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1

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE BIBLE

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

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

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

My dear Muslim friend, there is not one single verse in the Qur'an that confirms that the Bible has been invalidated by the arrival of the Qur'an. Furthermore, the Qur'an itself commands Muslims to profess belief in the Bible. We read in Surah 2:136: "Say ye: 'We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham . . . and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to [all] Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them . . .'"

THE QUR'AN CONFIRMS HOLY SCRIPTURE

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

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

The Qur'an's References to the Torah

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

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

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

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

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

Regarding the Injeel, the Qur’an declares in Surah 5:46, “And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the law that had come before him: We sent him the gospel: therein was guidance and light and confirmation of the law that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah.” Please also read Surah 57:27.

ACCORDING TO THE QUR’AN ALL HOLY BOOKS ARE EQUAL

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

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

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

Surah 4:136 reads: “O ye who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the scripture which He hath sent to His Messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denieth Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgment hath gone far, far astray.”

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

As we read in Surah 4:136, if any Muslim ignores or rejects any part of God’s revelation in the Torah or in the Gospel, he has “gone far, far astray.” Also, God would condemn him as an infidel, as noted in Surah 40:70–72: “Those who reject the Book and the (revelations) with which We sent Our messengers: But soon shall they know—when the yokes (shall be) round their necks, and the chains; They shall be dragged along—In the boiling fetid fluid; Then in the Fire shall They be burned.”

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

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

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

The Qur'an Considers the Bible Preeminent

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Throughout their history, the Jews have known only the Holy Scripture in the Books of the Old Testament. The Qur'an never states that the Torah is a book different from that which the Jews themselves accepted as the Torah.

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

The Qur'an also confirms biblical authenticity with regard to the New Testament. Surah 5:47 states, "Let the people of the gospel judge by what Allah hath revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) those who rebel." How could the Christians be expected to judge by the Injeel unless they had it in their posses-

sion? The Christian world has known only one Injeel, which existed centuries before Muhammad's time and continues to exist today. The Qur'an never states that the Gospel is a book different from the one Christians used at the time of Muhammad. And the Qur'an never accuses the Jews and Christians of changing the actual text of the biblical manuscripts.

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

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

The Qur'an in Surah 5:47 uses the word *Injeel*, which is the same title that the followers of Jesus use. Please refer to Mark 1:1 (NKJV): "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ . . ." In fact, Christian Arabs still use the Arabic word *Injeel* for the Gospel.

Additional References to the Torah and the Gospel

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

The Qur'an confirms its support of the Torah and the Gospel and urges the Jews and the Christians to recognize the authority of their Holy Book. It says in Surah 5:68, "Say: 'O People of the Book! Ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Law, the gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord.'"

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

Bible had been previously corrupted, they would have gone astray if they obeyed it.

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

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

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

Early Muslim Scholars Uphold Bible Integrity

Al-Ghazzali (AD 1058–1111), is considered one of the greatest Muslim theologians in the history of Islam. In his writings he never challenged the Bible's integrity. He even wrote treatises on the Trinity in which he quoted many passages from the Bible, without questioning the trustworthiness of the text.²

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING THE GOSPEL

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

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