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# 1

## THE CREDIBILITY OF THE BIBLE

In this book, Islamic beliefs and verses from the Qur'an are discussed to help Muslims and Christians see the common ground and the differences between Islam and Christianity.

While I do not depend on the Qur'an to prove the credibility of the Bible, I find it significant and interesting that throughout its pages, the Qur'an testifies to the authenticity of the Bible. The Jews and the Christians are described in the Qur'an as "the people of the Book." The Jewish Scripture is the Torah; and the Christian Scripture is the Injeel. The Qur'an speaks with reverence and respect of the Torah (Old Testament), Zabur (the Psalms), and the Injeel (Gospel or New Testament). These Holy Scriptures, according to the Qur'an, have the status of the authentic Word of God, because they were God's revelation before the Qur'an.

The Torah can mean the "law" or the instruction God gave through Moses. Also, it can be any word God gave through the prophets.

My dear Muslim friend, there is not one single verse in the Qur'an that confirms that the Bible has been invalidated by the arrival of the Qur'an. Furthermore, the Qur'an itself commands Muslims to profess belief in the Bible. We read in Surah 2:136: "Say ye: 'We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham . . . 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 . . .'"

## **THE QUR'AN CONFIRMS HOLY SCRIPTURE**

Hundreds of years before the time of Muhammad, the Bible was already written and in the hands of people all over the world. The Qur'an declares that it (the Qur'an) was given to confirm the previous revelations and not to replace them. Surah 5:48 says: "To thee [Muhammad] We sent the Scripture [Qur'an] in truth confirming the Scripture that came before it; and guarding it in safety." This confirmation is repeated in many Qur'anic verses (Surah 2:89; 2:91, 97; 2:101; 6:92; 46:12).

The Qur'an testifies that the Torah, the Zabur, and the Injeel are the Word of God. The testimony of the Qur'an is clear. Surah 3:3–4 states: "And He [God] sent down the Law [of Moses] and the gospel (of Jesus) before this as a guide to mankind."

### **The Qur'an's References to the Torah**

Regarding the Torah, we read in Surah 5:44: "It was We who revealed the Law (to Moses) therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the prophets who bowed (as in Islam) to Allah's will." Other verses in the Qur'an that discuss the Torah are as follows:

“We gave Moses the Book, completing (Our favor) to those who would do right, and explaining all things in detail—and a guide and a mercy.” (Surah 6:154)

“We [God] gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of Messengers [Jewish prophets].” (Surah 2:87)  
Please refer also to Surah 4:54; 28:43; 32:23; 40:53–54; and 45:16.

### **The Qur’an’s References to the Zabur (Psalms) and Injeel**

Regarding the Zabur, the Qur’an states in Surah 21:105, “Before this We [God] wrote in the Psalms . . .”

Regarding the Injeel, the Qur’an declares in Surah 5:46, “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 that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah.” Please also read Surah 57:27.

### **ACCORDING TO THE QUR’AN ALL HOLY BOOKS ARE EQUAL**

Many Muslims think that it is unnecessary to read the Bible. Their opinion contradicts even the Qur’an itself. The Qur’an states clearly that all Muslims must follow and obey the teachings of the previous Holy Scripture (the Bible). The following Surahs are clear on this subject:

Surah 2:285 states: “The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His Messengers. ‘We make no distinction (they say)

between one and another of His Messengers.’ And they say: ‘We hear and we obey . . .’”

Surah 4:136 reads: “O you who have believed, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray” (Sahih).

In Surah 2:285 and Surah 4:136 cited above, notice that “His Books” is plural. This means all the Holy Books. This is a clear command that Muslims should regard all Holy Books as equal revelation.

As we read in Surah 4:136, if any Muslim ignores or rejects any part of God’s revelation in the Torah or in the Gospel, he has “gone far, far astray.” Also, God would condemn him as an infidel, as noted in Surah 40:70–72: “Those who reject the Book and the (revelations) with which We sent Our messengers: 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.”

