The Gentle Answer to the Muslim Accusation of Biblical Falsification

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Cover illustration: painting of Abdul Masih (1776-1827) of Lucknow, CMS physician and evangelist, ordained in Calcutta in 1822. Artist unknown.
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CHAPTER ONE

Invitation to Read and Reason

Dear reader, this book is an invitation to read and reason together.

An invitation to read because for many centuries, Muslims and non-Muslims have refused or neglected to read each other's scriptures.

An invitation to reason because those who have read the scriptures of the other have often done so not to comprehend or consider the content of the scripture, but rather only to search for proof that the other scripture is not fit for reading.

The refusal of Muslims and non-Muslims to read each other's scriptures is frequently based on deep-seated prejudices and feelings of political enmity. In some cases, people even believe they are forbidden to read the scriptures of the other. They may refuse to read the scripture of the other out of fear.

How can we reason together if we refuse to read? Prohibitions against reading make reasoning impossible, and we are left with only second-hand impressions of the scriptures rather than a useful knowledge of the contents of the scriptures themselves.

One Muslim scholar who faced a prohibition against reading the Bible pushed back with a strong argument that reading the Bible is fully in line with Islamic tradition.[1] Al-Biqāʿī (d. 1480) faced criticism from other scholars in Cairo in the fifteenth century for including material from the Bible in his great commentary on the

Qur'an, *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa ʾl-suwar* ("String of pearls concerning the harmony of verses and *sūra*s"). Al-Biqāʿī argued that permission to read the Bible, and even commands to consult it, go back to the Qur'an and the *sunna* (life example) of the messenger of Islam.

By actually reading the Bible, al-Biqāʿī found much that attracted him. For example, after quoting a long passage from the book of Jeremiah in his commentary on the Qur'an, al-Biqāʿī described the passage as "a speech that is sublime in its style, exquisite in its tenderness, such that it crushes the livers, rends the hearts, and makes the eyes swell with tears."[2] Such joys are lost to those who refuse to read the Bible, or who choose to obey a prohibition against reading the Bible out of fear.

Therefore, this book is an invitation to read and reason together.

This book is offered as a gentle answer to a Muslim book which has done a great deal of damage to reading and reasoning between Muslims and non-Muslims, the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*.[3] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi published this book in 1864 in Arabic, but the book continues to be published in Arabic (1998) and is widely distributed throughout India in the Urdu translation *Bāʾibal se Qurʾān tak*. The Arabic title translates as *Demonstration of truth*. The following pages will show that key accusations contained in the book are in fact false. In any case, the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* was not an invitation to read and reason. Rather, the Muslim book was an angry attack claiming the authentic Torah and Gospel had disappeared because Jews and Christians had falsified the original text.

We answer in a gentle way because this is the way of the scriptures. In the Hebrew *Tanakh*, also called the Old Testament, we read:

> A gentle (Hebrew *rach*) answer turns away wrath,
> But a harsh word stirs up anger.
> The tongue of the wise commends knowledge,
> But the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

> The eyes of the LORD are everywhere,
> Keeping watch on the wicked and the good.
> The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life,
> But a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit (Proverbs 15:1-4).

Many conversations between Muslims and non-Muslims, especially debates in front of live audiences, are full of anger and deception. The goal of some famous Muslim debaters seems to be to crush the spirit of non-Muslim listeners. Instead of attack, we need to promote healing through wisdom and knowledge and gentle speech.

The Gospel, also called the New Testament, teaches this same gentle way. Peter, who was a disciple of Jesus, wrote,

> In your hearts set apart the Messiah as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness (Greek *prautētos*) and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in the Messiah may be ashamed of their slander (1 Peter 3:15- 16).

The intention of this answer is to invite friendly conversation between Muslims and non-Muslims. The accusations of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* must be answered. Not to answer might mean to some that the accusations of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* are correct; or that non-Muslims do not know how to answer, that they have no answer, or that they do not care enough to take the time to answer. But false accusations must be answered. Many Muslims demand an answer—either sincerely wanting to know the non-Muslim response, or rhetorically as an attack, wanting non-Muslims to say the accusations are true.

The intention of this answer is to remove the anger from the disagreement, and instead to invite Muslims and non-Muslims to read and reason together. Our invitation respects the ability of each reader or listener to reason freely without compulsion of any kind. The apostle Paul described beautifully the reasonable conversation we need: "by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves

to every person's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2). Such a conversation rules out "secret and shameful ways," wrote Paul, as well as deception or any kind of distortion of the Word of God.

Muslim scholar Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350) told the story of a Muslim who was challenged by the questions of a non-Muslim. The Muslim could not think of a good answer, and the questions and the questioner began to irritate him to the point of illness. He thought that he could solve the situation by beating the non-Muslim. "So he pounced on him and beat him, and he said, 'this is the answer!'"[4]

By contrast, a gentle answer does not attack people but deals with important ideas. It resists the temptation to provoke people with unnecessary statements. It renounces ridicule and sarcasm and all the tricks we see in live debates, where some debaters attempt to confuse or shame the opponent and manipulate the audience against the opponent. However, we cannot converse reasonably about the scriptures if we do not ourselves read them. Dear Muslim reader, we appeal to you to put aside centuries of prejudice against the Bible and to actually read the Bible. We will do the same—we will read the Qur'an without prejudice, attentively and carefully. In fact we have already done so many times.

We offer this gentle answer not only to refute false and damaging accusations against the Bible, but also to bring a blessing to the accuser, to give the reason for the hope that we have. Therefore, though this book includes responses to the most serious accusations contained in the *Iẓhār* a*l-haqq*, the final section of the book will offer relevant and important biblical truths never touched by the *Iẓhār*.

1. Set aside political enmities

These are turbulent times in which world events set Muslims and non-Muslims against each other. The *Iẓhār al-haqq* was actually written in a highly-charged political atmosphere and bears the marks

of those political enmities. The *Iẓhār*'s attack on the Bible was part of a larger Muslim response to British rule in India. Rahmat Allah Kairanwi himself was singled out as a problem for the British and had to flee to the Middle East, where he wrote and published the *Iẓhār* under the protection of the Ottoman emperor. It is quite understandable that the tone of the *Iẓhār* reflects Mawlana Kairanwi's resentment.

But *The gentle answer* is not driven by politics. The author grew up in India, loves Asia, and has no desire to provoke ancient enmities. Rather, in full awareness of the significant disagreements between Muslims and non-Muslims since the early centuries of Islam, this book is offered as an invitation to read and reason. We want to live together in peace with Muslims, but not in the Islamic "peace" that requires non-Muslims to submit to *dhimmi* status, or the Western postmodern "peace" that will not talk about crucial differences. We must care enough about each other to face our differences and to name what we see as false in the faith of a friend. Acknowledging differences shows respect to the identity and individuality of our conversation partner.

The early chapters of this book will show that the original Muslim accusations about "tampering" with scripture were made especially against the Jews. In both Qur'an and Muslim commentary, accusations against the Jews in relation to the Torah seem to be connected with the Muslim story of three major Jewish tribes in Medina at the time of the rule of the messenger of Islam. The story accuses the Jews of Medina first of obstinacy in response to Muslim claims, and second of political treachery against the Muslims. According to the story, the Jewish tribes suffered various kinds of punishment at the hands of Muslims. Whether or not this story is historically true, it has definitely supported negative Muslim attitudes toward Jews in general. Insofar as Muslim accusations against Jewish handling of the Torah reflect political hatred of the Jews, this book stands by the Jews in their faithful preservation of the Word of God in the *Tanakh*, or Old Testament. Judaism and Christianity may

differ over the inter-pretation of the Old Testament, but our agreement about its revelation by Yahweh is very significant.

2. A Muslim scholar probes the prohibition

The greatest hindrance to open and friendly conversation between Muslims and non-Muslims about their scriptures is the way in which some Muslims forbid other Muslims to read the Bible. If Muslims would actually read the Bible, many important doubts and questions about the Bible would be resolved. But as long as some Muslims forbid others, and Muslims therefore do not take the freedom to study the Bible, many unnecessary misunderstandings will remain.

The prohibition against reading the Bible is itself suspect and needs to be probed. A Muslim scholar who felt forced to examine the prohibition was the fifteenth-century Egyptian scholar al-Biqāʿī. When he was criticized for including material from the Bible in his Qur'an commentary, he defended himself in a work titled *al-Aqwāl al-qawīma fī ḥukm al-naql min al-kutub al-qadīma* ("The just words on the rule regarding quotations from the ancient books").[5]

Al-Biqāʿī offered a series of chapters or "statements" (*aqwāl*) to make the case that Muslim scholars of the past freely used the Bible and even encouraged its use. In the second chapter he documented the way in which many Muslim scholars have used the Bible in order to vindicate Islam and to prove its enemies false. His fifth and sixth statements give further examples and quotations from Muslim scholars. In Chapters 3 and 4, however, al-Biqāʿī made his case from the Qur'an and the *sunna* of the messenger of Islam.

al-Biqāʿī repeatedly referred to Q 3:93 as a justification for using the Torah: "…Bring the Torah and read it if you are truthful!" Muslims believe that *Allāh* commanded the messenger of Islam to say these words. Therefore, al-Biqāʿī related this to the *sunna* of the messenger of Islam and further developed his argument from the

sunna by relating traditions of practice found in *ḥadīth* (traditions) and *sīra* (biography). He told the story of how the messenger settles the question of the punishment for adultery by appealing to the Torah. Al-Biqāʿī also transmitted the tradition of how, on one occasion, the messenger reverently places the Torah on a cushion in the presence of the Jews of Medina. He told the story of how ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb visits the Jews of Medina, hears them reading the Torah, and marvels at how the Torah agrees with the recitations of the messenger. Al-Biqāʿī also reported the *ḥadīth* that the messenger encouraged his followers to narrate stories from the Jews.[6] He told of the encounters in the *Sīrat al-nabawiyya* of Ibn Hishām where the messenger tells the Jews of Medina he is mentioned in their scriptures.

These traditions about the messenger of Islam led al-Biqāʿī to argue that since it was the *sunna* of the messenger of Islam to use the Bible, and since any practice of the messenger is legally binding on Muslims, there should be no doubt about the legality of quoting or using the Bible.[7] From where, then, does the prohibition come? From Islamic law, answered al-Biqāʿī.

This book will show clearly that there is no prohibition against reading the earlier scriptures in the Qur'an or the *sunna*. Rather, we agree with al-Biqāʿī that there are many reasons to conclude that the original Muslim sources recommend their use. When the prohibition appears in Islamic law, we must ask why. If such a prohibition is not based on Qur'an and *sunna*, what is the motivation behind it? Was it merely part of the *dhimmī* oppression of non-Muslim peoples in the Islamic Empire? University of Toronto scholar Walid A. Saleh suggests the Muslim prohibition against reading the Bible reflected "first, a legal tradition that did not give the Bible any legitimacy and, second, a culturally antagonistic attitude toward the scriptures of other religions."[8]

One other way in which al-Biqāʿī helped us for this present study is that he categorized the views of Muslim scholars on the integrity of the Bible. Some scholars believed that the whole of the Bible had

been corrupted. Al-Biqāʿī described this view as "immoderate" or "extreme" (*ifrāṭ*) and wrote that insisting on total corruption would be nothing but arrogance (*mukābara*) or belligerence. Other Muslim scholars believe that most of the Bible is corrupted—a variation of the first view, according to al-Biqāʿī. The third group believe that only a small part of the Bible has been corrupted, and a fourth group believe that the Bible is not corrupted at all but that Jews and Christians have misunderstood and misinterpreted the text.

Al-Biqāʿī made it clear that he belonged in the third group. But in which group would he have placed Mawlana Kairanwi and the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*? It is important to recognize, before we analyze and answer the *Iẓhār*, that the view of the Bible promoted by Mawlana Kairanwi was an extreme and—according to al-Biqāʿī—arrogant position among a wide range of views within the Muslim community. Further support for this characterization of the *Iẓhār* as extreme will be provided in Chapter 8.

3. Answer to a provocation

This book is written to respond to the central accusation of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, which is that the original Torah and the original Gospel were lost (*fuqida*) prior to the career of the messenger of Islam in the seventh century.[9] Maulana Kairanwi claimed that his many lists of detailed accusations proved this central accusation.[10] Assuming that he had indeed proven his point, he then went ahead to base further accusations on his own assumption.[11] It is this central accusation that has discouraged many Muslims from reading the Bible. The response of this book is to make a case for the reliability of the Bible—that the Bible as we have it today is a faithful representation of the original Torah and Gospel, as well as the other parts of the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament.

The *Iẓhār* was a provocation to the Christian community that continues to trouble Christians today.[12] Mawlana Kairanwi demanded an answer to his many accusations,[13] writing at the

same time that Christians would not be able to answer him![14] This *Gentle answer* is not a fresh provocation but rather an attempt to respond to the *Iẓhār*'s request—albeit many years later.

The *Iẓhār* raises hundreds of individual points in its attempt to create the impression that the pre-qur'anic scriptures are corrupt. However, this is merely an impression based on sheer accumulation. In truth, the vast majority of these points do not actually support the main thrust of the book.

For example, the *Iẓhār* lists many differences between Gospel accounts in the famous section titled "Contradictions" (*ikhtilāfāt*). These differences, however, offer no proof that the original Gospel is lost. As we explain in Chapter 9, the original understanding of the Gospel was that it is a singular good news story about Jesus in four accounts. These accounts contained differences from the start. Differences, therefore, only support an accusation of the loss of the original Gospel if the Gospel is first defined in some other way. Yes, differences between the New Testament Gospel accounts raise questions, in the same way as the differences between various stories of prophetic figures in the Qur'an raise questions. But that is quite different from proving the loss of the original Torah and original Gospel.

Another example of material in the *Iẓhār* that does not support its central accusation is the many points based on quotations from Western academic scholars from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In many cases, biblical scholarship has shifted considerably since the early theories due to new manuscript discoveries and more careful academic analysis of the evidence. A century of astonishing discoveries of biblical manuscripts, including the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Chester Beatty Papyri, began only after the publication of the *Iẓhār* in 1864. Such discoveries have qualified, and in many cases discredited, many of the points that the *Iẓhār* based on earlier scholarship. For example, Mawlana Kairanwi claimed that "the original Hebrew Gospel of Matthew was lost (*fuqida*),"[15]

and that famous biblical codices like the Codex Vaticanus did not predate Islam.[16]

For this reason, this book does not attempt to answer every individual point in the *Iẓhār*, but rather aims to respond to the *Iẓhār*'s main thrust. Mawlana Kairanwi wrote that those who might answer him would only choose to answer some of the easier questions, leaving the most difficult accusations aside.[17] On the contrary, by dealing with the central accusation, we are choosing to answer not only the most difficult accusation but also the accusation that relates to all the individual points. However, where the *Iẓhār* raises points central to the conversation between the Gospel and Islam, *The gentle answer* addresses many of them, even if they do not support the central accusation. Many examples in the following chapters will illustrate the wisdom of this selective approach.

4. One "good news" story in four accounts

How do we use the word Gospel in this book? Most Muslims who use the word *Injīl* (Gospel) believe that it means a book of law revealed by Allah to ʿĪsā, the qur'anic Jesus. In other words, Muslims believe the *Injīl* to be a book like the Qur'an. However, this is not the way the Gospel was understood by people prior to Islam.[18] The word Gospel, in fact, is the English translation of the Greek word *euaggelion*, which simply means "good news." One can easily see how the Arabic word *Injīl* relates etymologically to the Greek *euaggelion*. Scholars suggest that the Arabic *Injīl* relates most closely to the Ethiopic word for Gospel, *wangēl*.[19]

The word Gospel (or *euaggelion*) was not used to refer to a book until well into the second century. The accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not known as separate Gospels but rather as together reporting a single good news story about Jesus. New Testament scholar Raymond Collins wrote:

> Even when *euaggelion* came to be applied to a written text, the word continued to be employed in the singular, and this use of the singular was still widespread in the third century. The usage bespeaks the conviction that the gospel was identical with the teaching of the Lord. This usage is reflected in the formulaic expression, "the Lord says in the gospel" (e.g., 2 Clem. 8:5), but it is also reflected in the titles of the Gospels. The earliest parchment codices of the New Testament, namely, the fourth-century Sinaiticus and Vaticanus codices, entitled the Gospels "according to Matthew," "according to Mark," and so on. This manner of providing each of the written gospels with a title suggests that *euaggelion* applied to the whole collection of the four canonical gospels.[20]

Therefore, in this book we will speak of one Gospel according to four accounts, singular like the qur'anic *Injīl* but "good news," rather than a book like the Qur'an. The form and content of the Gospel was established more than four centuries before Islam, the four famous accounts circulating as one unit already before 200 A.D.[21] Since this was the original meaning of Gospel, and this was the meaning of Gospel in the Middle East in the centuries prior to Islam, this is the meaning we will use.

5. Scripture and scholarship

Much of the content of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, and much of its appeal to Muslims past and present, is based on the writings of European scholars about the Bible during the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. In order to answer the *Iẓhār*, therefore, a number of observations must be made about academic scholarship.

1. The writings of European scholars featured in the *Iẓhār* show that there was freedom in Europe in the nineteenth century to question traditional Jewish and Christian views about the Bible. The *Iẓhār* does not mention, however, that other European scholars

challenged the statements and arguments of the writings it quoted. Some of the history of subsequent discussion of nineteenth-century views is explained in Chapter 7.

2. Scholarly interaction with the European writings quoted in the *Iẓhār* continues up to the present day. Some of the early nineteenth-century European views remain, but many of them have been discredited either by new information or by clearer analysis of the evidence. Discoveries since 1864, when the *Iẓhār* was published, make many of the statements quoted by the *Iẓhār* no longer applicable. For example, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 pushed the manuscript dating of the Hebrew scriptures back a thousand years. The implications of this important discovery for Muslim accusations against the Hebrew Bible is discussed in Chapter 11.

3. The freedom for qualified scholars to question traditional views about the Qur'an still does not exist in Muslim-majority countries. At the same time, as this book will demonstrate, there may be more reasons to question traditional Muslim views about the Qur'an than there are to question traditional Christian views about the Bible.

4. The *Iẓhār* quoted from books written by Western scholars on the Bible up to the middle of the nineteenth century, but it did not bring in any of the Western scholarship on the Qur'an already available by 1864. For example, Abraham Geiger's famous study, *Was hat Mohamed aus dem Judentum aufgenommen?* ("What did Muhammad take from Judaism?"), was published in 1833. Geiger provided evidence for the claim that substantial parts of the Qur'an were taken from—or were based on—rabbinic literature. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh explained that Muslims were happy to use European scholarship to support their own traditional polemical arguments against the Bible, but would not use European scholarship on the Qur'an: "Muslim scholarly criticism of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament never brought about a corresponding study of the Qur'an."[22] Section 3 of this book will describe some of the many

scholarly studies on the Qur'an that have appeared since Geiger's *Was hat Mohamed*.

5. The *Iẓhār* thus made its accusations against the Bible by quoting selected European scholars, while asserting the perfection of the Qur'an based purely on traditional Muslim truth claims. By doing so, the *Iẓhār* placed the two scriptures on an uneven playing field. This pattern of avoiding comparable questions about the Qur'an has continued far beyond the publication of the *Iẓhār*. For example, one well-known traditional Muslim claim has been that the Qur'an manuscript in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul was one of the *muṣḥafs* that Muslims believe Caliph ʿUthmān sent out to the cities of the Arab Empire. Muhammad Hamidullah simply stated this as a fact in his 1957 *Introduction to Islam*. However, as Turkish scholar Tayyar Altıkulaç notes in a recent publication, apart from a single article written about the Topkapi manuscript in 2002, "there is no serious scholarly work dealing with the claims that it was the private Muṣḥaf of Caliph ʿUthmān or one of his Muṣḥafs."[23]

Dear Muslim reader: What is the value of a comparison in which one side is subjected to the most stringent criteria of academic scholarship and the other side is exempt? A meaningful answer to the *Iẓhār* must therefore both respond to the scholarship on the Bible quoted by the *Iẓhār* and introduce scholarship on the Qur'an that asks similar questions. This will be done especially in Chapters 14-18.

The descriptions of academic scholarship on the Qur'an in this book are offered in order to encourage Muslims and Christians to read each other's scriptures. Many Christians would be happy to simply sit down with Muslims to read both Bible and Qur'an and to discuss the issues of truth these scriptures raise. Mawlana Kairanwi attempted to prevent that discussion by using academic scholarship against the Bible. The reality is, however, that difficult questions can be asked of both Bible and Qur'an. This should be seen as a challenge that committed adherents of Judaism, Christianity and Islam share, rather than as something that distinguishes the Qur'an

from the Bible. Knowing that we share a similar challenge should encourage us to work together on the scholarly questions. In the meantime, we can sit together to read each other's scriptures and discuss their contents.

6. Honest research on the scriptures by qualified scholars is always to be valued. When scholarship seems to go against traditional religious beliefs, one should never seek to avoid difficult questions by attacking the scholar. However, scholarship can also be questioned. New ideas are being proposed all the time, and writers who disagree discuss the ideas freely from a scholarly perspective. This is part of the "reading and reasoning together" to which we invite our Muslim friends.

This book does not share the approach of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* toward academic scholarship. The *Iẓhār* states that it only uses that scholarship for the purposes of attack. About his quotations from Protestant scholars, Mawlana Kairanwi wrote, "let no one think that I understand their words and actions to be good (*astaḥsinu*)."[24] He wrote that he used quotations that even make Muslims feel bad, asking Muslims not to mind because the purpose was merely coercion (*ilzām*) and argument (*jadal*).[25] To the contrary, this book takes the respectful approach of regarding academic scholarship seriously even when it disagrees with the ideas and argues against them.

6. Plan of the book

The earliest Muslim writings in existence show a great deal of anxiety about what they call the disbelief of the Jews of Medina during the rule of Islam's messenger in that city. These sources demonstrate that Islam's claim for the prophethood of its messenger was central to its origins. The controversial issue was the status and authority of Islam's messenger. The earliest sources also show that the choice of non-Muslims to reject the Muslim claim of prophethood

provoked Muslims to attack not only those non-Muslims, but their scriptures as well.

The particular accusation this book answers first is the Muslim accusation that Jews and Christians removed references to Islam's messenger from the Bible. This accusation is disproven conclusively in Section 1. Chapter 2 clearly shows the Qur'an's respectful attitude toward the earlier scriptures. Chapter 3 demonstrates that the Islamic interpretive tradition has not understood most of the ambiguous "tampering" verses to mean a falsification of the text of the Bible. Chapter 4 shows that the same theme of concealing or misinterpreting material in intact scriptural texts can be found in a wide variety of other Muslim genres.

The main focus of Muslim commentary on the "tampering" verses is alleged references to the messenger of Islam in the Torah. Most commentary assumes that these references can easily be found in an intact text. However, some Muslim commentaries also transmit accusations of falsification especially at two particular verses. Chapter 5 deals with this subject. Here again, the main accusation is that the Jews of Medina removed or changed the references to the messenger of Islam in the Torah during the seventh century A.D. This was the earliest and central version of the Muslim accusation of falsification, and it has continued strong through all periods of Muslim history to the present day. In Chapter 6, this accusation is shown to be false through a careful study of historical and material evidence.

The refutation of the Muslim accusation that Jews and Christians removed references to the messenger of Islam from their scriptures is then traced through to other accusations against the Bible made by some Muslims. The chapters in Section 2 provide answers to many of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*'s most important accusations against the Bible. Moving from scholarship on the Bible to similar scholarship on the Qur'an, Section 3 then presents questions qualified scholars ask about the Qur'an. As we have noted earlier, the *Iẓhār* neither acknowledged nor answered these questions. Finally, Section 4

simply commends Jesus to the reader from the Gospel in terms that Muslims understand.

Much of the material in this book is meant to appeal to the reader's intellect. The approach is appropriate, because the questions of truth treated in this book require the very best of human reason. However, the question of the integrity and truth of the Bible is not a purely rational one. Rather, all of our conscious faculties are involved in grappling with the question, and sometimes our conclusions may challenge what we once considered reasonable. This was the experience of John Subhan, an Indian of noble Muslim background who stepped forward to read and reason. At the time he was a student in the Calcutta Madrasa. He approached the Bible in a way similar to al-Biqāʿī—confident that the corruptions he had been taught to expect in the Bible could be readily identified. He later wrote about his first experiences of reading the Gospel. At the beginning of this gentle answer to Muslim accusations against the Bible, John Subhan's testimony is worth quoting in full.[26]

> A copy of the Gospel was given to me by a Muslim friend who himself had received it from a preacher or a colporteur. On a previous occasion I had torn it into pieces, for when attracted by its title 'Injīl'—a term with which I was familiarized by the study of the Quran—I had taken it to my teacher and was warned in all seriousness not to read it because it was not a true *Injīl* of which the Qur'an testifies, but a corrupted form of it, and consequently containing blasphemous teachings, the very acts of pronouncing its words pollute the mind and the soul of a believer.
>
> My inner longing, however, to read the book revealed to Jesus was very great, and it was intensified by my close acquaintance with Sufism which speaks of previous prophets, and of their books in a manner as to raise them in one's estimation. On this occasion I was prompted to read it. If it was a corrupted book, so I justified to myself its reading, it must contain at least parts

of the original revelation; as for its blasphemous contents, surely they can be easily detected and consequently discarded as lies and interpolations introduced into it by wicked Christians.

The result of my first reading was startling. In the first place I did not find a single sentence or a clause which in any sense could be interpreted as blasphemous or Satanic, and I had read it with a mind vigilant to detect any expression which implied any such notion directly or indirectly. Secondly, my common sense told me that if certain followers of religion were to corrupt their sacred books or introduce interpolations into it, they must have an adequate reason or sufficient motive behind it. An enterprise as such which is not only highly impious but also extremely presumptuous would not and could not be undertaken by any class of people unless they were to derive some great advantage or benefit from it.

In the light of this principle I closely examined every passage of the Gospel and I found none which would supply an adequate ground for such an act on the part of the Christians. I was impressed with the high ethical teachings of the Gospel. If the Christians were to corrupt their book the standard of its ethical teachings would have been lowered.

The narratives of the Gospel studied under this light suggested no motive for alteration or corruption in the text. The story of the crucifixion was an outstanding event in all the narratives concerning the life of Jesus, which completely contradicted the idea of the Gospel being corrupted. No follower of religion would intentionally invent a narrative which would attribute to his leader or founder such a shameful treatment at the hands of his enemies. It is no matter of pride to be a follower of one who was shamefully put to death. The appearances of Jesus subsequent to His death were confined to His disciples only and hence they made no redeeming feature of His ignominious death. The enemies remained triumphant over His death. Why?

