. So we are free to use our own language and even dialects, worship in accordance with our own customs, so far as these do not conflict with the general principles laid down in Scripture.

**Eating Pork.** Why do Christians eat pork, when it is expressly forbidden in the Law of Moses? We have to understand that, as is the case with circumcision, the abstinence from pork was demanded from the Jews only. It was part of God's covenant with them. It is indeed still observed by orthodox Jews today. But with the 'New Covenant' God gave broader instructions to believers. Jesus said:



Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'.

*Mark 7:15*

When Peter, who was a Jew, did not understand this at first, God gave him a personal lesson (Ac 10:9-16). The New Testament teaches clearly, that dietary laws are a personal matter because *"everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving"* (1Ti 4:3-5).

## **We conclude**

As followers of Jesus Christ we our worship is motivated from a heart that is fully dedicated to him. The greatest commandment for us to fulfil is: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."*

## **5.6 Why so many different denominations?**

The word 'church' in the New Testament does not refer to a building. Neither does it denote an organization. It simply means 'those who are called out' of the 'world' into the Kingdom of God under the rule and authority of Jesus as their true King (Jn 15:19, Eph 5:23, Col 1:24).

Very unfortunately it seems quite impossible to preserve spirituality, devotion and dedication to God. We may know all the right things, but to live with God is indeed a daily decision of rededicating ourselves to God. We may instruct our children in the Word of God, but we have no power to ignite or fan the love for God in their hearts. They may, for one reason or another, become and stay members of a church and not follow God with all their hearts. Their children again may drift even further away.

An illustration may clarify this. When having his daily devotion at home, a man was frequently disturbed by his dog, so he tied him for that time to the post of his bed before sitting on his special chair to read God's Word and pray. His son observed this little ritual and, when growing up, also tied the dog before sitting on this chair to say his little prayer. He did not read the Word for himself. The grandson who observed this, also traditionally tied down his dog, like his father and grandfather, whenever he was sitting on

that chair. He neither prayed nor read the Word any more. He no more knew the purpose for the tying of the dog, he simply followed a tradition.

Something very similar happened over the many hundreds of years in the church. All too often ritual and tradition, in other words the **form**, existed in the churches, but the **purpose**, the **content**, was only faintly known. When dedicated believers wanted to return to the roots they were labelled high-minded and proud. Today one would perhaps call them 'fundamentalists' or fanatics. They are viewed to disturb the good old customs. If they fail to have an impact on the church, they may well come together privately to worship God in a lively fashion. Attracted by their visible spirituality others join in – and a new church is born. That happened when the Reformation took place, and it keeps on happening.

Of course, there are also unworthy reasons to start a new church. It might be hurt pride, even lust for power over others and an urge to be someone special. There are also what are termed sects; groups that have departed from the teaching of the Bible, like the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons. But generally speaking the real division is not between the Reformed Church and the Pentecostal Church, or any other denomination for that matter. It is rather between those who are 'born anew' (Jn 3:3 and 5), and those who are not. And one is inclined to find these two groups of people in just about every church, in very different proportions, however.

It is mostly the traditional, liberal churches and their nominal membership that have brought discredit on the Christian Church, for they are perceived by outsiders, the Muslims included, to represent the Christian faith – which they do not.

*Christians are essentially followers of Christ,  
not just church members.*

They also live by the ethical norms of the Bible. The different churches, some much more alive than others, have also chosen somewhat different forms, but in essence they should all be alike.

In the light of this development the formation of new denominations is both a logical and positive event. It is good to provide room for different ways of expression, worship and devotion to God. Some like soft music, others loud. Some like to worship God in a conservative manner, others more spontaneously. However, we must also admit that schisms have or had its root in personality clashes.

## 5.7 Is Christianity based on ‘pagan’ origins?

Antagonists of the Christian faith have never rested to discredit it. An ever-repeated argument is that Christianity has its roots in pagan religions. It doesn’t come as a surprise that this argument suited Muslims also.

Of course, we do not think that a critical assessment of religious content is unethical. But it becomes clearly immoral, when dishonesty creeps in, when one tries to remove the splinter from someone else’s eye while having a beam in ones own.

We find, for instance, that Christian feasts like Easter and Christmas have in the past been linked to pagan practices. That is where the Christmas tree or Easter eggs, which may well be viewed as heathen items, come in. First of all we have to state categorically that the Christmas tree was never a pagan symbol. Easter eggs may betray a link to a fertility cult, which slipped in through the proverbial backdoor of Folk Christianity. These are customs and traditions that have developed over time, but are not traced back to the Bible. But that does not lead Christianity back to a pagan origin. We find a great deal more heathendom than that in official Islam. We only need to think of practically all the cultic performances at the **Hajj**, the prescribed pilgrimage in Islam. They clearly go back to the pre-Islamic “time of ignorance”, but still were incorporated into Islam!

Others go even further, comparing basic Christian beliefs about Jesus Christ and the triune nature of God with ancient myths surrounding pagan deities. The obvious purpose of such allegations is to suggest that the very existence of such similarities proves that Christianity is founded on paganism.

It would be good for people who entertain and promote such suspicions to see what the Qur’an has to say about the Bible and Jesus (See chapters one and four: ‘What the Qur’an says about the Bible’ and ‘What the Qur’an says about Jesus’). One will not find one word, which could support such assumptions.

A perhaps typical example of two Muslim writers using the case of the Egyptian deity ‘Horus’ differently may illustrate a point. One writer (Kamal-ud-Din) wants to prove that the story of Horus is a reflection of the story of Jesus in the Bible, and that Horus is one of the ‘sun-gods’ on which the Christian belief in the divinity and sonship of Christ is supposedly based. But another Muslim writer (Abdul Haque) tries to prove the exact opposite, by claiming that Horus, as the sun of the universe, does not represent Jesus, but rather Muhammad in no less than sixty likenesses!

How can one writer claim Horus to represent Jesus while another cannot see even one point of similarity between them, arguing that he represents Muhammad instead? The answer is simply that each Muslim writer is projecting a selective meaning to suit his own purpose.

## **We conclude**

The Christian message has always confronted culture by demanding faithfulness to the Biblical message over and above cultural values. Unlike Islam where various practices and sacred places from pre-Islamic times were incorporated into the new religion, Jesus clearly expressed that the world is under Satan's rule and that his disciples "*are not of the world any more than I am of the world*" (Jn 17:14).

## **5.8 Is Paul the founder of Christianity?**

Have you ever wondered why the apostle Paul is talking so much about the divinity and sonship of Jesus Christ? Or why some of the most distinct teaching concerning the atonement is found in his letters?

### **5.8.1 Did Paul invent and propagate his own ideas about Jesus Christ?**

Muslim propagandists readily join hands with claims of some liberal theologians that Paul never had a chance to meet Jesus. They perceive his writings simply as a way to keep the Church going. In their opinion Paul invented the Christ as a divine figure in contrast to the historical Jesus. Just as in the Graeco-Roman world where the gods interacted with human beings, so the Christ became god incarnate and dwelt on earth for his own pleasure. In fact, they would claim that Paul purposely used this teaching to make Jesus' message fit and more acceptable for the gentiles in the Roman Empire. Then Paul linked this with the teaching of the Holy Spirit, thus paving the way for the concept of a Trinitarian god in Christianity.

This argument is strengthened by pointing out that Paul rejected the Jewish law after his conversion. He wanted the pagans to feel at ease with their permissive and morally decadent lifestyle. So he simply added the teaching of atonement. All this would guarantee forgiveness for the sinner. Later, Paul's Church developed this further so that one could even buy ones way out of purgatory, as was advertised by the Roman Catholic Church during the medieval period. In contrast Muslims teach personal responsibility for ones sins, no substitution, and no place for Jesus' death on the cross.

It is suggested that the problems in the early church started when Barnabas disagreed with Paul on his teachings. Eventually the Church split up into a Trinitarian (Paul's) and a Unitarian (Barnabas) branch. Paul's Church became stronger, collaborated with the Roman Empire, and even joined in the persecution of the mostly Unitarian Christian branch. The state then made sure that Paul's writings were highly respected and finally got integrated into the New Testament.