Clearly, the Qur’an commands all people to read and obey God’s revelations in the Bible; this is an essential part of being a Muslim. It is very clear that Muhammad himself considered the Holy Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians to be books that lead people to become fully submitted to God.

The Qur’an also indicates that the Jews and Christians who lived in Muhammad’s time rejected the Qur’an. You can read about this in Surah 2:91: “When it is said to them: ‘Believe in what Allah hath sent down,’ they say, ‘We believe in what was

sent down to us.' Yet they reject all besides, even if it be truth confirming what is with them."

It is a fact that Muhammad wanted Arab Christians and Jews to accept him as a prophet in the line of biblical prophets. The Qur'an also recorded that Jews and Christians rejected Muhammad (Surah 2:120).

### **The Qur'an Considers the Bible Preeminent**

Surah 10:94 is a command given to Muhammad (and all Muslims) to treat the Bible as the primary source of enlightenment: "So if you are in doubt, [O Muhammad], about that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Scripture before you." This verse clearly instructs all the Muslim believers to refer to the Bible when questions arise regarding the Qur'an's meaning. It is clear from this verse that in the event of any doubt about certain revelations in the Qur'an, Muhammad is commanded by God to consult with the Jews and Christians who have been reading their Holy Scriptures. So Surah 10:94 is a command to Muhammad to test the truthfulness of his own message by the contents of the Holy Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians. This verse clearly shows that the Qur'an does not supersede the Gospel.

If Muhammad had doubt and was commanded to ask, then you, as a Muslim, have the permission—and the obligation—to examine all things. Think about all the information you receive so you can, by God's guidance, determine the whole truth.

Actually much of the Qur'an makes sense only with the background of the Bible. When you read the Bible, you will discover that it is a much more complete historical narrative of the story of Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Jesus, and all the prophets. You will be excited when you discover the whole truth and the complete stories. Unfortunately, the Bible was not accessible in Arabic to Muhammad.

My dear friend, the Qur'an does not claim that God sent it to prevent corruption or to replace the Holy Word of God, which is the entire Bible (Torah and the Injeel). On the contrary, the Qur'an confirms biblical authenticity.

Jesus declared that He did not come to abrogate previous revelations. Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17).

### **The Qur'an Recognizes That the Jews Possess the Word of God**

For example, a dispute had arisen among the Jews in Medina, and it had come to the attention of Muhammad. The Qur'an addresses Muhammad, "But why do they come to thee for decision, when they have [their own] law before them? Therein is the [plain] command of Allah" (Surah 5:43). Notice the expression "before them" in this verse.

It is also clear from Surah 5:43 that it was not necessary for the Jews to go to Muhammad for judgment because they had their Holy Scripture, which is the Word of God that contained all the needed guidance and light.

Consider also Surah 2:101, which states, "When a messenger from Allah came to them confirming that which was with them" (Sahih). Notice the expression "with them." These verses clearly teach that the Jews of Medina had the Old Testament in their possession at the time of Muhammad, and it was reliable to settle their own disputes.

The Qur'an never stated that the Holy Scriptures the Jews had and read is a book different from the book God revealed to them.

## **The Qur'an Recognizes That the Christians Possess the Word of God**

The Qur'an also confirms biblical authenticity with regard to the New Testament. Surah 5:47 states, "Let the people of the gospel judge by what Allah hath revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) those who rebel." How could the Christians be expected to judge by the Injeel unless they had it in their possession? The Christian world has known only one Injeel, which existed centuries before Muhammad's time and continues to exist today. The Qur'an never states that the Gospel that God revealed through Jesus is a book different from the one Christians used at the time of Muhammad. And the Qur'an never accuses the Jews and Christians of changing the actual text of the biblical manuscripts.

Have you noticed, my precious Muslim reader, what this verse said? "Let the people of the gospel judge by what Allah hath revealed therein." So the Christians, who are the people of the Gospel, should rely on the Gospel. They do not need the Qur'an.

It is clear then—the Qur'an does not supersede the Gospel!

