

TAKING THE WORD OF GOD TO ISLAM

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With this article, we are beginning a series of lessons that will aid us in studying with someone who is a Muslim.

UNDERSTANDING THEIR BACKGROUND

A Muslim might approach a study with possible stereotypes of Christianity. A large part of these stereotypes find their origins in their association of Christianity with “the West” and/or their association of Christianity with Catholicism and/or Protestant denominationalism. Examples of these stereotypes might include but are not limited to:

1) Confusing Christian women’s modesty and submission, with Western women’s immodesty and lack of submission.

2) Equating American civil laws prohibiting public prayer, with Christians being irreligious.

3) Perceiving the West’s high divorce rate as a reflection upon Christianity’s lack of concern for the home.

4) Perceiving the West’s high abortion and euthanasia rates as a commentary on Christianity’s devaluation of human life, or

5) Teaching Catholic physical resistance and war against Muslims in the Crusades represents the authorized Christian response to those with whom they disagree religiously.

If any of these stereotypes manifest themselves or surface during a study, they should immediately be addressed so as not to allow a false stereotype to prevent reaching them with the Gospel.

BEGINNING THE STUDY

Keep them in your prayers before and after a study (1 Thess. 5:17; Matt. 5:44).

In my estimation, there are few verses

more effective to begin a study with a Muslim than this one from the Koran. It can be a great opening discussion to establish the inspiration of certain parts of the Bible (in their mind).

3:3 — “He has revealed to you the Book (Scripture) with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed the Tavrat (Torah) and the Injeel (the Gospel) aforetime, a guidance for the people, and He sent the Furqan (Psalms).”

An immediate follow-up question to reading this verse in the Koran might be: “If the Torah, Gospel, and Psalms are from Allah, where can these be found today?” If they say “in the Bible” then by using the Psalms, Old Law, and the Gospel alone, you can convict someone of the truth regarding Jesus Christ. Using this fact, you can also move into a comparison of Mohammed according to the Koran and Hadith, versus Jesus Christ according to the Psalms and the Gospel. (Lists comparing and contrasting Jesus and Mohammed according to both books will be made later in this series of studies).

Another verse to introduce before studying internal conflicts within the Koran might be **Surah 4:82**.

4:82 — “Do they not then meditate on the Quran? And if it were from any other than Allah, they would have found in it many a discrepancy.”

Based on this premise, discrepancies within the Quran (Koran) would be another effective approach to studying with a Muslim. As is the case with most studies, however, sometimes the best approach

depends on the person with whom the study is being conducted.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARAB PEOPLES

After Ishmael and Hagar were sent away from Abraham and Sarah, Scripture records little in the area of Ishmael's descendants. Since the Messiah was to come through the descendants of Isaac and Jacob, Scripture really did not need to include this information.

We know they were dessert dwellers (Jer. 3:2; 25:24), and that the land they inhabited was east of but not including Babylon (Isa. 13:20). There were Arabs in the government of King Solomon who brought him gold and silver (2 Chron. 9:14). Ishmaelites were also mentioned in Judges 8:24, Psalms 83:6, and Nehemiah 6. In Nehemiah chapter 6, the Arab people first came in conflict with the Israelites as they tried to rebuild the temple following release from Babylonian captivity (Neh. 6:2-4). Uninspired history also records that they fought with the Greeks against the Jews when a priest named Judas Maccabaeus attempted to regain Jewish independence from Greek rule.

Following the close of the apostolic age, for a period of around 500 years, the religion of the Arab peoples was Sabianism, which is the worship of the sun, moon, and other celestial forms. Then in AD 570 in the town of Mecca, located in what is now Saudi Arabia, Mohammed was born. Mohammed himself had very little success with his religion while he was alive. In fact, toward the end of his life, he only had accumulated several hundred followers.

There are two main divisions in the Islamic movement: the *Shi'ites* and the *Sunnis*. The Shi'ite party began over political issues, but eventually moved to theological differences. They believe that Ali, the fourth of the caliphs (successors after Mohammed), was either divinely appointed or in fact deity himself. On the other side, the Sunnis claim that only direct descent, an actual descen-

dant of Mohammed, could take his position. The Sunnis greatly outnumber the Shi'ites, but the Shi'ites have always been more aggressive and militant.