### **5.8.2 How does this argument compare with reality?**

Some of these arguments seem to be very convincing when one doesn't know anything about Church history. There is actually no historical evidence that at such an early state the Church split into two opposing branches that claimed their existence on Jesus' or Paul's teachings. Later (in the fourth century) sectarian movements evolved, trying to go back to the historical Jesus and eliminating everything in the New Testament that indicated the divinity and sonship of Jesus Christ. But this was clearly done in order to make their teaching comply with their presupposition that Jesus was not God.

The same is true for Muslims today: Their presupposition doesn't allow them to accept anything that would support the doctrine of the Trinity, the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus, his crucifixion, death and atonement for sin. Muslims don't like Paul anyway because he disagreed with Barnabas (seen as the author of **The Gospel of Barnabas**). But this is not supported by historical facts.

Furthermore, the four Gospels and Paul's letters are in agreement with each other. Jesus talked about himself being one with the Father, sent by Him and even accepted to be placed at God's side (Jn 10:25-33; Mt 26:65f). He spoke about his death as an atonement for the sins of many (Mt 20:28; 26:28). And there are many more teachings in the Gospels that affirm the truth of Paul's statements.

But then, Muslims will not accept the Gospels as authentic either. So, let's go back to the Old Testament and read verses such as Isaiah 9:6 and 7:14. These verses convincingly show that these were not new ideas, but all along God had planned to bring salvation to the world in giving His only son as a ransom for the sin of mankind (Ge 3:15; Isa 53:4-12). Gospel presentations like the one on sacrifices and their spiritual significance, or about Abraham as the friend of God are powerful tools to present the Biblical doctrines of sin, salvation and atonement to Muslims. And Paul himself insisted to preach nothing else than what had already been revealed in the Old Testament (Ac 26:22-23), including Jesus suffering, death and resurrection.

### 5.8.3 Facing the facts of history

Although Muslims claim that Paul never had a personal encounter with Jesus he actually did. Paul met Jesus or rather Jesus met Paul. It was Jesus' initiative that changed the life of a persecutor of the Church to become an Apostle to the Gentiles (1 Ti 1:13; Ac 9).

From the very beginning Paul was preaching Jesus as the Christ, divine Son of God (Ac 9:20-22). This teaching, which he formerly had opposed, now became the cause for his repeated persecutions (Gal 5:11). Paul received direct revelations from Jesus for three years (Gal 1:11-12) before he consulted with the leaders of the Church; after that he presented himself to the Christians in Judea who praised God for him (Gal 1:18-24). Paul had to overcome the hostility of Jesus' disciples and only after he was screened thoroughly he was fully accepted. His teaching was in line with that of the other apostles (Ac 15). In fact, Philip to the Samaritans (Ac 8) and Peter to a Roman in Caesarea (Ac 10), had already paved the way to accept non-Jews as followers of Jesus (Ac 11).

The question of the Jewish law was the cause of Stephen's death (Ac 6:14; 7:53). Even Jesus' brother James spoke up against keeping Jewish customs and regulations such as the circumcision (Ac 15:13-21). The leaders of the Church unanimously decided in favour of the new freedom in Christ (Ac 15:23-29; Gal 5:1). Paul never rejected the law but only put it back into its right place, that is as a mirror of our sins and not a means to attain salvation (Gal 3:17-23). He never intended to give permission to sin (Ro 3:5-8). To the contrary, he firmly opposed sinners and showed them the godly way (Gal 5:13-21).

Paul not only preached according to Jesus teaching but he also practiced it. He was persecuted for his faith and never shied away from suffering for his convictions. Paul, as presented in the New Testament, was a sincere servant of the historical and risen Jesus. Because of his background as a scholar of Jewish Scriptures he understood the implications of Jesus being the Messiah, the Christ. He certainly did not invent the Christ but proclaimed him as he was revealed in the Old Testament and as he had revealed himself to the twelve disciples in Palestine and to Paul on the road to Damascus in the first century.

#### **We conclude:**

1. History does not support the Islamic claims.
2. The four gospel accounts and Paul's letters are in mutual agreement.
3. The OT confirms these doctrines.
4. Paul met Jesus, or rather Jesus met Paul.
5. Paul even had to overcome the hostility of Jesus' disciples.



6. Paul did not reject the law, but rather put it into its right perspective.
7. Paul not only preached in accordance with Jesus’ teaching, but also practiced it.

### 5.8.4 Synopsis of Biblical teaching

This table shows the harmony of teaching throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Foretold	Teaching	Jesus	Paul	Peter
Isa 9:6 Da 7:13f	<b>Jesus’ sonship &amp; divinity</b>	Jn 10:24-38 Mt 26:63ff Mk 14:61f	Gal 2:20 Col 1:15-19	Mt 16:16 2Pe 1:16-18
Isa 43:25	<b>Jesus’ power to forgive sins</b>	Mk 2:7-11	Col 3:13	
Isa 53:4-12 Da 9: 26 Zec 13:1 Jn 11:50ff Mt 20:19	<b>Jesus’ death on the cross &amp; atonement for sin</b>	Mt 20:28; 26:26-28	Ro 3:25f; 5:6-11 1Co 11: 26 Eph 1:7	1Pe 2:24; 3:18
Ex 20:1-17 Lev 20:7f	<b>Command not to sin, but live a life of holiness</b>	Mt 5-7 Jn 13:34f; 14:15	Gal 5:13-26 Eph 4:17-5:11 Tit 3:3-8	1Pe 1:13-16; 4:1-6 2Pe 1:9; 3:14
Ps 2:12 Jer 17:5-7	<b>Christ as object of faith and worship</b>	Jn 14:1; 20:28f	Phil 2:9-11	1Pe 1:7-9; 2:6
Dt 13:1-5; 18:21f	<b>False teachers predicted</b>	Mt7:15; 24:11.24	2Co 11:13.26 Tit 1:10-16	2Pe 2:1-22; 3:16

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### 5.9 Does modern science affirm the divine origin of the Qur’an?

To draw science into the picture is a new trend over the last few decades. Some Muslim scholars feel this to be an evidence for the divine origin of the Qur’an. The claim is that certain scientific knowledge that must have been unknown at the time of Muhammad, is reflected in the Qur’an. Even our knowledge of embryology is said to clearly confirm what the Qur’an teaches on this subject. The geological formation of the universe, including the

earth, is another topic. In that case, we have to admit, it would be strong evidence for the inspiration of the Qur'an; but it is not.

### 5.9.1 The Muslim Claim

One of the most widely spread publications to propagate Islam in our modern age is the book *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science* by Maurice Bucaille. The author finds in the Qur'an a description of the origin of the universe, which, according to him, at first consisted of gas that caused the 'Big Bang', which in turn facilitated the formation of galaxies, solar systems including our sun with its planets (p.139). This rests on his rather fanciful interpretation of two texts in the Qur'an, where we read:



Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens were joined together, then We clove them asunder.

*Surah 21:30*

Then He turned to the sky and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth, come ye together...

*Surah 41:11*

### 5.9.2 The Christian Response

Parallel passages of the Qur'an suggest something else. They mention invisible columns, which keep the heavens from falling onto the earth:



He (i.e. Allah) withholds the sky from falling on the earth.

*Surah 22:65*

He (i.e. Allah) created the heavens without any pillars that ye can see; He set on the earth mountains standing firm lest it should shake with you.

*Surah 31:10*

Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that ye can see.

*Surah 13:2*

These texts suggest convincingly that the Qur'an does not speak of the 'Big Bang', but rather tries to explain why the sky does not fall down to earth.

