

Responding
TO MUSLIMS



GLOBAL INITIATIVE
REACHING MUSLIM PEOPLES

Responding to Muslims

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Printed in the United States of America.

First Printing, September 1994 - 1M

Revised Printing, August 1996 - 5M

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Introduction

It has been said that one of the greatest religious revivals to take place within the last few decades has not been among the adherents of Christianity, but rather among those who profess Islam. Outside of Christianity, Islam is the only other religion that spreads with missionary fervor. It is no secret that the ultimate goal of Islamic propagators is to convert the whole world to Islam. Every Muslim is obligated to "invite" non-Muslims to embrace the teachings of his prophet Muhammad and follow the tenets of his religion. This invitation to outsiders is called *dawah*.

Unfortunately some Muslims, though not all, have been driven by this revival fervor to viciously attack Christianity and its teachings hoping to prove the superiority of their own brand of Islam. Theirs is certainly not a polite invitation! Such brutal methods against the sacred teachings and traditions of another person's religion can only create animosity and communal unrest. It must be admitted that insensitive Christians have been guilty of the same! Those with an un-Christlike spirit have been known to slander the prophet of Islam and insult both Muslim culture and tradition. This is not new in the history of the Muslim people. Even during the time of Muhammad it appears there were so-called Christians who mocked the Islamic faith. Against such, the Qur'an declared this warning:

O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for your friends and protectors...take not for friends and protectors those who take your religion for a mockery or sport.

Surat-ul Maida(5):51,57

Except for the above verse that addresses both Jews and Christians who may have been unkind and insensitive to the feelings of Muhammad during his time, it is noteworthy that the Qur'an has some very positive things to say about Christians. These do not apply to nominal Christians, but rather to true followers of Christ. Notice the following Qur'anic descriptions:

*...nearest among them in love to the believers (Muslims) wilt thou find those who say, "We are Christians" because amongst these are **men devoted to learning** and men who have **renounced the world**, and they are **not arrogant**.*

Surat-ul Maida(5):82

*When Jesus found unbelief on their part, he said, "Who will be my helpers to (the work of) God?" Said the disciples: "We are God's helpers; **we believe in God**, and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims (those who **bow to God's will**). Our Lord! We believe in what Thou hast revealed, and we follow the Apostle (Jesus): then write us down among those who bear witness."*

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):52,53

*Said the Disciples (of Jesus), "We are God's helpers!" Then a portion of the Children of Israel believed (became followers of Jesus), and a portion disbelieved. **But We gave power to those who believed** against their enemies, and they became the ones that prevailed.*

Surat-us Saff(61):14

Behold! God said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those

who blaspheme. I will make those who follow thee superior to those who reject faith to the Day of Resurrection."

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):55

*We sent after them (the prophets) Jesus the son of Mary, and bestowed on him the Gospel; and We **ordained in the hearts of those who followed him Compassion and Mercy.***

Surat-ul Hadid(57):27

In relating to Muslim people, do not hesitate to apologize on behalf of the many Christians who have either intentionally or unintentionally insulted their religion and their prophet. Although you may not agree with all the teachings of the Qur'an, let the Muslim know that you are among the true followers of Jesus whom the Qur'an describes as nearest in love to the Muslim people. Let your words and deeds prove to him that you also believe in the one true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and desire to fully submit to His will. Demonstrate to him in a loving way that you too are devoted to learning; free from worldly ties; humble; desirous to be God's helper; endowed with spiritual power over the enemy; destined to prevail to the very end; and one whose heart is filled with compassion and mercy for all people! If you can live up to these expectations, then you will certainly gain an open door into the hearts of Muslim people.

With this in mind, it is extremely important to emphasize that this booklet has not been prepared as a means of attack or counterattack against Muslims. Its purpose is not as resource material for debate and argument. Remember, as a true servant of the Lord Jesus, you must heed the admonition of scripture:

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

2 Timothy 2:23-26

*Remind the people...**to slander no one**, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.*

Titus 3:1,2

This booklet is a compilation of ideas and approaches gleaned from the reading of other authors combined with over 15 years of personal experience with the Muslim community. It is hoped that the following pages will help those Christians who are under persistent attacks from certain Muslim scholars who specialize in debate for the purpose of creating doubt and confusion within the Christian community. However, it must be emphasized that the better approach to prove the claims of Christianity is simply to live it! Every effort must be made on the part of a true follower of Jesus to befriend a Muslim and to establish an understanding of mutual respect. Arguments with verbal attacks and counterattacks only produce losers that result in long-term resentment. How much better to gain a Muslim friend and live before him a life of humility, daily putting into practice the love of Christ which alone is able to melt a hardened heart and open it to greater truths.

In a relationship of friendship and mutual respect, the material of this booklet can be used to a greater advantage to

answer the sincere questions of a Muslim who is aware of the many claims of his religion but seeks to sincerely know the truth! Such an open exchange of beliefs can certainly lead a Muslim friend into a deeper desire for the truths of the Bible, and ultimately a deeper desire for the truth of salvation in Jesus the Messiah.

True followers of Jesus have never been commissioned to take up arms for either a military or verbal war. Instead, they have been commissioned to lay down their worldly aims and carry the message of the gospel to all the world. As servants of God, their mission is to reveal the love of Christ and to preach salvation and forgiveness of sin in His name. They are not to condemn. Rather, as ambassadors for Christ, they are to proclaim the message of reconciliation whereby people might be reconciled to God and to each other! May God bless that noble endeavor.

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Muslim Claims

1. The Qur'an Came to Replace the Bible

Many Muslims contend that the Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam, came to replace the Holy Books of the Jews and Christians, as contained in the Bible, because they became corrupted, altered, outdated, or lost. However, the Qur'an itself says no such thing. Instead, the Qur'an declares that it was sent to confirm the previous revelations. It should be understood that if something is to be confirmed, then that something is of extreme importance, especially if God does the confirming! Notice now the following references in which the Qur'an says it did not come to correct, replace, annul, modify, or do away with; it came to **CONFIRM!**

*And believe in what I reveal, **confirming** the revelation which is with you....*

Surat-ul Baqara(2):41

*And when there comes to them a Book (Qur'an) from God, **confirming** what is with them....*

Surat-ul Baqara(2):89

*...yet they reject all besides, even if it (Qur'an) be truth **confirming** what is with them.*

Surat-ul Baqara(2):91

*And when there came to them an apostle (Muhammad) of God **confirming** what was with them....*

Surat-ul Baqara(2):101

*And before this (Qur'an) was the Book of Moses as a guide and a mercy; and this book (Qur'an) **confirms** (it) in the Arabic tongue.*

Surat-ul Ahqaf(46):12

*And this is a book (Qur'an) which We have sent down, bringing blessings, and **confirming** (the revelations) which came before it.*

Surat-ul An'am(6):92

*To thee (Muhammad) We sent the scripture (Qur'an) in truth **confirming** the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety.*

Surat-ul Maida(5):48

What was so important about these previous revelations that are now contained in the Bible? Why does the Qur'an say it came to confirm and guard them? The Qur'an itself gives us the answer. It tells us that the previous revelations were sent to humankind as admonition, insight, mercy, guidance, and light—and, of course, this light is the only light that can lead the world from the darkness of sin into the splendor of salvation and eternal life. Here are the testimonies of the Qur'an:

*And He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this (the Qur'an) **as a guide to mankind.***

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):3

*It was We who revealed the Law (to Moses); therein was **guidance and light.***

Surat-ul Maida(5):44

*We sent him (Jesus) the Gospel; therein was **guidance and light.***

Surat-ul Maida(5):46

*We did reveal to Moses the book after We had destroyed the earlier generations, (to give) **insight to men, and guidance and mercy, that they might receive admonition.***

Surat-ul Qasas(28):43

Once again it is extremely important for the Muslim to realize that the revelations spoken of above are the same as those found in the Bible. They are Signs from God, and as such, must be believed in faith. The Qur'an is clear on this:

Then those who reject faith in the Signs of God will suffer the severest penalty, and God is exalted in might, Lord of retribution.

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):4

Those who reject the Book and the (revelations) with which We sent Our apostles: but soon shall they know,—when the yokes (shall be) round their necks, and the chains; they shall be dragged along in the boiling fetid fluid; then in the Fire shall they be burned.

Surat-ul Mumin(40):70-72

2. The Scriptures of the Bible Have Been Changed

Nowhere does the Qur'an accuse Christians of changing the written words of the Holy Books of the Jews and Christians. It only accuses the People of the Book of *taharif*—changing the meaning with their tongue and keeping other portions of Scripture hidden.

There is among them a section who distort the Book with their tongues....

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):78

Those who allege that the Scriptures have been altered need to provide the true text in order to prove what exactly has been changed. The most common attempt has been the distribution of the *Gospel of Barnabas*. However, this attempt has proven embarrassing since it contains many contradictions to the Qur'an. Though variant readings exist in the early manuscripts of the Bible, there is nothing to indicate deliberate changes for the sake of tampering with doctrine. The existence of variant readings is also true of the Qur'an. Notice the following excerpt taken from page xxxvi of the Introduction to *The Holy Qur'an* by A. Yusuf Ali, 2nd Edition, 1977.)

From the above historical facts, it must have become clear that the reading of the Qurān (with a few minor variations) is the same as practised and taught by the Holy Prophet. All the scholars and Qurra** of the Qurān have been unanimous in asserting that only that reading will be authentic which (a) conforms to the script of the copy circulated by Ḥaḍrat Uṭhman and (b) complies with the lexicon of Arabic, its usages, idioms and grammar, and above all, (c) is traceable by genuine and continuous links to the Holy Prophet himself. That is why there are only a few variations in its reading and those are not contradictory in their meanings but enlarge their scope and make them more comprehensive. Thus there is absolutely no doubt that the Holy Prophet himself practised those various readings in the instances which exist today, and they make the meanings more comprehensive.

For example, let us take the two authentic readings of (a) verse 3 of Al-Fātiḥah and (b) verse 6 of Al-Mā'idah. One reading of I : 3, that is, "مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ" means the "Master of the Day of Judgement" and the other reading "مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ" means, "the Sovereign of the Day of Judgement" It is obvious that these two readings make the meaning of the verse all the more clear. (c) One reading of V : 6, that is, "فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ" means ". . . . wash your faces and (wash) your feet" as is done at the time of performing ablution with naked feet. The second reading, that is, "فَاغْسِلُوا" means ". . . . فَاغْسِلُوا" means ". . . . wash your faces and wipe your heads and (wipe) your feet" with wet hands.