If the Christians were to alter or expurgate anything from the Gospel, the account of the crucifixion would have been the first thing to be removed or modified. How plainly it refuted their claim for Jesus to be the Son of God. The incongruity between the claim made by Christians on His behalf and the narrative was obvious. Call this argument childish, but such was the line of thought of a child earnestly trying to arrive at truth.

The second reading of the Gospel produced in me the deep conviction that it was the true *Injīl*. It was God's Word and His Revelation. The inner urge to know God was to find satisfaction through it. The effect produced on the mind by its reading was so very different from that of the recitation of the Qur'an. The latter in its original language was something sublime, its recitation was charming, its eloquence fascinating, and sometimes its passage had thrown me into ecstasy. But in the *Injīl* I found something which spoke to my soul. The Gospel spoke to me in my own mother tongue, whispering to me the secrets of God. Its reading was comforting to my soul, every sentence touched it to its very depth, and it roused the slumbering faculties of my soul to a new state of consciousness.

If the Gospel was not true, the sun was not shining, the moon was not bright and the stars did not illuminate the path of heaven….

These are some of the blessings into which we invite our Muslim readers.

CHAPTER TWO

The Qur'an's Respectful View of the Bible

The accusation of the corruption or deliberate falsification of the Bible is popular among many Muslims. Muslim polemicists especially like to make this accusation.

But there are many problems with this accusation.

One of the main problems is that the Qur'an, the scripture of Muslims and a major source of their authority, makes no such accusation! In fact, as many scholars have observed, both Muslim and non-Muslim, the Qur'an speaks of the earlier scriptures only in the most positive and respectful way.

The Qur'an contains much material related to earlier scriptures. Sometimes these scriptures are identified by name; other times they are identified by the prophet to whom they are believed to have been revealed. In other cases, earlier scriptures seem to be indicated by terms that are less clear and therefore understood by Muslim interpreters in various ways.

Why, then, do polemicists use verses from the Qur'an to support their accusation? That question is answered in a careful and scholarly way in a later chapter. It will be clearly shown that only a few vague verses in the Qur'an leave any doubt about the earlier scriptures. These few verses must be read in the light of the many positive verses that are reviewed in this chapter.

This chapter does not claim that the Qur'an proves the Muslim accusation of the corruption of the Bible is false. Rather, the goal of

this chapter is simply to show that the Qur'an does not accuse the Bible of corruption. Other aspects of the accusation are discussed in later chapters. But since Muslims around the world look to the Qur'an for all of their beliefs and actions, it is best to start with what the Qur'an actually says. The following descriptions of the contents of the Qur'an that deal with earlier scriptures are then checked against the understandings of top scholars of Qur'anic Studies, both Muslim and non-Muslim.

It is interesting to note that the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* contains very little information about the Qur'an's view of the Bible.[27] This chapter clearly shows that the amount of information in the Qur'an about the earlier scriptures is substantial, and its tone is always positive and reverent. Why then did Rahmat Allah Kairanwi choose to provide so little information about the Qur'an's view of the Bible in the *Iẓhār*—and none of it positive?

One other fact must be noted. This chapter says nothing against the Qur'an or against Muslims. What this book opposes is the false accusation of the corruption of the Bible. We invite Muslims to regard the Bible with the same respect the Qur'an clearly gives the Bible—and to enter into the Bible's blessings.

1. Scriptures mentioned by name

Three particular earlier scriptures are mentioned by name in the Qur'an: the *Tawrāt*, the *Injīl*, and the *Zabūr*.[28] It is reasonable to assume that these terms correspond to three important parts of the Bible: the Torah, the Gospel, and the Psalms. The names *Tawrāt* and *Injīl* first appear at the beginning of the third *sūra*, at Q 3:3. The name *Zabūr* first appears at Q 4:163.

The term *Tawrāt* appears eighteen times in the Qur'an.[29] It appears six times in the third *sūra*[30] and seven in the fifth *sūra*,[31] but not at all in *Sūra*s 1, 2, 4 and 6. Beyond the fifth *sūra*, the word *Tawrāt* occurs only five times.[32]

The term *Injīl* occurs twelve times in the Qur'an.[33] The pattern of its occurrence is similar to that of the term *Tawrāt*: three times in the third *sūra*,[34] five times in the fifth *sūra*,[35] and beyond the fifth *sūra* only four other times.[36] Indeed, in all but two of its occurrences, the term *Injīl* appears in tandem with *Tawrāt*.[37] The pattern of occurrence of the terms *Tawrāt* and *Injīl*, with its concentration in the first five *sūra*s and its sparseness beyond, raises interesting questions about the contents of the Qur'an and the intended audiences of its various parts. In particular, the frequency of both terms in Q 5:43-68 is worthy of note.

The singular noun *Zabūr* occurs three times in the Qur'an. The root *z-b-r*, however, appears a total of thirteen times.[38] The pattern of occurrence of *Zabūr* is quite different from the other two names of scriptures: in the first five *sūra*s, *Zabūr* appears only once (Q 4:163) and its plural form only once (Q 3:184). The singular *Zabūr* never appears together with the other two names of scriptures. If fact, it does not even appear in the near contexts of the other names. Though the names of the previous scriptures do not appear in the second *sūra*, Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 767) found all three referred to already at Q 2:4. He completed the scriptural phrase "and what was sent down before you," with "upon the prophets, meaning *al-Tawrāt* and *al-Injīl* and *al-Zabūr*."[39]

The verses in which these scriptures are mentioned by name provide some basic information about the qur'anic approach to them. The reader first learns that Allah sends down the Torah (*Tawrāt*) and the Gospel (*Injīl*) (Q 3:3). The Torah and the Gospel are revealed after the time of Abraham (Q 3:65). Subsequently, Allah teaches *ʿĪsā* the Torah and the Gospel (Q 3:48, 5:110), and *ʿĪsā* in turn confirms the truth of the Torah (Q 3:50, 61:6). The Gospel confirms the Torah (Q 5:46). The Torah contains "the command (*ḥukm*) of Allah" (Q 5:43). Allah prescribes for the Jews in the Torah, "A life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds retaliation" (Q 5:45).[40] Jews and Christians are said to be able to find "the messenger, the

ummī prophet"[41] mentioned in the Torah and Gospel (Q 7:157). The Qur'an claims a "similitude" with the Gospel: that true believers are "like a seed that sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, it then becomes thick, and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers—that he may enrage the disbelievers with them" (Q 48:29). [42]

Of the three *Zabūr* references, we find in two of the verses the concept that Allah gives the *Zabūr* to David (Q 4:163, 17:55). The third occurrence is set in the form of a saying of Allah at Q 21:105 that he writes in the *Zabūr*, "The earth shall be the inheritance of my righteous servants."[43] Al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) wrote about *Zabūr* at Q 4:163, "It is the name of the book that was revealed to David, just as he named the book that was revealed to Moses as the *Tawrāt* and that which was revealed to Jesus as the *Inǰīl* and that which was revealed to Muḥammad as the *furqān*, because that is the name by which what was revealed to David was known. The Arabs say *zabūr Dāwud*, and because of that the rest of the peoples know this book."[44] Muqātil commented on *Zabūr* at Q 4:164: "It contains neither statute nor command, neither obligation nor permitted nor forbidden, [but has] 150 *sūra*s."[45]

None of the verses in the Qur'an that explicitly mention the names *Tawrāt*, *Inǰīl* or *Zabūr* makes a negative statement about these earlier scriptures. There is no hint in any of these verses that the earlier scriptures exist in a corrupt or falsified state—which is the accusation of Muslim polemicists against the Bible.

The Qur'an contains several passages that either quote or resemble expressions from the Bible. The resemblances between a few qur'anic expressions and Old Testament verses have already been noted: Q 5:45 with Exodus 21:23; Q 21:105 with Psalms 37:9; and Q 48:29 with Psalms 72:16. Q 7:40 includes the phrase, "until the camel passes through the eye of the needle," though there is no apparent awareness in the context that this may come from the Gospel (Matthew 19:24). The only time that the Qur'an claims the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an hold a specific content in common

is at Q 9:111. The common content is said to be "a promise binding upon Allah," that believers "fight in the way of Allah; they kill and are killed." In addition to seeming to offer a quotation from the Psalms, Q 48:29 claims the likeness of those with Islam's messenger is mentioned in the Torah and in the Gospel: they are "hard against the unbelievers, merciful one to another." They bow and prostrate, seeking bounty from Allah and good pleasure. "Their mark is on their faces, the trace of prostration."

2. "The book"

In addition to references to particular scriptures, the Qur'an contains many references to *kitāb* or *al-kitāb*.[46] By context, many of the occurrences of *kitāb* may be reasonably related to one or more of the earlier scriptures. At least, this is how many Muslim commentators on the Qur'an have understood verses using this term. Herbert Berg observed that "for a large number of qur'anic passages that contain the word *kitāb*, al-Ṭabarī and the early exegetes understood the word to refer to one of or both of the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, namely the *Tawrāt* and the *Inǰīl*."[47] An interesting example of this is when al-Ṭabarī interpreted the phrase in Q 2:2, "*dhālika al-kitāb*," generally understood by Muslims to refer to the Qur'an. Because the Arabic is "that *kitāb*" rather than "this *kitāb*," some of al-Ṭabarī's authorities suggested the phrase must refer to the Torah and Gospel.[48]

When "the book" is associated with Moses, it is reasonable to assume that it refers to the Torah. The first reference of this kind in a canonical reading of the Qur'an comes at Q 2:53: "And when we gave to Moses the book and the criterion (*furqān*), that haply you should be guided." The phrase "we gave to Moses the book" repeats at Q 2:87, 6:154, 11:110, 17:2, 25:35, 32:23, and 41:45. At Q 37:117, Aaron is included with Moses in "and we gave them the manifesting book." A similar phrase, apparently indicating the Torah, is "the book of Moses" at Q 11:17 and 46:11. A third variation

comes at Q 6:91: "Who sent down the book that Moses brought as a light and a guidance to men?"[49]

Other verses in the Qur'an offer a variety of clues that "the book" may indicate the earlier scriptures.[50] For example, at Q 2:44 the children of Israel are addressed with the question, "Will you bid others to piety, and forget yourselves while you recite (*tatlūna*) the book?" The same phrase about reciting the book is used about both Jews and Christians at Q 2:113. A second verb describes the action at Q 10:94: "If thou art in doubt regarding what we have sent down to thee, ask those who recite (*yaqraʾūna*) the book before thee." At Q 6:156, "the book" seems to indicate both the Torah and the Gospel: "The book was sent down only upon two parties before us, and we have indeed been heedless of their study (*dirāsa*)." All these verses could be reasonably interpreted to allude to the Torah and/or the Gospel.[51]

The phrase "the book of Allah" occurs nine times in the Qur'an, several times where it might bring to mind an earlier scripture. From its context at Q 5:44, *kitāb Allāh* indicates the Torah: "Surely we sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light; thereby the prophets who had surrendered themselves gave judgment for those of Jewry, as did the masters and the rabbis, following such portion of the book of Allah as they were given to keep and were witnesses to." At Q 2:101, "a party of them that were given the book reject the book of Allah behind their backs." It would be reasonable to assume that the phrase here refers to an earlier scripture. Muslim commentators often assumed exactly this. For example, Muqātil explained "the book of Allah" at Q 2:101 as "what is in the Torah from the matter (*amr*) of Muḥammad."[52] On the occurrence of "the *kitāb* of Allah" in Q 3:23, al-Ṭabarī explicitly says, "[I]t is the Torah."[53]

In Q 2:177, "true piety" is described as, among other things, believing in "Allah and the last day, and the angels, and the book (*kitāb*), and the messengers." A similar formula appears twice in the Qur'an with *kitāb* in the plural. The messenger believes in "Allah, his angels, his books (*kutub*) and his messengers."[54] In Q 66:12, Mary

"confirmed the words of her Lord and his books." A further use of the plural comes in Q 98:2-3: "A messenger from Allah, reciting pages (*ṣuḥuf*) purified, therein true books."[55]

These and other occurrences of *kitāb* do not come with the suggestion that a corrupted text is in mind, or that an earlier scripture has been or is in the process of being corrupted. The straightforward impression to take from these verses is that the writings being alluded to are thought of in a positive and respectful way.

3. Other writings

The Qur'an also contains a number of other terms for written records that may be understood to refer to earlier scriptures. These include references to scrolls, parchments, tablets, and revealed books.[56] For example, Q 53:36-37 mentions "the scrolls (*ṣuḥuf*) of Moses and Abraham." The same writings are called "the former pages" (*ṣuḥuf al-ūlā*) at Q 87:18.[57] There is also mention of parchments at Q 6:91 in connection with "the book which Moses brought": "You put it into parchments (*qarāṭīs*)."[58] A second word for parchment appears at Q 52:1-3: "By the Mount (*Ṭūr*) and a book inscribed in a parchment (*raqq*) unrolled."[59]

The word tablets (*alwāḥ*) comes three times in *Sūra* 7 in the context of an extended narrative about Moses and the children of Israel. At Q 7:145, Allah declares, "We wrote for him on the tablets (*al-alwāḥ*)[60] of everything an admonition (*mawʿiẓa*), and a distinguishing (*tafsīl*) of everything." The narrative relates that in the meantime, the children of Israel make a golden calf and Moses discovers it. He puts down the tablets (Q 7:150) in order to discipline his brother Aaron. His prayer to Allah seems to calm him down. "And when Moses' anger abated in him, he took the tablets; and in the inscription (*nuskha*)[61] of them was guidance (*hudan*),

and mercy (*raḥma*) unto all those who hold their Lord in awe" (Q 7:154).[62]

Another term for revealed writings, *al-zubur*, appears at Q 3:184, 16:44 and 35:25; at Q 26:196 it comes in a possessive construction, "the scriptures of the ancients (*al-awwalīn*)."[63] Two of these verses put the term *zubur* in a parallel relationship with "the clear signs" (*bayyināt*) and "the illuminating book" (*al-kitāb al-munīr*) (Q 3:184, 35:25). A third occurrence lists *zubur* with "the clear signs" and "the remembrance" (*al-dhikr*) (Q 16:44). At Q 26:196 the term could be said to be parallel with "the revelation (*tanzīl*)" in Q 26:192.[64]

4. The word of Allah

Among other expressions in the Qur'an that might be taken to allude to the previous scriptures, mention should be made of *kalām* and *kalim*. These words appear in the "tampering verses" studied in Chapter 3; and Muslim exegetes have tended to identify these terms with particular scriptures. Three of the four occurrences of *kalim* ("words; utterances")[65] in the Qur'an come in the tampering verses. *Kalim* is the object of the tampering verb each time. Four verses containing another form of this root, *kalimāt*, state confidently that humans cannot change (*baddala*) the words of Allah. "No one can change (*lā mubaddila*) the words (*kalimāt*) of Allah" (Q 6:34). The same active participle appears in Q 6:115 and 18:27, where the object is "his words." Q 10:64 also states, "there is no changing (*tabdīl*) the words of Allah."

The term *kalām* ("speech, word") similarly occurs only four times in the Qur'an, always in association with Allah. One of those occurrences is explicitly linked with Allah's revelation to Moses: "He said, 'Moses, I have chosen thee above all men for my messages and my utterance (*kalāmī*); take what I have given thee, and be of the thankful.' And we wrote for him on the tablets of everything of admonition, and a distinguishing of everything" (Q 7:144-145).

5. Claim of confirmation

Another indication of the qur'anic approach to the earlier scriptures comes from the language of confirmation. A series of verses seems to claim that the recitations of the present have essential links to revelations of the past.

The term *muṣaddiq*, from *ṣaddaqa*, means confirming, attesting, or pronouncing to be true,[66] as in its first qur'anic appearance, "And believe in that I have sent down, confirming (*muṣaddiqan*) that which is with you, and be not the first to disbelieve in it" (Q 2:41). This active participle occurs eighteen times in the Qur'an. Of that total, fourteen occurrences are distributed throughout *Sūra*s 2-6. Beyond *Sūra* 6 there are four occurrences, two of them in *Sūra* 46. [67] In addition, the term *taṣdīq*,[68] verbal noun of *ṣaddaqa*, appears at Q 10:37 and 12:111.

The object of the participle and verbal noun is generally one of a number of indistinct phrases that could be understood to refer to earlier scriptures. The most frequent object is *mā bayna yadayhi*[69] and similar phrases at Q 2:97; 3:3, 50; 5:48; 6:92; 35:31; 46:30; and 61:6. A second frequent object is "what is with them"[70] and similar phrases at Q 2:41, 89, 91, 101; 3:81; and 4:47. The subject of confirmation in those verses is generally "what I have sent down" (Q 2:41) and similar phrases. "A book (*kitāb*)" or "the book" is frequently specified: at Q 2:89, "a book from Allah", and in one of the *taṣdīq* verses, "this *qurʾān*" (Q 10:37). Other subjects include "a messenger" (Q 3:81) and "a messenger from Allah" (Q 2:101).

The Torah appears as the object of confirmation at Q 3:50, 5:46 and 61:6. In those verses, the subjects are *ʿĪsā* and the scripture sent down upon him, the *Injīl*. At Q 46:12, the Torah is updated by "*hādha kitāb*": "Before it was the book of Moses for a model and a mercy; and this is a book confirming, in Arabic tongue, to warn the

evildoers, and good tidings to the good-doers."[71] At Q 3:39, angels say to Zakariyya, "Allah gives you good tidings of Yaḥyā, confirming a word (*kalima*) from Allah."

In two of the verses, there appear parallel phrases that shed light on the meaning of confirmation. The first is at Q 5:48: "We sent to you the book in truth, confirming (*muṣaddiq*) what is before it from the book, and guarding it in safety (*muhaymin*)." The second is at Q 10:37: "it is a confirmation (*taṣdīq*) of what is before it, and a distinguishing (*tafṣīl*) of the book, wherein is no doubt."

The impression given by these verses containing *muṣaddiq* or *taṣdīq* is that the recitation conceived of as being sent down by Allah in the present is thought to align with what God sent down in the past,[72] indicating a claim of correspondence. These verses vouch for the truth of earlier revelations, which is the sense of *ṣaddaqa*. At the same time, these verses bring the authority of past revelations to bear on the present recitation.

6. Qur'anic characterizations of the earlier scriptures

The Qur'an provides uniformly respectful qualitative descriptions of the earlier scriptures. A striking example is at Q 6:154: "Then we gave Moses the book, complete for him who does good, and distinguishing every thing, and as a guidance (*hudan*) and a mercy (*raḥma*)." These and other expressions are repeated throughout the Qur'an. The Torah is characterized as containing "guidance and light (*nūr*)" (Q 5:44). The same phrase is used to describe the contents of the Gospel: "guidance and light" (Q 5:46). In the same verse, the Gospel is also called "guidance and admonition (*mawʿiẓa*) to the godfearing." The Torah is said to contain "the judgment (*ḥukm*) of Allah" (Q 5:43). The book given to Moses is described as a guidance to the children of Israel (Q 17:2, 32:23). Allah also gives "the book of Moses" for a standard (*imām*) and a mercy (Q 11:17, 46:12). The tablets Allah writes for Moses contain "an admonition and a distinguishing (*tafṣīl*) of everything" (Q 7:145). The book given to

Moses and Aaron is described as the "manifesting" (*mustabīn*) book (Q 37:117).

In other contexts, the qur'anic attitude toward the earlier scriptures can be seen in the actions associated with them. Q 3:93, for example, is an appeal to opponents in the midst of a polemical encounter to "Bring you the Torah now, and recite it, if you are truthful."[73] A similar understanding is given at Q 10:94: "If you are in doubt regarding what we have sent down to you, ask those who recite the book before you." These verses seem to indicate that the Torah was readily available, and could be produced to resolve disputes or answer questions.[74] They also assign authority to the contents of the Torah. A third situation of this type is seen at Q 5:43, where the Torah is said to be with (*ʿinda*) the Jews and to contain Allah's decision. At Q 5:44, the prophets and religious leaders of the Jews are said to have judged the Jews according to the Torah, and these leaders were entrusted with the protection of "the book of Allah."[75] Similarly, the "people of the Gospel" are urged to make their judgments according to the contents of the Gospel (Q 5:47). All of the People of the Book are also challenged to "stand fast" or act according to the Torah and Gospel (Q 5:66, 68).

These qur'anic descriptions of the earlier scriptures are uniformly positive and respectful. The most natural impression for a reader to take from these verses would be that the Qur'an assumes the earlier scriptures are available and intact. There seems to be no hint in any of the verses related to the earlier scriptures that the recitation of the present contradicts the contents of the earlier scriptures. There is no suggestion in these verses that any of the earlier scriptures exists in an altered state. The references to earlier scriptures in the Qur'an do not cause the reader to think of their corruption.

Many scholars who have studied the Qur'an without prejudice have agreed with these simple observations about the positive tone of the Qur'an toward the earlier scriptures. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh wrote, "The Ḳur'ān accepts the *Tawrāt* and *Indjīl* as genuine divine revelations taken from the same Guarded Tablets as the Ḳur'ān itself

and brought by true messengers to both Jews and Christians respectively."[76] Carra de Vaux referred to "the great reverence with which the Qur'ān" speaks of the Gospel.[77] William Muir concluded, after an extensive survey of qur'anic passages that refer to the earlier scriptures, "The highest value is attributed by the Corân to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. They are always spoken of with veneration. There is not a single expression regarding them throughout the Corân, but what is dictated by profound respect and reverence."[78]

7. Understandings of scholars of the Qur'an

From this survey of the contents of the Qur'an, it is clear that in all of the verses in which the earlier scriptures are actually named, the Qur'an has only positive and respectful things to say about them. It is impossible to support the Muslim accusation of the corruption of the Bible with verses from the Qur'an that actually name the earlier scriptures. Further, any honest reading of all of the qur'anic verses that can reasonably be assumed to refer to the earlier scriptures must acknowledge the overwhelmingly positive and respectful tone of this material. If there are verses among these that have been used to support an accusation of corruption, we must look more closely at their content and the ways in which Muslims interpreted them during the first centuries of Islam. But even these verses must be understood in the context of the totality of the Qur'an's teaching on the earlier scriptures.

A number of scholars have used the Qur'an's positive material on the earlier scriptures as a criterion to judge the Muslim accusation of the corruption or falsification of the Bible. These scholars conclude that the verses of the Qur'an themselves make no accusation of the textual corruption of earlier scriptures.

William Montgomery Watt of Edinburgh University wrote that a study of the qur'anic approach to the earlier scriptures must distinguish between "what the Qur'ān actually says" and "all later

interpretations."[79] After an examination of the Qur'an, Watt concluded, "the Qur'ān does not put forward any general view of the corruption of the text of the Old and New Testaments."[80] Watt repeated this view in a later publication and there added, "Manuscripts of the Bible are still extant which antedate Muḥammad, but there is absolutely no suggestion in the Qur'ān that the whole Bible has been corrupted at some time in the distant past, nor that there had been the collusion between Christians and Jews which would have been necessary in order to corrupt the Old Testament."[81]

Muslim scholar Mahmoud Ayoub also stated this position:

> Contrary to the general Islamic view, the Qur'an does not accuse Jews and Christians of altering the text of their scriptures, but rather of altering the truth which those scriptures contain. The people do this by concealing some of the sacred texts, by misapplying their precepts, or by "altering words from their right position." However, this refers more to interpretation than to actual addition or deletion of words from the sacred books.[82]

Watt and Ayoub thus agree that the meaning of the qur'anic verses on the earlier scriptures is different from how some of those verses came to be interpreted and—indeed—from what came to be the general Islamic view.

A third scholar who made a similar judgment was Ignazio Di Matteo. After reviewing the interpretations of verses on the earlier scriptures in the Qur'an by al-Ṭabarī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Di Matteo concluded, "According to the Qur'ān, the text of the holy scriptures has been altered neither before Muḥammad, nor even during his life-time by those Jews and Christians who were not favourably disposed towards his mission. In the Qur'ān *taḥrīf* means either false interpretation of the passages bearing upon Muḥammad or non-enforcement of the explicit laws of the Pentateuch, such as the stoning punishment."[83]

Abdullah Saeed is another Muslim scholar who finds no accusation of corruption in the Qur'an. Saeed distinguished between verses about the earlier scriptures and verses about the custodians of those scriptures. "In no verse in the Qur'ān is there a denigrating remark about the scriptures of the Jews and Christians. Instead, there is respect and reverence. Any disparaging remarks were about the People of the Book, individuals or groups, and their actions."[84]

A major article on "The corruption of the scriptures" was written by St. Andrews University professor John Burton, in which he related the qur'anic references to earlier scriptures directly to the Bible:

> Many non-Muslims are still firmly of the belief that Jews and Christians are accused in the Qur'ān of having tampered with the texts of the revelations to the prophets now collected into the Old and New Testaments of their Bible. This is because they regularly encounter such charges in their reading. The accusation is a commonplace charge against the People of the Book by the Muslims, not, however, because of what the Qur'ān says, but because of what the Muslims say the Qur'ān says. In other words, it is mere exegesis.[85]

Dr. Burton made a distinction between what the Qur'an actually says about the earlier scriptures and the way in which Muslims have interpreted the Qur'an on this theme. He agrees with the straightforward observation that the Qur'an does not accuse the Jews and Christians of having falsified the Bible.

Support for Burton's view comes from Lebanese scholar Martin Accad. Accad warns against reading into verses of the Qur'an later Muslim meanings of *taḥrīf* (the term used by Muslim polemicists as an accusation of corruption).

> In the Qur'ânic context, *taḥrîf* is principally an ambiguous accusation raised against the Jews. Moreover, [all four verses containing the verb *ḥarrafa*] more readily lend themselves to being understood as accusations of misinterpretation, *taḥrîf ma ʿna*, rather than textual corruption, *taḥrîf lafẓ*. One should

> not therefore too quickly conclude, as most do today, that these verses were automatically understood in the sense of textual corruption of the whole Bible, for this would represent an anachronism.[86]

Accad's perspective on the meaning of the qur'anic verses came from a close examination of twenty-five treatises written by Muslim authors during the first six centuries of Islam.[87]

Finally, Matthias Radscheit demonstrated how the positive qur'anic content on the earlier scriptures helps us understand what the Qur'an must mean by *taḥrīf*. Reflecting on the impression left by the qur'anic material on "tampering" with earlier scriptures, Radscheit wrote, "That it did not mean falsification of the fixed written Torah or Gospel shows itself—negatively—in that *taḥrīf* is never connected explicitly with these books, and—positively—by the verses which exhort the *ahl al-kitāb* to hold to what is in their scriptures."[88]

CHAPTER THREE

The Respectful View of Muslim Exegetes

Many Muslims who accuse the Bible of being corrupted or falsified quote verses from the Qur'an in an effort to support their accusation. However, anyone who studies how the greatest Muslim commentators (*mufassirūn*) on the Qur'an understood these verses finds very little support for the accusation of textual alteration.