The Qur'an in Surah 5:47 uses the word *Injeel*, which is the same title that the followers of Jesus use. Please refer to Mark 1:1 (NKJV): "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ . . ." In fact, Christian Arabs still use the Arabic word *Injeel* for the Gospel. The Gospel is the story of the infinite holy God's love for fallen humans, like you and me.

## **Additional References to the Torah and the Gospel**

It is important to note that the Qur'an does not claim to give all the teachings of Jesus, nor the whole story of His life. You need to read the New Testament to discover all that Jesus taught.

The Qur'an confirms its support of the Torah and the Gospel and urges the Jews and the Christians to recognize the authority

of their Holy Book. It says in Surah 5:68, “Say: ‘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.’”

This verse is another clear example showing that the Jews and Christians had the Word of God in their possession prior to the writing of the Qur’an. Since Jews and Christians are commanded by Surah 5:68 to observe the precepts contained in their Scripture, it would have been impossible for them to know the commandments they must obey if their Book had perished. Or if the Bible had been previously corrupted, they would have gone astray if they obeyed it.

There is no indication in the Qur’an whatsoever that the Holy Scriptures the Jews and Christians had in their possession at the time of Muhammad were anything other than the original Holy Books God had revealed to them.

Surah 5:68, which we just mentioned, is another clear example that Islam, as recorded in the Qur’an, did not and should not abrogate the Christian faith that preceded it. On the contrary, the Qur’an commands all Jewish and Christian believers to follow their Holy Scriptures.

Because the Qur’an testifies that the Holy Scripture of the Jews and Christians is the Word of God, the Muslim should submit to the authority of the Qur’an on this point. The Muslim should look no further. If the words of Muslim teachers or even Traditions (Hadith)<sup>1</sup> contradict what the Qur’an states, the true Muslim should follow the Qur’an because the Qur’an is much higher in authority according to Islamic law and beliefs.

### **Early Muslim Scholars Uphold Bible Integrity**

Al-Ghazzali (AD 1058–1111), is considered one of the greatest Muslim theologians in the history of Islam. In his writings he

never challenged the Bible's integrity. He even wrote treatises on the Trinity in which he quoted many passages from the Bible, without questioning the trustworthiness of the text.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Tabari, one of the earliest authoritative commentators on the Qur'an, comments on Surah 5:68. He noted that Ibn Abbas, one of Muhammad's companions, said that some Jews wanted to know if Muhammad believed the Torah. And so they asked Muhammad,

“Oh Muhammad, do you not claim that you walk in the steps of Abraham's Community and religion, and do you not believe in The Torah which we have and confess that it is God's truth?”

The messenger [Muhammad] said, “Of course I do but you have read into the Scripture things that are not there and you have rejected God's Covenant with you. You have concealed what you had been commanded to make known to the people. Therefore, I disown your innovations.”

They replied, “We abide by what is in our hands [The Torah]; we follow the truth and the guidance and we do not believe in you nor do we follow you.”<sup>3</sup>

Here we see that Muhammad admits that the Torah is God's truth, but accuses the Jews of concealing its teaching.

Many Traditions (Ahadith) record that when Muhammad was asked to judge on some disputes, he asked for the Torah to be read aloud to him. These Traditions are further evidence that Muhammad considered the Torah to be holy and uncorrupted.

For example, I read in the most acknowledged biography on Muhammad's life, by Ibn Hisham, a story about a man and a woman who were caught in adultery. In that story, the people asked Muhammad to be the judge. Muhammad asked a rabbi to read the passage about adultery.

As the rabbi read from the Torah, Abdullah B. Salam struck the rabbi's hand saying, "This, oh prophet of God, is the verse of stoning which he refuses to read to you." Muhammad then said, "Woe to you Jews! What has induced you to abandon the judgment of God which you hold in your hands?"<sup>4</sup>

## THE IMPORTANCE OF READING THE GOSPEL

My dear Muslim reader, to enjoy a right and complete relationship with God, you must read the Gospel (the New Testament). It will increase your understanding of Jesus Christ (Al-Masih, Isa). It will also help you to understand the salvation God wants you to experience through faith in Him.