Reproduction from Yusuf Ali's "The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary," 2nd Edition, 1977.

If such an accusation about the alteration of the Bible is to be considered, then the following questions must be addressed:

Question 1: Who changed the Scriptures?

It is often alleged that the Jews and Christians jointly altered the Scriptures in order to hold back the spread of Islam. But this is highly unlikely since the Jews and Christians themselves differed widely.

The Jews say "The Christians have naught (to stand) upon;" and the Christians say, "The Jews have naught (to stand) upon." Yet they (profess to) study the (same) book.

Surat-ul Baqara(2):113

If the Scriptures had been changed to alter doctrine, surely someone would have protested, as there existed many sects both within Judaism and Christianity. However, there is no mention of such accusations in Church history. The accusations were that Scripture had been falsely interpreted, not that it had been altered.

Jesus never accused the Jews of altering the Scriptures; instead, he drew their attention to them. If changes had been made, Jesus certainly would have exposed them. During the time of Muhammad, true Christian scholars from among the Abyssinians who befriended the Muslims would also have exposed any attempted changes in the Scriptures.

Nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say "We are Christians" because amongst these are men devoted to learning.

Surat-ul Maida(5):82

Question 2: When were the Scriptures supposedly altered?

If the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians had been altered before the death of Muhammad, surely, he would not have been instructed by God to recite the following:

I believe in the Book (of the People of the Book).

Surat-ush Shura(42):15

We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them.

Surat-ul Baqara(2):136

O People of the Book, Ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord.

Surat-ul Maida(5):68

Let the People of the Gospel judge by what God has revealed therein.

Surat-ul Maida(5):47

And in their footsteps we sent Jesus the son of Mary confirming the Law that had come before him. We sent

him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Law.

Surat-ul Maida(5):46

If thou (Muhammad) are in doubt as to what We have revealed, then ask the People of the Book.

Surat-u Yunus(10):94

And when there comes to them a Book (Qur'an) from God confirming what is with them.... ..yet they reject all besides, even if it be truth confirming what is with them.... And when there came to them an Apostle of God confirming what was with them....

Surat-ul Baqara(2):89,91,101

Note in the above references, as well as others, the phrase “*confirming what is with them.*” These verses are clear in teaching that the Qur’an came to confirm the previous Scriptures, not to correct them or replace them, as many Muslims would have us to believe! Nowhere does the Qur’an say it came to save the community of believers from the corruption, alteration, or disappearance of the previous Holy Books, namely the *Tawrat* (writings of Moses) and the *Injil* (New Testament).

It is highly unlikely that the Scriptures could have been altered after the death of Muhammad for the following reasons:

By 600 A.D., Christianity had spread into Asia, Africa, and Europe. There is no evidence of a worldwide council that met for the purpose of altering the Scriptures.

Since Muslims revere the Holy Books, converts from Judaism and Christianity would have retained the true texts; however, such texts cannot be found.

Manuscripts still exist from the fourth and fifth centuries (Muhammad was born in the sixth century). These manuscripts line up with today's translations of the Scriptures and any variant readings are noted.

Question 3: How was it changed?

Since Judaism and Christianity spread throughout the world, it would have been impossible for anyone to collect all the Holy Books, manuscripts, and writings containing scriptural references from all churches, synagogues, libraries, schools, and homes, and make the changes, and then return them all without anyone knowing!

The Qur'an itself claims no one can alter the Word of God:

The Word of thy Lord doth find its fulfillment in truth and in justice. None can change His Words.

Surat-ul An'am(6):15

No change can there be in the Words of God.

Surat-u Yunus(10):64

If Muslims use these verses to claim that God has been able to protect the Qur'an from any corruption, then they should believe that God is powerful enough to preserve all previous Holy Books as well!

3. Muhammad's Name Has Been Removed from the Bible

Many Muslims attempt to discredit the validity of the Bible because there is not a single verse in it that mentions Muhammad. They expect to see Muhammad's name in the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians because of these two verses that are found in their holy book, the Qur'an:

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

Surat-us Saff(61):6

Those who follow the apostle, the unlettered Prophet (Muhammad) whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures),—in the Law and the Gospel;—For He commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil.

Surat-ul A'raf(7):157

The more educated Muslims know from research that the early manuscripts of the Bible dating after the time of Muhammad are the same as those prior to the time of Muhammad. Therefore the accusation that the Bible was altered to remove the name Muhammad is baseless. However, they continue to claim that even though the name Muhammad is not explicitly mentioned, there are still clear references in the Bible that point to him, thus confirming his prophethood and mission to all humankind, including the Jews and Christians. With this argument, some Muslims

attempt to persuade Christians that they must also follow Muhammad and Islam, the religion he came to perfect.

In reference to the Qur'anic verse above which says that Jesus was giving glad tidings of an apostle to come after him whose name is Ahmad, many Muslim scholars who have searched the Bible for Muhammad's name claim that the verses in the Gospel of John regarding the Holy Spirit are in fact prophecies of Muhammad. Examples are John 14:16, 15:26, and 16:7. The original Greek word *parakletos* in these verses is rendered "comforter," "advocate," or "counselor" in the various English translations. Some Muslim scholars contend that the original Greek word was erroneously written from the beginning and that it should have been written as *periklutos*, which is a close translation for *ahmad* meaning "worthy of praise."

It should first be noted that the words *ahmad* and *Muhammad* are two different things. "Muhammad" is a proper name and means "the one who is praiseworthy." On the other hand, the word *ahmad* is an adjective meaning "worthy of praise." It appears that the word *ahmad* was not used as a proper name prior to the time of Muhammad. That is why we find that nowhere in all the Qur'an is the prophet of Islam addressed as *Ahmad*. Instead, we find the proper name *Muhammad*.

As for the references in John, the passages continue to describe this *parakletos* (comforter, advocate, counselor) as "the Spirit of Truth" whom the world cannot see, who lives in the hearts of the believers, and who will testify about Jesus. This is the same Spirit of whom Jesus spoke when He instructed His disciples:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8

About 50 days following the death of Jesus, this promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled in the lives of the disciples, and it all happened in miraculous fashion on the Day of Pentecost. In describing the great event, the disciple of Jesus named Peter declared:

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:32,33

From the above descriptions, it should be clear that this *parakletos* could only be the Spirit of God, and could never be a human being! Furthermore, this *parakletos* which Jesus promised would come to His disciples from the Father did indeed come during the lifetime of His disciples. Muhammad came long after the deaths of Jesus' disciples—over 500 years!

Muslims have also searched through the Old Testament, particularly the Torah, the books of Moses, to find possible references to Muhammad. Two passages that are most commonly cited are Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18:

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

Many Muslims claim that this prophet to be raised up after Moses and to be like Moses is Muhammad. This matter is taken up in the next section.

4. Muhammad Was a Prophet Like Moses

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him."

Deuteronomy 18:18

In regard to the above verse, many Muslims claim that because God is speaking to the Israelites who are the seed of Isaac, the phrase "from among their brothers" must mean the descendants of Ishmael since Ishmael was Isaac's brother. Therefore, they reason, the "prophet like Moses" who was prophesied to come, can only refer to Muhammad since he was the only great prophet to descend from Ishmael, and like Moses, instituted the Law of God and performed miracles.

First, let us deal with the phrase "from among their brothers." We get a better understanding of what this means from a similar usage when God instructed the Israelites about choosing a king. Notice Deuteronomy 17:14,15.

When...you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among

your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite.

Surely, no Muslim familiar with ancient Middle Eastern practice would expect the Israelites to seek a descendant of Ishmael for their king. Furthermore, it is clear that the phrase "from among their brothers" simply means a brother Israelite.

Second, in comparing Muhammad to Moses, it is important to read Deuteronomy 34:10-12. This passage gives a concise description of the prophet Moses and indicates what was expected of this future prophet.

Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders.... For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

From the Holy Scriptures we know that 1) Moses was an Israelite; 2) he was known by God "face to face" meaning God spoke to him directly, not through an intermediary; and 3) he performed awesome miracles. Muslims claim Muhammad is the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18:18. Christians, however, are convinced that the "prophet like Moses" is none other than Jesus the Messiah, and base their claim according to the following comparisons:

Moses

Prophet from among the Israelites

Revelations directly from God
(Sura 4:164; Exodus 33:11)

Miracles
(Sura 2:50 sea; Sura 2:57 manna)

Jesus

Prophet from among the Israelites
the tribe of Judah,
(Matthew 1:3, Luke 3:33)

Revelations directly from God
(John 12:49,50; 14:10)

Miracles
(Sura 3:49)
(Matthew 8:27 sea; John 6:11-14 manna)

Muhammad

Prophet from among the Arabs
(Sura 32:3; 36:6; 34:43,44)

Revelations indirectly through the angel Gabriel
(Sura 2:97)

No Miracles
(Sura 6:37; Sura 28:48)

In addition to the above, the New Testament confirms that the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:18 was fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah. Read Acts 3:17-26, particularly verse 22: *For Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people...."*

In closing, note carefully what Surat-ul Qasas(28:48) says:

But (now) when the Truth has come to them from Ourselves, they say, "Why are not (Signs) sent to him (Muhammad), like those which were sent to Moses?"

It is evident from this verse that even according to the Qur'an, Muhammad was not looked upon as one like Moses!

5. Ishmael Was To Be Abraham's Sacrifice

Many Muslims allege that one indication that the Bible has been altered to discredit Islam is the story of Abraham and the divine command to sacrifice his son. Most Muslims insist that this son was Ishmael. The Bible, however, claims that the son was Isaac, (Genesis 22:9, Hebrews 11:17, and James 2:21).

