

THE CHRISTIAN & ISLAM

A Study of the Islamic Faith
In Light of the Bible & the Quran



By
Kyle Pope



Ancient Road Publications™

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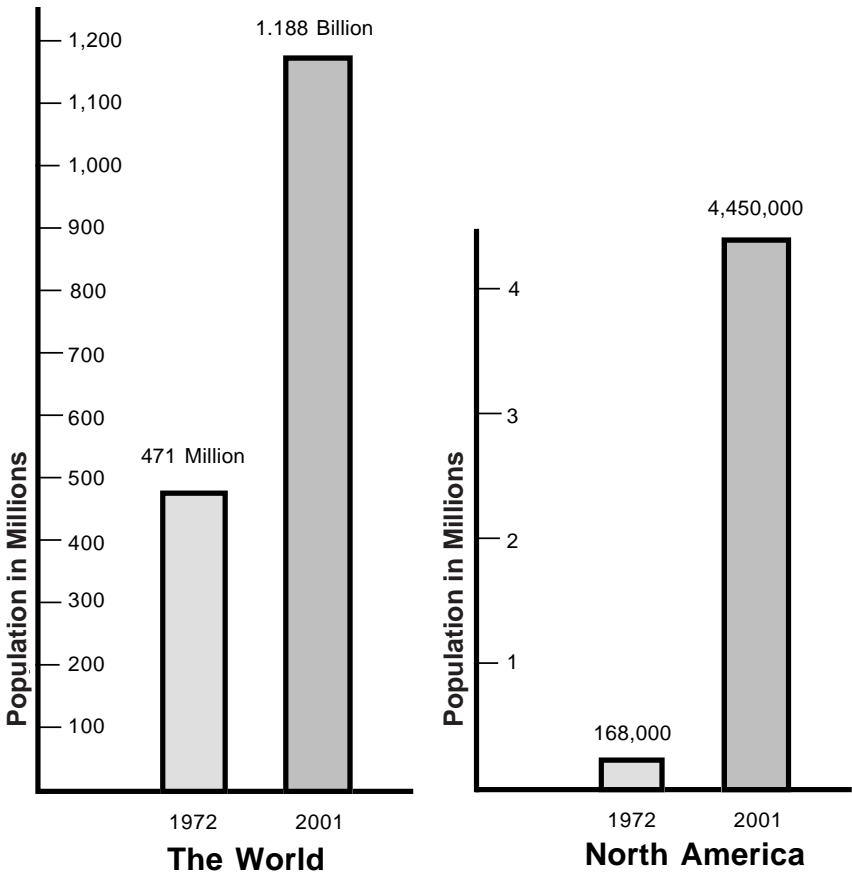
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The Rise of Islam



Statistics taken from the 1972 and 2001 editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year*

The Christian & Islam

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

(Genesis 12:1-3, NKJV).

Judaism, Christianity and Islam alike all look to Abraham as the father of their faith. All claim to be the heirs to his legacy of faith. For the Jew Abraham is their ancestor in the flesh who began a covenant relationship with God, which his ancestors claim to still enjoy. The Christian sees Abraham as their spiritual ancestor, and they see themselves as the heirs to his inheritance through a common faith (Galatians 3:7,8). Branching off from this common heritage, Islam believes that both Judaism and Christianity have departed from the purity of Abrahamic faith. Islam sees in Abraham an example of faith and worship which they claim to restore.

SUMMARY OF ISLAM

The Rise and Origin of Islam

Recent years have seen phenomenal growth in the spread of Islam worldwide as well as in North America. As illustrated in the chart on the facing page, 1972 census statistics recorded 471 million people who considered themselves Muslims worldwide. By 2001 that number had more than doubled to 1.18 billion. In North America during the same years the numbers went from 168,000 in 1972 to 4.45 million in 2001. This reflects a near doubling of Islam in North America in less than a decade. In 1992 North America claimed only 2.6 million adherents to

Islam. This rise in prominence in the western world is merely a recent manifestation of the growth of Islam that has continued since its origin.