### 5.9.3 Other fanciful assumptions considered

In the same passages it is alleged that the balance of the Laws of Gravitation and Centrifugal Force within a solar system is described by these passages (p. 152ff). The gravitation of a celestial body, according to the Natural Law, actually attracts any other body towards its own mass. That would, of course, eliminate its existence. But the force of gravity is balanced by the centrifugal force due to the planet's movement around a sun. As a ball,

when spinning around at the end of a string, is kept from flying away, so planets are forced away from the sun by the centrifugal force, but are kept in place by the law of gravity. So, the balance between the two opposing forces keep the planets on track. To the best of our knowledge it was Isaac Newton, who discovered these laws in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Do we actually find these natural laws, directly or by implication, mentioned in the Qur'an in general or in these verses in particular? Certainly not in the suggested texts! And could Isaac Newton have formulated these Laws of Nature, as he did, based on the knowledge of the above verses? I am sure we agree that with the best will in the world it would need a lot of imagination to let these verses explain the function of our universe. But Dr. Bucaille did it and he went even further. He discovered in the Qur'an a prediction of astronauts:



O ye assembly of Jinns and men! If it be ye can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth pass ye! Not without authority shall ye be able to pass!

*Surah 55:33*

It is further assumed that when the Qur'an speaks of seven heavens (e.g. S. 78:12), the number seven merely means plurality. From that he concludes that the Qur'an states that there would be many heavens and earths in the universe, a fact that could only be verified in our time (p. 141). This argument lacks any convincing logic, but rather looks like a projection of the author's desire for proof into the pages of the Qur'an.

To us it seems quite obvious that the Qur'an held the then prevailing world view, that the earth is a disc and not a sphere, as we know today:



Zul-qarnain (according to tradition Alexander the Great)...when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it set in a spring of murky water.

*Surah 18:83-86*

As Christians we would like Muslims to compare such fancy claims with a verse from the Bible that was written about 3500 years ago:



He (i.e. God) spreads out the northern [skies] over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing.

*Job 26:7*

## 5.9.4 An argument from human embryology

The most prominent argument for the alleged existence of then unknowable scientific data in the Qur'an, however, is gynaecology, or more specific, embryology, the science of the conception and development of the human embryo in the uterus of its mother. Many an eloquent article is trying to interpret the Qur'an to mean something it does not say. In flowery language we are informed how medical doctors are stunned at the accuracy of the description of the reproductive system and its function. So let us have a look at these:



We (i.e. Allah) created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a morsel of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may manifest (Our power) to you; and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term, then do We bring you out as babes ...

*Surah 22:5*

Man We (i.e. Allah) did create from a quintessence (of clay); Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature; so blessed be Allah the Best to create!

*Surah 23:12-14*

Man We (i.e. Allah) did create from a quintessence (of clay); Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature; so blessed be Allah the Best to create!

*Surah 23:12-14*

It is He (i.e. Allah) Who has created you from dust then from a sperm-drop then from a leech-like clot; then does He get you out (into the light) as a child.

*Surah 40:67*

He (i.e. man) is created from a drop emitted. Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs.

*Surah 86:6-7*

He Who has made everything which He has created most Good . . . began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay and made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised.

*Surah 32:7-8*

He (i.e. Allah) makes you in the wombs of your mothers in stages one after another in three veils of darkness.

*Surah 39:6*

Allah doth know what every female (womb) doth bear by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or do exceed. Every single thing is before His sight in (due) proportion.

*Surah 13:8*

It ought to be mentioned here that the above passages, with the exception of some duplications (S. 16:5, 80:19-20, 75:38-40, 18:38), constitute all that the Qur'an says about this subject. We find no hint about the fertilisation of the ovum by a sperm, but rather the assumption that the sperm is the seed that is planted into the womb to mature. To correct this omission Dr. Bucaille quotes from a Hadith:



He (the Holy Prophet) said: 'The reproductive substance of a man is white and that of a woman is yellow. When they have sexual intercourse and the male's substance prevails upon the female's substance, it is the male child that is created by Allah's Decree. When the substance of the female prevails upon the substance contributed by the male, a female child is formed by the Decree of Allah.' The Jew said: 'What you have said is true; verily you are an Apostle.' He then turned round and went away. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: 'He asked me about such and such things of which I had no knowledge until Allah gave it to me'.

*Sahih Muslim, 614*



Allah's Apostle the true and truly inspired, narrated to us: 'The creation of everyone of you starts with the process of collecting the material for his body within forty days and forty nights in the womb of his mother. Then he becomes a clot of thick blood for a similar period (40 days) and then he becomes like a piece of flesh for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to him (by Allah) and the angel is allowed (ordered) to write four things: his livelihood, his (date of) death, his deeds, and whether he will be a wretched one or a blessed one (in the Hereafter) and then the soul is breathed into him'.

*Al-Bukhari, 9.546*

You, as I, may not find this all that enlightening either. These aHadith would need a lot of "interpretation" to make sense to our 21<sup>st</sup> century minds.

## 5.9.5 Conclusion

It would need a book to go into any more detail in this discussion, but the little we could accommodate throws some light on these arguments. In essence all these arguments pursue the same objection:

*Muslims seek to strengthen the credibility of the Qur'an by producing pseudo-scientific evidence that exploits the ignorance of the readers on rather complex matters.*

What conclusion can we draw from all this? It is normal and understandable for people to reason on the basis of their world-view. We all live by the assumption that our worldview is right and true. But we must be willing to question the validity of our thinking in the light of outside evidence. This may be a sobering and sometimes heartbreaking process.

But it is also true: If we want to live spiritually truthful and meaningful lives, we will have to say 'good bye' to popular opinion – our own or others – and seek the truth. Without doubt, the way in which Bucaille and others have tried to assemble evidence for the divine origin of the Qur'an is neither truthful nor scientific, and raises a lot more questions than it can hope to answer.

## 5.10 Some minor issues

### 5.10.1 The mysterious number 19

During the mid-eighties Ahmed Deedat claimed that a system miraculously interwoven into the Qur'an proves with absolute objectivity that the Qur'an is the ultimate miracle. He referred to the figure 19, which, he claimed, provided a mathematical formula within the Qur'an to prove its divine origin. This soon backfired when not only the subjectivity of the selection method, but the often blatantly false figures were exposed; and even more so when Muslim writers disclosed that the number 19 was a mystical number in the Bahai religion. Under a storm of indignation from the Muslim community Deedat had to destroy all the copies of his booklet.

### 5.10.2 Who is Al-Masih, the Messiah?

The Qur'an translator Yusuf Ali uses the word 'Christ' for Messiah. Actually in the Qur'an text 'Masih' is the Arabic form of the Hebrew word 'Mashiach' or, as we say today, 'Messiah'. We know that the Greek

translation of this word is 'Christos' in short 'Christ', and we know that this is the title of Jesus. As a rule Muslims do not know what it means. Let us try to comprehend this concept, so we can explain it to them.

Had Jesus, for arguments sake, been born among the Incas of South America, or in Japan, and if he had then told the people that he was the Messiah, how would they have reacted? There would have been no reaction. They would neither have known the word nor the concept behind it. There is only one people who knew - the Jews.

They were, in fact, waiting for the Messiah! Only in **their** Book was the name and the concept of the Messiah revealed. In the Law of Moses it was demanded by God Almighty that all people consecrated for sacred purposes had to be 'anointed', which meant oil, enriched with a certain fragrance, was to be poured over them as a sign of dedication to God's purpose. So the title 'Messiah', actually meaning 'The Anointed One' was indicative of the role Jesus was to take. He was, so to speak, **the** prophet, **the** priest and **the** king (Heb 3:1; 4:14; 5:5; 6:20; Rev 19:16).

Revelations given by Jewish prophets indicated that someone special would come to introduce God's rule, not only to the Jews, but to all other peoples as well. He would bring the peace of God to all who would believe and follow Him. God, through the prophet Daniel in about 600 BC (Dan 7:13-14), foretold his title and the time of his coming.

The Jews have waited for the Messiah since then (although most of them rejected him when he came). Reports from the time of the birth of Jesus tell us that a number of devout Jews were waiting at the temple for His appearance. They had read and understood the prophecies of Daniel. (See also Lu 2:25-38)

When Jesus came he was recognised by many as the Messiah. The Qur'an adopts this title for Jesus without explaining it. To find out its meaning Muslims, as well as anyone else, have to turn to the only source available - the Bible.

