

The Bible Versus the Koran

Christianity and Islam have a lot in common concerning religion. Both religions believe in monotheism, the belief that there is only one God. Both believe Jesus was born of a virgin and performed miracles. Both agree that all forms of idolatry are evil. Both adhere to a basic moral standard of holiness. However, Christianity and Islam also have several major differences. Islam rejects the doctrine of the Trinity. Islam does not believe God could have a son, denies the crucifixion of Jesus, and disagrees with the Christian belief that salvation is by grace alone through faith only in Christ. Christianity does not embrace Mohammad as a true prophet of God and does not believe the Koran to be a true revelation from God.

It is becoming popular today to emphasize the similarities and downplay the differences between Christianity and Islam. This is not wise, ethical or biblical. The differences reveal Islam is opposed to the true gospel, and therefore its followers are still under the wrath of God and will be punished eternally in hell if they do not repent. This last statement may sound harsh, but I assure you it is said out of love and respect for the Muslim people. I do not hold this position because I believe I am better than Muslims; I say it because I am a follower of Christ, and he made it very clear when he made statements such as:

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6); “Whoever believes in him [the son of God] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” (John 3:18)

Because Muslims reject Jesus as the Son of God, they clearly fall under the category of the condemned that Jesus mentions in these passages. Their rejections of the one true God and the biblical gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith also put them outside of the camp of God’s people, according to the Bible (Galatians 1:8-9).¹

The Koran makes similar points of exclusivism. In Surah 3:85 it says, “He that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will surely be among the losers.”² In 3:19 it says, “The only true faith in God’s sight is Islam... He that denies God’s revelations should know that swift is God’s reckoning.” If anyone rejects Mohammad as a prophet or rejects the Koran “shall be cursed by God.”³ An entire Surah called “Unbelievers” states: “Say: ‘Unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. I shall never worship what you worship, nor will you ever worship what I worship. You have your own religion, and I have mine.’”⁴ There are some discrepancies in the Koran that seem to indicate that faithful Jews and Christians may be accepted,⁵ but placed alongside the clear condemnation of all those who reject Mohammad and the Koran and who embrace the belief that God has a son; the exclusive nature of Islam becomes apparent.

But how do we know Christianity is true and Islam is false? The best way we can discern which, if either, religion is true is to compare their sacred texts. Both the Bible and the Koran encourage tests of truth claims, so an evaluation of their respective tests, as well as seeing how the Bible and the Koran pass or fail these tests, can help us discover which, if either, religion is true. As we have seen, according to both texts, our eternal destiny is at stake here.

The Koran’s Test

¹ Note the Galatians passage states that even if an angel tells us of another gospel we should not listen to him; this is exactly what happened with Mohammad who supposedly received his revelations from the angel Gabriel.

² All quotes from the Koran unless otherwise specified are from N.J. Dawood, *The Koran* translated with notes, Penguin Books (London: 1999).

³ Surah 2:159; 40:70-72

⁴ Surah 109

⁵ 3:113; 22:17

Surah 10:37-38 states:

This Koran could not have been devised by any but God. It confirms what was revealed before it and fully explains the Scriptures. It is beyond doubt from the Lord of the Universe. If they say: 'He invented it himself,' say: 'Bring me one chapter like it. Call on whom you may besides God to help you, if what you say be true!'

This challenge, called the inimitability of the Scriptures, is made in several places in the Koran (2:23-24; 11:13; 17:88; 28:49; 52:33-34) and is worth examining in detail. Since this is the only test given in the Koran to prove its veracity and supernatural nature, if we can show that it is not a valid test and the Koran does not pass it regardless, we will reveal that the Koran is not God's word and Islam is not the true faith. Two points made in the passage in Surah 10:37-39 need to be understood to make a case for the superiority of the Bible over the Koran.

Point One: The Koran Teaches That The Bible Is God's Word

The first verse of the Surah above declares the supernatural nature of the Koran. If it is indeed "devised by God," then it should be considered equal with the Bible and a trustworthy document on religion. I say it should be considered equal with the Bible because this is exactly what the passage goes on to say. It "confirms" and "fully explains" the Scriptures. But what does the Koran mean by "the Scriptures"? Minimalist Muslims say the Scriptures that the Koran speaks of are the writings of Moses, the Psalms of David and the Gospel (Injil) of Jesus. These Muslims do not believe that the writings of Moses which Mohammad speaks of are the same as the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) that Jews and Christians today follow. They do not believe all of the Psalms in the Bible are the Psalms of David spoken of in the Koran, and they do not believe the Gospel is identical to the four Gospels written in the Bible. Some Muslims believe that the Gospel of Jesus was not even written down, but simply given to Jesus to proclaim. They believe that the Bible today is so corrupt that we cannot discern which parts belong to the original Scriptures, and that therefore the Koran is necessary and is really all we need today. But is this what Mohammad meant?

In several places the Koran claims to confirm the previous Scriptures. Surah 4:47 says, "You to whom the Scriptures were given! Believe in that which We have revealed, confirming your own scriptures." It is evident that Mohammad believed that the Scriptures the Christians and Jews had at his time were the true Scriptures, because he says the Koran confirmed what they possessed (*musadiqallima makum*).⁶ He said of the Jews, "They already have the Torah" indicating that the Torah the Jews had at that time was the authentic Torah.⁷ The term *Torah* in this context referred to the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures, not just the first five books of Moses, as is seen in 5:44 where the prophets, plural, are spoken of, and "God's Book" is said to have been committed to the Jews.

5:46 goes on to say that Jesus confirmed the Torah, which indicates that the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) at the time of Jesus were the authentic Scriptures from God. We know what Scriptures were used at the time of Christ because we have copies that date to the time of Jesus in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Greek translation called the Septuagint. The Jews of the first century, including Jesus, believed they had the accurate text of Scripture and that it consisted of the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Scriptures that Protestants and Jews embrace today.⁸ Jesus went so far as to say, "Until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."⁹

⁶ Steven Masood, *The Bible and the Qur'an* (Authentic Lifestyle: Carlisle, Cumbria, UK, 2002), 200.

⁷ Surah 5:43

⁸ The Jews number the books at twenty-four, but they consist of the same works as the Thirty-nine books found in Protestant Bibles. The number discrepancy is owing to the fact that the Jews combine certain books into one book (i.e. the twelve minor prophets are one book in the Hebrew Scriptures and twelve books in the Protestant Bible).

⁹ Matthew 5:18

From the statements of Mohammad and Jesus we can ascertain that the entirety of the Old Testament at the time of Jesus and at the time of Mohammad was an accurate copy of God's word, if the Koran is correct. Notice that the Koran contradicts the popular contemporary belief of many modern Muslims that the Bible was originally trustworthy, but due to corruption it can no longer be trusted. According to the Koran, and contrary to the modern Muslim myth, the Bible of Jesus' day and of Mohammad's day can be trusted. Since we have copies of the Bible at those two time periods we can compare them to our modern copies and see if there are any discrepancies. Apart from a few differences, most of which are grammatical in nature and none that affect any doctrinal beliefs, the Bibles we have today are essentially the same as the Bibles in Mohammad's day and Jesus' day and can be completely trusted.¹⁰

This first point is very important in its implications. If the Koran teaches that the Bible we have today is God's Word, then we simply have to compare it to the Koran to see if they teach the same thing. It is logical that if God wrote the Bible and he wrote the Koran that he wouldn't contradict himself, because he is God. The Koran is correct in its insistence that a person must accept all of God's revelation. For example Surah 4:136 states, "Believers, have faith in God and His apostle, in the Book He has revealed to His apostle, and in the Scriptures He formerly revealed. He that denies God, His angels, His Scriptures, His apostles, and the Last Day has strayed far." In this passage Mohammad equates the Book, referring to the Koran, with the Scriptures, referring to the Old and New Testaments. He specifically says that believers are to have faith in "the Scriptures He [God] formerly revealed." Obviously, in order to do this, the Scriptures would still have to be extant and in a trustworthy form. God would never require something that is impossible to perform. Allow me to elaborate on this point. We are required to have faith in the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians. If the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians at the time of Mohammad had been corrupted to the extent that they could no longer be trusted, the Believers of Mohammad's time would not be able to trust them, which is what is being required. But if the Scriptures can be trusted, then believers would be able to have faith in them and obey Surah 4:136.¹¹ Mohammad also declares that it is a sin to deny any of God's word; therefore if a Muslim denies any part of the Bible, he or she is sinning against God according to the Koran. It should become clear to the reader that the Koran has put itself in a perplexing place. If we can reveal that the Bible contradicts the Koran, then we have at the very least exposed the Koran to error because it would be stating that God contradicted himself. If the Koran is in error, then it nullifies the claim that it is "beyond doubt from the Lord of the Universe."

One could write an entire book on the disparity between the Bible and the Koran. The most glaring differences are their views concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus, the person of Jesus, and the Triune nature of God. The Koran teaches that Jesus was not crucified.¹² God made someone else look like Jesus and the Romans crucified the look-a-like, thinking they killed Jesus. This position makes God out to be a deceiver. The Koran does teach that God deceives and tempts people in Surahs 4:143, 7:163 and 27:4, but this view of God should be rejected because it reveals an imperfect and unrighteous god.¹³ One must also ask, "Why did God make people think Jesus was crucified?" What was the purpose? It gets even worse when one realizes that since God knows the future, he would know that the entire Christian church would believe this lie, being led astray, simply because the original disciples and Jesus' mother saw him crucified. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate; this is in

¹⁰ We will cover this in more detail in the section concerning the Bible and in Appendix A.

¹¹ Surah 5:68 makes a similar command to the Christians and Jews to "observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which has been revealed to you from your Lord." A command that would be impossible to perform if they did not have a trustworthy copy of the Torah and the Gospel to observe; how could they observe that which is not observable?

¹² Surah 4:157

¹³ The idea that God deceives is very disconcerting. If he can lie then his followers could also deceive without sinning. If this is the case, then how can we trust them? How do we know moderate Muslims are really moderate if the Koran teaches them they can deceive? The doctrine of Taqiyya teaches that it is acceptable to deceive the infidel if it furthers the work of Allah; this is contrasted by the demand for honesty and integrity commanded in the Bible.

agreement with all historical records. The Koran expects us to believe that all of the historical records, Christian (all four Gospels), Jewish (Josephus and Rabbi Eliezer 1st century and Trypho 2nd century) and Roman (Tacitus, Thallus and Suetonius 1st century and Pliny 2nd century), up until the seventh century when Mohammad wrote, were wrong.¹⁴ Jesus actually predicted three times in the Gospel of Mark that he would be crucified and rise from the dead.¹⁵

The Koran also denies the sonship of Jesus. In Surah 4:171 it says, “God forbid that He should have a son!”¹⁶ The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Son of God through eternal generation and that his followers are adopted sons of God. The reason the Koran rejects the view that Jesus is the Son of God is because this would entail his deity. It would seem that the reason the Koran dismisses the idea that believers are God’s children through adoption is because of its understanding of the relationship between humans and God. The Koran consistently describes our relationship with God as slaves to a Master. There is no personal relationship to speak of at all. Even when the Koran depicts heaven, it mentions only material benefits for humans such as living by streams of water, soft couches and “bashful, dark-eyed virgins, as chaste as the sheltered eggs of ostriches.”¹⁷ The Koran is correct in its understanding of the definition of sonship in both natural generation and adoption. To declare Jesus as the Son of God would be asserting his deity, and to declare the believer’s relationship with God as that of adopted son or daughter would demand an intimate, personal relationship. The Bible pronounces Jesus to be the Son of God numerous times, including Jesus himself making that declaration.¹⁸ The Bible goes so far as to say, “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.”¹⁹ The Bible also describes the believer’s relationship with God as an adopted child.²⁰ 1 John 3:1 says, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” The relationship between God and his people could not be as different as they are when the Bible is compared to the Koran.

Finally, the Bible and the Koran differ on the nature of God. Both agree that there is only one God, but the Koran specifically denies the doctrine of the Trinity in Surah 4:171-172 and 5:73. These surahs actually reveal that Mohammad misunderstood the doctrine of the Trinity, thinking it called for three gods. The doctrine of the Trinity may not be fully comprehensible to the finite mind, but it is not illogical. The Bible teaches that the Father is God, Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God and there is only one God. These three persons have intimate personal communion with each other and make up the one true God. My personal statement of faith explains this:

I believe there is only one infinitely perfect God (monotheism), the transcendent creator and providential sustainer of the universe. This one God exists eternally as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Trinity). All three persons in the Godhead are coequal in power, nature, and glory. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1; 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

Two important insights that stem from this disagreement are worth noting. First, it is understandable that Mohammad misunderstood what Christians believe concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, but it would

¹⁴ See Josh McDowell and Bill Wilson, *He Walked Among Us: Evidence for the Historical Jesus* (San Bernardino: Here’s Life Publishers, 1988).

¹⁵ Mark 8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34

¹⁶ See also 9:30 and 19:35

¹⁷ Surah 37:40-49. The obsession with virgins in the Koran is very demeaning to women, describing the virgin as a prize rather than a human being, referring to them as “High-bosomed maidens” and “a guerdon for their deeds” meaning a reward for the good works of the believer; they are portrayed as robots made for the lusts of men. 38:52; 55:52-77; 56:22-38; 78:31-33.