There is only one reference in the Qur'an that relates this incident and it begins with Abraham making this request:

*"O my Lord, grant me a righteous (son)!" So We gave him **the good news** of a boy ready to suffer and forbear. Then when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him, he said, "O my son, I see in a vision that I offer thee in sacrifice. Now see what is thy view!" (The son) said, "O my father, do as thou art commanded. Thou wilt find me if Allah so wills one practicing patience and constancy!" So when they had both submitted their wills (to Allah) and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to him, "O Abraham, thou hast already fulfilled the vision!" Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial—and We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice.*

Surat-us Saffat(37):99-107

Notice carefully in this passage, which is the only one dealing with the sacrifice, that the name of the son is not given! It does indicate, however, that this was the boy whose birth was foretold as "good news." If one searches the whole Qur'an, he will find nothing mentioned about the birth of Ishmael. In fact very little is said about Ishmael, and absolutely

nothing is said about the identity of his mother or his sons. It is from the Bible that we learn that Ishmael's mother was named Hagar, and that Ishmael had 12 sons (Genesis 25:12-17). Getting back to the "good news" mentioned in the above verse of the Qur'an, we read this about Isaac and his mother Sarah:

*Has the story reached thee of the honored guests of Abraham? Behold, they entered his presence and said "Peace!" He said "Peace...." They said, "Fear not," and they gave him **glad tidings** of a son endowed with knowledge. But his wife came forward (laughing) aloud! She smote her forehead and said, "A barren old woman!" They said, "Even so has thy Lord spoken; and He is full of wisdom and knowledge."*

Surat-uz Zariyat(51):24,25,28-30

In addition to this, we read a summary of Abraham and Isaac which follows the Qur'anic passage dealing with the sacrifice:

*Peace and salutation to Abraham! Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For he was one of Our believing Servants. And We gave him **the good news** of Isaac—a prophet—one of the righteous. We blessed him and Isaac.*

Surat-us Saffat(37):109-113

Notice the phrases "and they gave him glad tidings of a son" and "We gave him the good news of Isaac." No such wording can be found for the birth of Ishmael in the Qur'an. It should now be clear that the son about whom the good news was given and who was prepared for sacrifice as described in Sura 37:99-107 was not Ishmael, but Isaac. This is exactly what the Bible teaches.

In the beginning of this discussion, it was mentioned that most Muslims believe the son was Ishmael. Not all do! Those Muslims who have carefully studied the Qur'an realize that the evidence points to Isaac. For this very reason, Yusuf Ali, in his world-renown commentary of *The Holy Qur'an*, page 1204, note 4096, admits the following: "The boy thus born was according to Muslim tradition (which, however, is not unanimous on this point) the first-born of Abraham viz. Isma'il." Notice the words "according to Muslim tradition" and "which, however, is not unanimous." It is obvious that the claim that the son was Ishmael is not according to the Qur'an! It is important to be reminded that the Qur'an itself states that it came to confirm the previous Holy Books, not to contradict them. It appears that the Qur'an is in agreement with the Bible on this matter and that it is Muslim tradition which disagrees!

6. Muslims Are Not Required to Read the Bible

Many Muslims insist that it is not necessary for them to read the Bible since the Qur'an is the last revealed book, thus superseding all previous holy books. However, the Qur'an itself instructs Muslims to believe in all the holy books that God revealed to the prophets, and not just the Qur'an. The following declarations are clear:

Say ye: "We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) the prophets from their Lord; We make no difference between one and another of them."

Surat-ul Baqara(2):136

The Apostle (prophet) believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith.

Each one (of them) believeth in God, His angels, His books, and His apostles.

Surat-ul Baqara(2):285

O ye who believe! Believe in God, and His apostle, and the scripture which He sent to His apostle, and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denieth God, His angels, His Books, His apostles, and the Day of Judgment hath gone far, far astray.

Surat-un Nisaa(4):136

Notice that "His books" is in the plural, meaning not just the Qur'an but all the holy books. Also notice in the first verse the phrase "we make no difference between one and another of them." It is clear that Muslims are not to regard certain holy books superior to others. The principles of God's Word are the same for all people for all time. It is very important to point out to the Muslim that the Bible is not just one holy book that was given to some prophet, but rather it is a collection of many holy books that consists of the Law of Moses (Tawrat), the writings of David (Zabur), the teachings of Jesus (Injil), and the Writings of the Prophets (Suhuf-un Nabiyyin). Of course, for one to believe in the Holy Books, he must not only read them, but also study them to know what he is to believe. Thus the Qur'an declares:

*Those to whom We have sent the Book **study it as it should be studied**; they are the ones that believe therein. Those who reject faith therein,—the loss is their own.*

Surat-ul Baqara(2):121

In Islam, another important matter about the Holy Books is that they are regarded as Signs from Allah for the help of

humankind. Thus, even each verse of a Holy Book is considered an *ayat* (sign). Furthermore, these signs are not to be dealt with lightly; they are to be accepted. Notice the severe warning to those who reject God's Signs, even the Holy Books—all of them!

Those who reject our Signs, We shall soon cast into the fire.

Surat-un Nisaa(4):56

Those who reject faith and deny our Signs will be companions of Hell-fire.

Surat-ul Maida(5):10

7. The Bible Is Not Reliable— Loss of Original Manuscripts

Some Muslims argue that the Bible is no longer reliable because the original manuscripts have been lost. Therefore, there is no possible way to check the accuracy of today's Bible by comparing it to the very first words of recorded scripture.

It is true that none of the original manuscripts have been found, and are probably lost. However, the same can be said of the Qur'an. In *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary*, (2nd Edition, 1977) the author Yusuf Ali, in his introduction on page 32, states the following:

No sooner was a passage of the Qur'an revealed than it was recorded on leaves of date-palm, barks of trees, bones, etc., at the dictation of the Holy Prophet and all these pieces were put in a bag.

Notice that the verses of the Qur'an were copied onto leaves, tree bark, bones, et cetera. Further research reveals that according to the *hadith*, (collection of Muslim traditions) compiled by Al-Bukhari entitled *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the verses of the Qur'an were also recorded onto white stones and "men's breasts." Whether the phrase "men's breasts" is to be taken literally or figuratively (to mean memories of those who knew the verses by heart), it is obvious that neither case could fit the description of being "put in a bag." Furthermore, no person or museum has yet been able to exhibit any such collection of palm leaves, tree bark, white stones, or bones to verify the existence of the original manuscripts. Thus, even though all Qur'ans today may agree with the final copy that was approved by the Muslim ruler Uthman, 20 years after the death of Muhammad, no Muslim can prove that his Qur'an agrees exactly with the words dictated by his prophet. He faces the same problem as the Christian. The original documents have been lost.

If the Muslim can still accept the validity of his Qur'an without the proof of the original manuscripts, then it should not be so difficult for him to allow the Christian to accept the validity of his Bible.

As for the Muslim accepting the Bible, he does not have to worry. The Qur'an itself says it came to confirm the previous holy books. If this is true, then the Muslim should not be concerned about the original manuscripts. If there had been any major errors in the Bible, surely the Qur'an would not have come to confirm, but rather to annul, replace, or correct. However, no such indication is given by the Qur'an. So the Muslim, on the basis of his own Qur'an, can feel free to trust the validity of the holy books of the Bible.

8. The Bible Is Corrupt—Numerical Discrepancies

There are some Muslims who attempt to discredit the Bible on the basis of contradiction of numbers. They are quick to argue that if the Holy Bible is truly God's Word, then it would contain no numerical errors because God is perfect. It is true; God is perfect. However, human beings are not. Though it was God who revealed the Scriptures in perfect fashion, it was human hands that copied the manuscripts from one generation to the next. Since people are imperfect, there are bound to be mistakes in their work. We call these mistakes copyist errors because they most likely were made during the laborious and tedious task of duplicating the Scriptures for wider distribution. The following verses taken from the King James Version of the Bible show an example of this type of error:

And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen.

2 Samuel 8:4

And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen.

1 Chronicles 18:4

It is clear that the first verse speaks of 700 horsemen, and the other, 7,000 horsemen. Such errors in the Old Testament can be found in other passages and are attributed to the fact that many of the Hebrew characters for numbers closely resembled one another. Thus, it was easy to mistake one number for another during the process of copying. It was also easy to misplace a zero that could account for the difference between 7,000 and 700. These errors are believed to have been nonexistent in the original Scriptures. It is also important

to point out to the Muslim that such errors do not affect the great doctrinal teachings of the Scriptures. For example, a similar contradiction of numbers can be found in the Qur'an. Notice the following verses:

...in the end will (all affairs) go up to Him (God) on a Day, the space whereof will be (as) a thousand years of your reckoning.

Surat-us Sajda(32):5

The angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him (God) in a Day, the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years.

Surat-ul Ma'arij(70):4

It appears that one verse speaks of a Day with God being equivalent to 1,000 years, whereas the other verse equates a Day to 50,000 years. Yet, in no way does this detract from the Qur'anic teaching that God is merciful, compassionate, and ready to forgive at all times. In like manner, the difference of 6,300 horsemen does not detract from the biblical teaching that God has revealed His mercy and compassion through Jesus the Messiah in whom there is redemption and forgiveness of sins!

9. Muhammad Came to Establish a New Religion

It is claimed by some Muslims that the mission of their prophet Muhammad was to establish a new religion with a new code of law that would replace the corrupt and outdated religious system of the Jews and Christians. For this reason, many Muslims do not feel the need to give attention to the message of Christianity. To them, the Christian religion has been superseded by a new and better religion, Islam, introduced by Muhammad to the world almost 600 years after

the time of Christ. Though this thinking has spread into much of Islam, it is not in line with the teaching of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam.

According to the Qur'an, Muhammad's mission was not to establish a completely new religion, but rather to continue on in the religion of Abraham.

So We have taught thee (Muhammad) the inspired message, "Follow the ways of Abraham the true in faith, and he joined not gods with God."

Surat-ul Nahl(16):123

Say: "Verily, my Lord hath guided me to a way that is straight,—a religion of right,—the path (trod) by Abraham the true in faith, and he (certainly) joined not gods with God."

Surat-ul An'am(6):161

Say: "God speaketh the truth: follow the religion of Abraham, the sane in faith; he was not of the pagans."

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):95

They say: "Become Jews or Christians if ye would be guided (to salvation)." Say thou: "Nay! (I would rather) the religion of Abraham the true, and he joined not gods with God."