## 5.11 Right methods and approaches

As Christ's ambassadors we may just as easily fall into the trap of damaging our Christian witness through poor attitudes as through cowardice in not speaking up for the truth. Let us not fall off on either side of the horse. John Gilchrist in his compelling book *Facing the Muslim Challenge* warns against

### The spirit of triumphalism



Christians must avoid the temptation to try to lord their faith over Muslims. Likewise we need to resist the inclination to try to prove points simply to win a debate. The **hearer** himself is our major point of concern. All we say and the spirit in which we do it must be geared to win the confidence, hearing and goodwill of our opposite number.

*Facing the Muslim Challenge, by John Gilchrist, p. 9*

### The inclination to demonise and misrepresent Islam

Unfortunately this has done in various ways in the past by arranging anti-halaal campaigns, demonising the very word Allah simply to refer to the moon-god or promoting fanciful conspiracy theories such as the Catholic Church bringing about the Islamic religion by an ingenious plot through their spy Khadija. Again Gilchrist warns:



In promoting error you can only drive Muslims further from the truth. Christians need at all times to be truthful in their witness and objective in their perspectives. Be true to the Word of God, to the credible records of history, and avoid trying to gain an advantage over Islam by pursuing false charges against it.

*Facing the Muslim Challenge, by John Gilchrist, p. 10*

### Negative and militant attitudes towards Muslims

Since 9/11 we have been through a rollercoaster of anger, frustration, irritation about Islam and Muslims. As followers of the prince of peace we firmly need to withstand all temptations to fall back into a crusader mentality or revengeful militancy.



Only when we are willing to love Muslims irrespectively of who they are or what they might have done will we be truly able to manifest the love of Jesus towards them and fulfil the fundamental purpose of our witness – to draw them to his grace and salvation.

*Facing the Muslim Challenge, by John Gilchrist, p. 11*



At a more practical level we should endeavour to express these attitudes: fairness, patience and gentleness, avoiding quarrels and disputations, being serious about our faith, and being Biblical in our responses. Lastly,

### 5.11.1 Use objections as an opportunity for witness

Again, Gilchrist presents us with an excellent illustration how we might turn around an argument into an opportunity to emphasize the Gospel message:



The Muslim says 'How can God let his Son die? We only regard Jesus Christ as a prophet and yet we honour him and God by believing that God delivered him from the cross. Yet you claim he was God's Son but teach that God did nothing while they crucified him. How can you expect us to believe this?' The argument is usually sincere - the Muslim genuinely believes its logic, especially as sons are treasured in Muslim families throughout the world.

One Muslim took it further with me. 'How many sons have you got?' he asked me. I responded 'two'. 'Well' he responded, 'if you saw a group of thugs attacking just one of them and could see they were going to kill him, would you not go to his rescue? Do you not love your son?' As soon as you fall into the trap and simply answer 'yes', the Muslim closes the argument - that is precisely what a good

Heavenly Father would have done for his Son. I responded 'Let me strengthen your argument further before I answer it. What if you saw me walking down the road with a knife in my own hand and my son in the other, intending to kill him myself? Would that not be far worse?' He agreed (and fell into my trap!). I continued 'Then how can you believe that Abraham was such a great prophet and father when that is precisely what he did. He prepared one day to kill his own son according to the Qur'an (Surah 37: 102-103). God told Moses 'You shall not kill' (Exodus 20:13) - How can you think well of Abraham when he was prepared to do this to his very own son?'

He emphatically replied (and I am quoting him!): 'You do not understand. That was different! (My emphasis). It was a test of his love for God. If a man will give his son for God, he'll give anything for him!' The door was open for a more effective witness than any normal presentation of the Gospel message would have achieved. 'Exactly', I replied, 'and that is precisely what we are saying about God. He did not stand by watching, he willingly gave his Son for us to save us from our sins. It was the greatest proof of his love that he likewise could have given.'

*John 3:16!*

I continued 'God spared the son of Abraham but he did not spare his own Son. God showed, in commanding Abraham to give the best proof of his love for God by sacrificing his son, just what he was going to do by giving the greatest manifestation of his love for us. Christians know that in the cross God has done the very best he could for us. Does Islam have anything to compare with this? Has Allah ever matched Abraham's supreme example of sacrificial love?'

What started as a Muslim offensive against the Gospel ended as a more purposeful witness than I could possibly have given had he never raised his arguments? Use Muslim arguments to strengthen your witness. Take the Muslim away from objections and disputes as far as you can and bring the discussion back to where it should be - evangelistic witness.

*Facing the Muslim Challenge by John Gilchrist, pp. 15-16*

### **5.11.2 So: Should a Christian argue about his faith?**

Why are we going into so much detail about what we believe and why we believe it? Is the age of debates and public symposiums not a matter of the past, now replaced by a friendlier mood of dialogue and mutual tolerance? Should a Christian not just live his faith quietly rather than defending it by arguing and reasoning?

Indeed, many Christians today are posing such questions. Why emphasize the differences; let's consider together what unites us!

We do not deny the importance of friendly and peaceful relationships between the different religious communities. Indeed, the Crusades of previous centuries have been a sad transgression against the teaching of Christ. They present a shameful reminder where Christian triumphalism and surge for political power can lead to. Christians will do everything possible to avoid any cause for such violent eruptions as we witnessed in Nigeria in recent years.

However this should not force us into adopting a dumb or compromising attitude in our Christian faith. Scripture clearly reminds us to stand up for what we believe:

*"Dear friends, ...I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints",* implores Jude (Jude 3+20) and Paul, after drawing Timothy's attention to those teachers who deceive others by presenting false doctrines, urges him: *"But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness"* (1 Ti 6:12).

Yes, as followers of Christ we will seek first and foremost to present the power of the Gospel by a changed and exemplary life style, but we will also

stand up for the truth fully convinced that “*there is no other gospel*” (Gal 1:6-9) and that anybody claiming to offer another way to God except the one revealed through Jesus Christ will be eternally condemned. It is a serious matter indeed.

The Christian witness will not seek to score points in an apologetic contest with his Muslim opponent, but to lovingly and yet convincingly present to him the truth of the Gospel.

For a Christian to shrink back from explaining

- What he believes and why he believes,
- Why he trusts the Bible as the revealed Word of God and
- Why he honours Jesus Christ as true God who has assumed a human body and lived among us for a time, now due of our love and worship in all eternity, as one with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the divine triune nature of God and all other teaching of the Holy Bible,

*If you really love a Muslim, you will share with him the truth which you have found in Christ.*

will be interpreted as weakness, uncertainty or ignorance by the Muslim enquirer.

There is yet another reason for looking at our own faith in such detail. Often Christians are accused of blind faith, of accepting an irrational set of rules and doctrines. Does the Christian faith make sense? Are Christians meant to think about and reflect on what they believe? Most certainly so!

While it is sadly true that religious leaders have for centuries kept ordinary believers in ignorance and at times even exploited this ignorance to their

- *study the Scriptures... (Jn 5:39)*
- *examine the Scriptures every day... (Ac 17:11)*
- *hear and understand God's grace in all its truth... (Col 1:6)*
- *have understood fully... (2 Co 1:13+14)*

own advantage, surely God never intended this.

Today the Word of God is freely available in hundreds of different languages around the world every believer is implored to

No doubt, God wants us to know and understand His Word. By explaining it to our Muslim friends it will even benefit ourselves and we will come to a better understanding and deeper assurance of our faith.

It is our hope that in studying this book your faith has been strengthened and your commitment to share the truth of God's word with your Muslim friend or enquirer has been reinforced.

### **Recommended Literature for Chapter 5:**

**Christian Reply to Muslim Objections.** W. St. Clair Tisdall, *The Good Way*, 1904, pp. 189-225.

**Is Muhammad foretold in the Bible.** John Gilchrist, MERCSA, 1985, pp. 40

*The Christian Witness to the Muslim.* John Gilchrist, MERCSA, 1988, pp. 350-356 and pp. 392-396.

**Questions Muslims Ask.** Ghana Committee of IAP (now: PROCMURA).

## 5.12 Epilogue

We do have to realise that the rejection of the Bible by Islam and thus by Muslims, has a purpose. Its purpose is much the same as the formerly famous **Berlin Wall**. It was built to stop the occupants of communist East Germany from defecting to the West, where it was ever so much more attractive to live. The East German propaganda, on the other hand, proclaimed that the wall was built to protect East Germans from an invasion by the West!