(Politically, **Saddam Hussein** was of the Ba'ath party, but seemed to show more allegiance to, or at least sympathy for, the Sunni sect than he did the Shi'ite sect.)

ABOUT THE KORAN (QURAN)

The Koran was revealed in Arabic over a period of twenty-two years (AD 610-632). Since Muslims universally insist that Mohammed was illiterate, they claim that he received nonliterary (unwritten) revelations from the angel Gabriel, which he never wrote down (of course how could he if he was illiterate). The Koran supports this contention (6:7; 7:158; 17:93; 25:5; 29:48,51). This means the Koran existed first *only* orally as spoken by Mohammed. The next step, therefore, in preserving these "revelations" is to retrieve all these oral teachings from all the many hearers. Most of Islam will also admit and contend that this process of collecting and compiling all these "revelations" did not begin until after Mohammed's death. This brings us to a *very important* point concerning the Koran. If Mohammed is indeed (as they claim) the final and greatest prophet, this necessitates that the retelling and recording of these "revelations" would be left to uninspired speakers, writers, and memories.

Muslim scholars and historians credit Abu Bakr (his best friend and father of his favorite wife) with having been the first to organize the collection and transmitting of all these "revelations" in one single book. They contend he produced the first official written Koran. Many Muslim apologists and scholars admit that after the initial compilation of the Koran was finished, many copies were burned. They will go on to explain, however, that this burning took place because there were "incorrect copies" and many with "mistakes". They admit, therefore, that since their process of

recording and collecting these “revelations” was a completely uninspired process, there were many mistakes and errors in early copies. Where most people contend that through the years a work will lose its credibility, the Muslims must contend that through the years their book gains more and more credibility as they remove the mistakes and contradictions.

It is often contended that when mistakes and contradictions arise, they are totally the fault of the translation of the text into another language other than Arabic. In the author’s personal experience, this has been a common response, which is why in my work I always carried an Arabic copy of the Koran for Muslim students to use (though most of them could not use it if they wanted to!). By stating this, the person is basically saying the only way the Koran can be truly understood in its “perfect” and “inerrant” form is by speaking and/or reading the Arabic language. The god of the Koran has decided that the true message can only be received through one language, and the Koran claims in several passages that it has been preserved in only pure and clear Arabic speech (26:195). Interestingly enough, though, scattered throughout the pages of the Koran are words from *other languages!* For example, Syrian words are used repeatedly in the Koran (3:45- *masih* translated Messiah, 2:50- *furqan* translated salvation, etc.).

Finally, it is also important to understand what Muslims call Islamic *Hadith*. The *Hadith* is simply a collection of “traditions” regarding the life and sayings of the prophet Mohammed and how he responded to others. These traditions were first transmitted by word of mouth and later recorded. It is regarded as just as much the word of Allah as the Koran (some Muslims esteem it more authoritative even than the Koran).

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT BOOKS LIKE THE KORAN

Where Jesus was *not* satisfied leaving the truth to the unaided human memories of His apostles alone, He instead told them the Holy Ghost would “teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). The same cannot be said for the Koran. In recording the Bible, not only did God inspire the writer’s memory and knowledge, He also inspired their *writings*.

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom *given unto him hath written* unto you” (2 Peter 3:15). “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the *things that I write* unto you are the *commandments of the Lord*” (1 Cor. 14:37). “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, *Write: for these words are true and faithful*” (Rev. 21:5).

This is how Paul, through the Holy Spirit, could write “*all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (2 Tim. 3:16). All that is Scripture, whether oral or written, is God-breathed. That means if something new is taught, remembered, or written without the direct assistance of God, *it is not Scripture!*

That introduces another very important concept directly relating to the Koran. God breathed the words written by the apostle Paul when He wrote: “But though we, *or an angel from heaven*, preach any other gospel unto you than that which *we* have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8-9).