Surat-ul Baqara(2):135

Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to God, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the true in faith? For God did take Abraham for a friend.

Surat-un Nisaa(4):125

Aside from the above, the Qur'an itself says that Muhammad did not come to teach anything new. In fact, the Qur'an tells us he was given revelations that were to confirm what was already revealed—not to correct, replace, add to, or annul, but to confirm!

And before this was the Book of Moses as a guide and a mercy; and this Book (Qur'an) confirms (it, the book of Moses) in the Arabic tongue.

Surat-ul Ahqaf(46):12

Nothing is said to thee (Muhammad) that was not said to the Apostles before thee, that thy Lord has at His command (all) forgiveness as well as a most grievous penalty.

Surat-u Fussilat(41):43

The same religion has He (God) established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah...and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: namely, that ye should remain steadfast in Religion, and make no divisions therein.

Surat-ush Shura(42):13

Say (Muhammad): I am no bringer of newfangled doctrine among the apostles, nor do I know what will be done with me or with you.

Surat-ul Ahqaf(46):9

It is important to note that the religion of Abraham was expanded upon by moral and civil laws introduced by God to the community of believers through the prophet Moses. As a result, the religion of Islam has adopted many practices that were already common, particularly among the Jews, hundreds

of years prior to the advent of Muhammad. The following is a brief list of some Muslim practices that have their counterparts in the Bible. Contrary to what some Muslims would have Christians believe, these were not a new set of customs for a new religion.

1. Greeting of peace (Luke 10:5)
2. Washing before prayer (Exodus 40:31,32)
3. Removal of shoes in God's presence (Exodus 3:5)
4. Prostration during prayer (Psalm 95:6)
5. Animal sacrifices (Deuteronomy 16:1-6)
6. Pilgrimage (Acts 8:26-28)
7. Head covering for women (1 Corinthians 11:5,6)
8. Circumcision (Luke 2:21)
9. Offering of sacrifice at birth of a child (Luke 2:24)
10. Prolonged fasting (Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8; Matthew 4:2)
11. Modesty and silence of women (1 Corinthians 14:34)
12. Abstinance from pork (Leviticus 11:7)

10. Jesus Was a Prophet Only to Israel

Some Muslims contend that Jesus' ministry was only for the Children of Israel and not for all people, as Christians believe. On the basis of this argument, they attempt to persuade Christians to become followers of Muhammad, since they claim he alone was a universal prophet for all people for all time. To support their claim, these Muslims are quick to cite the following verses from the New Testament:

These twelve (disciples) Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel."

Matthew 10:5,6

He (Jesus) answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

Matthew 15:24

It is important to realize, first of all, that Jesus was born of the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was the fulfillment of the promise that God had made to Abraham many centuries earlier. Because of obedience and submission to God's will, God's promise to Abraham was two-fold. First, God promised to bless his lineage, namely Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and the children (descendants) of Israel. Second, God promised that from this lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would rise up a blessing for all nations, meaning the whole world. (see Acts 3:25,26 and Galatians 3:8,14).

In this promise to Abraham, both the descendants of Israel, and the Gentiles (all non-Israelites) were to be blessed. This was confirmed many centuries later when Jesus was born. When the baby Jesus was taken to the temple for dedication, a devout, elderly man who had been praying there was moved upon by the Spirit of God. He took the child in his arms and proclaimed these words in prayer to God:

For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.

Luke 2:30-32

From the passage above, we understand Jesus' ministry to be two-fold. First, because He was born of the Children of Israel, His first mission was to reveal himself and God to the Israelites. They were God's chosen people—the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even the Qur'an bears witness to this distinction.

And commemorate Our servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, possessors of power and vision. Verily, We did choose them for a special (purpose)—proclaiming the message of the hereafter.

Surat-us Sad(38):45,46

Children of Israel, call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others (for My message).

Surat-ul Baqara(2):47

Unfortunately, over the course of time, the Children of Israel had grown hardened and indifferent to the things of God. As a result, it was necessary for Jesus to minister personally among them with signs and wonders in order to confirm to them that He was the long-awaited Messiah, the Blessed and Anointed One whom God had sent to redeem His chosen people. For this reason during His personal ministry, Jesus instructed His disciples to go only to the Children of Israel. They were to hear the message first. This was their privilege because they were the people of God's covenant—the promise of blessing. Following the death and resurrection of Jesus, one of His disciples addressed the Israelites as follows:

*And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "Through your offspring (descendants), all people on earth will be blessed." When God raised his servant (Jesus the Messiah), **he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.***

Acts 3:25,26

It is important to realize that the second part of Jesus' mission was the most significant. That mission was to give His life a ransom for the sins of all humanity (1 Timothy 2:4-6). This was the blessing that was for all nations—the good news that Jesus, by the shed blood of His suffering on the Cross, paid the penalty for the sins of humankind. Whoever accepts this blessing of salvation is assured of eternal life with God!

*This is what is written: The Christ (Al-Masih) will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to **all nations**, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Luke 24:46,47

The Scriptures are clear that this salvation in Jesus the Messiah is available for all people, both Jews and Gentiles of all nations. Remember, during Jesus' earthly and personal ministry He instructed His disciples to go only to the Israelites. But after the second part of His mission was completed (His atoning death on the cross), notice what He then instructed His disciples:

*You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, **and to the ends of the earth.***

Acts 1:8

*Go and make disciples of **all nations** (all people).*

Matthew 28:19

Jesus himself confirmed the universal nature of His mission when He declared these words:

*I am the **light of the world**. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*

John 8:12

Again Jesus is referring to himself as that special blessing or revelation of mercy for all people. The Qur'an also points to the universal mission of Jesus. God is quoted as saying:

And (We wish) to appoint him (Jesus) as a Sign unto men (ayat-al linnasi), and a mercy from Us.

Surat-u Maryam(19):21

Notice, it does not say, "a sign only to the Israelites" as some Muslims would have us believe. In fact, the Arabic indicates a "sign to mankind!"

11. Jesus Was No More Than a Prophet

In an attempt to conceal the uniqueness of Jesus in the Qur'an, many Muslims cite the following verse:

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

Surat-ul Maida(5):75

It is true that in His human nature, Jesus was a man of flesh just like all the other prophets. However, we cannot ignore the teaching of the Scriptures that reveal to us that in this human flesh dwelt the Word of God of divine nature. (John 1:14, *The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.*) Though we could never begin to explain this mystery of the divine and human nature of Jesus, the Scriptures confirm its truth. Even the Qur'an points to both the human and divine nature of Jesus. For example, we read the following from the Qur'an:

O People of the Book (Jews and Christians)! Commit no excesses in your religion; nor say of God aught but the

truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of God, and his Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him.

Surat-un Nisaa(4):171

Though the Qur'an is justified in refuting the claim by some heretical Christians of that day that Jesus was the third of three gods along with His mother Mary, it must be carefully noted that the Qur'an has preserved the uniqueness and divine splendor of Jesus by referring to Him as "His (God's) Word" and "Spirit (proceeding) from Him (God)."

The New Testament also calls Jesus "Word of God" (Revelation 19:13). This term should not be considered lightly. Most Muslims will readily admit that the Word of God was never created, and will never die; it is eternal from everlasting to everlasting. Such can only be of the divine nature!

As for the phrase "Spirit (proceeding) from Him (God)," the Arabic for this is *ruh-un min hu* and is found elsewhere in the Qur'an.

He (God) has written faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with a Spirit from Himself.

Surat-ul Mujadila(58):22

In *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* by A. Yusuf Ali, footnote number 5365 describes this "Spirit from Himself" as "the divine Spirit which we can no more define adequately than we can define in human language the nature and attributes of God."

From the above it should be obvious that this same phrase "Spirit from Him (God)," which the Qur'an uses to describe

Jesus in Surat-un Nisaa(4):171, is speaking of One who is more than just an ordinary prophet!

There are several other teachings from the Qur'an which point to the uniqueness of Jesus that should not be overlooked. They are listed as follows:

a. Miraculously Born of a Virgin

She (Mary) said: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?"

He (Gabriel) said: "So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, 'That is easy for Me.'"

Surat-u Maryam(19):20,21

It is often asserted that Adam also had no natural father. Therefore Jesus should not be singled out as unique in this regard. It is true that Adam had no earthly father—but that is to be expected! How could he have had natural parents if he himself was the first man? However, it was completely different with Jesus. There must have been hundreds of thousands of men and women through whom Jesus could have been born, just like every other prophet after Adam. Yet, this was a sign to humankind. God wanted the world to know that Jesus did not come from the natural seed of man here below; instead, He came from the divine nature of God above.

b. Lived a Holy Life

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

Surat-u Maryam(19):19

Jesus was truly a holy son. Having come from God and not from the seed of man, His life was untouched at birth by Satan. Truly, Jesus lived a pure life, without fault. Many Muslims contend that Jesus is not unique in this regard because all the prophets were completely faultless. However, if we carefully search the Qur'an we find that such is not the case. It is evident that even the great prophets prayed for God's forgiveness. Unlike Jesus, they, like all other men, were born from the seed of Adam. Notice the following examples:

Adam (and Eve): *They said: "Our Lord, we have wronged our own souls. If Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy mercy, we shall certainly be lost."*

Surat-ul Araf(7):23

Abraham: *And who (God) I hope will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment.*

Surat-ush Shu'araa(26):82

Moses: *He prayed: "O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do Thou then forgive me!*

Surat-ul Qasas(28):16

David: *And David gathered that We had tried him; he asked forgiveness of His Lord.*

Surat-us Sad(38):24

Solomon: *He said, "O my Lord! Forgive me...."*

Surat-us Sad(38):35

Jonah: *And he had done acts worthy of blame. Had it not been that he (repented and) glorified God, he would certainly have remained inside the fish...."*

Surat-us Saffat(37):142-144

Muhammad: *Verily We have granted thee (Muhammad) a manifest victory; that God may forgive thee thy faults of the past and those to follow.*

Surat-ul Fath(48):1,2

Know therefore that there is no god but God, and ask forgiveness for thy fault, and for the men and women who believe.