The enormous effort by Muslims to discredit the Bible must be seen in the same light. It is a massive propaganda effort on the part of Islam to 'protect' its people from getting to know the Gospel of Jesus. But it also wants to draw away the attention from the many problems in the Qur'an and the Traditions.

The discrepancies between the Bible and the Qur'an should be open for scholarly investigation on an honest and intellectual platform. If the results thereof were made accessible to Muslims without censorship or intimidation, Islam in time is likely to be reduced to a group of fundamentalists, fanatics, and those who refuse to analyse and examine unwanted information.

Throughout history Islam has thrived on propagating the often undigested and (as we have seen) even ridiculous statements of Bible critics to 'prove' the Bible to be defective, without allowing their own or outside theologians to make their findings on the Qur'an and the Hadith accessible to the broad public.

It is a foregone conclusion for Muslims that the Qur'an, being the last revelation, must be right, and the Bible - though even confirmed by the Qur'an to be the Word of God (which cannot be changed by any man!), must therefore have been corrupted.

*We challenge Islam to publicly and officially permit, even encourage, all seekers to search for evidences of divine revelation in the disputed Books.*

They should be able to do that without facing intimidation and be afforded the chance to make a free choice which faith they would like to embrace. This presupposes, of course, free access to information from both sides. The Internet is well suited for such open dialogue.

It is with great sadness that we have to conclude that Islam is unashamed in its use of force, be it in its *Jihaad* by means of war or terrorism, or by moral, religious or political pressure on all its dissidents. This robs people of their freedom of choice in moral or religious matters. Muslims have managed by their vociferous demands to even intimidate non-Muslim governments to bow to demands, which they will not dream of granting to Christians in countries governed by the *Shariah* law.

Because of fear and negative information instilled in Muslims, they are not readily willing to listen to the Gospel with an open mind. The friendly contact with Christians is just about the only chance most Muslims have to be informed about the Jesus of the Bible and the salvation he alone can offer.

*Muslims, irrespective of how closed to the Gospel they may appear, are people who are loved by Jesus, who also died for them! This fact constitutes a call for every true Christian to build bridges to Muslims and befriend them with the aim of providing access to the true message of Jesus.*

Every student of the *Christian - Islamic Controversy* will have to pass his or her own judgement on its content. We trust this will be honest and with integrity, not prejudiced or influenced by accusing statements in an attempt to slander Islam and its Prophet.

These notes represent an honest attempt to establish which of the conflicting Books may be trusted, and which not. We are aware that this is a highly emotional issue that has caused thousands, perhaps even millions of people to sacrifice their lives to obtain eternal bliss in the Presence of God. That makes it all the more imperative not to approach this topic on an emotional level, but by means of fair and factual study, scrutiny, and on honest and sound judgement.

It is understandable that nobody likes to be the looser in a debate of this nature. Yet we consider it wise to choose not to be a looser on that day when we have to individually stand before God to give an account of what we did with the knowledge that has been made available to us.

It is important for the reader to understand that the argument is not about religion. People everywhere are called upon to choose God as their only purpose and hope for time and eternity. When conflicting religions are placed before people, they are compelled to choose one, and this choice may

be affected by culture, upbringing and the influence of the dominant religion of the region or culture. In the case of Islam, choosing Christ often will result in severe social disadvantage, personal rejection and even physical danger. However, both Islam and the Christian faith cannot be equally true, as they stem from very different sources.

It is our objective to present the truths of the Christian faith to those who, by virtue of their cultural and religious heritage, have been denied access to the truths about the Bible, Jesus Christ, sin and salvation. Now we have the opportunity, in an objective and non-confrontational manner, to present these truths to Muslims. Then they will be in a position to make their own choice, possibly for the first time ever:



This day I call heaven and earth as witness against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now, choose life!

*Deuteronomy 30:19*

And Jesus pleaded:



Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. **If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in!**

*Revelation 3:20*

## 6 Appendix

### 6.1 Why Christian Apologetics?

Apologetics, derived from the Greek word, *apologia*, refers to the practice of defending one's beliefs or convictions by giving evidence for them or answering objections brought against them. Christian Apologetics is a branch of Christian Theology which concentrates on the defence of the Christian faith and answers objections brought against it in such areas as doctrine, logical consistency, historicity, Biblical authority, and the exclusivity of Christ and His teaching, etc.

Christian apologists through the centuries have defended the Faith by way of debate, lecturership, the written and spoken word, by Christ-like character and by death through martyrdom. Examples of early and modern apologists include men like Stephen, Justin Martyr, Augustine of Hippo, to later Church fathers like Anselm and Aquinas, to modern apologists like C.S. Lewis, Francis Schaeffer, Michael Green, Norman Geisler, and Ravi Zacharias, among others.

The question, however, is, is Christian Apologetics really important? Why should anyone be engaged in it? In fact, why would anyone lay down his life and die in defence of Christ's truth and the authority of the Word of God? Is there something about the defence of our faith that is so important that the modern Church should be concerned with it? In short, why bother with Christian Apologetics?

#### 6.1.1 God commands it

*We read in 1 Peter 3:15: "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."*

With Christ as the Lord of our lives, we cannot keep quiet when people ask questions about the faith and hope we have in Him. We are to answer everyone who inquires about **what** we believe and **why** we believe. We must, however, do this respectfully.

**Jude urged believers further to "...contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."**



*The custodianship of the faith to believers is a solemn duty. It implies that it is Christians who ought to defend the faith at all costs. We cannot keep quiet when non-Christians attack what we believe.*

In fact, even when doctrine is under fire, leaders should speak back. They themselves are expected to rebuke those who teach heresy. Paul wrote the following words to Titus concerning every leader in the Church:

*“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”* (Tit 1:9)

God Himself invited Israel to come and reason with Him and encouraged them to set forth their case and present their arguments. (Isa 1:18 and 41:21).

### **6.1.2 Bible people defended our faith**

The prophets of old challenged idolatry and had face-to-face contentions with people of other faiths. A case in point is Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Moses defended Yahweh before Pharaoh and the Egyptian magicians and David

came before Goliath in the name of the Lord. Although the latter combat ended up being physical, its decisiveness was in David’s declaration that he came to Goliath in the name of the Lord. Jeremiah challenged the false religious ideas of his day and reduced idols to a scarecrow in a melon perch. Peter argued that the disciples were not under the influence of liquor on the Day of Pentecost as onlookers supposed. Stephen was stoned after giving a historical defence of Christ, the Redeemer. Paul reasoned with both Jews and Greeks in defence of the Resurrection of Christ and faced philosophical challenges from Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Most significantly, Jesus, our Master apologist answered numerous questions from his critics including the Pharisees and Sadducees. He urged us to love God, not just with our hearts but also with our minds.

### **6.1.3 Apologetics deepens and confirms the faith of Christians**

Both Timothy and Titus had their faith deepened by observing the life of Paul and how he stood for the confirmation of the faith. Believers who observed and heard the defence of the faith by early church fathers were greatly encouraged to stay in the faith. Many a modern Christian has been

encouraged to remain a Christian by reading the defences of writers such as C.S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, Francis Schaeffer, Norman Geisler, John Stott, Gary Habermas, John Gilchrist, Ravi Zacharias, etc. When questions raised against our faith are adequately answered, the faith of the believers is strengthened. In effect, when the enemy is silenced, what he opposed is certified.

### **6.1.4 The world demands answers from Christians**

It is obvious that Christianity is under attack from the secular media, various world religions, humanism, atheism, agnosticism, cults and the occult. Movies abound that critique the sinlessness and deity of Jesus. Books have been published ridiculing Christian ministers, the Church, Christian doctrine and practices. Whole movements and lobby groups have been known to fight Christianity, ranging from pro-abortion campaigners and homosexuality defenders to politicians and rights activists. Muslims challenge the authenticity of the Bible and Hindus question why we worship only one God. Atheists ask, if there is a good God, why is there evil in the world? Professors in African universities present Christianity as a white man's religion.