The history of Islam begins with the life of an Arabic tribesman named Muhammad. In 610 AD. Muhammad claimed that God revealed Himself to him calling him to preach *Islam* “submission.” Muhammad claimed that the angel Gabriel, in a dream told him to “recite.” The revelations which he claimed to receive throughout his life were first committed to memory, then written on stones, palm leaves and bones. In 632 AD. these recitations were compiled into the *Qur’an* (Koran) “recitation,” which would come to be viewed as the sacred text of Islam. In addition to the Qur’an, Muslims also follow the “traditions of the prophet” known as the *Sunna*. This is comprised of numerous and often contradictory individual traditions known as *Hadith* meaning - “narrative.” Each *Hadith* is established by some source close to Muhammad. Different Islamic sects accept and reject different *Hadith*.

Muhammad’s teachings were initially rejected by the polytheistic people of his home of Mecca. He was driven from Mecca to the nearby city of Medina. Later when Mecca accepted Islam, Medina and Mecca came to be viewed as holy cities. Long before Muhammad, Mecca had been a religious center with a sacred shrine known as the *Ka’ba* which was dedicated to a deity known as Allah who ruled over other gods and goddesses. This fifty foot cube-shaped dark stone structure, Muslims claim, was built by Abraham and Ishmael. When Mecca was conquered by Muhammad, the images of the gods were destroyed and Muhammad prayed in the *Ka’ba* to Allah. This established the *Ka’ba* as a sacred shrine of Islam.

From the very beginning Islam has been a militant faith. Muhammad himself fought against opponents of Islam. After his death, Muhammad’s followers succeeded in “converting” the Middle East to Islam by the sword. Ultimately Northern Africa, Southern Asia and portions of Southern Europe became dominated

by Islam. Such violence and repression was not the only side of this domination. During the intellectual stagnation of Europe in the Middle Ages, Islamic centers of learning preserved classical Greek and Roman learning and made advances in the fields of mathematics and astronomy.

Islamic Doctrine & Practice

The doctrine of Islam involves a few basic tenets: 1. There is only one God - *Allah*. This Arabic name for God is similar to some of the Hebrew names used for God in the Old Testament. 2. Allah has revealed Himself to many prophets in the past (Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc.). 3. Muhammad is the final prophet of Allah. 4. Islam is the faith practiced by Abraham and all those who were truly faithful in the past. 5. The Qur'an is the full and final revelation of God. 6. At the resurrection all who practice Islam will enjoy eternal paradise and all unbelievers will receive the punishment of eternal fire.



Arabic name *Allah*

A follower of Islam is called a *Muslim* “one who submits to God” (i.e. as taught in the Qur'an). Islamic worship is characterized by five required acts of worship referred to as the “Five Pillars.” These acts of worship are:

1. Profession of faith. Every Muslim must recite the *Shahadah* (i.e. “witness”) - “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.” Dr. Mohiaddin Alwaye in his booklet *Pillars of Islam: Shahadah and Salah* suggests that two fundamental beliefs of Islam are illustrated by this confession: the oneness of God (i.e. no mate nor partner), and the “finality and universality of the Prophethood of Muhammad” (p. 14).

2. Prayer. The faithful Muslim is expected to engage in prayer (*Salah*) in a series of prostrations five times daily facing the city of Mecca. These prayers must be offered in Arabic (Alwaye, p.

69). This may be done privately or in a *Mosque* (i.e. “a place of kneeling”).

3. Almsgiving. Muslims must give both the *Zakat*, a 2 1/2% religious tax and the *Sadaqah*, freewill offerings.

4. Fasting. During the daylight hours of the ninth lunar month of Ramadan Muslims are to fast (*Sawm*) and abstain from sexual intercourse. John Sabini in his work *Islam: A Primer* notes:

Paradoxically, Ramadan can be one of the merriest seasons of the Muslim year in some countries...The mosques are brightly lit and filled with worshippers. Parts of town are turned into fairgrounds, shops, cafes and places of amusement are open; children allowed to stay up late, ride on swings and merry-go-rounds. (p. 19).