Surat-u Muhammad(47):19

If one were to carefully search the whole Qur'an, he would not find any verse regarding Jesus asking forgiveness from God. The reason should now be clear: He was holy, faultless and perfectly pure. He was from above and not of this world.

c. Performed Mighty Miracles

I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord, in that I (Jesus) make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's leave; and I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by God's leave....

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):49

Not only did Jesus perform great miracles of healing and raise the dead to life, but unlike any other prophet before or after Him, the Qur'an describes Him as shaping a bird, breathing into it, and causing it to become a live animal!

d. Returned to the Presence of God

Behold! God said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself...."

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):55

Unlike most other prophets who returned to dust, Jesus was not only taken up into Heaven, but more importantly, was taken up to God himself! The Scriptures mention no other prophet who received such honor. Since Jesus was from above, from God himself, it is noteworthy that according to the Qur'an, that is exactly where Jesus returned!

e. Will Return to the World

And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment).

Surat-uz Zukhruf(43):61

Though the Qur'an does not explicitly talk of Jesus' return from heaven, many Muslim scholars use this verse to support the Muslim tradition that Jesus will return to the world in the Last Days to defeat the forces of Satan and prepare the way for universal peace. In his footnote to this verse found in *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* by A. Yusuf Ali, we read the following: *"This is understood to refer to the second coming of Jesus in the Last Days just before the Resurrection...."*

In summary, the above Qur'anic references give us a picture of Jesus who was miraculously born outside the blood stream of Adam; lived a sinless, perfect life; performed great miracles, even of creation; was raised up to God himself; and is expected to return to the world to pave the way for universal peace. No other prophet in any of the Holy Books is described like this! Regardless of what some Muslims may say, the Qur'an speaks loudly for itself—this is no ordinary prophet!!!

12. Christians Worship a Trinity of Gods

One of the most common and strongest objections that Muslims have against Christianity is that Christians worship a trinity of gods. The word “trinity” gives most Muslims the mistaken idea that Christians believe that God is not one but three. This is totally unacceptable to followers of Islam who have been taught from childhood that God is absolutely one and that there is no god but Him! To worship someone other than this one god is to commit one of the worst acts of sin.

Unfortunately, during the time of Muhammad, there was a heretical Christian sect in Arabia which claimed that Mary was divine along with Jesus. Thus, they worshipped the trinity of God the Father, Mary the Mother, and Jesus the Son. Of course, such a trinity is contrary to biblical teaching. This is the trinity which the Qur’an refutes:

And behold! God will say: “O Jesus the son of Mary, didst thou say unto men, ‘worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of God?’”

Surat-ul Maida(5):116

They do blaspheme who say God is one of three in a trinity; for there is no god except one God.

Surat-ul Maida(5):73

Because of this misunderstanding of the true biblical “trinity” and the strongly sensitive feelings that Muslims have toward anything that suggests the worship of more than one god, it is best not to even use this word “trinity.” Be sure to let your Muslim friend clearly understand that you also believe in just one God, and that you do not worship three separate gods. Share with him the biblical teaching that God is one,

using Deuteronomy 4:35, 6:4; and Mark 12:29. However, let him also know that you believe that this one God exists with a will, and that this will is expressed through His Word and carried out by the power of His Spirit, so that wherever there is God, there is also His Word and His Spirit. This truth is revealed in the biblical account of creation where God spoke the Word, and by the power of His Spirit, creation came into being! (Genesis 1:1-3; Psalm 33:6, 104:24,30.) Explain to your Muslim friend that you believe that both the Word and Spirit of God are inseparable from God. As long as God existed, so did His Word and His Spirit; They were never created and They shall never die. In this sense They are divine!

Surprisingly, unknown to most Muslims, the Qur'an also points to three things that are divine. Of course, the first is God himself. But the Qur'an also speaks of the Word of God. It is referred to as the Word or Command of creation.

For to anything which We have willed, We but say the Word, "Be," and it is.

Surat-ul Nahl(16):40

Verily when He (God) intends a thing, His Command is "Be," and it is!

Surat-u Ya-Sin(36):82

In regard to verse 36:82 above, in *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* by A. Yusuf Ali, footnote number 4028 says this about God's Word: "*The moment He (God) wills a thing, it becomes His Word or Command, and this thing forthwith comes into existence.*" The biblical accounts also demonstrate that things are created by the Word of God. Now if creation is by the Word of God, then it is obvious that the Word itself could never be created, since it is

the agent by which creation comes into being. For this reason most Muslim scholars agree that the Word of God is uncreated. Thus, if the Word of God is uncreated and eternal, then it certainly is of divine essence. From this reasoning, we explain to our Muslim friends that Jesus is not only of human nature, but also divine nature, since both the Bible and Qur'an refer to Him as God's Word.

The third item that the Qur'an speaks of is the Spirit of God, or the Spirit from God.

For such He (God) has written Faith in their hearts and strengthened them with a Spirit from Himself.

Surat-ul Mujadila(58):22

In *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* by A. Yusuf Ali, footnote number 5365 describes this "Spirit from Himself," or "Spirit from God" as "*the divine spirit, which we can no more define adequately than we can define in human language the nature and attributes of God.*"

And so in the Qur'an as well, we can find evidence that points to a divine threesome—God, God's Word, and God's Spirit—each different, yet of the same divine essence, inseparable from one another.

In summary, avoid such words and phrases as "trinity," or "godhead of three persons," or anything else that would mislead your Muslim friend to think that you worship three separate gods. Remember, the Muslim can only think in terms of One God, and ONLY one God! So try to speak of this one God in terms of His Word (Jesus), and His Spirit. Do not try to unravel the great mystery of the Godhead. Let the mystery remain; let God be God! Simply state your belief in one God

whose will is revealed through His divine Word and carried out through His divine Spirit.

13. Jesus Is Not God

Many Christians in their zeal to share with their Muslim friends the uniqueness of Jesus and His divine nature are quick to proclaim in loud voices, “Jesus is God!” They do not realize, however, the great difficulty this presents to the Muslim. Islam is a religion of one God—and only one God! For a Muslim to regard anyone or anything else as god beside the one true God is a violation of his religion and a terrible act of sin. This is why the Qur’an speaks against the idea of Jesus being a god separate from the one true God, thus making two gods!

*They do blaspheme who say: “God is Christ the son of Mary.” But said Christ: “O Children of Israel! Worship God, my Lord and your Lord. **Whoever joins other gods with God**—God will forbid him the Garden, and the Fire will be his abode....”*

Surat-ul Maida(5):72

Whenever the zealous Christian proclaims “Jesus is God,” the Muslim says to himself, “If Jesus prayed to God saying, ‘Our Father’ and if He is God as Christians claim, then Christianity must teach that there are at least two gods!” That is all it takes for the Muslim to quickly turn away from any further Christian witness.

Christians need to ask themselves if they really believe in two gods, or if, like the Muslim, they also believe in just one God as taught by Jesus in Mark 12:29. It is extremely important for Christians not to give the false impression to

Muslims that they worship more than one God. Such an impression would, in most cases, create a stumbling block that could easily prevent the Muslim from hearing the simplicity of the gospel message, that Jesus came as Savior of the world to reveal God's compassion and to redeem fallen humanity from the curse of sin.

It could very well be that the Scriptures themselves do not contain the simple statement "Jesus is God" in order to avoid any confusion about the scriptural declaration, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." Instead, we find these descriptions of Jesus that point to His divine nature: **Word of God** (Revelation 19:13); **Radiance of God's Glory and the exact representation of His being** (Hebrews 1:3); **the image of the invisible God** (Colossians 1:15); and **the image of God** (2 Corinthians 4:4). These references speak of the One True God who is fully revealed in Jesus.

If we take the approach of the Scriptures and use scriptural terminology, we are able to confirm our belief in one God, and also reaffirm our belief in the deity of Jesus by reminding our Muslim friends that both the Bible and the Qur'an refer to Jesus as God's Word. This is significant because most Muslims would agree that the Word of God was never created and can never die; it is of divine essence! In this way we can speak of the divine essence of Jesus, the Living Word of God!

Do not feel that you must be able to explain to your Muslim friend the great mystery that surrounds the nature of Jesus. For who among us mortals can fully comprehend anything related to the divine! Be careful not to complicate the simplicity of the gospel message; and do not impose difficult requirements of great theological understanding which the Scriptures themselves do not require. Nowhere in the New

Testament are we commanded to understand the nature of Jesus completely in order to experience salvation. Salvation is not based on our ability to fully explain the deity of Jesus; rather, it is based on the faith of the heart which accepts Jesus as the Savior of humankind sent by God, and the only one sent by God through whom we have redemption and forgiveness of sins. That is the Good News!

14. Jesus Is Not the “Son of God”

One of the first things a Muslim comes to know about the Christian religion is the belief that God had a wife who conceived for Him a son named Jesus. But you say, *“Nonsense! The Bible teaches no such blasphemy.”* Try to see through the eyes of a Muslim who interprets much of his holy book literally. Almost every piece of literature a Muslim receives from the hand of a Christian includes John 3:16. For most Christians, this one verse represents the theme of the gospel message. But to a Muslim, it represents something altogether different. The moment his eyes come across the words “that He gave His only begotten son” he thinks, *“What? God had a son? Blasphemy! Any mature adult knows that to say God had a son means to say He also had a wife! May God forbid!”* With total disgust, the Muslim tosses aside the piece of literature, promising never again to set eyes on such heresy!

You must realize that from early childhood, most Muslims have been impacted by the teaching that God is one, that He has no partner, and certainly no female companion! He was not born, nor does He give birth to other gods and goddesses.

How can He have a son when He hath no consort? He created all things, and hath full knowledge of all things.

That is God, your Lord! There is no God but He, the Creator of all things.

Surat-ul An'am(6):101,102

Say: He is God, the One and only; God the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.

Surat-ul Ikhlas(112):1-4

Of course, we cannot delete the term "Son of God" from the Bible no matter how much it may offend some Muslims. But try to be sensitive to his reaction to such a term. For you too would strongly object to any teaching that would suggest God had a female companion who bore Him a son!