¹⁸ For example Mark 1:1; 15:39; John 5:23; 20:31

¹⁹ John 5:22-23

²⁰ Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:5-7

not make sense that God would misunderstand the Christian position because He is all knowing. Since the Koran reflects this misapprehension, it is highly unlikely that its source is God. This mistake reveals that the Koran did not have a supernatural origin. Second, the disagreement reveals that the two religions do not believe in the same God. It is popular today to claim that Allah and Yahweh are the same God, but the Koran and the Bible will not allow this naïve understanding. Historical studies reveal that Allah was the name of a pagan god worshiped in pre-Islamic Arabia and whose idol was housed in the Ka'bah in Mecca.²¹ The fact that Islam still uses the Ka'bah as the religious center of Islam reveals its pagan roots. The Allah of the Koran would not sanction the belief that he is triune and would reject the title of God as father of his people. Muslims do not have intimate communion with Allah; they submit to him. Yahweh of the Bible longs for intimate communion with his people. The New Testament clearly reveals his triune nature and the Old Testament has lucid subliminal hints of the doctrine of the Trinity. Reading the Old Testament in light of the New Testament's full revelation of God in Christ is like reading a detective novel after finding out how it ends; the clues stick out clearly, though in the first reading they may have been missed.²²

The Bible and the Koran are very different from one another and clearly do not agree on several major issues, and therefore could not both be written by God. If Mohammad declared that the Bible of his day was a trustworthy copy of God's word as we have seen, then it becomes evident that Mohammad misunderstood the Bible when he stated that the Koran "confirms and explains" the Bible. The Koran does not confirm or explain the Bible and therefore, since the Bible was written first and both religions recognize the Bible as God's word, we must disavow the Koran as God's word. Many Muslims contend, in spite of what the Koran teaches, that the Bible we have today is so corrupt it is no longer trustworthy, but the Koran has been kept perfect; this is a very strange claim. If Allah was not able to keep his word intact concerning the writings of Moses, David and the Gospel, then he is not a very powerful god. And if he was not able to keep his previous revelations from corruption, why should we believe he is able to keep the Koran pristine? The Muslim finds himself in a conundrum. If he confesses the trustworthiness of the Bible, he must relinquish his belief in the Koran, and if he rejects the Bible's dependability, he must admit to a weak god and doubt the Koran's veracity as well.²³

Point Two: The Test the Koran Calls for is Invalid

The second point of the passage we have been studying presents a test for deciding the supernatural nature of the Koran. It states, "If they say: 'He invented it himself,' say: 'Bring me one chapter like it. Call on whom you may besides God to help you, if what you say be true!'" First we should note that Mohammad seemed paranoid about people accusing him of making up the visions he had. In multiple places throughout the Koran, Mohammad confronts the thought that he invented the Koran rather than received it from God. When Mohammad first received his visions, he attempted to share them with those in Mecca as well as with the Christian and Jewish communities near him. Many refused his claims and countered that he had made up the visions. The truth seeker must at least entertain this possibility before discarding it and embracing the writings of the Koran. Two considerations are necessary in discovering the source of Mohammad's visions.

The first indication of the actual source of Mohammad's visions is his early admissions of concern that the visions may not have come from God. Mohammad originally believed that his visions were demonic. When he shared with his first wife Khadijah his concern, she assured him that they were not from Satan, but rather were from God. It is well known that his visions were accompanied by bizarre, ecstatic experiences:

²¹ Anees Zaka and Diane Coleman, *The Noble Qur'an's Teachings in Light of the Holy Bible: the Truth about Islam* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P and R Publishing, 2004), 117-118.

²² See Appendix C for more information on the Trinity and Jewish beliefs.

²³ See Appendix A for more information on the textual evidence for the Bible and the Koran.

These episodes were “attended by a fit of unconsciousness, accompanied (or preceded) at times by the sound of bells in the ears or the belief that someone was present: by a sense of fright, such as to make the patient burst out into perspiration: by the turning of the head to one side: by foaming at the mouth: by the reddening or whitening of the face: by a sense of headache.”... Dr. Dede Korkut, a Turkish neurologist,...demonstrates very convincingly that the underlying physiological source of Muhammad’s experiences was the combined effect of hydrocephalus and epilepsy.²⁴

Exhibiting strange behavior does not automatically rule out God as the source of a particular revelation, but it should at least call for caution. The fact that Mohammad doubted his own revelations at first is completely unique in Scriptural revelation and would discount any theistic origin and even possibly indicate a demonic derivation. Arthur Jeffery includes the Hadith on Mohammad’s call where at first he said, “I am worried about myself” and needed the confirmation that he was “not Jinn-possessed.” He went to his wife after receiving a revelation and said, “O Khadija, the only conclusion I can come to is that I have been afflicted with madness.” Because he thought he was “Jinn-possessed” he concluded, “I shall go to some high mountain cliff and cast myself down therefrom so that I may kill myself and be at rest.”²⁵ Suicidal tendencies after receiving the supposed revelations should have been a red flag to both Mohammad and his wife that he needed help, not exaltation to prophet status.

The Koran teaches that prophets of God can be tempted by Satan with false revelations.²⁶ Islamic tradition records that Mohammad himself received revelation from Satan, thinking it was from God; these revelations became known as the “Satanic Verses.”²⁷ Mohammad was trying to reach his own tribe, the Quraysh. He received a revelation and shared it with them, indicating that it was “legitimate for Muslims to pray to al-Lat, al-‘Uzza, and Manat, the three goddesses favored by the pagan Quraysh, as intercessors before Allah.”²⁸ This went over very well with the Quraysh, but then Mohammad received another revelation rebuking him, found in Surah 17:73-75. This incident brings serious doubts on all of Mohammad’s revelations because it reveals that he was not able to discern the source of his revelations. The prophets of the Bible never expressed any doubts and never received revelation from Satan. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:15-22 give tests of a true prophet. One of those tests states that even if a prophet performs miracles and promotes other gods, he is a false prophet. Another test states that if the prophet gives one false prophecy, it discredits his prophetic ministry and reveals the prophet as a false prophet. The fact that Mohammad gave this false prophecy, even though he retracted it later, constitutes Mohammad as a false prophet.

The second indication of the origin of Mohammad’s revelations is the self-advantageous nature of some of the revelations. The Biblical prophets never gave prophecies that they personally, solely benefited from. Many of the prophets suffered extreme hardships because of their prophecies. Mohammad received supposed prophecies directed to his wives alone, admonishing them that if they committed lewd acts they would be doubly punished.²⁹ Allah supposedly told him that he could marry his adopted son Zayd’s divorced wife.³⁰ Not only is this marriage immoral according to Moses and Jesus, making Mohammad an adulterer,³¹ it is a strange thing to put in the Koran which is supposed to be the

²⁴ Anees Zaka and Diane Coleman, *The Noble Qur’an’s Teachings in Light of the Holy Bible: the Truth about Islam*, 34.

²⁵ Arthur Jeffery, editor, *Islam: Muhammad and His Religion* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1958), 15-21. He also stated that each time he encountered Gabriel, the angel “grievously afflicted him” for seemingly no reason.

²⁶ Surah 22:52-53

²⁷ See this admission by the Muslim biographer of Mohammad, Ali Dashti, *23 Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1994), 30-32. Dashti goes so far as to say that Mohammad was not infallible.

²⁸ James Gauss, *Islam and Christianity* (Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2009), 13.

²⁹ Surah 33:30-34

³⁰ Surah 33:37

³¹ Luke 16:18

eternal word of God. Muslim belief is that the Koran originated from all eternity as tablets in heaven.³² It is mindboggling to think that for all eternity past God had written on tablets words concerning the propriety of Mohammad marrying Zayd's wife and specific admonitions to Mohammad's other wives. It gets worse. In Surah 33:50 Mohammad is told that he, and only he, could have more than the allowed four wives. It says, "This privilege is yours alone, being granted to no other believer." Are we to believe that from all eternity God had written on tablets the privilege that only Mohammad could have more than four wives? In Surah 8:1 God stated that the spoils of war belong to God and Mohammad alone. Notice these prophecies are allowing Mohammad to have multiple wives and to get rich; he is profiting greatly from his prophecies! According to 49:2 believers had to speak to Mohammad softly, but were allowed to raise their voices to others. In 58:12 believers had to pay Mohammad to pray for them. In 66:1-5 we are told that God released Mohammad from an oath that he made with one of his wives not to take another wife, a clear violation of Numbers 30:1-2.³³ Verse five is simply an abuse of the supposed gift of prophecy to manipulate his wives; it states, "It may well be that, if he divorce you, his Lord will give him in your place better wives than yourselves, submissive to God and full of faith, obedient, penitent, devout, and given to fasting; both formerly-wedded and virgins."

Mohammad doubted the source of his early revelations. He received and prophesied revelations that he later admitted were from Satan. Many of his prophecies were for the sole purpose of his own aggrandizement. Several prophecies were of such petty nature, it is impossible to believe they make up the eternal Word of God. Mohammad has all the signs of being a false prophet. Now that we have discovered why Mohammad was so paranoid about people thinking he was making up his revelations, let's look at the test he gives that is supposed to prove the authenticity of his prophecies.

Allah says, "Bring me one chapter like it. Call on whom you may besides God to help you, if what you say be true!" Surahs 2:23-24; 11:13; 17:88; 28:49; 52:33-34 state similar claims that if someone can bring a chapter or surah like one in the Koran, it would disprove the Koran. I say similar claims because they are slightly different. 28:49 says that you would have to bring a whole book like the Koran, 11:13 says you would have to bring ten chapters like the Koran and our passage above, along with 2:23-24, say that if someone can simply produce a writing in the likes of one single surah, it would discredit the proof of the supernatural nature of the Koran. There are two basic problems to this test: It is not a valid test for divine revelation and the Koran does not even pass its own test.

First, we must simply ask, "How does this prove the divine nature of the Koran?" How are we evaluating the chapters? Does the test mean the Koran is superior in beauty or Profundity? Many Muslims claim it is in faultless Arabic, which is somehow the perfect language. Surah 39:28 claims, "We have given mankind in this Koran all manner of parables, so that they may take heed: a Koran in the Arabic tongue, free from any flaw, that they may guard themselves against evil." This assertion is simply not true. Steven Masood records several grammatical errors, examples of plagiarism, and instances of other Arabic writings that are of similar quality.³⁴ Surah 49:9 refers to two parties fighting but uses a verb that is in the plural, when grammatically it should have used the dual form.³⁵ It is not unspoiled Arabic because it contains 118 non-Arabic words.³⁶ Muslims purport that one must read the Koran in the Arabic, because it is the holy language and all other translations cannot be trusted. The Koran itself tells us why it was written in Arabic; it was because it was written to the Arabians and God wanted them to understand it: "We have revealed the Koran in the Arabic tongue that you may understand its meaning."³⁷ If it was written in Arabic so the Arabs could understand it, then it makes sense that it should be translated into other languages so other people groups could understand it, if God wants to reach the whole world. There

³² Surah 43:1; 85:22

³³ God expects us to be people of integrity and to keep our vows even if it hurts.

³⁴ Steven Masood, *The Bible and the Qur'an*, 170-194.

³⁵ Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 187-188. See the rest of the reference for more examples.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 177.

³⁷ Surah 43:1. See also 41:43.

is nothing special about Arabic. David Wood presents the uselessness of Mohammad's argument if it only works in Arabic:

If the Muslim argument only works in Arabic, very few people are capable of examining the central argument for Islam. There are nearly 7,000 known languages in the world. The evidence for God's existence can be examined in any of them. The central argument for Christianity ("Jesus rose from the dead, so believe what He says") makes sense in any language. But when we get to the Qur'an, we find an argument that someone can only examine if he's lucky enough to speak Arabic. Indeed, even native Arabic speakers can't seriously investigate this claim, because very few are trained in Classical Arabic. And even those who are trained in Classical Arabic generally aren't experts in Arabic literary styles. So it seems that Muhammad has given us an argument that is virtually useless.³⁸

Christians have always promoted translations of the Bible in as many languages as people speak because the Word of God is powerful. To think that God expects everyone to learn Arabic makes God look like a colloquial deity rather than the creator of the universe and every culture on our planet. Besides all of this, the beauty of a literary work does not prove its divine nature. Masood illustrates this point: "Homer for example was not only illiterate but also blind, yet he was the author of the Iliad and much of the Odyssey. He was the greatest Greek epic poet in terms of eloquence, versification and style. However, it does not prove that his work has a divine origin."³⁹ Are we to believe Shakespeare's works are equal to Scripture because of their beauty?

If it is not beauty, is it the Koran's profound content that makes it God's revelation? Let's compare one surah with a modern poem and see which one is more insightful. Surah 111 is a short surah that does not seem to have much inspirational quality at all. It states:

May the hands of Abu-Lahab perish!
May he himself perish!
Nothing shall his wealth and gains
avail him. He shall be burnt in a flaming fire,
and his wife, laden with firewood,
shall have a rope of fibre round her neck!

Abu-Lahab was Mohammad's uncle who opposed his teaching. This is one of many examples of Mohammad's vindictiveness. This passage is certainly not profound and does not prove the divine nature of the contents of the Koran. Unfortunately much of the Koran is a book of threats, not beauty. Even if we were to agree that this passage is profound, it would not prove its case. Look at this twentieth century poem that is not inspired revelation and compare:

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed
that during the low periods of my life,
when I was suffering from
anguish, sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.