5. Pilgrimage. All Muslims are to try at least once in their life to make the *Hajj*, a sacred pilgrimage to the city of Mecca. During this pilgrimage worshippers purify themselves and circle the Ka’ba seven times. During this ritual the Muslim tries to touch (or kiss) a sacred Black Stone which is embedded in a corner of the structure. This stone is believed to have been sent down from heaven (Sabini, p. 21).

Islam is divided into three main sects which have divided over issues of leadership and *Hadith*. **1. Sunnites.** This sect makes up about 90% of all Muslims. It holds that leadership should belong to a descendant of Muhammad’s tribe. **2. Shiites.** Comprising about 10% of all Muslims, Shiites believe that true leadership belongs to a direct descendant of Muhammad through his daughter Fatima and Ali. **3. Kharijites.** This smallest main sect, believes that leadership can belong to any worthy Muslim. It comprises less than 1% of all Muslims. The African-American sect known as the **Black Muslims** is a non-traditional Islamic group which has focused on racial problems. Its teachings are centered on the claims of its founder Elijah Mohammed.

While the majority of modern Muslims do not advocate forced conversion or violence as a means of advancing their faith, there continues to an element of the Islamic world which holds such views. Terrorist acts carried out by Muslim extremists in the name of Islam are the worst demonstrations of these sentiments.

The west has become quite familiar with the Islamic name for this religious warfare - the *Jihad*. Mateen A. Ellass, who was raised as a Muslim, in his article “Four Jihads” explains that in most cases *Jihad* does not involve violence. There can be *Jihad* of the mouth, the pen, the hand and the “lesser *Jihad*” of the sword (*Christian History*, Vol. XXI, no. 2, issue 74, pp. 35-36). In this an important distinction should be noted between Islamic and Christian beliefs about conversion. Although violence and compulsion has erroneously been conducted in the name of Jesus, Ellass points out that this has never been an acceptable means of conversion. For Islam on the other hand, “*Jihad* has been at the heart of Islam’s expansion” (ibid., p.38).

ISLAM & CHRISTIANITY

The differences between Islam and Biblical Christianity concern two basic questions: 1. Can the Bible be trusted? and 2. Who is Jesus?

What Does the Qur’an Say About the Bible?

The Qur’an is quite explicit in its statements about the origin, inspiration and accuracy of the Biblical Scriptures which were in existence before Muhammad. This very fact poses some difficulties to the one who would accept Islam. Consider the following statements:

God gave Scripture to Moses - “And remember We gave Moses the Scripture and the Criterion (between right and wrong): there was a chance for you to be guided aright” (Sura 2:53).

Israel was given God’s message - “O children of Israel! Call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others for my message.” (Sura 2:47).

The Law is a guide to truth - “...Say: ‘bring ye the Law and study it if ye be men of truth.’” (Sura 3:93).

Moses was followed by the prophets and Jesus - “We gave Moses

the Book and followed him up with a succession of Apostles; We gave Jesus the son of Mary clear (signs) and strengthened him with the holy spirit..." (Sura 2:87).

God gave His book to many biblical characters - "...We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron... and Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias... These were the men to whom We gave the Book and the Authority, and Prophethood: if these (their descendants) reject them, behold! We shall entrust their charge to a new people who reject them not." (Sura 6:84-89).

The books of Moses, the Prophets and Jesus came from God - "Say: 'We believe in God, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail; Isaac, and Jacob and in the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord we make no distinction between one and another..." (Sura 3:84).

God's revelation is not lost - "None of our revelations do we abrogate or cause to be forgotten..." (Sura 2:106).

The Qur'an is meant to confirm those books which came before - "It is He who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this as a guide to mankind..." (Sura 3:3).

Contradictions Between the Bible & the Qur'an

While the Qur'an claims to confirm the Bible, and declares that the Bible is from God, it is clear that there are many biblical teachings which conflict with Islam. In II Timothy 3:14-17 we are taught that in the Bible is all that is needed to be "thoroughly equipped for every good work." The Apostle Paul taught that the revelation of doctrine was complete in the first century. He wrote:

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

(Galatians 1:8-9).

The Bible further teaches that salvation is found in Jesus' name

alone, affirming - "...there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). How can the Bible be from God and the Qur'an confirm the Bible if these doctrines are true?