Instead, a careful and honest study of early Muslim commentaries (*tafāsīr*) on the Qur'an reveals a much more respectful and cautious approach to the earlier scriptures. Rather than making accusations of textual change at some of the qur'anic verses quoted most frequently by polemicists, Muslim commentators told stories of how, in the distant past, the Children of Israel verbally altered the words of Allah, or about various actions of tampering mainly by the Jews of Medina during encounters with the messenger of Islam.

Muslims wanting to accuse the Bible of corruption or falsification commonly use a pair of Arabic terms: *taḥrīf* and *tabdīl*. *Taḥrīf* is the verbal noun from the Arabic verb *ḥarrafa*, and *tabdīl* is the verbal noun from *baddala*. Neither verbal noun actually appears in the Qur'an, but because of the popularity and importance of these terms, this chapter explores Muslim commentators' understanding of all of the verses in the Qur'an that contain either of the verbs behind them. The reader will see that the commentators did not understand the verbs *ḥarrafa* and *baddala* to mean what the polemicists mean by *taḥrīf* and *tabdīl*, and learn that the commentators pictured a range of actions best described in English as "tampering."

Scholars of Muslim polemic have found that Muslim writers tend to refer to one or more of twenty-five particular qur'anic verses when they want to accuse the Bible of corruption or falsification.[89] They have determined that one of the considerations of Muslim writers is whether the verses contain one of the verbs from the "semantic field of tampering". Verbs in this field include verbs of alteration *ḥarrafa* and *baddala*; verbs of concealment *katama*, *asarra*, and *akhfā*; plus several other tampering verbs *labasa*, *lawā*, and *nasiya*.[90] Another consideration is whether the verses include one of several less distinct expressions of action that could be interpreted to mean tampering. This chapter reports on the most important interpretations of this set of twenty-five verses by two early Muslim commentators on the Qur'an.

All materials in this chapter come from Muslim sources, many of them the best-known and most respected Muslim commentators in the first centuries of Islam. None of this material is from non-Muslim sources; none is written by anyone who would want to attack Islam. None of this material is now presented in order to criticize Muslims in any way. All of this material can and should be checked in the original Arabic sources, which are cited in each case. Nothing here depends on the wording of a particular translation. All translations are intended to be as accurate as possible, and whenever there might be a question of wording, the original Arabic is given in transliteration. The analysis of the material is a straightforward and reasonable consideration of the facts in order to foster clarity in this discussion.

Similar to how the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* did not include or discuss the abundant material on the earlier scriptures in the Qur'an, it did not mention the interpretations of the "verses of tampering" by the great classical commentators of Islam. In a short section titled, "The opinion of Muslim scholars,"[91] the *Iẓhār* presented brief general opinions on the Gospel from al-Rāzī (d. 1209), al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273), and al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442)—but nothing of their interpretations of the tampering verses. For this reason, this chapter includes a summary of al-Rāzī's interpretation of these verses from his great *Mafātīḥ al-*

ghayb. Al-Rāzī's comments will be seen to be quite different from the impression left by the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*.

Again, it seems inexplicable that the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* would have made such a serious accusation as the corruption of the scriptures reverently named by the Qur'an, without taking into consideration the views of Muslim exegetes on verses that have been understood to question the treatment of those scriptures by Jews and Christians. [92] What could account for this?

The two commentators on the Qur'an whose interpretations are featured in this chapter are Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 767) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 923). Muqātil's *Tafsīr* has the advantage of being the earliest complete Muslim commentary in existence.[93] It was written within 150 years of Islam's origins and therefore offers one of the earliest views available on the meanings of the qur'anic verses. Al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* collected traditional interpretations from the first three centuries of Islam and also serves as the first great classical commentary on the Qur'an. [94] Muslims regard the *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* highly, and there is even one tradition which says it would be worth walking all the way to China to obtain a copy! These two commentaries represent interpretive trends on the tampering verses from earliest times right up to the present.

1. Verbal changes

The first two verses in the Qur'an containing the verbs *baddala* and *ḥarrafa* are Q 2:59 and 2:75. Instead of interpreting these verses to mean falsification of the text of the earlier scriptures, early Muslim commentators understood these verses to mean verbal changes of the commands of Allah by the Children of Israel in the distant past.

Both Q 2:59 and 2:75 are part of a longer qur'anic passage about the Children of Israel during the time of Moses. Therefore, commentators tended to interpret both in terms of that story. Q 2:59

reads, "those who did wrong substituted (*baddala*) a saying (*qawl*) for what had been told to them." Muqātil ibn Sulaymān and al-Ṭabarī interpreted this verse in the context of Q 2:58 and told a story about a word Allah tells the children of Israel to say as they enter Jerusalem (*Īlyā'*).[95] The exegetes wrote that instead of saying the word *ḥiṭṭa*, the Children of Israel say something else. Neither exegete mentioned the Torah or indeed, any scripture.

At Q 2:75, the two exegetes similarly went back in time to tell a story about Moses and the seventy leaders of the Children of Israel.[96] The verse reads, "…there is a party of them that heard the speech (*kalām*) of Allah, then tampered with it (*yuḥarrifūnahu*)…." Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī understood this to mean that Moses tells the seventy leaders what Allah told him, but when Moses and the leaders return to the Children of Israel, some of the leaders contradict Moses. Moses reports the commandments of Allah to the people, but a group of Jews from the seventy leaders says something different.

Al-Ṭabarī wrote that he was familiar with a tradition associated with Q 2:75 that Jewish religious leaders keep a second book in addition to the Torah.[97] For a bribe, the leaders give a favorable judgment out of the second book. But al-Ṭabarī clearly preferred the story about Moses and the seventy leaders as the interpretation.[98]

The verses about substituting a saying for *ḥiṭṭa* (Q 2:58-59) repeat in the Qur'an at 7:161-162. The two exegetes provided the same interpretation as they had earlier—the verbal replacement of one expression with another.[99]

2. Encounters with the messenger

Other than the three verses explained above, there are only four other verses with verbs of alteration which might be related to earlier scriptures, one other verse containing *baddala* and three containing *ḥarrafa*. Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī understood all four verses

to refer to negative responses from the Jews of Medina to the messenger of Islam. At Q 2:211, the exegetes wrote that the Jews of Medina "disbelieved in Muḥammad."[100] The verse reads, "Whoso changes (*yubaddil*) Allah's blessing after it has come to him, Allah is terrible in retribution." As in many of the tampering verses, the object of the verb is not clear. Muqātil pictured an inappropriate response to the messenger of Islam by the Jews of Medina, while al-Ṭabarī understood "Allah's blessing" to be Islam itself. He wrote that Allah had included information about the messenger of Islam in his covenant with the Children of Israel.

The explanations of the three remaining *ḥarrafa* verses portrayed various encounters between the messenger of Islam and the Jews of Medina. Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī understood Q 4:46 to mean that the Jews speak in a disrespectful way toward Islam and its messenger.[101] Muqātil's comments on the third *ḥarrafa* verse (Q 5:13) are worth quoting more extensively:

> This is about how Allah, powerful and exalted, made a covenant with Banū Isrāʾīl in the Torah that they would believe in Muḥammad, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him,[102] and to give credence to him. He is written with them in the Torah.[103] Then when Allah, powerful and exalted, sent him, they disbelieved in him and envied (*ḥasada*) him, and said, "This one is not from the descendents of Isḥāq, but rather he is from the descendents of Ismāʿīl."[104]

This interpretation, typical of Muqātil, clearly shows that in his mind, a description of the messenger of Islam could be found in the Torah right up until the appearance of the messenger. When the Jews see that the messenger is from the descendants of Ismāʿīl, their "tampering" action is that they disbelieve in him out of ethnic envy.

The most famous of all the stories of encounter related by Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī was the one they told to explain the fourth *ḥarrafa* verse, Q 5:41. There, they related a "test of prophethood" the Jews of Medina give to the messenger of Islam.[105] The Jews bring an adulterous couple to the messenger and ask him for a

ruling on their punishment. The angel *Jibrīl* tells the messenger that the punishment is "stoning," but he proceeds to the Jewish house of study in Medina and asks for the best Torah scholar. The messenger adjures Ibn Ṣūriyā to tell him that the punishment for adultery "in your book" is stoning. Ibn Ṣūriyā affirms it is so. Islam's messenger exclaims, "I am the first to revive one of the *sunna*s of Allah," then commands that the two adulterers be stoned.

By al-Ṭabarī's time, several versions of the "stoning verse" story were in circulation, four of which he transmitted. In addition to a version substantially the same as Muqātil's, al-Ṭabarī offered three accounts which provide information on why the Jews have stopped applying the Torah punishment.[106] In one of these, the messenger of Islam exclaims, "O Allah, I am the first to revive your command, since they put it to death."[107] In a second account, the messenger says, "I impose what is in the Torah."[108] This second account pictures the messenger inside the Jewish study house appealing to the Torah scholars, then questioning in particular one rabbi at one side of the room who kept quiet.

The reader will notice that although Q 5:41 contains the verb *ḥarrafa*, there is no hint in any of al-Ṭabarī's interpretations of a corrupted text or an act of falsification. On the contrary, the Torah is portrayed as an intact, available source of authority on the question of the punishment for adultery.

These two early commentators did not understand any of the qur'anic verses containing *baddala* to mean that the text of the earlier scripture had been changed. Muqātil similarly did not interpret any of the *ḥarrafa* verses to mean a change of text. Al-Ṭabarī offered an accusation of falsification at one of the *ḥarrafa* verses (Q 5:13), in spite of the fact that the tampering phrase ("they tamper with the words out of their places") is almost exactly the same at Q 4:46 and 5:41. Al-Ṭabarī's accusation of falsification at Q 5:13 is dealt with thoroughly in Chapter 5.

3. Concealing references in the Torah

Verses in the Qur'an containing verbs of concealment (eleven) are more numerous than verses with verbs of alteration (seven), with the result that commentators on the Qur'an took more opportunities to explain these verbs. Consequently, many indications of how they viewed the earlier scriptures are included in their explanations. A verb of concealment, *katama*, also appears earlier (Q 2:42) in the canonical progression of the Qur'an than the verbs *baddala* (Q 2:59) and *ḥarrafa* (Q 2:75). The exegetes' explanation of Q 2:42 seems to have set the tone for what they wrote on subsequent tampering verses. A third relevant factor is that unlike any verb of alteration, *katama* appears in a series of four verses in close proximity,[109] allowing the exegetes scope to develop an extended explanation of the action as they understood it.

At Q 2:42, the commentators understood the phrase, "do not conceal the truth," to be addressed by Allah to the Jews.[110] Muqātil wrote that the "truth" means "the matter (*amr*) of Muḥammad." According to Muqātil, the Jews know that Islam's messenger is a prophet and that his description (*naʿt*) is in the Torah, but they conceal this information. Al-Ṭabarī attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās the following interpretation:

> Do not conceal what is with you (*ʿindakum*) from knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of my messenger and what he brought, although you find him in what you know from the books you have in your own hands (*bi-aydaykum*)….The People of the Book conceal Muḥammad, even though they find him written with them (*ʿindahum*) in the Torah and the Injīl.[111]

Every aspect of the two exegetes' interpretations of this verse indicates a concept in their minds of intact scriptures containing references to the messenger of Islam. This picture continues throughout their interpretations of the eleven concealment verses and creates a tone of positive and respectful regard for the earlier scriptures.

Muqātil began his interpretation of the series of *katama* verses in the middle of *Sūrat al-Baqara* by repeating the object of concealment he gave at Q 2:42. The verse reads, "Who does a greater wrong than he who conceals a testimony (*shahāda*) that has come to him from Allah?" (Q 2:140) According to Muqātil, the "testimony" is "the matter (*amr*) of Muḥammad in the Torah and the Injīl."[112] Allah has made the matter clear to the People of the Book, wrote Muqātil, but they conceal this testimony that is with (*ʿinda*) them. Muqātil understood the same object of concealment in two other verses of the series. At Q 2:159, the "guidance (*hudan*)" being concealed is the matter (*amr*) of Islam's messenger in the Torah;[113] and at Q 2:174, Muqātil understood the "book of Allah" to be the Torah and the information being concealed by Jewish leaders to be "the matter (*amr*) of Muḥammad."[114]

In fact, at five of the six remaining verses of concealment, Muqātil understood the object of concealment to be information about the messenger of Islam in the Torah.[115] Only at Q 2:146 is there a completely different object. There, Muqātil told a story about an encounter between the messenger and a group of particular Jews.[116] The Jews question the *qibla*. The messenger answers, "You know the circumambulation of the house (*bayt*) is true because it is the *qibla* which is written (*maktūb*) in the Torah and Injīl, but you conceal and deny the truth that is in the book of Allah."

The reader will notice the "time stamp" on these explanations. Muqātil claimed references to the messenger of Islam in an intact Torah in the possession of the Jews of Medina during the rule of the messenger there in the early seventh century. He gave the names of particular Medinan Jews in seven of his explanations—at Q 2:77, 146, 159, 174: 3:71: 4:37: and 6:92. Muqātil did not understand a concealment of references in the Torah at some unspecified time prior to Islam, nor did he hint in these interpretations at a corruption or falsification of the Torah.

Similarly in the commentary of al-Ṭabarī, ten of the eleven concealing passages indicate it is the "matter" or "description" of

Islam's messenger that is being concealed. This is virtually the only object of concealment in eight of the passages. Another remarkable feature in *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* is the frequency of occurrence of the phrase, "they find him written (*maktūb*) with them (*ʿindahum*) in the Torah and the Gospel." This phrase appears twelve times in this exact wording, which is the same wording as the qur'anic phrase in Q 7:157. In addition, the phrase appears sixteen times in similar expressions, such as, "they find him written with them."[117]

In relation to al-Ṭabarī's commentary, a point of Arabic grammar is relevant to understanding the commentators' concept of the timing of the tampering. The qur'anic phrase in Q 7:157 is, "they find him written (*yajidūnahu maktūban*)." This is the imperfect tense in Arabic, meaning the present or the future. Similarly, both exegetes use the imperfect tense in their interpretations. If they had so chosen, they could have put their interpretations in the past tense, called the perfect active—"they found him" (*wajadūhu*). This might have suggested that people at some time prior to Islam found the references in uncorrupted copies of the earlier scriptures before they were falsified. Instead, the interpreters set their explanations in the imperfect, meaning they believed the People of the Book were concealing references to the messenger of Islam that existed in intact texts of earlier scriptures available at the time of his rule in Medina.

4. Other actions of resistance

Beyond the alteration and concealment verses, Muslim polemicists have used other verses from the Qur'an in an attempt to support their accusations against the Bible. In general, however, Muslim commentators have not understood these verses to refer to textual corruption or falsification. Their concern was not the state of the text of the earlier scriptures, but rather the responses of the People of the Book to the Muslim claim for their messenger's authority.

The semantic field of tampering includes several other Arabic verbs that have attracted the attention of Muslim polemicists; but at the verses containing these verbs, commentators tended to tell stories of resistance. For example, in order to explain the verb *labasa* ("to confuse") at Q 2:42, al-Ṭabarī wrote that there were hypocrites among the Jews of Medina. These hypocrites acknowledge (*iqrār*) that Islam's messenger was sent to other communities, but they deny (*juḥūd*) that the messenger was sent to them.[118] On the same verb, when it appears at Q 3:71, Muqātil told a story about two Jewish leaders changing their instructions to the Jewish community within a single day. At the beginning of the day, the leaders tell them to "believe in the *qurʾān*." But by evening, they say, "We looked in the Torah, and the description which is in the Torah is not the description of Muḥammad."[119]

Scholars have also identified several expressions of action Muslim writers often connect to tampering with the earlier scriptures. One example is the expression, "sell for a little price." Where it first appears in the canonical progression of the Qur'an, at 2:41, Muqātil wrote that the Jewish leaders conceal the matter of Islam's messenger from the rest of the Jews.[120] They stand to gain from this, according to Muqātil. He explained that the Jewish leaders receive a portion of the total produce from the Jewish community every year. If they would choose to follow the messenger of Islam, they would not receive that food. Muqātil offers similar explanations at eight other places where "selling for a little price" occurs in the Qur'an.[121] This "language of commerce" first appears in Q 2:16 with the expression, "Those are they who have bought error at the price of guidance." There, Muqātil told a story of Jewish response to the messenger of Islam:

> This is about how the Jews found the description (*naʿt*) of Muḥammad the prophet, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, in the Torah before he was sent, and believed in him, assuming that he was from the descendents of Isḥāq, upon whom be peace. Then when Muḥammad, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, was sent from among

the Arabs, from the descendents of Ismāʿīl, upon whom be peace, they disbelieved (*kafara*) in him out of envy (*ḥasad*), and "purchased error with guidance."[122]

It is important to emphasize the extent to which verses used by Muslim polemicists to attack the Bible have been understood quite differently by the great commentators on the Qur'an, whose concern was resistance to Muslim claims by the People of the Book rather than textual falsification. For example, al-Ṭabarī interpreted another verb in the semantic field of tampering, *nasiya* ("to forget"), at Q 5:14—a verse which refers to Christians.[123] The Christians, according to al-Ṭabarī, were not faithful to the covenant that Allah made with them. The covenant stipulated following Allah's messengers and attesting to them, but the Christians abandoned (*taraka*) part of the covenant and neglected (*ḍayyaʿa*) Allah's command.

Al-Ṭabarī also interpreted another of the expressions of action, "throw behind backs" at Q 2:101. The exegete pictured an encounter between the messenger of Islam and the Jews of Medina.[124] When the messenger of Islam comes to the religious leaders and scholars of the Jews, wrote al-Ṭabarī, he confirms the Torah and says that the Torah attests to him. But the scholars reject the book of Allah—the Torah—by denying (*jaḥada*) it and refusing to accept (*rafaḍa*) it after acknowledging. They did this, according to al-Ṭabarī, out of envy and injustice toward the messenger of Islam.

It is at two verses in this category of containing expressions of action that accusations of falsification can be found in the commentaries. The key expression seems to be "write the book with their hands" in Q 2:79. At this verse, both Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī included accusations of falsification.[125] Another expression that seems to have triggered accusations from the commentators appears at Q 3:78: "twist their tongues with the book."[126] Because the interpretations of these two verses are so different from the interpretations of the vast majority of the tampering verses, they

are dealt with separately in a careful and thorough manner in Chapter 5.

In the context of the interpretations of the many tampering verses, traditions of falsification appear to be rare and isolated. Perhaps this is why scholars of Islamic Studies have characterized the treatment of the falsification accusation by al-Ṭabarī and his forebears as reluctant,[127] cautious,[128] guarded,[129] careful,[130] and gentle.[131]

5. Consistency in the Islamic interpretive tradition

The many stories and scenarios described thus far have appeared in interpretations of verses that scholars of Muslim polemic have specifically connected with the accusation of the corruption of earlier scriptures. Similar stories can be found in many other passages in the commentaries of Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī. Indeed, such stories seem to come in a virtually limitless supply. After al-Ṭabarī, the stories continued in the Islamic interpretive tradition for more than a thousand years. The stories picture intact scriptures in the hands of the People of the Book during the rule of the messenger of Islam in Medina.

Countless examples could be given, because wherever Jews, Christians, or the general "People of the Book" are named in the Qur'an, the commentators had reason to develop a story of response to Muslim claims. But even when the actors are not named, hundreds of verses have been traditionally understood to relate to the People of the Book. For example, when Muqātil interpreted Q 2:89, he wrote that "what was with them" means the attestation (*taṣdīq*) to the messenger of Islam in the Torah in the hands of the Jews of Medina.[132] On the subsequent phrase, "they aforetimes prayed for victory over the unbelievers," he offered a scenario of Jews praying for help against Arab tribes:

> The Jews used to say when they fought them, "O Allah, we ask you in the name of the prophet whom we find in our book, that you send him at the end of the age and help us." So they were allowed to triumph over them. Then when Allah, powerful and exalted, sent Muḥammad, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, from outside of the children of Israel, they disbelieved in him [though] they recognized him.

Again, Muqātil showed no anxiety here about the text of the Torah. In fact, the Torah must be intact in order for the story to make sense. Muqātil's concern was with the response of the Jews to the messenger of Islam after he was sent.

On the other hand, who are the People of the Book described in Q 3:199? These "have faith in Allah and in what Allah revealed to you and in what he revealed to them. They are humble before Allah and do not exchange Allah's revelations for a trifling price." Al-Ṭabarī transmitted traditions that the verse refers to the Christian al-Najāshī of Abyssinia, or ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām and his fellow Jewish converts. Al-Ṭabarī himself understood the verse to mean all People of the Book who follow the messenger of Islam "and yet follow what Allah had enjoined in the Torah and Gospel."[133] Four hundred fifty years later, Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) was still writing similarly: "They do not conceal the prophecies of the coming of Muḥammad, mention of his qualities and characteristics, his apostleship and the characteristics of his community, which are in their scriptures. These are the best of the people of the book and their elect, be they Jews or Christians."[134]

In Islam, commentary is a traditional discipline. Rather than inventing new interpretations, commentators transmit and discuss interpretations inherited from the authorities of the past. Therefore, stories and scenarios identical or similar to those offered by Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī appear in the classical commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144), al-Rāzī (d. 1209), al-Qurṭubī (d. 1272), al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286-1316), and Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373).

The commentaries of all of these great Muslim *mufassirūn* are now posted on the Internet in such a way that readers can search their interpretations of any particular verse.[135] For those who do not read Arabic, many good translations are available. In English, special mention must be made of two volumes of translations by Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Qur'an and its interpreters*.[136] These translations allow readers to examine the interpretations of the important second and third *sūra*s by thirteen Muslim commentators.[137] For al-Ṭabarī, J. Cooper's translation of a good part of his commentary on the second *sūra* is available;[138] and for al-Bayḍāwī, see the translations of his commentary on the third *sūra* by D.S. Margoliouth,[139] and on the twelfth *sūra* by A.F.L. Beeston.[140] Helmut Gätje has made available a thematic arrangement of translations from a selection of commentators, including many interesting passages from al-Zamakhsharī.[141]

These commentators loved to offer stories of resistance to the claims of Islam by the People of the Book, and especially stories of Jewish obstinacy. For sheer narrative impact, they preferred by far the story that there were references to the messenger of Islam in the scriptures Jews and Christians possessed. In the commentators' minds, the Jews and Christians refused to acknowledge the references to the messenger out of a variety of perverse motives.

6. The Torah's claim to unbroken transmission

The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* briefly quoted Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī to support its accusation of corruption against the Gospel. In order to show just how deceptive the practice of selective quotation can be, we examine here al-Rāzī's interpretation of a series of important "tampering" verses in his great commentary, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.[142]

In his commentary on the tampering verses, al-Rāzī raised the subject of *tawātur* (unbroken transmission), which he claimed for the Qur'an. Perhaps aware of the accusation of corruption, which had already been argued by Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), al-Rāzī asked

whether the Torah could also claim *tawātur*. At Q 2:75, al-Rāzī wrote that alteration of a scriptural text is only impossible if the appearance of the Word of God follows a process of uninterrupted transmission (*ẓuhūran mutawātiran*), which al-Rāzī claimed for the appearance of the Qur'an.[143] At Q 3:78, the exegete posed the question, "How is the insertion (*idkhāl*) of *taḥrīf* possible in the Torah with its great renown (*shuhra*) among people?"[144] At Q 4:46, al-Rāzī asked again, "How is [falsification of text] possible in relation to a scripture whose every letter and word was transmitted with the maximum of security (*al-tawātur al-mashhūr*) in the West as well as in the East?"[145]

al-Rāzī suggested that perhaps it might be possible that a small group of Jews secretly conspired to falsify, then the distortion spread slowly.[146] But his subsequent comments seem to rule out this weak suggestion. At Q 5:13, he considered whether the tampering referred to in the verse would be false interpretation (*taʾwīl*) or alteration of the word (*taghyīr al-lafẓ*) and wrote, "We have shown earlier that the first sense is preferable, because alteration of the word does not occur in a scripture transmitted without interruption (*biʾl-tawātur*)."[147] At Q 6:91, al-Rāzī addressed the alteration question once more:

> The Torah is a book which has reached the people of the West and the East, and the majority of the learned men (*ahl al-ʿilm*) know and have memorized it (*ḥafiẓūhu*). In such a book it is impossible to insert (*idkhāl*) additions (*ziyāda*) or omissions (*nuqṣān*). And the proof is that if anyone now wants to insert additions or omissions into the Qur'ān, he could not do it: the same goes for the Torah.[148]

Some readers may be surprised that an orthodox Muslim commentator like al-Rāzī would be willing to extend to the Torah the same claim to preservation and *tawātur* as the Qur'an itself. Whatever the case, it would certainly be unscholarly to describe al-Rāzī's view of the earlier scriptures without bringing in his interpretations of the Qur'an's tampering verses. Al-Rāzī

acknowledged that the Torah was continuously recited around the known world, "in the West as well as the East," before Islam, during the rise of Islam, and after Islam was established. His opinion that the Torah therefore has a claim to *tawātur* is therefore only reasonable.

This opinion is very different from the brief characterization of al-Rāzī in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, where al-Rāzī was introduced only to support the *Iẓhār*'s attack on the Gospel. The *Iẓhār* created the impression that al-Rāzī would support its accusations against the Bible. But the evidence points in the opposite direction. We have seen much material in al-Rāzī that would argue powerfully against the accusation of corruption. This practice of using selective quotations in an attempt to support an accusation against the scriptures the Qur'an names only with the greatest reverence may be typical of public debates, but it is not appropriate to the peaceful reasoning between Muslims and non-Muslims required in today's world. The great Muslim exegetes of the past deserve better.

Thus far we have seen that neither the Qur'an itself, nor the understandings of the Qur'an among the earliest Muslim commentators, make a clear and distinct accusation about the material alteration of the earlier scriptures. Wherever the Qur'an names the earlier scriptures, it speaks about them only with respect. In the commentaries, the overwhelming majority of references to the earlier scriptures pictures them as available and intact sources of attestation to the messenger of Islam. The few accusations of falsification that do appear in the commentaries need to be read in the context of the majority understanding.

Of greater interest to the commentators was their attempt to prove the prophethood of the messenger of Islam and that his recitations were from Allah. Their interpretations reveal great anxiety about the disbelief of most of the Jews of Medina. The commentators steadfastly claimed that the matter (*amr*, *shaʾn*) of the messenger of Islam, his description (*naʿt*), his characteristics

(*ṣifa*), and his mission (*baʿth*, *mabʿath*) would be found written in the Torah and Gospel. In their minds, that attestation (*taṣdīq*) was with (*maʿa*, *ʿinda*) the Jews and Christians and in their hands (*bi-aydayhum*). Since that attestation was a proof of prophethood for the commentators, they considered the existence and integrity of the earlier scriptures to be essential.

CHAPTER FOUR

Tales of Intact Scriptures

The Muslim accusation of the corruption of the Bible contradicts the story told in many different ways by some of Islam's most famous scholars during the early centuries of Islam in a variety of well-known Muslim sources.