If the angel Gabriel brought a message to Mohammed (as they claim), that is different, contradictory, or even additional to what the apostles of Jesus Christ taught, **the message should be rejected!** Paul could not be any plainer than what he wrote to the Galatians. So, the man of God simply needs

to compare the words of the Koran to the words of the apostles of Jesus Christ, and in *every single way* that the Koran is different than Scripture, it should be rejected and its author should be considered accursed. And, in whatever ways they agree, they are not true because the Koran said it (or in other words because Mohammed rewrote what he read in Scripture that had already been written), it is true because Scripture said it before Mohammed was even born!

Where the god of the Koran has decided that the true message can only be received through the Arabic language, this is in complete contrast to the God of the Bible who supplied many early Christians (specifically the apostles) with the ability to speak and carry the message in tongues they had never before studied (Acts 2:7-8, et al.) in order for the Gospel to reach all peoples (Col. 1:23). In fact, when God himself desired to speak a message to Saul of Tarsus, He spoke “in the Hebrew tongue” (Acts 26:14). Paul wrote that there are “so many kinds of voices (or “languages” NKJV) in the world, and none of them is without signification (or “significance” NKJV)” (1 Cor. 14:10).

CONFLICTS IN DOCTRINE BETWEEN THE KORAN AND THE BIBLE

I. Regarding the Person of Jesus:

Koran: Describes Jesus as:

1. An unauthorized “partner” not to be given God (3:64, 25:2).
2. Never accepting nor had the right to accept worship (5:116-117).
3. Not the “Son” of God (18:1-5). In fact, God Himself denies that Jesus is His Son (9:30-31).
4. Not possessing the traits of deity (23:91).
5. An impossibility since God had no partner or “wife” with whom to have a child (6:102-103).
6. No more than an “apostle” or “prophet” (5:75). Specifically, He is no greater than

- Abraham, Ishmael, or Jacob (2:136; 3:84).
7. Having been born of a virgin birth (21:91) while also having been created by God of the dust just like Adam (3:59).
8. Capable of being destroyed by God should He have so chosen (5:17).
9. Not having actually been crucified (4:157).
10. Having called his disciples “Muslims” (3:52).
11. Having prophesied of Mohammed (61:6).
12. His purpose in coming was to prepare the way of Mohammed (61:6).

Interesting notes also recorded in the Koran regarding Jesus:

1. Muslims are instructed to obey His words (43:63).
2. He performed miracles on earth (3:45-49; 5:110; 113).
3. Never tasted of death but was taken by God (3:55; 4:158).
4. He was faultless (19:19).

Bible: Describes Jesus as:

1. Having perfect unity, fellowship and communion with the Father (John 17:21-22).
2. Accepting worship (Matt. 2:2,11; 14:33; 28:9; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:8).
3. Being the Son of God (Matt. 8:29; John 1:34; 1 John 2:22-23). The Father declared such Himself (Matt. 2:15; 3:17; 17:5).
4. Equal with God (Isa. 9:6-7; John 1:1; 5:18; 10:30,38; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9; Rev. 1:8-9).
5. His birth on earth resulting from a supernatural process that could not involve God having something He cannot have as a Spirit (Matt. 1:18-20; Mark 12:25).
6. A Prophet and an Apostle (Deut. 18:15; Heb. 3:1) but greater than any other prophet or apostle (Matt. 3:11; Luke 7:28; Matt. 17:4-5; Luke 11:31-32; John 4:12-14; 8:53,58; 13:14-16).
7. Being “made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4), not

- of the dust like Adam (Rom. 5:12-19).
8. The beginning and end (Rev. 1:8) or part of the eternal plan of God (Eph. 3:11).
 9. Crucified and resurrected (Matt. 27:35; 1 Cor. 15:3-4).
 10. Having called some of His disciples "apostles" (Luke 6:12-13) and later all of His disciples were called "Christians" (Acts 11:26).
 11. Being the culmination of the last system that communicates the message of God to man (Heb. 1:1-2; John 16:12-13).
 12. Coming to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10) and having had *His* way prepared by John (Matt. 3:3) He *became* the Way (John 14:6).

