

Answers in the Book by John Murphy

Introduction

When Islam departed from Arabia, it came into contact with forms of Christianity that had been tainted with Greek thought. Many Christians had been influenced by Hellenistic ideas, as had many Muslim philosophers. In fact, history proves that many Muslim philosophers were transmitters of Greek thought to the west, in the late Middle Ages. So the ideas of the classical writers had quite an impact on both Christians and Muslims alike. Nevertheless, many reactions were formed against these impure forms of Christianity. These strange heresies, especially concerning the nature of Christ, caused a wall to be erected between the two groups, and the situation would only get worse in time. The Crusades played a major role in this, when both Christians and Muslims were forcing people to convert or face the sword. This extremely immature practice created tension that regretfully would last for centuries. There must be a peaceful solution to this ongoing conflict between these two groups, who simply desire to glorify the God of heaven. In this book, we will attempt to suggest at least one feasible option.

Section One: Jesus **And The Qur'an**

Chapter 1: What Is The True Gospel Of Jesus?

The one viable solution, potentially acceptable to both groups, and perhaps befitting in the final analysis, could be a reevaluation of the context of the Qur'an itself. Instead of interpreting the Qur'an as an attack on pure Christianity, perhaps it would be better to view the Qur'an as an attack on the common heresies related to Jesus' nature, the nature of Allah, Mary, and polytheism, during Muhammed's time. If one cannot accept this approach as appropriate, then the only sensible conclusion is to deny that Muhammed was a prophet of Allah. The fact that no other reasonable inferences can be drawn will be demonstrated. Nonetheless, Muhammed claimed that Jesus came to confirm Moses' writings, or the Torah (*Tawrat*), several times in the Qur'an. He also claimed that his mission was to confirm the Gospel of Jesus (*Injil*) and combat certain false teachings about Allah's revelations (sura 22:49-51). During the times of both Jesus and Muhammed, the first five books of the Old Testament were traditionally accepted as the writings of Moses. Jesus even quotes from them numerous times, and attests to their Mosaic authorship (e.g. Mk. 12:26, 29-31- [Exod. 3:6; Deut. 6:4-5; Lev. 19:18]). Jewish tradition has always considered these books to be the Torah (*Tawrat*), and Muhammed

calls them the “Word of Allah” (sura 3:3), just like he does with the Gospel of Jesus, repeatedly throughout the Qur’an. During Muhammed’s time, the Gospel of Jesus was traditionally accepted as the first four books of the New Testament. These are established historical facts, automatically accepted by all objective historians. Some historical corroboration can be sought in the early Church Fathers’ records.

A few historical references should be adequate for our purposes here. Clement of Rome, who died in 102 A.D., and is probably mentioned in Philippians 4:3, since Tertullian called him a disciple of the apostles, wrote a letter to the church in Corinth around 95-96 A.D. In it, he not only wrote about the martyrdoms of both Peter and Paul, as the apostles of God, but also quotes from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts, as inspired sources.¹ He also makes reference to the one Gospel that Jesus preached and that his apostles passed down to the rest of us. Clement even cited numerous examples of Jesus’ teachings found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as Christ’s very own words.² Ignatius submitted to martyrdom in 117 A.D., but not before leaving behind seven letters quoting from Matthew, John, Acts (Luke being the author), some of Paul’s writings, James, and 1 Peter, as God’s inspired word.³ In Smyrnaeans, Ignatius quotes Luke 24:39, and attributes them to Christ.⁴ Polycarp was born in 69 A.D. and happened to be a disciple of the Apostle John. He evidently was wholly dedicated to John’s authority as an inspired eyewitness of Jesus Christ, thus confirming the authority of John’s written record regarding Christ’s Gospel. He also proved his loyalty to that Gospel message by submitting to martyrdom in 155 A.D., as an elderly man.⁵ Polycarp also quotes from

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, several times in his *Epistle to the Philippians*, and categorizes these excerpts as the words of Jesus. This is also true of the *Didache*, which quite possibly may be a first century document.⁶ In approximately 180 A.D., one of Polycarp's students, Irenaeus, in his work called *Against Heresies*, wrote:

The Scriptures are indeed perfect since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit The tradition from the apostles does thus exist in the Church and is permanent among us. Let us revert to the Scriptural proof furnished by those apostles who did also write the Gospel The apostles, likewise, being disciples of the Truth, are above all falsehoods (2:28:2).

Irenaeus not only contended that the apostles themselves were divinely appointed disciples of Christ, who could not err, but also attested to their connection with the authorship of the traditionally accepted Gospels. Papias reminds us all, in his *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*, written in the first half of the second century, that Mark was Peter's amanuensis.⁷ Thus, according to Papias, Mark was actually written by the inspired apostle himself. In fact, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Jerome, all affiliated Peter with the authorship of Mark in their writings.⁸ A simple comparison of Mark with Peter's two epistles and sermons in the book of Acts, proves this by the myriad of parallels and similarities.

In Luke's case, like Mark, he was a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul, according to Paul's own testimony (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24). Luke affirms this conclusion by writing about the Apostle Paul's travels and continually using the first person plural (i.e. we). So, although Mark and Luke were not apostles like Matthew and

John were, they nevertheless recorded what they received directly from the inspired apostles. These facts lend a great deal support to the authority of their written testimonies. Furthermore, according to the New Testament, the apostles could bestow the Holy Spirit on people by laying their hands on any individual they chose (Acts 8:17-18; 2 Tim. 1:6-7). This enabled those individuals to speak or write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, just like the apostles themselves. They were New Testament prophets (Acts 11:27, 13:1-3, 15:32; 1 Cor. 12:28, 14:29; Eph. 4:11). Accordingly, Mark and Luke fall into that category themselves.

Origen was another early Church historian who greatly contributed to our knowledge of the apostles and the Scriptures. Origen (185-254 A.D.), prior to dying for his faith, allegedly memorized huge sections of Scripture and wrote a large number of books, pamphlets, and lectures. In his written material, he quotes from the New Testament over 18,000 times. Many of these citations are from Christ's words, recorded by the traditional Gospel writers, and are unequivocally regarded as authentic.⁹ Origen was a well-respected Christian leader in Alexandria who collected lists of all the books considered authoritative by Christians throughout the entire Mediterranean region. All the churches accepted the four Gospels as God's word, along with Paul's thirteen epistles, 1 John, 1 Peter, and Revelation. In 397 A.D., at the Council of Carthage, the entire convention unanimously agreed upon the divine inspiration of the 27 books currently represented in our contemporary New Testament.¹⁰ Thus, well before

Muhammed's birth, the New Testament canon was already standardized, and the Gospel (*Injil*) was officially recognized as a compilation of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Many more historical examples could be given as proof that Jesus' Gospel message was considered to be accurately recorded by the authors of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, from the first century onward. Anyone who wants to refute this must neglect a vast amount of historical evidence. In fact, the entire New Testament minus eleven verses is actually cited by the various early Church Fathers in their writings. So, attempting to determine what traditionally was considered to be the true Gospel of Jesus, historically, should not even merit attention as a question worthy of debate.

Initially, there was not even a distinction drawn between the traditional four gospel accounts: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They were all originally classified as authoritative accounts representing one Gospel message unanimously adopted by the early believers. The focus was on the one message they all shared in common. The French scholar Henri Daniel Rops states:

St. Irenaeus spoke very accurately of the tetramorphic gospel, the gospel, that is, which is under four forms. And from the middle of the second century, with Clement of Alexandria and the *Muratorian Canon*, it was the practice--and the only right practice--to say, 'The Gospel according to St. Matthew, according to St. Mark, according to St. Luke, according to St. John,' to make it clear that here is a body of truth, substantially one and unique, communicated to men in different modes.¹¹

Irving Jensen agrees with the infamous scholar F.F. Bruce in that the four Gospel accounts were circulated among the churches separately upon their completion, and then bound together as one document representing the fourfold Gospel of Jesus.¹² So though there were four different authors, they were all grouped together because they all wrote about one common Gospel message that was established as truth very early on. This is extremely important for any Muslim to understand since Muhammed talked about this one uniform Gospel that Jesus taught His apostles. There was only one true Gospel that Christ taught, though there were various witnesses who explained it. And it was established early on that the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, represented the true Gospel that Jesus actually taught. Therefore, if Muhammed meant some other books when he spoke of the Gospel, then he should have specified which ones, since it would have been assumed that he was referring directly to these traditionally recognized sources.

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1. Josh McDowell, *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1992), pp. 437-38.
 2. Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (Joplin, Mo: College Press, 1996), p. 111.
 3. Josh McDowell, *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense*, p. 438.
 4. Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, p. 111.
 5. Josh McDowell, *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense*, p. 438
 6. Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, p. 111.
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
 8. Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 77.
 9. Josh McDowell, *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense*, p. 439.
 10. James North, *A History of the Church: From Pentecost to Present* (Joplin, Mo: College Press Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 57-58.
 11. Josh McDowell, *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense*, p. 74.
 12. Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament: Search and Discover* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), p. 115.

Chapter 2: Typical Muslim Responses Discussed

Some Muslims do not want to accept the traditional sources because they cannot seem to harmonize them with their interpretation of the Qur'an. Many Muslims deny the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus based on three ayas from the Qur'an that will be

discussed later. Thus, many Muslims do not want to admit that these traditional sources are what Muhammed was confirming. The *Gospel of Thomas* cannot resolve the dilemma for Muslims though, since it was written in the mid-second century and represents much of the conventional Gospel tradition handed down by the apostles themselves. There is not a single new thing mentioned about Christ's ministry, and only a few new sayings ascribed to Him. This source talks about Jesus' death (34:25-27; 45:1-16), and encourages believers to carry their crosses like Jesus did (42:27-28). In fact, the whole account opens with a description of the living Christ, indicating his resurrection. Generally, the whole Gnostic text collection, found by the Arab peasant at Nag Hammadi in 1945, of which the *Gospel of Thomas* belongs, bears witness to Christ's resurrection.¹ Consequently, relying on this source accomplishes nothing for the skeptical Muslim.

If Muhammed meant the *Gospel of Barnabas*, which denies Jesus' crucifixion, and explains that Allah replaced Jesus with someone else, then there are numerous inconsistencies creating more dilemmas for the skeptic. In reality, the *Gospel of Barnabas* has been proved to be a fifteenth century counterfeit document, probably written by a Muslim. There are many Islamic elements in the book itself. For example, according to the *Gospel of Barnabas*, Jesus supposedly preached from the top of the temple, and that place was called a *dikka* in this source. A *dikka* is the Arabic word referring to platforms in modern day mosques where mullahs preach. Furthermore, in chapter twelve of this source, Jesus' sermon highly resembles an Islamic *hutba* that begins by praising Allah and His holy prophet. Thus, it seems as though this source was

an attempt by a Muslim living during the Middle Ages, to weaken the credibility of the traditional Gospel accounts. How do we know it was written that late? The *Gospel of Barnabas* used the text from the Roman Catholic *Latin Vulgate* version of the Bible, translated in the fourth century. That is obviously a hint that it is not a first century document.²

In addition to this, there are several examples in the source relating to medieval life. There is mention of a vassal owing a share of his crop to his lord, an illustration of medieval feudalism, wooden wine casks instead of wine skins used in first century Palestine, and even the procedure from a medieval court setting. According to this source, the Year of Jubilee was every 100 years instead of every 50 years, as the Bible claims. Indeed, after Pope Boniface's decree in 1343 A.D., changing the Year of Jubilee from every 50 years to every 100 years, that was the case, but not before then. Logic would tell us that this document must have been penned subsequent to the enacting of that Papal edict. To add to all this evidence is the fact that this source

also contradicts the Qur'an, in sections 42 and 48, by denying that Jesus was the Messiah.³

If Muhammed meant this highly controversial source when he talked about the Injil, then it was his obligation to make that clear for all of us, especially since it contradicts his own words. The fact that he did not clarify this means that it should automatically be

understood that he was alluding to the original Torah and Gospel contained in the canonized Bible, which had been traditionally accepted as the word of God for centuries prior to his birth. In the Qur'an, Muhammed even consistently calls the Jews and Christians "People of the Book" (3:65). If they did not really have God's word in written form, as the Bible, then at what book was Muhammed hinting? Sura 2:113 informs us that both the Jews and Christians read the same book. What book could this be if it is not the Bible? This is especially true since the word "Bible," when literally translated, means "book." Thus, when Muhammed referred to the "People of the Book," he was doubtless talking about the Bible itself since it would even be a literal translation of the meaning. Put simply, he literally named the book he was referring to by calling it "the Book." Sura 5:65ff reads:

If the People of the Book accept the true faith and keep from evil, We will pardon them their sins If they observe the Torah and the Gospel and what is revealed to them from their Lord, they shall enjoy abundance from above and from beneath Say: 'People of the Book, you will attain nothing until you observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord.' Jews . . . Christians . . . shall have nothing to fear or to regret.

Not only do these *ayas* (the word for verse, meaning 'miracle' in Arabic) seem to imply that the true faith is following the Torah, in addition to the Gospel, but they also clearly inform us of the fact that these books are in the possession of the Jews and Christians, who are mentioned in the context (5:47). How could these two groups follow Muhammed's advice if they did not have both the Torah and the Gospel during

Muhammed's lifetime? It is simply ludicrous to pretend, as some do, that Muhammed meant some books, other than the traditionally recognized canonical books of the Bible. Again, if Muhammed meant some other books, then he was not only being ambiguous, but he was also historically inaccurate. Try telling a Jew that the first five books of the Old Testament, in its original Hebrew form, is not really the Torah (see Acts 15:21). Try telling a Christian that the four Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament, in the original Koine Greek language, spoken during Christ's time, are not really the Gospel. That is like trying to tell a Muslim that the Qur'an in Arabic is not really the Qur'an. Historically, this argument can neither stand, nor have any logical basis, in light of Muhammed's words, as will soon be more apparent.

Many actually suppose that God snatched these secret books from us after Muhammed's death, and that they are currently located in heaven. This idea might have come from sura 17:88, where it talks about the possibility of Allah taking what He has revealed (i.e. specifically the Qur'an in this context), were it not for Allah's mercy. Unfortunately, there are a number of problems with this rationale, one being the fact that Muhammed's words, in sura 5:65-68, would automatically be rendered irrelevant and inapplicable for modern civilization. If Muhammed were a prophet of Allah, then this whole idea makes no sense because the issue seems to be salvation itself. Is it possible to find a more important topic than salvation?

Muhammed asserts that the Jews and Christians will attain nothing if they fail to follow

both the Torah and Gospel. The context in sura five, the ayas under discussion, talks about punishment for those who deny the true faith (5:65) by treating their faith with contempt (5:57ff), or believing in three Gods instead of one (5:73). The punishments spoken of there are being transformed into apes and swine (5:60), or the promise of hell (5:72). Hence, Muhammed encourages both Jews and Christians to follow closely what Allah revealed in the Torah and the Gospel, in order to maintain true faith. The Qur'an repeatedly talks about one true faith that stemmed from Abraham and the Bible provides a detailed synopsis of this in both the Torah and the Gospel. These are elementary facts for any student of the Bible and Qur'an. So in order to get a complete picture concerning this faith that stemmed from Abraham, one must read what is written in the Torah and Gospel.

Both the Torah and the Gospel also plainly state that there is only one God, not three (Deut. 4:35, 6:4, 32:39; Mark 12:29), and that faith should not only be taken very seriously, but that it is essential for maintaining a relationship with the one true God (Deut. 11; Mt. 23). In fact, Muhammed even seems to refer to the first of the Ten Commandments from the Torah (Exod. 20:1) in sura 6:14-15, and reiterates the fact that hell awaits those who do not follow it. Therefore, the Torah and the Gospel are required for those who desire salvation. However, if both the Torah and the Gospel have been taken to heaven, then it is impossible to read them, as Muhammed decreed. This would also mean that salvation is impossible for at least the Jews and Christians. Does the idea of Allah snatching these books away from us really make any sense whatsoever? If it

does, then it should not. It would not only make Allah cruel and unjust, but it would undermine Muhammed's authority as a prophet. If Muhammed's advice on an issue this critical is irrelevant in our modern world, then who can say that any part of the Qur'an is relevant today? Muhammed stressed the importance of following these other revelations, but if Allah's intention was to take them away from us, then Muhammed was simply wasting his breath. In sura 5:44 it says:

Surely We have revealed the Torah, having guidance and light. By it did the prophets who submitted themselves judge for the Jews, and the rabbis, and the doctors of law, because they were required to guard the Book of Allah And whoever judges not by what Allah has revealed, those are the unbelievers.

So according to Muhammed, the Torah was Allah's words, and it was the will of Allah for it to be preserved. Let us continue to read in this sura:

And We sent after them in their footsteps Jesus, son of Mary, verifying that which was before him of the Torah. And We gave him the Gospel containing guidance and light, and verifying that which was before it, the Torah, guidance and admonition for the dutiful. And let the People of the Gospel judge by that which Allah has revealed in it. And whoever judges not by what Allah has revealed, those are the transgressors (ayas 46-47).

Here, we see that Allah was successful in completely preserving His word, the Torah.

We also see that Jesus confirmed the Torah during His day, with the Gospel that Allah revealed through Him. It is clear from this passage that the Gospel during Muhammed's time was indeed the perfect word of Allah, and that Christians were instructed to base their lives on its precepts. Notice also what Muhammed said: "Whoever judges not by

what Allah has revealed has strayed from the true faith.” Muhammed even went so far as to say the following:

If you doubt what We have revealed to you, ask those who have read the Scriptures before you. The truth has come to you from your Lord: therefore do not doubt it. Nor shall you deny the revelations of Allah, for then you will surely be among the lost (sura 10:94).

Here, we see that Jews and Christians should be trusted and consulted at times. The reason is because they are blessed by having the Scriptures (i.e. the word of Allah). We also see here that those who deny these Scriptures will be in danger of the fires of hell (see 3:1-4). Another example of this is seen in sura 16:43-44, where Muhammed reiterates the fact that the “*Reminder*” (the Bible) is Allah’s words, and that if Muslims fail to believe that, then they should ask the Jews or Christians for confirmation of it. It is the responsibility of the Jew, and the Christian, as People of the Book, to remind the doubting Muslims of this because many seem to have forgotten it. As a matter of fact, sura 15:9 manifests the notion that Allah revealed the “*Reminder*,” and that the purpose of the Qur’an was to guard it from criticism. The words in sura 10:94 are generally considered Allah’s words to the prophet Muhammed himself. He seemed to have been experiencing some doubt as to whether what was revealed to him was indeed from Allah, and was supposedly ordered to consult the People of the Book in order to have his doubts resolved. Early on, Muhammed supposedly thought that he was demon-possessed since the angel Gabriel allegedly choked him with a cloth, three times, to the point of death, and then released him. This was Gabriel’s way of calling him to be a prophet, knowing

that he would resist. Muhammed Husayn Haykal describes the event graphically in his book *The Life of Muhammed*. He mentions that Muhammed had that fear of being possessed for a long time and wondered if his fear had finally come true, but both his wife Khadijah, and cousin Waraqa, convinced him otherwise. They compared his experience with that of Moses' call to prophethood on Mt. Sinai.⁴ Exodus three tells us that Moses too experienced some fear (3:6), and also resisted the initial calling (v. 11ff). Thus, just like in Muhammed's case, those who know these Scriptures, referred to in sura 10:94 (the Bible), may provide examples that can support Muslims who are experiencing doubts about Muhammed's call as a prophet. This certainly does not mean that Jews and Christians will be willing to do so, but it does mean that Muhammed valued these Scriptures as Allah's very words. That is the key point here, worthy of emphasis.

1. Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, pp. 101, 115-17.

2. Norman Geisler, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), pp. 298-99.

3. Ibid., pp. 298-99.

4. Ibid., pp. 154-55.

Chapter 3: Can Man Corrupt The Word Of God?