That story pictures people who possess a scripture, especially the Jews of Medina, responding negatively (and rarely, in positive ways) to Muslim claims for the authority of the messenger of Islam. In this story, the earlier scriptures exist in an uncorrupted state in the possession of the People of the Book. Muslims claim these earlier scriptures contain references to the messenger of Islam. The earlier scriptures are brought into the story intact and authoritative, first to attest to the messenger of Islam, and then to provide proof that those who do not accept his prophethood are willfully and culpably obstinate. The problem is not with the earlier scriptures. Rather, the problem is with the people who possess them.

In the previous chapter it was clearly seen how Muslim commentators explained the qur'anic "verses of tampering" which polemicists like to use to attack the Bible. The overwhelming sense from these commentaries is that the tampering verses refer mainly either to the Children of Israel verbally altering Allah's revelations in the distant past, or to actions by the Jews of Medina during the career of the messenger of Islam, which mostly picture hiding verses in an existing and intact text.

This chapter demonstrates that the story Muslim scholars told in many different ways in other important genres essentially matches the interpretations Muslim exegetes offered on the tampering verses. This story relies for its narrative logic not on a corrupted text of the Torah or Gospel, but rather on an intact text of scripture. Muslim scholars told this story in works of biography (*sīra* and *maghāzī*), prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*), occasions of recitation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and history (*taʾrīkh*).

As in the previous chapter, all materials in this chapter come from Muslim sources, many of them from the best-known and most respected Muslim scholars in the first centuries of Islam. None of this material is from non-Muslim sources; therefore, none is written by anyone who might want to attack Islam. None of this material is now presented in order to criticize Muslims in any way. All of this material can and should be checked in the original Arabic sources, which are cited in each case. Nothing here depends on a particular translation. All translations are intended to be as accurate as possible, and wherever there might be a question of wording, the original Arabic is given in transliteration. The analysis of this material is intended as a straightforward and sensible discussion of the facts.

The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* did not take these important Muslim sources into consideration before making its accusation of corruption against the Bible. For example, though the *Iẓhār* mounted a strong argument for the authenticity of the *ḥadīth*,[149] it referred to the contents of the *ḥadīth* only in the briefest way. In relation to the earlier scriptures, the *Iẓhār* quoted a single tradition, offered by al-Bukhārī (d. 870) in two different versions, which contains an accusation of falsification.[150] Using the Muslim sources in this manner is unfortunately typical of public debate. It may deceive many listeners who do not know the sources well, but it seems a careless way to proceed when making such a serious accusation in print as the corruption of scriptures. This chapter shows clearly that the one tradition recounted in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* does not in fact represent the content and tone of most *ḥadīth* related to the earlier scriptures.

In connection with the apparent avoidance of Muslim narrative sources in the *Iẓhār*, one other comment is necessary. The story of intact scriptures told by many Muslim writers does not prove that Muslim accusations against the Bible are false. Some Muslims may even want to discount the importance of this narrative material. But it must be noted that the episodes presented in this chapter come from the very same sources as all other information about the origins of Islam including, for example, the Muslim accounts of how the Qur'an came together. Whether historical or not, the story shows a significant trend in Muslim thought about the previous scriptures in the early centuries of Islam.

1. Intact scriptures in the *Sīra*

The *Sīrat al-nabawiyya* of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767), known to us in the edition of Ibn Hishām (d. 833), is the earliest extant Muslim story of the life of the messenger of Islam.[151] This is the book from which come most of the details of the story Muslims tell about the messenger of Islam to the present day.

Two facts about this book are important for the theme of the integrity of the Bible. First, this famous story contains not a single suggestion of scriptural corruption or falsification. Second, it offers the same episodes about intact scriptures we encountered in the commentaries of Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī and throughout the Islamic interpretive (*tafsīr*) tradition.

The thrust of the extended account of the messenger of Islam in the *Sīra* is that the messenger is essentially linked with the line of earlier prophets;[152] indeed, the *Sīra* openly asserts that the earlier scriptures predict the messenger's coming.[153]

The *Sīra* presents stories about people anticipating the coming of the messenger of Islam before he appeared. According to Ibn Isḥāq, this expectation among the People of the Book comes from having read descriptions of the messenger in the previous scriptures.[154]

For example, Jewish rabbis and Christian monks speak about the messenger of Islam as the time of his appearance draws near. They report "his description (*ṣifa*) and the description of his time which they found in their scriptures and what their prophets had enjoined upon them."[155] Regarding the Jews, the *Sīra* presents a trio of stories that portray Jews predicting the coming of a prophet.[156] The Arabs are inclined to listen, because, "We were polytheists worshipping idols, while they were people of the scriptures with knowledge which we do not possess."[157]

When the messenger of Islam appears, the People of the Book recognize him on the basis of what they read in their scriptures. For example, when Christians from Abyssinia (Ethiopia) come to meet the messenger in Mecca, they hear him recite the Qur'an and promptly believe in him. According to the *Sīra*, "They recognized (ʿ*arafa*) in him the things which had been said of him in their scriptures about his matter (*amr*)."[158]

This story is interesting because it illustrates a Muslim concept of a group of Christians in another part of the world (Africa) possessing scriptures. In this case, one could reasonably assume that the *Sīra* is referring to the Gospel. Ibn Isḥāq makes no suggestion here of a corrupted Gospel or an act of falsification. If such were the case, it would not be possible for him to claim attestation to Islam's messenger in the Gospel.

A story which reveals a great deal about Ibn Isḥāq's concept of the earlier scriptures is the story he told about the conversion of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām.[159] Ibn Salām is introduced as the rabbi of Banū Qaynuqāʿ and their "most learned man." Together with the messenger of Islam, Ibn Salām devises a ruse in order to demonstrate his high standing among the Jews of Medina as well as the deceitfulness and treachery of the Jews. When the Jews affirm the good reputation of Ibn Salām, he challenges them to accept the prophet of Islam. "By Allah you certainly know that he is the apostle of Allah," says Ibn Salām, according to the *Sīra*. "You find him

written with you in the Torah by his name and his characteristics."[160]

This story clearly assumes the Jews of Medina possess ("with you") a Torah in which the description of Islam's messenger may be found. The main character here is someone who knows the Torah well. He is speaking to Jews who know the Torah well. It is worth noting that Ibn Isḥāq uses the imperfect tense ("You will find him written") rather than the perfect tense ("You found him written"). He is not referring to a copy of Torah that was uncorrupted before the action of the story but falsified after.

Regarding the four qur'anic verses which contain the verb *ḥarrafa*, Ibn Isḥāq comments on three of them. His understanding of Q 2:75 and 4:46 is very similar to Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī. His comments on Q 5:41, however, are worth noting because of what they reveal about his concept of the earlier scriptures.[161] The story is substantially the same as the stoning verse story found in Muqātil, ʿAbd al-Razzāq, and al-Ṭabarī. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṣūriyā, introduced as "the most learned man living in the Torah," affirms that the Torah prescribes stoning for adulterers. He says that the Jews know Islam's messenger is a prophet sent by Allah, but don't want to acknowledge the truth because of envy. Here, Ibn Isḥāq also attaches the story of a rabbi concealing the stoning verse.[162] The messenger of Islam calls for a Torah to be brought out, but the rabbi covers the verse with his hand. When ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām knocks the rabbi's hand off the page, the stoning verse is revealed. The messenger of Islam then proclaims, "I am the first to revive the command (*amr*) of Allah and his book and its practice."[163]

Every part of Ibn Isḥāq's version pictured an intact Torah that could be produced and read aloud by Jewish Torah experts. The messenger's proclamation that he revives Allah's book appears to come from a mindset that sees the book as authentic and reliable—even if the book's custodians are not.

According to the *Sīra*, the messenger of Islam sends a letter to the Jews of Khaybar saying that Allah had revealed the words of Q 48:29, "and you will find it in your scripture."[164] Here, Ibn Isḥāq related a rather remarkable challenge written in the messenger's letter: "Do you find in what he has sent down to you that you should believe in Muḥammad? If you do not find that in your scripture then there is no compulsion upon you."[165]

This challenge seems to reveal an uncertainty about the actual contents of the Torah. It also seems to imply that if a command to believe in the messenger of Islam were to be found in the Torah, then coercion (*kurh ʿalā*, cf. Q 2:256) of the Jews would be justified.

In another *Sīra* story, the messenger of Islam enters a Jewish school and calls the Jews to Allah. In the ensuing exchange they disagree about the identity of Abraham, so the messenger says to the Jews, "Then let the Torah judge between us."[166] Ibn Isḥāq claimed this was the occasion of recitation of Q 3:23: "Have you not regarded those who were given a portion of the book, being called to the book of Allah, that it might decide between them, and then a party of them turned away, swerving aside?"[167]

Near the end of the section in the *Sīra* on the Jews of Medina, a group of Jews puts the question to the messenger of Islam directly: "Is it true, Muḥammad, that what you have brought is the truth from Allah?" The prophet responds, "You know quite well that it is from Allah; you will find it written in the Torah which you have. . . . You know well that it is from Allah and that I am the apostle of Allah. You will find it written in the Torah you have."[168]

These last two examples claim the Torah possessed by the Jews of Medina during the messenger of Islam's rule will confirm his status as a prophet of Allah and the divine origin of the recitations he is speaking.

A striking fact about the episodes about the *Ahl al-kitāb* Ibn Isḥāq narrated in the *Sīra* is the absence of any accusation of falsification of the previous scriptures. Why would he not have mentioned the

accusation? If he had heard it, why did he not include it in his characterization of the Jews of Medina? There is little doubt that in Ibn Isḥāq's story of the origins of Islam, the Jews emerge as a deceitful, obstinate, and indeed, treacherous people. Did Ibn Isḥāq not consider the accusation of their falsification of the Torah helpful for his portrayal? Was he possibly not familiar with the accusation?

2. Intact scriptures in the *Ṭabaqāt*

Around the same time Ibn Hishām edited Ibn Isḥāq's story of the messenger of Islam, two other writers produced biographical material about the messenger that is well-known among Muslim scholars. al-Wāqidī (d. 832) wrote *Kitāb al-maghāzī* (*Book of the military campaigns*) about the career of Islam's messenger in Medina.[169] Al-Wāqidī's secretary and disciple Muḥammad ibn Saʿd (d. 845) wrote *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (*Book of the major classes*), a work which includes a biography of the messenger.

In his biography of the messenger, Ibn Saʿd presented twelve traditions about the qualities (*ṣifa*) of the messenger of Islam he claimed could be found in the Torah and Gospel.[170] Ibn Saʿd supplied chains of transmission (*isnāds*) for the traditions which often end in figures such as Kaʿb al-Aḥbār and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām —Jews who converted to Islam according to Muslim sources.

Ibn Saʿd's collection of traditions begins with several short sayings of Kaʿb al-Aḥbār in which he related qualities of the messenger of Islam which he finds in the Torah.[171] A repeated expression in these sayings is that, "He is neither rough nor harsh. He is neither noisy in the markets nor returns evil for evil, but he pardons and forgives." The fourth tradition is a longer saying attributed to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām.[172] Ibn Salām "quoted" the following from the Torah:

> O Prophet! Lo! We have sent you as a witness and bringer of good tidings and a warner, and as protector of the *ummiyyūn*.

> You are my servant and apostle. I have named you *mutawakkil*, who is neither harsh nor coarse, and who does not make noise in the markets nor returns evil for evil but who forgives and pardons. I shall not cause him to die until I make the crude creed straight and the people recite, "There is no god but Allah." He will make blind eyes see, deaf ears hear and hard hearts soft.[173]

According to this tradition, Kaʿb al-Aḥbār hears the news of Ibn Salām's "quotation" from the Torah and confirms it, except for three words.

In another tradition, an unnamed Jew says the messenger of Islam has fulfilled every quality mentioned about him in the Torah except forbearance (*ḥilm*).[174] The Jew then conducts some financial dealings with the messenger of Islam and finds that even this quality is fulfilled. "I have tested his forbearance today and I found it as it has been described (*waṣafa*) in the Torah." According to this tradition, the Jew's entire family becomes Muslim through this experience, "except an old man of 100 years."

These traditions show open trust that "mention" (*dhikr*) of the messenger of Islam can be found in the Torah. The central characters are Jews who know the Torah well. There is no hint of corruption of the Torah in the past or an act of falsification in the present. Rather, the Torah is brought into the story as an intact and authoritative source to attest to the messenger of Islam.

Several of the remaining traditions seem to be fragments of Ibn Salām's Torah "quotation," attributed to various transmitters.[175] However, Ibn Saʿd also passed on a very interesting story about a Christian and a copy of the Gospel.[176] In this tradition, Sahl "the *mawlā* of ʿUtayba" says that he once read a copy (*muṣḥaf*) of the Gospel belonging to his uncle. He discovers that "some leaves (*waraq*) seemed to be pasted with an adhesive." When Sahl tears the leaves open, he finds written these qualities of the messenger of Islam:

> He will be of neither short nor tall stature. He will be of white complexion with two locks. Between his two shoulders there is a seal. He will often sit with his legs folded. He will not accept *ṣadaqa*. He will ride the donkey and the camel. He will milk the she goat and put on a patched shirt, and he who does that is free from pride and he will do that. He will be a descendant of Ismāʿīl, and his name will be Aḥmad.

According to this tradition the uncle is angry with Sahl for opening the leaves, beats Sahl, then denies that the prophet described in these pages has appeared.

This story certainly pictures an act of tampering, but it is not an act of falsification. The "mention (*dhikr*) of Muḥammad" is found in the Gospel, but Sahl's uncle wants to conceal it. In this tradition, the "quotation" takes center stage. Its existence is essential for the claim of scriptural attestation to the messenger of Islam. Those in possession of the Gospel, however, are portrayed as wanting to conceal and deny the attestation.

3. Intact scriptures in the *ḥadīth*

The story of intact scriptures continues in the traditions collected in the third century of Islam by al-Bukhārī. Al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* is regarded by Sunni Muslims as the most authentic of all *ḥadīth* compilations.

Al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* contains several traditions which tell of encounters between the messenger of Islam and the Jews of Medina. These traditions picture an intact Torah in the hands of the Jews. Many Muslims today are not aware of these traditions—perhaps due to the fame of a single falsification tradition in the *Saḥīḥ*. This famous tradition is discussed thoroughly in Chapter 5. However, even this tradition must be understood in the context of the predominance of traditions picturing an intact text.

A good example of the story in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is this interesting description of the Jews of Medina: "The people of the book used to read the Torah in Hebrew and explain (*fasara*) it in Arabic to the people of Islam. Then Allah's messenger said, "Do not believe the people of the Scripture, and do not disbelieve them, but say, 'we believe in Allah and whatever has been revealed…'"[177] In this scene there seems to be some uncertainty about the contents of the Torah and some suspicion of the People of the Book. However, there is no hint of a corrupt Torah or an act of falsification.

A similar tradition concerns the Gospel. The narrative setting is the time immediately after *Jibrīl* gives the messenger of Islam his first recitation, when his wife Khadīja is looking for an explanation.[178] Khadīja takes the messenger of Islam to her cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal, who became a Christian prior to Islam and used to write with Hebrew letters. "He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write." Waraqa asks the messenger of Islam to relate his experience, then reassures the messenger that *Jibrīl* had also been sent to Moses.

The concern in this *ḥadīth* is not with a corrupted text or an act of falsification. The significance of Waraqa's Christian faith and knowledge of the Gospel is that he would have some perspective on the meeting with *Jibrīl* and the experience of recitation the messenger of Islam is describing.

A third example is al-Bukhārī's version of the stoning verse story. He offered this story not in connection with Q 5:41, but rather to explain Q 3:93: "Say, 'Bring the Torah and recite it (*atlūhā*), if you are truthful.'"[179] The outlines of this famous episode are already familiar from Muqātil, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn Isḥāq. However, some of the details are helpful for determining the concept of the earlier scriptures held by Muslims in the middle of the third Islamic century. After the Jews tell the messenger of Islam that they do not find the command of stoning in the Torah, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām accuses them of lying and orders them to bring a copy of the Torah and recite it (Q 3:93). The Jewish religious teacher places his hand over

the verse of stoning and reads what is above and below his hand. Ibn Salām removes (*naza ʿa*) the teacher's hand from the verse and challenges, "What is this?"[180] When the Jews see the verse, they admit, "This is the verse of stoning."

Every detail of this story conceives of an intact Torah in the possession of the Jews of Medina. In both Q 3:93 and al-Bukhārī's stoning verse story, the Torah is only spoken of with the greatest respect.[181] The verse also has a time stamp: two present-tense imperatives the messenger is commanded to speak. All versions of this episode presented thus far confirm that the stoning verse was found in the Torah during the career of the messenger of Islam. The Torah was not found to be corrupt, nor do the Muslim accounts narrate an action of falsification. This episode leaves no uncertainty about the integrity of the Torah. However, as we learn in later chapters, the stoning verse story may represent some uncertainty about the integrity of the Qur'an.

4. Intact scriptures in the *Taʾrīkh* of al-Ṭabarī

We have already encountered the thought of al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) in his massive Qur'an commentary, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*. Equally famous is al-Ṭabarī's history, known as *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk* (*History of the apostles and kings*). The story of Islam's messenger is only a small part of this history, which also includes an account of pre-Islamic peoples back to Creation and from the early Muslim conquests right up to the ʿAbbāsid Empire of 915 A.D.

In this separate genre, cut loose from the constraints of the Qur'an, what did al-Ṭabarī say about the Jews, the Christians, and their scriptures? Many episodes are similar to what we have found in *sīra* and *ḥadīth*. In one scene, the messenger of Islam makes a speech to the Banū Qaynuqāʿ, the first of three Jewish tribes in Medina to come into conflict with the Muslims.[182] The occasion is the tribe's negative behavior toward the messenger of Islam after the battle of Badr.

The messenger of Islam assembles the tribe in the market of the Banū Qaynuqāʿ and says, "O Jews, beware lest Allah bring on you the like of the retribution which he brought on Quraysh. Submit (*aslamū*), for you know that I am a prophet sent. You find this in your book (*tajidūna dhālika fī kitābikum*) and in Allah's covenant with you.'"[183] Rather than denying the statement, the Jews' response is to say the Muslims were victorious at Badr only because the enemy did not know how to fight. Al-Ṭabarī was not concerned here with corrupted scriptures or an act of falsification, but with what he considered an inappropriate response to the messenger of Islam and his appeal to submit.

Another fascinating example is the story al-Ṭabarī told about Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor at the time of the Arab conquests.[184] The basic story also appears several times in the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.[185] According to al-Ṭabarī, the messenger of Islam sends a letter to Heraclius commanding him to "submit." Heraclius meets and has a conversation with Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb in Jerusalem. Heraclius asks Abū Sufyān eleven questions about the character and behavior of the messenger of Islam, then summarizes and analyses Abū Sufyān's answers. The Byzantine emperor concludes that Islam's messenger does indeed possess the qualities of a prophet. Heraclius then asks for the letter from Islam's messenger, which according to al-Bukhārī is delivered by Diḥya al-Kalbī.

Al-Ṭabarī took the episode further to bring in the earlier scriptures. In al-Ṭabarī's account, Heraclius takes some time to decide how to respond to the letter from Islam's messenger. He writes to a man in "*Rūm*" who can read in Hebrew "what they read telling him about [the messenger's] affair and describing his circumstances and telling him about what had come from him." The man in Rome sends the reply, "He is the prophet whom we expect: there is no doubt about it, so follow him and believe in him."[186]

Heraclius then challenges the Roman generals. "By Allah," Heraclius testifies, "[Islam's messenger] is truly the prophet whom we expect and find in our books, so come and let us follow him and

believe in him that it may be well with us in this world and the next."[187] Al-Ṭabarī added two other traditions in which Heraclius asserts that the Christian scriptures prophesy the sending of the messenger. In one tradition, Heraclius claims before the Byzantines, "You know…that this man is a prophet who has been sent; we find him in our book; we know him by his description (*ṣifa*)."[188] However, Heraclius is afraid that the Byzantines will kill him, so he sends Diḥya to a bishop named Ḍaghāṭir, whom Heraclius says has a stronger reputation among the Byzantines than he. When Diḥya tells Ḍaghāṭir about the messenger's invitation, the bishop replies, "Your master is a prophet who has been sent; we know him by his description (*ṣifa*), and we find him mentioned by name in our books." The bishop then converts to Islam, confesses the *shahāda* in church, and is immediately killed by the Christians.[189]

An important aspect of these details for our examination of Muslim accusations against the Bible is that this story tells of people possessing earlier scriptures well outside of the *ḥijāz*—in Christian Jerusalem and as far away as Rome. According to this story, the earlier scriptures exist there and contain references to the messenger of Islam. There is no suggestion here that the earlier scriptures are corrupted or falsified. However, as often happens in this story, the people who possess those scriptures are portrayed as responding in diverse ways to the messenger of Islam.

5. Intact scriptures in the *asbāb al-nuzūl*

Many of the episodes reported in Chapters 3 and 4 from commentaries, *Sīra*, and other early Muslim genres are technically *asbāb al-nuzūl* ("occasions of sending down"), that is, the circumstances in which Muslims believe parts of the Qur'an were first recited. However, Muslim scholars later produced works that are solely concerned with listing these *asbāb*. The best known of these works is the *Kitāb asbāb al-nuzūl* of al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075). Al-Wāḥidī's collection of occasions takes us well into the fourth century of Islam,

and much of it was picked up by al-Suyūṭī at the end of the fifteenth century.

Among the many interesting stories which al-Wāḥidī offered as occasions of recitation is the episode he associated with Q 2:98.[190] Al-Wāḥidī wrote that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb used to visit the Jews of Medina when they were studying the Torah. ʿUmar would "marvel at how the Torah concurs (*muwāfaqa*) with the Qur'an and how the Qur'an concurs with the Torah." According to al-Wāḥidī, the Jews love ʿUmar because he visits them and enjoys their company. ʿUmar explains, "I come to marvel at how the books of Allah confirm (*taṣdīq*) each other, the agreement (*muwāfaqa*) of the Torah [with] the Qur'ān, and the agreement of the Qur'ān with the Torah."[191]

There is no anxiety in this episode regarding the text of the Torah. The story continues that ʿUmar urges the Jews to tell him whether they knew (*ʿalima*) that Islam's messenger was the apostle of Allah. Their rabbi says they knew this. ʿUmar responds that they are the most deserving of perdition if they know that he is the apostle of Allah but do not follow (*tabiʿa*) him. In this story too, the problem is not with the Torah but with the response to the messenger of Islam.

In another *sabab* associated with Q 3:12, al-Wāḥidī reported a speech of the Jews of Medina after the Muslim victory at the battle of Badr: "By Allah, this is the *ummī* prophet who was announced to us by Moses and whose attribute (*naʿt*) and description (*ṣifa*) we find in our Scriptures."[192] Islam's messenger also appeals to the Jews to submit (*aslama*), saying, "You know that I am a sent prophet. You find that in your Scripture and in Allah's covenant with you." The Jews want to believe in and follow the messenger of Islam, but they wait until the Muslim defeat in the battle of Uhud, then become skeptical and do not submit.

Once again, the issue is not a corrupted text or an act of falsification but a failure to respond positively to alleged mention of the messenger of Islam in an intact Torah.

Some of al-Wāḥidī's occasions also relate to the Gospel. For example, the Qur'an often refers to scenes in which listeners are accusing the messenger. One accusation is that the messenger is taking his recitations from others: "Only a man teaches him" (Q 16:103). Al-Wāḥidī associates this verse with two Christian youths who make swords in Mecca. "They also could read the Scriptures in their own tongue."[193] The messenger of Islam used to pass by them and listen to their reading. Therefore, the associators used to say, "He is being taught by them." One could reasonably assume that one of the scriptures referred to here by al-Wāḥidī is the Gospel, [194] and yet he was unconcerned about corruption or falsification of text. Rather, he was defending the messenger of Islam from the accusation of taking his recitations from others.

This chapter has given only a small selection from a virtually unlimited supply of similar episodes that tell the same basic story. To the famous Muslim sources quoted in this and the previous chapter —*tafsīr*, *sīra*, *ḥadīth*, *asbāb al-nuzūl*, and *taʾrīkh*—one could add *maghāzī*, *futūḥ,* and *ayyām*.[195] All these sources tell the story that references to the messenger of Islam were to be found in the scriptures of the People of the Book in the seventh century. In fact, these sources offer "quotations" from the Torah and Gospel. The Torah and the Gospel are presented as touchstones of authority for attestation to the messenger of Islam and even for perspective on the experience of his first recitation. The problem these sources identify is that some of the People of the Book respond negatively to the appearance of the messenger of Islam. They do not acknowledge that the messenger matches the references to him in the scriptures they possess.

Some of these episodes reveal a great deal of uncertainty among Muslims of the first centuries of Islam about the actual contents of the earlier scriptures. However, it is clear there was no consensus among these sources that the earlier scriptures existed in a corrupted state at the time of the origins of Islam. The frequency of

tales of concealing and negative responses, and their colorful variety, indicates that the majority view among Muslims of the early centuries of Islam was that the earlier scriptures were intact in the seventh century.

To this point, therefore, we have determined that neither the Qur'an itself, nor the first Muslim commentators on the Qur'an, nor the stories transmitted by other Muslim genres makes a clear and distinct accusation about the physical alteration of the earlier scriptures. The accusations that do appear in these early Muslim works need to be analyzed in the context of the majority understanding, which is the focus of the next chapte

CHAPTER FIVE

The Matter of the Messenger

In Chapter 3, we saw that most of the verses from the Qur'an used by Muslim polemicists past and present to support their accusation of corruption of the text of the Bible were not, in fact, understood by classical Muslim commentators on the Qur'an to mean textual corruption. Instead, Muslim commentators pictured various acts of "tampering" which assumed intact scriptures in the possession of the Jews (and sometimes Christians) of Medina during the rule of the messenger of Islam. Chapter 4 demonstrated a similar scenario in early writings in several other Muslim genres.

However, there are two particular verses from the Qur'an that have been interpreted to mean accusations of falsification even in some commentaries. They are Q 2:79 and 3:78. Because the interpretations of these two verses in some commentaries are so different from the interpretations of the vast majority of tampering verses, they deserve special attention. Accusations of falsification are often not examined for what they actually claim. Their claims must therefore be carefully described and analyzed, and then tested against history and scholarship. This chapter presents just such an investigation of these two verses and the interpretations associated with them.

Just as most of the stories of tampering in commentaries on the Qur'ān and other early Muslim writings have to do with the "matter of Muḥammad," so the accusations of falsification focus on alleged references to the messenger of Islam in the earlier scriptures,

especially the Torah. Most of the accusations in the early centuries of Islam picture an action of physically changing a copy of the text of scripture, especially the Torah, and especially by the Jews of Medina in the early seventh century, in response to the appearance of Islam's messenger.