The Qur'an mentions the glad news of Jesus in Surah 3:45 "Behold! The angel said: 'O Mary! Allah giveth thee Glad Tidings of a Word from him: His name will be Christ Jesus . . ."

Indeed, Jesus' birth and coming to earth is the most awesome news you can hear because Jesus revealed that God cares about everything in your life—God wants to help you in your marriage, with your children, with your job. He desires to satisfy all your daily needs and protect you from the evil that tries to harm you. God wants to be involved and present in your life every day.

Jesus also promised: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47 NKJV).



## 2

# WAS THE BIBLE ALTERED, AS SOME MUSLIMS CLAIM?

**M**y dear Muslim reader, it is only fair that you examine the evidence with objectivity. Any accusation that the Bible was altered raises serious questions, which demand answers from those people who have made this claim. When could this alleged alteration of the Holy Scriptures have occurred?

A. Before Muhammad's time?

All the verses pointed out in the previous chapter clearly demonstrate that Muhammad did not believe the Bible to be corrupt in his time.

B. After the death of Muhammad?

It is not possible for the Bible to have been altered after the death of Muhammad because by AD 600 Christianity had spread as far as Asia, Africa, and Europe.

## COMPARISONS OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS REVEAL TEXTUAL ACCURACY

Those who had embraced Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Europe had no common language. The Bible was circulating in many different languages around the world. This would make any attempt to falsify the Holy Scriptures impossible, and comparisons of these Bible translations in the various languages reveal complete accuracy of the Bible text.

### **An Impossible Conspiracy**

It is not rational to suppose that Christians and Jews throughout the world could meet and agree on the alterations of their Holy Scripture. History shows that Jews and Christians have had major doctrinal differences between them, and they have been in disagreement regarding many religious issues. (See Surah 2:113.)

We also read in many verses in the Qur'an that Christians were divided into sects. So if the Scriptures had been changed to alter doctrine, at least one of the many sects that existed within Judaism or Christianity at that time would have protested. Yet there is no historical mention of any such accusation or dissension.

By the time Muhammad lived, Christianity had spread throughout the world. Therefore, it would have been impossible for anyone or any group to collect all the Holy Books, manuscripts, and writings containing scriptural references from all the churches, synagogues, schools, libraries, and homes to make the changes. Then the replacements would have had to be returned without detection. How could everyone who had a Bible be convinced to exchange it for a corrupted version, and yet leave no evidence of such a monumental feat?

### **More Evidence for Textual Purity of the Bible**

Many sincere Christian scholars during the time of Muhammad, such as the Abyssinians who loved Muslims and befriended them, would have exposed any attempted changes in the Scriptures.

Surah 5:82 describes these Christians. It reads: “You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity towards the believers [to be] the Jews and those who associate others with Allah, and you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say ‘we are Christians’: that is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant.”

Note that this verse describes these Christians as “devoted to learning.” Since these dedicated Christians knew very well the revelations given to them from God, they would have discovered any attempted tampering. The verse also describes these Christians: “They have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant,” which means these Christians were living a godly life. Therefore, they would not have committed such a terrible sin of changing or corrupting their Holy Scriptures.

### **Lack of Evidence for Textual Corruption**

Surah 5:66, which states, “There is from among them a party on the right course,” shows that there were a significant number of Jews and Christians who did not compromise, but were faithful and stood fast by the Law and the Gospel. Such a steadfast group would have exposed any attempt to corrupt their Holy Scriptures.

In addition, from Muhammad’s time forward, many Jews and Christians in lands conquered by the Muslim army embraced Islam. Since Muslims revered the Holy Books of the Jews and the Christians, the Jews and Christians who became Muslims would have retained their reverence for their original Scriptures as well.

Yet no texts have been discovered that differ from today's Bible.