³⁸ David Wood, "Is The Qur'an a Literary Miracle?" WWW.4truth.net. P.2.

³⁹ Steven Masood, *The Bible and the Qur'an*, 176.

So I said to the Lord,
“You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you,
you would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life
there have only been one set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?”

The Lord replied,
“The times when you have seen only one set of footprints in the sand,
is when I carried you.” (Mary Stevenson)

This is a beautiful poem that has blessed millions of believers, but Mary Stevenson would never have dreamed of calling it divine revelation. I am sure she believes God inspired her, but it is not equal to God’s Word. Profundity does not prove divine authenticity. Mohammad’s test fails! The Koran doesn’t pass its own test, and the test is not valid regardless. This is the only test given in the Koran; therefore we are correct in rejecting the Koran as the Word of God.

One more statement needs to be made concerning the Koran. According to Islamic practice, the Koran is not sufficient. It claims to explain and expound on the Bible, but it really does not do that. Most Muslims do not even read the Koran and are solely dependent on the traditions passed down through the Hadith. The Hadith are a collection of supposed sayings of Mohammad that did not make it into the Koran. Islamic commentator on the Hadith, Maulana Muhammad Ali, makes this telling statement in his book *A Manual of Hadith*: “While the Holy Qur’an simply gives the general direction to keep oneself in a state of cleanliness, Hadith gives the necessary details.”⁴⁰ Notice he speaks of *necessary* details; the Koran is insufficient. This is true even of the most basic practices of Islam in their five pillars of the faith, which are not included in the Koran. When we bring in tradition as necessary for the faith, even though these traditions are not considered prophetic words of God, we open up a slew of problems that simply cannot be solved. For instance, which Hadith are necessary? On page 55 of Ali’s manual the Hadith on purification states, “Prayer is not accepted of a man who voids himself until he performs ablution.”⁴¹ Are we to believe that it is absolutely necessary to believe that God won’t hear your prayers after you pass gas until you wash? In a footnote on page 76 Ali admits that Hadith contradict other Hadith; if this is the case and we absolutely need the Hadith, we have no hope in discovering what is actually necessary. True Christianity is completely different. Although there are Christian groups that have elevated tradition to equal status with the Bible and absolutely necessary for the proper interpretation of the Bible, the true Christian view rejects any claims that tradition is absolutely necessary to the faith. Christians follow Jesus’ example by recognizing tradition as inferior to Scripture and Scripture as the only necessary writing in leading us to discover God’s truth; this view elevates Scripture to its proper status as the supreme authority of the Christian. The quagmire of the Hadith reveals the inferior status of the Koran and the danger of tradition that Jesus warned us about (Mark 7:1-23).⁴²

The Bible’s Test

We have looked at the Koran’s test of authenticity and found it wanting. Does the Bible give a test? In Isaiah 41:21-24 God challenges the false gods to prove their divinity:

⁴⁰ Maulana Muhammad Ali, *A Manual of Hadith* (The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore, n.d.), 40.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴² This passage also reveals a great difference between Christianity and Islam where Islam emphasizes being clean outwardly and Christianity emphasizes being clean in the heart. See Hadith on purification and the footnotes, *ibid.*, 40-67.

Set forth your case, says the LORD; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob. Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come. Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified. Behold, you are nothing, and your work is less than nothing; an abomination is he who chooses you.

Here Isaiah declares that the true God would be able to do three things; 1) He would be able to describe the past accurately because he was there. 2) He would be able to predict the future without error, because he is all-knowing and beyond time. 3) He would be able to perform miracles, because he is all-powerful. Let's examine the Bible's claim and evaluate the Koran according to this test as well.

1. God Would Be Able to Describe the Past Accurately Because He Was There

The true God would not make historical errors in his revelation. For a work to be considered divine it would at least be factual in its historicity. Interestingly, when the Bible and the Koran were written there was no such science as archaeology in order to investigate the claims of these books, but now we can put these works to the test by evaluating how they compare to archaeological findings. The first proof we have testifying to the reliability of the Bible is the archaeological evidence. Nelson Glueck, a respected Jewish archaeologist claims: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."⁴³ A.N. Sherwin-white, an esteemed classical historian at Oxford, says about the book of Acts, "For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming...any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd."⁴⁴ A case in point is the historicity of Jesus. We have several first century writings from non-Christians (Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, Rabbi Eliezer, and Josephus) mentioning details about Jesus and his crucifixion, John the Baptist as well as many other details found in the Gospels. The old contention that there never was a historical Jesus is blown away by the evidence.

Archaeology is not an exact science, and new theories are constantly replacing older ones, but it can be helpful in either establishing the veracity of a text or debunking it as seriously questionable.⁴⁵ In the nineteenth century it was popular to question the Bible because several kings, people groups and places the Bible mentions were missing from the historical records at that time. It was also thought that writing was relatively unknown in Palestine until the tenth century B.C., so Moses could not have been the author of the Torah. A strong anti-supernaturalist bias was prevalent among scholars. Since that time archaeology has considerably helped the argument for the dependability of the Scriptures.

Several finds have strengthened the case for the reliability of the Bible, including the Ras Shamra Tablets, the Mari Tablets, the Nuzi Tablets, the Hittite Legal Code, the Code of Hammurabi, The Egyptian Book of the Dead, the Tell el-Amarna Tablets, the Israel Stela of King Merneptah, and others. Due to recently found documents, Babylonian king Belshazzar and Assyrian king Sargon are no longer on the missing person's list. Liberal scholars scoffed at the Bible's declaration that Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon because historical records revealed that Nabonidus was the last king and there were no records of anyone named Belshazzar. In the first part of the twentieth century new documents were found explaining the discrepancy.⁴⁶ Nabonidus' son Belshazzar acted as coregent while Nabonidus went off to

⁴³Rubel Shelly, *Prepare to Answer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p.103.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p.110. Also, "William Ramsay was a famous historian-archeologist and confirmed agnostic who at the end of the nineteenth century set out to disprove the Book of Acts. The more he researched the background, however, the more he became convinced that Luke was one of the most accurate historians of antiquity. This conclusion led to Ramsay's conversion." Grant Osborne, *3 Crucial Questions about the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 52.

⁴⁵An example of debunking would be the Book of Mormon. The Church of the Latter Day Saints have explored the American continents in search of archaeological evidence and have not found any evidence of the large cities, mountains, rivers, artifacts (scimitars, coins, etc.) or people groups their religious book mentions.

⁴⁶Walter Kaiser Jr., *The Old Testament Documents*, 99.

Arabia to worship the moon god Sin; this explains why Belshazzar issued the proclamation declaring Daniel third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:29). This insight also strengthens the case for Daniel having been written near the time of these events rather than hundreds of years later, as is believed by liberal scholarship because these records of Belshazzar were lost at the time liberals claim Daniel was written. After excavating Dur-Sharrukin, it was discovered that Sargon was the Assyrian king who captured Samaria after the three-year siege of Shalmaneser V. His son Sennacherib moved the capitol from Dur-Sharrukin to Nineveh. Additionally, the Hittites and Horites, as well as the cities of Ophir, Dibon, Nahor and Hebron, have been found.

No one today doubts the writing capabilities of fifteenth century B.C. Palestinians since the discovery of the Ras Shamra Tablets and the alphabetic inscriptions found at the turquoise mines of Derabit el-Khadim. These writings reveal that by 1500 B.C., “writing was so widely diffused among the Semites of the pre-Mosaic age that even the lowest classes of society could read and write.”⁴⁷ The Nuzi Tablets disclose that many of the ancient customs recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as Abraham’s servant Eliezer being the legal heir (Gen 15:2), the legitimacy of Esau selling his birthright (Gen 25:33), and a possible motive for Rachel’s theft of her father’s household gods (Gen 31),⁴⁸ were commonly practiced at the time indicated by the Scriptural passages. The Tel el-Amarna Tablets speak of the *Habiru* invading the land, recording the Hebrew conquest of Canaan “from the standpoint of the Canaanites themselves.”⁴⁹ A gradual assimilation of Palestine by the Hebrews, as was once believed, is contradicted by these documents that reveal a violent takeover.⁵⁰ Not all puzzles have been solved; we are still missing King Darius, and there are questions about precise dates, but with all that has been found, Kaiser’s challenge should be considered:

But since we have seen so many specific challenges over the years yield to such specific data in favor of the text, a presumption tends to build that we should go with the text until definite contrary information is available. This methodology that says that the text is innocent until proven guilty is not only recommended as a good procedure for American jurisprudence, but it is recommended in the area of examining the claims of the Scripture as well.⁵¹

It is simply amazing that Muslim scholars are still resorting to nineteenth century liberal studies. The old claims like multiple/late authorship of the Pentateuch have been discredited as anti-supernatural bias without any evidence.⁵² Why are conservative Muslims resorting to liberal scholars who deny the power of God? The only answer is that it serves their agenda. But we should not be interested in agendas; we should be searching for truth wherever it may lead. The evidence leads to the truth that the Bible is historically accurate.

One particular incident is worthy of note because of its more than coincidental nature concerning the recording of the miraculous account of the Hebrews’ destruction of the city of Jericho. There is a question of dating the fall of Jericho which concerns a time period of not more than 150 years, but the

⁴⁷ Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 176.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 288-295. For the gradual infiltration model see Albrecht Alt, “The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine,” *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 135-169; Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 68-84. For an overview of the differing positions concerning the exodus/conquest see Carl Rasmussen “Conquest, Infiltration, Revolt, or Resettlement? What Really Happened During the Exodus-Judges Period?” in David Howard Jr. and Michael Grisanti, editors *Giving the Sense: Understanding and Using Old Testament Historical Texts* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 138-159.

⁵¹ Walter Kaiser, Jr., *The Old Testament Documents*, 108.

⁵² See Appendix D.

facts concerning the destruction fit the Biblical account well.⁵³ Ancient Jericho has been excavated four times, and the basic results show that fire and an earthquake destroyed the city, and an abundance of grain was found on the site. Apparently invaders attacked the city and were able to get in because the walls had collapsed outward from the earthquake. The aggressors attacked shortly after harvest, as is seen by a plethora of jars of grain found. This is curious because that would be an unconventional time militarily for attack. It is even more interesting that the assailants did not plunder the grain. The account recorded in Joshua states that immediately after Passover (after harvest) the Israelites attacked Jericho, and the walls came down after they shouted. Under a normal military siege the walls would have fallen inward from the attack. The Israelites then burned the city, leaving everything as an offering to God by God's command. Apart from the discrepancy of dating, "the details surrounding the destruction of Jericho City IV thus closely parallel what we read in the Bible."⁵⁴ This event reveals the accuracy of the Bible, and it reveals the miraculous nature of the Bible. Are we to suppose that the Israelites just happened to attack Jericho at the same time as an earthquake that caused the walls to fall outward? Or should we recognize the walls came down at that time because of God's command? Earthquakes occur, but not at the precise planned timing of humans.

Archaeology does not answer all the questions we may have and has even opened up new questions, but overall, it verifies the general accounts given in the Hebrew Bible.⁵⁵ It not only backs up the Scriptural accounts, but also reveals accurate information has been passed down.⁵⁶ This makes sense because if God were to author a book, it seems reasonable that he would also safeguard its contents. The Bible passes the first part of the test proposed by Isaiah. How does the Koran stand up to this test?

The Koran is generally trustworthy, but it does make some mistakes and records some fanciful additions to the Biblical account. First it makes some general historical errors. Surah 2:127 states Abraham and Ishmael built the Ka'bah in Mecca. God led Abraham to Canaan and promised him that the land would belong to his descendents. God did not lead him to the middle of the desert where tribes went to war each year just to fight over a well of water. This sounds like something someone who lived in Arabia would make up, but it does not sound like God, nor does it fit the historical records of Genesis which we have already seen are trustworthy documents. Surah 18:83-97 claims Alexander the Great was a monotheist. This is simply not true. The account actually came from the legendary story *Romance of Alexander* that was written as fiction originally. It appears Mohammad had a copy of this account and did not realize it was fiction. Surah 21:96-97 states Alexander built a giant iron gate to keep the armies of God and Magog out and that in the last days God would let those armies through the gate. The problem is that there is no such gate and never was. In Surah 19:7, it says that John the Baptist was the first person to have the name John. It is obvious that Mohammad misunderstand the biblical account that says no one in Zechariah's family had that name (Luke 1:59-63). In Surah 28:35-42 and 40:36-37, there is a story where Pharaoh orders Haman to build a tower reaching to heaven. It is obvious that Mohammad has conflated three different Bible stories (Genesis 11, Exodus, and Esther); Haman is a Persian name, not an Egyptian name.

Archaeologically there are some errors in the Koran. Surah 20:85-88, 95 claim the Samaritans lived during the time of Moses. The Samaritans did not come into existence until after the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel in the eighth century B.C. Finally, Surah 7:124 and 26:49

⁵³ For alternative dates of 1550 and 1400 see Piotr Bienkowski, "Jericho Was Destroyed in the Middle Bronze Age, Not the Late Bronze Age," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 16, no.5 (1990), 45-69 for the 1550 date and Bryant G. Wood, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 16, no.2 (1990), 45-59 for the 1400 date.

⁵⁴ *NIV Biblical Archaeology Study Bible*.