Some Muslims argue that the Bible represents God's words that have been changed and corrupted due to the many years of copying, but this argument is quite irrational since it

would contradict the Qur'an. The Qur'an insists that Allah's words cannot be changed (suras 6:34, 116; 18:27). Some may actually state that Allah's words only refer to the Qur'an itself, not the other revelations of Allah. The problem is that Allah's words are supposedly eternal, and since sura 2:75 literally calls these former revelations the words of Allah, then they too are eternal. Eternal means forever existing, whether that be past, present, or future, and the Qur'an unequivocally certifies that they existed during Muhammed's time. In other words, they exist today as was already demonstrated.

Some maintain that the only words of Allah that cannot be changed are the words in the Qur'an itself. One look at the context of sura six though, where it reminds us twice that Allah's words cannot be changed, should put that argument to rest. First of all, in sura six, as in many suras, there is continuous reference to Allah's revelations in the plural tense. So, in Muhammed's mind, Allah's revelation is not just the Qur'an, and this is expressed all throughout the book itself. Even if one were to reason that these revelations in sura six refer solely to Muhammed's alleged sporadic revelations over that 22-year time period, he still runs into a brick wall called the context. In sura 6:34, where it talks about the unchangeable words of Allah, it not only denotes the Qur'an, but clearly mentions the former prophets of Allah, and how the unbelievers throughout history foolishly rejected their messages. In spite of that though, Allah's words still remain. Sura 6:48-49 talks about Allah's revelations and clearly designates the messages of the various former prophets of Allah, before Muhammed's lifetime. Then, in 6:85-93, after a discussion about Abraham, we see a brief listing of Allah's former prophets, who were

all mentioned in the Bible. Even Elias (Elijah), John the Baptist (who came in the spirit and power of Elias [Lk. 1:17]), and Zacharias (Zechariah was John's father), along with Jesus Himself, are all mentioned here. Since Muhammed claims that they were all true prophets of Allah, it would only be expected for us to read what they actually said. (See John 1:19-34 for John the Baptist's testimony, and also Luke 1:67-80 for Zechariah's words.) In aya 90, Muhammed reminds us all that they were given the very words of Allah Himself, and that what they said should not be denied by *this generation*.

Furthermore, aya 91 says: "So follow their guidance . . . It is an admonition to *all mankind*." The subsequent aya talks about Moses' writings, in the Book, being a light and guidance to mankind in general, and then aya 93 assures any doubters that the Qur'an confirms the validity and importance of what they wrote. What would be the reason for confirming them if they were irrelevant during Muhammed's time, and thereafter? Why would they be called "A light and guidance for all mankind" if they were unimportant? Why would Muhammed have spent so much time concentrating on them, establishing their veracity, and warning those who denied, misrepresented, or rejected their messages, if they were impertinent to his own audience? It is evident from the Quran itself, that Muhammed's whole purpose was to corroborate the truth contained in the Torah, Psalms, and Gospel. The only logical conclusion is that it is our duty to study them according to their original contexts, and accept them as the true eternal words of Allah. As Muhammed advised: "Follow their guidance" (sura 6:91).

If one holds that the only reason for their importance is that they give credence to

Muhammed's testimony as an inspired prophet, then he must practically ignore the books themselves, since one is hard pressed to find anything about Muhammed written there. Even if he is there, he is definitely well hidden and certainly far from being the central figure. This will be discussed subsequently. One may plead that these ayas under discussion have been abrogated (sura 2:106), but this seemingly contradicts the whole idea that Allah's eternal words cannot be changed, as well as Muhammed's emphasis on the former revelations of Allah. Hence, it is in the context of corroborating the former prophets like Moses, Jesus, and John the Baptist (see 21:90 also), that aya 116 repeats the fact that Allah's words cannot be changed. All throughout sura six we see Muhammed's words: "Thus do we make plain our revelations." In 6:131 Allah's revelations are again attributed to the various prophets in history. Finally, in 6:155-158, Muhammed again makes it clear that the Torah, Gospel, and the Qur'an, are Allah's words. The two communities mentioned in aya 157 are the Jews and Christians, and they received "the Book" from Allah. Then, we see that "the Book" refers to the Qur'an in aya 158, specifically for the Arabs. Muhammed even revealed the reason why the Qur'anic text was penned in the Arabic language. Sura 43:3 says that this was so that Muhammed's hearers could understand what was being said. The next aya also talks about "the Eternal Book of Allah." Sura 13:38-39 talks of the "Mother of the Book," or "Eternal Decrees of Allah." The Bible also makes this point in Revelation 14:6-7 where the "eternal gospel" is described, and three main themes of the Qur'an are listed there: 1) there is only one God; 2) it is our duty to worship and obey Him; and 3) we will all stand before Him at the judgment. The fact is, that in the Qur'an, both the Bible and the Qur'an are often

called by the same title, that being “the Book.” It also seems as though the term “Reminder” is used interchangeably for both books. All of this information solicits a weighty deduction, which is that Muhammed seemed to believe in the existence of one book that has always existed in heaven, and that nobody can abrogate because it represents the eternal words of Allah Himself. In Muhammed’s mind, according to what is written in the Qur’an, it is quite possible that both the Bible and Qur’an are eternal, and constitute one book written by an eternal author. Notice that in sura 3:118, Muhammed speaks of the need to believe in the “entire book.” Sura 4:150-51 also warns those who deny any of Allah’s spokesmen. Sura 13:39 declares that only that author (Allah) has the right or ability to alter or abrogate what He has revealed, but since Muhammed confirms the Torah, Psalms, and the Gospel, repeatedly throughout the Qur’an, it should be visible to one and all that they are still true and applicable today. Furthermore, abrogation of some commands or rituals is possible, but the abrogation of historical facts is not. For example, the Gospel claims that Jesus Christ was crucified and rose from the dead (Jn. 19:25-37; 20:1ff). How is it possible to abrogate events that have already taken place in history? Since it is not, the law of abrogation in the Qur’an cannot logically apply in these cases.

If one says that the Torah, Psalms, and the Gospel, have changed due to copiers’ errors, then that means the Qur’an is self-contradictory. Likewise, if one wants to say that Allah took His words from us when Muhammed stressed their importance, or that the historical portions of the Gospel have been abrogated, then he is forced to admit that the Qur’an is

irrational and incoherent. If one wants the Qur'an to remain internally consistent, then he must believe that at least the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospel, are all Allah's uncorrupted words and that we presently have them in our possession (5:47, 66, 68; 7:157). Permit it to be said, that any allegations against the People of the Book in the Qur'an relate not to their imperfect Scriptures, but instead to their mistreatment of the words of Allah. They were criticized for misinterpreting and hiding the truth (2:42; 3:70), deliberately perverting the message of Allah's words (3:77; 4:46-47), denying some parts of their Scriptures (2:85), and being ignorant of Allah's words (2:78), but never for rewriting or changing Allah's words.¹ The Arabic word used in suras 6:34, 116, and 18:27, is *mubaddila*, carrying with it the meaning of "to alter," or "to eliminate." So the Injil (*Gospel*) is on the earth, reliable, and relevant to everyone. Otherwise, Allah would not have been able to preserve His words, as the Qur'an explicitly states.

The Bible itself speaks of the Jews' mistreatment of the Scriptures. Many Jewish groups before Christ's birth began quoting the scholars of the Old Testament more than the actual Scriptures themselves. This led to a curtailment of Bible study, and just increased the study of the interpretations of the scholars, who tend to err quite often. Regretfully, the average Jew simply left the studying of the Scriptures up to those who were considered more able to do it properly. Their teachings were called "the tradition of the elders" (Mt. 15:2-3). In John 12:34, we see the crowd arguing with Jesus over something they heard instead of something they actually read for themselves. Though Paul proved

the need for Christ to die and rise from the dead according to the Old Testament, the Jews in Thessalonica were not open to the truth because they had their opinions based on their own prejudices (Acts 17:1-5). Mark 12:24 reminds us that the Sadducees were mistaken since they did not know the Scriptures.² Hence, it could be said that Muhammed posed the same arguments as Jesus did, regarding the Pharisees' mistreatment of Scripture. Many Jews basically misunderstood their Scriptures because they relied on the opinions of specific individuals instead of diligently studying for themselves. That is surely a lesson we all should remember daily. Unfortunately, many Christians and Muslims have made that very same mistake. So let us never doubt that God's inspired words in the Bible have been preserved. Let us instead blame ourselves for not understanding them correctly, due to our own biases, and misplaced priorities.

Muslims should always remember that Christians and Jews possess God's revealed truth, in the Bible, and should be ever mindful of Muhammed's advice in sura 29:46, for he says:

Be courteous when you argue with the People of the Book, except with those who do evil. Say: 'We believe in that which is revealed to us and which was revealed to you. Our God and your God is (sic) one. To Him we surrender ourselves.'

What was revealed to the People of the Book, if not the Book (the Bible) itself? Those who try to deny that the Bible is the authoritative word of God should remember the words of their own prophet. In sura seven Muhammed quotes from two famous incidents

mentioned in the Gospels and labels them both as Allah's revelations. In sura 7:40 he talks about those who have denied Allah's words and declares that they will enter paradise only after the camel has gone through the eye of a needle. This is a citation from all three of the synoptic Gospels: Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25, and Luke 18:25. Then, in sura 7:58, an excerpt from Jesus' renowned parable of the soils, in the synoptics (Mt. 13, Mk. 4, and Lk. 8), is repeated and spoken of as a message from Allah.

Furthermore, many Qur'anic examples could be used to establish these facts. For example, in sura 66:12, a verse we will mention later in reference to the virgin birth, we see that Jesus' mother Mary was one who put her trust in the words of her Lord and His Scriptures. Obviously, since she was a Jew, Mary believed that the entire Old Testament canon was the word of God, and Muhammed, unlike some modern Muslims, does not seem to be questioning that at all. In the Qur'an, Allah recognizes many of the Old Testament prophets as being truly inspired. Some examples would be David and Solomon (27:15). David wrote the Psalms and Solomon wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon (Song of Songs), according to established Jewish tradition. This means that Solomon's Old Testament books were also inspired. Also, according to sura 4:163-64, it is plain that Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and his offspring (the twelve tribes of Israel), Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Moses, among others, were all prophets. They all were also mentioned in the Old Testament first, and some of them may have written the books named after them (Jonah, Job). This broadens the scope of

inspiration for the Old Testament books.

A Short Discussion of Matthew 24:35

Let it be repeated here that Muhammed asserted several times in the Qur'an that Allah's words cannot be changed (6:34, 116; 18:27). The Bible itself agrees with this statement too (Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Mt. 5:18; 1 Pet. 1:24-25). Jesus Himself said "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Mt. 24:35, NIV). This not only means that His words would remain with us forever, but that they would be relevant and applicable to us all, since His message was a universal and everlasting one (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Jn. 12:48). Interestingly enough, the Apostle Matthew recorded these words of Jesus in chapter 24, at the end of two famous prophecies of Christ, concerning the fall of Jerusalem (Mt. 24:1-25) and His second coming (24:26-35). Mark also puts these words of Christ in the same context (Mk. 13:1-31). Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the Roman army, led by General Titus, laid siege to Jerusalem and completely destroyed the Jewish temple, which was of no use at that point since animal sacrifices were no longer needed. This is simply because Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice that fulfilled the imagery of the law's animal sacrifices (Hebrews 9:11-10:8-10). The key, though, is that these two references regarding Christ's eternal words are placed in the context of a prophecy that has already been fulfilled, and another one that the Qur'an confirms dozens of times. Thus, if someone claims that Jesus never made this weighty statement, then he must prove that both Matthew and Mark wrote after the fall of Jerusalem, invented this prophecy themselves, and deceitfully

attributed these words to Jesus. If he cannot, then he has a real problem because this would then be a prophecy that actually came true and must be accounted for logically.

We will return to this line of reasoning shortly.

1. Norman Geisler, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*, p. 208.
1. Knofel Staton, *How To Understand the Bible* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 1978), pp. 7-8.

Chapter 4: The Authority Of The New Testament

We will briefly list several passages from the Qur'an that provide additional proof that the Bible is indeed the book that Muhammed truly believed represented Allah's words. In sura 2:61, there is a short reference to the Torah, or Numbers 11:5. Aya 195 of the same sura resembles Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, regarding the need to give generously in the cause of God. Sura 3:159 reflects Paul's words in Romans 8:31, concerning God's ability to protect His servants. Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23, note that Abraham was God's friend, and Muhammed's words in sura 4:125 echo that fact. Psalm 24:1 is paralleled by Muhammed in 4:126, and aya 127 refers to Biblical teaching about orphans (Exod. 22:22ff; James 1:27). Sura four continues to cite incidents in the Torah, such as the golden calf of Exodus 32, and the command not to break the Sabbath (Exod. 20:8-11), in ayas 153-54. Suras 6:72-74, 20:102, and 36:51-52 definitely match 1

Thessalonians 4:13-18, where the Lord Jesus will return and gather His elect with the sound of the trumpet (v. 16). Incidentally, God's presence is sometimes indicated by a trumpet blast in the Bible (see Exod. 19:9-19). Aya 147, in the sixth sura, cites the traditional Torah by quoting from Leviticus 7:23, while aya 152 mentions three of the Ten Commandments: 1) you shall have no other gods besides me; 2) honor your father and mother; and 3) you shall not murder (Exod. 20:3, 12-13). The following aya mirrors another one of the Ten Commandments, the taboo of giving false testimony (Exod. 20:16), and also alludes to both Leviticus 19:36 and Proverbs 11:1, regarding the requirement of keeping honest scales in business, or life in general. This aya also says: "We impose not on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability," which seems to be repeating Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:13. Aya 160 prohibits the splitting up of the faith into various sects, just like Jesus' famous prayer in John 17. In aya 165, we see Paul's words regarding the law of the harvest, in Galatians 6:7, and Moses' words in relation to personal responsibility for sin in Deuteronomy 24:16. In sura 7:22-26, the account about Adam and Eve's sins from Genesis 3:7-21 is recorded, along with the inference that God performed the first sacrifice for sin when He clothed them both with garments of skin instead of allowing the leaves to be sufficient. Since death had not entered the world at that point, this would have been a momentous event, establishing an important precedent for all mankind. If sura 7:175-76 is about Judas Iscariot, then it fits with the Biblical picture perfectly, since Judas was overtaken by Satan in Luke 22:3. Sura 8:37 correlates well with Jesus' description of the Day of Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. Jesus' parable about where to build one's house seems to be analogous to sura

9:109. Again, the Second Resurrection is pointed at in suras 10:4, 11:7, and 17:49, and these can be compared with 1 Corinthians 15:35-58. Romans chapters 7-8 define man's sinful nature thoroughly, and sura 12:53 reiterates that fact. Romans 12:19 is confirmed by sura 14:47, and the following aya agrees with 2 Peter 3:13, respecting the new heaven and new earth of the future. Muhammed, in sura 16:53, concurs with James 1:17, about all good gifts coming from Allah. First Corinthians 15:52, speaking of Christ's second coming, describes it as coming in the twinkling of an eye, as does sura 16:77. Sura 17:49 is very similar to the famous Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel 37. James 4:13-15 is repeated by Muhammed in sura 18:23-34. Surely, Muhammed quotes from 2 Peter 3:8 when claiming that 1,000 years are like a day to the Lord, in suras 22:47 and 32:5. Muhammed talks about those who make a god out of their worldly desires in sura 25:43, just like Paul in Philippians 3:19. Jonah's time in the belly of the fish is mentioned in the Qur'an (37:139ff). In fact, even a sura is named after that Old Testament prophet, just like Joseph, Abraham, Noah, and Mary the mother of Jesus. Muhammed's advice, in sura 41:34, coincides with Jesus' turn the other cheek philosophy (Mt. 5:39; Lk. 6:29). Jesus' teaching on loving one another, and about God's abundant blessings for those who do good deeds (Lk. 6:38; Mk. 12:31; Mt. 25:14-30), is contained in sura 42:23. In sura 46:15-17 we see Paul's words concerning the need to care for one's parents, later in life, due to their service while he/she was growing up (1 Timothy 5:4-8). Finally, sura 48:29 vaguely matches Mark 4:27-28, as does sura 57:13 with Matthew 15:1-13. Furthermore, most of the Qur'anic text consists of Old Testament stories. Moses is mentioned over 500 times, and his confrontation with Pharaoh, coupled with Israel's deliverance, is the

main story repeated throughout the Qur'an. Other Biblical examples abound also. So, in one's quest to successfully deny that the Qur'an is striving to confirm the Bible, one must totally ignore the text of the Qur'an itself. This supplementary evidence increases the probability that the traditional canonical books of the Bible, otherwise known as the *Scriptures*, are exactly what Muhammed

was alluding to. If so, then our modern Bible should definitely be trusted, since it is based on manuscript copies that predate the life of Muhammed by centuries.

Those who reject the possibility of the Bible's divine origin have tried to undermine its credibility by attempting to convince people that the writers of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) all copied from each other. Mainly, this attempt has been based on the presupposition that God does not exist and that miracles are unworkable. Thus, those who believe in God and miracles cannot consistently use most of the rationale behind this speculative reasoning. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted by both modern liberals and conservatives that Mark wrote his account first, although some of the Church Fathers asserted that Matthew did. In any case, the liberals, at least until recently, have said that it is impossible to know who wrote these books since they were forged documents, penned by anonymous Christians writing in the second century or later. According to their Four-Source Theory, Mark, and *Quelle*, a speculative source with no proof for its existence, preceded Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke then supposedly copied from these two sources. One must also remember that most critical

historians agree that Luke and Acts were definitely written by the same person, and that Acts was the sequel. So if one can date the book of Acts, then one will have a good idea when the synoptic Gospels were completed since they were all penned prior to Acts.

Here are six good reasons for dating Acts around 64 A.D. or earlier: 1) like the Gospels, Acts does not show any knowledge of Jerusalem's fall in 70 A.D.; 2) there is no mention of Emperor Nero's persecutions, and the general tone of Acts toward Rome is peaceful; 3) the deaths of James (61 A.D.), Paul (64-67 A.D.), and Peter (65 A.D.), are not mentioned even though they are key figures in the book, while the deaths of Stephen and James (John's brother) are referred to; 4) the important issues in Acts were all popular topics before the fall of Jerusalem, but not afterwards (e.g.- the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all peoples; division between the Palestinian and Hellenistic Jews; and Jew/Gentile relations concerning the law of Moses; etc.); 5) phrases like "the Son of Man," "the Servant of God," "the first day of the week," and "the people" (the Jews), would all have had to have been explained after the fall of Jerusalem, but not beforehand; and 6) the Jewish war against Rome (from 66 A.D. onward) is not even mentioned.¹

While on the subject, we might as well discuss Paul's epistles in the New Testament. In his case, tradition credits him with thirteen letters and only the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) are considered controversial by the fiercest of critics. The others are not even worthy of intellectual debate. Hence, we have at least ten letters written by a

contemporary of Christ's eyewitnesses, all written prior to 70 A.D.² These ten letters contain all the main ingredients of the Gospels themselves. Also, since they were all written so early, the potential for the development of a legend replacing true historical facts is close to impossible, according to A.N. Sherwin-White, a scholar of ancient Roman and Greek history at Oxford University.³ In addition to this, Paul even points out that most of the 500 people who simultaneously saw Jesus after His resurrection from the dead, were still living as he wrote (1 Cor. 15:6), indicating an early date for his letters.