This chapter presents Q 2:79 and 3:78 as they appear in the Qur'an, first purely in their own words and then in their surrounding qur'anic contexts. Next, Muslim understandings of the verses are presented as provided by the great classical commentaries of the Islamic interpretive tradition. Of course, a great number of commentaries could be researched for their interpretations of the two verses, but most Muslim scholars look to the series of major commentaries selected for examination in this chapter. A number of similar accusations that appear in other Muslim works will also be described.

A striking observation on these accusations is that almost all of them focus on the messenger of Islam, particularly on the Muslim claim that the Jews of Medina removed references to the messenger from the Torah in hostile response to his appearance. There are exceptions to this rule, a number of which are described and analyzed. However, the majority accusation is subsequently summarized and considered with the help of qur'anic scholars from around the world.

1. Two ambiguous verses

When accusations of falsification appear in Muslim commentaries on the Qur'an or works of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, it is usually in the interpretations of two particular verses, Q 2:79 and 3:78. Taken on their own, these two verses do not say anything definite about the falsification of the Bible. It is not clear how they came to be associated with accusations of falsification in some commentaries.

For example, consider the text of Q 2:79:

> So woe to those who write the book (*kitāb*) with their hands, then say this is from Allah, in order to purchase a small gain with it. Woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn.

The first thing to notice about this verse is that it specifies no particular scripture, but merely indicates *al-kitāb* ("the writing" or "the book"). As we saw in Chapter 2, the Qur'an names the *Tawrāt*, *Inǰīl*, and *Zabūr* at many places—but not here. Therefore, the location of the action is not clear. Second, the actors are not specified. The actors are simply "those" (*alladhīna*). Third, the action is not clearly focused. None of the verbs from the semantic field of tampering appears here, such as *ḥarrafa* or *baddala*. Instead, the ordinary verb, "to write" (*kataba*), describes the action. They "write the book with their hands." The verse uses the imperfect tense of the verb, which means the action happens at the same time as the recitation or in the future. But what do they write? Again, the verse itself provides no specific information.

If the verse itself does not lead the reader to a clear accusation of falsification of the earlier scriptures, neither does the context in the Qur'an. We have seen in Chapter 3 that the earliest Muslim commentators understood Q 2:75 to be a story of verbal change during the time of Moses. The verses in between seem to refer to actions of deception (2:76), concealment (2:77), and guessing (2:78). No earlier scripture is named in the context, and neither Jews nor Christians are named—though stories about the Children of Israel are not far off.

The same lack of clarity seems to characterize the second verse, Q 3:78:

> [There is] a party of them [who] twist their tongues with the book (*kitāb*) so that you may think it is from the book, when it is not from the book. And they say, it is from Allah, when it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie against Allah knowingly.

Like Q 2:79, this verse does not name one of the earlier scriptures, but simply gives *al-kitāb*. The actors are not specified but are described as a group or sect of "them" (*hum*). By all appearances, the verse refers to a verbal action: twisting (*lawā*) their tongues. Again, all the verbs are in the imperfect tense, which means the action is contemporary with the recitation. The unnamed actors lie: they say "it" is from the book, and from Allah, when it is not. The "it" that "they" say is also not identified.

The context of Q 3:78 suggests the actors may be the People of the Book (Q 3:71, 72, 75), but no earlier scripture is named in the immediate context. The reader is not prepared by the preceding context to understand Q 3:78 as an accusation of falsification. Q 3:71 mentions actions of confusing truth with falsehood and concealing the truth. As we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, "concealing" assumes an intact text of scripture: people cannot "conceal the truth" in a corrupted scripture. An accusation of concealing therefore clashes logically with an accusation of falsification.

These simple observations on Q 2:79 and 3:78 clearly show that the two verses on their own cannot be said to "mean" that the Jews falsified the Torah. However, this is exactly what some Muslim commentators interpreted them to mean.

2. Anxiety about the messenger

Q 2:79 – those who write the book with their hands

Muslim scholars have offered their interpretations of Q 2:79 and 3:78 from the eighth century all the way to the present. Within this impressive Islamic interpretive tradition, particular commentators and their famous commentaries have been considered especially authoritative. Not all of these commentaries include accusations of falsification at Q 2:79 and 3:78. However, in this chapter, we describe all of the accusations of falsification that do appear. The

striking trend in these accusations is their focus on alleged references to the messenger of Islam in the Torah.

The commentary of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 767) is included in this survey because it is the earliest complete Muslim commentary on the Qur'an in existence. On Q 2:79, Muqātil wrote that the unidentified "those" in the verse are the chiefs of the Jews of Medina.[196] The Jews erased (*maḥā*) the description (*naʿt*) of Islam's messenger from the Torah, according to Muqātil, and wrote something other than his description. The Jewish leaders then told the false description to the other Jews. "What their hands have written," Muqātil wrote, is "the alteration (*taghyīr*) of the description of Muḥammad" in the Torah.[197]

Some consider the commentary attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās to be transmitting Muslim understandings of the Qur'an from a time even earlier than Muqātil. In the *Tanwīr al-miqbās*, Ibn ʿAbbās wrote that the interpretation of "those who write the book with their hands" is that they "change the description and traits of Muḥammad…in the book."[198]

The first of the great classical Muslim commentaries on the Qur'an was the *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* of al-Ṭabarī. On Q 2:79, al-Ṭabarī offered the general interpretation that the Jews of the Children of Israel altered the book of Allah and wrote a book according to their own interpretations.[199] However, he cited two traditions that are more specific about the object of alteration. First he transmitted a tradition attributed to Abū ʾl-ʿĀliya, "They took up (*ʿamada*) what Allah sent down in their book of the description of Muḥammad, then tampered with (*ḥarrafa*) it from its places."[200] Then he cited a substantial tradition attributed to ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān that accuses the Jews of adding to the Torah whatever they liked and erasing what they did not like. "And they erased the name of Muḥammad from the Torah."[201]

The Spanish commentator al-Qurṭubī discussed a variety of questions (*masāʾil*) in his interpretation of Q 2:79.[202] His fifth question is about the phrase, "in order to purchase a small gain with

it." Here al-Qurṭubī related an accusation attributed to Ibn Isḥāq and al-Kalbī. According to this tradition, the description (*ṣifa*) of the messenger of Islam is contained in the books of the Jews. Those books describe him as of medium height (*rabʿa*) and of brown complexion (*asmar*). But the Jews make him a man of lank hair (*sabṭ*) and tall (*ṭawīl*) stature. Then they tell their companions and followers to compare the appearance of the messenger with the false description they made, and observe, "It does not resemble this description (*naʿt*)."[203] In this tradition, the guilty actors are the rabbis (*aḥbār*) and the scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*). The reason they alter (*ghayyara*) is that they fear if they report the true description of the messenger, they will lose their food and provisions.

In his interpretation of Q 2:79, Ibn Kathīr transmitted two interesting traditions of accusation. [204] The first tradition mentions ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān in its chain of transmission and seems similar to the tradition transmitted by al-Ṭabarī. Ibn Kathīr wrote that Q 2:79 descended concerning the Jews, "because they tampered with the Torah, adding what they liked and erasing from it what they did not like, and they erased the name of Muḥammad, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, from the Torah."

The second falsification accusation given by Ibn Kathīr is a *ḥadith* he attributed to Zuhrī and Ibn ʿAbbās. In the tradition, the messenger of Islam asks the community of Muslims why they ask the People of the Book about anything when the "book of Allah" that he revealed to the messenger is Allah's newer message. The messenger tells the Muslims that Allah has informed them "that the People of the Book tampered (*baddala*) with the book of Allah and changed (*ghayyara*) it, and wrote the book with their hands."

Two commentators both called Jalāl (the *Jalālayn*), al-Suyuṭī and al-Mahallī, wrote a short commentary in the ninth century of Islam (fifteenth century A.D.) that has proven very popular among ordinary Muslims because of its handy length. The commentary is a kind of digest or short summary of the long classical commentaries. On Q 2:79, the Jalālayn wrote that the Jews changed (*ghayyara*) the

description (*ṣifa*) of the prophet in the Torah, as well as the verse of stoning and other unspecified things.[205]

Al-Shawkānī (1759-1834), a Yemeni commentator, showed how Muslim scholars were interpreting Q 2:79 more than a thousand years after Muqātil and shortly before the career of Rahmat Allah Kairanwi. In his commentary titled *Tafsīr fatḥ al-qadīr*,[206] al-Shawkānī wrote about the unidentified "those" of Q 2:79:

> [T]hey are the rabbis of the Jews, and they found the characteristics (*ṣifa*) of the prophet (PBUH) written in the Torah as black (*akḥal*) eyes, medium height (*rabʿa*), curly hair (*jaʿd al-shaʿar*) and a handsome face (*ḥasan al-wajh*). So when they found him in the Torah they erased (*maḥā*) him out of envy (*ḥasadan*) and injustice (*baghyan*). Then a group from the Quraysh came to them, and said, "Do you find an *ummī* prophet in the Torah?" So they said, "Yes, we find him tall (*ṭawīlan*), with blue eyes (*azraq*) and lank hair (*sabṭ al-shaʿar*). So the Quraysh disowned [him] and said, "This one is not from us (*laysa hādha minnā*)."

The interesting feature of this accusation is that it not only focuses purely on the messenger of Islam, but—like al-Qurṭubī—also makes a claim about the characteristics of the messenger of Islam that appeared in the Torah before they were erased, as well as the false characteristics substituted into the now-falsified Torah.

Q 3:78 – those who twist their tongues with the book

From all appearances, Q 3:78 seems to refer to a verbal action of some kind. However, a number of Muslim commentators included accusations of textual falsification in their explanations of this verse. Muqātil interpreted "it is not part of the book" to mean the Jews of Medina wrote something other than the description (*naʿt*) of Islam's messenger, "and they erased (*maḥā*) his description."[207] Al-Ṭabarī did not mention the messenger in his interpretation of the verse, but made the accusation that the Jews add (*alḥaqa*) to "the book of Allah" that which is not from Allah.[208] Al-Ṭabarī also indicated his

concept of the dating of this action: the actors were the Jews "who lived around the city of Allah's apostle in his era."

Al-Zamakhsharī included a tradition of falsification at Q 3:78, which he attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās:[209] "They are the Jews who gave precedence to Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf. They changed (*ghayyara*) the Torah and wrote a book substituting (*baddala*) in it the characteristics (*ṣifa*) of the messenger of Allah, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him. Then the Qurayẓa took what they wrote and confused (*khalaṭa*) it with the book which they had."[210]

As described in Chapter 3, at Q 3:78 al-Rāzī questioned whether *taḥrīf* could be inserted into the Torah, "with its great renown among people." However, whenever he did suggest an object of possible falsification, it always related to alleged references in the Torah to the messenger of Islam. al-Rāzī mentioned the "prophethood (*nabuwwa*) of Muḥammad" three times[211] and his "description (*naʿt*)" twice.[212]

Not all of the classical commentaries included accusations of textual falsification at Q 3:78. For example, the Jalālayn picked up on the verbal action that seems to be the most obvious sense of "they twist their tongues with the book." This phrase means, wrote the two Jalāls, "they bend (*ʿaṭafa*) its recitation from the revealed to what they tampered with from the description (*naʿt*) of the prophet."[213]

Of all the alternatives, Ibn Kathīr's interpretation of the verse is the most interesting. Ibn Kathīr transmitted a tradition from al-Bukhārī and Ibn ʿAbbās that no one from among Allah's creation can remove (*zawwala*) a word from one of the books of Allah. He attributed to Wahb ibn Munabbih the statement that "The Torah and the Gospel remain as Allah revealed them, and not one letter from them was changed (*ghayyara*)." According to Ibn Abī Ḥātim, wrote Ibn Kathīr, "as for Allah's books, they are protected (*maḥfūẓ*) and not changed (*ḥawwala*)." Rather, he wrote, the verse means that the Jews give a false interpretation (*taʾwīl*) to the book. They also

misguide the people, using other books they used to write themselves.[214]

3. The main accusation by far

It is certainly remarkable that throughout the interpretive tradition of Islam, from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries and from huge multi-volume works to the digest of the Jalālayn, Muslim commentators who included accusations of falsification at Q 2:79 or 3:78 considered the main object of change to be the alleged description of the messenger of Islam. Similarly, they named the main location of change as the Torah, and the main falsifiers as the Jews of Medina. Some exegetes indeed mentioned the "verse of stoning." But as we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, Muslim stoning verse stories in *tafsīr* and other genres assume an intact Torah. Furthermore, existing copies of the Torah from both before and after the seventh century say clearly to put adulterers to death. A few exegetes mention the falsification of various commandments,[215] but they are not specified, and therefore are impossible to trace. Therefore the accusation that the Jews of Medina changed the description of the messenger of Islam in the Torah emerges as by far the main accusation of falsification for more than a thousand years.

4. Brown complexion and medium height

The object of falsification specified by the majority of accusations in the commentaries is also the focus of some other early Muslim writings. For example, the explanation of the occasion (*sabab*) of recitation for Q 2:79 in al-Wāḥidī's (d. 1075) *Asbāb al-nuzūl* is fascinating for its similarity to the commentaries.

> This was sent down concerning those who changed (*ghayyara*) the description (*ṣifa*) of the prophet, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, and substituted (*baddala*) his traits (*naʿt*). al-Kalbī mentioned… "They changed the description of

> Allah's messenger, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, in their book. They made him a man of lank hair (*sabṭ*) and tall (*ṭawīl*) stature [when] he was of medium height (*rab ʿa*) and of brown complexion (*asmar*). They said to their companions and followers: 'Look at the description of the prophet who will be sent at the end of time; his traits do not match that of this [man].' The Jewish rabbis and scholars used to gain some worldly benefits from the Jewish people and so they were afraid of losing this gain if they were ever to show the [real] description. It is for this reason that they changed [it]."[216]

This *sabab* is instructive for many reasons. First, the focus of the accusation is exclusively on the alleged "description of the prophet" in the earlier scriptures. Second, the Jewish leaders are again put in the role of the guilty actors, and their motivation is explained. Third, the tradition from al-Kalbī actually specifies what is changed—the complexion and height of the messenger of Islam. Fourth, there is a definite time stamp on the whole tradition: the Jewish leaders change the description of the messenger at the time he is "sent" in the first half of the seventh century so that the rest of the Jews of Medina will not recognize him as the one mentioned in the Torah. In order for this accusation to make sense, the Jewish leaders would need to have seen the messenger to know what to change about his description in their book. Finally, the accusation in this famous *sabab* is not of a universal, systematic falsification of all copies of the Torah from Spain to India. Rather, the accusation is of an alteration of a single copy of the Torah in the possession of the Jews of Medina.

5. Exceptions to the rule

In Chapter 3 we noted that at one of the *ḥarrafa* verses, Q 5:13, al-Ṭabarī made an accusation of falsification. Since this accusation is different from the majority accusation in the commentaries, it is included here. Al-Ṭabarī wrote about the Children of Israel:[217]

> They tampered with (*ḥarrafa*) the speech (*kalām*) of their Lord which he sent down upon their prophet Moses, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, and it is the Torah. So they changed (*baddala*) it and wrote with their hands other than what Allah, exalted and powerful, sent down upon their prophet. They said to the ignorant of the people, "This is that word (*kalām*) of Allah which he sent down upon his prophet Moses"—may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him —"and the Torah which he revealed to him." And this characterized the Jews in the centuries after Moses, some of who reached the era of our prophet Muḥammad,[218] may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him.

One other important exception to the majority accusation in Muslim commentaries is the *ḥadīth* we have already seen in Ibn Kathīr's interpretation of Q 2:79. This exception is the speech attributed to the messenger of Islam about questioning the People of the Book. The tradition is actually well known from the *ḥadīth* collection of al-Bukhārī.[219] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi quoted it in two versions in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*.[220] The speech declares that Allah told the Muslims that the People of the Book substituted (*baddala*) what Allah wrote and changed (*ghayyara*) the book with their hands.

Though this is a famous tradition, established for many Muslims beyond doubt, it is important to observe what it actually says and doesn't say. First, its claim that the People of the Book "changed" the book rests purely on the authority of the messenger of Islam. No evidence is offered for the accusation, and no particular object of falsification is identified. Therefore, it is impossible to evaluate the claim—one must simply accept or not accept the authority of the messenger.

Second, the tradition contradicts what we know from the Qur'an. We saw in Chapter 3 that the verb *baddala* is used in the Qur'an for an action Muslim commentators have consistently described as a verbal change (Q 2:59, 7:162). *Baddala* is never used in association with a writing from Allah. Also, the verb *ghayyara* does not appear in

the Qur'an in relation to the theme of tampering with the earlier scriptures. Instead, as we showed in Chapter 2, the Qur'an speaks of the scriptures of the People of the Book only in the most positive and respectful terms. When a particular scripture is actually named, it is never associated with any kind of verb or expression of alteration. University of Notre Dame professor Gabriel Said Reynolds argued that al-Bukhārī's *ḥadīth* does not come from the time of Islam's messenger but rather from a later time when Muslim scholars were trying to understand the biblical narratives in the Qur'an and began to ask Jews and Christians about them ("How do you ask the People of the Book…?"). The *ḥadīth* was meant to condemn this practice.[221]

Third, al-Bukhārī's tradition contradicts the vast majority of stories of encounter with the messenger of Islam told in Muslim commentaries and other early Islamic writings—including *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. As became abundantly clear in Chapter 4, almost all of these stories picture an intact Torah in the hands of the Jews of Medina. There, the messenger of Islam shows respect to a copy of the Torah and even appeals to the Torah for legal rulings. The action of the Jews is most often concealing a reference. The writers clearly preferred an accusation of obstinacy in the face of scriptural attestation to an accusation of falsification.

Fourth, besides contradicting the Qur'an and the understandings of Muslim commentators, the tradition has several other curious features. For example, the messenger speaks about the book (*kitāb*) that was revealed to him, and yet Muslim tradition tells of the recitations being collected into a book only after the death of the messenger. There also seems to be an undercurrent of resentment, and perhaps some anger, toward the People of the Book in the tradition. The messenger says that he has never seen any of them asking Muslims what has been revealed to them, even though their book contains the more recent information. So why should Muslims ask the People of the Book about anything?

As for al-Ṭabarī's exegesis of Q 5:13, it is not clear what he meant by the writing that "characterized the Jews in the centuries after Moses." A number of scholars have suggested that al-Ṭabarī was thinking of a second book. Even on Q 2:79, Camilla Adang wrote that Ṭabarī probably meant to say that the tamperers wrote "a separate book, alongside the Torah."[222] The exegete himself does not use the verbs of subtracting from and adding to the Torah that would clearly specify a falsification of the text. In this reading, the Jews produce a writing from their own minds and then deceive the people by promoting it to them as the Torah.

Andrew Rippin drew attention to three traditions included in al-Ṭabarī's exegesis of Q 2:79 which seem to simply indicate the Jews write books and claim they are from Allah.[223] He suggested these traditions may have nothing to do with the Torah or its alteration and speculated that the *kitāb* in view might be the *Mishnah* or the *Talmud*.[224] Other scholars who have pursued this line of explanation are Ignaz Goldziher,[225] Hartmut Hirschfeld,[226] William Montgomery Watt,[227] and Hava Lazarus-Yafeh.[228] Support for this suggestion in al-Ṭabarī's commentary comes in his explanations of Q 2:42 and 3:71, where Ibn Zayd explains "confounding the truth with falsehood" as mixing up "the Torah which Allah sent down upon Moses" with "that which they wrote with their hands."[229]

In al-Ṭabarī's mind, for the Jews to write a book that is not the Torah and claim that it is the Torah is reprehensible. But he may understand it to mean simply that the Jews are using a second book alongside the Torah. In a story attributed to Ibn Zayd at Q 2:75, the Jewish leaders keep a book with false rulings alongside the Torah and choose which book to use based on the bribes of the supplicants. In this scenario, the Jews write a book that is definitely not the Torah, but the Torah itself remains unscathed. Similarly, at Q 2:79, Ṭabarī finds that the Jews write a book out of their own interpretations, and that their deception of the uneducated people is based on the common people lacking ability to distinguish between

the false book and the Torah. Another reason to believe that Ṭabarī may have had more than one book in mind comes from a scenario which the exegete offered in explanation of the phrase, "what the Satans recited over Solomon's kingdom," at Q 2:102:

> The Jews who were in Madīna during the time of the prophet contended with him through the Torah, but found the Torah to be in full agreement with the Qur'ān, commanding them to follow Muḥammad and to assent to all that the Qur'ān enjoins. They instead disputed with him on the basis of books which people wrote down from the dictation of soothsayers (*kuhhan*) who lived during the time of Solomon.[230]

Conclusions

To this point in *The gentle answer*, we have investigated what the Qur'an says about the earlier scriptures and examined what Muslim commentators have written about qur'anic verses that seem to refer to various actions of "tampering" with scripture. We are now in a position to draw some worthwhile conclusions.

The Qur'an speaks about the earlier scriptures only in the most positive and respectful terms. When it actually names *Tawrāt*, *Zabūr* and *Injīl*, it never associates these scriptures with a verb or expression of tampering. Some verses which use more general objects such as "book," "speech," or "words" and contain verbs or expressions of tampering have been understood by Muslims to be about the earlier scriptures. However, Muslim commentators have understood the vast majority of these verses to refer to various actions of resistance to the messenger of Islam that assume an intact Torah in the possession of the Jews of Medina. Similar stories of encounter with the messenger of Islam are found abundantly in many other Muslim genres, such as *sīra*, *ḥadīth*, *taʾrīkh* and *asbāb al-nuzūl*.

This leaves a few verses some Muslim commentators have interpreted to mean an action of falsification. As we have shown in this chapter, most of the accusations of falsification that commentaries have included in their explanations of Q 2:79 and 3:78 focus on alleged references to the messenger of Islam in the Torah. The majority accusation against the Bible made by Muslim commentaries on the Qur'an throughout the history of Islam is that the Jews of Medina, in the first half of the seventh century, changed or removed references to the messenger of Islam in the Torah in response to the messenger's appearance.

This is the central Muslim accusation of the falsification of the earlier scriptures. But is it true? The following chapter analyzes and evaluates this key accusation in a scholarly, historical, and scientific manner.

CHAPTER SIX

The Accusation is False

During the first centuries of Islam, the main Muslim accusation of the falsification of the earlier scriptures was that the Jews of Medina, in the first half of the seventh century, removed or changed references to the messenger of Islam from the Torah.

This central accusation was preserved in works of *tafsīr* (Qur'an commentary) and *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation), and in this way passed into the great mass of Islamic tradition that Muslims have treasured for a thousand years, right up to modern times. For this reason, we continue to hear this particular accusation today.

Until relatively recently, the Muslim accusation of removing references to the messenger of Islam from the Bible could be made without fear of being tested by hard evidence. That is, no one was able to compare the biblical manuscripts from before the seventh century with the manuscripts from after the seventh century to see whether there was any evidence for the accusation. The accusation could take advantage of this "silence" to advance a bare polemical claim. However, during the past century, a number of very important discoveries have cast scholarly light on the accusation. Manuscripts of the Torah and Gospel dated to before the seventh century have been discovered and are now available for open study. It is now possible to remove the question from the area of polemics and consider it as a purely academic matter.

So, what does the scholarly evidence show?

If the manuscripts of the Bible that are known to exist show no change related to the messenger of Islam between the sixth and eighth centuries, then "silence" can no longer be used to support the accusation. Rather, some evidence must be required of those who bring the accusation: Where is the Torah, or Torahs, from before the seventh century containing references to the messenger of Islam?

Where are the manuscripts that show signs of removal or alteration of information about the messenger of Islam? There are indeed manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Qur'an that show clear evidence of having been "corrected."[231] This is a common feature of manuscripts of all three scriptures and will be dealt with in Chapters 12 and 18. The present question is whether there is any evidence in biblical manuscripts that such "corrections" included elimination or alteration of references to the messenger of Islam. This investigation should encompass not only manuscripts of the original Hebrew but also manuscripts of early translations of the Torah into other languages.

The plan of this chapter, therefore, is simple and straightforward. First, we review and summarize the main Muslim accusation of falsification in the earliest centuries of Islam. Then, we describe the actual evidence that can be used to evaluate the Muslim accusation in a scholarly way. We indicate the manuscripts of the Torah in existence today that are known to pre-date the seventh century. Next, we introduce the extant manuscripts of the Torah that are dated to the end of the seventh century or later. We pose the question of whether a comparison of the two sets of Torah manuscripts provides any grounds for the Muslim accusation. Finally, we appeal to our Muslim readers to be honest and reasonable—to give up unsupported attacks on the Bible and instead consider solid evidence and scholarly research.

1. Time stamp on the accusation

During the earliest period of Islam, when Muslim writers accused the Torah of having been falsified, the main accusation they made was that the Jews of Medina erase or change references to the messenger of Islam from the Torah after they see the messenger appear. According to these accusations, the references to the messenger of Islam can be found in the Torah before the messenger appears, and the Jews are anticipating the messenger's appearance. However, when the Jews see that Islam's messenger is from the line of Ishmael rather than from the line of Isaac, out of envy they refuse to acknowledge the authority of the messenger and remove or alter the references to him from the Torah in order to justify themselves.

In telling the story this way, the Muslim writers put a time stamp on their accusation. The story requires that the "falsification" of the Torah take place in the first half of the seventh century. Chapter 5 demonstrated how Muslim interpretations of Q 2:79 and 3:78 in the qur'anic commentaries develop this story. The same pattern appears in many other early Muslim sources.

