

Engaging with Islam

THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN - SESSION 9

PART 1: Preparation

The Qur'an claims that it confirms the teaching of the Bible (Q. 4:47) and that Muhammad is foretold in the Bible (Q. 7:157, 61:6), and therefore it instructs Muslims to accept the Bible along with the Qur'an (Q. 2:136 & 285, 3:84, 4:136). However, this creates a problem for Muslims because as we have seen the Qur'an does not confirm the Bible nor Muhammad is foretold in it. The result is that Muslim leaders have to explain why this discrepancy exists. The answer they give is to accuse Christians of changing the Bible, and that if the Bible had not been changed then the Qur'an would confirm it and it would predict the coming of Muhammad. Here are some examples of what Muslim leaders say about the Bible and Qur'an.

Unlike earlier scriptures the Qur'an has been preserved unchanged in its original Arabic text since the time of revelation, as God had promised within it. History witnessed the fulfilment of that promise, for the Book of God remains to date exactly as it was revealed to the Prophet and recited by him. Immediately memorized and recorded by large numbers of his companions, it was passed on in exactly the same form by thousands of Muslims generation after generation up until the present day. ... There is only one version of the Qur'an; the same revealed words continue to be read, recited and memorized in their original Arabic language by Muslims throughout the world. (Saheeh International, *Clear Your Doubts About Islam: 50 Answers to Common Questions*, Saudi Arabia: Dar Abul-Qasim, 2008, pp. 28-29)

The (Torah) we Muslims believe in is not the "Torah" of the Jews and the Christians ... Likewise, we believe that the ... Psalms ... was the revelation of God granted to ... David ... but that the present Psalms associated with his name are not that revelation. ... What about the ... Gospel? ... In his life-time Jesus never wrote a single word, nor did he instruct anyone to do so. What passes off as the "GOSPELS" today are the works of anonymous hands! (Ahmed Deedat, *Is the Bible God's Word?*, ch. 3, pp. 7-8)

In summary: Muslim leaders claim that the Bible has been changed and that only the Qur'an has been perfectly preserved, and therefore there is no use listening to the Bible.

When Christians hear these claims it can be difficult to answer because they are not familiar with the evidence for the Bible or Qur'an. Here is a brief summary:

The Evidence for the Bible

We have very good evidence that the Bible has not been changed. Firstly there are the ancient manuscripts in the original languages. These come from different locations and times yet show a unified text. Any errors in copying among the manuscripts, whether intentional or accidental, can be identified through comparing the vast number of manuscripts.

Secondly, there are ancient translations. These translations were done in the early centuries of Christianity and also testify to the text at that time.

Thirdly, there are ancient quotes of the Bible. From the beginning of Christianity, Christian teachers have quoted the Bible in their writings. These quotes are another testimony to the text at the Bible.

What this evidence shows is that the Bible has been well preserved and the abundance of evidence allows for any copying errors to be corrected for.

Q1. What would you say to a Muslim who said: "In modern publications of the Bible the footnotes say that Mark 16:9-11 and John 8:1-11 are not in the oldest manuscripts. This is proof that the Bible is corrupted."

Q2. When Christians say "The law of Moses" do we mean that Moses wrote every word of it? (See Joshua 24:26)

The Evidence for the Qur'an

Muhammad would say the Qur'an at different times and places. Sometimes it would be written down, sometimes learned by heart, and some of it was incorporated into Islamic worship. However, he never made a collection of the Qur'an himself. It was his companions who did this. They gathered different parts from different people and made their own collections. These collections had different numbers of suras/chapters, different sura orders, and differences within the verses themselves. That is, there were synoptic Qur'ans: There was the Qur'an according to Ubayy ibn Ka'b, the Qur'an according to Abdullah ibn Masud, the Qur'an according to ibn Abbas, and others.

The differences between these Qur'ans caused a lot of trouble for the early Muslims. Therefore one collection was chosen and made the standard version and all other collections were destroyed.

Narrated Anas bin Malik: ... Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the Muslims of Syria and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to 'Uthman, "O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Quran) ..." So 'Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you." Hafsa sent it to 'Uthman. 'Uthman then ordered ... to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies. ... 'Uthman sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt. ..." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*: vol. 6, bk. 61, no. 510)

This means that most of the early manuscripts of the Qur'an have been destroyed, and only one collection has been preserved.