Furthermore, a manuscript known as the *Chester Beatty Papyrus II*, containing all ten of the epistles positively credited to Paul, has recently been dated in the late first century.⁴ Earlier, this document had been dated around 200 A.D., however Young Kyu Kim has dated it prior to Emperor Domitian's reign (81-96 A.D.), primarily because all other papyri comparable to its literary handwriting style are presented as first century documents, while no second or third century document poses any resemblance to it.⁵

Dr. William Albright, known as one of the world's most outstanding archaeologists, stated in 1955 that: "There is no longer any solid basis for dating any NT book after circa AD 80." In 1963, he declared that the objective evidence indicates that the New Testament was completed between 50-75 A.D. A former critic of the New Testament, Dr. John A.T. Robinson, from Trinity College in England, agrees with Albright. As a confident skeptic, he decided to research these dates for himself as sort of a joke, but in the process was shocked at what he found. His conclusion was that the entire New

Testament was indeed written by the apostles themselves, or their co-workers, all by the year 64 A.D. He then issued a challenge for anyone to research it for him/herself and attempt to prove him wrong. Perhaps this is partly why Carl Henry, the famous Christian theologian, claims that liberal higher criticism of the Bible is presently undergoing more unfavorable observation and analysis than ever before.⁶

Let us remember also that after the crucifixion, Palestine was highly influenced by the first century Greeks, but the Jews did not affect the Greeks much. Most Palestinian Jews were bilingual, speaking both Aramaic and Greek, but the Greeks only knew their language. Jesus presumably taught in both Greek and Aramaic, but the Church from 50 A.D. onward, exclusively spoke Greek. In the Gospels however, there are many phrases that translate very well from Greek into Aramaic, which indicates that those statements credited to Jesus were indeed genuine and not inventions of the second or third century Church, like some liberals or Muslims would allege. In fact, there are several cases where Aramaic phrases have obviously been translated into Greek, though they do not reflect typical Greek linguistic constructions. In other words, the statements were actually made by Jesus Himself and were accurately recorded by those who heard Him in person, or had close connections to those who did. Simply put, these statements were most likely recorded very early. If the statements were merely made up by the early Church in the second or third centuries, and deceitfully ascribed to Christ, they would not have appeared the way they are. Adding to this, Jesus' use of the words "amen" and "abba" are unique. There are 64 examples of threefold sayings (e.g. 'ask, seek, knock'),

which pose no resemblance to other writers. Even Jesus' use of questions is unique. His use of the passive when referring to God is peculiar to Himself (e.g. Mt. 11:27). His use of "How much more?" and "Which of you?" are exclusively used by Christ, as is the word "disciple." This is all convincing proof that Jesus' actual words are correctly recorded in the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels.⁷ In fact, modern scholars at the beginning of the twentieth century, after studying the early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, came to the conclusion that this Greek language was a distinct Jewish-Greek dialect, with a mixture of classical Greek. This was probably due to at least a couple of reasons: 1) the influence of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, from which the New Testament writers often quoted; and 2) the authors of the New Testament were bilingual Jews.⁸ Most bilingual people can relate to the habit of incorporating phrases from their native tongue into their second language, and the fact that the New Testament is replete with these types of examples, firmly substantiates early Jewish traditional authorship.

What conclusions can we draw from all this information? First, this means that both Matthew and Mark wrote prior to the fall of Jerusalem, in 70 A.D. Thus, both chapters regarding the fall of Jerusalem (Mt. 24 and Mk. 13) should be considered the actual words of Christ, since they were prophecies that came true. The only other options are that both Matthew and Mark were dishonest in attributing these words to Christ, followed politics very closely, somehow being able to foresee Rome's intentions to sack Jerusalem in advance, or they were involved in some sort of spiritualistic activity whereby they

could determine the future. Sadly, these latter conclusions would have to be forced since there is no factual basis to support such views. In summary, if Jesus really did say that His words would “never pass away,” as both Matthew and Mark testify, then anyone who tries to imply that we have lost Jesus’ words is contradicting both Jesus and the Qur’an. Even if someone denies that Allah snatched Jesus’ words from us, but instead argues that some portions of the first four books of the New Testament indeed represent the actual words of Jesus, though they are arbitrarily perceived, then Jesus’ words indeed have passed away. If that were the case, then His words would be indiscernible. Simply put, they would be lost forever.

COMPARING CHRIST’S TEACHINGS WITH PAUL’S

Because the Apostle Paul was mentioned, it only seems fitting to prove that he was in agreement with the teachings of Jesus, since many contend that he started a completely new religion. Paul, like Jesus, did not believe Christianity to be a new religion, but simply the culmination of Judaism (Rom. 10:4, 9-11; Mt. 5:18 and Lk. 16:16-17). He also agreed with Christ about the message of the Gospel itself. Both Paul and Jesus claimed that every mere man has sinned (Rom. 3:23; Mt. 7:11), and that only Jesus’ blood could cover those sins (Rom. 5:8; Mk. 10:45). Jesus’ resurrection was essential for the atonement of mankind (Rom. 10:9; Lk. 24:46-48). The obvious result of these facts would mean that we are all saved by God’s grace in Christ, not by our own good deeds (Eph. 2:8-9; Jn. 3:16). Also, part of the Gospel (*good news*) message is that we can receive God’s guidance, but only through submitting our lives to Christ in faith (Rom.

10:9-11; Mk. 1:15). Consequently, one's life will totally change from within (Jn. 15:1-11; Eph. 2:10). Jesus taught that the Gospel was for the whole world, not just for the Jews (Mt. 28:18-20; Jn. 10:16). Paul fulfilled that commission by becoming an apostle sent to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13-14), who would also be part of God's Kingdom (Mt. 8:11-12; Jn. 17:20). These teachings were all prophesied in the Old Testament (Gen. 12:3; Isa. 19:18-25) and therefore not new doctrines. Paul's teachings were even scrutinized by the original apostles, in keeping with Jewish tradition, so as to prevent the potential spread of heresy, as Galatians 2:1-10 expresses.⁹

Thus, Paul was neither in conflict with the teachings of Jesus, nor was he attacked by the apostles themselves. Actually, just the opposite is true. In fact, the Apostle Peter boldly insisted that Paul was also an inspired apostle, by proclaiming that he received wisdom from God (2 Pet. 3:15). According to the Qur'an, there were two prophets who went to the city of Antioch, in sura 36:13-25. Early Muslim commentators believed the Apostle Paul to be one of those prophets, accompanied by one of his traveling companions. His companion most likely would have been Barnabas, who is also called an apostle in the New Testament (Acts 14:4, 14). Thus, if this truly was Paul, then even Muhammed defends his apostleship. Supposedly, Muhammed's job was to confirm the Injil, according to sura 3:1-4, along with a myriad of other ayas. If one wants to view Muhammed as a prophet of Allah, then the Qur'an must be interpreted in harmony with the first four books of the New Testament, the Injil, which the Apostle Paul died to defend. Muhammed declared the following to the readers of the Qur'an: "Nothing is said

to you that has not been said to other apostles before you” (41:43). Hence, Muhammed’s words should be in agreement with those of the New Testament apostles. Some indeed contend that this is the correct way to view the Qur’an. Therefore, some examples will be given in order to help clarify how this may be possible.

1. J.P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), chapter 5.
2. Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), p. 309.
3. J.P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*, chapter 5.
 1. Philip Wesley Comfort, *The Origin of the Bible* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), p. 179.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
 4. J.P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*, chapter 5.
 5. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), p. 125.
9. Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, p. 88.

Chapter 5: The Virgin Birth And The Holy Spirit In The Qur’an

Two examples that manifest the importance of understanding the Qur’an in light of he

Bible, are the virgin birth of Christ, and the identity of the Holy Spirit. One of Karl Barth's central proofs for the deity of Christ was Jesus' birth to a virgin. He argued that if Jesus had an earthly father, then he could not have been divine; but since He did not, according to Barth, He had to be divine. The only other alternative would be that Christ was created, and that was unthinkable for the Swiss theologian. Though Barth could not accept this option, the general Muslim community does because of a couple of ayas in the Qur'an, and tradition. The most popular title of Jesus in the Qur'an is Son of Mary, used a total of twenty-three times. The Bible, in like fashion, refers to Christ this way in Mark 6:3. Many Christians take offense to this title, simply interpreting it as a denial of Christ's deity, but this is unwarranted. Mary is highly honored in the Qur'an (3:4-42) and hence the association with her is appropriate. Some famous Muslim poets such as Ibn 'A' isha and Ibn Mayyada have also been referred to in similar ways. A brother of Ali was always associated with his mother, as was Muhammed at times.¹ Some would say that Muhammed is attempting to focus all the attention on Christ's humanity by the use of this title, but this conclusion is also unnecessary. The title Son of Mary could easily remind people of the virgin birth, which Barth correctly assumed proves

Jesus' deity. The title, in emphasizing Christ's mother, reminds one that Jesus had no earthly father.

It must be said that the Qur'an outright denies that Jesus was the Son of Allah, but nevertheless, no discrepancy between the Bible and the Qur'an, on this point, is

imperative. In every case, except one, the Arabic word “*wahlid*” is used for “son,” and that word’s mandatory rendering indicates a son by the natural process of begetting. It is probably a simple rejection of the idea that Allah had sexual relations with Mary. This will be discussed further down. Before proceeding though, the Jewish understanding regarding the title “Son of God,” should be defined here. Many people from various cultures may perceive a father-son relationship on the level of authority primarily, but the Jews interpreted this in a different sense. When Jesus called Himself the “Son of God,” He did not mean that He was God’s physical son, nor did He mean to imply fundamental and essential subordination to God. Rather, by the use of the title “Son,” Jesus professed His unity with the Father, and the sharing of a common essence with Him. He claimed to be of that same basic substance as the Father Himself, which automatically means divinity.² Consequently, the Jews consistently accused Jesus of blasphemy, or putting Himself on God’s level. John 5:18 serves as an example, by explaining that Jesus was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Having said that, let us move on to the birth and its innate implications regarding Jesus’ nature.

One look at the birth itself helps one to see the uniqueness of Jesus. Not only is Jesus the only man in history to be born of a virgin, but He is also the only one to be born by the particular method that God chose. In the primary Qur’anic accounts of the birth, such as suras 3:35-46, 19:1-40, and 66:12 especially, it is clear that God breathed into Mary’s womb of His Spirit, and she consequently conceived. Examples of parallel passages could be given. One would be sura 21:91, which says: “We breathed into her of Our

Spirit and made her and her son a sign to all mankind.” One should note that the description “Our Spirit” blatantly affiliates the Spirit with Allah Himself, as was previously explained. This correlates well to the Biblical picture of the birth of Jesus. Luke 1:35 records that Mary would be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and become pregnant with the Christ child. So it appears that the Holy Spirit played the decisive role in causing Mary to conceive. The problem is that the Qur’an does not speak of the Holy Spirit much, and to most Muslims, His identity seems to be somewhat of a mystery. This is simply because most Muslims unfortunately ignore the Bible when considering this question.

Some Muslims consider the angel Gabriel a possible solution to this dilemma. Some Muslim commentators believe “the Spirit,” in suras 16:102 and 26:193, happens to be the angel Gabriel, since he was designated as the means through which the Qur’an was presented to Muhammed, and that happens to be what the context in both passages is emphasizing. However, this conclusion seems to be forced because Gabriel is not even mentioned in either of the immediate contexts regarding “the Spirit.” Moreover, if Muhammed meant Gabriel in these cases, then why did he not say “Gabriel”? Even though Gabriel allegedly presented the Qur’an to Muhammed (2:97), this does not necessarily mean that the Holy Spirit is Gabriel. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). And if Gabriel presented Allah’s words to Muhammed, then he must have received them from Allah Himself, at some point.

This dilemma, for the Muslim, can easily be resolved by arguing that the Holy Spirit, being God, revealed the Qur'an to Gabriel, and the angel merely passed it on to Muhammed. This easily eliminates Gabriel as a plausible candidate for being the Holy Spirit, and rightly so, since both the Biblical and Qur'anic accounts claim it was the Holy Spirit who caused Mary to conceive the Christ child (sura 66:12). It was also the Holy Spirit who was responsible for revealing the Torah and the Gospel, according to the New Testament, and that correlates well with the ayas under discussion, since the means of revelation is being emphasized in the immediate context. Therefore, if these ayas pertain to the Holy Spirit of the New Testament, then the Gospel accounts are verified. In addition to this, the Qur'an calls Jesus "a Spirit proceeding from Allah" (4:171), permitting His affinity with the Holy Spirit, as God, to be entirely probable. A group by the name of the Mu'tazilites, had some who openly rejected the traditional view, that this Spirit was

the angel Gabriel, and accepted the Messiah Himself as being the only legitimate alternative. Among them was the renowned Abu Muslim.³

Moreover, if one looks at the three Qur'anic accounts concerning the birth of Jesus, other factors indicate differences between Gabriel and the Holy Spirit. In sura three, though Mary calls the messenger "Lord," it could be argued that she is addressing Gabriel here, along with other angels. This is because there seems to be a plurality of them. The Holy

Spirit may have come later to repeat and fulfill what Gabriel had said, by impregnating Mary. This is entirely possible since nothing about her pregnancy is even mentioned in sura three. Thus, Gabriel could have simply informed her about what would later occur, which perfectly coincides with the Biblical picture. In sura 19, one individual messenger is described as “Our Spirit,” or the Spirit of Allah Himself. Here we see what this individual says: “I am the messenger of your Lord . . . and have come to give you a holy son.”⁴ So this messenger Himself seems to be the one who miraculously impregnated Mary, not the one who would just inform her of what would later occur. We see in the following aya, that she conceived immediately, unlike in the previous passage we discussed (sura three). Furthermore, the Qur’an itself asserts that Mary was impregnated by Allah through the Holy Spirit, as was mentioned (66:12). Unfortunately, different translations of the Qur’an present different scenarios. In Yusuf Ali’s version, this aya is translated in the following manner: “Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son.” Notice that the words “to announce” (*not in the Arabic*) are in brackets, indicating Yusuf Ali’s own biased interpretation of the meaning. Yusuf Ali, by the way, is convinced that Gabriel is the messenger here. If this be the case, then he is confronted with a dilemma, for he cannot argue that Gabriel impregnated Mary, especially since his job as a messenger was merely to “*announce* the gift of a holy son.” Therefore, Gabriel, according to Ali’s logic, utterly denies being involved in the conception process, since he was only announcing its imminent reality. Yusuf Ali’s understanding neither seems to do justice to the text itself, though, nor does it coincide with what is written in the Gospel accounts.

Sura 16:2 clearly distinguishes between the angels and the Spirit by declaring that Allah sends down the angels with the Spirit. Haplessly for Yusuf Ali, Gabriel falls into the category of the angels, and thus cannot rightfully be considered the Spirit. Another aya exposing the distinction between Gabriel and the Holy Spirit is sura 38:71-74. This passage clinches the case by describing how Allah created Adam by breathing His Spirit into him, and ordering all the angels, including Gabriel, to prostrate themselves before him. Satan (*Iblis*) was the only angel who refused to do so. To allege that Gabriel was the Spirit here, would be unreasonable, since he was one of the angels ordered to submit to Adam, not the agent through whom Adam was created. Did Allah first issue a command to Gabriel, and then breath the angel into Adam, and then witness Gabriel prostrating himself before the man? This would seem to be ridiculous. Again, the identity of the Spirit may be a mystery to many Muslims today, but that would mean that not much has changed, because sura 17:85 says: “They put questions to you about the Spirit. Say ‘The Spirit is at my Lord’s command. Little indeed is the knowledge vouchsafed to you!’.” If the Spirit was Gabriel, then why did Muhammed avoid lucid clarification of the issue? The reason seems to be because the Holy Spirit is Allah’s own substance, being His own Spirit, and this indeed is mysterious to mere mortals like us. Yes indeed, the traditional Islamic assumption of Gabriel being the Holy Spirit seems rather incredulous in light of this evidence, especially when the New Testament’s explanation is considered. This is an extremely critical detail, as we will come to realize.

Sura 3:59 seems to present a problem for those who focus on the virgin birth of Christ as proof of His deity. This is because the aya compares Jesus to Adam and adds the idea of Christ being created from the dust of the ground. Nobody can rightfully claim that Jesus was God in human form if He was created, right? Contrary to popular opinion, one actually could rather easily. To summarize the Christian response briefly, it can be said that the physical man Jesus was created at that point, but not the spiritually infinite Word (*Logos*). So Christ existed prior to His birth, but not in human form. Therefore this new form had to be created temporarily. Jesus often talked about his pre-existence (Jn. 6:62, 8:58, 17:5), and Christ, like Adam, was not the result of the natural process of begetting.

It is possible that this is one example where the identity of the Spirit is crucial. If Jesus (the physical manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ) had been united with the Holy Spirit before His birth into this physical world, as the New Testament testifies, then He could have even participated in creating Himself, in a sense. The Apostle Paul stated in Philippians 2:7, that Jesus “*made Himself nothing*, taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness” (NIV). Thus, Christ Himself, evidently took an active part in the process of “*being made in human likeness.*” One may argue that there is no logic in that plea, but God should not be bound by human logic since He transcends that realm.

In the Gospel, speaking of Christ, it says: “All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (Jn. 1:3, NASB). Maybe a few illustrations will help. A chameleon changes colors but still remains a chameleon; or an immigrant changes countries but still remains the same nationality; or time may pass

from the past into the present, and then into the future, but still essentially remains the same. If the pre-incarnate Jesus were truly God, then He could easily have created an entirely new temporary form for Himself, that being a human being, which is patently not His true ontological essence, while keeping His nature as God. Hence, the idea that He created Himself. It was as if God breathed into Mary and left part of Himself in her womb, as the man Jesus Christ. If this cannot be elucidated or understood adequately, then one must always remember the Torah's assertion that "the secret things belong to the Lord our God" (Deut. 29:29, NIV) and allow faith to be the convincing factor.

One must also remember that Christ created birds and gave them life by breathing into them, by Allah's will, according to the Qur'an (3:48; 5:110). There are two Arabic words for "create," but the common word used for both Allah and Christ's creative work, is "*khalafa*," not "*qaddara*." According to sura 13:16, Allah alone is the creator of all things, so even the fact that Jesus literally created is significant. We also see in sura 22:73, that nobody but Allah can create even a fly. In sura 15:26-29, Allah creates man by breathing His Spirit into him. If Jesus is not linked with Allah, or deity itself, then why was He the only man who ever created anything according to both the Bible and Qur'an? If the Spirit is not linked with Allah, or deity itself, then why is He always involved in the creating processes? In addition to this, one should know that the Old Testament Hebrew word for "spirit" is "*ruach*," while the New Testament Greek word is "*pneuma*." These words can also be translated as "wind," or "breath." Interestingly enough, life is often associated with breath or spirit (Gen. 6:17, 7:15, 22; Job 33:4;

Ezek.3 7:5-14). The Holy Spirit is also often associated with life itself (Jn. 3:5-7, 6:63; Rom. 8:2, 6, 11; 2 Cor. 3:6). Furthermore, even the word for “spirit” in the original languages indicates a breathing and producing of life, which fits all the references concerning the Holy Spirit’s work in both the Bible and Qur’an. Who can possibly give life other than Allah? Even sura 3:48 reminds us of Jesus’ ability to raise the dead to life, while suras 21:21-22, 25:3, and 30:17-27, claim that only Allah can raise the dead to life, or create anything. Jesus said: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” predicting His resurrection from the dead (Jn. 2:19, NASB). Of course the temple He spoke of was His body (Jn. 2:21), but the key here is that He Himself would raise it again. In Romans 8:11, the Apostle Paul associates the Spirit with Christ’s resurrection. And in Acts 2:24ff, Peter announces that God (the Father) raised Jesus to life, in fulfillment of some of the Old Testament prophecies such as Psalm 16:8-11. Who really raised Jesus back to life? In John 5:26, Jesus declares: “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself” (NASB). Jesus even called Himself “the life” (Jn. 11:25, 14:6). The Apostle Paul generally used specific titles for the Godhead to distinguish them. He generally calls the Father “God,” and calls Jesus “Lord.” In Acts 17:24-25 Paul argues that the Lord (Jesus) is God, thus uniting the Father and Son together as one God. He continues by saying that He is the source of all life and breath, which seems to include a connotation of the Spirit also.

Even in Revelation 4:8, the Apostle John quotes from Isaiah 6:3 in calling God “holy” three times. One could argue that this is simply for the emphasis of His holiness through

the use of repetition, but this does not preclude the possibility of a reference to the Godhead, or the Trinity. All throughout the Old Testament we see the following description of the Lord: “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Could this be another illustration of the triune nature of God? The main Hebrew word for deity is “*Elohim*,” and it is plural. When used of pagan gods, it is always used alongside plural verbs, but when used of the God of Israel, it is always used alongside singular verbs.⁵ According to Genesis 1:26, God spoke these words in the beginning: “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (NASB). Genesis 3:22 and 11:7 are similar examples from the first book of the Bible, displaying God’s unified plurality. If God does not have a plural nature, then why was God speaking here, and with whom was He speaking?