How should you deal with this sensitive issue? First, it is important to explain to your Muslim friend that this term is not to be taken in a literal sense. It does not mean that God in union with a goddess had a son. This term is a symbolic or allegorical expression that could mean several things. The term "Son of God" could refer to the special relationship that Jesus had with God. Simply ask your Muslim friend, "According to the Qur'an, who is the real father of Jesus?" He will most likely know that the Qur'an teaches that Jesus was miraculously born of a virgin and therefore had no earthly father. Precisely! The term "Son of God" reminds us that Jesus was not the son of any man. Instead, He came directly from God!

The term "Son of God" also points to Jesus as the representative and heir of God's great power. The Scriptures tell us that God gave Jesus authority to rule over His entire Kingdom. Just as a king hands power over to the heir, the prince, so did God hand over power to the heir, Prince Jesus.

And notice that the relationship between king and prince is father and son. As the "Son of God," Jesus is the representative of God and the inheritor of great power and authority. For this reason, often the term "Son of God" is used in Scripture to refer to the Messiahship of Jesus. As the Messiah, or the Anointed One, Jesus was to come as a Great Ruler to overthrow the forces of Darkness and deliver the People of God from evil oppression. Thus Peter's confession, "*Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God.*"

Many Christians feel compelled to continually refer to Jesus as Son of God in their preaching and writing in order to uphold the deity of Jesus. However, there is a much better descriptive term that speaks of the deity of Christ, and that is the term "Word of God." This title is much more acceptable to Muslims because the Qur'an also refers to Jesus as God's Word. Furthermore, most Muslims would agree that the Word of God is uncreated, which means it is of divine essence.

Try to avoid using the term "Son of God" in your initial contacts with Muslim people. There are so many other scriptural terms to describe Jesus. It is especially noteworthy that in the Book of Acts which records the preaching of the apostles, the term "Son of God" is found only once (9:20); and from the context of the passage, it is used not to address the deity of Jesus, but rather to speak of His identity as the long-awaited Messiah (9:22). Notice this varied list of expressions and titles that are found in the Book of Acts to speak of Jesus: **Lord and Messiah (2:36); Servant (3:13); Holy and Righteous One (3:14); Author of life (3:15); Holy Servant (4:27); Prince and Savior (5:31); Son of Man (7:56); Lord of all (10:36); Judge of the living and dead (10:42); the Savior (13:23); and the Christ (18:5).**

In summary, when sharing Jesus with your Muslim friends, speak of the great power and authority God has given Him. Speak of Him as God's Holy Servant who came to minister to humankind and to give His life a ransom. Speak of Him as the great Prince of Peace who will someday return to establish peace worldwide. Speak of Him as the Savior whom God has sent to rescue the world from the curse of sin and the works of the devil. Speak of Him as the Holy and Righteous One through whom people can inherit eternal life!

15. Jesus Should Not Be Worshipped

Many Muslims strongly oppose the Christian practice of worshipping Jesus. They contend that God is but one, and that He alone is to be worshipped. People are not to bow down to any other creature; to do so is to commit *shirk*—a most terrible sin for any Muslim!

Despite this strong objection to the worship of any creature other than God, the Qur'an itself relates an account of God commanding His angels to bow down and worship something other than Him. He commanded them to bow down before Adam!

And behold, We (God) said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam."

Surat-ul Baqara(2):34

Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay, from mud molded into shape. When I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him."

Surat-ul Hijr(15):28-30

What is significant about this is that surely God must have known that Adam would someday listen to the whispers of Satan and bring about the fall of the entire human race. Yet, God who knows all things—past, present, and future—still commanded the angels to bow before the first man Adam.

It is helpful to point out to the Muslim that the Holy Scriptures speak of another “Adam,” one who would succeed in leading the human race where the first Adam failed. Just as God gave the first Adam power and authority to rule over all the earthly kingdom, so God gave this second Adam power and authority to rule over all the heavenly kingdom—the very Kingdom of God! This other Adam is referred to as the “second Adam” or the “last Adam.” He is Jesus the Messiah! The first Adam was of the earth; this other Adam, of heaven.

So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.... The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. ...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.... But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:45,47-50,57

From the above passage we see that this second Adam who is Jesus would have the power and authority to restore humankind to the eternal and spiritual presence of Almighty God—the place of Adam’s beginning before falling to the

temptation of Satan. Jesus would have the power to give this spiritual, eternal life to all those who follow Him. The Holy Scriptures plainly declare:

For You (God) granted him (Jesus) authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those You have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

John 17:2,3

The Qur'an speaks of Jesus as being honored both in this world and the next. Muslims know of the honor attached to Jesus the Messiah simply by reading in the Qur'an about the power given to Him to heal the leper, open the eyes of the blind, raise the dead to life, and even create! (Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):49.) But the Qur'an also speaks of the hereafter:

His name will be Christ Jesus (Al-Masih Isa), the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter, and of (the company of) those nearest to God.

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):45

Unfortunately, many Muslims are not aware of the great honor bestowed upon Jesus after God raised Him up to himself. Share with your Muslim friend the following scriptural passages:

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father (God) the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:32,33

*And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! **Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

Philippians 2:8-11

Speaking of this honor, Jesus himself declared these words to His disciples:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Matthew 28:18

To this One to whom all power and authority has been given, and who submitted to the suffering of the Cross as the final great sacrifice of atonement, to Him who was called the “Lamb of God,” we find even the hosts of angels giving worship:

*Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: **Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!***

Revelation 5:11,12

In all of this, dare we as mortal beings refuse to bow to Him whom God has anointed King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16)? Just as many Muslims kiss their holy book which they revere as the Word of God, so do true Christians kiss the feet of Him who is the Living Word of God, uncreated and forever eternal! It is extremely important to explain to your Muslim friend that you do not bow to another god, nor do you bow to the human nature of Jesus; rather you bow to His divine nature which defines Him as God's Word. In the Qur'anic account, angels bowed to a man made of clay; in the true Christian experience, believers bow to Him who is Word of God, the image of the invisible God, and inseparable from God, from everlasting to everlasting—truly of divine essence!

In regard to this same matter, Muslims often question Christians about the practice of praying to Jesus. It was Jesus himself who instructed His disciples that if they would ask for help in His name, He would grant it. Therefore, as true followers of Jesus, many Christians today pray to Jesus knowing that He is alive in heaven at the right hand of God, and has been empowered to bring complete deliverance and salvation to those who call upon His name. God has never withdrawn the great honor and power from Jesus the Blessed One. The Scriptures are clear that Jesus has entered the experience of humanity to destroy the works of the devil; and He will certainly help those who call upon Him.

And I (Jesus) will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son (Jesus) may bring glory to the Father (God). You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 14:13,14

16. Jesus Was Not Crucified

Perhaps the greatest obstacle that keeps most Muslims from accepting the truth of the New Testament is the story of the crucifixion of Jesus. They adamantly refuse to accept the truth that Jesus died on the cross, and they insist that the whole story of the Crucifixion is a hoax to deceive the Christian community. Many of these Muslims further claim that one reason the Qur'an was revealed was to correct this false teaching about Jesus dying on the cross.

If the story of the Crucifixion is a hoax, and if the Qur'an came to correct this false doctrine, then it would only be reasonable to expect the Qur'an to have a great number of verses declaring, "Jesus did not die on the cross," just as there are many verses declaring the Resurrection of the dead and the Day of Judgment! The Qur'an has over 6,000 verses. Would it be too much to expect that a mere 5 percent of all its verses would declare, "Jesus did not die on the cross?" What about only 1 percent? That would mean only sixty verses. We could expect at least 10 verses out of 6,000 to clearly state, "Jesus did not die on the cross." This would certainly help to clear up this controversy, and most Muslims would agree that, yes, the Qur'an must surely have at least 10 verses to support their claim.

Now for an amazing revelation! Out of over 6,000 Qur'anic verses, there is not one single verse that simply says that Jesus did not die on the cross or that Jesus was not crucified. Not even one! Furthermore, in the whole Qur'an, there is only one passage that speaks on the issue of the Crucifixion. It reads as follows:

That they (the Jews) said (in boast) "We killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the Apostle of God"—But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. Nay God raised him up unto Himself; and God is exalted in Power, Wise.

Surat-un Nisaa(4):157

Look carefully at the passage. The subject of the passage is not Jesus, but the Jews; and it clearly says that the Jews did not kill or crucify Jesus. Nowhere does it say that Jesus did not die on the cross. This is the only verse about the Crucifixion.

The phrase "but so it was made to appear to them" is not clear. As a result this has opened the door to many interesting theories as to how Jesus was supposedly rescued from the cross. One favorite tradition is that God changed the appearance of Judas the traitor to look like Jesus so that it was really Judas who was nailed to the cross, not Jesus. But no such story is found anywhere in the pages of the Qur'an. Such stories come only from the imaginations of great story tellers!

The phrase in question could just as well be explained in this way. The Jews plotted against Jesus and boasted that they had put an end to Him. It certainly appeared that their scheme had succeeded and that the ministry of Jesus was silenced for good. But God was also planning. Though Jesus died, God raised Him to life to prove to the Jews that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. He was the One who God anointed to be Savior and Ruler of the world.

According to the Holy Scriptures, it was God's good plan that Jesus suffer the agonizing death of the Cross. This death of Jesus was to reveal the suffering love of God who agonizes over the continual sin and rebellion of the human race whom God lovingly created to worship and adore Him. In relation to God's plan, the death of Jesus was to be the fulfillment of all the animal sacrifices. This is why Jesus is called "the Lamb of God." His sacrificial and atoning death was to provide redemption and forgiveness of sin, and more importantly, entry into the presence of God. It was Jesus who was to lead man into the presence of God, and not some four-footed beast! The animal sacrifice was only a symbol of the far purer sacrifice that God would provide.

And so all of this was the plan of God, not the plan of the Jews. The Jews did not put Jesus on the cross; God did, to reveal His plan of salvation for all humankind. In order to prove to the world that the Cross was God's plan to overcome the scheme of Satan, God raised Jesus from the dead, exalted Him into heaven, and seated Him at the right side of His throne!

The Qur'an mentions the death of Jesus as follows:

*So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die,
and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again).*

Surat-u Maryam(19):33

Most Muslims accept the birth of Jesus and the raising of Jesus into heaven. It should not be so difficult then for them to believe that somewhere in between, Jesus died, as clearly indicated by the above Qur'anic verse. This verse certainly agrees with the teaching of the Bible that Jesus was born, died, and was raised to life and lifted into heaven. However,

unfortunately the Qur'an does not tell us how Jesus died. This, of course, poses a question and the Qur'an itself clearly gives the following instruction whenever one is in doubt:

If thou were in doubt as to what We have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee (ask the People of the Book).