In many instances the Qur'an actually contradicts the Bible. This is true not only in matters of practice and teaching but in statements of material fact. For example:

Noah. The Qur'an claims of Noah, that one of his sons died in the flood (Sura 11:43), yet the Bible claims that all his family was saved (Genesis 7:7, 23).

Abraham. The Qur'an claims that Abraham left his father (Sura 19:45-49), the Bible tells us that Abraham stayed with his father until his death in Haran (Genesis 11:27-12:4). The Qur'an claims that Abraham told Isaac that he would be sacrificed (Sura 37:102). The Bible says that Abraham told Isaac that God would provide the lamb (Genesis 22:8).

Jacob. The Qur'an claims that Jacob understood Joseph's dream and warned him about his brothers (Sura 11:5). The Bible says that Jacob rebuked Joseph for his dream (Genesis 37:10). The Qur'an claims that Jacob knew that Joseph was not dead when shown his clothes (Sura 11:18), yet the Bible relates that Jacob tore his own clothes and mourned for many days (Genesis 37:34).

Joseph. When Joseph was in Egypt, the Qur'an claims that Potiphar was near the door when his wife tried to seduce Joseph (Sura 11:25). The Bible tells us that Potiphar was away from home (Genesis 39:16). In the Qur'an Potiphar asks Joseph to forgive his wife (Sura 12:29), yet in the Bible it is Potiphar who has Joseph imprisoned (Genesis 39:20). The Qur'an claims that the cupbearer related the interpretation of the dream to Pharaoh (Sura 12:43-49). The Bible says that Joseph told Pharaoh the interpretation himself (Genesis 41:14-16).

Moses. Concerning the life of Moses, the Qur'an claims that Pharaoh's wife preserves the life of Moses as a baby (Sura 28:9). In the Bible it is Pharaoh's daughter that saves the child (Exodus 2:1-10). In the Qur'an Jethro has only two daughters (Sura 28:23).

The Bible says that Jethro had seven daughters (Exodus 2:16). The Qur'an claims that God spoke to Moses after ten years in Midian (Sura 28:25-30). The Bible states that it was forty years (Acts 7:30). In the Qur'an Pharaoh repents at the Red Sea and his life is spared (Sura 10:90-92). In the Bible it is not clear that Pharaoh was at the Red Sea, but of those who were there "not as much as one of them remained" (Exodus 14:17, 28).

Aaron. When the Israelites turn to idolatry at Mt. Sinai, the Qur'an claims that Aaron tried to plead with the people not to practice idolatry and then consented (Sura 20:90). In the Bible Aaron simply instructs the people to give him gold to make the idol (Exodus 32:2,24).

Israelites. When they had taken the land of Palestine the Qur'an claims that the Israelites asked for a king to fight for God's cause (Sura 2:246). In the Bible, the Israelites asked for a king in order to be like the other nations (I Samuel 8:5).

Zacharias. Before the birth of John the Baptist, the Qur'an claims that Zacharias was unable to speak for three days (Sura 3:41; 9:10). In the Bible Zacharias was unable to speak until the birth of John (Luke 1:20, 64).

Mary. In the Qur'an Mary is said to have given birth to Jesus under a palm tree (Sura 19:23). In the Bible Mary gave birth near a manger (Luke 2:7).

Jesus. The Qur'an claims that Jesus was not God's son (Sura 9:30). The Bible declares that Jesus is God's son (Matthew 3:17; 16:16). The Qur'an claims that Jesus was not divine (Sura 5:19). The Bible reveals that in Jesus God was manifested in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16; John 1:1; 20:28). The Qur'an claims that Jesus was not crucified (Sura 4:157) while the Bible states clearly that Jesus was crucified (Luke 23:33). We shall return to this point later in our study.