Moreover, the Qur’an also reflects this plurality within God’s nature through the use of the Arabic by constantly using the word “We” when Allah is speaking. One may argue that this is just the nature of Arabic by contending that when kings spoke, they referred to themselves in the plural tense, because of their authority. While this may be true, one should also remember that this whole custom was the result of something in the distant past. According to Genesis, God used this language from the beginning of time because of His essence as the Creator, but through the ages, man may have adopted the linguistic parallel while fitting it into his own context as a creature. Granted, this potential theory concerning the origins of language, though possible, is admittedly insatiably speculative. In any case, these Biblical illustrations and passages are by no means contradictory. Rather, they attest to the fact that the three who make up the Trinity are united as one

God, and the skeptic should not dismiss this without ample consideration. The Bible is simply filled with examples that prove this point, and since the Qur'an supposedly confirms these former Scriptures, this doctrine should automatically be accepted by all true Muslims.

In relation to the virgin birth, there is an apocryphal excerpt called *Epistula Apostolorum* claiming to be a letter from the eleven apostles to the Church universal, penned after speaking with Jesus, subsequent to His resurrection. In it, Jesus supposedly informs them that He appeared to the Virgin Mary in the form of Gabriel, and entered her as the eternal Word, who then became flesh once inside her womb.⁶ This just adds to the discussion concerning Christ's participation in the creating process of Jesus, the human being. The problem is that this seems to raise questions as to Gabriel's role in the entire process and may have negatively influenced many Muslims, who reject Christ as Savior, to focus all the attention on Gabriel instead of Christ Himself.

Nevertheless, we see that both the Biblical and Qur'anic accounts attest to the Spirit's mysterious link with Christ during His earthly ministry (sura 2:87, 253). The Apostle John records John the Baptist's testimony about the Christ, when he said that Jesus would have the Holy Spirit without limit (Jn. 3:34). The New Testament claims that we are all filled with the Holy Spirit once we repent of our sins and are baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38), and that all the apostles were filled with the Spirit simultaneously (Acts 2:1-4). The entire New Testament proves that all who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and

Savior receive the internal presence of the Holy Spirit, who influences them toward holiness, in fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 (see Jn. 7:37-39; Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:14). That must mean that the Spirit is omnipresent, a characteristic that only God possesses. John testified that when Jesus sent His disciples out, He breathed the Holy Spirit on them and gave them the divine right to forgive sins as His inspired apostles, filled with God's Spirit (Jn. 20:21-23). This again reminds us that Jesus was completely united with the Spirit, and that both Jesus and the Spirit were united with the Father, for only God can forgive sins (Mk. 2:5-7; sura 3:134). It also reminds us of Christ's possible link to creating Himself in human form, by breathing the Holy Spirit into the Virgin Mary.

A comparison of John 14:26 and John 15:26 shows that not only are the Spirit and Christ united, but that Christ and the Father are too. In John 14:26, we see that the Father sends the Spirit in Jesus' name, while John 15:26 tells us that Jesus will send the Spirit from the Father. This whole point becomes even more intriguing when validated by passages such as Galatians 4:6 and Acts 2:33. Is this a contradiction? This is not necessarily the case. It just reinforces the fact that Christ, the Spirit, and the Father, are all intimately joined together and represent one God. This is no contradiction, but rather one of the many examples of the Trinity notion, expressed in the pages of the Bible. Many analogies can be used to illustrate how God can be seen in three personalities, yet remain as one God. A person has a physical body, a soul, and a spirit, but is still just one person. A team is made up of many players, but still remains as one team because of its unity in nature and

purpose. The great theologian, Augustine, argued that the Trinity is evidenced by the notion that God is love, according to the Scriptures (1 Jn. 4:7-8). Augustine explained that love has an inherent three-fold nature since love requires a lover, a loved one, and the element of love itself.⁷ These are just a few examples from the real world that successfully attempt to illustrate God's nature, though do so deficiently. Simply because God's nature is unfathomable to mere mortals, any analogy will be lacking, although there are certainly many that aid our inadequate understanding. Even if we cannot imagine how God can be three, yet remain as one, we should be reminded that there are many things about His nature that we cannot understand, yet confidently accept by faith. Can humans grasp how God can exist without beginning or end, or how He can be without gender, or how He can be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent? At least smart ones cannot. By faith, all of us agree with these remarkable elements of His being. Likewise, God's triune nature is beyond human comprehension, as should be expected. After all, it is the impossible and the incomprehensible that makes the creator . . . *GOD*.

Some other key New Testament verses about this subject are Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 15:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11, 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 1:20-22, 13:14; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18, 3:14-17, 4:4-6, 5:18-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18-19; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:4-6; 1 Peter 1:1-2; and 1 John 3:21-24, 4:11-16, though this is by no means an exhaustive list. You will notice in these few references that there is no distinct order of the three, exhibiting their intrinsic equality in essence, though their roles may vary at times. The Biblical data seems to prove that the three are united as one God because they share a

common essence or substance, while they are distinct in their various roles, which often overlap and always seem to coincide, or interrelate.

1. Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 23.
2. Jack Cottrell, *God the Redeemer* (Joplin, Mo: College Press Publishing, 1991), p. 165.
3. Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 162.
4. N.J. Dawood, *The Koran* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 19:19.
5. Jack Cottrell, *God the Redeemer*, p. 133.
6. Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, p. 157.
7. Jack Cottrell, *God the Redeemer*, pp. 117-18.

Chapter 6: Who Is The Counselor In John's Gospel?

Jesus, when He promised to send the Holy Spirit in John chapters 14-16, said that He would send “another” (Jn. 14:16). The specific Greek word John used here was “*allos*,” literally meaning “one of the same kind or essence,” instead of the Greek word “*heteros*,” meaning “one of a different kind.”¹ In 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Paul connects the Holy Spirit with the Father by explaining that He understands all the thoughts of God, by calling Him the Spirit of God, and by comparing Him with the unity of people and their spirits, in relation to the Father. All of us have spirits that make up a part of our nature as human beings, and Paul manifests the idea that this is exactly what the Holy Spirit is for God Himself. Peter understood this truth and therefore blatantly called the Holy Spirit “God” in Acts 5:3-5. Thus, Jesus sent out His disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, according to Matthew 28:18-20. The key is that the Greek word for “name” there, is singular, not plural.

Jesus told his disciples in John 15:26: “When the Counselor 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” (NIV). Then in chapter 16 Jesus says:

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; . . . He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. . . . All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you (vv. 13-15, NASB).

Some people claim that this counselor is Muhammed, but if that is true, then Muhammed

must be the Spirit of truth, whose main goal is to bring glory to Jesus, as verse fourteen states. Remember that Jesus, in John 13:32, reminds us that God (the Father) will glorify the son in Himself. It is also interesting to mention that it was Jesus' goal to glorify the Father by completing the work He was assigned to do (Jn. 14:13). Jesus honored the Spirit when he said: "And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in the age, or in the age to come" (Mt. 12:32, NASB). In John 16:15, Jesus says: "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you." This is an obvious reference to the Trinity concept repeated throughout the whole New Testament, of which Muhammed has no connection.

To label Muhammed as the counselor in the context of John chapters 14-16 seems absurd since the Holy Spirit is obviously being described. Jesus even asserts that He Himself will send this Spirit of truth (16:7), but no true Muslim would say that Jesus sent Muhammed. This counselor is even called the Holy Spirit in John 14:26, and no good Muslim could possibly claim that Muhammed was the Holy Spirit. If he/she does, then how do we identify the Holy Spirit who approached Mary in sura 19? What about the Spirit who was breathed into Mary by Allah, in sura 66:12? One must also remember that Jesus is speaking directly to His disciples (the apostles) at this particular time. How could Muhammed have been sent to the apostles in the first century? On the other hand, the Holy Spirit was sent to them fifty days after the resurrection, according to Acts 2, along with additional historical corroboration from early Christian writers. Notice what

Jesus says in John 14:29: “And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe” (NASB). So, this was a prophecy that would be fulfilled within the scope of the apostles’ lifetimes. This is why Jesus told the apostles to stay in Jerusalem and wait until they were “clothed with power from on high” (Lk. 24:49, NASB). Also, the counselor, who is called “holy,” would even be with them “forever” (Jn. 14:16), which indicates His deity. Can Muhammed possibly match this description? Additionally, the foundation for this flagrant conjecture that Muhammed is being prophesied, is the changing of three Greek letters in John’s Gospel, referring to the counselor. That would mean having to change Jesus’ own authoritative words. The visible consequence of this casts doubt on the accuracy of Jesus’ testimony, as well as the Apostle John’s record in the Gospels. What makes this especially incredible is that John used this Greek word four times in this section, which means that he not only made one mistake, but twelve of them. Ultimately, this may jeopardize Muhammed’s witness concerning the nature of the Injil, when the argument is taken to its logical conclusion, as was explained previously concerning Allah’s words.

Finally, Isaiah prophesied about the coming Messiah in chapter 9:6, where He is called “Wonderful Counselor.” In Isaiah 11, the chapter begins by talking about this coming Messiah who will be from Jesse’s line (i.e. David’s line). Then in verse two it says: “And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him . . . the spirit of counsel and strength” (NASB). Since both the New Testament and the Qur’an affirm that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, it only seems logical to say that the Spirit is the one spoken of in

John chapters 14-16, rather than Muhammed. Furthermore, the correlation between the “Wonderful Counselor” (Jesus) and the “spirit of counsel,” is rather conspicuous. The Apostle Paul even calls the Lord (Jesus) “the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17-18). The Apostle Peter affirms this by linking the Spirit of Christ, who guided the prophets of old, with the Holy Spirit, in 1 Peter 1:10-12 (see also 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Isaiah 40:13 asks the question: “Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counselor has informed Him?” (NASB). This shows that there is no superior counselor in existence. So why should any other counselor be sent?

Either way, even if one wants to argue that Muhammed is being prophesied in John 14-16, then he must at least concede that the Apostle John was indeed a prophet of Allah, and that his entire Gospel is authoritative. How could a book accurately prophesy about something, or someone, and be disregarded at the same time? If a Muslim wants to debate this point about Muhammed, then he must remain consistent in his justification as such. Thus, in doing so, he automatically concurs that at least the Apostle John was a prophet, and that possibly the entire New Testament is authoritative, and should be categorized with Allah’s very own words. If he/she does this, then he/she is forced to believe all that is written therein. In the author’s estimation, these are the only logical conclusions one can draw from the evidence, and hopefully the reader will agree.

1. Jack Cottrell, *God the Redeemer*, p. 129.

Chapter 7: Denigration Or Preservation?

One concluding thought regarding the previous discussion about the virgin birth is that this whole concept of Jesus being created in the Qur'an must be viewed against the backdrop of Muhammed's dedication toward preserving the holiness of God. The Qur'an repeatedly defends God's purity by insisting that God never had sexual relations with

Mary, in opposition to some groups who have contended otherwise. The Mormons are a modern cult who actually affirm that there was some sort of sexual union, but this logically fits their theology since they assume that God had a beginning and that He initially began as a human being. The bottom line is that Muhammed's words do not inevitably have to be interpreted as an attack on Jesus' nature, but could rather be seen as a defense of God's chastity instead. Sura 17:111 states: "Praise be to Allah Who has never begotten a son; Who has no partner in His Kingdom; Who needs none to defend Him from humiliation." Sura 37:149-59 portrays Muhammed as one defending Allah from people insisting that He has had many daughters in the form of angels. This would mean that Allah, like the Greek gods, had sexual relations resulting in children. This is abhorrent to Christians and Muslims alike. In fact, the Gospel avoids this conceivable misunderstanding by focusing on the spiritual nature of Christ's relationship to the Father and the Spirit, not any physical relationship. One example of this is at Jesus' baptism. When Jesus came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove, and witnesses heard the Father announce: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased" (Mk. 1:11). It was after Jesus had fulfilled "all righteousness" (Mt. 3:15) at His baptism, that the Father publicly announced their relationship, stressing its spiritual nature rather than physical one.

Sura 6:101-107 also defends Allah against these accusations, and adds that Allah cannot have children since He has no wife. In the Qur'an, there is even a warning against those who allege that Allah adopts children (sura 39:4). During Muhammed's time, there was

a popular heretical doctrine called Adoptionism, claiming that Jesus became God's Son when He was adopted by the Father due to His perfect life, thus making two separate gods. This heretical viewpoint became somewhat influential, especially through Paul of Samosata, who died in 275 A.D.¹ This relates to the whole Qur'anic attack of the heretical ideas centering on the Biblical concept of the Trinity. The Qur'an clearly rejects Adoptionism, or the idea that there are two gods. It also fights against Mariolatry, or the veneration of Mary as a god. In sura 5:116, Allah asks Jesus, the son of Mary, "Did you say to men 'Take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?'" Again, sura 4:171 denies that Jesus and Mary are two additional gods by demanding people not to say "three." This would, according to any informed mathematician, add up to three gods. In the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church, Mary is called the "Mother of God," the "Second Eve," the "means through which we receive blessing and life," and "our Advocate." John of Damascus spoke of her as the "Sovereign Lady to whom the whole creation has been made subject by her Son." Peter Damian honored her as the "most exalted of all creatures," and deifies her by claiming that she has been "endowed with all power in heaven and on earth."² To accept this view of God the Father, God the Mother, and God the Son, would be equivalent to idolatry according to both the Bible and the Qur'an. This is shirk, or the attributing of partners to Allah, beyond a shadow of a doubt. Again, the implications of this Catholic doctrine are that one could justifiably pray to Mary as the Roman Catholic Church does, but this too is useless and unacceptable since there is just one mediator between God and men (sura 43:86; 1 Tim. 2:5). Thus, Muhammed may have been rebuking the heretical Christians who supported these

teachings in sura 38:5.

Even to worship Jesus and the Holy Spirit, as gods *besides* Allah, would be heresy since this is also equivalent to polytheism (suras 37:86; 38:65; 39:3-4, 8, 11-15, 64-67; 40:73-74). These examples are but a few, and they all plainly combat polytheism by using the words “gods besides Allah.” Suras 4:171 and 5:73 rightfully condemn those who believe in three gods. True Christians do not believe in, let alone worship, gods besides Allah, since they are monotheists. Again, sura 29:46 reminds us all that true Christians believe in only one God, as the Bible teaches inexorably, and that they do not commit the sin of shirk like the heretics in some warped forms of the Christian faith. The Qur’an seems to attack polytheism, just like the Bible does. It does not seem to attack the specific form of monotheism represented in the Bible, nor does it attempt to describe its own form of monotheism. Remember that if the Qur’an does attack the monotheism of the Bible, then it would, by logical necessity, collapse on itself since it supposedly confirms the former revelations of Allah. Muhammed proclaimed in sura 29:46 that the Christians and Muslims serve the same God. Since the first century, true Christians have been submitting to the Biblical definition of God, meaning the monotheistic version of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and therefore we are left with two conclusions. Either Muhammed also accepted the Biblical concept of the Trinity, or he was incorrect in his assessment regarding the common God to whom both groups (Christians and Muslims) submit. What other conclusion could possibly be drawn?

This information definitely clears up much of the confusion many Muslims may experience when considering the implications of the virgin birth of Christ. Mainstream Christians in Syria often compared Jesus' birth to the creation of Adam, very much like the Qur'an does. One example is Ephraim of Nisibis, who wrote:

The virgin's conceiving teaches us that He who brought Adam into the world by causing him to come out of the virgin earth without carnal intercourse, also formed the second Adam in the virgin's womb without carnal intercourse.³

Hence, Jesus was conceived in the womb, but not in the natural human way of reproduction. Rather, it was in a specific divine, miraculous, and holy process. Otherwise, Allah would be subject to human depravity.

1. Jack Cottrell, *God the Redeemer*, p. 147.
2. Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Arabic Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Lahore, Pakistan: 1951), pp. 275-76.
3. Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, p. 156.

Chapter 8: The Title Of Messiah In The Qur'an

In the Qur'an there are some titles attributed to Jesus that seem to attest to His deity. For example, Muhammed calls Him the "Messiah" eleven times. The most common meaning of this word according to most Arabic lexicons is "to touch", but it could also mean "to anoint," "to rub," or "to massage."¹ Most Muslims tend to lean towards "to touch," as the rendering. Sura 3:35 reads: "And I commend her and her offspring to the protection from the evil one, the rejected." Muslims believe that when a child is born, Satan pricks it, causing it to cry, but Jesus was the only child in history who Allah protected from the

Devil's touch. This idea is seen in the Sahih Muslim hadith 58:37. Al-Bukhari alludes to it in Sahih al-Bukhari 3:194. Al-Baydawi also quotes this tradition in 3:31. Muslim, in 15:120, quotes Muhammed as saying: "There is no child born, but Satan touches it at its birth and therefore it cries at the touch, except Mary and her son."²

The New Testament has much to say about this whole concept. Both the Bible and the Qur'an support the idea that man is spiritually inapt and inclined toward being immoral. Sura 12:53 notes that man's soul is prone to evil. In Romans 7-8, the Apostle Paul discusses how the sinful nature of man is defeated only by living according to the Holy Spirit's influence, who dwells inside the one who surrenders his life to the Lord Jesus. The sinful nature of man exists and exerts considerable influence on all of us. In our daily observance of the world around us, that is certainly becoming more evident. In Romans five, Paul describes how all of Adam's physical descendants are tainted by his sin in the Garden of Eden. Then, in Colossians 2:13, he relates that we are all dead in our sins and the impurity of our sinful nature before we accept God's grace through Jesus Christ. Though controversial, there is a viewpoint in Christendom that has become popular in some circles, and it is worthy of mention here due to its relevance. Some Christians believe that Jesus was the only man who was unaffected by the sinful nature, that we all inherited from Adam. They say that Jesus cannot literally be considered a true descendant of Adam, since He had no earthly father, in the biological sense. Because He was born of the Holy Spirit, He avoided the inheritance of our sinful nature, and proved it by His exemplary moral standards. Only Jesus mirrored the image of God by His perfect

behavior, and in His pure, untainted essence. According to this sentiment, this point is extremely important because it links Jesus with God by showing that they alone share the same moral code and nature. It is also relevant to the question of Jesus' crucifixion because only a perfect sacrifice could atone for the sins of the entire world. So anyone who espouses this viewpoint could use it to elaborate further on the hadiths mentioned earlier, regarding the Arabic word for Messiah. Again, some Christians would have trouble with this rationale. Fortunately this is not the only response that Christians can give.

Another guess as to the reason why Jesus is called the Messiah in the Qur'an is because of His healing touch. The Dajjal, being the Antichrist, is also called "messiah," possibly because he too will claim to have a healing touch, though it will be expressed in simulated wonders. This is akin to the Apostle Paul's portrait of the Antichrist:

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, NIV).

It is interesting to note that the Dajjal is contrasted with Jesus, not Muhammed. The Dajjal is the antithesis of pure goodness, or the antipode of Jesus Himself. This sets Jesus Christ apart from all others because He was the greatest model of perfection that anyone could have ever been. Muhammed could not have been the Messiah, nor could he have been contrasted with Dajjal, because he did not meet the moral requirements or perform miracles like Jesus did. According to the Injil, Jesus not only healed the sick and

raised certain individuals from the dead, but this was symbolic of how He would heal all of mankind spiritually. That was an essential element of His Messiah role. He was anointed, or chosen, for a specific purpose, and the Bible clarifies that sufficiently, whereas the Qur'an simply points to the Bible for the explanation. He certainly was not prophesied fifteen hundred years in advance (see Genesis 3:15) merely because He was God's chosen instrument, destined to heal just a handful of people in the Roman Empire, of their temporary ailments. That would have definitely been history's greatest disappointment.