**Christians cannot remain silent in the face of all these attacks and challenges.** Apologetics is the discipline that would prepare believers for such a task.

### **6.1.5 Results confirm the need for apologetics**

We have already mentioned the results of defending our faith by various Bible characters. We add here that Acts 17:4 and 17:34 cites the conversion of numerous people through Paul's reasoning in defence of the Resurrection of Christ. Augustine of old was won to Christ through Apologetics. C.S. Lewis came to believe in Christ due to the compelling nature of evidence for faith in Him. He admitted that Atheism, which he had held onto before, was too cheap. Josh McDowell, one of the greatest defenders of our faith, came to Christ through the observation of compelling evidence. He had wanted to dispute the faith, set out to do so, but ended up believing what he had set out to fight. Frank Morrison, who was a non-believer, set out to write a book disputing the claim that Jesus rose from the dead. He ended up being convinced by the evidence for the Resurrection. He wrote a book called *Who Moved the Stone?* The first chapter in that book is appropriately titled, "The book that refused to be written". The author of this article has spoken to thousands of university students defending the Christian faith through interdisciplinary evidences. Many students have come to Christ through his

meetings. Christian Apologetics, thus, has the results of conversion and the confirmation of the Gospel message.

## 6.1.6 Reason demands apologetics

As stated above, we are to love God with our minds. This is because, unlike animals, we are created rational. Good reason honours God. To be unreasonable and/or irrational betrays God's expectation of us. He invites, Come now and let us reason together.... Socrates put it well when he said, "The unexamined life is not worth living".

*A faith that is not examined is not worth holding onto either.*

While some religions are not open to examination and criticism and will kill those who examine them or ask questions about them, Christianity is open to the consideration and examination of all its claims. There are good reasons and overwhelming evidence for the claims of Christianity.

Apologetics is important. It will clear obstacles to faith and gently lead the non-believer to faith in Christ. Indeed, nobody could argue anyone into faith in God and neither does apologetics claim to convert anyone, but its use is inevitable in a world that is openly hostile to faith in general, let alone faith in Jesus Christ. Every Christian must take seriously the call to defend what he/she believes as recorded in the Scriptures and boldly stand up and speak when his/her faith is under attack. He cannot afford to keep quiet and do nothing when the world around denatures and ridicules the precious Word of God. Not to defend the faith is to betray the one who bought us by His precious blood and the millions of fledgling believers in Him.

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## 6.2 Detailed Prophecies of Christ's Death

Prophecies by Jesus, Daniel and David	Isaiah 53 (750 BC)	The Gospel
<p>We are going up to Jerusalem, he said [to the twelve], and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. <b>They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will arise.</b></p> <p><b><i>Mark 10:33-34</i></b></p>	<p>He was oppressed and afflicted, <b>yet he did not open his mouth...</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b><i>verse 7</i></b></p>	<p>Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you? <b>But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.</b></p>
<p>In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was <b>one like the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.</b> He approached the Ancient of Days (God) and was lead into his presence. <b>He was given authority, glory and sovereign power;</b> all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away.</p> <p><b><i>Daniel 7:13-14, 600BC</i></b></p>		<p>Again the high priest asked him, Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?</p> <p>I am, said Jesus, and you will see the son of man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.</p>
	<p><b>By oppression and judgement,</b> he was taken away... though he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b><i>verses 8a-9b</i></b></p>	<p>The high priest tore his clothes, Why do we need any more witnesses? he asked. You've heard the blasphemy.</p> <p><b>They all condemned him as worthy of death.</b> Then some began to spit at him...and the guards took him and beat him. <b><i>Mark 14:60-65</i></b></p>
<p>Why do <b>the nations</b> rage, and the people plot in vain? <b>The kings</b> of the earth take</p>		<p>Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And when (Pilate)</p>

<p>their stand, and the rulers gather together against the Lord and his Anointed One (Messiah)</p> <p><i>Psalm 2:1-2, 1000 BC</i></p>		<p>learned that he belonged to (King) Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod... <b>And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him, then... he sent him back to Pilate</b> (Caesar's governor)</p> <p><i>Luke 23:1, 7a,11</i></p>
	<p>He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows</p> <p><i>verse 3</i></p>	<p>They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha... Then they offered him wine mixed with (bitter) myrrh, but he did not take it.</p>
<p>They have pierced my hands and my feet,</p> <p><i>Psalm 22:17-18, 1000 BC</i></p>	<p><b>But he was pierced</b> for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities <i>vs 5</i></p>	<p>And they crucified him,</p>
<p>They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing</p> <p><i>Psalm 22:18, 1000 BC</i></p>		<p>Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get <i>Mk 15:22-24</i></p>
<p>But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. <b>All who see me mock me. They hurl insults, shaking their heads.</b></p> <p><i>Psalm 22:7-8, 1000 BC</i></p>	<p><b>He</b> poured out his life unto death, and <b>he was numbered with the transgressors</b></p> <p><i>verse 12</i></p>	<p>They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left.</p> <p><b>Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads</b> and saying, So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross a. save yourself.</p>
<p>He trusts in the LORD. Let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since He delights in him.</p> <p><i>Psalm 22:8, 1000 BC</i></p>		<p>In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself! Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe. Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.</p>

<p><b>My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?</b> Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? <i>Psalm 22:1, 1000 BC</i></p>	<p><b>Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him</b> and cause him to suffer... <i>verse 10a</i></p>	<p>At the sixth hour (noon) darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour (3 p.m.) And at the ninth hour <b>Jesus cried out in a loud voice</b>, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthaani? -- which means <b>My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?</b> When some of those standing near heard this, they said, Listen, he is calling Elijah... <b>Mark 15:27-35</b></p>
<p>I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint... My strength is dried up like a potsherd, <b>and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.</b> <i>Psalm 22:14-15, 1000 BC</i></p>		<p>Jesus said I am thirsty. <i>John 19:28</i></p>
<p>And (they) gave me vinegar for my thirst <i>Psalm 69:21, 1000 BC</i></p>		<p><b>One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar</b>, and put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink...</p>
<p>You (God) lay me in the dust of death. <i>Psalm 22:15b, 1000 BC</i></p>	<p><b>For he was cut off from the land of the living;</b> for the transgression of my people he was stricken. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. <i>vs 8b + 12b</i></p>	<p>With a loud cry, Jesus gave up the spirit. The curtain of the temple (the entrance to the most Holy place) was torn in two from top to bottom <i>Mark 15:36-38</i></p>
	<p>He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and <b>with the rich in his death...</b> <i>verse 9a</i></p>	<p><b>Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council</b>, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and <b>asked for Jesus' body</b>. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead... When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. <b>So Joseph... took down the body,</b></p>

		<p><b>wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock.</b> Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Mark 15:43-47</b></p>
<p><b>Prophecies of Jesus' Resurrection and their Fulfillment</b></p>		
	<p>And though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering</p>	<p>For what I received I passed on to you... that Christ died for our sins... that he was buried, that he was raised the third day according to the scriptures, and</p>
<p>I will declare Your name to my brothers. In the congregation I will praise You.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Psalm 22:22, 1000 BC</b></p>	<p><b>he will see his offspring and prolong his days</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>verse 10</i></p>	<p><b>(1) That he appeared to Peter, (2) And then to the Twelve. (3) After that he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. (4) Then he appeared to James, (5) Then to all the apostles.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>1 Cor 15:3-7)</b></p>

## 6.3 Old Testament Stories in the Qur'an

From: Die Biblischen Erzählungen vom Koran, Heinrich Speyer, 1931

### 1. The Creation of the World

1. **Creation of the world in six days** (7:54, 10:3,11:7, 25:59, 32:4)
2. **A Babylonian creation myth** (21:30)
3. **The constitution of the world** (13:3-4, 15:19, 16:15-16, 55:10-12, 71:19-20, 77:27, 78:6-8, 79:30-33, 27:60, 16:14)
4. **Creation of heaven** (41:11f, 2:29, 23:17, 23:86, 65:12)
5. **The lights of heaven and their purpose** (10:5, 71:16, 6:96-97)
6. **Day, night** (17:12, 25:47, 28:73, 6:96)
7. **The months** (9:36)
8. **Allah made the earth subservient to man** (31:20, 22:65, 45:12)
9. **Completion of creation** (11:7, 50:38, 46:33, 50:15)
10. **The divine throne** (10:3, 13:2, 20:5-6, 32:4-5, 70:3-4)