The Accuracy of the Bible

How does Islam reconcile these difference? If they say the Qur'an is wrong the entire foundation of their faith is shattered. Instead they must say that the Bible is flawed and corrupt. In a 1974 debate between evangelist Hiram Hutto and Dr. Salah El Dareer, the President of the Islamic center of Birmingham, in Birmingham Alabama this claim was asserted. Dr. El Dareer explained:

Are the Jewish and Christian scriptures without foundation? Can they be said to accurately reflect or preserve a message from the Supreme being to mortal man? When one reads the Bible today, what is really being read, God's word or men's fables? Muslims believe in divine revelation, we believe in the Law which was given to Moses and in the Gospel which was given to Jesus, but can we find either the Law or the Gospel in today's Bible? I say we can find some of the Law; and yes we can find some of the truth in the Bible. (p. 25).

Does this solve the problem? Is this the explanation? The problem for the Muslim is that Muhammad himself didn't believe this. He claimed:

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 they Book; and they say, 'That is from God,' but it is not from God: It is they who tell a lie against God and (well) they know it! (Sura 3:78).

Here the claim is that people distort the Book "with their tongues," not that the Book is itself distorted. In fact, Muhammad claimed that those who follow the Bible would be saved.

Those who believe (in the Qur'an) and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabian, any who believe in God and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Sura 2:62).

It is clear from these contradictions that Muhammad's knowledge of the Bible was quite limited. If Muhammad was being led by the Holy Spirit, or being given a revelation from God when was God inaccurate - in his revelation of the Bible or

to Muhammad? James A. Beverley, in his article “Muhammad Amid the Faiths” points out the absurdity of this claim of corruption. He observes:

Muslims do not accept the prophets ignorance as the reason for these discrepancies. They argue that Muhammad and his text are correct, but Christians and Jews corrupted their Scriptures—every single copy. (*Christian History*, Vol. XXI, no. 2, issue 74, p. 13).

If, as modern Muslims claim, the Bible is corrupted surely there would be evidence of such corruption. Is there evidence of the Bible’s corruption? Of the more than 4000 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament which have survived 146 of them date from the seventh century (when the Qur’an was written) or earlier. Are all of these manuscripts wrong? The British Museum houses a near complete manuscript of the Greek New Testament which was found in a Sinai monastery in the mid-1800’s. This manuscript dates to the 4th century - some 300



Page from Fourth Century
Sinai Manuscript

years before Muhammad. In the late 1940’s a treasury of scrolls was discovered near the Dead Sea which contained most of the Hebrew Old Testament. These scrolls date to the first century AD. - nearly 600 years before Muhammad. In each case the texts of both the Greek New Testament manuscript and the Hebrew Old Testament manuscript are virtually identical to the Bible we have today.

To resolve this dilemma some Muslims appeal to a manuscript found in the 1700’s written in Italian that is known as the *Gospel According to Barnabas*. This manuscript has been proven to date to the 1500’s. Internal evidence indicates that the manuscript could not have been written earlier than the 1300’s, and was

authored in the Western Mediterranean by an author ignorant of Palestinian geography. In spite of these facts, it is suggested that this text represents the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Why rely upon such a speculative document? In the text Jesus is said to deny that he is the Messiah and predicts that Muhammad would be the Messiah (a claim which the Qur'an itself contradicts - Sura 3:45). Would God allow his word to simply disappear? The Bible affirms - "The word of the Lord endures forever" (James 1:25).

What Does the Qur'an Say About Jesus?

The second major paradox of Islamic faith concerns the claims of the Qur'an about Jesus. Ahmed Deedat in his work *Christ in Islam* goes to great lengths to emphasize the honored status that Jesus holds in Islam. Deedat points out that Muslims are taught to say *eesa alai-hiss-salaam* meaning "Jesus, peace be upon him" when the name of Jesus is spoken (p. 4). The real issue that divides Christians and Muslims is not whether Jesus deserves respect but whether He deserves worship. Is Jesus the son of God or simply one of many prophets? Consider some major points about who Jesus was with which the Qur'an is in agreement (or near agreement) with biblical Christianity:

Jesus was born of a virgin - "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...'" (Sura 19:20,21).

Jesus was given the Holy Spirit - "Then will God say: O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount my favour to thee and to thy mother. Behold! I strengthened thee with the holy spirit..." (Sura 5:113).

Jesus did miracles - "...And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by God's leave..." (Sura 3:49).