CONFLICTS IN DOCTRINE BETWEEN ISLAMIC HADITH AND THE BIBLE

I. The Person of Jesus

Hadith: Jesus will:

1. Return, die, and be resurrected (Surah 19:33-34).
2. Restore Islam and wipe out Christianity and Judaism (3:425).
3. Then judge the world by the Koran and *not* the Gospel (4:658).
4. Only reward those who believe in Him *and* Mohammed (4:655).
5. Not intercede for man as Mohammed will (8:570).

Bible: Jesus has:

1. Already died once and for all time (Heb. 10:10). Falling away from the truth is the spiritual equivalent of crucifying Him again (Heb. 6:6).
2. Already ended the Jewish system (Matt. 23:37; Rom. 2:28-29; Heb. 7:12) and did not speak of another system following Christianity (Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 12:31-32).
3. Stated He will judge the world according to His words (John 12:48) in the Gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-8).
4. Had salvation placed *only* in His name (Acts 4:12).

5. Alone been given the responsibility of interceding between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 8:34).

CONFLICTS IN DOCTRINE BETWEEN THE KORAN AND THE BIBLE

II. The Godhead (Triune Nature) and His Divine Characteristics

Koran: Denies the Godhead (5:72-74), and describes Allah as one who does not love those who reject faith (30:44-45; 3:32; 40:35).

Bible: Defends the Godhead (Matt. 3:16-17; 1 John 5:7; Col. 2:9) and describes Jehovah as loving everyone, even while they are/were in sin (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 8:38-39; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2, 4:19). He does not forgive until they repent, but He loves them just the same.

III. Relationships of Muslims with Others

1. Marriage:

POLYGAMY

Koran: Allows for a man to have up to four wives if he can afford them (4:3, 24-25; 23:6; 30:21). The only exception was Mohammed who could have more wives than any other man (33:50-53).

Bible: Though God may not have immediately punished polygamy under the Old Law, this was never His desired system (Deut. 17:17; Matt. 19:3-5; 1 Cor. 7:2; 1 Tim. 3:2,12; 5:9). God has never allowed a prophet or teacher to live differently than what he has preached and/or to exalt himself above the law (2 Thess. 2:4; 1 Cor. 4:6; Rom. 2:21).

DIVORCE

Koran: A Muslim man can divorce for any reason (2:226-232; 33:4,49; 58:2-4). Realistically, a Muslim could have an unlimited amount of wives, all with the

approval of God.

Bible: God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) and only approves of remarriage for the innocent party if the divorce was for fornication (Matt. 5:32; 19:5-9) or death (1 Cor. 7:39).

CANDIDATES FOR AND CONDUCT IN MARRIAGE

Koran: If there are no women available, men were allowed to marry young girls (4:25) as Mohammed did. Husbands are allowed to beat their wives (4:34).

Bible: The husband is to give honor to the wife because she is weaker than him (1 Peter 3:7). He is to love her as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25).

VIOLENCE

Koran: Muslims should fight back against those who fight them (2:190) because persecution is worse than slaughter (2:191, 217). Allah is described as loving those who fight for him (61:4), which is why on occasion his followers are told to bear weapons while praying (4:102).

Bible: Christ taught His disciples they were *not* to fight back when provoked (Matt. 5:38-41; 26:52; John 18:36), but should instead return good for evil (Matt. 5:43-44; John 15:20, 1 Thess. 5:15). Inspired apostles of Jesus Christ indicate the government (Rom. 13:1-4), not we ourselves (12:19), is to be the distributor of punishment for evil-doers; hence, we should not leave our sphere of authority to take away the realm of authority from the government (1 Peter 2:13-14). Persecution for Christians should be expected (John 15:20), not feared (Matt. 10:28); and endured (Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12-13), not resisted. Jehovah does not approve of (He in fact hates) those who are quick to shed blood (Prov. 6:16-19).

CONFLICTS IN DOCTRINE BETWEEN ISLAMIC *HADITH* AND THE BIBLE

III. Relationships of Muslims with Others

1. Women

Hadith: Women:

- a. Are considered to have less intelligence than men (1:301).
- b. Will be the majority of those in hell (1:301, 8:555).
- c. Will represent such a large number in hell because they are disobedient to husbands (1:28).
- d. Can only travel with her husband or another man who she cannot marry (4:250).