### 2. Adam

0. **Main passages** (2:30-37, 5:27-32, 7:11-27, 15:28-43, 17:61-65, 20:115-123, 38:71-84)
1. **What material Adam was created from** (Dust: 3:59, Earth: 11:61, 18:37, 30:19, 35:11, 22:5, 40:67, Loam: 23:12, Nothing: 19:67, Water: 25:54, 22:5, 23:13-14, 40:67, 71:14, 75:37-38, 96:2)
2. **The formation of the first human being** (32:9, 15:29, 38:72, 82:7-8, 40:67, 7:11, 64:3)
3. **Adam's glorious appearance** (95:4-6)

4. **Adam's choice** (3:33)
5. **Adam names everything** (2:30-33)
6. **Worship of Adam. Satan's Fall** (15:28-38, 2:34, 7:11, 18:50, 17:61, 20:116, 38:71-82)
7. **Satan's profession** (17:62-65, 7:16-17, 4:118-119, 15:39-43, 38:83-84, 14:22, 36:60-62)
8. **The creation of Eve** (4:1, 7:189, 30:21, 39:6, 42:11)
9. **Allah gives Adam the interdiction** (2:35, 7:19)
10. **The constitution of the prohibited tree** (23:20, 95:1-2, 24:35)
11. **Covenant with Adam** (20:115)
12. **Allah exhorts Adam** (20:116-119)
13. **Seduction by Satan** (7:20-21, 7:27, 20:120)
14. **The fall of man** (7:22-23, 20:121)
15. **Expulsion from paradise** (2:36, 7:24, 20:123)
16. **The curse** (7:24-25, 2:36, 20:55, 22:66)
17. **Adam's repentance and restitution** (7:23, 2:37, 20:122)
18. **Eve's pregnancy. The fall of the first human beings** (7:189f)

### 3. The Sons of Adam

1. **The sacrifice** (5:27)
2. **The conversation** (5:27-29)
3. **Brother killing brother** (5:30)
4. **Cain's repentance** (5:31)
5. **The doctrine** (5:32)

### 4. Noah

0. **Main passages** (7:59-64, 10:71-73, 11:25-48, 23:23-28, 26:106-118, 71:2-28)



1. **Allah commands Noah to build the ark** (11:36-37, 23:27-28)
2. **Noah admonishes the people** (7:59 and 61-63, 9:70, 11:25-26, 23:23, 11:33-34, 71:2-4, 11:28-31, 26:106-110, 10:71-72, 26:112-115)
3. **The people despise and mock Noah** (11:27, 7:60, 23:24-25, 54:9, 7:64, 10:73, 11 :32, 26:111+116, 11:38-39)
4. **Noah's prayer** (71:5-20, 26:117-118)
5. **Summoning the people to keep to the ancient gods** (71:21-23)
6. **Noah's demand that sinful humanity be punished** (71:26-28, 21:76, 37:75)
7. **Allah's command** (11:40, 23:28)
8. **The flood** (54:11-12, 6:6, 11:40, 23:27)
9. **The ark** (54:13-14, 69:11-12)
10. **The call to enter the ark** (11:41)
11. **Noah's son** (11:42-43, 11:45-47)
12. **The voyage** (11:42, 54:14, 36, 41)
13. **Destruction of sinful mankind** (26:120, 7:64, 10:73, 21:77)
14. **Allah puts an end to the water** (11:44)
15. **The water decreases and the ark comes to a stop** (11:44)
16. **Noah leaves the ark** (11:48, 27:78-79)
17. **The disbelief of Noah's wife** (66:10)
18. **Noah's age** (29:14)
19. **Noah's offspring** (37:77, 6:6)

## 5. The Tower of Babel

0. **Allusion to the tower of Babel** (40:36-37)

## 6. Abraham

0. **Main passages** (2:124-136, 6:74-81, 11:69-81, 15:51-74, 19:41-58, 21:51-72, 26:69-93.160-171, 27:54:57, 29:16-35, 37:83-113)
  1. **Abraham recognizes Allah** (6:76-79, 37:83-93, 41:37)
  2. **The call of Abraham** (2:124, 33:7, 57:26)
  3. **Abraham's dispute with his father** (19:42-48, 6:74, 21:52-57, 43:26-27)
  4. **Abraham's dispute with his compatriots** (6:80-81, 9:70, 19:42-47, 21:59-67, 22:44, -26:69-93, 29:16-19, 24-25, 37:84-96, 43:26-28, 60:4)
  5. **Abraham destroys the idols of his father** (21:58)
  6. **The people are indignant because Abraham has destroyed the idols** (21:59-67, 37:97)
  7. **Abraham's dispute with Nimrod** (2:260, 14:15(?), 21:68-69, 50:24(?))
  8. **Abraham is saved from the fire** (21:68-70, 37:97-98)
  9. **Abraham prays for his father** (9: 114, 19:47, 26:86-87, 60:4)
  10. **Abraham renounces his father** (9:114, 19:48)
  11. **Lot believes Abraham** (29:26)
  12. **The angels visit Abraham** (11:69-73, 51:24-34, 15:51-60, 29:30-31)
  13. **Abraham's intercession for the sinful cities** (11:74-75, 29:31-32)
  14. **Lot's dispute with his contemporaries** (26:160-169, 29:28-29, 38:13, 50:13, 54:33. 36)
  15. **The messengers come to Lot** (15:61-64, 11:69-73, 15:51-60, 51:24-34)
  16. **The wickedness of the people of Sodom** (11:77-79, 15:67-72, 27:54-56)

17. **The message of the angels** (11:80-81, 29:33-34, 15:65-66)
  18. **Destruction of the city of the sinners** (54:37-38, 11:82, 15:66, 15:74, 26:172-173, 27:58, 37:136, 54:34, 51:37, 29:35, 21:70, 15:73-74)
  19. **Lot's wife** (27:57, 15:60, 26:171, 37:135, 11:81, 66:10)
  20. **Abraham to become Muslim** (2:131)
  21. **Abraham founds the Kaaba** (2:127-129, 22:26-29, 3:96)
  22. **Abraham wants to see how Allah revives the dead** (2:260)
  23. **Abraham's request for his son** (37:100)
  24. **Abraham sacrifices his son** (37:102-113)
  25. **Allah shows Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and of earth** (6:75)
  26. **Abraham's prayer** (14:35-40, 2:126)
  27. **Abraham's intercession for the land** (2:126)
  28. **Abraham's descendants** (19:49-50, 21:71-72, 37:112-113, 6:84, 29:27, 19:58, 38:45-48, 12:38, 11:71, 12:6, 2:133)
  29. **Ishmael** (19:54, 21:85, 38:48, 6:86, 14:39, 2:125, 133, 2:136, 3:84, 4:163)
  30. **Abraham admonishes his children** (2:132)
  31. **The religion of Abraham** (3:67, 16:120-123, 9:41, 22:78, 42:13, 53:37, 21:51, 4:125, 163, 6:161, 2:130, 3:33, 65-67)
  32. **Books of Abraham and of Ishmael** (87:19, 19:42, 19:55)
7. **Joseph**
    0. **Main passage** (12:4-103)
    1. **The descendants of Abraham** (37:113)
    2. **Allusion to the interdiction not to eat the tendon at the socket of the hip** (3:93, ct. Gen 32:32)
    3. **Joseph's dream** (12:4-6)
    4. **The hatred of the brothers** (12:8-9)
    5. **The plan** (12:10)
    6. **The trick** (12:11-14)
    7. **Allah comforts Joseph** (12:15)
    8. **The brothers bring Joseph's garment to their father** (12:16-18)
    9. **The caravan finds Joseph** (12:19)
    10. **Joseph is sold** (12:20)
    11. **Joseph with Potiphar** (12:21-22)
    12. **Potiphar's wife seduces Joseph** (12:23-24)
    13. **Joseph is steadfast** (12:25)
    14. **The evidence for Joseph's guilt or innocence** (12:26-27)
    15. **Potiphar justifies Joseph** (12:28-29)
    16. **The women mock Potiphar's wife** (12:30)
    17. **The justification of Potiphar's wife and her threat** (12:31-32)
    18. **Joseph asks Allah for strength** (12:33-34)
    19. **Joseph is taken to jail** (12:35)
    20. **Joseph interprets dreams in jail** (12:36-41)
    21. **Joseph's request** (12:42)
    22. **Pharaoh's dream** (12:43)
    23. **The wise men cannot interpret the dream** (12:44)
    24. **The chief butler remembers Joseph** (12:45)
    25. **Joseph hears the dream of the king and interprets it** (12:46-49, 7:130)
    26. **The king summons Joseph to himself** (12:50, 54)
    27. **The king inquires about the events in Potiphars house** (12:50-53)
    28. **Joseph before Pharaoh** (12:54-56)
    29. **Joseph's brothers come to him, but do not recognize him** (12:58)
    30. **Joseph wants to see his brother** (12:59-60)

