



# **Islam and the Qur'an**



Centuries ago, a prophet arose who claimed the sacred scriptures had been corrupted and that no one on earth at that time was teaching truth. An angelic visitor had told this prophet he was going to restore true religion and produce a pure word from the Almighty.

Do you suppose I mean Muhammad? Actually I was referring to Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon Church). Though we will be discussing Islam's holy book, the stories are remarkably similar and much of what I say about the Qur'an could be applied to Smith's Book of Mormon as well. NOTE: In Galatians 1:8 the Bible warns of and places a curse upon anyone, even an angel, who brings another gospel. While Muslim scholars (who claim to accept the Bible as coming from Allah) reject the writings of the apostle Paul- and thus much of the New Testament- they do so in spite of the fact that Paul's apostleship is detailed in Luke's book of Acts and validated by Peter as well.

The Qur'an, it would no doubt surprise many, presupposes one is familiar with the Bible. The Qur'an offers no explanation for the major events detailed in the Bible and is not written as a chronological history. Therefore, it is reasonable to say, knowledge of the Bible is essential to making any sense of The Qur'an.

I'm going to take a big-picture approach and ask a simple question: Why do we need the Qur'an? If, as it states, the Jews and Christians had, for some reason corrupted their own scriptures, then it would have been up to Muhammad to pass along the details to 'set the record straight'. He doesn't. In spite of calling himself a 'plain warner' who is bringing 'a clear revelation', the Qur'an is, frankly, baffling. Numerous times we are told the Law was given to Moses and the Gospel was given to Jesus but never are these explained; strange since it is they which were supposed to have been adulterated. Stories are told out of chronological order- some retold several times- while large periods of history are ignored altogether. This makes it near-impossible to determine who is being told what. The Bible on

the other hand flows on a steady timeline from the creation of the world to the end of the age. Because of this, anyone can see the holy wars of the Old Testament were against certain people at a prescribed time and place and not an open-ended edict to kill worshippers of another god. The same cannot be said of the Qur'an though we will give it the benefit of the doubt and assume it does not teach war on infidels. Also, the Old Testament temple worship (with its priesthood and animal sacrifices) is nowhere to be found. This is very significant as we will see shortly.

There are miscellaneous items of great concern as well. First, Muhammad was not sure if he had heard from Allah (via the angel Gabriel) or a devil. No prophet of God ever had this thought but each proclaimed, 'The word of the Lord came to me' or similar words. It was Muhammad's wife, who had not even been there for the meeting, which told him he had heard from Allah.

Also the claim that the scriptures (Old Testament and New Testament) have been corrupted can be quickly and decisively dismissed. Tens of thousands of manuscripts exist (many from long before Muhammad's time) and they all agree with each other and our current Bibles.

The evidence conclusively proves the scriptures have been preserved with amazing accuracy. I would point out that no scriptures have been found dating before the time of the Qur'an which agree with its 'restored truths' but, to be blunt, the Qur'an is remarkably short on content anyway. In terms of historical accounts, prophetic material or anything verifiable, the Qur'an is sorely lacking. Islamic scholars, trying to verify the corruption claim, compile lists of minor transcriptional errors in the Bible, usually concerning numbers (i.e. ages of kings, sizes of armies), while there is little chance of disproving anything in the Qur'an since it says very little that deals with external sources. Since a great deal of the Qur'an consists of promises of rewards for believers and threats of damnation for unbelievers (both future events), there is not much that can be challenged.

The question of adulterated texts poses a thorny problem for Islamic scholars anyway. Since Allah swore he would preserve his earlier scriptures (the Bible) and failed to do so that means a) He is not really almighty and b) There can be no assurance the Qur'an is free from error either. Also, if the Bible were really that corrupted it would be incumbent upon Allah to give Muhammad a whole new revelation, starting from square one. He doesn't do that. Clearly, as stated earlier, the Qur'an actually calls upon its reader to rely on texts that have been willfully perverted. Just how distorted are these Old and New Testaments supposed to be? Beyond recognition and far beyond any usefulness, as we will see shortly.

While the Qur'an certainly contradicts the Bible on many points the bigger issue, again, is do we need the Qur'an? With the exception of the occasional fast and pilgrimage, the overarching messages of the Qur'an are faith in and submission to Allah, avoidance of sin and the practice of charity. In what way does this differ from what the Bible teaches? Beyond these similarities, however, lie some glaring differences.

One example is Heaven. In the Bible, God Himself is the desired end, the prize for the faithful. God told Abraham He was his exceeding great reward. The longing of believers is

to be with God, to behold His glory, to serve Him, to be in His presence. The Psalmists wrote they longed for Him as deer pant for water. The Qur'an, on the other hand, speaks of the reward of believers as a Garden of sensual delights. While both books draw sharp contrasts between the righteous and the wicked, the Bible's rewards are such that would be of no interest to a carnally-minded man. While the Bible's just ones long to merely be with God in His kingdom, the Qur'an's paradise- being waited on by servants, feasting on the finest food and enjoying the company of beautiful women- would excite the worldliest and most reprobate mind. While the Bible tells us no one can even imagine what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Corinthians 2:9), one might experience a semblance of Islam's promised afterlife pleasures during a high-rolling weekend in Las Vegas or perhaps a visit to the Playboy mansion. The prospect of being in the presence of Allah is not held forth as a motivation.