Surat-u Yunus(10):94

The People of the Book know how Jesus died because the Bible very clearly gives the answer. The following verses should remove any further doubt from the mind of the inquirer:

Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took twelve disciples aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man (the Messiah) will be betrayed to the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles (non-Jews) to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life.

Matthew 20:17-19

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

Acts 2:22-24

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God....

Acts 2:32,33

17. It Is Unlawful to Eat Pork

Muslims are appalled at the sight of Christians freely eating pork. They are repulsed by the sight of a pig just as much as the early Children of Israel were under the Mosaic Law, which continues to affect the lives of millions of Jewish people still today. The pig was clearly forbidden in the Old Testament:

And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

Leviticus 11:7,8

A similar prohibition is also found in the Qur'an:

He hath only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides that of God.

Surat-ul Baqara(2):173

Since the flesh of swine is strongly forbidden in Islam, Muslims regard the eating of pork as an extremely unholy act—an abomination before God. For this reason they consider it an outrageous contradiction for people who claim to be followers of the holy prophet Jesus to eat pork.

It is important to explain to the Muslim the nature of the Mosaic Law and its specific purpose for the Children of Israel. The Law of the Old Testament consisted of both the moral law and the civil law. The moral law dealt with the great ethics of life. Its purpose was to set apart the chosen people of Israel from all other nations on the basis of inner holiness with regard to honor for both God and human beings. This great moral law was to lift the Children of Israel to a much higher standard of holiness and to serve as a model for all people of all generations. For example, the Ten Commandments is a code of moral law that pertains to human responsibilities to God and other people. They are laws unaffected by changes in the environment, and thus they remain unchanged.

The civil law was different. It consisted of rules and regulations that pertained to everyday living; these rules were influenced by both the environment and the customs of neighboring pagan communities. Such laws dealt with issues of cleanliness, food, health, clothing, and religious ritual. The purpose of these laws was to set apart the Children of Israel from all other nations on the basis of outer holiness. They were to remain separate and distinct, and were to be distinguished in the eyes of the rest of the world because they served the one true God and refused to adopt the practices and superstitions of idolatrous worship that surrounded them.

Among these civil laws was the rule that forbade the eating of pork. It was a common practice among neighboring pagan tribes to offer a pig as a sacred sacrifice to their idols. Furthermore, at that time and in that part of the world, the pig was a filthy animal that fed on dead meat and garbage. As a result, eating pork caused the spread of terrible diseases that affected the whole community. The Children of Israel were to

separate themselves completely from such pagan influence and filth.

The Muslim needs to be reminded that the Children of Israel were chosen to be a holy nation, submitting itself to the one true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This nation was to be a constant reminder to the rest of the world that God had set it apart from other nations for a very special reason. The Qur'an speaks of this also:

And commemorate our servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, possessors of power and vision. Verily We did choose them for a special (purpose)—proclaiming the message of the hereafter.

Surat-us Sad(38):45,46

O Children of Israel, call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others (for My Message).

Surat-ul Baqara(2):47

Explain to your Muslim friend why the Children of Israel were so special and for what purpose God had chosen them. We now know that this was the chosen community through which would come the Savior of the world, Jesus the Messiah, the Holy One sent from God to ransom humankind. The Word of God took on human flesh in the person of Jesus and was born of the virgin Mary. This Holy One was to be born from among the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Children of Israel. No wonder they were called to be holy and unique from all other nations.

Unfortunately, at the time of Jesus' ministry on earth, many among the Children of Israel had lost sight of the

purpose of the civil law. They substituted the washing of hands for the washing of the heart and began placing more emphasis on the civil laws of daily rules and regulations. In fact, the religious leaders began to add many more regulations of their own and claimed these were the true standard of holiness as opposed to the purity of the heart which was much more difficult to observe. As a result, for many people, true religion degenerated into dead rituals lined with arrogance and hypocrisy. The religious leaders could be seen outwardly reciting their prayers, washing their hands, and eating only permitted foods. But inside, their hearts were diseased with hatred, greed, lust, and jealousy. Men had abused the law to boast of their own holiness!

Jesus saw this human corruption of the civil law and took appropriate action according to the authority God had given Him. He declared all food clean for the purpose of removing such hypocrisy and returning the emphasis of true holiness to the heart. As a result, for the followers of Jesus, all food was declared lawful. Even the Qur'an quotes Jesus as saying:

"(I have come to you), to attest the Law which was before me, and to make lawful to you part of what was (before) forbidden to you...."

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):50

From the New Testament, we read about the teaching of Jesus on holiness:

"Are you so dull?" he (Jesus) asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean?' For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") He went on: "What comes

out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

Mark 7:18-23

It should also be pointed out that since Jesus came into the world, there was no longer any need for the Children of Israel to remain a distinct and exclusive community. In fact, Jesus had now come to unite all cultures of the world unto God and to empower people of all races to live up to the holiness of the great moral laws of God. It is obvious that as this community grows worldwide there are no civil laws that can be common to all because of great differences in environment and climate. Nevertheless, the great moral teaching of Jesus remains the same for all: It is not the abstinence of food that brings great glory to the Almighty, but rather the expression of genuine love for God and fellowman! This law can apply to anyone and to any place in the world!

It should also be noted that the Mosaic law was for the Children of Israel, and since most Christians are not descendants of Israel, they are not subject to the civil laws that dealt with community practice.

There are times, however, when Christians refrain from eating pork. If they know that in their area of the world, pigs feed on dead meat and filth, they are careful not to eat pork for health reasons. To care for the body is also pleasing to God. Also, some Christians refrain from pork if they feel it creates a stumbling block in their witness to Muslim friends and neighbors. By keeping pork out of the home, Muslims may be

more apt to visit, converse, dine; and consequently see and hear the wonderful gospel message.

18. *The Gospel of Barnabas Is the True Gospel*

Muslims who claim that the New Testament is not the original Gospel have searched in vain to find the "real one!" The best that some Muslims could do was to offer a book entitled *Gospel of Barnabas*. This work is supposedly the true Gospel written by Barnabas, an early believer, who accompanied the apostle Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-4). Modern scholarship, however, has this to say about the so-called *Gospel of Barnabas*:

*There was also a **Gospel of Barnabas**, referred to by several ancient authors, especially in the "Decree of Galasius" (500 AD); but there is no mention of its contents or character. However, there is in existence a long Italian manuscript under this title written from the Muslim standpoint and containing a strong element of Gnosticism. It was edited in 1907 by Lonsdale and Laura (M Roberts) Ragg, who held it to be the work of an apostate from Christianity, sometime between the 13th and 16th century. Like most of the patristic and medieval apocrypha, the work is highly imaginative, a work of fiction rather than of historical tradition, but it has a strongly marked ethical emphasis.*

Encyclopedia Americana
1976 edition, page 247

Because of the suspicious nature of this book, *Gospel of Barnabas*, only a few Muslims have taken it seriously. These are the ones bent on attacking Christianity and the Bible. The

more educated Muslims who are well-versed in the Qur'an and are familiar with Palestinian history and geography realize that to claim divine origin for such a book is an outright embarrassment to the cause of Islam. The *Gospel of Barnabas* contradicts both the Qur'an and the historical background of Palestine in the days of Jesus. These discrepancies are listed by category with examples from the text in question.

a. The Identity of the Messiah

One of the main objectives of this book, *Gospel of Barnabas* (1907 edition), is to transfer the title "Messiah" from Jesus to the prophet Muhammad. This attempt, however, is contradicted by both internal and external evidence.

The following references confirm the author's attempt to remove the title "Messiah" from Jesus:

page 122, chapter 96: Jesus says He is not the Messiah

page 123, chapter 97: Muhammad is claimed to be the Messiah

page 182, chapter 142: The Messiah is not of the seed of David or Isaac

Despite the above references from the *Gospel of Barnabas*, the Qur'an clearly attributes the title *Al-Masih* (the Messiah) to none other than Jesus, son of Mary. This distinct title is never used in the Qur'an for any other prophet, including the prophet Muhammad. Notice the following Qur'anic references:

Christ Jesus (Al-Masih Isa) the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of God, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him.

Surat-un Nisaa(4):171

*Behold! the angels said: "O Mary, Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be **Christ Jesus (Al-Masih Isa)**, the son of Mary held in honor in this world and the hereafter."*

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):45

It must also be noted that Muslims agree with the Bible that Jesus was of Jewish descent, born of the lineage of the prophet David, who descended from the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Since the Qur'an identifies Jesus as the Messiah, the statement in the *Gospel of Barnabas* that the Messiah is not of the seed of David or Isaac is clearly contradictory to Muslim belief!

Throughout the book, *Gospel of Barnabas*, the author uses the title Christ which means Messiah for Jesus, but at the same time contends that Jesus is not the Messiah!

b. Scriptural and Traditional Inaccuracies

page 5, chapter 3: Mention is made that Mary bore Jesus without any pain. The Qur'an, however, clearly says otherwise:

So she conceived him (Jesus), and she retired with him to a remote place. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree: She cried (in her anguish): "Ah! would that I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight!"

Surat-u Maryam(19):22,23

page 26, chapter 23: It is said that circumcision started with Adam. However, both Muslim tradition and the Bible say that this rite began with the community of Abraham and Ishmael.

page 46, chapter 35: It is alleged that man's navel was made from the spittle of Satan. Yet on page 50, chapter 39, the author says that the dog was created from Satan's spittle. Neither the Qur'an nor the Bible indicate that Satan had any part in the creation of man's body, including his navel. Furthermore, most Muslims would agree that the Mighty Creator God certainly did not need Satan's help in creating any part of man!

page 51, chapter 39: Adam and Eve were supposedly forbidden to eat of the apples and the corn. However, the Qur'an relates the following:

O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will: but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression.