The Apostle John, who actually witnessed the crucifixion himself (see Jn. 19:35), as well as the resurrection (Jn. 20:1-9, 19-20; 21:24), wrote in his first epistle the following words: "We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him" (1 Jn. 5:18, NASB). This proves that Jesus not only avoided Satan's touch, but that He offers that same protection to those who decide to be born again, which takes place when one accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior by faith. Again, this is a reminder that Jesus' Messiah role was not just an empty position that He held, but a responsibility that He took upon Himself, which affects each and every one of us personally.

The Hebrew and Greek definitions for Messiah and Christ, respectively, were both "to anoint," or "to choose." Jesus was literally the culmination of a long line of *anointed ones* spoken of in the Old Testament, and this is precisely why the former Islamic

debater, Ahmed Deedat, objected to the usage of “Christ” as a title for Jesus. Since there were many *christs* in the past, there is no rightful justification for the Christians’ insistence that this title should be used exclusively for Jesus Himself.³ In other words, this is just an example of how the Christians have unjustly and arbitrarily honored their prophet through the use of the title “Christ.” The problem is that Deedat, actually considered to be a heretic by most mainstream Muslim groups, not only challenges the Bible with this argument, but also contradicts the Qur’an, as is his usual practice. In sura 3:44, Jesus is called “Messiah” (Hebrew) or “Christ” (Greek) by name. The Apostle John wrote: “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?” (1 Jn. 2:22, NASB). John should know since he traveled around with Jesus for three and a half years, witnessed His miracles, His death, and His resurrection. Besides this, the idea that there were many *christs* who were comparable to Jesus in the Bible is asinine since those other individuals were all symbols of the true Christ who was to come. God used all the others as images in order to prepare the world for the one Christ who would save mankind from his sins. Either way, it is not Jesus’ name that makes Him unique; it is what He accomplished, as the true Christ or Messiah, which sets Him apart from all others. Given the fact that Jesus is called the “Christ” (Messiah) in both the Bible and Qur’an, it would be helpful to know exactly what was originally meant by the term during Jesus time, and shortly thereafter. Here are some examples of New Testament verses mentioning Jesus’ title as Messiah, that may help better illustrate the point:

And He said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter His glory?’ And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He

explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures (Lk. 24:25-27, NASB).

She said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world' (Jn. 11:27, NASB).

And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Mt. 16:16, NASB).

And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ' (Acts 17:2-3, NASB).

From these five verses in the Gospels, and two from the book of Acts, it is clear that the term "Messiah," or "Christ," automatically meant Son of God, and attested to His suffering, His death, and His resurrection from the dead. Even the Qur'an mentions that Jesus was the Messiah and refers to the crucifixion in the same aya (4:157). Some Muslims claim that this aya rejects the crucifixion, but the author will soon briefly attempt to show that this is a flimsy assertion. Again, according to the Apostle John, who actually witnessed the crucifixion himself (Jn. 19:35) and saw the risen Christ, being the Son of God was an indication of equality with God (Jn. 5:18). It is also interesting to note that the turning point in Mark's account of the Gospel of Jesus, is found in chapter 8:27-29, where Peter first confesses his belief that Jesus was not just another prophet, but the Christ. Before these three verses, the emphasis in the book was on the power of Jesus shown through His miracles, but after them, the emphasis becomes Jesus' need to suffer as the Savior of the world. This was doubtless because He was the Christ. Put another

way, the term “Christ,” or “Messiah,” would then imply deity because only the sacrifice of God Himself could possibly atone for the sins of the whole world throughout the entire scope of human existence. The entire New Testament agrees with this assessment, and therefore all Muslims who desire full submission to Allah should also.

1. Ahmed Deedat, *Desert Storm: Has it Ended?* (Durban: Islamic Propagation Centre [sic] International, 1991), p. 13.
2. L. Bevan Jones, *The People of the Mosque* (Kashmere Gate, Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1994), p. 94.
3. Ahmed Deedat, *Desert Storm: Has it Ended?*, pp. 13-14.

Chapter 9: Resolving The Controversy Of The Cross

The fact that many Muslims reject the death of Jesus on the cross, simply because of sura 4:157-59, merits our attention. The majority of Muslims simply interpret these ayas as a rejection of the crucifixion altogether, even though the entire message of the Injil is that Christ died for all of our sins on Calvary’s cross. Since this is a cardinal issue, some traditional Christian responses to this literal rejection of the cross will be offered at this point. First of all, let us remember that some ayas in the Qur’an seem to establish Jesus’ death. Some examples are as follows: suras 3:54, 5:17, 5:75, 5:117, and 19:33. Sura 4:157-59 should then be interpreted in light of these ayas. Some Christians have held that 4:157 proves the deity of Christ by distinguishing between the two natures of Jesus. Although His physical body was crucified, His true divine nature was unaffected. Put simply, though Jesus’ physical body experienced death, His divine nature could not be killed, and Muhammed could therefore argue that the Jews did not kill the infinite Christ.¹

Another response, though potentially controversial, emphasizes the soul of Christ, rather than His divine nature. The Qur'an says that martyrs should not be considered dead, but rather alive with the Lord (sura 3:168). Thus, Jesus should not be spoken of as having been destroyed, since He is still alive as a martyr. Furthermore, His soul was raised to the level of Allah. The words "They did not kill Him *for certain*" should be understood as "They did not *really* kill Him," in this context, which is definitely an acceptable rendering.² The fact that He rose from the dead, according to the Injil, should also strengthen this line of reasoning. Jesus is alive, and though He did experience death, we should not imply that His death was the end of the story either. In fact, it was more like the beginning.

A third response to this difficult passage in the Qur'an is the idea that nobody killed Christ because He Himself offered His life as a sacrifice, according to Allah's intended will. In 4:157-58, we see that the Jews were boasting about being successful in fulfilling their intended purpose of ridding the earth of Jesus for His blasphemy, but it only appeared to them as such (4:157). They assumed that they were in control, but it was Allah who had arranged everything in advance. Listen to Jesus' words prior to His death, recorded by Luke in chapter 18:31-33:

Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again (NASB).

Jesus stood silent while on trial before Pontius Pilate, as prophesied in Isaiah 53:7, but finally informed the Roman procurator that it was God, not Rome itself, who had given him the authority to crucify the Christ, otherwise he would not have been able to (Jn. 19:11). In sura 3:53, Muhammed talks about the Jews scheming concerning Jesus, but also talks about Allah's scheme, which was greater than that of the Jews. Then, in the following aya, Allah supposedly speaks to Jesus with these words: "O Jesus, I will cause you to die and exalt you in my presence." This coincides perfectly with the message of the Injil by explaining that Jesus died according to Allah's original plan, accomplishing something that the Jews knew nothing about, in fulfillment of the Mosaic Law. Sura 5:117 echoes the point that Jesus' crucifixion was Allah's will by supposedly quoting from Jesus Himself, as He spoke with Allah: "You did cause me to die." So it could be argued that the Qur'an actually supports the crucifixion of Jesus. If not, then the Qur'an is innately discrepant since it would be in conflict with the Injil, as well as itself.

Charles Ledit proposes that the Qur'anic symbolism presents evidence of Jesus' death and resurrection. In sura 18:60-63, there is a story about Moses and his servant traveling together. On their journey, they brought a fish along for food, and at the convergence of two rivers, the servant forgot the dead fish, but it came back to life and swam away. In early Christianity, the fish symbolized the risen Christ, and Ledit believes that it does here also. Rife in this story is the symbolism of Jesus being contained in the Law of Moses, dying in fulfillment of it, and being raised back to life. At the nexus of the two

covenants (the Old and New Testaments), Jesus breaks away from the law that binds and illustrates the freedom that only He can provide for His followers.³ Paul wrote: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:1-2, NIV). Jesus Himself said: “If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed” (Jn. 8:36, NASB). That is my prayer for each person who reads this book. I hope and pray that you will come to know the Son, Jesus Christ, and find true liberty in Him.

Moreover, the Qur’an repeatedly speaks of the slaying of the prophets of Allah, generally by the Jews. A few examples would be suras 2:61, 2:87, 3:111, and 5:70. In sura 2:87, Muhammed is rebuking the Jews for this horrible sin, and two prophets are acknowledged there. One of them is Moses and the other one is Christ. The question to ask is this: Which one of the two serves as an example illustrating this grave offense by the Jews? Was it Moses? Obviously not, since he died a natural death according to the Torah (Deut. 34:1-8). The Jews did not kill Moses, but instead mourned for him an entire month (v. 8). Apparently, Jesus was the example Muhammed chose to use to powerfully illustrate the culmination of the Jews’ iniquity, relating to the slaying of Allah’s messengers. Sura 5:70-75 stands as another example supporting this position, regarding the death of Christ. Aya 70 refers to this evil practice of the Jews and then Jesus becomes the focus in aya 72. Again, it seems rather coincidental to mention Jesus in the immediate context if He had no association with this matter of the slaying of Allah’s

prophets. Furthermore, aya 75 begins with these words: “The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a messenger; other messengers had passed away before him.” Ali Muhammad, in his translation and commentary of the Qur’an, agrees that this aya is convincing proof that Jesus died.⁴ This aya plainly states that Jesus experienced physical death, and in this context it could be argued that the Jews were guilty of involvement in the process. Notice that aya 72 denies the whole concept of Allah being the Messiah, but the following aya qualifies this by denouncing polytheism, or the heretical belief that Jesus is one of three gods. So again, this does not inevitably need to be interpreted as an attack on Biblical monotheism.

Additionally, in the Qur’an there are potential allusions to two Christian practices that were based on, and directly linked with, the death, burial, and resurrection, of Jesus Christ. Christian baptism has always been connected to Christ’s atoning death and resurrection, as Romans 6:1-8 points out, and sura 2:138 may bear this connotation. The prophets, Abraham and Moses, are spoken of in aya 136, as well as Christ Himself. Baptism is an outworking of the Gospel of Jesus, which was announced in advance to Abraham (Gal. 3:8). And remember that Moses’ followers were also immersed (1 Cor. 10:2). Some translate the word “baptism” as “*religion*,” “*coloring*,” or “*dye*.” Maulana Muhammad Ali uses the word “*coloring*” in his translation of the Qur’an, though he confesses in his commentary that the word does carry with it the literal meaning of “dipping or immersing in water.”⁵ Incidentally, Yusuf Ali uses the word “baptism” in his version. Even the idea of coloring, or the dye, implies Baptism, because early

Christians placed a dye in the water so that when one was immersed, his new skin color would remind all the witnesses of the new and changed life. Concerning the tie to religion here, in Christianity it is undeniable that accepting the true faith includes immersion in the form of Christian baptism. So even if one wants to translate this word as “*religion,*” “*coloring,*” or “*dye,*” he must nonetheless admit that baptism has a graphic association with all the other meanings.

Sura 5:112-15 is quite possibly a reference to the Eucharist, one of the first sacraments of the early Church that has been observed throughout the centuries. It is a memorial meal that Christians share together in remembrance of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, and serves to strengthen believers upon its observance. Some may allege that the reference to Allah’s protection of Jesus from the Jews, in aya 110, is a denial of the crucifixion, but it could also be a referral to God’s delivery of Jesus from physical death in His hometown. This incident is recorded in Luke 4:14-30. In reality, sura 5:110 seems to apply more directly to Jesus’ life-threatening confrontation with the Jews, in John 8:37-40, 58-59, because there is citation of the Jews’ argument against Christ in the aya. Sura 5:110 indicates that the Jews accused Christ of using the power of the devil, just like in the context of John 8:37-40, 58-59 (see Jn. 8:48). If this be the case, then Muhammed wholly corroborates all of Jesus’ claims in this entire section of the Gospel of John, including John 8:19, 23-24, 38, 54, 58, as the “clear arguments” He used (sura 5:110). Simply put, if one or both of these sacraments are meant by Muhammed in the Qur’an, then this would be irrefutable proof of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, since neither

of these sacraments have any meaning apart from these principal events in the Gospel.

Finally, sura seventeen begins with an intriguing passage concerning the first and second transgressions of the Jews (17:4-8). Both transgressions were similar in that they were the culmination of years of unbelief on the part of the Jews, and apparently resulted in the destruction of the Jewish temple. According to 2 Chronicles 36:15-16, the first transgression was the Jews' rejection of God's holy word, spoken through the prophets throughout the ages, and the mistreatment of His messengers. As a result, God raised up the Babylonians who destroyed the Jewish temple and enslaved the Jewish people for 70 years (2 Chron. 36:17-21). This took place during the time of Daniel and was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah in his book, as is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 36:21. This is probably why Muhammed calls this "the prophecy of your first transgression." One would expect the second transgression to be akin to the first since they are intimately linked together. The Jewish temple was again desolated in 70 A.D. by the Romans. Interestingly enough, the fact that Muhammed concedes to this entire line of reasoning helps prove the crucifixion of Jesus.

The famous 70 Sevens, otherwise known as the 70 Weeks Prophecy, in Daniel 9:20-27, is remarkable because it was written immediately after the destruction of the first temple, yet speaks of another razing of the temple, even before the rebuilding process began. It is also amazing in that it predicts the killing of the Messiah, and the destruction of that future temple as the fundamental consequence of that despicable atrocity (v. 26). How

may one propose that this prophecy, which was written in the sixth century B.C., speaking of events scheduled to take place within 70 sevens, or 70 weeks, could possibly relate to Jesus' crucifixion and the Roman Empire's sacking of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.? First of all, it must be noted that there are instances in the Bible where one day signifies a year. A few quick examples should suffice: 1) the *forty year* punishment of the Jews in the wilderness for their bad report concerning Canaan, after *forty days* of observation; 2) the Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:1-11); and 3) the symbolism of Jerusalem's capture in Ezekiel chapter four. Secondly, let us remember that Daniel's prophecy begins with the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25), most probably in 457 B.C.,⁶ or the seventh year of King Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:8, 11-26). If we then interpret the 70 weeks as days symbolizing years, amounting to 490 years, we then come to some amazing conclusions. The 70 weeks are distinctly broken up into three parts in the text itself (seven weeks, 62 weeks, and one last week). After the first seven weeks the temple will be rebuilt, according to verse 25, bringing us to the year 408 B.C. Then, after the next 62 weeks, the Messiah makes His entrance and subsequently will be "cut off," or killed (vv. 25-26). Due to the changing of the calendar from B.C. to A.D., this literally brings us to the year 27 A.D., or the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Most conservative scholars say that Christ was crucified in the year 30 A.D. because of early mistakes in the calendar, and accordingly this prophecy fits perfectly since the Christ was to be "cut off" after the sixty-two weeks (v. 26). Verse 26 goes on to talk about the repercussions of the murdering of the Anointed One as being the destruction of the city and the temple, no doubt meaning Jerusalem.

So again, the Jews were guilty of the same exact sin. They mistreated and rejected the one sent from the Father, the holy living Word, and consequently their temple and city were destroyed. So the first and second transgressions mentioned by Muhammed in sura seventeen could easily be used to prove the killing of the Anointed One, spoken of in Daniel 9:26. Muhammed's acknowledgment of the truth of the Gospel, in and of itself, should seal the case immediately, because the whole message of the Gospel is this: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, . . . He was buried, . . . He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4, NIV).

Some Muslims maintain that Jesus' semblance was transferred onto Simon of Cyrene, the one who carried His cross, and that Simon was crucified while Jesus ascended to heaven. Concerning this hypothesis, three problems instantly present themselves: 1) this seems deceptive on God's part; 2) it contradicts the Gospel; and 3) it does not account for the existence of Christianity. Regarding the third point, it should be understood that the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, has always been the foundation of Christianity. It must also be recognized that Christianity began in Jerusalem, near Christ's tomb, only a matter of months after the crucifixion. So if the tomb was not empty, then people would have been able to see that for themselves and dispel any rumors or false claims by the apostles. The historical fact that Christianity originated immediately near the location of Christ's tomb, proves that the tomb was indeed empty. Furthermore, if it were someone else who was crucified in Jesus' stead, then how can one account for the tomb

being empty? Perhaps this is why Luke, in describing the fact of the resurrection, used the strongest legal term for the word “evidence,” that the Greek language could offer.⁷

1. Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, p. 108.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-10.
4. Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Arabic Text, Translation, and Commentary*, p. 264.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
6. Frank G. Gaebelin, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Zondervan NIV Bible Library Version 2.5.1. CD-ROM* (Zondervan Corporation, 1997), Daniel 9:20-27.
7. John Balchin, *What Christians Believe: The Heart of Christianity Explored and Explained* (Oxford: Lion's Publishing, 1994), p. 59.

Chapter 10: Some Other Titles Attributed To Christ In The Qur'an

INTERCESSOR

In Christianity, one of the principal evidences for the deity of Christ is His role as priest. In 1 Timothy 2:5, the Apostle Paul reminds Timothy that there is only “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (NIV). Nobody can assume this position since nobody else died for the sins of the world. Just as Jesus intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34), the Holy Spirit intercedes in our prayers (Rom. 8:26), but not as a mediator or one who reconciles the differences between two disputing parties, like Jesus. Christ alone fills this role as a Priestly Intercessor. Sura 43:86 makes reference to the one who has the “power of intercession.” Regretfully, it is unclear as to who the intercessor is since there is no explanation given. Significantly, Jesus is in the immediate context as a “sign of the

Hour of Doom” (43:61), the one who came to resolve disputes among men (43:63), though the Qur’an elsewhere claims that only Allah has that ability (see 39:46). Jesus is also spoken of here as one who came with “clear arguments and wisdom” (43:63). Some hadiths call Jesus a “Just Judge” although this admittedly is a weak argument since even al-Bukhari claims that only approximately 1.3 % of the traditional hadiths can be trusted as being accurate. This title harmonizes well with the Bible though, and that will be discussed subsequently. In any case, the aya immediately preceding the one under discussion mentions this “Hour of Doom,” and then our aya talks of him who “testifies to the truth.” If one ignores the immediate context, a Muslim would probably just assume that this special individual is Muhammed, but there are certainly grounds for questioning that conclusion.

According to the Gospel, Jesus came for the express purpose of testifying to the truth (Jn. 18:37). Jesus said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6, NASB). Jesus’ phrase “I tell you the truth” is recorded at least 78 times in the Gospels. Even the Qur’an calls Jesus a “statement of truth” (19:34). Hence, in light of the context concerning the Hour of Doom, Jesus’ key role in returning then, and considering Jesus’ testimony about Himself regarding the truth, Christ seems to be a plausible candidate for having “the power of intercession,” in sura 43:86. Even Yusuf Ali agrees that Jesus is undoubtedly included in this description. One problem is determining whether it is a plural rendering or singular meaning intended because of the nature of the Arabic language. If this is singular, and Jesus is the one being described, then the Qur’an supports a key doctrine in

the Bible regarding Jesus' nature and role as Priestly Intercessor. Significantly, Muhammed calls Allah "the Truth" and the "One Who resurrects the dead," in sura 22:6, which correlates to Jesus rather well. Allah is also called "the Light . . . of the world" in sura 24:35, while Jesus calls Himself "the light of the world" in John 8:12 and 9:5. And the Qur'an proclaims that Allah alone has the capability of interceding on man's behalf (sura 39:43-46). All the evidence concerning the identity of this intercessor points directly at somebody who is one with Allah Himself, and active as a mediator. Christ alone fits that description.

Notice how the text speaks of "the power of intercession." Usually, intercession would be thought of as a privilege bestowed, instead of power displayed. If intercession, in this case, simply meant the right to plead, then the word "power" would not have been used. So this individual not only has the right to plead a case, but also has the power to accomplish reconciliation as a mediator. The high priests in the Old Testament sacrificed animals in order to satisfy God's demand for punishment regarding the sins of the people. They had to shed the blood of innocent animals so that God would relent from punishing the people. This never secured forgiveness for those sins, but just additional time and patience on God's part. Jesus, on the other hand, secured complete forgiveness for those sins through the shedding of His own blood, as our High Priest and mediator (Hebrews 9:11-15; 1 Jn. 2:1-2). Not only did He do that, but He also rose from the dead and consequently was "declared with power to be the Son of God" (Rom. 1:4, NIV). Even

the prophet Isaiah, writing approximately 740 years before Christ's birth into this world, blazed abroad the fact that this suffering servant will make intercession for sinners by bearing their sins (Isa. 53:12). Now that is true *power of intercession*, and that is the *good news* (literally *Gospel*, or *Injil*).