Q3. Imagine if the early Christians destroyed all of the copies of Mark, Luke, and John, and just preserved Matthew. This may have made things simpler but what would we lose?

Even though the early Muslims standardised the text of the Qur'an, this text still has many variants resulting in at least 10 authorised Arabic versions today.

Conclusion: What Muslim leaders say about the Bible and Qur'an is false. Do not be deceived or intimidated by their claims. The booklet, *The Preservation of the Qur'an*, gives a lot more detail and is ideal to give to your Muslim friend when they say the Bible has been changed. http://engagingwithislam.org/leaflets/Preservation_Quran.pdf



PART 2: Video Presentation (17 minutes) https://youtu.be/keyh_7lg2PI



The Muslim Attitude to the Bible

The Bible

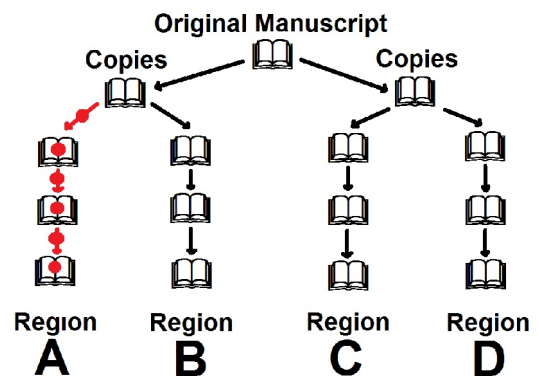
The Qur'an's attitude to the Bible

- Make no distinction between the books: 2:136, 285, 3:84, 4:136, 29:46.
- God's word cannot be changed: 6:114-115, 10:61-64, 18:27.
- Jews and Christians are to read their books: 5:43-49, 5:68.
- Muhammad and Muslims can read these books: 2:111, 3:93, 10:94, 21:7.
- Muhammad and Islam are foretold in these books: 7:157, 20:133, 26:196-197, 61:6.

The Evidence for the Preservation of the Bible

1. Manuscripts

(Bruce Metzger interviewed) We can have great confidence in the fidelity with which this material has come down to us, especially compared with any other ancient literary work. (Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, 1998. p. 82)



- John 8:1-11 or Mark 16:9-20

2. A Unified Message

Other reasons Muslims may reject the Bible.

- The sins of the prophets.
- Authorship
- Contradictions
- Get help: answering-islam.org

BIBLE				QUR'AN
Old Testament			New Testament	Muhammad
Torah	Prophets	Psalms	Gospel	
<----- c. 1500 years ----->				23 years
Humanity is created in the image of God.				No
The Fatherhood & Son of God				No
God dwells with his people.				No
Humanity is corrupted by sin.				No
Priesthood & Sacrifice of Atonement for Sin				No
Covenants of Noah, Abraham, Moses, & David				No
One Story of Redemption				No

Qur'an

- *The Preservation of the Qur'an* booklet:
http://engagingwithislam.org/leaflets/Preservation_Quran.pdf



PART 3: Discussion

Q4. Do you have any comments about the video?

Q5. Why do Muslims attack the Bible and say it has been changed?

Answers

Q1. These variations are the exception and not representative of the whole Bible. It is invalid to refer to an exception and apply it to the whole.

Q2. No.

Q3. Islam lost important evidence as to what the Qur'an was. Now they only have one testimony to it and without being able to compare this testimony to others we cannot know how accurate this testimony is.

Q5. They are blaming Christians for Muhammad's failure to agree with the prophets.

PART 4: Activities

Have you done the following? Circle an answer.

- Smile at a Muslim. Greet the Muslims you know. Yes/No.
- Pray privately, and publicly at church, for the Islamic world and the Muslims you know, and for Christians who are suffering under Islam. Yes/No.
- Ask a Muslim if they know what books are in the Bible. Yes/No.
- Ask a Muslim if they believe in the Day of Judgement. If they do ask if they have done enough good deeds. Yes/No.
- Invite a Muslim to read Matthew and then meet with them and talk about it using the Matthew outline presented in session 7. Yes/No.
- Have you done your group activities? Yes/No.