⁵⁵ Two excellent books cover the reliability of the Bible in detail: Walter Kaiser, Jr., *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001), and K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

⁵⁶ See P.J. Wiseman, *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985) for the case that Moses, as editor, used accurate literary sources for Genesis. Whether all of his conclusions are accepted or not, he reveals that the time periods recorded in Genesis reflect the periods being discussed rather than the time of Moses.

claim that crucifixion was practiced by Pharaoh in Moses' day, but crucifixion was not invented for another 900 years in Persia. Egyptians executed people by impaling them on a stick, but no amount of finagling can claim impaling is the same as crucifixion. It is obvious that Mohammad did not know his history very well; this would be acceptable except that he claims God said these things to him. The Koran does not pass the first test of Isaiah 41.⁵⁷

There are plenty of accusations that the Bible has contradictions. If there were true contradictions in the Bible, that would be a problem because God does not make mistakes. It is helpful to understand the Christian view of inspiration, which is different than the Muslim perspective. Muslims believe that the Koran was dictated orally to Mohammad; it was given to him completely passively, meaning his personality had nothing to do with the wording of the book. The Koran is understood as coming from a book written in heaven from eternity; therefore human personality has nothing to do with it. This view of inspiration is completely foreign to Christianity and is simply not true of the Koran. Mohammad's personality comes out throughout the pages of the Koran. It reads very much like a work from a seventh century Arab. Throughout Church history Christians have held to the idea of verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. It is verbal in that God inspired the work right down to the very words written, and it is plenary in that it is fully inspired without any mixture of error. But the verbal plenary view is different than the dictation view in that it fully incorporates the personalities of the human writers. One can legitimately say that the Bible has two authors, divine and human, without any mixture of imperfection. Jesus is another example of this joining of the human and divine without involving blemish.

When we interpret the Bible we must be careful to understand the verbal plenary theory of inspiration. Though in secular universities the popular method of teaching the Bible is the historical critical method, a better manner, that keeps in view this two-author understanding, is the grammatico-historical method. To properly interpret the Bible one must understand it in its historical milieu and grammatical usage. Simply put, we must seek to discover what the original author in his historical context was actually meaning to say, rather than reading our own meaning into it. All of the writers of Scripture were pre-modern and therefore did not have the same literary practices as modern and post-modern humans do. For example, the Apostle John did not have the same need for precision as twenty-first century historians. This does not mean he was in error; it simply means that he did not write the same way we might write today. If John did not intend to give the exact order of events of the life of Jesus, but rather put these events in a sequence that displayed the theological truths he wished to highlight, he is not in error even if his order is different than another Gospel. The Gospel of John is inerrant in that it is exactly word for word what God wanted to say through John in his historical and cultural setting.

One major difference between the Bible and the Koran is that the Koran is written in one genre, whereas the Bible uses many different genres. The Psalms are examples of Jewish poetry. Poetry cannot be interpreted the same way as prose; this is true even in the twenty-first century. Poetry allows exaggeration, personification and the use of imagery. To summarize what I have been saying, let me quote the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy:

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.⁵⁸

Proper interpretation helps explain the vast majority of the supposed contradictions in the Bible.

⁵⁷ See Appendix B for more errors in the Koran.

⁵⁸ As quoted in the appendix of R.C. Sproul, *Scripture Alone* (Philipsburg, New Jersey: P and R Publishing, 2005). 184.

Many of the accusations come from those who claim that different accounts of events do not coincide with each other. For instance, the accusers say the four Gospels differ on what events to include and how they are described. First it should be said that if the Gospels said the same thing, there would be no need for four Gospels. But more importantly it should be noted that this is actually a proof for their validity. When a detective is investigating a crime, he or she will question witnesses. If the witnesses' testimonies are exactly the same, they are accused of collusion. But when there are minor apparent incongruities, it is noted that the crime was viewed differently from different eyes and the witnesses are deemed credible. The Gospels have all the earmarks of being testimonies from eyewitnesses.⁵⁹ Matthew and John were there; Luke described the encounters of the eyewitnesses he surveyed; Mark tells the story of Peter. Different perspectives come out in the details. Special things are emphasized because of each author's design and theological intentions. John is very theological; Matthew is very Jewish; Luke is more cosmopolitan; Mark is fast paced; but they are all together exactly what God wanted us to get out of the life of Christ. There are no true contradictions in the Bible. Incidentally, Islamic scholars have ready answers for the supposed contradictions and errors pointed out in the Koran. If they expect readers to listen to their answers, they should at least be open to hearing the Christian explanations to tough questions people ask about the Bible, especially since Mohammad believed the Bible to be trustworthy, as we have already seen.⁶⁰

2) *God would be able to predict the future without error, because he is all-knowing and beyond time.*

This is the best proof for the supernatural nature of the Bible because it demands the miraculous. Deuteronomy 18:21-22 asks the question of how a person can know if a true prophet has spoken. The answer is that the prophet's predictions will be 100% accurate. If a prophet is wrong or calls people to follow after false gods, that prophet is a false prophet. The Bible is a compilation of over forty prophets who made hundreds of detailed predictions without error. Jeremiah predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, the exile of God's people and the return of the exiles in seventy years (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10). The first exiles went in 605 B.C. and in 538 B.C. Cyrus issued the decree that allowed the Jews to go home, which took place between 538-535 B.C. Interestingly, the temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. and rebuilt in 516 B.C. Jeremiah lived at the time of the exile, but he was long dead before the return seventy years later. Isaiah 44:28-45:4 predicts Cyrus by name as the king who will allow the exiles to return and rebuild the temple. Isaiah predicted this over 150 years before it occurred.⁶¹ Approximately 536 B.C., Daniel predicted the Greeks would defeat the Persians and become the world power and then the Romans would defeat the Greeks and become the world empire. Daniel predicts in amazing detail the reigns of Alexander the Great, the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties, including particulars concerning the reign of Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.).⁶²

The Bible predicted several prophecies of the complete destruction of cities—many of the cities it said would be rebuilt and several it claimed would never be rebuilt. The Bible is 100% accurate in both categories, as archeology shows. One amazing example is the city of Tyre. Ezekiel 26 predicts:

1. Nebuchadnezzar will take the city.
2. Other nations will participate in the fulfillment.
3. The city is to be made flat like the top of a rock.
4. It is to become a place for spreading nets.
5. Its stones and timber are to be laid in the sea.
6. The old city of Tyre will never be rebuilt.

⁵⁹ Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament Reliable? A Look At Historical Evidence* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), 91-98.

⁶⁰ See Appendix D for the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch.

⁶¹ For the evidence that Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah in the eighth century B.C. see Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 363-390.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 421-447 for evidence that Daniel wrote in the sixth century B.C.

History records that Nebuchadnezzar took the city but the people escaped out to an island. Later Alexander the Great took the Island off the coast by taking the old city's rubble and throwing it into the sea making a land bridge (this caused the old city to look flat like a rock due to the scraping of the material). The old city is now a place for fisherman, but no city has been planted there even though there is an excellent water supply to support a major city. Ezekiel's prediction was not fulfilled for hundreds of years, but in the end the precise detail is observed without error.

Another interesting prophecy is that of the destruction of Babylon. Listen to Hugh Ross's explanation:

Mighty Babylon, 196 miles square, was enclosed not only by a moat, but also by a double wall 330 feet high, each part 90 feet thick. It was said by unanimous popular opinion to be indestructible, yet two Bible prophets declared its doom. These prophets further claimed that the ruins would be avoided by travelers, that the city would never again be inhabited, and that its stones would not even be moved for use as building material (Isaiah 13:17-22 and Jeremiah 51:26, 43). Their description is, in fact, the well-documented history of the famous citadel. (Probability of chance fulfillment = 1 in 10 to the ninth power)⁶³

The most amazing prophecies are those concerning Jesus, predicted hundreds of years before his birth. We have extant copies that date before the time of Christ, so it is clear the prophecies were made before the fulfillments. Micah 5:2 predicts he would be born in Bethlehem in his human nature, but pre-exist in his divine nature. The exact date of his ministry is given in Daniel 9:25-26, pinpointing it at 483 years after the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem by king Artaxerxes in 458 B.C. Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Zechariah 12:10 predict the manner of Christ's death and burial as being pierced in the hands, feet and side, and his execution and burial would be associated with both a rich man and the wicked. These predictions are even more amazing when one considers they were given several hundred years before crucifixion was invented. Notice the Bible does not call it crucifixion, which would be an anachronism (the mistake of the Koran noted above), but describes crucifixion long before it was practiced. It is important to notice that the Old Testament predicted the crucifixion of the Messiah; therefore if the Koran rejects the crucifixion, it rejects both the Old and New Testaments as well as the miracle of prophecy. It would have been impossible for someone to guess the exact place of birth, time of ministry and means of death of the Messiah hundreds of years before that Messiah existed. These predictions I have listed are only three of over two hundred made concerning the Messiah that are completely fulfilled in exact detail.

Another interesting aspect of Biblical prophecy is the New Testament prophecies concerning the last days. John, Zechariah and others had prophecies and visions of the future, which they attempted to describe with the words available to them at that time. The amazing thing is how accurate the prophecies are of the way the world is today. There was no way they could have known two thousand years ago what the conditions would be like today. For example, in Revelation 9:13-19, John describes an army of two hundred million soldiers that will cross the Euphrates river from the east. At that time there weren't even two hundred million people on the earth. John describes this army as riding on horses with breastplates and out of their mouths comes fire, smoke and sulfur. They will have power in their tails and will be used to kill a third of mankind. It sounds as though John is describing modern day warfare with tanks. He called them horses because that was the only mode of transportation then. John described in Revelation chapter 13 a one-world government, which would have a cashless money system that worked with a mark on each person's hand or forehead. Today we have scanners in our grocery stores that will soon do away with the use of money. This will cut down crime considerably and so will be accepted readily by a world in desperate need. Right now we use debit cards for these type of transactions, but an invisible implant underneath the skin with our social security number on a bar code will work better

⁶³Hugh Ross, "Fulfilled Prophecy: Evidence for the Reliability of the Bible," www.reasons.org, p.2.

because it is more easily accessible and will do away with the problem of losing our debit and credit cards, not to mention the problem of credit card theft that will be eliminated by this new system. Our technology is ready for this and the world is moving toward it, and yet we must ask, "How did John know?" Zechariah 14:12-16 describes a battle, which God will use to judge the nations (compare with Revelation 19:17-21). He describes the "plague" like this: "Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths." This sounds gory, but we can not escape the similarities to the destruction of people by nuclear warfare and fallout. How did Zechariah know? There was nothing comparable to this at all in his day. The most likely explanation is that God, who can see the future, told him, thus verifying the Bible.

There are many more prophecies we could mention, but this should suffice. The Bible passes the second test of divine authenticity. Only God could make hundreds of predictions and get them all right in exact detail, because only he is omniscient and knows the future completely. How does the Koran stand up to this test?

The Koran does not make any detailed prophecies of the distant future other than the general statements that God will judge the world. It provides a few vague predictions of Mohammad's victories in battle, but these cannot be seen as legitimate prophecies that prove the divine inspiration of the Koran for two reasons. First, the time between the prediction and fulfillment is next to nothing, and there is no way we can know if they were not made after the fact. Second, even if they were made before the battles involved, there was a fifty-fifty chance of fulfillment. Surely Mohammad expected to win the battles; otherwise he would not have engaged them. These kinds of prophecies cannot even be put into the same category as the Bible with its pinpoint accuracy of detailed predictions of the near and distant future. One other prophecy made in Surah 30:1 states: "The Greeks have been defeated in a neighboring land. But in a few years they shall themselves gain victory." This prophecy is in reference to the defeat of the Greeks by the Persians in 615 A.D. The Greeks or Byzantines conquered Persia in 628 A.D. Once again this does not qualify as prophecy from a Biblical perspective. It concerns immediate events rather than the distant future and could have been made after the fact. It was obvious at the time that that is what would take place. It is completely lacking in detail. Besides these "prophecies" there is nothing else in the Koran that would fit the Biblical test. Mohammad was not a prophet in the Biblical sense of the word because he never predicted anything astounding.⁶⁴

3) God would be able to perform miracles, because he is all-powerful.

The final test of Isaiah 41 is that the true God would be able to do miracles specifically as signs verifying his words. The Koran agrees with the Bible that Moses, Elijah and Jesus performed miracles. The ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea were miraculous signs for both the Israelites and the Egyptians, revealing that Yahweh is the true God. The miracles performed by Elijah were also specifically done to reveal to the people that Baal was a false God and Yahweh was the only true God (1 Kings 18). The first half of the Gospel of John is centered on seven "signs" meant to manifest Jesus' glory and encourage faith in the disciples (John 2:11). Is there any evidence existing today that these miracles actually took place in space and time? I believe two sets of miracles can be validated today when the evidence is taken seriously without any preconceived biases against the possibility of the miraculous. If there is a God, then he is certainly capable of performing miracles. In fact, a Supreme Being would be infinitely powerful, and one would expect him to manifest his power at times. I would also say that too much of the miraculous would force the unwilling to capitulate and then render faith unnecessary and love impossible. God is capable of discerning just how much of the miraculous is necessary.