31. The brothers agree (12:61)
32. Joseph lets the money be put back into the bags (12:62)
33. The brothers ask their father to send Benjamin with them (12:63-64)
34. The brothers find the money (12:65)
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43. Joseph reveals his identity (12:89-93)
44. Jacob hears about Joseph (12:94-97)
45. The brothers ask their father's forgiveness (12:98-99)
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48. Muhammad and the story about Joseph (12:103)

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2. Pharaoh kills the Jewish boys (2:49, 7:141, 14:6, 28:4, 40:25)
3. The fear of Moses' mother (28:10)

4. Moses' mother puts him into the box (28:7, 20:38-39)
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7. Moses' sister offers the mother of Moses as a nurse (20:40, 28:12)
8. Moses is returned to his mother (28:13, 20:40)
9. Pharaoh's wife supports Moses (28:9)
10. Pharaoh, the enemy of Moses, has to bring him up (28:8, 20:39, 26:18)
11. Moses grows up (28: 14)
12. Moses kills one of his enemies and the consequences of this act (28:15-19, 20:40, 28:33, 26:21)
13. People are out to kill Moses (28:20-21, 40:26-27)
14. Moses in Midian (28:22-28, 20:40)
15. Midian and Schu'aib (7:85-93, 11:84-95, 26:176-189, 15:78-79, 38:13, 50:14, 29:36-37, 9:70, 22:43, 28:45)
16. Moses and his shepherd's staff (20:17-18)
17. The burning bush (28:29-30, 20:9-10, 27:7-8)
18. The calling of Moses (14:5, 20:11-16, 79:15-19, 26:10-17, 20:25-36. 42-46, 27:7-12, 28:30-35)
19. Allah gives Moses the signs that he is to perform before Pharaoh (20: 17-24, 27:10-12, 28:31-32, 79:20)
20. Moses asks that his tongue be loosened (20:25-28)
21. Aaron as the substitute of Moses (7:142, 25:35, 20:29-36, 28:34-35, 26: 12-14, 19:53)
22. The mission regarding Pharaoh (20:47-48, 26:16-17, 25:36)
23. Moses and Aaron are afraid to go to Pharaoh (20:45-46, 26:12-15, 28:33-35)

24. **Pharaoh's position and character** (10:83, 28:8, 69:9, 51:40, 11:97-99, 28:4, 38, 40:6-37)
25. **Moses before Pharaoh. The magicians** (7:103-126, 10:76-82, 20:56-59, 66-71, 27:13-14, 43:46-48, 51:38-39, 8:54, 11:99, 23:47-48, 69:9, 73:16, 17:101-102)
26. **The magicians turn away from Pharaoh** (20:70-72, 7:118-126, 43:48-51, 26:45-51)
27. **The people of Pharaoh declare the signs to be lies** (27:13-14, 28:36-37, 40:23-24, 17:101, 54:41-42, 3:11, 50:13)
28. **Pharaoh inquires about God and declares himself as such** (20:49-56, 26:23-31, 43:51-55, 28:38, 79:24)
29. **Pharaoh reproaches Moses for his ingratitude. Moses' response** (26:18-22)
30. **Pharaoh wants to subdue the people of Moses** (7:127)
31. **The stubbornness of the Egyptians** (7:134-135, 23:45-48, 11:97, 28:36)
32. **Only one tribe believes in Moses** (10:83, 7:159)
33. **Pharaoh holds a secret council against Moses** (20:60-65, 26:34-40)
34. **An unknown believer wants to save Moses** (40:28-35, 38-46, 44:17-22)
35. **Moses' prayer** (10:88-89, 44:22-24)
36. **The plagues** (7:133-134, 17:101, 7:133-134)
37. **The faith of Pharaoh's wife** (66:11)
38. **Pharaoh, the man of the poles, wants his minister Haman to build him a tower** (28:38, 40:36-37, 28:6, 8, 29:39, 40:24, 38:12, 89:10)
39. **Moses admonishes the people to remain steadfast, but the people reproach him** (7:128-129, 10:84-7)
40. **The people of Moses are to build themselves a Qibla in Egypt** (10:87)
41. **The people of Moses are to go out of Egypt** (26:52, 44:22-24, 20:77-78, 2:50, 17:103)
42. **The Egyptian land and the people of Moses** (26:57-58, 44:25-26, 28:6)
43. **The destruction of the buildings of Pharaoh** (7:137, on Pharaoh's buildings cf. 28:38, 40:36-37, 38:12, 89:10)
44. **Pharaoh assembles his people against the people of Moses** (26:53-56)
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46. **The passage through the sea** (20:77, 26:63-66, 7:138, 10:90, 44:30-31, 2:50)
47. **The destruction of the Egyptians in the sea** (20:78, 28:40, 7:136, 8:54, 17:103, 26:66, 51:40, 85:17-18, 29:39, 43:55-56, 2:50)
48. **Pharaoh alone is saved** (10:90-92)
49. **Pharaoh's punishment in the hereafter** (79:25, 28:41-42, 11:98-99, 40:45-46)
50. **The people demand a change in food** (2:61)
51. **Moses strikes water out of a rock** (2:60, 7:160)
52. **The people receive shadow from clouds as well as Manna and Quail to eat** (2:57, 7:160, 20:80-81)
53. **Allah's covenant with the children of Israel** (2:40, 4:154, 5:70, 7:169, 2:83-84)
54. **Moses and the Scriptures** (2:87, 146-147, 4:136, 25:35, 2:213, 3:3, 5:46, 46:12, 17:2, 23:49, 32:23, 40:53, 5:46, 37:117, 3:23, 4:47, 11:110, 41:45)

55. The people desire to see Allah (2:55-56)
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57. The Jews speak equivocally (2:93, 4:46-47)
58. Allah threatens by lifting the mountain (2:93, 7:171, 2:63)
59. Allah takes the descendants of Israel as witnesses (7:172)
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67. Aaron warns with no success (20:90-91)
68. Moses returns to the people (20:86)
69. Moses rebukes the people regarding the sin of the calf (2:54, 7:151, 20:86)
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- 98. Moses exhorts his people in a speech (5:20, 14:6-8)
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- 101. Moses in the line of the messengers of God (6:84-86, 2:136, 19:51-52)

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- 0. Main passage (2:246-251)
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- 2. After the death of Moses Israel wants a king (2:246)
- 3. Objection of the prophet (2:246)
- 4. The refusal to fight (2:246)
- 5. Talut (= Saul?) is to become king (2:247)
- 6. The children of Israel do not want to accept him as king (2:247)
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- 0. Main passages (21:79-82, 27:15-45, 34:10-19, 38:20-39)
- 1. David is admonished (38:26-29)
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- 7. David the author of the Psalms (4:163, 17:55)
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- 9. Mountains and birds are summoned to praise Allah (34:10, 38:18-19)
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- 13. Solomon prays (38:35)
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- 15. Solomon understands the language of the birds and everything is subservient to him (27: 16)
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