2. Other requirements and beliefs

Hadith: Muslims:

- a. Are commanded to bathe on Fridays (3:833).
- b. Are taught dogs are unclean and not even angels can enter a house where there is a dog or even pictures of a dog or other living creature (4:448).
- c. Believe pets can alert man to the presence of either an angel or the devil (4:522).

Bible: The Bible teaches women are of great value to God (Exodus 10:9-11; 1 Tim. 2:15; 1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:6; Acts 16:13-14). Galatians 3:28 declares there is no longer “male or female” for we are “one in Christ Jesus.” Though men and women have been given different *roles* in areas such as the family or the church (Gen. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:11-12), their souls have not been given different *values* to God. Jesus does not specify “what shall a man give in exchange for a male soul?” because *all* souls are equally valuable to God. While a life of disobedience to a husband can result in eternal punishment (Eph. 5:22,24), so can a life of mistreating a wife (1 Peter 3:7). Holding the traditions of man above the commandments of God make a religion and its worship vain (Matt. 15:8-9).

CREATION OF MAN

Koran: Speaks of two days of creation (41:9), followed by supplying hills and mountains for four days (41:11), followed by two days for the creation of the seven heavens (41:12), for a total of eight days of creation. While in other places it describes six days of creation (32:4). Man was created from blood (96:2), sperm (16:4), dust (3:59), mud (7:12), sticky clay (37:11), water (25:54), and nothing (52:35). Allah also created man weak and imperfect (4:28).

Bible: God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Gen. 2:2). He created man of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7) and woman of his rib (Gen. 2:21-22). God created man wholly good (Gen. 1:31).

ANGELS

Koran: Tells angels to worship man (15:26-35; 2:34; 7:11-12; 17:61; 18:51).

Bible: Man is not to be worshiped (Acts 14:13-15; Matt. 4:10). Man was made a little lower than the angels (Psa. 8:4-5).

HEAVEN

Koran: There are seven “heavens” (2:29; 23:86-87; 17:44), one of which is called “paradise” (76:11-22; 55:46-78). All of these are described in physical terms: a garden (76:12), bearing fruits of every kind (55:52), no heat nor cold (76:13), with silver and crystal goblets (76:15), with wine to drink (76:17), with many youthful servants (6:19), and sleeping on soft carpets (55:54). For men, there will be access to women with wide and lovely eyes (44:54), virgins who no man nor devil has touched (55:56), and they will be men’s “companions” (55:72) who God Himself will wed them to (44:54). Muslims achieve heaven by doing more good than bad

(23:102-103).

Bible: There are three “heavens” (Gen. 1:20; 15:5; Matt. 5:16; 2 Cor. 12:2), the “third” of which (the abode of God) is not earned by good works but is a gift made possible through Jesus Christ (John 10:27-28; Rom. 6:23). It is not a carnal place where carnal activities continue such as those carried out in marriage (Matt. 22:30).

HELL

Koran: Hell is described as a place of physical punishment, not spiritual torment. The unfaithful will be dragged into fire upon their faces (54:48), dragged by their hair (70:16), with their faces blackened (39:60), subjected to hooked rods of iron (22:21), neither die nor live (87:12-13), drink and have boiling water poured on them (18:30), then be forced to drink extremely cold water (38:57-59), and eat bitter, thorny fruit (88:2-7). “Malik” is the primary angel in charge of hell, where he will be in charge of tormenting its inhabitants (43:74,77). The Koran refers to hell, doom, or fiery punishment in 92 of its 114 chapters (80%).

Bible: In the New Testament, “hell” (*gehenna*) is mentioned a total of 12 times. Hell is a spiritual death or punishment because it is an eternal separation from God (Matt. 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Rev. 20:10). It is a place of everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46) that is compared to a fire that will never be quenched (Mark 9:43-48), or a lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:14-15). It is where all sinners go (those on the left hand, the goats, the wicked; Matt. 25:30-46; Rev. 21:8).

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