The first set of miracles is the Pauline miracles. Muslims do not accept Paul as a legitimate apostle, but his credentials are worth considering. He was raised a Pharisee and taught by Gamaliel who was one of the most important Rabbis of the first century. Paul was zealous in his persecution of Christians and led many to their deaths. He was a rising star in Judaism and believed in his cause. What made him change so drastically? There is no other viable explanation than the one he gives as recorded in

⁶⁴ See Deuteronomy 18:22.

the book of Acts: Jesus met him on the road to Damascus. Paul's conversion was dramatic. It could not have been a hallucination because others witnessed the events and Ananias healed his blindness. He then performed many miracles proving his apostleship. The fact that he willingly was beaten, persecuted and eventually went to his death for his beliefs reveals that he did not make up the story. Peter, James and the other apostles endorsed Paul's ministry because it was clear that the best explanation for his remarkable turn was that his story was true.⁶⁵

The most convincing set of miracles is the series of signs performed by Jesus, culminating in the resurrection. Even his opponents did not deny his powerful abilities, accusing him of performing miracles by the power of Satan. The greatest miracle that validates the rest of his wonders is the resurrection of Jesus. If we can prove that the best explanation of the historical facts available to us today is that Jesus really did rise from the dead three days after being crucified, then all his miracles should be accepted as well as his teachings, as found in the four Gospels. The New Testament claims that the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, are centered on Christ and speak of Christ (Luke 24:44-49; John 5:46). It would make sense that the greatest miracle of all would substantiate this claim. Let us look at the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

Only the Muslims deny Jesus was crucified because, as we have already seen, the historical records with multiple attestation from both sympathetic and hostile parties, are in complete agreement to the basic facts that a man named Jesus gathered a group of followers in Israel and was crucified under Pontius Pilate; there are no claims to the contrary until the seventh century.⁶⁶ The only reason anyone would renounce the historical data that substantiates the crucifixion of Jesus is an a priori conviction that it goes against Islamic belief, which must be rejected as willful ignorance. If Jesus was not crucified, the Muslim would have an even greater dilemma in explaining why God would deceive people in this way and further, why the body was missing three days later. The facts conclude that the body was missing three days later. If this body was not Jesus' body, then whose body is missing? Do the Muslims believe God raised Judas from the dead? We will now look at the evidence for the missing body and see that the best explanation for the missing body is the resurrection.

William Lane Craig sums up the evidence "in three independently established facts: (1) Jesus' empty tomb, (2) Jesus' appearances alive after His death, and (3) the origin of the disciples' belief in His resurrection."⁶⁷ The empty tomb is substantiated by very early, independent sources. 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, Acts 13:28-31 and Mark 15:37-16:7 all agree that Jesus died, was buried, was raised and appeared alive to his followers. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 no later than the spring of 55 A.D., but the language indicates "the transmission of a formal early Christian tradition" received by Paul at his conversion around 33 A.D.⁶⁸ This tradition dates within five years of Jesus' death; there is no question that the early church from its inception believed Jesus died on the cross and three days later the tomb was empty. There was not enough time for a myth to develop, which is what Muslims are suggesting. Similar to atheists in this respect, the Muslim skeptics propose that the historical Jesus was not crucified, never claimed to be God, and was only a prophet who taught the basic beliefs of Islam.⁶⁹ The Muslims then see a second layer of myth superseding the first historic layer that brings in the crucifixion, resurrection and appearances of Christ. Peter Kreeft exposes the problem with this "two layer myth" theory: "The problem with this myth

⁶⁵ See 2 Peter 3:15-16; Acts 15.

⁶⁶ Mohammad denied the crucifixion and so does the forgery known as the Gospel of Barnabas, which could not have been written before the fourteenth century. Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 295-299. Some confuse the Gospel of Barnabas with the Epistle of Barnabas, which is a legitimate letter written between 70 A.D. and 132 A.D. The Gospel of Barnabas is never mentioned by anyone in history, including Muslim apologists until the fifteenth century A.D. If it existed prior to this, the medieval Muslim apologists would have cited it.

⁶⁷ William Lane Craig, *On Guard* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010), 219.

⁶⁸ James Taylor, *Introducing Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 204-205.

⁶⁹ Atheists would disagree with the Muslims and embrace the crucifixion, but would deny the resurrection, claims of deity and miracles. Both groups hold to a two layer myth.

is simply that there is not the slightest bit of any real evidence whatever for the existence of any such first layer. The two-layer cake theory has the first layer made entirely of air – and hot air at that.”⁷⁰

The belief of Jesus being raised from the dead is the most logical explanation for the missing body. We must explain the fact that there was no body in the tomb. Let us review the possibilities unbelievers have presented:

1) Some have suggested that the body is still in the tomb; perhaps the disciples went to the wrong tomb. This idea would at least exonerate the disciples from the accusation of deception, but it is highly unlikely they would all forget where their Rabbi was placed after the crucifixion. If the body was still in the tomb, then when the Jewish officials saw all the commotion of the Christians claiming Jesus rose from the dead, all they would have to do is say "No he didn't; here's his body." But they could not do that because the body was missing. What the Jewish officials actually did was claim that the disciples stole the body. This is the second option.

2) The disciples stole the body. The tomb was guarded by soldiers and was blocked by a very heavy boulder with a Roman seal placed on it. Let's just assume that the disciples snuck into the graveyard when the guards just happened to fall asleep (even though it was a death penalty for a guard to fall asleep on duty). They very quietly removed the boulder and stole the body. If this is true, then we must deal with the problem of the credibility and the faithfulness of the disciples. The disciples turned from cowards to lions after the supposed resurrection. Would that have happened if they knew it to be a lie? The disciples are responsible for recording the book with the highest ethical standards known to humankind, which constantly demands truthfulness and condemns lies; is this possible for wicked liars? I say 'wicked liars' because this would mean that they consciously misled people who would later die for that deception. Would these same disciples be willing to die for what they knew to be a lie? If they stole the body, when the Romans demanded them to recant, they would have gladly rejected Jesus, knowing he was still a corpse. But they didn't. They all went to their horrible deaths claiming that Jesus rose from the dead and that he changed their lives. A person might be willing to die for something he thought was true when in actuality it is not true, but no one would be willing to die for something that he knew was not true; if the disciples stole the body, then they knew Jesus did not rise from the dead, and they would not have been willing to die for that belief. The idea that the disciples stole the body was the predominant view of the Jews of the first three centuries, which is great evidence that the tomb was empty, but it does not square with the facts.

3) Because of the impossibility of the first two explanations, most atheists opt for the last theory - the swoon theory. This theory states that Jesus did not actually die on the cross. He only appeared dead. When he was placed in the cool tomb he was resuscitated and then appeared to the disciples. We still, however, have the problem of his getting by the guards and removing the boulder. We must also assume that the centurion, whose entire job in life was to make sure the criminals were dead, was wrong in this case. Additionally, John would have had to lie about the incident of the soldier piercing Jesus' side after he died because the account says that blood and water came out, which pathologists tell us is proof of death. Not only this, but we must imagine a weak, half dead Jesus somehow appeared to the disciples in strength and glory enough to convince them that he had risen from the dead. This would make Jesus a liar. I find it amazing that this is the most popular explanation by the atheists for the missing body. The Muslim view that God swapped Jesus with Judas, having Judas die on the cross as Jesus' look alike is another version of the theory that Jesus did not actually die, but it cannot explain the missing body and turns God into a liar. The Bible declares that God cannot lie or deceive (Hebrews 6:18), which is a much more logical understanding of the ethical nature of a perfect supreme being than that of the Koran, which declares God deceives (Surah 27:4; 4:143).

Let me suggest one other possibility - Jesus rose from the dead! Unless we have preconceived biases against the possibility of miracles (which is foolish because if God exists he can certainly do miracles), we must conclude that the most logical explanation for the missing body is that Jesus was raised from the dead. If Jesus was resurrected, then he is Lord, and we had better listen to him when he

⁷⁰ Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 191-192.

says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Not only is the empty tomb evidence for the resurrection, but Jesus' appearances alive after His death is also strong confirmation of the resurrection. The first people to see that the tomb was empty and Jesus was alive were women (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:1-3, 11-18). In the first century the testimony of a woman was not credible, so it is quite amazing that all four Gospels agree that women were the first witnesses of the resurrection. If someone were to make up the story that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to his followers, he would never have invented the idea that women were the first witnesses, because it would not have been believed by the hearers. If this story was made up, the deceiver would have recorded that men were the first to see Jesus alive. The only reason someone would have written down the idea that Jesus first appeared to women is that he really did appear to them. The testimony of all four Gospels is very strong evidence to the fact that Jesus did appear to these women alive after being crucified.

Another verification of Christ's resurrection is the salvation of his brothers. Before Jesus died, his brothers did not believe in him (Mark 3:21, 31-35; John 7:5). This honest declaration is not the sort of thing deceivers would put into their story, but it is just the sort of thing God would include if it were true. The Bible is unique among religious books in that it describes its heroes truthfully, warts and all, even if that truth might detract from the character's prestige (i.e. David's sin). Jesus did not have any warts, but admitting that his own brothers did not believe in him might deter some from believing. The fact that Jesus' brothers' unbelief is recorded gives credence to the historical accuracy of the account. His brothers did not believe in him while he was alive, but something changed after his death. We know that at least James and Jude became believers after Jesus died, and according to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, James was killed for his faith by the Sanhedrin shortly after 60 AD.⁷¹ What caused the dramatic change? 1 Corinthians 15:7 says Jesus appeared to James after his death. William Lane Craig puts this information into perspective:

Now how is this to be explained? On the one hand, it seems certain that Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him during His lifetime. Jesus' crucifixion would only confirm in James' mind that his elder brother's messianic pretensions were delusory, just as he had thought. On the other hand, it's equally certain that Jesus' brothers became ardent Christians, active in ministry. Many of us have brothers. What would it take to make you believe that your brother is the Lord, so that you would die for this belief, as James did? Can there be any doubt that the reason for this remarkable transformation is to be found in the fact that "then he appeared to James"?⁷²

Jesus also appeared to Peter and the rest of the Apostles who were in hiding due to cowardice before these appearances and were bold witnesses of the resurrection after these manifestations. The resurrection best explains these turnarounds. The Apostle Paul also claimed to have seen Jesus alive after his death. It is difficult to explain how this man, who at one time zealously pursued the death of Christians, became a Christian after seeing the risen Christ and later died for his faith. Finally, 1 Corinthians 15 states that over five hundred people saw Jesus alive at one time. At the time of the writing, most of the people were still alive and could have been questioned. The pronouncements of the appearances of Christ to so many were recorded so early that it did not leave enough time for myth to develop, because the facts could have been checked out and exposed by the opposition; this is also true of the Gospel accounts themselves. Nineteenth century liberalism claimed the Gospels were written in the second century, which would have given ample time to develop myth, but the twentieth century has produced a tremendous amount of research and manuscript evidence that contradicts those claims, exposing them to anti-supernatural bias, rather than careful scholarship. The synoptic Gospels (Matthew,

⁷¹ (*Antiquities* 20.200).

⁷² William Lane Craig, *On Guard*, 233-234.

Mark and Luke), along with the book of Acts, were all written before 65 AD.⁷³ With such early and unanimous witness of the death, resurrection and appearances of Christ, the logical explanation is that Jesus did actually rise from the dead bodily. To reject the historical evidence in favor of a late, poorly attested position simply because one feels he or she must hold to what he or she has been taught or was socially conditioned in, is to act like the proverbial ostrich who sticks his head in the sand when confronted with the obvious. We dare not act like the Pharisees who stoned Stephen, plugging their ears and screaming at the top of their voices so they would not hear the truth (Acts 7:54-60). Jesus said, "The truth will set you free."⁷⁴ If the facts verify Christianity, then we will be held accountable for willfully rejecting those facts.

The Bible passes the third test found in Isaiah with flying colors. How does the Koran measure up? Mohammad stated clearly that he did not perform any miracles or "signs" except bringing the greatest sign of the Koran.⁷⁵ Many followers after Mohammad claimed miracles for him, but those miracles are completely unfounded and would contradict Mohammad's statements, making him out to be a liar. One example of these supposed miracles should be sufficient to reveal their fabrication:

We read in the "Sahih Muslim" (IV, page 1 467):

"We were along with Allah's Messenger at Minâ that moon was split up into two. One of its parts was behind the mountain (the mountain covered one of its parts according to another writer) and the other one was on this side of the mountain." "The people of Mecca demanded from Allah's Messenger, that he should show them (some) signs (miracles) and he showed them the splitting of the moon."⁷⁶

We give Mohammad credit for admitting he did not perform miracles, and this would not disqualify him as a prophet because many prophets did not carry out miracles, but it makes sense that the greatest of all prophets, the one who is supposed to be a prophet like Moses, would perform miracles. In Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses predicts a prophet to come like him. Numbers 12:6-8 describes what it means to be a prophet like Moses: God spoke to Moses face to face rather than in visions. Moses had a special relationship with God, unlike the other prophets. Deuteronomy 34:10-11 also gives us a clue to the uniqueness of Moses as a prophet; "He was unparalleled for all the signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do." The prophet to come would receive revelation from God out of a unique relationship with Him, and he would also perform miracles at the same level as Moses. Though many Muslims claim this was a prophecy of Mohammad, he cannot be the one predicted by Moses because he received his revelations only from an angel, and he did not perform any miracles. Acts 3:19-23 reveals that Moses was referring to Jesus who clearly had a unique relationship with God as his Father and who performed greater miracles than Moses, as even the Koran admits.