Jesus was righteous - "And Zakariya and John and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous." (Sura 6:85).

Jesus was an apostle of God - "And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of God (sent) to you confirming the Law (which came) before me..." (Sura 61:6).

Jesus was a prophet - “He said: ‘I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet.’” (Sura 19:30).

Jesus was the word of God - “...Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of God, and his Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him...” (Sura 4:171).

Jesus was a sign to mankind - “...And (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us”: It is a matter so decreed.” (Sura 19:21).

Jesus brought the gospel - “And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Law that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear God.” (Sura 5:49).

Jesus was the Christ (Messiah) - “Behold! the angels said: ‘O Mary! God giveth thee Glad tidings of a Word from Him: His name will be called Christ Jesus ,the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those Nearest to God.’” (Sura 3:45).

It is interesting that the Qur’an acknowledges that Jesus is the Messiah. However, Muslims do not understand the term “Messiah” in the same special and peculiar sense that Jews and Christians do. Drawing upon its basic meaning “annointed one” they suggest - “Not only were prophets and priests and kings anointed (christos-ed), but horns, and cherubs and lamp-posts also” (Deedat, p. 13). In the Bible, there is clearly one who was promised that would possess a status greater than simply a prophet. This is where the problems come. Islam fails to recognize that it cannot except certain claims about Jesus without being forced to accept others. For example, while the Qur’an accepts that Jesus was born of a virgin, it denies that Jesus was God’s son and that He was God in the flesh. The Qur’an declares:

They do blaspheme who say: ‘God is Christ the son of Mary...

They do blaspheme who say: God is one of three in a trinity: for there is no other God except One God...” (Sura 5:75,76).

And further:

...Christians call Christ the Son of God... God’s curse be upon them: how they are deluded away from the Truth! (Sura 9:30).

If Jesus was born of a virgin, then He was God with man. Isaiah 7:14 declares:

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin

shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

This name “Immanuel” is particularly important because it means “God with us.” This is explained in the New Testament, where Isaiah is quoted:

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23).

In another text in Isaiah, this fact is brought out even more distinctly. Speaking of the nature of the promised Messiah, it declares:

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7).

If the Messiah was not to be God in the flesh, it would be blasphemous to call Him “Mighty God!” It is clear in the Bible that the claim that Jesus was the Christ (or Messiah) carried with it this special identification of Christ’s deity. This is seen in the confession that Peter makes - “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16).

Two other claims that both the Bible and the Qur’an share are equally distinctive. As noted above the Qur’an claims that Jesus was the “word of God.” If Jesus was the “word of God” then according to the Bible, He was divine. The Gospel of John begins with a discussion of this very fact. It states:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:3).

We notice here that the one identified as “the Word” is said to have been responsible for creation, to have existed in the beginning and the powerful claim “the Word was God.” Lest there should be any confusion about the identity of the one identified as “the

Word” the text explains:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14).

The rest of the Gospel of John goes on to tell about the life and teachings of this one who was “the Word” which became flesh.

Second, for the Qur’an to admit that Jesus brought the gospel, concedes that in Jesus there is the way to salvation. Romans 1:16,17 explains the power of the gospel in this way:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16,17).

Islam must either deny that Jesus brought the gospel, or deny that it has the power which the Bible attributes to it. We must remember, the Qur’an claims that the Bible is from God - which claim will we accept?

One of the most fundamental issues has to do with the crucifixion of Jesus. In this the Qur’an puts itself in conflict with not only the claims of the Bible but with those of secular history.

The Qur’an claims:

...They said (in boast), ‘We killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the apostle of God,’ 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 a surety they killed him not: - Nay, God raised him up unto Himself... (Sura 4:157,158).

Obviously the Bible claims that Jesus was crucified (see Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:33 & John 19:17,18), but even ancient sources hostile (or indifferent) to Christianity acknowledge the same fact. Consider two pagan and two Jewish sources:

Cornelius Tacitus (Late first century Roman historian): “Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontus Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius...” (*Annals of Imperial Rome*, 15:44).

Lucian (Second century satirist): “...The man was crucified in

Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world...”
(*The Passing Perigrinus*).