The first stage of the accusation was the claim that the Jews of the Medina, prior to meeting the messenger of Islam, know he is mentioned in the Torah and are expecting his arrival. Muslim commentators connected this theme with verses such as Q 2:89. Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 767), for example, wrote at Q 2:89 that before the messenger of Islam appears, the Jews pray for assistance against the idolatrous Arabs through the messenger's coming. The Jews say they find the messenger in their book and anticipate his help.[232] At the end of the third Islamic century, al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) transmitted a variety of traditions at Q 2:89 and 2:90 about the Jewish expectation of the messenger of Islam in pre-Islamic times. [233]

The second stage of the accusation was that when the Jews of Medina see the messenger of Islam appear, they deny knowing he was mentioned in the Torah. Their motivation for doing this, according to many Muslim sources, is that they are envious that the messenger came from the line of Ishmael rather than from the line

of Isaac.[234] According to Muqātil at Q 2:89, "Then when Allah, powerful and exalted, sent Muḥammad . . . from outside of the children of Israel, they disbelieved in him [even though] they recognized (ʿ*arafa*) him."[235] Several of al-Ṭabarī's traditions at Q 2:89 claim that envy of the Quraysh and the Arabs is the motivation for the Jewish rejection of the messenger when he appears.[236] Al-Ṭabarī added his own judgment that the crime of the Jews in this story is denying that the messenger is the one whose description they find in their book.[237]

Another motivation frequently given in Muslim writings is greed. A popular story is told about Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf, a wealthy Jew in Medina. When the Jewish scholars say they find the messenger of Islam in their scriptures and bear witness to the messenger, Kaʿb denies them the many benefits (*khayran kathīran*) he wants to give them. The Jewish scholars, therefore, go away and write in their scriptures characteristics other than those of the messenger. When the scholars show Kaʿb what they have written, he gives them rich gifts.[238]

According to the early Muslim sources, the messenger of Islam also appeals to the Jews of Medina on the basis of what he considers to be in the Torah. In Chapter 4, we noted that the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767) portrayed the messenger imploring the Jews, "You know well…that I am the apostle of Allah. You find it written in the Torah you have."[239] The same claim appears in other early Muslim sources. "You know (*qad ʿariftum*) that I am a prophet sent, for you find it (*yajidūna dhālika*) in your scriptures and Allah's covenant with you," says the messenger, according to al-Wāhidī.[240] "I am written (*maktūb*) in [the Torah] that I am a prophet and a messenger," the messenger says to the Jews in Muqātil's interpretation of Q 3:23.[241] Muslim scholars continued to tell this kind of story well into the eighth century of Islam.[242]

Other stories in the early sources tell that the Jews continue to believe there are references to the messenger of Islam in the Torah for some time after his arrival. After the battle of Badr, according to

al-Wāhidī, "the Jews of Medina said, 'This is, by Allah, the *ummī* prophet whom Moses announced to us, and whom we find (*najidūhu*) in our book by his description (*naʿt*) and his characteristics (*ṣifa*). No banner of his will ever be brought low.' They were about to believe and follow him…"—but, according to al-Wāhidī, decided to wait and see whether the Muslims would win the next battle.[243] In all of these Muslim stories, the Torah references to the messenger of Islam are intact until the time of the messenger's appearance and even well after.

The third stage of the accusation was the portrayal of various actions done by the Jews of Medina in an attempt to justify their denial. We saw in Chapters 3 and 4 that most of the "tampering" actions mentioned in early Muslim commentaries affect alleged references to the messenger of Islam in the Torah. The major activity of the Jews in this Muslim portrayal is concealing the references to the messenger of Islam in the Torah. As we also noted, the accusation of concealment assumes the Torah is intact, trustworthy, and authoritative.

Beyond making accusations of concealing, various Muslim sources made the accusation of falsification of the text of the Torah. Chapter 5 presented this claim in Muslim commentaries on the Qur'an and in other early Muslim works. The common factor in all of these accusations is that the tampering actions take place in response to the appearance of the messenger of Islam—that is, in the seventh century A.D.

2. Muslim anxiety the source?

Academic studies of Muslim polemic have indicated the original source of the accusation of biblical falsification to be Muslim anxiety that their messenger be attested to in the earlier scriptures. The anxiety may be related to a claim in the Qur'an: "…the messenger, the *ummī* prophet, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel…" (Q 7:157).[244] The verb "find" (*wajada*) in

this claim is in the Arabic imperfect tense, meaning present or future. But what if the Jews and Christians conquered by the Arab armies replied to the Muslim claim that they found no such attestation in their scriptures? That this kind of conversation actually took place is clear from the candid comment of at least one Muslim scholar. Al-Maqdisī (d. 991) wrote that his motivation for making a case to Muslims for the alteration of the text of the Torah was, "so that you will not be discouraged when [Jews and Christians] say that Muḥammad is not mentioned in the Torah."[245]

There also seems to be evidence of this Muslim anxiety in early Christian-Muslim exchanges. In the dialogue known as "The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi," the Muslim protagonist accuses Timothy, saying there were many testimonies to the messenger of Islam in the books of the Bible, "but the books have been corrupted, and you have removed them."[246]

Ignaz Goldziher was the first academic scholar of Muslim polemic to observe the connection between the accusation of biblical falsification and the Muslim claim that the "announcement of the mission of Muhammad" would be found in the earlier scriptures. [247] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh further pinpointed the accusation to the qur'anic claim that the *ummī* prophet would be "written down with them" in the Torah and Gospel: "The contradictions between the Ḳur'ānic and Biblical stories, and the denial of both Jews and Christians that Muḥammad was predicted in their Holy Scriptures, gave rise to the Ḳur'ānic accusation of the falsification of these last by Jews and Christians respectively."[248] In a very recent publication, Camilla Adang arrived at the same conclusion: "What may be at the root of these allegations is that the Jews denied that Muḥammad was mentioned in their scripture."[249] These scholarly analyses of Muslim polemic all understand the accusation of biblical falsification to have originated in the seventh century or later as the Muslim response to Jewish and Christian denials that the messenger of Islam was referred to in their scriptures.

It is interesting to note references to both Q 7:157 and the main accusation of the early centuries of Islam in a recent Muslim publication that presents itself as a scholarly study. In *The history of the qur'ānic text from revelation to compilation*, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Aʿẓamī quoted Q 7:157 in Arabic and explained that the verse indicates references to the messenger of Islam in the Old and New Testaments. "Such references were seen by many of the Prophet's Companions and successors," al-Aʿẓamī claimed, "but have since then been largely cleansed."[250]

It is remarkable that the persistence of this accusation—that Jews and Christians removed references to the messenger of Islam from the Bible—goes back more than a thousand years to the early centuries of Islam. It is perhaps even more striking, however, that a well-educated, modern Muslim would stamp the accusation with a date even later than the Jewish response to the messenger of Islam in Medina. Al-Aʿẓamī dated the alleged falsification to well into the seventh century, and perhaps beyond. This time stamp is a thoroughly Muslim idea that conveniently makes it possible to evaluate the accusation of falsification from an historical, scientific, and scholarly approach.

3. Torah manuscripts from before the seventh century

In 1864, when the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* was written, the Hebrew Bible could be accused of being falsified by the Jews of Medina during the seventh century without any way of answering back in a scholarly manner. That is, those who wanted to defend the integrity of the Torah against attack could only do so by faith and tradition. Access to manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible from before the seventh century was restricted, and it was therefore difficult to bring forward evidence for the integrity of the Torah. But then, during the first half of the twentieth century, a number of important developments fundamentally changed the discussion. And today, with rapid

advances in information technologies, the amount of accessible evidence is greater than ever before—and increasing.

An important symbol of increased access to manuscripts was the 1933 purchase of the Codex Sinaiticus by the British Museum. The Museum immediately put the codex on public display in London. The Codex Sinaiticus is a Greek manuscript containing the New Testament and half of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) in the Septuagint translation. It is dated to the middle of the fourth century,[251] nearly three centuries before the rise of Islam. Actually, the Sinaiticus manuscript was discovered even prior to the 1864 publication of the *Iẓhār al-haqq* by German scholar Constantine Tischendorf at the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai. In the complicated history of the manuscript's travels from there, 347 leaves of the Codex Sinaiticus remained in the Russian Imperial Library between 1869 and 1933, unavailable to the free investigation of scholars, especially under the atheistic Soviet regime after 1917. The purchase of the manuscript by the British government meant free public access to this important pre-Islamic biblical manuscript for the first time. Today, not only is the manuscript available to scholarly research at the British Museum, but the entire manuscript has been posted online.[252]

Tischendorf considered the 347 leaves of the Codex Sinaiticus "the most precious biblical treasure in existence." However, the Sinaiticus was not even the best or earliest manuscript of the Septuagint. Since at least the fifteenth century, another manuscript, known as the Codex Vaticanus, had been kept in the Vatican Library. The manuscript is dated to the fourth century,[253] earlier—according to some scholars—than the Sinaiticus. The manuscript includes the New Testament and a nearly complete Septuagint. Unfortunately, twenty original leaves from Genesis and Psalms are missing.

In addition to the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, two other early codices of the Septuagint are available to scholars of the Bible: the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Ephraemi. The Codex

Alexandrinus is dated to the fifth century A.D.[254] and contains 773 velum folios: 630 folios of the Septuagint and 143 of the New Testament. The Septuagint is nearly complete and includes a complete copy of the Torah, though some small sections of Genesis and Leviticus are damaged. The Codex Alexandrinus is kept at the British Museum and can also be viewed online.[255] The Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, dated to the early fifth century A.D., is another pre-Islamic manuscript of parts of the Septuagint scholars can use in textual criticism.[256] The codex has only 209 leaves, of which 64 belong to the Septuagint. The biblical text is actually a palimpsest—the original text was washed off so that the velum could be re-used for the treatises of Ephraem the Syrian. Tischendorf deciphered and published the underlying biblical text in 1840-45. The Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus is currently housed in the National Library of France in Paris.

This documentation answers and conclusively disproves the claim in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* that Christians possessed no manuscripts of the Bible from prior to Islam. The *Iẓhār* mentioned the Codices Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi Rescriptus but claimed that none of these manuscripts could be dated prior to Islam.[257]

These four Greek manuscripts are often grouped together as the "Four great uncials," so named for the style of calligraphy using only capital letters. But Greek is not the only language into which the Hebrew Bible was translated before the rise of Islam. The Hebrew Bible was translated into the Syriac language, likely in the first or second century A.D. One surviving manuscript of the Syriac translation is dated to 459-460 A.D.[258] and contains most of the Torah. It is now kept at the British Library in London. A second manuscript of the Syriac translation, now kept in Milan, Italy, is dated to the sixth or seventh century[259] and includes all the books of the Hebrew Bible. Closely related to the Syriac language is Aramaic, which was used by Jews in the Middle East in the century before Jesus. Translations of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic, called Targum (note: *tarjuma*), were used in synagogues alongside the Hebrew text so that Jews who did not know Hebrew could

understand. The Targum translations are midrashic in character, and many Jews believed they should not be written down. Nevertheless, manuscripts of the *Targumīm* exist, and some have been dated to the seventh century.[260]

Translations of the Hebrew Bible were also made in each of the four dialects of Coptic, the language of Egypt prior to the Arab Conquest, and are still used by the Coptic Church. Parts of the Hebrew Bible in the dialects of Sahidic and Bohairic are available in manuscripts dated to the fourth and fifth centuries.[261] Jerome translated the Hebrew Bible into Latin at the end of the fourth century.[262] A special feature of his translation is that he translated directly from the Hebrew, checking the older Latin translations from the Septuagint as he went.[263] Some manuscripts of Jerome's Latin translation of parts of the Torah, especially the Psalms, are dated to the sixth and early seventh centuries.

Though these manuscripts of the Septuagint and other translations of the Hebrew Bible provided solid evidence for the contents of the text hundreds of years before the rise of Islam, a question remained. Until 1933, the earliest Hebrew manuscript was considered to be the Aleppo Codex, dated to the tenth century. Those who wanted to attack the integrity of the Torah could still make an accusation from silence: Who could say whether the Aleppo Codex wasn't already a falsified manuscript? But then, in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, taking the available evidence back more than a thousand years. In caves near the Dead Sea, at first by accident, were discovered 972 manuscripts that included parts of every book of the Hebrew Bible except the book of Esther. The five books of the Torah were well represented, with more than ten copies of each discovered, including thirty-two copies of the book of Deuteronomy. Scholars dated the biblical manuscripts to the second century B.C., nearly eight hundred years before the rise of Islam. Thanks to the labors of scholars and modern technology, parts of the Dead Sea Scrolls are now accessible for viewing online.[264]

We now possess many manuscripts from well before the seventh century, allowing us to check the Muslim accusation of biblical falsification. The main Muslim accusation of falsification during the early centuries of Islam was that the Jews of Medina, during the seventh century A.D., erased or changed references to the messenger of Islam from the Torah. Do we indeed find references to the messenger in these manuscripts that are dated to before the seventh century? Is there scholarly evidence that these references are missing from, or altered in, the manuscripts of the Torah from after the eighth century? Open access to these many pre-Islamic manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible increases the responsibility of those who accuse of falsification to now examine the manuscripts and produce the evidence that pre-Islamic manuscripts of the Bible contained references to Islam's messenger.

4. Torah manuscripts after the seventh century

The most famous manuscript of the Hebrew Bible from after the seventh century is the Aleppo Codex, so named for its residence in the Syrian city of Aleppo for more than 500 years. The manuscript is the oldest copy of the entire Hebrew Bible in existence.[265] It is dated to the first half of the tenth century A.D. when Aaron, son of the famous scribe Moses ben Asher, supervised its production in Jerusalem. After anti-Jewish riots broke out in Aleppo in 1947, the codex was lost and feared destroyed. Fortunately, however, the codex reappeared in Israel in 1958—though sadly missing almost a quarter of its 294 folios. A facsimile edition of the Aleppo Codex was published in 1976, and the codex is now available for scholarly examination in Jerusalem.[266]

While the Aleppo Codex is no longer complete because of physical damage to the manuscript in the 1947 riots, the Codex Leningradensis is a complete Bible written in Egypt in 1008 by Shmuel ben Yaʿaqov. It was copied from exemplars written by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher.[267] The manuscript is kept in the Russian

National Library in St. Petersburg and was reproduced in the *Biblia Hebraica*. Also in St. Petersburg is the Petersburg Codex of the Prophets, which contains Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets. The manuscript is dated to even earlier than the Aleppo Codex, to 916 A.D.[268] It was discovered in 1839 by Abraham Firkowitsch and gives clues to the nature of the Babylonian pointing system.

Another witness to the state of the Hebrew Bible after the rise of Islam is the Codex Cairensis, which contains the Former and the Latter Prophets. This manuscript was written and pointed in 895 A.D. by Moses ben Asher, the father of the scribe responsible for the Aleppo Codex. The Codex Cairensis also faced great danger when the Crusaders seized it as loot in 1099. Fortunately, it was later restored to the possession of the Jewish Karaite community in Cairo. Cairo also became the source of an abundance of ancient fragments from the Hebrew Bible when a kind of storage room known as the Cairo Geniza was discovered in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The biblical fragments come from the sixth through eighth centuries, thus providing hints of the development of the Masoretic system prior to the Codex Cairensis.

The text of the Hebrew Bible after the seventh century can also be examined through translations. The Codex Amiaticus, the earliest surviving manuscript of the Latin Vulgate, is dated to the beginning of the eighth century.[269] Jerome translated this complete Bible from Hebrew at the end of the fourth century. Another post-seventh century translation of the Hebrew Bible that may interest Muslim readers is the Arabic translation of Saadia Gaon (882-942), who lived in Cairo and Sura, Babylonia.[270] Saadia wrote his Arabic translation using Hebrew letters and added his own commentary. His translation of the Torah has survived and is still used.

The reason translations are important is that during the seventh century, the Torah existed in many translations, as well as in the original Hebrew, in many different locations. There was not only one single Torah in the world in the seventh century—and that in Hebrew

in Medina. Rather, both Jews and Christians possessed copies of the Torah right through the seventh century, throughout the world, both in the original Hebrew and in many translations. This reality increases the responsibility of those who would accuse Jews and Christians of having falsified the Torah. In addition to checking the Hebrew manuscripts of the Torah to see whether references to Islam's messenger had indeed been erased or changed during the seventh century, accusers must check translations in many languages to see whether there is evidence for their accusation.

5. No grounds for the accusation

For nearly thirteen centuries, Muslims have attacked the Bible on the basis of the claim that the Jews of Medina, in the seventh century, removed or changed references to the messenger of Islam from the Torah. This was the major accusation among accusations of falsification of the Bible made in the earliest centuries of Islam. For most of the long period since then, those who wanted to defend the Torah from this accusation could only do so from faith and tradition. However, this situation underwent a categorical change through the discoveries of ancient manuscripts of the Bible in recent centuries. The preceding two sections of this chapter have shown that the actual evidence needed to evaluate the main early Muslim accusation of falsification is both substantial and readily accessible. Now the question can be posed: Does a scholarly comparison of Torah manuscripts from before and after the seventh century provide any grounds for the Muslim accusation?

Bible scholars take great freedom to indicate and describe the differences between existing manuscripts of the Torah. The general question of what to make of these differences will be taken up in Chapter 11. The two key questions for the present chapter, however, are whether the Torah was falsified during the seventh century A.D., and whether alleged references to the messenger of Islam in pre-Islamic copies of the Torah can be shown to have been removed or

changed by the Jews of Medina in response to the appearance of the messenger. Regarding the first question, Brandeis University biblical scholar Nahum M. Sarna concluded,

> …no further developments of any significance in the biblical Hebrew consonantal text took place during the 600 years that elapsed between the latest manuscripts from the tannaitic period (c. 200 C.E.) and the earliest medieval ones (c. ninth century C.E.). None of the medieval manuscripts and codices, and not even the thousands of Bible fragments from the Cairo *Genizah* represent a recension different from the received text. [271]

Some Muslim writers have not only accused the Torah of being falsified during the seventh century A.D. but have specified exactly what characteristics of the messenger of Islam were changed. al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075) and al-Qurṭubī (d. 1230) claimed that before the Torah was changed, it had described the messenger as of medium height and of brown complexion.[272] Even relatively recently, al-Shawkānī (1759-1834) claimed the Jewish rabbis of Medina had found the messenger "written in the Torah" as having black eyes, medium height, curly hair, and a handsome face.[273] Is there any evidence of such descriptions in pre-Islamic Torahs going back to 800 years before the start of Islam?

To the contrary, it appears there are no scholarly articles or monographs presenting manuscript evidence to support the accusation that references to the messenger of Islam were altered or removed from the Torah.[274] Certainly, Muslim polemical arguments for removal or alteration based on Islamic tradition are readily available. But it seems that, to date, no Muslim studies of the Torah exist that argue from manuscript evidence for the Muslim accusation.[275] Even *The history of the qur'ānic text from revelation to compilation*, though it mounts an extensive attack on the Torah, offers no manuscript evidence. When al-Aʿẓamī wrote on "Some major examples of deliberate textual corruption," he presented only a single accusation about the biblical treatment of

Ishmael, and that not based on any kind of manuscript study.[276] The book presented no evidence for the removal or alteration of references to Islam's messenger from the Torah—even when it subsequently insisted that these references had been "cleansed"! [277]

In the absence of scholarly studies about the removal of references to the messenger of Islam from the Bible, or even of Muslim accusations that provide manuscript evidence, one may ask whether there is any indirect comment on the question in scholarly investigations. An example of such a study might be Eugene Ulrich's answer to the question of whether there are "sectarian variants" among the Dead Sea Scrolls.[278] Ulrich, one of the world's top scholars on the scrolls, was inclined to say that his answer would be very short—because he could not remember ever having seen a variant of this kind.[279] However, he conscientiously worked through the evidence once more. Ulrich freely discussed the variants among the scrolls of the Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Hebrew Masoretic text. He acknowledged the variety of groups who are believed to have had an interest in the wording of the scrolls: Pharisees, Sadducees, Samaritans, Essenes, and others. But in the end, he could find only a single, clearly sectarian variant, the subject of which is unrelated to the messenger of Islam.[280] Ulrich explained the absence of sectarian variants in the following way:

> If one group tampered with the text of Scripture in order to promote its views, it would have been open to immediate demonstrable refutation. All the groups had limited viewpoints, but all apparently agreed that the text of the 'original' Scriptures should not be altered, and if there were problems, the texts should be corrected toward the 'original', not reshaped according to sectarian ideology.[281]

The Dead Sea Scrolls go as far back in history as manuscript evidence for the Hebrew Bible allows. Internal evidence about the history of the Hebrew Bible prior to the Dead Sea Scrolls is simply lacking at this point. Though the biblical books were composed long

before the Dead Sea Scrolls, we have no evidence to tell us for certain about the earlier history of those books.[282] Rather, scholars today work from the available evidence and come to different conclusions. All scholars— Jews, Christians, and Muslims— work from the same position. Why should those who believe the Hebrew Bible is the Word of God be held accountable for the history of the text beyond what can be known from the available evidence, or for the disagreements of scholars who are honestly trying to work from that evidence?

As far as the particular accusation of falsification investigated in this chapter is concerned, manuscripts of the Torah from both before and after the rise of Islam are now available for study. This evidence shows no sign that references to the messenger of Islam have been removed from, or changed in, the copies of the Torah that exist. Therefore, the onus is on those who accuse the Torah of falsification during the seventh century to bring forward their evidence for this accusation. If no evidence is brought forward, the accusation should end.

This chapter has established the falsehood of the Muslim accusation that the Jews of Medina erased or changed references to the messenger of Islam from the Torah—so that copies of the Torah all over the world were thereafter corrupted or falsified. This long-persisting accusation can no longer be made from silence; consequently, those who accuse should fall silent. To use a helpful expression from the Qur'an, "Produce your proof, if you speak truly" (Q 2:111).

Of course, this is not the only accusation of falsification that Muslims have made. Some Muslims accuse the Torah of having been corrupted or falsified at some indeterminate point in the centuries before the rise of Islam. These accusations are answered in Chapter 11. At this point, dear Muslim reader, please note that though the story of the falsification of the Torah by Jews in Medina in response to the messenger of Islam in the early seventh century A.D. seems

to have a kind of narrative appeal, it takes a great leap of logic to claim that the Jews changed the references to the messenger of Islam hundreds of years before they had seen him or knew that he would be "sent."[283]

Some Muslims also argue the claim of Q 7:157 is true because references to the messenger of Islam in the Bible can still be found —quite a different claim! The unbiased reader will notice that it contradicts the accusation examined in this chapter. The claim that the messenger of Islam is prophesied in the Bible will be dealt with in Chapters 19 through 24. In response to both of these claims, we ask our Muslim readers to be honest and reasonable. If you accuse the Bible of having been falsified, bring your evidence. Let's look at the evidence in a scholarly manner and discuss it peaceably. The six chapters of the following section make a scholarly case for the authenticity and reliability of the Bible.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Questions and Answers

What is the best way to answer challenging questions?

In the introduction to his treatise, *Hidāyat al-ḥayāra fī ajwibat al-Yahūd wa l-Naṣāra*,[284] Damascene Muslim scholar Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350) explained his motivation for writing this famous work of polemic. Ibn Qayyim wrote that he had heard of an "unbeliever" asking difficult questions of a Muslim. The Muslim could not think of a response beyond physically attacking the "unbeliever", wrote Ibn Qayyim. "So he pounced on him and beat him, and he said, 'This is the answer!'"[285]

Ibn Qayyim clearly thought physical attack was the wrong way to answer and wrote that this incident sparked him to work on his *Hidāyat al-ḥayāra*. It is possible the story of the beating was invented, but as University of Nottingham scholar Jon Hoover suggested, it seems unlikely that Ibn Qayyim would have made up so unflattering an incident if it was not based in reality.[286] The story comes from a time and place where Muslims had the upper hand politically and militarily over the Jews and Christians in their midst. Even Ibn Qayyim did not object to using the sword against "unbelievers" who would not respond positively to the Muslim argument. But first, wrote Ibn Qayyim, Muslims should debate the "unbelievers" and call them to Islam. "The sword came only to enforce the argument, to reform the obstinate and to limit the denier."[287]

This *Gentle answer* you hold in your hands, dear reader, comes with no thought of using force of any kind—certainly not physical force! This present answer is given in the peaceable spirit of Jesus, who always gives freedom to the listener to make up his or her own mind. As the apostle Paul wrote to a group of Jesus' followers in Greece, "we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2).

1. Questions provide opportunities

We agree, however, with the first part of Ibn Qayyim's method: when faced with challenging questions, answer with your best arguments. This section of the book is an answer to Muslim accusations against the Bible. We answer not in anger that someone is accusing or questioning, nor wishing to discredit—much less beat!—the questioner!. Rather, we see questions about the Bible as an opportunity to seek answers and indeed to enter into profitable conversation with the questioner.

Because the manuscripts of the Bible are ancient and written on materials that disintegrate with time or get destroyed, for example, in the conquests of empires, there are many questions about the origins and development of these manuscripts. The questions are natural and reasonable, many of them springing from honest curiosity. Questions provoke some of the greatest scholarly minds to probe areas that have not yet been explored. Without questions, many matters previously obscured in mystery would not now be open to scholarly enquiry. This includes questions about the manuscripts of the Bible.

In the heat of polemic and combative debate, however, questions are often used as weapons to attack not only the integrity of the biblical manuscripts but also the truth of their contents! Questions are advanced as "proofs," and even as threats. However, this is a

misunderstanding of scholarly questions. In reality, questions are just that—questions. Questions do not prove anything in themselves; rather, they provide opportunities to investigate and answer.

At some point in history after the Arab Conquests of the seventh century, Arab Muslims realized that their beliefs were different from the beliefs of the large communities of Christians and Jews within the new Muslim Empire. Muslims had heard of the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospel. As we saw in Chapter 2, the Qur'an mentions these three writings repeatedly in the most positive and respectful terms.

The first material evidence that the Arab conquerors were aware of differences between their beliefs and the faith of Christians is in the Dome of the Rock, built in 691 A.D. in Jerusalem. In the galleries of that beautiful building, one can still read the 240-metre-long inscription, which is remarkable for its focus on the identity of Jesus, here (as in the Qur'an) called ʿĪsā.

The names of the earlier scriptures are not mentioned in the Dome's inscriptions. But with time, the Arab conquerors will have learned that the Christian claims they attempted to deny in the Dome's inscriptions were based on the Christian scriptures themselves. This raised a question in their minds. Were the differences in beliefs due to a problem with Muslim faith, or was the problem with the Christian scriptures?

Some of the questions in early Muslim writings seem to be an honest, curious questioning arising from a desire to know more about the earlier scriptures. Other questions seem to be already developing a harder edge in which the question is used as an accusation.

Questions cause problems when the questioners do not stay for answers. It is against the nature of questions to ask them while insisting they cannot be answered. This approach can be seen at several points in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*. Rahmat Allah Kairanwi claimed the questions he raised were so effective as to be unanswerable.

[288] What meaningful conversation can take place when partners take such an attitude? Just as a question is a question, an answer is an answer. Whether the questioner is satisfied with the answer or not, an answer must be acknowledged as such.

The questions academic scholars ask about the Bible are extremely challenging. They are comparable to—and not necessarily more challenging than—the questions scholars ask of the Qur'an. Scholarly approaches to the Qur'an will be discussed in Section 3. This section is devoted to questions about the Bible.

2. History of Muslim questions

Many Muslim scholars have not agreed with the accusation that the Bible was corrupted or falsified. Their views are presented in the next chapter. This present chapter highlights some of the main works that—like the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*—claim corruption and falsification of the text of the Bible.

The attack on the Bible in the *Iẓhār* is one of the best-known Muslim attacks in history. When the great Hungarian scholar Ignaz Goldziher visited Istanbul in 1878, he found the city abuzz with discussion of the Turkish translation of Mawlana Kairanwi's work. [289] However, the *Iẓhār* is certainly not the first such attack. In fact, organized Muslim polemic against the Bible goes back almost a thousand years to Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064). In the intervening millennium, a number of Muslim scholars mounted strong attacks against the Bible. Scholars of Muslim polemic against the Bible[290] often draw attention to the following six authors and works.