Conclusion

The Bible and the Koran each proclaim a test for deciding which book is God's Word. The Koran claims that its literary genius proves it to be supernatural. We have evaluated this test and concluded that it is not

⁷³ This is even admitted by liberal scholar John A.T. Robinson who states that the overwhelming evidence reveals early dates for the synoptic Gospels and the book of Acts (by 60 A.D.), giving only thirty years at the most between the time of Christ and the writing of these works. John A.T. Robinson, *Can We Trust the New Testament?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 71-79. It is refreshing to see a scholar who doesn't believe in the miraculous advocate going with the evidence rather than coming up with an excuse in order to maintain his beliefs.

⁷⁴ John 8:31-32.

⁷⁵ Surah 17:59; 13:7; 6:124; 6:37; 2:118-119; 2:99, 151, 252.

⁷⁶ www.Aswering-Islam.org.

a valid test for discovering divine authenticity. Not only is the test unacceptable, the Koran does not even pass its own test. Some have estimated that over 90% of Muslims never read the Koran; this is understandable, due to its lack of beauty. It is a book of threats that is monotonous and ambiguous. Mohammad does not qualify for the status of a true prophet of God.

The Bible presents a different test for assessing its supernatural claim. It states that the true God would be able to describe the past without error, predict the future with 100% accuracy and report verifiable miracles. We saw that the Bible fulfills all of these lofty claims, whereas the Koran does not accomplish any of them. The Bible is the Word of God!

The Bible is made up of sixty-six books from over forty authors. It was written over a fifteen hundred year span, in three different languages, on three different continents by authors with occupations varying from farmers and fishermen to kings and royal statesmen. It has all this diversity but still reads like a single book with a singular purpose, because God is its ultimate author. In the Old Testament, God describes how He made humans and how they fell into sin. From the very beginning God had a plan to rescue sinful humanity. He first called a people known as the Israelites to himself in order to reach out to the whole world. The Law was given to Moses, first to reveal that humans cannot come to God by the Law because they cannot complete it, and second to show God's moral requirements of holiness. God must punish sin, but humans cannot overcome sin. God sent the prophets to warn people of the consequences of sin, but also to proclaim God's plan of salvation for sinful humanity. The prophetic work culminates in Jesus, who is the Word of God incarnate. He came to declare that the Kingdom of God was at hand. He performed miracles and cast out demons to demonstrate that the kingdom came with his appearance because he is the King of kings. But he did not bring the kingdom as people expected. He did not conquer the Romans. He triumphed over sin and death by dying on the cross as our substitute (which was prophesied in Isaiah 53) and rising from the dead. His Apostles recorded this ultimate revelation in the New Testament, describing Jesus and what his death accomplished. Now is the time for receiving God's mercy, because when Jesus returns he will bring the fullness of the kingdom by judging the world. He is waiting to return so that everyone will have an opportunity to accept his free gift of salvation (2 Peter 3:8-9). He paid the penalty for our sin that we cannot pay. He simply requires us to repent of our sin and place our faith in him and his finished work on the cross. Sincerity will not get anyone into heaven. Everyone, including Muslims, must reject all false religions, including Islam and place their faith in Christ. If they refuse to receive Christ as Lord and savior they will go to hell as the penalty for their unbelief and sin. If they receive Christ and abandon the false teachings of the Koran and Mohammad, they will be forgiven of their sins and become adopted children of God. God offers a wonderful relationship of love with Himself. Please put your trust in Christ. The evidence has been given. Count the cost. You may have to give up your life for the sake of Christ, but eternity is at stake. "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

If you are a Muslim and see that you need to become a Christian but are afraid, please contact our church. You are not alone. There are thousands of Muslims coming to Christ all over the world. The church will be a family to you in your time of need. All those who receive Christ are brothers and sisters in Christ; we take care of each other. There are resources to help you!

May God bless you,

Pastor Larry Siekawitch
Harvest Fellowship

Appendix A: The Bible and the Koran's Textual Evidence

Muslims have claimed that the present Koran is identical to the original writing, without any textual variants, whereas the Bible has allowed many variants to creep into its text; therefore, the Koran can be trusted, but the Bible cannot be relied upon. Once again when we look at the evidence, rather than propaganda, we see that both the Bible and the Koran have minor textual variants, but both are dependable copies of the original, with the Bible actually having fewer problems than the Koran.

First we need to understand the process for how we received the present Koran. Surah 85:22 claims there is an original tablet of the Koran in heaven. The Koran was given to Mohammad orally through the angel Gabriel. Mohammad never wrote anything down, but shared the Koran with trusted disciples. The disciples memorized his recitations and eventually wrote them down, first on fragile surfaces such as bones, leaves, etc. Many of the reciters died in the battle of Yamama after Mohammad died, and so Abu Bakr began to have the surahs collected and written down; however, no vowel points or diacritical marks were recorded until 200 years later. No prophet wrote the Koran, and Mohammad never called for it to be written down, so we must consider the possibility of mistakes creeping in through the process of memorization by the disciples of Mohammad as well as their writings. Only prophets can claim infallibility when it comes to the Word of God. Also a lack of vowels and diacritical marks can change the meaning significantly, so we must admit that the current Koran may not be true to the original, unless we believe people who are not prophets, two hundred years after the writing of the Koran, were used infallibly by God to record the proper vowels and marks.

Several minor variations and some larger deviations in the text were noticed, which led Uthman, the third caliph, to declare one text the official Koran. He had the other variants burned. Destroying the variant Korans in order to hush up a problem is similar to what the Nazis did in World War 2, but it is not a proper way of dealing with the issue. Christians never felt the need to destroy the evidence of minor discrepancies in the text because these texts can be used to help us discover what the originals said. There are no original manuscripts of either the Koran or the Bible, but the volume of early manuscripts we do have can be compared to help assure us that we have an accurate text; more on this later.

Uthman was not successful in destroying all the evidence for differentiation in the texts. The Hadith and the medieval Islamic commentaries admit to the existence of variants, some of significant importance. According to Aisha, Mohammad's wife, some verses on stoning and breastfeeding an adult ten times were lost because a sheep ate them. She also said Surah 33 originally had two hundred verses, but Uthman could find only seventy-three. Caliph Umar admitted many passages of the Koran disappeared. Even contemporary Yusuf Ali admits some early Muslims held a different rendering of Surah 33:6.⁷⁷ The Dome of the Rock sanctuary (which is the second most holy place for Muslims), built by Abdul Malik in 691 A.D., has a variant inscription on it. Two Surahs not included in the Koran are recited in the nightly prayers; these Surahs were included in Ubay B. Ka'b's manuscript. Medieval manuscripts are still extant and available that have minor variations.⁷⁸ Coins have been uncovered from the time of Abdul Malik with Koran variants written on them. The Koran was revised by Ibn Mujahid 250 years after the Uthmanic recession. Muslim apologists such as Mazhar Kazi claim that the Koran has no changes from the original text, which is a miracle and therefore proof of its divine authorship. As we have seen however, this is not the case. David Woods summarizes what has been said:

Kazi's claim is odd for two reasons. First, it's certainly no miracle for a book to be preserved for fourteen centuries. The Dead Sea Scrolls, copies of the Bible, and other writings have survived longer than fourteen centuries, so Muslims can hardly appeal to preservation as proof of divine

⁷⁷ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Beltsville, Maryland: Amana Publications, 2006), note 3674 p. 1057.

⁷⁸ See Mondher Sfar, *In Search of the Original Koran* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2008), 22-26 for specific examples.

inspiration. Second, it's simply false to say that the Qur'an has been perfectly preserved. When we turn to the early Muslim sources, we find that entire chapters of the Qur'an have been lost, that large sections of chapters are missing, that individual verses were forgotten, and that words and phrases were changed. Indeed, we know from Muslim reports that Muhammad's most trusted teachers couldn't even agree on which chapters were to be included in the Qur'an!⁷⁹

The Bible fairs better than the Koran in preservation. We have thousands of texts, some of which date closer to the originals of the Bible than the extant manuscripts of the Koran do to its original. When we compare these manuscripts we see that an accurate copy of the original has been preserved. The vast majority of the copies agree on 98% of the material found in the Bible. Most of the variants are minor issues, and the original can easily be detected through the science of textual criticism. There are three major texts that have significant manuscript variations, i.e. John 7:53-8:11; Mark 16:9-20 and 1 John 5:7b-8a, but none of these changes any theological content of the Bible. It can be shown that the passages in John and Mark do bear witness of being Apostolic, and the 1 John 5:7b-8a passage is clearly not original and is actually not found in any Greek manuscript prior to the sixteenth century (an obvious forgery of the Roman Catholic Church). One example of manuscript evidence that reveals the accuracy of the Bible today is worth noting. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the earliest copy of the Old Testament in Hebrew that we had dated in the ninth century and is called the Masoretic text. The Dead Sea Scrolls date between 250 B.C. to 50 A.D. When the Masoretic text is compared to the Dead Sea Scrolls we see remarkable compatibility even though they are a thousand years apart. One scroll of the entire book of Isaiah varies with the Masoretic text in three minor words!⁸⁰ The amazing comparability is due to two things: First, the scribes responsible for copying manuscripts were very precise in making sure they copied accurately, with multiple tests to make sure no errors crept in. The ancient Hebrews had incredible memorization skills as well. Second, God made sure we would have accurate copies. The question needs to be asked again, "If God supposedly kept the Koran perfect, then why did he allow the Bible to become corrupt?" The evidence reveals that God did provide us with a trustworthy copy of the Bible, which even Mohammad admitted. One might ask, "Why are there any discrepancies if God preserved the text?" One possible answer is that God did not want any originals around because His people may have been tempted to worship them. Even if we do not know why God allowed the originals to disappear, the fact remains that we have accurate copies that are trustworthy. Most Bibles include any manuscript variations in the footnotes of the text. R.C. Sproul illustrates well that though we don't have the originals, we can trust the Bible because of the thousands of early manuscripts we do have:

Some people...say, "We don't have the originals, so how can we say that the Bible is the Word of God?" That's like saying that if someone put a bomb in the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Washington and blew up our official yardstick, there wouldn't be enough accurate yardsticks and copies to allow us to reconstruct what a yard is. Of course we would be able to reconstruct it, and we could do so with infinitesimal variation. The same holds true for the text of Scripture.⁸¹

⁷⁹ David Wood, "Has the Qur'an Been Perfectly Preserved?" www.4truth.net.

⁸⁰ Walter Kaiser, Jr. states, "The state of purity in some of the DSS is nothing short of spectacular. For instance, in one complete Isaiah scroll, only three words exhibiting a different spelling were found for a book that runs about one hundred pages and sixty-six chapters in our English texts." *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?* 45-46.

⁸¹ R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrews Expository Commentary: John* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust, 2009), 149.

Appendix B: Errors in the Koran

The Bible is the inerrant Word of God and therefore is without error; this cannot be said about the Koran. As noted above, the Christian understanding of interpretation (hermeneutics) answers the vast majority of the problems unbelievers point out when they claim the Bible has errors. The use of hyperbole, round numbers, phenomenal descriptions, generalizations and topical arrangements were perfectly acceptable in the Ancient Near East. The Muslim cannot appeal to these truths because of their peculiar belief in dictation. If God dictated the Koran to Mohammad the errors listed below simply have no explanation. The Muslim may appeal to potential answers clarifying the mistakes, but some are very difficult to explain. It should be asked of the Muslim, "If we should accept his or her explanation for the difficult passages, then why shouldn't he or she accept Christian accounts for difficulties found in the Bible?" Here are some of the Surah errors scholars have pointed out:

- 41:9-12 state the world was created in eight days whereas 7:54 says it was created in six days.
- 28:6,8 say Haman was an Egyptian under Pharaoh, but *Haman* is a Persian name. It is clear Mohammad mixed up the Genesis account with Esther chapter 3.
- 20:85 puts Samaritans in the time of Moses, when they did not come into existence until after the destruction of Samaria in 722 B.C.
- 32:5 says a day is a thousand years, but 70:4 says a day is fifty thousand years.
- 18:86 says the sun sets in a muddy spring of water.
- 18:83-97 claims Alexander the Great was a monotheist. Mohammad received his information from an Arabian Christian legend called *The Romance of Alexander*. Mohammad did not know it was fiction, but God should have known.
- Surah 18 and 21 speak of Alexander the Great building a giant gate made of iron and copper to hold back Gog and Magog and in the end of time the gate will be opened for them. We have scoured the earth and there is no such gate!
- 19:7 says no one was ever named "John" before John the Baptist. "John" was a common name in Israel long before John the Baptist. Mohammad simply misunderstood the Biblical text that says no one in Zechariah's family was named John.
- 7:124 and 26:49 say that Egyptians practiced crucifixion. This is not true. Crucifixion was not invented for 900 years. Attempts to claim that impalement was crucifixion are false.
- 78:6-7 says God created mountains as tent pegs to prevent earthquakes, also 16:15; 21:31.
- 37:6-10; 67:5; 15:16-18 says shooting stars are God throwing them at Satan in his anger.

Appendix C: How Can A Monotheistic Jew or Muslim Worship Jesus As God?