Instead of telling us what to believe, the only substantial teaching the Qur'an brings to the table is, rather, what not to believe. Most of this concerns Jesus Christ. While the Qur'an does refer to Him as the Messiah, a title meaning 'anointed one', He says very little and is dismissed as 'just another messenger' (Surah 5:75). How can this be? The Messiah is a unique

figure; there can only be one and he must, by definition, be the highest of all. What does this 'Messiah' do and what is this 'Gospel' He was given?

The Qur'an does not tell us. The Bible, which has been meticulously preserved, tells us Jesus is the only-begotten son of God who died for our sins. The Qur'an says Allah has no son and Jesus did not die on the cross.

If that were true then Jesus would have been a false prophet, for He predicted He would be put to death and raised again to life. The Qur'an says Jesus is illustrious in this life and the Hereafter without explaining what that means or why it would be so. One reads the Qur'an and wonders, 'What is so great about this prophet Jesus?' The Bible makes it abundantly clear. Not only is Jesus presented as the only son of God, he is said to be 'the Lord from Heaven' (1 Corinthians 15:47). He is not merely a representative of God; He 'came forth from God' (John chap. 16); in fact, He claims to be 'one' with God (John 10:30). Jesus said of Himself that He was 'from above' and 'not of this world' (John 8:23). Not only does every book of the New Testament center on Him, they also are quite clear about His death and resurrection. If the Qur'an is correct, then they are all wrong. One wonders why Jesus' disciples would perpetuate the story they did if it were not true. They had to know it would put them in direct opposition to the Jewish establishment, to say nothing of the Roman Empire. Indeed, all they got for their efforts in preaching the Resurrection of Christ was to be killed. Why would they pursue such a reckless course unless they knew it to be the truth? Not only is Jesus the object of the New Testament, He even claimed in Luke 24:44 that He was the object of the Old Testament as well.

'...These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.'

In addition to the almost complete lack of Jesus' teachings in the New Testament, another glaring omission from the Qur'an is the system of Old Testament Temple animal sacrifices mentioned earlier. Aaron the high priest is mentioned many times with his brother Moses but the sacrificial offerings are not. The Bible makes it clear that the animal sacrifices, especially the Passover lamb, prefigured the final sacrifice, Jesus, the Messiah. He offered Himself once for all as a sacrifice to take away sins (read Hebrews chap. 10).

This theme is driven home throughout the entire New Testament and prophesied many times in the Old. While the God of the Bible requires payment be made for sins, Allah's laws apparently are not inviolable. By that I mean that even though they are broken, he can simply forgive whomever he wishes without requiring a penalty. If a sinner may be reconciled to the Almighty by merely repenting and asking forgiveness, then much of the Bible makes no sense. It is true that in the Old Testament, in Psalm 51, for example, transgressors such as King David rely on God's mercy for their salvation rather than their own good works. This, however, does not change what the Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation; there is a sacrifice necessary to atone for the sins of men and God Himself



provides it. The testimony of the Bible is that God has done the work necessary but we must first, accept it and second, walk in obedience.

As we've seen the Qur'an has the same message about repentance, charity and holiness but it omits the most crucial part; God's provision of a sacrifice. Jesus Christ is- inexplicably- called Messiah in the Qur'an but in the Bible it is clear what that means. He is the sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world. To this end He was, according to every book of the New Testament (and many secular historians) crucified. This the Qur'an boldly denies, stating He was certainly not crucified though perhaps Allah made it appear so.

Not only would this make Allah a deceiver but Jesus a false prophet as well, since He predicted numerous times he would be put to death and rise again from the grave. The Old Testament foretells this in many places, for example Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. The death of Jesus, according to the Bible, was a stunning victory wherein he destroyed the work of the devil and made restitution for the sins of the world. It was on the cross that Jesus Christ redeemed for Himself a people to inherit eternal life. No more offerings are necessary; He made one sacrifice for sins forever (Hebrews 10:12). Forgiveness cannot be earned; Isaiah said all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Salvation is a 'free gift' of God.

'Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.'

(Romans 5:18)

In addition to denying Jesus' death on the cross, the very centerpiece of the New Testament, the Qur'an also opposes the view that Allah has a unique son. Not only does the Bible emphatically state that Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God, but also that He is in fact equal with God and should be honored in the same way (Philippians 2:6, John 5:23, John 10:33-34).

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

"...that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father." (John 5:23)

"He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9)

Jesus calls Himself 'greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah, greater than the temple.  
(Matthew 12, Luke 11)

Christ is also called:

'King of kings and Lord of lords' (1 Timothy 6:15, Revelation 17:4, 19:6)

'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (Then it goes on to say He is the creator)

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.  
(Colossians 1:15-17)

He is also called The First and the Last:

'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: (Revelation 2:8)

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8) This "First and Last" title is one taken by God for Himself in Isaiah.

"Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last. (Isaiah 48:12)

Christ is the First and the Last (who was dead, which the Qur'an denies)...also identified as the Almighty?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son," (John 5:22)

Just another Messenger? Or Creator and Judge? Think about it...how can they both be right?

You, along with the Mormons, may certainly 'choose to believe the prophet' but, in doing so, you take the word of one man against all the biblical prophets and history as well. You would be choosing to dismiss the Bible as 'corrupted' when the evidence says the exact opposite. Worst of all, you would be choosing to reject Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Jesus, boldly proclaiming Himself as Judge, stated this:

'But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.' (Matthew 10:33)

Can you really trust one man for your eternal destiny? You can, but only if that Man is Jesus Christ. We exhort you to begin reading the Bible, the very word of God and find out who the 'prophet Jesus' really is. In Him you will find rest for your souls, peace with God and eternal life. You may obtain a free Gospel of John right here. God bless you.

**Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. (John 11:25)**