One of the first Muslim scholars to claim corruption of a particular part of the Bible was Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiz (d. 869), a Muʿtazilī scholar. In a letter known as *Fī al-radd ʿalā l-Naṣārā*, Al-Jāḥiz argued that differences in the Gospel accounts were evidence of their corruption.[291] A later Muʿtazilī scholar who wrote at greater length about the New Testament was ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025). In

his *Tathbīt dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*,[292] ʿAbd al-Jabbār not only accused the Bible of being falsified but also attempted to describe how, when, and even why the alleged falsification took place.[293]

Spanish scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), in his work *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa l-ahwāʾ wa l-niḥal*, was the first Muslim to develop the accusation of the corruption of the Bible in a substantial and systematic way.[294] Ibn Ḥazm searched the Bible for examples of what he considered to be chronological and geographical inaccuracies, theological impossibilities, and objectionable behavior of prophets.[295] Meanwhile, at the other end of the Muslim Empire, Ibn Ḥazm's younger contemporary al-Juwaynī (d. 1085) wrote his *Shifāʾ al-ghalīl fī bayān mā waqaʿa fī l-Tawrāt wa-l-Injīl min al-tabdīl*,[296] perhaps from Baghdad. At the beginning of his book, al-Juwaynī explained that the reason he argued the alteration of the Bible was that the biblical texts themselves do not mention the messenger of Islam.[297]

The approach of Ibn Ḥazm and al-Juwaynī was picked up strongly two centuries later in the wake of the Mongol incursions into the Middle East and especially the destruction of Baghdad in 1258. The Egyptian jurist Aḥmad ibn Idrīs al-Qarāfī (d. 1285) drew heavily on Ibn Ḥazm,[298] as did Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350),[299] the student of the famous Ibn Taymiyya. Here are some of the main arguments of these Muslim scholars:

1. Differences in biblical accounts, whether between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles, or among the Gospel accounts, are contradictions. Contradictions prove corruption.[300]

2. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Torah of Moses. Ezra then wrote his own version of the Torah, leaving out references to the messenger of Islam.[301]

3. Allah revealed the Gospel in Hebrew. Scripture is only valid in the original language. Therefore, since the Gospel accounts are not in Hebrew, they are not valid.[302]

4. The Gospel accounts were not safeguarded from error, forgetfulness, and the intention of the authors to lie.[303]

5. The Gospel reports of the death of Jesus are false. In this case, direct visual evidence is untrustworthy, because the power of sight can be fallible.[304]

6. The Bible has no claim to *tawatūr*—that is, continuous transmission.

7. Prophets do not sin. The biblical accounts of prophets such as David show them sinning. This proves the Bible is corrupt or falsified.

8. The absence of references to the messenger of Islam in the Bible proves the Bible has been falsified.[305]

9. Though the Bible is corrupt and falsified, references to Islam's messenger can still be found in its pages.[306]

10. Biblical criticism written in Europe supports the earlier accusations against the Bible.[307]

3. Early Christian answers

Just as the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* was not the first book of polemic against the Bible, *The gentle answer* is certainly not the first attempt to respond to the Muslim accusations. Far from it! Christian responses to Muslim accusations against the Bible appear to go back to the eighth century A.D., though scholars are not agreed on the dates of the earliest written responses. Since that time, Christian answers have been more numerous and better known than responses from Judaism. This stands to reason, since the Christian population of the Middle East at the time of the Arab Conquest was much greater than the Jewish population. This does not mean, however, that the Christian answers were necessarily superior. When an angry mob in Baghdad wanted to kill the Jewish philosopher Ibn Kammūna for his *Examination of the three faiths*, a Christian opponent encouraged

Christians to pray for Ibn Kammūna—because he had presented "the Christian case" better than the Christians had![308]

It is interesting to note that one Christian scholar, ʿAmmār al-Basrī (d. c. 845), actually called his response, *The book of questions and answers* (*Kitāb al-masāʾil wa l-ajwiba*).[309] This work suggests that Christian writers took Muslims' questions and accusations seriously and did their best to provide answers. Christians wrote answers from many places and from a variety of Christian backgrounds, both from within the Muslim Empire and from outside. Some of the responses have come to us in the form of dialogues or exchanges. For example, we possess what claims to be an exchange of letters between the Byzantine Emperor Leo III (ruled 717-741) and the Umayyad Caliph ʿUmar II (r. 717-720).[310] We have what presents itself as a dialogue or "apology" of Timothy, the Patriarch of the East Syrian Church, spoken before al-Mahdi, the third ʿAbbāsid caliph, in 781 A.D.[311] We also have the reply of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī to the summons of a Muslim in the court of al-Ma'mun, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ismāʿīl al-Hashimī, around 830 A.D.[312]

Besides his *Book of questions and answers*, in which he wrote answers to fourteen questions on the authenticity of the Gospel accounts, ʿAmmār al-Basrī wrote a shorter work titled *Kitāb al-burhān* (*Book of the proof*), in which he answered Muslim accusations against the New Testament.[313] Abū Rāʾiṭa (d. ca. 835) also refuted the charge of corruption of the Gospel in his first *Risāla on the Holy Trinity*.[314]

These Christians defended their scriptures in the absence of the kinds of scholarly resources now available to evaluate the evidence for the Muslim accusation. Therefore, many of their arguments appeal to common sense:

1. In truth, neither we nor the Jews have ever tampered with our scriptures.[315]

2. Bring forward your evidence: show us the uncorrupted books so you and we may know for sure whether the books we possess are

corrupted. Lacking such evidence, how do you know the Gospel we use is corrupted?[316]

3. The authors of the four Gospel accounts "wrote and transmitted to us what they had heard and learned from Jesus the Messiah."[317]

4. Yes, humans are weak, imperfect and forgetful. However, God is powerful to both give and protect his Word.[318]

5. Your Qur'an speaks in only the most respectful way about our scriptures and commands you to consult us (Q 10:94, etc.). When you accuse our scriptures of being corrupted, you contradict the Qur'an and in fact, falsify it.[319]

6. Followers of Judaism and Christianity, who disagree strongly about Jesus, agree that the Hebrew scriptures are genuine.[320]

7. If the Jews had wanted to falsify the Hebrew scriptures, why wouldn't they have taken out the parts Christians understand to be prophecies of Jesus?[321]

8. The Gospel has been translated into many languages. If one or two language groups had changed their translations, how would the same changes have appeared in translations of other language groups far away? Instead, there is uniformity.[322]

9. Christian groups that disagree about doctrine would be tempted to change the text of the Gospel to reflect their views. However, no such thing has happened.[323]

10. Your accusation that our scriptures have been corrupted is your way to escape the inferences of a reasonable conversation about the contents of our scriptures. It is your favorite argument, and you "shelter behind it."[324]

4. Medieval Jewish answers

Because the followers of both Judaism and Christianity consider the Torah to be the Word of God, both communities have been concerned about attacks on the Torah since they first heard them from Muslims. The followers of Judaism may be said to be the more concerned of the two groups, because the Muslim accusations attack the central text of their faith. In addition, as University of California professor Moshe Perlmann noted, the attacks of Muslim polemicists like Ibn Ḥazm gave considerably more space to Judaism than to Christianity.[325] Jewish responses to attacks on the Torah have been strong and substantial, though they have not been as well known—nor as early and numerous—as Christian answers.[326]

Not widely known, for example, is the reply to Ibn Ḥazm written by a Spanish rabbi, Solomon ben Abraham ibn Adret (1233-1310).[327] Abraham ibn Dāwūd (c. 1246-1316), another Spanish Jew, also knew of Ibn Ḥazm's attack and wrote an answer in his philosophical work, *ha-Emunah ha-ramah (The exalted faith*).[328] Both wrote in Hebrew.

The first known Jewish writing on Muslim accusations against the Torah appears to be that of the Karaite scholar Yaʿqūb al-Qirqisānī, who lived in the first half of the tenth century.[329] al-Qirqisānī, from Circassia in the north Caucasus region, travelled throughout the Muslim Empire. The tract he wrote in response to Islam has not survived, but he included a section on his objections to Islam in his major work, *Kitāb al-anwār wa l-marāqib*.[330] Around the same time, Saʿadya Gaon (d. 942)[331] lived in Babylonia, where in 928 he was appointed Gaon, head of the religious academy in Sura. Saʿadya replied to Muslim arguments against the eternal validity of the Torah in his *Kitāb al-amānāt wa l-iʿtiqādāt*.

Another Karaite, the philosopher Yūsuf al-Baṣīr, lived in Babylonia or Persia in the first half of the eleventh century. al-Baṣīr wrote an argument against the Islamic doctrine of the inimitability of the Qur'an.[332] Jehuda Halēwī (1075-1141) defended Judaism against Muslim contentions in his *Kitāb al-khazari*, which has the subtitle, *The book of refutation and proof on behalf of the most despised*

religion.[333] Among other medieval Jewish works written in response to Islam was the *Bustān al-ʿUqūl* by the twelfth-century Yemeni writer Nethanel Fayyūmī.[334]

Maimonides (1135-1204), a Spanish physician who was born in Cordoba and lived in Morocco and Egypt,[335] was the preeminent expert for his day in the text of the Hebrew scriptures. He dealt with accusations against the Torah in his *Moreh*, in his *Thirteen articles of creed*,[336] and in his *Iggeret Teman* (*Epistle to Yemen*).[337] ʿIzz al-Dawla Ibn Kammūna (d. 1284),[338] a physician (ophthalmologist) who lived in Baghdad, answered most of the Muslim accusations against the Torah in Chapter 2 of his *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth li ʾl-milal al-thalāth*.[339]

Solomon ben Abraham ibn Adret (d. 1310) was born and spent most of his life in Barcelona, Spain. He was one of the foremost Jewish scholars of his day. Ibn Adret wrote an extensive reply to Ibn Ḥazm's attack on the Torah, titled *Maʾamar ʿal Yishmaʿel she-ḥibber ʿal ha-datot*….[340] Abraham ibn Dāwūd (d. c. 1316)[341] was also born in Spain, perhaps Cordoba, and lived in Toledo. In *ha-Enumah ha-ramah*, he defended Mosaic prophecy and rebutted the accusation that the Torah was falsified in the course of time.[342] Simon B. Ṣemaḥ Duran (d. 1444), a Spanish rabbi-physician who settled in Algiers, included a refutation of Islam in a Hebrew work against both Christianity and Islam.[343] Here are some of the answers these Jewish scholars gave to Muslim accusations against the Bible:

1. All Jews and Christians testify that the Torah they possess is the Torah Moses brought and which they have transmitted ever since.[344]

2. The punctiliousness and meticulousness of the Jews about their scriptural text is well known. Jews have used the Torah as a law book and quoted it extensively in liturgy.[345]

3. The Torah was handed down in an uninterrupted chain of transmitters from the time of its revelation to Moses.[346]

4. There is a uniform tradition regarding the text of the Hebrew scriptures in both the East and the West. There are no differences in the text, even in the vocalization.[347]

5. The variant Qur'an readings, whether of the oldest Qur'an transmitters or those based on the unvocalized text, show far greater differences than among the Hebrew Scriptures, the Greek Septuagint, and the Samaritan Pentateuch.[348]

6. Many copies of the Torah have always existed. Your argument requires that every single copy be gathered from the four corners of the world and that all of them be falsified in the very same way.[349] Such a feat is impossible.

7. The reports in the Torah of episodes that Ibn Ḥazm calls "scandalous" actually testify to the truth of the Torah.[350] Everything that happened, whether it reflected positively or negatively on the Israelites, was written down truthfully.

8. Hebrew scripture was translated into Syriac, Greek, Persian, and Latin hundreds of years before the rise of Islam.[351]

9. If Christians, who knew the Hebrew scriptures much better than the Muslims, had thoroughly checked the text of the Torah and found no distortions during the six centuries preceding Islam, on what basis do Muslims now accuse the Torah?[352]

10. The only reason you Muslims accuse the Torah of falsification is that you have not been able to find a reference to Islam's messenger in the Torah.[353] You have no other basis for your accusation.

5. Scholarly discussions of biblical criticism

The two sections above demonstrate that Jews and Christians have written many answers to traditional Muslim accusations against the Bible in the past. However, the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* was notable for employing European scholarship of the eighteenth century and the

first half of the nineteenth century in its attack. In fact, apart from traditional Muslim accusations of contradictions and errors, etc., a large part of the *Iẓhār* is composed of quotations from Western academic scholars. In order to answer this aspect of the attack, one must become familiar with the history and significance of "biblical criticism" in the West. While the *Iẓhār* skillfully exploited Western scholarship, the book shows signs that Mawlana Kairanwi misunderstood the meaning of academic scholarship on the Bible.

The word "criticism" in the phrases "biblical criticism" or "higher criticism" is not an expression of disapproval or condemnation. Rather, it means "analysis" based on asking reasonable questions. Since the sixteenth century, scholars in Europe have taken the freedom to ask difficult questions about the Bible, even when these challenged the beliefs of most Europeans at the time. All good scholarship—reasonable conclusions drawn from evidence and careful observation—should be valued. However, both observations and conclusions may be mistaken, and new discoveries of evidence may fundamentally change the questions.

One modern work that provides a helpful perspective on the history of biblical criticism is the survey by Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*.[354] Readers will notice that the period of this study encompasses the publication of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* in 1864. *Interpretation* followed up on the sorts of sources the *Iẓhār* used and showed how scholars subsequently agreed or disagreed with the important writings of that era.

In the introduction to *Interpretation*, Neill and Wright described the serious threat to orthodox Christian faith that came from the writings of German scholars and their British interpreters/advocates in the first half of the nineteenth century. The strength of that scholarship must certainly be acknowledged. Very few believers had the academic qualifications required to deal with those writings. What Neill and Wright showed in their book, however, is that these writings were in no way the last word on any particular question

they raised. Other qualified scholars immediately picked up the questions and ran with them, often finding new answers and even new methods of study. For example, Neill and Wright described the scholarly response to the enormously influential writings of Tübingen scholar Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860): "The only way adequately to deal with this situation was to carry out an equally comprehensive survey, on basically the same critical principles, but far more soberly, far more realistically, and with far fewer presuppositions than those which Baur had brought with him into the field."[355]

The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* provides a number of illustrations of the type of scholarly question and answer described by Neill and Wright. One of the *Iẓhār*'s strongest attacks on the authenticity of the Gospel accounts came in a section about the writings of "Ikhārn" (Eichhorn).[356] Taking this passage as an example, we can see how the *Iẓhār* misused scholarly material and why it has been difficult for non-academics to disentangle this and many other of its accusations.

The *Iẓhār* quoted at length from the introduction to a book written by Harvard University scholar Andrews Norton in 1837, *The evidences of the genuineness of the Gospels*. Professor Norton wrote this book to argue that the Gospel accounts remain essentially the same as they were originally composed and have been ascribed to their true authors.[357] In order to set up the "question," Norton translated a passage from a book with which he did not agree: *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, published near the beginning of the nineteenth century by Göttingen scholar Johann Gottfried Eichhorn.[358] Eichhorn's book contained an influential theory about the formation of the Gospel accounts that Norton wanted to answer. The *Iẓhār* did not describe Norton's 1837 two-volume answer to the question.[359] Instead, it quoted Norton's translation of Eichhorn's 1812 "question," then based a series of very strong accusations on Eichhorn's statements.[360]

This example illustrates that academic scholars in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century took freedom to question traditional Christian understandings of how the New Testament came together. It also shows that as soon as a work of scholarship was published, other scholars entered into academic discussion. Norton provided a substantial answer to Eichhorn's question. Though Norton disagreed strongly with Eichhorn's ideas, he did not seek to dismiss these ideas by trying to discredit Eichhorn, but directly engaged the ideas of Eichhorn's *Einleitung* in order to answer them. Norton even translated Eichhorn's German text into English so the reader could know the force of Eichhorn's ideas.

Eichhorn wrote on the basis of evidence that was available to him at the beginning of the 1800s. Since that time, the amount of evidence related to the formation of the Gospel accounts has grown exponentially. There is now a long and extensive scholarly perspective from which to test the ideas of Eichhorn and other scholars from that era. One of Eichhorn's key theories was that there was an Aramaic original to all of the Gospel accounts. For this Eichhorn depended on a statement by a second century Christian, Papias. On the basis of this weak and unsubstantiated theory, the *Iẓhār* made the astonishing accusation that "the original Gospel was lost (*qad fuqida*)."[361]

"Every conceivable hypothesis has been put forward at one time or another, each being supported rather by intelligent guess-work than by careful and scientific reasoning,"[362] wrote Neill and Wright in their survey of New Testament study. For their first example of "[e]very conceivable hypothesis…supported…by intelligent guesswork", the authors identified the theory "of an original Aramaic Gospel now lost, on which all the three evangelists depended." This is precisely the theory of Eichhorn, upon which the *Iẓhār* based its accusations against the Gospel accounts! The theory "had a long run," Neill and Wright acknowledged; but in the end, the majority of scholars discredited it.

The insight that allowed scholars to advance beyond Eichhorn and his theory came from the scholarly observation that the Gospel according to Matthew incorporates approximately 80% of the text of the Gospel according to Mark, and therefore, that Mark was the earliest Gospel account to be written.[363] Interestingly, this insight was first expressed just one year before the publication of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* in a book by Heinrich Julius Holtzmann titled, *Die synoptischen Evangelien: Ihr Ursprung und geschichtlicher Charakter* (1863). Holtzmann made a case for the historical reliability of the sources of Matthew. By the end of the nineteenth century, the "priority" of Mark "had come to be looked on as one of the assured results of the critical study of the New Testament."[364]

"There is no longer any doubt that Greek was the language in which all of the parts of the New Testament were originally written," wrote New Testament authorities Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland. [365] About the statement in the fragment of Papias cited by Eichhorn and the *Iẓhār*—that Matthew compiled the sayings of Jesus in the Hebrew language, Tübingen professor Martin Hengel wrote, "It is impossible to relate this note to the canonical first Gospel, since that was originally written in Greek and was not translated from a Hebrew (i.e. Aramaic) original."[366]

This is just one example of the mistaken use of Western scholarship in the *Iẓhār*. Many others could be given. Even though we have described the question very concisely, it has taken some time to untangle. In the end, however, the "problem" was only apparent and was resolved. The threat disappeared. If one were to attempt to disentangle every such misuse of Western scholarship in the *Iẓhār*, it would take many volumes. However, one must ask whether the fruit of such an attempt would repay the expense of time and effort. Did Mawlana Kairanwi present this scholarship in order to understand the Bible better? Was he sincerely questioning with a desire to "read and reason together"? Was he actually expecting an answer; and if a good answer had been given, would he have credited it as an answer? Did he show respect for academic scholars by the way he used Western scholarship?

In this particular case, the scholarly question used by the *Iẓhār* was conclusively answered by subsequent academic scholarship. In the meantime, however, the *Iẓhār* continues to be distributed throughout the world and used triumphantly by Muslims who neither understand the context of the Western scholarship cited there nor know of the scholarly answers provided since. The *Iẓhār* creates confusion among non-Muslims who believe the Bible is God's Word and discourages Muslims from reading the Bible itself. In this, it seems the *Iẓhār* has been successful. But at what cost to truth?

An interesting dimension to this *Iẓhār* accusation about Aramaic originals of the Gospel accounts is that some Western scholars have begun to claim the existence of a Syriac original or *Urtext* prior to the Qur'an.[367] Just because a scholar states a theory and advances arguments to support it, is this statement the last word on the matter? Should the scholar's theory immediately be used as the basis for an accusation that "the original Qur'an was lost"?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Judging by False Assumptions

The *Iẓhār al-haqq* judges the Bible to be without any claim to inspiration (*ilhām*).[368] But by what standard does it judge?

Any judgment at this level of importance must proceed from a carefully developed standard in order to be meaningful, and the standard must be true if any significant accusation is to be based upon it. We saw clearly in Chapter 2 that in all the verses in which the Qur'an actually mentions the *Tawrāt*, *Zabūr,* or *Injīl*, the Qur'an has only the most positive and respectful things to say. The Qur'an says that both the Torah and the Gospel contain "guidance and light" (Q 5:44, 46). In fact, we found in the Qur'an clear affirmation that these scriptures were revealed. In this sense, denying that the Bible is revealed contradicts qur'anic teaching. Such an accusation, therefore, would require a rock-solid foundation.

In Chapters 3 and 5, we examined the interpretations of other verses Muslim polemicists have used to support their accusations of biblical falsification. In Chapter 3, we saw that exegetes have not understood the vast majority of these verses to mean falsification of the text of scripture. We found the few verses that have been interpreted in this way to be unclear in themselves and open to meanings that do not envision falsification of the Bible. The Islamic interpretive tradition on the "verses of tampering," therefore, does not provide the solid foundation required for accusation.

Lacking such a solid foundation, any accusation of falsification should therefore be made most carefully and advisedly. Instead,

what we find is that the accusation is often based on a number of false assumptions, which sometimes have been derived from doctrines developed by Muslim scholars during the early centuries of Islam. Although the doctrines had no firm basis in either the Bible or the Qur'an, they nevertheless became part of Muslim orthodoxy and were then used to judge the Bible negatively.

False assumption #1: *When the contents of the Qur'an disagree with the Bible, this means the Bible is corrupt or falsified*.

Why should that which is written later automatically judge the scriptures that came before? If what comes after disagrees with what was prior, we can logically assume that one of them is wrong. That which comes later may just as well be wrong.

In historical and scholarly terms, the account that is chronologically closer to the actual events is usually judged to be the more trustworthy.[369] To prefer the Qur'an's later version of events requires a prior commitment to the Muslim belief that the Qur'an is true. However, that belief is a Muslim truth claim, not an established fact. This really is the central question between Bible and Qur'an: Which one is true?

Rahmat Allah Kairanwi wrote that according to Islam, only the biblical statements that match the teaching of the Qur'an can be accepted. Any biblical statements contradicted by the Qur'an, wrote Mawlana Kairanwi, must certainly be rejected (*mardūd*).[370] How is this pronouncement reasonable? In order to decide such an important question, the contents of both Bible and Qur'an must first be closely read and carefully considered. Truth is not simply a matter of saying it is so.

The Qur'an claims in many verses that the recitations of the messenger confirm (*muṣaddiq*, *taṣdīq*) the earlier scriptures.[371] In these verses, the earlier scriptures are portrayed as a reliable source

and an essential support for the Qur'an. Just because Muslims subsequently discovered that the contents of the Qur'an disagree with the scriptures already in existence at the time of these recitations, why should they feel free to accuse the earlier scriptures of being at fault?

False assumption #2: *If the Bible did not come together in the same way Muslims claim the Qur'an came together, the Bible cannot be the Word of God.*

One standard by which some Muslims have judged the Bible to be corrupt or falsified is the Muslim doctrine of scripture developed by Muslim writers in the early centuries of Islam. Muslims accept this doctrine as true, and many use the doctrine to judge other concepts of scripture.

Muslim beliefs about how the Qur'an came together have been thoroughly explained by academic scholars and do not need to be reviewed here.[372] Briefly, Muslims claim that Allah revealed his word to the messenger of Islam, and this word was collected and edited into a definitive book within about 20 years of the messenger's death. Two observations can be made immediately. First, the Islamic doctrine of scripture is a Muslim truth claim based on acceptance of Muslim sources by faith. Second, the biblical concept of scripture differs from the Islamic doctrine.

There is no historical evidence for Muslim claims about how the Qur'an came together. Those claims are based on traditions that were first set in writing during the ninth century—more than two hundred years after the events they claim to report. The historical reliability of these *ḥadīth* reports and the stories they tell will be examined in detail in Chapter 16. By way of a brief preview of that discussion about the traditions written down in the third century of Islam, academic scholars agree that there is no evidence to prove

that the claims are true.[373] Why, therefore, should these stories be used to judge the Bible?

Following are Jesus' own words, spoken to his disciples and apostles, and recorded in the Gospel accounts. Jesus said,

> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away (Matthew 24:35).
>
> [Y]ou also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning (John 15:27).
>
> This is what is written [in the Hebrew scriptures about me]: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:46-48)
>
> [After my death and resurrection]…the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)

From Jesus' own words, it can be seen that the proclamation of good news from eyewitnesses is the concept of scripture in the Gospel accounts. The eyewitnesses saw, heard, and even touched (1 John 1:1) what they were reporting about. Concerning the death of Jesus, the Gospel says, "The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe" (John 19:35). It is likely that the proclamation of the good news about Jesus was set down in Gospel accounts "precisely because the eyewitnesses were dying and their authoritative testimony needed to be preserved in writing."[374] The Islamic doctrine of scripture is very different from this.

Prior to Islam, the *Injil* was not known as a book sent down on Jesus. "Such has never been a Christian view of the Gospel," wrote Dr. Sidney Griffith.[375] The Gospel was always the good news about Jesus, one Gospel from four witnesses. Jesus' followers accepted the four-form Gospel as the only Gospel and this four-form Gospel was the only *Injil* that existed in the seventh century when

Islam arose, as well as before and after. Even so, in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, Mawlana Kairanwi simply declared, "The chronicles and epistles now in existence are not the *tawrāt* and *injīl* mentioned in the Qur'an, so it is not necessary to accept them." He explained that according to Islam, only those statements about the Gospel that match the teaching of the Qur'an can be accepted. Any statements denied by the Qur'an, wrote Mawlana Kairanwi, must certainly be rejected (*mardūd*).[376]

University of London professor Kate Zebiri wrote that Muslim anti-Christian polemic like that of Mawlana Kairanwi relied on internal (Islamic) categories that presupposed a different understanding of revelation from the Christian one. "This is seen most clearly in the qur'ānic assumption that God revealed the gospel to Jesus in the same way" that Muslims believe Allah revealed the Qur'ān to their messenger.[377]

Why should the Islamic doctrine judge the biblical concept? Why should a doctrine of scripture developed by Muslim writers in the early centuries of Islam have authority over the concepts by which the earlier scriptures defined themselves? Jews and Christians developed their concepts of scripture from what the Torah and Gospel themselves said, and held these concepts through the centuries preceding the rise of Islam. In the ninth through eleventh centuries, Muslim writers developed claims for the Qur'an's authority, uncreatedness, and inimitability.[378] Why should these Muslim doctrines, developed by humans, be considered a valid standard by which to judge the realities of the earlier scriptures?

The Muslim judgment on the Bible likely comes from a further assumption—that there can be no human involvement in the process of setting down God's revelation. However, the Gospel was comfortable with human involvement from the start. How can humankind have a record "of the things that have been fulfilled among us" without a human to investigate the matter and write it down in an orderly account? (Luke 1:1-4) Muslim tradition about the origins of the Qur'an tells of the involvement of human gatherers

and editors and even of the critical decisions of human caliphs and governors. From the earliest qur'anic manuscripts to the printed Qur'ans of today, hundreds of years of human decisions concerning consonants, vowels, and pronunciation marks were required. This interesting topic is taken up in Chapter 18. At this point, it is important to note that just because Muslim doctrine claims there was no human involvement in the process of establishing the qur'anic text, this belief should not be seen as able to judge the Bible.