THE HOLY SERVANT

We have briefly acknowledged Jesus' role as *servant* in the book of Isaiah, but the Qur'an also uses this designation for Him in sura 43:59. The term expresses complete submission to the will of Allah, as is clear from this aya, along with suras 4:172 and 19:30. Christ's level of submissiveness to Allah, and His fellow man, was a sign of power because only He was able to evidence it to that extreme. Nobody else in all of history lived a perfect life; only Christ was capable of reflecting Allah's character to the fullest extent. In Philippians two, Paul describes Christ's deity. In verse eight, Paul explains how incredibly submissive Jesus was by becoming "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (NASB). As a result of His submissiveness, Jesus was elevated to the highest place and given the name that is above all names (v. 9). Jesus told us all to turn the other cheek if one strikes us (Mt. 5:39). One must understand the fact that much more strength is shown in one's submissiveness to Allah, than in succumbing to our natural worldly impulses. In Islam, one is given a choice. An individual can retaliate when struck, or he can follow Jesus' command. If he strikes back, then he will remain neutral in Allah's eyes, but if he controls himself, then Allah will bestow a

blessing on that person. This obviously means that Jesus set the highest standard that could have ever been established. Jesus modeled this standard, according to the Injil, by giving His life for the sins of the world, and even while He was hanging on the cross, He cried: “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk. 23:34, NASB). Jesus also informed us all that true greatness is attained through serving others (Mt. 20:26-27). Again, Jesus’ link to the *servant* in Isaiah is quite noticeable, and that means He fulfills that distinct role, outlined by the prophet well before His birth. That is the primary reason why most Christians call Isaiah “the Gospel Prophet.”

One of the characteristics of God, found in both the Bible and the Qur’an, is His holiness or separation from sin. The Bible claims that the only person in history who attained complete separation from sin is Jesus Himself (Heb. 4:15). The Qur’an agrees with this historical fact by calling Jesus a “Holy Child” (19:19, 29-33), and almost no Muslim would even contest this truth. Sura 3:44-45 goes on to support this by indicating that Jesus would live a righteous life (see also 6:86). Some Muslims suppose that all of the prophets were morally undefiled, though this is in contradiction to both the Bible and Qur’an. For example, the Qur’an talks about the sins of Adam (7:22-23), Abraham (26:82), Moses (28:16), Jonah (37:142), Noah (11:47-49) and Muhammed (40:55; 48:2). The Bible clearly states that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23, NIV), except Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21). In fact, Jesus even challenged His enemies to accuse Him of transgression and they could not (Jn. 8:46). This holiness, a trait that only the God of heaven possesses, signifies Jesus’ essential deity. It also proves that Jesus

was the Savior of the world because only righteous sacrifices were acceptable according to the Old Testament (Deut. 33:19; Ps. 4:5, 51:19; Mal. 3:3).

THE SIGN FOR ALL PEOPLE

Muslims feel that prophets were sent by Allah to various nations at different times in order to make His will known. Muhammed, according to the Qur'an, was sent to the Arabic people (16:89), whereas Jesus was originally sent to the Jews. This also coincides with the Biblical picture. Jesus went to the Jews initially since they were the chosen people of God, but because their hearts were not open to the message He preached, their hope became available to all the nations of the world (Rom. 9-11). The Qur'an calls Jesus "a sign unto men" (19:21; 23:50). This means that His was a universal message for people in general, regardless of their race, religion, or nationality. In sura 21:91, Jesus is called "a sign for all people," which can literally be translated "a sign for all the worlds." Jesus' message is not to be limited to one people group, but should be universally proclaimed because of its relevance to all peoples of the world, which reminds us all of Christ's Great Commission, in Matthew 28:18-20. These verses not only express the global scope of Jesus' message, but also assure His followers that all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him (v. 18). Sura 3:3 calls the Gospel of Jesus "a guidance for mankind," not just for the Jews themselves. We also see in aya 186, of that same sura, that the former Scriptures were to be proclaimed to *mankind*. In sura 5:46-48, the Gospel of Jesus is being emphasized as that which contains "guidance and light, confirming the Torah." The Torah here is then called "a guidance and an admonition to the righteous."

Who are “the righteous” here? Could this be limited to the Jews or Christians alone? In the context of the Qur’an itself, this seems impossible. Hence, in aya 48 the Qur’an allegedly supports the Gospel and protects it from the unrighteous who try to relegate it to the realm of irrelevance. So all who want to be considered righteous should follow the Gospel of Jesus. Again, we would do well to remind ourselves that the Gospel is to be accepted by “*this generation*” and is a “*Reminder to the nations,*” not just to the Jews (6:90-91).

This partly explains why Jesus is singled out in the Qur’an, as one Allah elevated above the prophets (2:253). Here, the Qur’an says “Others He raised to degrees of honor,” and then goes on to speak of Jesus specifically. Why does the Qur’an mention Jesus alone and not any of the other prophets? It seems as though the reason is because there is no other prophet that can claim the same level of honor and authority that Allah bestowed upon Christ. Again, let us remind ourselves that he was raised to Allah’s level, according to sura 4:148. Adding to that, Paul, a divinely appointed apostle (Gal. 1:1, 11-12), insists that God exalted Jesus to the “highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name” (Philippians 2:9, NIV), before Muhammed said that “Allah has the greatest of Names” (7:180).

Even the very word “sign,” (*aya* in Arabic) used to describe Jesus (19:21), indicates a semblance of the sender Himself, and reveals the miraculous fact that He became human. Jesus revealed the nature of Allah by His very existence in human form, as a living

miracle. Other parallel passages in the Qur'an are suras 3:50, 21:91, 23:50, and 43:61. In sura 43:61, we see that Jesus will return as "a sign of the Hour of Judgment," confirming the Bible and proving Jesus' message to be universal. Why would Jesus be the one chosen to return as a sign for the judgment of all mankind if His message was just for one people group alone? Luke 3:6 is a quote from Isaiah 40:3-5 about how John the Baptist prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah, and it says: "And all mankind will see God's salvation" (NIV). Jesus Himself predicted His impending death with the following words to His disciples: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:46-47, NASB). So rejoice my friends, because this good news of the forgiveness of sins also includes you, if you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.

THE WORD OF GOD

Before concluding this section, we must mention one final name given to Jesus in the Qur'an. This title of "Word" (3:38; 4:171) in the Qur'an denotes deity, despite the objections of most Muslims. A famous Sunni Muslim commentator, al-Baydawi, contends that this simply means that Jesus came into existence by Allah's command.¹ This first interpretation can easily be explained by reading the section dealing with Christ's birth, earlier in this book. Another famous commentator, Razi, feels that the title is given because Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him.² Either suggestion is possible, as this study reveals, but if the latter

understanding is more accurate, then additional credible evidence for Jesus' divinity is offered.

One such prophecy is Isaiah 9:6, where the child to be born will be called "Mighty God." The Hebrew word for God there is "EL," which cannot be translated in any way other than "God." This is why Isaiah could prophesy in chapter 7:14, that "A virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (NASB). The name "Immanuel" literally means "God with us." Psalm 45 is a prophecy of the Messiah, full of symbolism, as usual, and this individual spoken of is called "the most excellent of men" (v. 2, NIV), "anointed" (v. 7), and "God" (v. 6). Isaiah 40, besides describing the results of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for us all (v. 2), and beautifully illustrating the Trinity, proves Christ's deity by calling Him "God," in verses three and nine. Verse three begins by describing John the Baptist's work in preparing the Jews for the coming of the Messiah (see Mt. 3:1-3), and then the chapter goes on to paint a picture of the Messiah's future work. Furthermore the Messiah is called "Sovereign Lord" in verse ten.

Psalm 102:25-27 is cited by the writer of Hebrews in the New Testament, and applied to Jesus (Heb. 1:10-12). In other words, the creator is Christ Himself. Psalm 68:18-20 talks about how the God of heaven "ascended on high." How could God ascend on high if He had not come down to us? Thus, the Apostle Paul quotes this Psalm and applies it to Jesus Himself, who ascended on high after His resurrection from the dead (Eph. 4:8).

Even verse 19 in that Psalm calls the Lord: “God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens” (NIV). Christ is called “Our Lord and Savior” all throughout the New Testament, and He not only bore our burdens on the cross, but continues to do so as our advocate (1 Jn. 2:1-2). Paul even urged us to “bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2, NASB). In Matthew 11:28, right after proclaiming His unity with the Father in the previous verse, Jesus says: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (NASB). Christ is surely the one foretold of in Psalm 68. These are but a few of the many examples that could be used to demonstrate the Messiah’s true nature. If one examines many of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, he will realize the divine nature of Jesus if he is objectively searching for the truth.

In his Gospel, John used the term “Word” (Gk. Logos) a number of times. John 1:1-2 says “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (NASB). John then discloses the identity of the “Word,” in verse fourteen, by affirming His temporary incarnation and presence among us. In the third verse, John proclaims that the Logos created everything that was created. David, in Psalm 33:6, declares: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth” (NIV). The first chapter of Genesis explains this by describing how it was only after God spoke, that there were corporeal results. Hence, God created everything through His Logos, who is Jesus Christ, according to John’s testimony. Significantly, in Genesis 1:2, the Spirit is mentioned as

being present at the creation, and Moses therefore indicates His participation in the creation, alongside God's Word. Thus, David also links creation to the Breath of God, or the Holy Spirit. So, even in the first few verses of the Bible we see the Trinity represented, as would be expected.

Regarding John chapter one, if anyone doubts that Jesus is meant here, he should read verse seventeen, which settles the issue. John points to Christ's eternal nature by explaining that the Word was "in the beginning with God" (v. 2). This speaks of His preexistence as the ageless Logos, as do verses in the Injil, such as John 12:49, 14:10, and 17:5-8, to list a few. These verses not only remind us that the Logos had no beginning, but also that His words, while spoken on earth, were directly from the Everlasting Father. How could Jesus have been sent from the Father if He did not exist prior to His birth? How could Jesus have existed prior to His birth and not have been more than just a prophet? How could Jesus have existed alongside the Father and not have been divine? Notice what Jesus said in John 17:5: "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (NASB). Apparently, Jesus' physical body was not His true ontological essence, nor was time His boundary.

In the context of John 8:31, Jesus was being harassed by Jews who were accusing Him of being demon-possessed, due to the miracles He was performing and the claims He was making for Himself. The Jews shouted: "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You

seen Abraham?” (Jn. 8:57, NASB). Jesus’ classic answer in the following verse almost resulted in His being stoned to death for blasphemy (juxtaposing Himself with God), according to verse 59. Jesus answered “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am” (v. 58, NASB). Why did the Jews react so harshly in this instance? In Exodus 3:14, Moses asked God who he should say sent him to the Israelites in Egypt, and God responded by saying “I AM WHO I AM; . . . Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (NASB). This name for God is also mentioned in Isaiah 47:10, where Babylon is being rebuked for applying the divine name to itself. Revelation 1:18 also reflects this appellation, along with many of the “I AM” statements made by Jesus throughout John’s account of the Gospel (e.g. Jn. 6:35; 10:9,14; 14:6). John even used a specific Greek construction in these instances, which was distinct from the norm, to reflect this meaning of deity and expose the true essence of what Jesus was actually saying.

The Old Testament Hebrew rendering of this designation denotes a release from the restrictions of time itself. Thus, when God called Himself “I AM,” He was indicating a nature that exists in the past, present, and future, simultaneously. Jesus deliberately attached this sacred name to Himself. Furthermore, John 1:14 informs us that Jesus temporarily made His dwelling among us, which verifies His pre-existence, participation in His birth, and His divinity. This dwelling among us is a vivid illustration of the tabernacle during Moses’ time. Part of this temporary system of worship, that the Jews had during their wilderness wanderings, consisted of a Tent of Meeting, where the

presence of God would reside. God's glory would fill the tent and Moses would meet the Lord there face to face (Exod. 33:7-11). According to the New Testament, our physical bodies are compared with tents (2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:13), and thus Jesus' temporal body, in John 1:14, is being equated with the Tent of Meeting of old. The glory of God filled Christ's physical tent, and that is why John testifies in this verse that "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Paul also wrote: "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9, NASB).

Some Muslims believe that John used this cognomen "Word" (Logos), for Jesus, after deriving it from Philo, or one of the other Greek mystics.³ This is a common attempt to weaken the Apostle John's testimony by accusing him of plagiarism and yielding to some Gnostic influence, though this is clearly a gratuitous inference. Because of his theories regarding the natures of God and man, Philo could never have argued for the incarnation, like John did.⁴ Actually, Philo's entire concept of the Logos was a cognate of the Apostle Paul's notion of divine wisdom.⁵ First Corinthians 1:30 gives us a hint of Paul's theology on this point, in these words: "Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God" (NIV). In the next chapter, Paul talks about the divine wisdom that is imparted through the Holy Spirit, in verses six and following. He writes about this secret wisdom that many did not have and thus rejected Jesus as Lord and Savior (1 Cor. 2:7-8). In verses nine and following, Paul describes how the Spirit knows the thoughts of God, and in verse sixteen the apostle quotes Isaiah 40:13, by asking: "For who has known the

mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” (NIV). He concludes the verse by answering this very question: “But we have the mind of Christ.” Again, this whole section represents another model of the Trinity since both Christ and the Spirit are directly linked with God’s divine wisdom. Colossians 2:2-3 and Ephesians 1:17 are two more comparable examples in Paul’s letters. Thus, even if John did use this term that had indeed been previously employed by Philo, it still would not affect his personal usage of the term itself, nor does it have any bearing on his credibility as an apostle. John wrote to Christians in Asia Minor in his subsequent epistles to combat Gnosticism, so he must have been quite familiar with Philo’s work, though many would allege that Philo was not a Gnostic himself.⁶ Regardless of this, Philo had explicit Gnostic tendencies and it would only be expected for John to use one of his opponent’s terms to his own advantage.

The term “Logos” actually existed in Stoicism long before Philo’s time (c. 30 B.C. - 50 A.D.). Zeno of Cyprus (335-263 B.C.), the father of Stoicism, used the term “Logos” in Stoic physics, for the material that keeps the cosmos together. Two other names used synonymously with “Logo” were “Breath” (Gk. *pneuma*) and Zeus.⁷ This understanding can easily be compared with Colossians 1:17 in relation to Jesus Christ. According to ancient Stoicism, the world consists of fire undergoing endless cycles of change into air, water, earth, and back into fire. But ordering this instability is the Ultimate Source of Equilibrium known as the Logos, or the impersonal god of the universe. In the realm of Stoic ethics, the Logos was the perfect standard of behavior, according to reason itself.

If one lived ethically, then he lived rationally, or according to the Logos.⁸ Again, the parallels with Christ and His exemplary model of ethics are indeed striking. The Greeks also used this term “Logos” in order to refer not only to the spoken word, but also the unspoken word, or the mind. To the Greeks, the mind, or reason in general, demanded the highest form of respect and attention. The ancient Greeks, as was pointed out, believed in an eternal Logos (*Word*) that controlled the universe itself, and it certainly was not what the Jews, Christians, and Muslims, would call “God,” but it nevertheless was a Superior Eternal Source of Reason that was all encompassing.

Thus, John simply applied this term “Logos” to Christ, in the Jewish context of a personal God. The term would then have been comprehensible to both Jews and Greeks, and consequently rather effective for accomplishing John’s goal in reaching the Greeks also, with Christ’s universal Gospel message. Those who attempt to undermine the Bible’s authority by presuming that he was merely influenced by Zeno, or Philo, and as a result applied the term “Logos” to Christ with similar connotations, are surely way off base. This is vividly discernible when the whole Jewish element of his writings is placed in its proper Christian context. John, though far from being a Stoic or Gnostic, was quite familiar with both groups, and deliberately used a common appellation for Christ in order to prove His deity as the personal God in the flesh. Therefore, an historical and etymological tracing of this term “Word” proves the apostle’s original convictions regarding Jesus, and Muhammed’s use of the same exact term for Christ should cause every Muslim to draw those same exact conclusions.

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1. Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an*, p. 45.
 2. Ibid., p. 46.
 3. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Brentwood, Maryland: Amma Corporation, 1991), p. 239.
 4. G.W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, K-P* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979-88), p. 849.
 5. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, p. 454.
 6. Ibid., p. 454.
 7. Ibid., p. 335.
 8. Ibid., pp. 336-38.

Section Two: Muhammed **And The Bible**

Chapter 11: Did Muhammed Fulfill Biblical Prophecies?

Instead of changing one's perspective of the Qur'an, like this first approach, some have reevaluated the meaning of the Bible in order to solve this conflict between Islam and Christianity. Abdu L-Ahad Dawud has written a very controversial book called *Muhammed in the Bible*, and in it he says that the entire Old Testament focuses on Muhammed, instead of on Jesus Christ. He actually alleges that Muhammed is even paramount in the New Testament.¹ Briefly, from a critical viewpoint, we will take a look at some prophecies that he applies to Muhammed, and hopefully will do so respectfully. This is by no means an attack on Islam or on Muhammed; it is simply an attempt to interpret the Bible correctly and according to its original context. Every Christian and Muslim should expect nothing less.

An Historical Sketch

In Genesis twelve, we have the famous promise to Abram that all nations would be blessed through him (v. 3). Hagar bore Ishmael (meaning 'God hears') when Abram was 86 years old (Gen. 16). We also see that Ishmael's descendants will be enemies of Israel, and that prophecy is being evidenced even now (Gen. 16:11-12). In Genesis seventeen, we see that God institutes circumcision for all males who are eight days old. We also see that God changes Abram's name (meaning 'exalted father') to Abraham (meaning 'father of many') and tells Abraham that it is through his second son, the promised child Isaac,

not Ishmael, that this promise will be fulfilled (Gen. 17:19-21; 21:8-14).

Concerning Ishmael and his descendants, we see a list of them in Genesis 25:12-18.

Verse eighteen confirms the prophecy in Genesis sixteen by saying “they lived in hostility toward all their brothers.” History definitely confirms this. We see Ishmael’s descendants (Arabs) mentioned in the Bible several times, but usually showing their inferiority to the Jews, as the chosen people of God and benefactors of His promise to Abraham, that was accepted by faith, not works (Gen. 15:6).

Biblical References To Arabs

1. 2 Chronicles 9:14 shows Arabian kings bringing gifts to David’s son Solomon.
2. 2 Chronicles 17:10-11 shows that God caused the Arabs to be afraid of Judah, and they also gave gifts to King Jehoshaphat.
3. 2 Chronicles 26:7 shows that God helped King Uzziah defeat the Arabs in battle.

When Nehemiah assembled some Israelites to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls after the Babylonian captivity, one of the men who opposed him was an Arab (Neh. 2:19-20).

And we see that Nehemiah’s (a Jew) God was not the God of the Arabs (Neh. 4:20).

Biblical References To Kedar

Concerning Kedar, one of the sons of Ishmael according to Genesis 25, his name is mentioned in the Old Testament several times too. But practically every meaningful or

relevant instance is in a negative light. Here are some examples:

1. Genesis 25:13 - One of Ishmael's sons was Kedar.
2. 1 Chronicles 1:29 - One of Ishmael's sons was Kedar.
3. Psalm 120:5 - talks about the descendants of Kedar being of those who hate peace (v. 6).
4. Song of Solomon (Songs) 1:5 - Simply mentions the tents of Kedar being dark.
5. Isaiah 21:16-17 --

We see a prophecy against Arabia in verses 13-17 after the prophecy against Edom in verses 11-12. In verse sixteen we see that all the pomp of Kedar will come to an end within a year. Now, there are also prophecies against Israel in the book of Isaiah. In fact, immediately following the prophecy against Kedar's descendants, we see a prophecy against Jerusalem. But if one reads through Isaiah, it is clear that God will rescue Israel and atone for her sins, and restore her position. That is the difference between all the prophecies against Israel or Judah, as opposed to all the other nations prophesied against in the Old Testament.