A great difficulty arises for a faithful Jew or Muslim when he or she realizes that Christianity declares Jesus the Messiah to be God. The doctrine of the Trinity can be a stumbling block to their faith. First it must be said that true Christianity has never denied the truth of monotheism as described in the Shema: "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" There is only one true God, but diversity within the one being of God is foreshadowed in the Hebrew Scriptures and revealed in the New Testament. I want to briefly explain the doctrine of the Trinity to help the troubled Jewish or Muslim believer understand this mysterious doctrine.

I want to look at one Old Testament passage and see how it reveals the truth that Jesus is God. God wrote the Bible by what theologians call "progressive revelation." Progressive revelation means God revealed himself and his plan of redemption to his creation gradually over a long period of time. He did not reveal himself all at once. First, he gave us "general revelation" which is the revelation of God that we see in his creation. By looking at the world, I know there had to be an all-powerful, all wise, all loving God (Psalm 19; Romans 1). This tells us a little about God but not enough. Next, God revealed

himself in “special revelation.” This is specific information about God that he revealed to the prophets. This revelation is more reliable because God made sure it was an accurate revelation kept from corruption (2 Peter 1:20-21). Finally, he revealed himself in his Son, which is the most complete revelation of God. Hebrews 1:1-3a says:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Even during the life of Jesus the people could not handle the full teaching of God, so they had to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who would “guide them into all truth” (see John 16:12; Mark 4:33; and Matthew 19:8). Because of this method of God revealing himself, we can expect the Bible to get clearer and more specific in the later Old Testament books, and we can anticipate the clearest presentation of God in the New Testament, which is a record of the full revelation of God in Jesus. We can also expect the New Testament to explain the Old Testament (remember that according to Hebrews 1:1 the Old Testament is only a partial revelation of God - accurate but not complete).

Now I would like to show an example of this progressive revelation of God by looking at a passage in Isaiah and appropriate New Testament passages that explain and add to our understanding of this passage. Isaiah 44:6:

This is what the LORD says - Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.

Let’s look at each segment of this passage in detail.

- 1) “This is what the LORD says” - The Hebrew term יהוה is used here. This is the personal name for God many translate as Yahweh or Jehovah.⁸² This is not a representative of God; it is the Supreme Creator himself.
- 2) “Israel’s King and Redeemer” - There are three parts to this segment:
 - a. God is the king and redeemer of *Israel*. He has a special relationship, a covenant relationship with Israel. They are the people of God in the Old Testament. The New Testament people of God are the church. In fact both Jew and Gentile who trust in Jesus as their savior are called Abraham’s seed and together are the covenant people of God (Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:14-18; 3:6). Since we are the people of God, he is our king and redeemer as well.
 - b. God is the king. Isaiah wrote under the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (Isaiah 1:1), but he saw God as the supreme King. In 1 Timothy 6:15-16 God is called the “King of kings and Lord of lords” and the “blessed and only Ruler.” This title is also given to Jesus in Revelation 17:14 and 19:6. To be the King of kings and Lord of lords means he is the supreme King and Lord over all other kings and lords. Either Jesus is King over God who is king, or they are one and the same. I believe the New Testament passages are revealing who this Yahweh is. He is Jesus!
 - c. God is the redeemer. The term redeemer (גֹּאֲלֵם) is a term used to set prisoners free. We are under the bondage of sin until God redeems us. In other words, God is our savior (Isaiah 45:21). In fact Isaiah 43:11 says, “I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.” God is the only savior. But the New Testament says Jesus redeemed us (Galatians 3:13-14). The New Testament also calls Jesus our savior twenty-three times. Which one is the savior, God or Jesus? The confusion is even more pronounced in Titus. 1:3; 2:10; and 3:4 use the phrase “God our Savior.” 1:4 and 3:6 use the phrase

⁸² Judaism began to shy away from the use of the personal name for God out of reverence, but it should be noted that nowhere in Scripture do we find this prohibition. God gave his personal name to his people because he wanted an intimate relationship with them. I don’t want to disrespect the Jews but I believe God wants us to use his personal name.

“Jesus Christ our Savior.” 2:13 explains this dilemma: “While we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” The King James Version of this verse is a little obscure, but the Greek is very clear - Jesus is God. The context proves it. We are all waiting for the appearing of Jesus known as the second coming. Titus wasn’t confused. He could interchangeably call God the savior and Jesus the savior because he believed Jesus was God.

3) “The LORD Almighty” - יהוה צבאות literally means Yahweh of armies. This is a technical term for Yahweh being the mightiest warrior. In the Septuagint (the Jews’ Greek translation of the Old Testament) the word pantokrator (παντοκρατωρ), which means “Almighty, is used.” Revelation 1:8 calls the Lord God the “Almighty” (pantokrator) and “the Alpha and the Omega.” In Revelation 22:13 Jesus calls himself the “Alpha and the Omega.” There are not two alpha and omegas. In Isaiah 9:6 the Messiah (Jesus) is called “the mighty God.” Some have claimed that Jesus is the mighty god, but he is not the Almighty God; however, just a little while later in the book Isaiah calls Yahweh the mighty God (Isaiah 10:21 also see Luke 22:69). Jesus is the LORD Almighty, the mighty God, and the Alpha and Omega.

4) “I am the first and I am the last” - God calls himself the first and the last (also in Isaiah 48:12). This phrase speaks of his supremacy and eternal being. It is similar to the phrase “the Alpha and the Omega” which are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. God has always been, and he will always be. The four living creatures of Revelation 4 never stop singing “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.” This same book calls Jesus the first and the last in 1:17; 2:8; and 22:13. 22:13 also calls Jesus the Alpha and the Omega, tying him in with the God Almighty of 1:8. John was not confused as to who was the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last - He is Jesus (also God is called the beginning and the end in Revelation 21:6-7, and Jesus is called the beginning and the end in Revelation 22:12-16).

5) “Apart from me there is no God” - Throughout the entire Bible, the belief in monotheism (there is only one God) is taught. Isaiah brings this out several times (43:11; 44:8; 45:5, 21-22; 46:9). 43:10-11 states:

You are my witnesses, declares the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.

Isaiah goes out of his way to declare that there is only one true God. All other gods are false gods (Psalms 96:5). Jesus is called God in John 1:1, 14: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The Jehovah’s Witnesses translate this verse saying, “The word was a god.” They think this preserves them from having to admit Jesus is God, but they are mistaken. They are forced in saying that Jesus is a god but not the one true God. If this is true then Jesus is a false god and we should have nothing to do with him. The fact is Jesus is the one true God and that is why we worship him. Isaiah 45:22-23 says:

Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.

Philippians 2:10-11 explains this passage in more detail. It says, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” It says, “Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” This same passage says that Jesus is, in his very nature, God (in the form μορφή of God) just as he is, in his very nature, a servant (in the form μορφή of a servant); he is just as much God as he is a servant (Philippians 2:6-10). Throughout the New Testament Jesus is called God (i.e. John 20:27-29; Hebrews 1:8) and is worshiped as God (i.e. Revelation 5:12-14). Even the angels worship Jesus (Hebrews 1:6). Jesus is worshiped even though the law says to worship God alone (Deuteronomy 6:13; see also Revelation 19:10 and 22:8-9). The New Testament explains and expands upon the Old Testament, showing us clearly that Jesus is Yahweh - Jesus is God!

This is what the LORD says - Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.

I would like to examine a few other passages that teach the deity of Jesus. John 8:58-59 says, "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this they picked up stones to stone him." In English, as well as in Greek, this statement by Jesus uses an improper verb tense. It should be "Before Abraham was, I *was*." Jesus deliberately used the wrong tense for a reason (he doesn't make mistakes by accident); he was claiming to be God. The Greek words used are *εγω ειμι* (*ego eimi*), which are the Greek words for the Hebrew words used for God's personal name, which He told Moses to call Him in Exodus 3:14. Yahweh (called the tetragrammaton יהוה) is derived from the verb יהי found here. Jesus was saying, "Before Abraham was, I have always been, Yahweh." That is why the Jews tried to kill him. Jesus' pre-existence is also taught in Colossians 1:16-17:

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

This passage says Jesus created all things and that he holds everything together. If Jesus were a created being and not God, then this passage would be stating that Jesus created himself (all things), but that is illogical. In John 1:3 John goes out of his way to make this point; he says, "Through him all things were made; without him *nothing was made that has been made*." Jesus has always existed and is the great I AM!

In John 20:28 it says, "Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'" Thomas specifically calls Jesus his God. Some say that Thomas just made a mistake in his excitement, but if that were true Jesus would have corrected him; instead he praised him! For Jesus to accept worship as God when he was not in fact God would have been a horrendous sin, but if Jesus is God then it is natural.

There are several other passages that state Jesus is God. These references are found in all of the new translations of the Bible because they are based on the earliest and most accurate manuscripts. John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." Romans 9:5 says, "Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen." Titus 2:13 says, "While we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:1 says, "...To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ ..."

It should be clear by now that Jesus is God, according to the New Testament. Church history also backs up the belief that Jesus is God. All of the early church fathers proclaimed that Jesus is God. Papias and Polycarp who were both disciples of John declared the deity of Jesus. Clement and Ignatius, as well as many other second century Christians, also clearly proclaimed the deity of Christ. The idea that Jesus was not God was not historically held by anyone within the Church until the fourth century and is refuted by the early church fathers and then the councils. The Bible, as well as the earliest followers of Jesus, taught that Jesus is God.

Now we have to try to make sense of the Bible's teaching. God is called the Father (Jude 1:1). He is also called Jesus (as we have already seen). The Holy Spirit is also referred to as God (Acts 5:3-4). The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all considered persons in the Bible. Some would argue that the Holy Spirit is not a person but is a force. The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30); he can be lied to (Acts 5:3); He teaches us, comforts us, convicts us, and counsels us as Jesus' substitute (John chapters 13-17). In these chapters in John, Jesus specifically uses the masculine pronoun (he) in referring to the Holy Spirit to show that he is a person. The term Holy Spirit is a neuter term and would normally call for a neuter pronoun (it), but Jesus wanted his people to know that someone would be coming after he left to continue what he started. The Holy Spirit is not a force; you do not grieve, lie to, or gain instruction from a force (this is not Star Wars). If the Holy Spirit is only the power of God rather than a person in the Godhead, then Luke 4:14 would not make sense. It says, "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit

into Galilee.” If the Spirit is just the power of God then this verse would read, “And Jesus returned in the power of the power into Galilee.” The Holy Spirit is a person. The Bible also teaches that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6, etc.). So the facts according to the Bible are that the one God is made up of the three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. They are three separate persons. These three persons are the one God. This is the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is difficult for us to understand how one being can be made up of three persons, because in the physical realm all we see are individual beings made up of only one person each. I am one being and one person. You are one being and one person, etc. But just because this is all we see in the physical realm, it does not mean it is impossible for a being to be made up of three persons. This is the majesty of God. This just says that his being is so much greater than ours. He is so far above and beyond us; as theologians say, he is “other” than us. If God were just like us, it would give us a reason to question whether or not we made up this god ourselves. Because God is infinite, it makes sense that finite creatures cannot fully comprehend him (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Though the doctrine of the Trinity is difficult to understand, it is not illogical. If we were to say God is one god, and at the same time in the same way, he is three gods, we would be stating illogical nonsense. If we were to say God is three persons, and at the same time and in the same way he is one person, we would be irrational. But we are not saying those things; we are saying he has always been one God, and he has always been three persons. It may be beyond our ability to comprehend, but the doctrine of the Trinity is not illogical.

We should be concerned about the rationality of the doctrine, but our primary concern must be “What does the Bible say?” It has already been conclusively shown in the Bible that God has revealed himself as three persons. Let us look at a few other Trinitarian passages: Matthew 28:19 says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name [not names] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Are we baptized in the name of God, a created being and a force? No, we are baptized in the name of the Trinity. This passage continues with Jesus saying, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” In order for this to be true, Jesus would have to be omnipresent (everywhere all at once), which is an attribute only God holds. 2 Corinthians 13:14 says, “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” Does this grace by which we are saved come from God or a created being? Do we have fellowship with a force or the third person in the Trinity?

Some are troubled by the doctrine of the Trinity because the Bible calls Jesus the Son of God, and it teaches that he is in subordination to God (1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:28). Subordination does not necessitate inferiority. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says, “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” God being the head of Christ does not necessarily make him superior anymore than man being the head of woman makes him superior. The truth of the Trinity is “Ontological equality but economic subordination,” in other words, equal in being but subordinate in role. There is an order in the Trinity. The Son submits to the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, bringing glory to the Son. The confusion can be cleared when we understand the use of the terms “God” and “Lord.” In the Old Testament God was referred to by the terms “God” (Elohim), “LORD” (Yahweh) and “Lord” (Adonai). In the New Testament’s full revelation of God as Trinity, the Father is primarily referred to as “God” and Jesus is primarily referred to as “Lord,” though Jesus is referred to as God a few times and the Father is referred to as Lord a few times.