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):55

It is quite possible that "apples" may have been on the forbidden tree, but it is quite commonly known that "corn" does not grow on trees!

page 57, chapter 44: The idea of the Promise or Covenant being made to the seed of Isaac is refuted. However, nowhere in the Qur'an is mention made of a covenant with Ishmael and his descendants. References of such a Promise or Covenant are in regard to the seed of Isaac which means Israel

(Jacob) and his descendants. Thus we read the Qur'anic verse as follows:

*O Children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill your Covenant with Me as I fulfill **My Covenant with you**, and fear none but Me.*

Surat-ul Baqara(2):40

page 132, chapter 105: Mention is made of "nine heavens." The Qur'an speaks of only seven:

Moreover His design comprehended the heavens, for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments;...

Surat-ul Baqara(2):29

page 134, chapter 106: Hell is spoken of as a place of intolerable snow and ice. Many of the Qur'anic references, however, speak of hell as a place of burning flames and boiling water.

page 141, chapter 112: Jesus is stated as saying that He would not be raised into heaven until the Day of Judgment. The following references of the Qur'an indicate otherwise:

Behold! God said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself...."

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):55

Nay, God raised him up unto Himself; and God is exalted in Power, Wise.

Surat-un Nisaa(4):158

page 156, chapter 124: It is stated that the *Zabur* (Book of Psalms) was given because of the corruption of the *Tawrat* (Books of Moses), and that the *Injil* (New Testament) was given because of the subsequent corruption of the *Zabur*.

However, this line of reasoning is not found in the Qur'an. To the contrary, the Holy Books of the Bible are spoken of as light and guidance to mankind. If the Books of the Bible had been corrupted, the Qur'an would not have contained the following admonitions:

If only they had stood fast by the Law, the Gospels, and all the revelation that was sent to them from their Lord, they would have enjoyed happiness from every side.

Surat-ul Maida(5):66

O ye who believe! Believe in God and His apostle, and the scripture which He hath sent to His apostle and the scripture which He sent to them before him. Any who denieth God, His angels, His Books, His Apostles, and the Day of Judgment hath gone far, far astray.

Surat-un Nisaa(4):136

page 273, chapter 221: Jesus is quoted as saying, "*I died not.*" Though most Muslims deny the death of Jesus, the Qur'an is not clear on this issue and even gives stronger evidence for the belief that Jesus did die, before being raised up to God. Notice the following Qur'anic verse:

Behold! God said, "O Jesus, I will take thee and raise thee to Myself...."

Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):55

The Arabic expression for "*I will take thee*" is *tawaffika* meaning "I will cause you to die." This expression is used again in Surat-ul Maida(5):117 where Jesus says to God, "...*when Thou didst take me up.*" Here again the Arabic literally means "when you caused me to die."

There is another verse which indicates that Jesus died before being raised to God. Jesus is quoted as saying:

*So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die,
and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)!*

Surat-u Maryam(19):33

In *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary*, A. Yusuf Ali in his footnote No. 2485 says, "...*those who believe that he (Jesus) never died should ponder over this verse.*" To get around this issue, many Muslims teach that when Jesus returns to the earth, He will die at that time. However, such teaching is not found in the Qur'an!

It is important to note that in the *Gospel of Barnabas* there is no mention of John the Baptist whom Muslims call *Yahya*. However, in both the Qur'an and the Bible, John the Baptist (*Yahya*) is a very prominent figure. He was the one commissioned to be the forerunner or witness of the advent of Jesus. John's primary mission was to confirm that Jesus was the Messiah, the "Anointed One" of God. It is clear now why the author of the *Gospel of Barnabas* completely omitted any reference to John the Baptist. In his attempt to make Muhammad the Messiah, he made Jesus the witness of the Messiah, thus eliminating any need for the mission of John the Baptist. By now it should be clear that all of this is contradictory to the teaching of the Qur'an!

c. Geographical and Historical Inaccuracies

page 22, chapter 20: “*Jesus...having embarked on a ship sailed to his city of Nazareth.*” Nazareth is located inland and is not a seaport as indicated.

page 23, chapter 21: “*went up to Capernaum.*” However, Capernaum is not inland, but is a port city on the Sea of Galilee.

page 116, chapter 92: It is stated that Jesus went to Mt. Sinai, then drew nigh to the Jordan River. However, Mt. Sinai is located on the Egyptian side of Israel, and the Jordan River on the Jordan side of Israel. These two locations are extremely far apart, not near!

page 217, chapter 169: “*How beautiful is the world in summertime, when all things bear fruit.*” This description may be true for places like Europe, but not so of Palestinian summers, where the ground is left dry and barren by the hot, scorching sun!

page 4, chapter 3: Jesus was born when “*Pilate was governor in the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas Jesus was born.*” However, history records that Pilate did not become governor until 26-27 A.D.

page 11, chapter 12: The words “ascend to the pinnacle,” which are used here, are more indicative of medieval 15th and 16th century Europe when speeches were delivered from lofty balconies. This particular expression does not reflect the method of Palestinian Jews giving sermons from their synagogues.

page 19, chapter 18: Mention is made of the slaying of 10,000 prophets by the woman Jezebel. However, no such event is recorded either in the Scriptures of the Holy Books or the pages of history.

page 41, chapter 32: Mention is made of the worship of the idol of Baal spreading throughout all the world. However, there has been no archeological evidence to substantiate such a claim.

page 82, chapter 65: The word *Probatina* is used in reference to a pool. However, this was a Greek name used for one of the entrances into Jerusalem called the "Sheep Gate."

page 115, chapter 91: Reference is made to 600,000 Roman soldiers assembling in the small town of Mizpeh. Such an event is not recorded in the annals of Rome and appears to be sheer exaggeration!

page 130, chapter 103: Though the words "mariner" and "ship" are used, these words are not typical for Palestine during the time of Jesus and in the area He ministered. They are more indicative of places such as Spain or Italy in medieval Europe.

page 185, chapter 145: Mention is made of 17,000 Pharisees in the time of Elijah the Prophet. However, the Pharisee sect did not come into being until 200 B.C. during the Jewish Maccabean Era. Elijah lived 700 years earlier in 900 B.C.

page 196, chapter 152: Reference is made to soldiers being rolled out like casks of wood when washed to refill with wine. However, wooden casks were not typical of the times of

Jesus' ministry. In that time and still today, wine skins made of animal hides, not wood, were used. Wooden wine casks reflect medieval Europe and were exported to other parts of the world.

page 262, chapter 214: Mention is made of 30 pieces of gold. However, during the times of Jesus, Palestinian currency tended to be in silver pieces.

Conclusion: From the many examples given, it should be clear to both Muslims and Christians that this so-called *Gospel of Barnabas* cannot be regarded as of divine origin. All evidence indicates that it is a forgery composed by someone most likely during the Middle Ages in Europe as an attack on Christianity. Some researchers think the *Gospel of Barnabas* may have been written by someone of Spanish or Italian background who resented the removal of Islam from Spain by the Christians, and thus attempted to present Muhammad superior to Jesus. It is evident that this devious work has been exposed by the seekers of truth; and Truth will forever prevail!

Appendices

Islamic Terms/Names/Expressions

1. Greeting: Peace be upon you—*As-salamu alaikum*
Response: And peace be upon you—*Wa alaikum as-salam*
2. God—*Allah (al-ilah)*; a combination of *al* (the) and *ilah* (god) meaning “the god”
3. God Most High—*Allah Ta’ala*
4. God the glorified and exalted—*Allah Subhana wa Ta’ala* or *Allah (SWT)*
5. God is Greater (than anything else)—*Allah-u Akbar*
6. In the name of God—*Bismillah*
7. In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate—*Bismillah-ir Rahman-ir Rahim*
8. Praise be to God (Hallelujah)—*Al-hamdulillah*
9. Lord of Heaven and Earth (the universe)—*Rabb-ul A’alamin*
10. Jesus the Messiah—*Isa Al-Masih*
11. Abraham (peace be upon him or *pbuh*)—*Ibrahim (alaihi as-salam or [a:])*
12. Isaac and Jacob—*Ishaq[a:]* and *Yaqub[a:]*
13. Ishmael—*Isma’il[a:]*
14. Moses and Aaron—*Musa[a:]* and *Harun[a:]*

15. David and Solomon—*Daud*[a:] and *Sulaiman*[a:]
16. John the Baptist—*Yahya*[a:]
17. Prophet—*Nabi*
(example: Prophet Moses—*Nabi Musa*[a:])
18. Mary—*Maryam*[a:]
19. Gabriel (Holy Spirit Messenger)—*Jibrail* or *Ruh-ul Quddus*
20. Mohammed (blessing be upon him and peace)—*Muhammad (salallahu alaihi wa as-salam)* or *Muhammad*[s:]
21. The Holy Book (the Bible)—*Al-Kitab-ul Muqaddas*
22. The Books of Moses (Torah)—*Al-Tawrat*
23. The Psalms of David—*Al-Zabur*
24. The New Testament (Gospel)—*Injil (Sharif)*
25. Writings of the Prophets—*Suhuf-un Nabiyyin*
26. Jerusalem—*Al-Quds*
27. Islamic religious law—*Shari'ah*

Similarities Between Biblical and Muslim Cultures

Biblical Religious Customs

1. Greeting of peace—Luke 10:5
2. Washing of hands and feet before worship—Exodus 40:31,32
3. Removal of shoes—Exodus 3:5
4. Bowing prostrate in prayer—Psalm 95:6
5. Animal sacrifice (Passover)—Deuteronomy 16:1-6
6. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem—Acts 8:26-28
7. Women covering their heads during worship—1 Corinthians 11:5,6
8. Circumcision—Luke 2:21
9. Offering a sacrifice for the first-born—Luke 2:24
10. Prolonged fasting—Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8; Matthew 4:2
11. Abstinance from pork—Leviticus 11:7

Muslim Practices

1. Greeting—*As-salamu alaikum* (peace be unto you)
2. Ablutions—*wudu*
3. No shoes inside the mosque
4. Prostrate during prayer—*sajda*
5. Feast of animal sacrifice—*Eid-ul Adha/Eid-ul Qurban*
6. Pilgrimage to Mecca—*hajj*
7. Women wear head-covering
8. Circumcision—*khitan*
9. Offering of sacrifice at birth of a child—*akika*
10. 30-day fast during Ramadan—*saum*
11. Muslims abstain from eating pork