1. Isaiah 42:11- "Let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice."

This is one of the few positive references relating to Ishmael's descendants, but let us research a little in order to understand why. In sura 7:157, it says that Muhammed was

prophesied about in the Torah and the Gospel. Some like to link this prophecy with Muhammed, so it shall be discussed at length, even though Isaiah is neither found in the Torah, nor in the Gospel. In verses 6-7, we see that the Gentiles will also be allowed to share in Israel's salvation sometime in the future. Thus, in verse eleven, the Gentiles (Kedar's descendants and the people of Sela here) are to rejoice because they too will eventually have a chance to join God's family. In Acts 2:11, on the Day of Pentecost, the day when the Church was born, we see that there were Arab converts to Judaism present. They quite possibly may have been included in the group of 3,000 people who were baptized into Christ Jesus, right after Peter's sermon and testimony about the crucifixion and resurrection, which was delivered that very day (Acts 2:41). If so, then they fulfilled this prophecy in Isaiah 42. After they accepted Jesus and the salvation that comes only through Him (see Acts 4:12), they gave glory to the Lord and proclaimed His praise in the islands (Isa. 42:12).

Let us begin with verse one in Isaiah 42. This chosen one (i.e. Messiah) will be one in whom God is well pleased, and on whom the Holy Spirit will rest (see Mt. 3:16-17). He is also referred to as a "servant" in verse one. The Hebrew word is "abad," and is used of slaves in Genesis 39:17 and Deuteronomy 5:15, among hundreds of other cases. The Injil is replete with examples showing Jesus' nature as a servant (Mt. 20:28, Lk. 22:27, Jn. 13:4-5). In sura 43:59, Jesus is called a "servant" and the Arabic word means "one who fully submits himself to the will of Allah." This is exactly what Jesus did according to the Apostle Paul's testimony (Philippians 2:5-8). Again, one should remember that the

Qur'an itself calls Jesus the "Messiah" (literally *chosen one, anointed*) eleven times.

Moreover, if one wants to say that Muhammed fulfills this prophecy, then it must be contended that he is connected to all the other prophecies in Isaiah referring to the "servant" (*abad*) of the Lord, for the sake of consistency. For example, Muhammed would have to be the "servant" in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, whose appearance would be disfigured beyond that of any man and whose form marred beyond human likeness (52:14). This seems to refer to someone who was brutally beaten and tortured to the point of utterly changing his physical appearance. Muhammed would then have to be the one who would be a man of sorrows, and familiar with our infirmities (v. 3). Jesus indeed was acquainted with man's ailments since He healed so many people with all kinds of diseases. Likewise, it would have been necessary for Muhammed to have been pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities, while bringing us peace and healing through his wounds (v. 5). This indicates crucifixion as the means of torture used, because of the word "pierced." Muhammed would then have had to have all our sins laid upon him (v. 6). He then would have been required, like a lamb, to be slain for the sins of the people without raising an argument (vv. 7-8). Matthew 27:11-14 gives a vivid example of how Jesus fulfilled this prophecy by remaining silent in the face of false charges and looming death.

Furthermore, Muhammed would have had to have been considered a criminal, even though he never lied or hurt anyone physically, and then granted a rich man's grave after

his death (v. 9). Considering all the battles that Muhammed was involved in, the hope that he never hurt anyone physically seems quite unbelievable. In addition to this, Matthew 27:57-61 reveals that Jesus was placed in Joseph's tomb after dying as a religious convict. Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin according to Mark 15:43, and therefore was doubtless a rich man, as Matthew 27:57 states. Besides this, the tomb was brand new and had never contained a body (Lk. 23:53). Archaeology has shown that only the wealthy owned tombs like the one provided to Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea, as recorded in the Injil. It has also been proved that these tombs were generally in gardens, as in Jesus' case. Three kinds of tombs have been found by modern archaeology, but only two, the acrosalia and bench tombs, remain as possible candidates for being ones in which Christ was buried. These tombs were apparently rare in Jesus' day and were solely reserved for the rich and prominent. Amazingly, first century acrosalia tombs have been discovered near the traditional site of Christ's place of burial.²

Isaiah 53:10-12 continues by teaching us that this righteous "servant" must bear the sin of many as a guilt offering, in conformity with God's own will (sura 3:53-54). We also see that this "servant" will continue living after His death (vv. 10-11), which undoubtedly implies the resurrection of Jesus. Muhammed does not even come close to fitting this description, but it is precisely what Jesus did for the entire world, according to the message of the Injil. Jesus even cited this prophecy and professed to be the one who would fulfill it (Lk. 22:37).

In Isaiah 42:3-4 we see that this “servant” will establish justice by being faithful, though it will be difficult for him. But he will be successful, and will not allow discouragement to defeat or deter him from accomplishing his task (Lk. 22:42). Consequently, this justice that is attained on the earth will provide hope for people everywhere. This will be explained in detail shortly. In Isaiah 9:6-7 it is written that a child will be born in the future who will establish justice and righteousness on the earth forever. He will reign on David’s throne (i.e. be a king from David’s line) and will be called “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” and “Everlasting Father.” We obviously see a picture of the Trinity here, and Jesus fits the prophecy perfectly. Jesus, in this instance, is called “Counselor” and “Father,” showing His unity with the other two who comprise the Godhead. Moreover, the Gospel applies this to Jesus in Matthew 12:15-21. Muhammed cannot be the one Isaiah is alluding to in chapter nine, and therefore it seems irresponsible to assume that he is the central figure spoken of in chapter 42. This is especially true when one reads Isaiah 43, which sets Israel apart as God’s possession, and the one with whom He dwells.

In Isaiah 42:6 we see that this “servant” will be a “light to the Gentiles.” Verse sixteen also emphasizes this idea. When Jesus was just an infant, Simeon took Him and called Christ “A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES” (Lk. 2:32, NASB). Jesus said “I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness” (Jn. 12:46, NASB). In the Qur’an, sura 24 is called “Light.” In

24:35, we see that Allah Himself is called “the Light.” So, even if one wanted to claim that this “servant” in Isaiah 42 was Muhammed, he would have to equate Muhammed with Allah, thus committing shirk (i.e. attributing partners to Allah). Christians have always considered Jesus to be Allah in the flesh, even from the first century onward. So Jesus alone seems to qualify as the candidate. Furthermore, Jesus quotes from Isaiah 62:1-2, which seems to repeat Isaiah 42:7, and applies it to Himself, in the synagogue at Nazareth (Lk. 4:17-21). One can also argue that Isaiah 42:8 records the words of Christ, who is called “the Lord” all throughout the New Testament.

Some may say that Jesus does not fit the picture painted by verse thirteen, but that argument is used carelessly. First of all, let us remember that this “servant” will be extremely gentle in establishing justice (vv. 2-3). Thus, this battle cry relates to a spiritual war, not a physical one. We see many illustrations of spiritual warfare in the New Testament (Rom. 13:12; 2 Cor. 6:7, 10:4; Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Thes. 5:8; Rev. 12:11). Isaiah, in chapter 59, talks about God’s enemies. It says that all sinners are His enemies and separated from Him because of their sins. It goes on to describe how justice is nowhere to be found. In verses 16-21, it is clear that God decides to bring forth justice on His own by putting on spiritual armor for the purpose of redeeming (defeating them in the spiritual sense) His enemies. Just like in a physical battle, God wants to take captive His enemies and make them His allies. In Jesus’ case, God brought forth justice by punishing Christ for our sins. Hence, there was justice since God’s just (i.e. righteous) nature was satisfied. In the process, we were bought at a price (1 Cor. 6:20) and given

the chance to be God's allies rather than being His enemies. Thus the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21:

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their transgressions against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (NASB).

Jesus Himself intimated that the Father would establish justice through Him as the Son of Man, in Luke 18. The parable Jesus told is about an unjust judge, who stands in contrast to God and Jesus Christ Himself, the Just Judge. Notice how Jesus announces that God will bring forth justice on the earth, and quickly (v. 8). The implication is that this justice on the earth was established through the Son of Man. Again, let it be repeated that several hadiths profess that Christ is the Just Judge. Even the title "Son of Man" substantiates this by showing Christ's humanity and divinity simultaneously. The title was derived from Psalm 80:17 and Daniel 7:13-14, and the latter passage focuses on His authority over all nations, making Him the Divine Judge (see Lk. 21:27). It should be noted that Jesus reminded His hearers that He had the authority to judge *because* He was the Son of Man (Jn. 5:27).

In any case, Muhammed cannot be the "servant" of the Lord in Isaiah since all the references to the "servant" in Isaiah either literally apply to the nation of Israel, one of Jacob's physical descendants, or to spiritual Israel (Isa. 41:9; 49:3, 7ff; 65:8ff). In

chapter 65 we see that spiritual Israel is being described, and this prophecy was fulfilled in the Church that Jesus built, according to Matthew 16:18. In Isaiah 65:15, it is clear that part of this prophecy involves the giving of a new name to God's servants. In Revelation 3:12, the Apostle John records Jesus' words to the church at Sardis:

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name (NASB).

Accordingly, this prophecy was already fulfilled by the Church, who will reside in the new Jerusalem, and whose names are written in heaven, according to Hebrews 12:22-24. Hence, Muhammed can be included in this prophecy only if he were a Christian, that being a spiritual Jew (Rom. 9-11).

If one wants to argue that the Persian king Cyrus, called God's "anointed," in Isaiah 45:1, is also a "servant" of the Lord, then he must also admit that the reason was because he was providing freedom to the Israelites from their Babylonian captors. Again, this proves that the "servant" and his activity are directly linked with helping Israel. Cyrus was a type of messiah since he delivered physical Israel from physical bondage, exactly like Moses did. Jesus, by contrast, was the true Messiah because He delivered spiritual Israel from spiritual bondage. He freed them from their guilt and gave them power over sin and death. So Cyrus' actions were directly related to the nation of Israel itself. Besides this, it should be noted that Cyrus is not called "servant" in Isaiah 44:28, but

“shepherd” (Hebrew ro’iy) rather. Consequently, even he cannot rightfully be linked to the “servant” in Isaiah, but merely stands as a semblance of the coming Messiah, or Anointed One. Concerning Muhammed, since he has no connection with Israel whatsoever, he has no connection to these prophecies. In fact, according to the Qur’an itself, he never even claimed to have any link to them, so why should anyone suggest that he did?

Kedar Passages Continued

1. Isaiah 60:7-9 - Kedar and his descendants will bring honor to Israel by becoming their slaves.
2. Jeremiah 2:10-11 - Here, we see that the descendants of Kedar were not worshipping the true God, though they did not change their idols for others. So here, while there is no compliment given to Kedar, there is a stern rebuke of Israel for doing something that even the pagans would not do.
3. Jeremiah 49:28-29 - This is simply another command by the God of Israel to attack Kedar.
4. Ezekiel 27:21 - This is a prophecy against Tyre, and it merely mentions that merchants from Kedar and Arabia did business with them.

Some Biblical References to the Ishmaelites

1. Judges 8:24 - Shows how the Lord used Gideon to defeat them in battle and

requested their gold earrings as his share of the plunder.

2. Psalm 83:6 - The entire Psalm is a prayer against the enemies of the Lord and Kedar's descendants are included here (v. 2).

So far, the author sees no justification for expecting an Arab or one of Ishmael's descendants to be the key figure prophesied in the Old Testament. This is especially true since Israel was the chosen nation that was waiting for a deliverer from the line of David (i.e. the line of Judah). Furthermore, the idea that God would send Israel a prophet from their enemies is a bit far fetched. Nevertheless, the search for Muhammed in the Bible will continue.

1. Norman Geisler, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*, pp. 147-48.
2. J.P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*, chapter 6.

Chapter 12: A Pivotal Prophecy

1. Deuteronomy 18:15-18 – “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers” (v. 15).

If one reads the book of Deuteronomy, in its entirety and in its original context, it is almost absurd to suggest that anyone other than Jacob's physical descendants (Israel) could be included in Moses' address to the people. This book was exclusively for the Israelites, and gives no indication that it was intended for a broader audience (Deut. 1:1-3). Even Muhammed argues against such a conclusion by saying "We gave Moses the Book . . . and We made it a guide for the children of Israel" (32:23). To presuppose that Deuteronomy 1:8 includes Ishmael's descendants because Abraham's name is mentioned, thus giving grounds for a prophecy about Muhammed, totally contradicts the rest of the book.

In chapter two, the Edomites are called Israel's brothers (vv. 4, 8) and therefore an argument could be made that this prophet in chapter eighteen came from the Edomite line. Unfortunately this cannot include Muhammed since he came from Ishmael's line, not Esau's. Let us remember that Esau was not only one of Abraham's descendants, but also one of Isaac's, and Isaac was the promised child, in contrast to Ishmael. There is a big difference between the two. But even though the Edomites are called "brothers" here, let us remember that they are simply mentioned in passing. They do not play any major role in the book of Deuteronomy whatsoever. So creating an argument based on the false assumption that Edom's line merits primary attention in this book also smacks of deception.

As you may recall, Isaac had two sons: Jacob and Esau. Jacob had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel, while Esau became the father of the Edomites, who settled in Seir (Gen. 36:9). In Genesis 27 we see that Isaac blesses Jacob, whose name becomes Israel (Gen. 32:28), not Esau, the father of Edom. In fact, one of the prophetic books of the Old Testament (Obadiah) was written to show Israel's superiority over Esau and his descendants. It is a prophecy against Edom specifically, and it is one of many in the Old Testament. Thus, Deuteronomy 1:8 specifically says "See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them" (NASB). What land is Moses talking about? The answer is Canaan, the land promised to the Jewish nation, not to the Ishmaelites. We even see Moses' parting words to his audience, the twelve tribes of Israel, in his closing chapter (Deut. 33).

In Deuteronomy 18:1-2, we see that the Levites will not receive an inheritance from their Israelite brothers, meaning the other eleven tribes, because the Lord Himself is their inheritance. In verses 9-14, just before our prophecy begins, we see that Israel is not to be like the nations around them once they enter into the promised land, because those nations are all enemies of God. Israel is to be set apart from the other nations. It is in this context that our prophecy is written. So, anyone who wants to argue that Muhammed (an Arab) is one of Israel's brothers, must ignore the immediate context as well as the entire message of the book itself. This would be a pathetic example of hermeneutics. In fact, another look at the immediate context provides more proof that the

meaning of “brothers” in our prophecy refers only to Israelites. According to Deuteronomy 17:15, Israel is instructed to choose a king from among their own brothers. It goes on to say: “Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite” (NIV). So “brothers” in our text means fellow Israelites. And it just does not seem logical for God to choose a prophet from Israel’s enemies in order to guide them, especially after reading Deuteronomy 17:15.¹ No Muslim would argue that Muhammed was sent as a prophet directly to Israel anyway, but that is one of the requirements of this prophet since he will be raised up for “you” (i.e. Israel).

Even the Qur’an itself contends that the prophetic line was through Isaac instead of Ishmael (29:27). Yusuf Ali decided to include Abraham’s name, in this aya, in order to suggest Muhammed as a possible candidate for being this prophet from Deuteronomy 18, the prophet under discussion. The problem is that Abraham’s name is not in the Arabic text.² So, Yusuf Ali has even determined to be dishonest in defending his personal opinions concerning the identity of this prophet. The prophet of Deuteronomy 18 is mentioned in the closing chapter of the book, and some criteria are given for identifying him. In Deuteronomy 34:10-12, it is obvious that this prophet will be one who God knew face to face, and will work miracles similar to the ones Moses performed in the sight of all Israel. This is apparently one of the main ways in which the prophet will be like Moses. Jesus performed many miracles and some were very similar to those of Moses, but Muhammed may not have performed miracles at all.

Did Muhammed Perform Miracles?

Many Muslims point to sura 54:1-2, where “the Hour of Judgment is near,” and the “moon was rent asunder,” as a miracle that Muhammed supposedly performed. First of all, there is no indication that Muhammed has anything to do with splitting the moon in half. He does not speak of this as a miracle that anyone is performing, but instead speaks of it as a “sign,” which can be understood in more than one way.³ In the Bible, we see several instances when the moon is figuratively described as turning to blood, and that will supposedly be one of the signs of the Hour of Judgment (see Joel 2:31, Rev. 6:12-17). Simply put, it will be a sign of the Judgment Day. In ayas 6-8, we see “the Inviter” gathering the dead from their graves, and in ayas 46-48 they will be cast into hell. This entire sura seems to paint a picture of the end times, thus placing the splitting of the moon in a future context. Many Muslim commentators do not agree that Muhammed split the moon in half, because in their view it does not seem consistent with what the text actually says. The past tense of “rent asunder” is simply understood as the typical linguistic method of expressing the assurance that a future event will doubtless occur. This is both common in Arabic and Hebrew. Moreover, sura 3:181-84 seems to indicate that Muhammed refused to perform any miracles, and these ayas were written after those in sura 54.⁴ Another reference to consider is sura 2:118. Finally, let us not forget the possibility of an eclipse, or simply a half-moon phase.

Many Muslims try to use sura 6:35 in order to prove that Muhammed performed miracles, but this is exactly the opposite of what the text really indicates. Here, if

Muhammed could have performed miracles, then he would not have been criticized for the lack of a miracle in aya 37. That is the only logical way to interpret this passage. Some Muslims like to point to 17:1 as a miracle, though it does not fit the nine Islamic criteria for being one (*mudjiza*). Many Muslim scholars interpret this to be a spiritual journey, not a physical one. If that is the case, then it cannot be a miracle. Even A'isha, one of Muhammed's fourteen wives, claimed that his body simply remained in its place during the entire process.⁵

The victorious Battle at Badr is also considered by some to be a miracle, but many questions remain. The battle is supposedly mentioned in suras 3:123, 5:11, and 8:17, but many scholars disagree. Many think that these suras refer to other events such as the assassination attempt of Muhammed at Usfan (sura 5), or figuratively illustrate how Muhammed cast fear into the heart of his enemy, Ubai ibn Khalaf (sura 8). Again, there cannot be a miracle in sura three because it does not meet the nine Islamic requirements for miracles. If one wants to claim that Muhammed's outnumbered army's victory here represents a miracle concerning Allah's approval, then it should be remembered that this same army lost the next battle at Uhud. Should this be interpreted as a sign of Allah's condemnation? Among Muhammed's wounds was the loss of his two front teeth. His dead soldiers were butchered on the battlefield, and some actually lost their noses and ears in order to make victory necklaces for the enemy. Muhammed's victory at Badr was by no means the first time that an outnumbered army won a battle, nor was it the last time. It only took Israel six days to defeat Egypt in modern history's (1967) shortest

war.⁶ Again, how should this be interpreted?

Finally, sura 94:1-3 is used by some to indicate a miracle on the part of Muhammed.

Supposedly, his heart was taken out of his chest, cleaned, filled with wisdom, and then

placed back in his body by the angel Gabriel. As would be expected, there is much

controversy concerning these ayas. Many scholars interpret this to be a figurative

process where Allah helped Muhammed cope with the high level of stress he was

enduring, early on in Mecca.⁷ Even if it was a miracle, it was performed by the angel

rather than by Muhammed himself. So Muhammed may not have done miracles at all. If

he did, they not only differed from those Moses performed, but they even may destroy his

credibility as a prophet of Allah, since he very well may have denied performing them,

according to the testimony of the Qur'an (see 2:118;

6:37; 20:133). Either way, Muhammed certainly seems to be an unlikely candidate for

being the prophet being foretold in Deuteronomy 18:15-18.

A Comparison Of Moses And Jesus

The former Muslim apologist, Ahmad Deedat, argued that Jesus could not be this prophet

of Deuteronomy 18 because He was not like Moses at all. Let us see if Deedat's thesis

actually has a factual basis.