Some are also confused when the Bible calls the Son the “only begotten.” There is a strong case for translating this term “the One and only” or “unique one” (see NIV). But even if we go with the translation “Only begotten,” we must understand the uniqueness of this term in referring to Jesus. We are sons by adoption, but he is a son by generation. When dogs have babies they have little dogs (cats, humans and everything else are the same). The offspring of God would be deity. If the offspring is deity, then this deity would have to be eternal; therefore, we are not talking about his coming into being; we are referring to only the Son’s relationship with the Father. Also, when Colossians 1:15 calls Jesus the

firstborn over all creation, Paul is not speaking about a time when Jesus came into being. The term “firstborn” (πρωτοτοκος) refers to preeminence and rule, not birth order. Psalm 89:27 brings this out clearly; when speaking of David God says, “I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.” David was not the first king or the firstborn of his family; he was actually the youngest son. The verse shows that by firstborn the psalmist means “most exalted.”

When the difficulties are examined we find there are Biblical solutions. The Bible never says, “Jesus is not God,” but actually says in several places “Jesus is God.” The proper response is to worship and proclaim Jesus as God, holding to the doctrine of the Trinity.

There are many hints of the Trinity in the Hebrew Scriptures. Millard Erickson notes well:

The teaching of the Old Testament on this subject may naturally be expected to be less direct than that of the New Testament. So, for example, the idea of incarnation is not really asserted in the Old Testament. What we find instead are anomalies in the Old Testament witness, which do not necessarily teach, but are consistent with, the Trinity. They may be hints at the doctrine, which lead us to that conclusion.⁸³

Elohim is a plural noun used for the singular subject *God*. Though this may simply be a use of the plural of majesty, there are other places where the idea of “plural of majesty” simply does not fit. Genesis 1:26 says, “Then God said, ‘Let *us* make man in *Our* image...’” Here we see that Moses uses the singular form for *said* and the plural form for *us* and *our*. Erickson points out that the Jewish commentators give several explanations because “plural of majesty” does not answer this particular problem.⁸⁴ Even in the great passage on monotheism in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 called the “Shema” where it says Yahweh is one, the Hebrew word for “one” is peculiar. In Hebrew the word *yahid* (יחיד) is used to present the one and only or unique one, such as in Genesis 22:2, 12, 16. But in the Shema, Moses uses *ehad* (אחד). This is the same word used in Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” *Ehad* can simply be used for a singular subject, but it can also “be used to speak of a unity that is actually a union or composite of several factors.”⁸⁵ The Hebrew Scriptures leave open the possibility of a plurality within the one true God.

The exalted terminology used for Messiah also gives credence to the idea of Messiah being both God and human. Micah 5:2 says “His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” Daniel 7:14 speaks of the Son of Man stating, “And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” In many places the “Angel of the LORD” or some human-like figure can be seen as a theophany or manifestation of God in a physical form because the nature of the “Angel” is divine not angelic (i.e. Genesis 18:1-2, 16-18, 22, 19:1; 32:24-32; Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 6:11-24; 13:3-23). In reference to Messiah, Isaiah 9:6-7 states:

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

⁸³ Millard Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 31. I am indebted to Millard Erickson for the information on the Old Testament witness of the Trinity 31-34.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 32; this is also true concerning Genesis 3:22, 11:7, and Isaiah 6:8 where the Targums, Philo, The Book of Jubilees and the Talmud give conflicting explanations or simply alter the reading because of the difficulty. *Ibid.*, 32-33.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

This clear messianic prediction declares the Messiah to be “Mighty God.” *El gibbor* for “Mighty God” (אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר) always refers to God in the Hebrew Scriptures. Daniel Akin notes, “This is a clear and direct affirmation of Messiah’s deity. What that would mean was, no doubt, shrouded in mystery at the time of the prophecy, but there is no textual reason for shying away from what it says.”⁸⁶ In all of these instances we see hints or shadows of the Trinity, which foreshadow the New Testament’s full revelation.

I would like to conclude with a quote on the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity by Wayne Grudem:

Why was the church so concerned about the doctrine of the Trinity? Is it really essential to hold to the full deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit? Yes it is, for this teaching has implications for the very heart of the Christian faith. First, the atonement is at stake. If Jesus is merely a created being, and not fully God, then it is hard to see how he, a creature, could bear the full wrath of God against all of our sins. Could any creature, no matter how great, really save us? Second, justification by faith alone is threatened if we deny the full deity of the Son. (This is seen today in the teaching of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who do not believe in justification by faith alone.) If Jesus is not fully God, we would rightly doubt whether we can really trust him to save us completely. Could we really depend on any creature fully for our salvation? Third, if Jesus is not infinite God, should we pray to him or worship him? Who but an infinite, omniscient God could hear and respond to all the prayers of all God’s people? And who but God himself is worthy of worship? Indeed, if Jesus is merely a creature, no matter how great, it would be idolatry to worship him - yet the New Testament commands us to do so (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:12-14). Fourth, if someone teaches that Christ was a created being but nonetheless one who saved us, then this teaching wrongly begins to attribute credit for salvation to a creature and not to God himself. But this wrongfully exalts the creature rather than the Creator, something Scripture never allows us to do. Fifth, the independence and personal nature of God are at stake: If there is no Trinity, then there were no interpersonal relationships within the being of God before creation, and, without personal relationships, it is difficult to see how God could be genuinely personal or be without the need for a creation to relate to. Sixth, the unity of the universe is at stake: If there is not perfect plurality and perfect unity in God himself, then we have no basis for thinking there can be any ultimate unity among the diverse elements of the universe either. Clearly, in the doctrine of the Trinity, the heart of the Christian faith is at stake. Herman Bavinck says that “Athanasius understood better than any of his contemporaries that Christianity stands or falls with the confession of the deity of Christ and of the Trinity.” He adds, “In the confession of the Trinity throbs the heart of the Christian religion: every error results from, or upon deeper reflection may be traced to, a wrong view of this doctrine.”⁸⁷

If God is not Triune, then he had to create in order to love and therefore could not be a necessary being, but rather contingent on his creation. To reject the Trinity is illogical. There was infinite love expressed throughout eternity between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He created us and loves us simply out of the overflow of his love, not because he needed something to love. If we receive his love through Jesus Christ we will have an eternity to grow in our understanding of him without ever exhausting the knowledge of God because of his infinite nature. If God is not Triune, then the Father giving his son as a sacrifice is not love, but rather cruelty; what father would send his son, rather than himself, to be tortured? If Jesus is God, then the Father sending the Son is a loving act because God himself is the one suffering in our place. May this doctrine draw you closer to our Creator.

⁸⁶ Daniel Akin, editor, *A Theology for the Church* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2007), 488.

⁸⁷ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), pp.247-248.

Appendix D: Documentary Hypothesis Evaluation

The documentary hypothesis denies Mosaic authorship of the Torah and postulates four sources known as the Yahwist or J document, Elohist or E document, Deuteronomist or D document and the Priestly or P document. This is a serious deviation from the historic Jewish and Christian position because the Torah claims to have been written by Moses (i.e. Exodus 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Numbers 33:1-2; Deuteronomy 31:9,11)⁸⁸ and therefore would prove to be untrustworthy, at least in part, if the hypothesis is true. The main reasons cited for multiple authors are 1) repetitions such as the supposed two accounts of creation found in Genesis one and two, 2) diverse writing styles, and 3) different names used for God, namely Yahweh יהוה and Elohim אֱלֹהִים.

The documentary hypothesis is an interesting theory, and perhaps because of its evolutionary theme, it became popular at a time when little was actually known about the ancient Near Eastern world. K.A. Kitchen points out how this lack of information is no longer the case, and therefore the documentary hypothesis needs to be seriously reevaluated:

At that time there were *no* Amarna letters (only found in 1887), *no* Code of Hammurabi of Babylon (only dug up in 1901), *no* other early law collections, *no* Siloam inscription (found in 1880), *no* Hittites.... There was *no* systematic archaeology by strata.... *No* Ugarit, *no* Hurrian, *no* vast Ebla, Mari, Ugarit, Emar archives from outside Mesopotamia. So Wellhausen worked in a near vacuum and could speculate freely. But that day has long, long since gone. We today *do* have the vast resources hinted at just above. And they *do* enable us to profile ancient history accurately in its broad sweep. And straight bottom-to-top evolution is *out*. It *never* happened like that; no, not ever.⁸⁹

Kitchen makes the bold declaration that the documentary hypothesis is sheer fabrication without any evidence to support it:

This final scheme, pumped into generations of students, both future and practicing biblicists, is an (alas!) always was pure, unadulterated fantasy. I am sorry, but that's how life is – and wasn't. It clashes horribly with real-life historical profiles for the cultures that we can test...and has no decent parallel in terms of *longue duree*. That is how things are, and it wrecks the Wellhausen scheme completely.⁹⁰

If Kitchen is correct, then Moses may still be considered the leading contender for the authorship of the Torah. Let us examine the evidence.

First, it must be stated that there is no real evidence for the documentary hypothesis. There is no manuscript evidence whatsoever of the supposed JEDP sources. Some question the historicity of people such as Abraham or Solomon because there is no evidence outside the Bible of their existence, but these same people have no problem believing a theory with no manuscript confirmation. Kitchen is warranted in demanding, "Some MSS, please!"⁹¹ Kaiser makes the argument based on Hittite second millennium suzerainty treaties that the book of Deuteronomy was much more likely to have been written in the

⁸⁸ Gleason Archer notes, "It is interesting to observe that Wellhausen, in his *Prolegomena*, nowhere (according to the index to the English edition, at least) discusses any of these five explicit references in the Torah to Moses' writing of these portions of the Pentateuch." Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 117. See also Joshua 1:7-8; 8:31-32; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Nehemiah 13:1; Daniel 9:11-13; Malachi 4:4 where the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures also attribute the Torah to Moses.

⁸⁹ K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 487.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 492.

second millennium than the first because it includes the six typical sections of the second millennium treaties rather than what is found in the modified treaties of the first millennium.⁹² The documentary hypothesis places the supposed D document as being written at the time of Josiah (640-609 B.C.), but the evidence calls for sometime around the fifteenth century B.C. The manuscript of Deuteronomy compared to the ancient Hittite treaties should be given precedent over a mythical D document.

Second, all the supposed literary substantiation for the documentary hypothesis, at closer scrutiny disappears. The idea that repetitions and doublets prove two different authors is fallacious because in the period under consideration this was actually a “mark of literary artistry.”⁹³ The suggestion of differing styles found in the Torah is a very subjective proposal that could just as easily be used against the unity of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Did Tolkien write all three books using such a variety of styles, or should we look for a redactor in his trilogy as well? Kaiser notes, “It could just as well be a sign of differences in subject matter that carry with them their own distinctive vocabulary and style.”⁹⁴ Finally, the use of different names for God affords no proof for multiple authors. *Yahweh* and *Elohim* are used throughout the Torah, sometimes together (i.e. Genesis 2:4; Exodus 9:3; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 10:9; Deuteronomy 6:4) where *Yahweh* is seen as the personal name for God and *Elohim* for designation of deity. To imagine the cut and paste production necessary for the documentary hypothesis is incredible. It is much easier to believe that, like most other religions, the ancient people of God had more than one title/name/word for God.

Finally, the hypothesis destroys the obvious literary unity seen in the Torah. Edward Young states:

The theory is unnatural. It is too much of a strain upon one’s credulity to be asked to believe that a work, which exhibits the inner unity and harmony of purpose found in the Pentateuch, should have had its origin in the manner postulated by this hypothesis. The phenomenon is unparalleled in the history of literature.⁹⁵

The far better explanation of authorship is the ancient one, that Moses wrote it using sources (i.e. Numbers 21:14; also the toledoth formula תולדות along with possible minor redaction (i.e. Joshua may have written the record of Moses’ death in Deuteronomy 34 as well as Numbers 12:3 which refers to Moses’ humility).⁹⁶ It would behoove the Jewish reader to consider other possibilities when his or her Scriptures are being subjected to literary dissection with no real basis for doing so by those who may have had questionable motives. Plaut quotes H.D. Hummel’s accusation:

In general, it is probably true that much Jewish scholarship, even that which was not totally traditionalistic, was initially, and to a degree still remains, rather cool toward the standard results of German biblical scholarship, well aware of the subtle anti-Judaism, if not anti-Semitism, which by no means necessarily, but very often *de facto*, accompanies any depreciation of the Old

⁹² Walter Kaiser Jr., *The Old Testament Documents*, 143-144.

⁹³ Ibid., 137. Kaiser sites the thorough assessment of the documentary hypothesis by R.N. Whybray who is not a theological conservative. See R.N. Whybray, “The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study,” *Journal for the Study of Old Testament*, Supplementary Series 53 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987).

⁹⁴ Walter Kaiser Jr., *The Old Testament Documents*, 137. See also Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 127-140 for a thorough treatment of this question.

⁹⁵ Edward Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 132.

⁹⁶ Tremper Longman III and Raymond Dillard speak of the “essential authorship” of Moses and conclude, “In the final analysis, it is possible to affirm the substantial Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in line with the occasional internal evidence and the strong external testimony, while allowing for earlier sources as well as later glosses and elaboration.” *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 51.

Testament – and it is undeniable that such implications were often present in much of the classical ‘critical’ literature.⁹⁷

We cannot judge the motives of the nineteenth century German scholars, but their attack on the Scriptures without any proof should be rejected by the twenty-first century Jewish scholar. The common courtesy of “innocent until proven guilty” is reversed in much of modern scholarship, which instead uses the formula, “guilty until proven innocent.” The Torah claims to have been written by Moses, and until clear evidence is revealed, we should give the Torah the benefit of the doubt.

⁹⁷ W. Gunther Plaut, *The Torah: Genesis*, xxi.