If the Jews and Christians had collaborated to corrupt the Bible, surely some of these Muslim converts would have been able to produce unaltered copies of the Holy Books. In fact, hundreds of manuscripts exist today from the fourth and fifth centuries (Islam started in the sixth century). These manuscripts agree with today's translations of the Scripture (Injeel). Any variances are minor and do not affect any essential doctrine. So the New Testament of Muhammad's day is the same as the New Testament today. This is a well-established fact that is widely agreed upon.

### **Challenging the Basis for the Accusations**

These circumstances render it impossible for Jews and Christians to have come together after the death of Muhammad to alter their Holy Scriptures. Those Muslims who claim that today's Bible is altered or corrupt need to answer the following questions:

- When and where did this corruption take place?
- Who were the perpetrators?
- How did they reach a consensus?
- If there were an original Bible different from the one that exists today, where is it so that we can make a comparison? What specific textual changes were made to the original manuscripts?
- What evidence proves any alterations of doctrines?

### **ACCORDING TO GOD, THE BIBLE CANNOT CHANGE**

The Word of God is unchangeable as God originally presented it in the Holy Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians. The Qur'an itself asserts repeatedly that no one can alter the Word of God. Surah 6:34 states, "There is none that can alter the

Words (and Decrees) of Allah.” Surah 10:64 states, “No change can there be in the Words of Allah.” Both Surah 6:115 and Surah 18:27 state, “None can change His Words.”

In addition, the Bible emphasizes that the Word of God does not change. In the Old Testament, Isaiah 40:8 reads, “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

Therefore, whoever claims that the Bible is corrupted or changed calls God a liar and actually accuses God of being unable to protect and preserve His Word.

When any of my Muslim acquaintances or friends tell me, “The Bible is corrupted,” I reply, “God forbid,” or in Arabic, “Ast-aghfar Allah.”

### **The Earliest Revelation Is the Foundation**

We know counterfeit currency can be made after the authorized one is first given. What is the standard that we use to examine currency to see if it is authentic or counterfeit? Do we use the original authorized currency or a recent one? Obviously the same principle applies when we ask if a book is God’s Word or not. Of course the standard should be the earlier holy books not the most recent book.

Therefore, it is not possible, as some Muslims claim, that God first sent the Torah, the Zabor (Psalms), and the Injeel (the Gospel), and then allowed them to be corrupted.

Even the Qur’an indicates harmony with this principle. For in Surah 10:94 a command is given to Muhammad and all Muslims to treat the Bible as the primary source of enlightenment. The verse reads, “If thou wert in doubt as to what We have revealed

unto thee then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee.”

## **HOW COULD IT POSSIBLY BENEFIT THE JEWS OR THE CHRISTIANS TO CORRUPT HOLY SCRIPTURES?**

What purpose or benefit would it have been to the Christians and the Jews to corrupt their own Holy Scriptures? Why then would they continue to believe their Scripture? If they had done this, how could they bring themselves to pass it on to their children? Such an allegation is irrational.

Some Muslims claim the Bible may have contained prophecies related to Muhammad and that they were deleted. Where is the evidence? If such prophecies were originally found in the Bible, Christians and Jews would have acknowledged Muhammad. They would have followed him and benefited by sharing in the spoils given to Muslims at the conquests of Persia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and many other lands.

In the Torah, God warned the Jews, “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you” (Deuteronomy 4:2). (See also Deuteronomy 12:32.) If such prophecies about Muhammad did exist, why would Jews and Christians bring upon themselves and their beloved children sufferings here on earth and forever by eliminating those prophecies? In fact, the temptation would be to try to find prophecies of Muhammad rather than to eliminate any. For example, by becoming Muslims they could have avoided a disadvantaged status as a minority at the time when Muhammad died and Islam was spreading rapidly through conquest.

Also, when you read the Bible, you will find many statements

and paragraphs that show the bad actions and sins of many Jewish religious leaders and people.

It does not make any sense that Jews corrupted the Bible without deleting all the negative words that still exist all over the Bible against them.

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