1. All Jewish prophets were like Moses in a limited sense according to Scripture.

- A. Mediator - one who intercedes between two parties
 - 1. priest - represented the people before God
 - 2. prophet - represented God before the people

 - B. None of these mediators were completely like Moses in these roles
 - 1. God spoke to Moses mouth to mouth (Num. 12:6-8)
 - 2. God spoke to Moses face to face (Deut. 34:10)

 - C. Moses stands out because of the tasks God gave him
 - 1. He led Israel out of Egyptian captivity (the Exodus)
 - 2. He received God's law at Mt. Sinai
2. Jesus perfectly fulfills the requirement like unto Moses not just in a general sense, but even in the very details of His life.
- A. Prophet - spokesman for God
 - 1. Moses
 - a. Exod. 3:1ff – God’s call from the burning bush on Mt. Sinai
 - b. Exod. 4:10-16 - God will give him the words to say
 - c. Exod. 7:1 - Moses will be as God to Pharaoh

 - 2. Jesus
 - a. Mt. 21:11, 46 - people recognized Him as a prophet
 - b. Jn. 12:47-50 - His teachings came directly from the Father

c. Heb. 1:1-2 - He was the last in a long line of prophets

B. Savior - deliverer

1. Moses

a. Exod. 3:10 - Moses called to lead Israel out of slavery in Egypt

b. Exod. 3-14 - the story of the Exodus

2. Jesus - His name means “the Lord saves”

a. Mt. 1:21 - Gabriel told Joseph it is He who will save His people from their sins

1. Lk. 2:11 - the angels told the shepherds that “Today . . . a Savior has been born to you

c. Jn. 1:29 – “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”

d. Rom. 3:19-26 - salvation by grace through faith in Christ

C. Law-giver

1. Moses - the Old Covenant

a. Exod. 19-31 - giving of the law to Moses at Mt. Sinai

b. Deut. 31:24-26 - Moses completes the writing of the law in a book

c. Deut. 32:45-47 – Moses’ final exhortations to keep the law

2. Jesus - the New Covenant

a. Mt. 5-7 – Jesus’ sermon emphasizing grace over law

- b. Jn. 1:17 – “the law came through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus”
- c. Jn. 14:6 – “I am the way the truth and the life”
- d. Jn. 15:10-15 – “This is my commandment, that you love one another”

D. Miracle-worker

1. Moses

- a. Exod. 4:1-9, 17 - Moses given the power to work miracles
- b. Deut. 34:7-12 - a summary statement about Moses’ many miracles

2. Jesus

- a. Acts 2:22 - Jesus was attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs
- b. Jn. 20:30-31 - Jesus did many more miracles that were not even recorded

E. Circumstances of their birth and childhood

1. Attempt by the king to kill all the Jewish babies

- a. Exod. 1:15-22 - Moses in danger
- b. Mt. 2:13-16 - Jesus in danger

2. Put in an unusual place as an infant due to circumstances

- a. Exod. 2:1-3 - Moses placed in a wicker basket in the Nile River
- b. Lk. 2:7 - Jesus placed in a stable

3. Found there by royal visitors
 - a. Exod. 2:5-10 - Moses found by Pharaoh daughter
 - b. Mt. 2:1-11 - Jesus found by the wise men from the east with expensive gifts
4. Each had both real and foster parents
 - a. Exod. 2:1, 2, 10 - Jochebed and Amram/Pharaoh's daughter
 - b. Mt. 1:18-25 - the Holy Spirit/Mary and Joseph
5. Born in one place but grew up in another place
 - a. Exod. 2:1, 2, 10 - Goshen/Pharaoh's palace
 - b. Mt. 2:1, 13-23 - Bethlehem/Nazareth

F. Man of great wisdom and learning

1. Moses
 - a. man of power in words and deeds" (NASB)
 - b. Heb. 11:24-26 -- refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (indicating Godly wisdom)
2. Jesus
 - a. Lk. 4:22 – the people were amazed at His words and wisdom
 - b. Lk. 2:40-52 - in the temple at age twelve stunning the teachers of the law

- c. Mt. 13:53-54 - hometown folks astonished at His wisdom
- d. Jn. 7:14-17, 46 - enemies marveled at His wisdom

G. Prepared in the wilderness prior to ministry

1. Moses

- a. Exod. 2:15-22 - in the land of Midian for forty years
- b. Acts 7:23 – Moses visits his fellow Israelites at age forty

2. Jesus

- a. Mt. 4:1-11 - in the wilderness for forty days

H. Rejected by his own people

1. Moses

- a. Exod. 5:19-21 - the situation with the bricks and straw
- b. Exod. 14:10-12 - at the Red Sea
- c. Exod. 16:1-3 - the people were hungry
- d. Exod. 17:1-4 - the people were thirsty
- e. Num. 14:1-4, 10 - report of the spies sent to Canaan

2. Jesus

- a. Isa. 53:3 - despised and rejected by men
- b. Jn. 1:11 – “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him” (NASB)

- c. Lk. 4:16-30 - rejected at Nazareth
- d. Mt. 26-27; Mk. 14-15; Lk.22-23; Jn. 18-19 - arrest, trials, crucifixion

I. Willingness to sacrifice himself for his people

1. Moses

- a. Exod. 32:1-35 - making of the golden calf at Mt. Sinai

2. Jesus

- a. Isa. 53:5 – “was pierced through for our transgressions” (NASB)
- b. Mt. 16:21 - warns the apostles for the first time that He must die in Jerusalem
- c. Jn. 3:14-17 - Son of Man must be lifted up like the bronze serpent during Moses’ time
- d. Jn. 10:11-18 – Christ is the good Shepherd, who lays down His life for the sheep
- e. Mt. 26:26-29; Lk. 22:14-20 - the Eucharist instituted
- f. Mt. 26-27; Mk. 14-15; Lk. 22-23; Jn. 18-19 - arrest, trials, crucifixion
- g. Philippians 2:5-8 – “became obedient unto death . . . on a cross”

J. Intimate contact with God

1. Moses

- a. Exod. 33:18-23 - Moses saw God more fully than any other man

- b. Exod. 34:28-33 - experience caused Moses' face to shine
- c. Num. 12:1-8 - God spoke to Moses intimately
- d. Deut. 34:10 - very intimate relationship

2. Jesus

- a. Jn. 1:18 - no man has seen God but Jesus revealed Him to us
- b. Mt. 11:27 - only Jesus knows God completely
- c. Jn. 10:30 – “I and the Father are one” (NASB)
- d. Jn. 14:9 – “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (NASB)
- e. Col. 1:15 – “image of the invisible God” (NASB)
- f. Heb. 1:3 – “He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature” (NASB)

K. Followers were baptized

1. Moses

- a. 1 Cor. 10:1, 2 – “baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (NASB)

2. Jesus

- a. Mt. 28:19-20 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”
- b. Acts 2:38 – “be baptized, everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ”

- c. Gal. 3:27 – “you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”

Aside from both being Jewish prophets who were sent directly to the Jews, much more could be said. Just a few more examples should suffice for our purposes here.

Both Moses and Jesus --

1. built residences in which the presence of God would reside (Exod. 26-28; Mt. 16:17-18)
2. fasted for forty days (Exod. 34:28; Mt. 4:2)
3. miraculously controlled the sea (Exod. 14:21; Mt. 8:26)
4. miraculously fed a multitude (Exod. 16:15; Mt. 14:20-21)
5. had radiant faces (Exod. 34:35; Mt. 17:2)
6. endured grumbling from the Jews (Exod. 15:24; Mk. 7:2ff)
7. were discredited in the home (Num. 12:1; Jn. 7:5)
8. made intercessory prayers (Exod. 32:32; Jn. 17:9)
9. had seventy helpers (Num. 11:16-17; Lk. 10:1)
10. established memorials (Exod. 12:14; Lk. 22:19)
11. reappeared after their deaths (Mt. 17:3; Acts 1:3; 9:4ff)
12. dealt with holy bread (Exod. 25:23-30; Mt. 26:23-26; Jn. 6:25-59)
13. were called “faithful servants” (Heb. 3:2-5)
14. were present on the Mount of Transfiguration and spoke to God (Mt. 17:1-5)
15. prophesied events that were fulfilled (Deut. 18:15-22, 28:15-68; Mt. 24 - Jerusalem)
16. died because of sin (Num. 20:12; Jn. 1:29, 10:14-16)

17. dealt with water and a rock (1 Cor. 10:4; Jn. 4:13-14; 7:37-38)

John the Baptist denied being “the prophet” (Jn. 1:21), but Philip (Jn. 1:45), Peter (Acts 3:18-26), and Stephen (Acts 7:37), all agreed that Jesus was truly the one who fulfilled that prophecy. Jesus Christ was indeed the “prophet like unto Moses.” Ahmad Deedat argues that Muhammed was more like Moses than Jesus was. He says that both Moses and Muhammed had two natural parents, though it has already been shown that Moses’ situation was more comparable to Jesus’ family circumstances. Deedat also contends that both Moses and Muhammed got married and had children, while Jesus did not. This cannot be contested. Many of the other prophets had wives also, unlike Jesus. Deedat continues by saying that both Moses and Muhammed were kings, but Jesus denied being a literal king. This is completely faulty reasoning since Moses was not a king, but a prophet. According to the Old Testament, the first king of Israel was Saul, during David’s time (1 Sam. 8-9). Moses died centuries prior to Saul’s coronation. So how could Moses have been a king? Moreover, Jesus was labeled “King of the Jews” by Pilate, and His critics argued that He was even a threat to Caesar (Jn. 19:14-15) because He professed to be “a King” (Jn. 18:37). After His resurrection, Jesus said “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Mt. 28:18, NASB). The Apostle Matthew even calls Jesus a “King” eight times in his Gospel account (2:2; 21:5; 25:34, 40; 27:11, 29, 37, 42). Deedat continues by noting that both Moses and Muhammed died natural deaths, and are currently buried in the earth, unlike Jesus. This fact is assuredly undeniable.⁸

Sure, Moses and Muhammed had similar characteristics, but probably not nearly the amount that Jesus and Moses had. Even if there were as many commonalties, they certainly were not as detailed or unique. Common similarities like being married, having children, dying, remaining in the tomb, and the like, are universal parallels, but uncommon similitudes carry much more weight. On top of that, Muhammed does not seem to fit the criteria for being like Moses according to Deuteronomy 34:10-12, nor does he have the New Testament's testimony to support him. Finally, in Deuteronomy 18:18, we see what God says: "I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him" (NASB). Here it is evident that the prophet will be God's voice to Israel, and will tell them what God Himself commands him directly. Here, there is no indication of an indirect connection to God through the angel Gabriel, which was Muhammed's situation, according to his own testimony. Since Jesus Himself was the living Word of God (Jn. 1:1,14; sura 3:38; 4:171), it seems more plausible for Him to be the fulfillment of this decisive prophecy, and the central figure of both the Old and New Testaments. In the final analysis, reevaluating the Bible as Abdu L-Ahad Dawud has suggested, seems wholly unwarranted and unacceptable.

1. Norman Geisler, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*, p. 148.
2. Ibid., pp. 148-49.
3. Ibid., p. 159.
4. Ibid., p. 159.
5. Ibid., pp. 158-60.
6. Ibid., pp. 160-61.
7. Ibid., p. 161.
8. Ahmed Deedat, *The Choice: Islam and Christianity, volume one* (Chicago: Iqraa Charitable Society, 1993), pp. 7-8.

Chapter 13: Christian Symbolism In Islam And Its Relevance To Muslims

In closing this study, we will discuss one of the most well-known Muslim holidays and consider its connection to Judaism and Christianity. The feast is called Baqr-‘Id, or the Cow Festival, and is mandated by Muhammed in sura 22:32-37. Other names for this festival are ‘Idu’l-Adha, ‘Id-i Qurban, and Bairam. It relates to animal sacrifices made in Mecca while on the hajj, or pilgrimage. In fact, hadiths 18:33 from Al-Muwatta, 5:279 from Sahih Bukhari, and 2602 from Sahih Muslim, all link this feast with the Jewish Day of Atonement. This Muslim feast sprang from Muhammed’s positive ties with the Jews while in Medina. He observed how they celebrated the Day of Atonement on the tenth

day of the seventh month, in the Jewish calendar. This was in connection with God's deliverance of the Jewish nation out of slavery in Egypt, and Muhammed decided to join in celebrating the feast during his first year in the city. Later though, after his relationship with the Jews had worsened, he decided to adopt this feast into Islam, make a few minor changes, and call it by a different name.¹ In the Jewish temple, there was a room designated for general priests called the Holy Place. The room adjacent to the Holy Place was called the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place, where the Ark of God's presence was located. This room was separated from the Holy Place by a large veil, and was designated for the high priest alone. Due to God's holiness, and man's sinfulness, the high priest was always restricted from passing the veil and entering the room, except on the tenth day of the seventh month. It was then that he would symbolically atone for the sins of the people by shedding the blood of bulls, goats (Lev. 16:27-30), rams, and seven male lambs without defect (Num. 29:8). Even this concept of cleansing through a lamb's blood is familiar to many Muslims, since it is customary in some Muslim societies for a lamb to be slaughtered when one buys a new house. Supposedly the new home is cleansed by the sacrifice.

The parallel between Judaism and Islam is striking when Christianity is taken into account. The prophet Jeremiah foretold of a New Covenant that the Lord would establish with the Jews in his Old Testament book (Jer. 31:31). When Jesus breathed His last on the cross, the Gospel testifies that the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom (Mt. 27:50-51) providing access for all of us into the Most Holy Place, or God's very

presence. According to Hebrews 9, Jesus Christ did away with the Old Covenant by fulfilling its symbolism completely as the ultimate sacrifice of atonement. Jesus became our High Priest and entered the Most Holy Place in heaven by means of His own blood shed on the cross for every person in history, not by the blood of animals (Heb. 9:12). In verse thirteen, the writer shows that through the Old Covenant's Day of Atonement, people were made outwardly clean through the blood of these sacrifices. Let us see how the writer continues his explanation:

How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason, He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (NASB).

So Jesus provided true atonement and "eternal redemption" (v. 12) for all who accept Him as Lord and Savior, not just an appearance of outward cleansing, like the Old Covenant sacrifices. The fact that the Day of Atonement was adopted by Muhammed into Islam, provides evidence that Jesus Christ died and rose again in order to give us all eternal life, just like He claimed (Jn. 3:16). Notably, in Mecca each year, Islam has chosen a specific day when a veil is rent in front of the Ka'ba, and most Muslims are unaware of the symbolism. Hopefully, this clarification regarding the Jewish Day of Atonement supplies ample insight for the reader to grasp the elementary meaning of this ceremony.

Sura 7:8-9 also seems relevant to this discussion by talking about the scales of judgment that will supposedly determine the eternal destiny of each individual. In light of this,

A'isha reported Muhammed's alleged statement:

Man has not done anything on the 'Idu'l-Adha more pleasing to Allah than spilling blood; for verily the animal sacrificed will come on the day of resurrection . . . and will make the scales of his (good) actions heavy. Verily its blood reacheth the acceptance of Allah before it falleth upon the ground; therefore be joyful in it.²

One commentator, named Jalal-ud-din As-Suyuti, correctly held that this sacrifice was based on Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son, recorded in sura 37:101-113. Bukhari contended that this son was Ishmael, even though there is nothing in the Qur'an that would even hint at Abraham's older son.³ In fact, the Qur'an appears to agree with Genesis 22 by attesting to Isaac's role in this, rather than Ishmael's. The immediate context refers to Isaac, by name, as the one who was promised to Abraham ahead of time (ayas 101, 112-113). In fact, aya 107 says: "And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice." This correlates ideally with Moses' account of Abraham and Isaac in the Torah (Gen. 22:13). So Abraham was willing to sacrifice his own son Isaac out of love for God, but God rescued Isaac by providing the sacrifice Himself. It is momentous that Muhammed immediately couples the Passover with this section, by noting God's deliverance of the Jews through Moses and Aaron, in ayas 114-115, and it must be spelled out here.

In the Torah, the book of Exodus, God's deliverance of the Jews from Egypt is recorded.

The last plague God used to convince Pharaoh to release the Jews from their captivity, was the killing of the firstborn. An angel was sent into Egypt and he was to kill the firstborn son in every home. This would be so dreadful that Pharaoh himself allowed the Jews to leave his country. The Lord devised a plan to protect the Jews from falling victim to this though, and it is described in Exodus 12 as the Passover. It is written there that each Jewish family was to kill a perfect male lamb and smear its blood on the doorframes. Those families who did this were spared from the plague. In verse thirteen, God promises to pass over the houses when He sees the blood of the lamb, and the Jews were to celebrate this deliverance from bondage, every year, by sacrificing perfect male lambs without breaking any of the

bones (Exod. 12:46). They were to remember the lamb that brought them salvation and freedom.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul says: "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7, NIV). John the Baptist, who prepared the Jews for the Messiah's coming, declared concerning the Christ: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn. 1:29, NASB). One of the original twelve apostles, Peter, wrote in his first epistle that we are not saved by silver or gold, but instead by the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish or defect (1 Pet. 1:19). On Thursday night, the night before the crucifixion, Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with His apostles. Though the Passover was to begin the following day, Jesus wanted to observe it early because He

was aware of what awaited Him on that Friday morning. So as they all remembered the blood of the lambs that set the Jews free during Moses' time, Jesus instituted a new feast called the Eucharist. This new memorial was the fulfillment of the Passover feast because it meant true salvation for everyone through the blood of Jesus, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (see Lk. 22:14-20; Mt. 26:26-28). Jesus was the perfect male Lamb whose bones were never broken. It was a Roman practice to break the legs of those being crucified in order to speed up the dying process. This prevented the victim from elevating his body to a position where breathing becomes possible, and quickly results in asphyxiation. But when the Roman centurions broke the legs of the criminals who were crucified next to Christ, they realized that Jesus had already died. So instead of breaking His legs, they put a spear through His side (Jn. 19:31-37). John makes note of this and its fulfillment of Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20, and Zechariah 12:10.

1. L. Bevan Jones, *The People of the Mosque*, p. 105.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Conclusion: The Result Of Christ's Sacrifice For All Of Us

In sura 39:73-75, a clear reference to heaven is made. The ayas talk about how Allah's people, and especially the angels, will glorify Him while encircling His throne there.

This unquestionably corresponds to the Apostle John's scene in chapter four of the final book in the Bible, Revelation. In allegorical style, John paints the picture perfectly.

Verse eight recalls their praise before His throne: "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, who was and who is and who is to come" (NASB).

The eleventh verse proceeds further: “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created” (NASB). In chapter 5:6, John sees a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne. In chapter 5:11-13, thousands of angels, accompanied by the living creatures and elders, encircle the throne, shouting and singing:

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. . . . To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever (NASB).

Who is this Lamb, my friends? It is Jesus, our Lord and Savior. The one who was slain for our sins. A salient point is that though Christ and the Father appear to be completely separate here, it must be acknowledged that they also have unity here. According to the book of Revelation, the judgment day will be the day of “their wrath” (6:17). The elect will bear both the Lamb’s name, as well as the Father’s name, on their foreheads (14:1). Both the Lamb and the Father share *one* throne in the end (22:1), and they both will be the temple and light of heaven (21:22-23). Finally, both receive worship, and are eternal. In Revelation 1:8, the Father says: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, . . . who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty, ” while Jesus exclaims in 22:13: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (NASB). So, although they have identities in themselves, they are still one, and are due praise and worship because of the wonderful salvation that they have given to us all.¹ The Apostle Paul, in

relation to the grace that we all have received in Christ, wrote: “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15, NASB).

Finally friends, I would just like to repeat Jesus’ famous words: “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13, NASB). Jesus Christ not only defined the greatest level of love, but He went on to express it for you and me, by becoming our Passover lamb. If you presently are in doubt about this, I sincerely hope and pray that you will come to believe it, in time. Jesus loves you more than you will ever know, and only He can save your soul from hell (Acts 4:12), but only if you surrender your life to Him. My fervent prayer is that you will.

1. Jack Cottrell, *God the Redeemer*, p. 126.

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