Babylonian Talmud: “On the eve of the Passover they hanged Yeshua (of Nazareth)...they found naught of his defense and hanged him on the eve of the Passover” (*Sanhedrin*, 43a).

Flavius Josephus (Late first century Jewish historian): “Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man... Pilate at the suggestion of the principle men among us, had condemned Him to the cross...” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.33).

Are we to ignore the claims of the Bible and history and yet accept the claims of the Qur’an?

Contradictions Within the Qur’an

How can a reasonable soul accept the claims of a document that repeatedly shows itself to be contradictory? We have already seen examples of the the Qur’an contradicting the Bible. What is remarkable is that the Qur’an contradicts its own words on numerous occasions. Consider two dramatic examples:

Compulsion in Conversion: In early passages in the Qur’an this principle is clearly articulated:

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects Evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things. (Sura 2:256).

Yet, in later passages, this is contradicted and violence is commanded against those who will not convert.

Fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every strategem (of war)... Fight those who do not believe in God nor the Last Day... (Sura 9:5,29).

Which approach is to be taken? Why the contradiction?

Acceptance of Islam: Again, in early passages of the Qur’an those who hold to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are said to be accepted by God. It states:

Those who believe (in the Qur’an), and those who follow the

Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and Sabians, any who believe in God and the Last Day, and work righteousness shall have their reward with the Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Sura 2:62).

Yet, in a later text, this tolerance is rejected.

If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to God), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good). (Sura 3:85).

Who is accepted by God? Why the contradiction? These contradictions alone should make any Muslim realize that these are not the words of God, but rather the words of men that change their minds, confuse their words and deceive those who would follow them.

Did Jesus Prophecy the Coming of Muhammad?

One of the most puzzling tendencies utilized by Muslim apologists is the practice of appealing to the Bible in defense of their own beliefs. This puts the Muslim apologist in the awkward position of relying upon the very thing that (in some instances) he seeks to discredit! An example of this is the claim that the Bible prophesied the coming of Muhammad. The Qur'an makes this assertion:

And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of God (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... (Sura 61:6).

A. Yusuf Ali in his commentary on this passage writes:

'Ahmad' or 'Muhammad', the Praised One, is almost a translation of the Greek word PERICLYTOS. In the present Gospel of John, 14:16; 15:26 and 16:7 the word 'Comforter' in the English version is used for the Greek word PARACLETOS... Our doctors contend that PARACLETOS is a corrupt reading for PERICLYTOS, and in the original saying of Jesus was a prophecy of our Holy Prophet Ahmad by name.

The Greek word *periclytos* (περικλυτός) means "famous, renowned, glorious" (Liddel & Scott, p. 628). The name

Muhammad has a similar meaning. Ali properly observes that the Greek text of the Gospel of John uses the word *paracletos* (παράκλητος) meaning “advocate, or comforter.” What Mr. Ali fails to point out is the complete lack of manuscript evidence for their theory!

Philip W. Comfort & David P. Barrett in their book *The Complete Text of the Earliest Manuscripts of the New Testament* list and transcribe the texts of the earliest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament which are extant. One such manuscript, known as \mathfrak{P}^{66} contains 78 leaves (158 pages) of most of the Gospel of John. This manuscript, which is housed primarily in Geneva Switzerland dates to the middle of the



Page from the Second Century Manuscript \mathfrak{P}^{66}

Second Century (almost 400 years before Muhammad). In John 14:16 the text clearly reads *paracletos*. In John 15:26, part of the manuscript is damaged but the letters *-ara-* of the word is preserved (not *-eri-*). In John 16:7 the text is not preserved. Can Muslim apologists argue that the text was corrupted at this early date? If so, then it was corrupted when Muhammad declared:

Say: ‘We believe in God, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail; Isaac, and Jacob and in the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord we make no distinction between one and another... (Sura 3:84).

Obviously, this argument is an attempt by Modern apologists to insert a word which would support their view but has no manuscript authority behind it. Aside from the manuscript evidence the text itself identifies who the promised One is:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit is identified in this text, not a future prophet.

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