False assumption #3: *If biblical accounts tell of the sin of prophets, the Bible must be corrupt or falsified.*

The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* judges the Bible to be falsified on the basis of the Islamic claim that prophets do not sin.[379] This claim is an instructive example of judging by wrong assumptions. Nowhere in the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel or even the Qur'an are we led to believe that prophets were sinless! In fact, this point is one on which all four books agree. Rather, Muslim writers developed the doctrine of prophetic sinlessness during the second through fifth centuries of Islam, first by the Imāmī Shīʿa and the Muʿtazila.[380] Why should this later doctrine, invented by humans, be seen as a reliable standard by which to judge the Bible?

It is important to expose this assumption as false, because polemicists continue to base their false accusations against God's Word on it. The purpose of including the following explanation of why it is false is certainly not to show disrespect to Muslims—much less to show disrespect to prophets! All that is discussed here is taken strictly from the scriptures themselves and considered from the perspectives of qualified academic scholars.

The accounts of the prophets presented in the Bible include information about their sins. These accounts are contained in the earliest manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible in existence, from the second century B.C., nearly 800 years before the rise of Islam.[381]

The accounts continued unchanged in biblical manuscripts up to the seventh century A.D. when Islam began. There is no evidence in the history of biblical manuscripts that anything was changed, removed from, or added to these accounts of the prophets between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic text. Though there are some differences of wording among the Hebrew scriptures, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint, they all agree on the prophet stories.

The Bible claims sinlessness for a single prophet—Jesus. There, he is the only one who "had no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). In the Gospel according to John, Jesus himself asked his opponents, "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?" (John 8:46) In answer, the opponents insulted Jesus; but according to the Gospel, no one took up Jesus' challenge to try to prove him guilty of sin. Based on what they knew of the life of Jesus, other New Testament writers described Jesus as "one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); and as "one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). The disciples of Jesus testified, "he committed no sin" (1 Peter 2:22), and "in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). They particularly connected Jesus' sinlessness with his redemptive death, declaring that people were saved by "the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:19).[382]

The Qur'an seems to agree with the Bible in many of its expressions about the sin of figures Muslims consider to be prophets. A.J. Wensinck wrote, "the Kuran contains a large number of passages on Apostles and Prophets; they are not of a dogmatic nature, any more than are the stories of the Prophets in the Old Testament."[383] Paul Walker concluded, "…the sins of the prophets are more or less freely attested in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, if understood literally, and the earlier Muslims apparently admitted as much."[384] The Qur'an tells us, "Adam disobeyed (*ʿaṣā*) his Lord, so went astray (*ghawā*)" (Q 20:121). The verb *ʿaṣā* is a strong Arabic verb which includes the meanings of disobedience, defiance

and rebellion.[385] The Qur'an also says that Abraham lied about his smashing of the idols (Q 21:63).[386] Moses is clearly portrayed as killing a man (Q 20:40, 28:15). The qur'anic version of the Joseph story states that Joseph desired the wife of his employer (*hamma bihā*) (Q 12:24).[387] "The Qur'ān recognizes prophets as sinning," wrote Muhammad Qasim Zaman.[388]

A series of verses in the Qur'an also tells of prophets asking God for forgiveness. It is only reasonable to assume that when people ask forgiveness (*maghfira*) of God, they have done something that needs to be forgiven. Taking the prophets in chronological order, Adam and his spouse say, "Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves (*ẓalamnā anfusanā*). If you do not forgive us (*taghfir lanā*) and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the lost (*al-khāsirīna*)!" (Q 7:23) In very similar words, Noah says, "unless you forgive me (*taghfir lī*) and have mercy on me, I shall be among the lost" (Q 11:47). Abraham says, "I hope that [the Lord of the Worlds] will forgive me (*taghfir lī*) my sin (*khaṭiyyatī*) on the Day of Judgment" (Q 26:82). In the verse immediately after the Qur'an's report that Moses kills a man, Moses says, "My Lord I have wronged myself (*ẓalamtu nafsī*), so forgive me (*ighfir lī*)" (Q 28:16).

Similarly, the Qur'an says of David, "David thought that we had put him to the test, so he asked pardon (*istaghfara*) of his Lord. He collapsed in prayer and repented (*atāba*). So we pardoned him (*ghafarnā lahu*) that" (Q 38:24-25). The Arabic verb used in all of these verses is *ghafara*, to forgive or grant pardon. The Qur'an does not make clear why David needs to ask pardon of his Lord. Incompleteness is characteristic of many qur'anic narratives about biblical figures. The full account is given in the Bible (2 Samuel 11-12). The traditional understanding of Psalm ("Zabūr") 51 is that the following words are David's prayer of confession.

For I know my transgressions (*peshāʿ*),[389]
And my sin (*ḥaṭṭāʾt*) is always before me
Against you, you only, have I sinned (*ḥāṭāʾtî*)
And done what is evil (*raʿ*) in your sight

So that you are proved right when you speak
And justified when you judge. (Psalm 51:3-4)

Muslim commentators and historians in the early centuries of Islam, familiar with the biblical account of David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah, did not hesitate to pass on this information in their explanation of Q 38:21-25.[390] Some also connected the biblical account of Uriah, Bathsheba, and David with the Muslim story of Zayd, Zaynab, and the messenger of Islam, to which Muslims believe Q 33:37 refers.[391] It was only in later writings that Muslim scholars began to claim the biblical account to be false and to accuse the Bible of corruption on the basis of this claim.[392]

The development of this particular line of Muslim polemic illustrates how truth can be perverted when the only purpose is to attack. Without support from Qur'an or *ḥadīth*, some Muslims apparently began to dislike the biblical story of David's adultery. Some then used the biblical story to accuse the Bible of corruption or falsification, based on the Islamic doctrine of prophetic sinlessness. In the biblical manuscripts that predate Islam, there is no evidence of attempts to change David's life story to add the adultery and murder plot.[393] However, it turns out that some Jewish rabbis in the centuries before Islam were also uncomfortable with the account of David's commission of adultery and murder in 2 Samuel and wrote other explanations in Jewish extra-biblical writings such as the *Midrash* and *Talmud*.[394] Isaac Hasson explains that Muslim storytellers accepted the legends from these extra-biblical sources "and rejected the older image of David from the Book of Samuel and Kings, where he is charged with adultery and murder."[395]

These medieval Jewish rabbis therefore had a reason to want to change the biblical text. Is there any evidence they did indeed attempt to add to, erase, or alter the account of David's adultery in 2 Samuel? If they did not do so, we would have a logical reason to believe in the integrity and reliability of the biblical text. In truth, the

existence of this account in the Bible should be seen as a reason to trust the text. The perversion of truth is rather the way that Muslim polemicists have used the account to accuse the Bible of corruption or falsification.

Interestingly, the Qur'an also uses the language of *ghafara* in relation to the messenger addressed by the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an says at Q 40:55, "So have patience. The promise of Allah is true. And ask forgiveness for your sin (*istaghfir li-dhanbika*)." The Arabic verb here is a singular imperative. Similarly at Q 47:19, the Qur'an says, "So know that there is no god except Allah, and ask forgiveness for your sin (*istaghfir li-dhanbika*)." As if to give the messenger a reason to ask for forgiveness, the Qur'an says, "That Allah may forgive you (*li-yaghfira laka*) of your sin (*dhanbika*) that which is past and that which is to come" (Q 48:2).[396] The Arabic noun *dhanb* in these verses is normally translated as "offense, sin, crime, misdeed."[397] Two other verses that add to this picture of the messenger, using additional vocabulary, are Q 93:7 ("Did he not find you wandering (*ḍāllan*) and direct you?")[398] and Q 94:2 ("And eased you of your burden (*wizraka*)").[399] Institute of Ismaili Studies professor Wilferd Madelung wrote, "In early Islam moral failures and errors of Muḥammad were freely mentioned."[400]

In contrast, the Qur'an explicitly describes ʿĪsa as sinless. In Q 19:17, the Qur'an says, "We sent unto her our spirit (*rūḥ*)" with the message, "I am only a messenger of your Lord, that I may bestow on you a faultless (*zakiyyan*) son" (Q 19:19). According to the Qur'an, the spirit gives this message to Maryam about ʿĪsā. The normal meaning of the Arabic adjective *zakiyy* is pure, chaste, guiltless, blameless, sinless.[401] The word *zakiyy* only occurs once in the Qur'an,[402] and that unique expression refers to ʿĪsā.[403]

None of these verses from Bible or Qur'an are quoted here in order to dishonor prophets—and certainly not to show disrespect to you, dear Muslim reader! How can it be disrespectful to describe what the scriptures themselves report about prophets? The verses are cited here only to show that the Islamic doctrine of prophetic

sinlessness is a false assumption. Scholarly examination of the assumption has revealed that the stories of the sins of the prophets in the Hebrew scriptures, far from being proof of its corruption or falsification, are actually a reason to trust its integrity! This examination also raises the question of how Muslim polemicists treat the Word of God. What does it mean to accuse the authentic contents of the Word of God of being lies and fabrications and to seek to forbid them?

Since the doctrine of the sinlessness of prophets did not come from the Qur'an, from where did it come? Academic scholars have traced the doctrine to developments in the thinking of Shīʿī writers in relation to their concept of the Imām.[404] Shīʿī writers wanted to claim a sinless state for their own leader. Paul Walker wrote, "One early Shīʿī theologian even claimed that the imāms had to be impeccable and infallible, despite the Prophet himself having been liable to a degree of sin as recognized and admitted by the Qur'ān."[405] Among Sunni writers, "the dogma of the impeccability of the Prophets was perhaps for the first time formulated in the *Fiḳh Akbar II*."[406] Dr. Wensinck dated this work to the tenth century (fourth century of Islam).[407] He also wrote, "We must suppose that [the dogma of prophetic sinlessness] arose out of the growing worship of Muhammad."[408] William Graham argued that the doctrine was developed to safeguard the Qur'an: "had the messenger not been divinely preserved from at least major sins, how could one be certain he did not make errors with regard to the reception and transmission of God's sacred word?"[409]

As demonstrated above, the sinlessness of all prophets is not a concept taught by the Qur'an. It should not be surprising, therefore, that the noun *ʿiṣma* ("sinlessness, infallibility") does not appear in the Qur'an, nor does the common participle *maʿṣūm* ("immune, infallible, sinless").[410] Furthermore, the vocabulary of *ʿiṣma* does not appear in any of the collections of *ḥadīth* accepted by Muslims as authoritative: and in fact, these canonical collections contain no trace of the sinlessness of prophets.[411] Even the dogma of the

sinlessness of the messenger of Islam is never mentioned explicitly in the canonical *ḥadīth*.[412]

False assumption #4: *The attack of the* Iẓhār al-ḥaqq *on the Bible must be true because Muslim scholars throughout history have agreed with it*.

In the *Izḥār al-ḥaqq*, Mawlana Kairanwi left the impression that Muslim scholars throughout history have agreed with his statement that "[t]he original *Tawrāt* and the original *Injīl* were lost (*fuqida*) prior to the sending of Muḥammad. The existing copies today have the status of books containing true and false accounts (*riwāyāt*). We do not say that they were present in their original form at the time of the prophet, then became corrupt."[413]

In reality, Mawlana Kairanwi's position is an extreme point of view in the history of Muslim scholarship. *Ifrāṭ* ("extreme" or "excessive") is the word Cairene Muslim scholar al-Biqāʿī (d. 1480) used to describe this position in his work *al-Aqwāl al-qawīma fī ḥukm al-naql min al-kutub al-qadīma* ("The just words on the rule regarding quotations from the ancient books").[414] Al-Biqāʿī, relying on the analysis of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) before him,[415] divided Muslim views on the integrity of the Bible into four camps. He characterized the first group as saying that nothing of the original divine word of God remained with the Jews and Christians (*aḥaduhā annahā buddilat kulluhā*).[416] Insistence on this position, wrote al-Biqāʿī, would be nothing but arrogance (*mukābara*) or belligerence.[417] Al-Biqāʿī's position, the third camp, held that corruption had tainted only a small and insignificant part of the Bible (*waqaʿa fī al-yasīr minhā wa muʿẓamuhā bāqin ʿalā ḥālih*).[418] Al-Biqāʿī considered this third position the correct one, and claimed for his camp the famous jurist al-Shāfiʿī (d. 820) and even Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064). Personally, al-Biqāʿī thought the Bible to have a high probability of being the Word of God.[419] In any case, for al-Biqāʿī the extreme position represented by Mawlana Kairanwi was far from

being the only position of Muslim scholars or—to al-Biqāʿī's mind—the correct view.

Indeed, Muslim scholars have expressed a wide range of views about the Bible. It is only necessary to relate a few of the more interesting views to show that the assumption of the agreement of Muslim scholars with Kairanwi's harsh view is false.

1. Early Muslim writers Ibn al-Layth (d. c. 819), ʿAlī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. 855), al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 860), and Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) wrote extensively about the Bible without accusing the Bible of being falsified.[420] It is true that al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm changed the words of scripture when he quoted from the Gospel according to Matthew.[421] He clearly doubted the content of the Gospel when it did not match his Islamic understandings. However, this is very different from the accusation of wholesale corruption and falsification. Furthermore, if the Gospel al-Qāsim was reading was authentic, as we argue in this book, how should we describe his treatment of the Gospel?

2. Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), in his work *al-Risāla al-aḍḥawiyya fī l-maʿād*, disagreed with the view of another Muslim writer that the Torah has been completely corrupted with an inappropriate view of God. "What does it mean to say that the Hebrew scripture (*kitāb*) is entirely, from beginning to end, pure anthropomorphism? One cannot answer that this scripture is entirely falsified. How could a scripture be entirely falsified that is diffused among countless nations who live far away from each other and have very different mentalities? And it involves Jews and Christians, two communities hostile to each other."[422] Ibn Sīnā's common-sense approach to the accusation of falsification is similar to arguments Jews and Christians were offering in defense of the Bible.

3. An interesting work attributed by many to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) is *al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilāhiyyat ʿĪsā bi-ṣarīḥ al-Injīl* ("The fitting refutation of the deity of Jesus through the evidence of the Gospel"). Instead of accusing the Gospel of corruption or falsification, *al-Radd al-jamīl* took the content of the Gospel seriously

and argued that anything not matching Islamic teaching should be interpreted through *taʾwīl*—that is, metaphorically.[423] The author's refutation of Christian belief in the deity of Jesus rested on giving metaphorical interpretations to many Gospel passages that either clearly present or strongly imply the deity of Jesus.

4. The views of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209) on the Qur'an's tampering verses have already been presented in Chapter 3. It is essential to know the thinking of al-Rāzī because Mawlana Kairanwi claimed al-Rāzī as an ally in his harsh attack on the Bible.[424] al-Rāzī's commentary on the tampering verses shows him to be much closer to al-Biqāʿī than to Mawlana Kairanwi. al-Rāzī expressed these same views elsewhere in his writings. In fact, a Jewish writer living in Baghdad in the thirteenth century named Ibn Kammūna quoted a passage from al-Rāzī's *al-Muḥaṣṣal* in his discussion of Muslim accusations against the Bible.[425] In this passage, al-Rāzī wrote that it would be false to claim that detailed descriptions of Islam's messenger would be found in the Bible, "because we find the Torah and the Gospel void thereof." Al-Rāzī continued, "It cannot be said that the Jews and the Christians distorted these two books, because we say that these two books were well-known east and west, and in such a case, like in that of the Koran, distortion is precluded."[426] Does al-Rāzī's statement provide evidence that Muslim writers were starting to listen to the Jewish defense of the Torah?[427]

5. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) wrote in *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ* that very little of the actual text of the Bible has been changed.[428] He stated repeatedly that Christians had altered the meanings of their scripture (*taḥrīf al-maʿānī*), but not the actual wording (*alfāẓ*).[429] Ibn Taymiyya wrote that in the fourteenth century, the Islamic position towards textual corruption was still diverse and ambiguous: "If…they [Christians] mean that the Qur'an confirms the textual veracity (*alfāẓ*) of the scriptural books which they now possess—that is, the Torah and the Gospel—this is something which some Muslims will grant them and what many

Muslims will dispute. However, most Muslims will grant them most of that."[430]

6. Ibn Khaldūn rejected the idea of the falsification of the text of the Bible and charged Jews and Christians only with misinterpreting the text.[431] In his famous *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldūn answered the Muslim argument that the Jews altered the Torah: "The reply to this argument would be that the statement concerning the alteration of the Torah by the Jews is unacceptable to thorough scholars and cannot be understood in its plain meaning, since custom prevents people who have a revealed religion from dealing with their divine scriptures in such a manner."[432] Ibn Khaldūn described the Torah as "the oldest book of the revealed writings that came down to us" and used the Torah for his history.[433] Ibn Khaldūn also speculated on how mistakes may have been produced when copies of the Torah were made. "But this happened without premeditation on the part of their scholars and rabbis. And, in spite of this, one can be proud of the authentic text of the Torah, if one wants to make a judicious choice in scientific study of the text."[434] W.J. Fischel suggested that Ibn Khaldūn approached the Bible "not as a theologian but as an historian, generally free from polemics and prejudices."[435]

7. Interestingly, the most influential South Asian theologian of the modern period, Shāh Walī Allāh (1702-62), declared that he did not believe in the corruption of the text of the Torah. He explained in his *al-Fawz al-kabīr fī uṣūl al-tafsīr* that "tampering with meaning" means corrupt interpretation (*taʾwīl*), misconstruing a verse arbitrarily, and deviation from the straight path.[436] Likewise, a contemporary of Mawlana Kairanwi and the founder of Aligarh University, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898), conceived of tampering as referring essentially to exegetical interpretation rather than actual verbal corruption of the text.[437] Sir Sayyid even began a work entitled the *Mohomedan commentary on the Holy Bible*. He wrote in Urdu on Genesis 1-11 and Matthew 1-5. His approach to scripture was Modernist and his writing free of polemic.[438]

No informed Muslim would say that Ibn Sīnā, al-Rāzī, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Khaldūn are insignificant thinkers in Islamic intellectual history. Yet all of these scholars disagreed radically with Mawlana Kairanwi's harsh attack on the Bible. al-Biqāʿī added many other examples.[439] It is wrong to assume that Muslim scholars throughout history have agreed with Mawlana Kairanwi's harsh accusations, which al-Biqāʿī characterized as extreme and arrogant. [440]

In fifteenth century Cairo, al-Biqāʿī was irritated by the assertion that the prohibition against reading the Bible was based on "consensus." All the evidence, he argued, pointed to the opposite conclusion: "if there is a consensus among Muslims, it is in support of the use of the Bible."[441] In the same way, it would be false to assume that there has been a consensus among Muslim scholars to agree with Mawlana Kairanwi's negative view of the Bible.

CHAPTER NINE

One Gospel in Four Accounts

The good news about Jesus offered in the Gospel is based on eyewitness testimony. Men and women who knew Jesus and accompanied him during his activities and teaching told what they saw and heard. A number of individuals then wrote down accounts from the testimony of eyewitnesses. The Gospel accounts contained in the New Testament offer that testimony.

This is what the writer of the Gospel according to Luke claimed at the very beginning of his "orderly account." He immediately acknowledged the multiplicity of early reports about Jesus: "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us…" (Luke 1:1). The writer evidently did not think of this multiplicity of accounts as a problem, but rather a strength.

Neither the Gospel according to Luke nor any of the other Gospel accounts in the New Testament claims that the "Gospel" (Greek original, *euaggelion*; Arabic translation, *injīl*) is a book revealed to Jesus. In fact, there is no record of such a claim in the early centuries of Christianity. The claim that the *Injīl* was a writing "given" to or "sent down" upon Jesus appears for the first time six hundred years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, in the Qur'an (Q 5:46, 47).[442] Why should the Gospel, fixed in writing during the first century and accepted as authoritative during the second century, be judged by a claim that Muslims began to make about the *Injīl* in the seventh century?

Accounts "handed down" from eyewitnesses would seem to have a ready appeal to Muslims, who base much of their faith and practice on traditions they believe to be faithfully handed down from the companions of the messenger of Islam. But the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq,* instead of understanding and appreciating the heritage of eyewitness testimony, offered only accusation. Such is the legacy of Muslim-Christian encounter: the very things that might have been shared and discussed instead became points of contention and conflict.

One of the main points of accusation in the *Iẓhār* is the variation among the four Gospel accounts. In the *Iẓhār*'s lists of "contradictions, errors and alterations," the differences between the Gospel accounts are cited as proof of the corruption and/or falsification of the Bible. Dear Muslim reader, what would be the result if the same criteria used by the *Iẓhār* against the Gospel were applied to the Qur'an and to the sources of the *sunna* of the messenger of Islam? Do differences between accounts of important personalities in the sourcebooks of Islam prove corruption and/or falsification?

This chapter, and Chapters 10 and 12, answer many of the *Iẓhār*'s accusations against the Gospel accounts. This chapter first sets out, in a scholarly way, the meaning of "Gospel" during the six centuries before the rise of Islam. There is no point in attempting to answer accusations that don't understand what the Gospel is! Secondly, the meaning of differences in qur'anic accounts is explained. Thirdly, many of the *Iẓhār*'s accusations against differences in Gospel accounts are answered. Finally, the question is posed to the accuser: If you discount some Gospel reports because of differences in detail, what will you do when all of the accounts agree about central Gospel affirmations?

This chapter and subsequent chapters do not respond to every individual accusation in the *Iẓhār*'s lists. Most of the accusations have already been answered many times, and the sources of those answers will be indicated. The *Iẓhār*'s lists actually repeat many of

the same accusations first as "contradiction," then as "error," and additionally as "alteration"! Further, many of the accusations can be grouped in categories; in some cases, the entire category can be treated with a single answer.

1. One Gospel in four accounts

One of the key points of confusion between Christians and Muslims when they discuss the "Gospel" and its contents is that many Muslims have a false idea of what the Gospel is. In order to clear up this confusion, one should know what the "Gospel" meant to people in the Middle East during the six centuries between the death and resurrection of Jesus and the origins of Islam.

The Gospel means the "good news" of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus.[443] The term for Gospel in the original Greek New Testament is *euaggelion*. At first, *euaggelion* meant the reward given to the messenger who brought good news. Later, the term came to be used for the good news itself. When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into the Greek Septuagint in the second century B.C., the translators used the verb form of *euaggelion* to translate "the announcement of the good news of salvation" (Isaiah 40:9, 52:7; Psalms 96:2).[444]

The word *euaggelion* came to mean "the good news about Jesus" in the letters of the apostle Paul, the earliest writings in the New Testament. However, some scholars believe that Christians were already using the term in this way before Paul. The evidence is that in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 1:1-4, Paul was passing on teaching he had received from the earliest Christian community, perhaps in Jerusalem.[445] Paul's clearest statement of the content of the Gospel comes in 1 Corinthians 15:3-6:

> For what I received (*paralambanō*) I passed on (*paradidōmi*) to you as of first importance; that the Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was

> raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

In Paul's other statement about the *euaggelion*, the focus is on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and how by this, Jesus "was declared with power to be the Son of God" (Romans 1:4). It is essential for a true understanding of the meaning of "Gospel" to note that these statements of Paul represent the very earliest beliefs of the followers of Jesus. In fact, Paul's letters were written prior to any of the four Gospel accounts.[446] It is also important to note that the principle of faithful transmission (Greek *paradosis*, Arabic *tawātur*) was in operation among Christians from the very earliest years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.[447]

Eventually, the word *euaggelion* came to be applied to a written text. The Gospel according to Mark opens with, "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1).[448] However, Christians used the word "Gospel" in the singular well into the third century. The earliest parchment codices of the New Testament entitled the Gospel accounts "according to (*kata*) Matthew," "according to Mark," and so on. This suggests that *euaggelion* applied to the whole, singular collection of four accounts. "There was only one message of final, eschatological salvation, namely salvation accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus, but the message could be conveyed in different ways."[449]

The first recorded instance of Christians referring to the four accounts as "Gospels" (plural) is in the writing of Justin Martyr, around 150 A.D.[450] Elsewhere in his writings, however, Justin Martyr retained the singular use of "Gospel."[451] In any case, relatively soon after the completion of the four Gospel accounts in the first century A.D., they were bound into a single book that circulated among the early Christian communities. Cambridge

professor Graham Stanton makes the case that the codex of four Gospel accounts was established shortly before the middle of the second century.[452]

In the second century A.D., the early Christian communities accepted four Gospel accounts but no other. Church leader Irenaeus wrote around 180 A.D. that the Gospel, "…given by the creator of the world and Logos incarnate, expresses the perfection of apostolic tradition about the Messiah. Thus there may be neither more nor less than these four, since the Gospel in its divinely-willed fourfold form is in turn 'held together by one Spirit.'"[453]

Fully aware of the differences among the four Gospel accounts, the early Christians accepted them as authoritative. At the time, pagan critics of Christianity such as Celsus used the differences among the Gospel accounts to accuse Christianity of being confused and unworthy.[454] The early Church had other options to accepting four accounts. They could have chosen one particular Gospel account as the authoritative account of Jesus, or they could have chosen to harmonize the four accounts into one single account. Both of these options were rejected. Marcion urged the first option around 140 A.D., insisting on the acceptance of only the Gospel according to Luke.[455] Tatian not only proposed but also produced the second option between 160 and 180 A.D. His *Diatessaron* ("[one] from four") "braided together the four Gospels of the New Testament canon and produced a single, consistent text."[456] However, the fourfold collection of Gospel accounts won out.

University of Edinburgh biblical scholar Larry Hurtado suggested that the Church's acceptance of four Gospel accounts "reflects an affirmation of a certain diversity that is represented in multiple witnesses to Jesus."[457] At the same time, the Church restricted the authoritative accounts to these four. The fourfold Gospel also "represents an affirmation of the individual integrity of each of the four texts included in the collection."[458]

The earliest Christians must have been tempted by differences among the Gospel accounts to change the individual accounts so

they would all read the same. That they did not do so should be seen as an indication of the authenticity and integrity of the four accounts. Rather than respecting how the accounts had been protected from alteration, Rahmat Allah Kairanwi used the differences only to accuse. The accusations of the *Iẓhār* against the Gospel based on differences can and must be answered. However, is the accuser aware that differences are not unique to the Gospel accounts about Jesus?

2. Differences in qur'anic accounts and their meaning

Muslim accusations against the Gospel based on the differences among the four Gospel accounts could benefit from a sense of perspective about differences among accounts within the sourcebooks of Islam. The Qur'an, the *ḥadīth* and the earliest Muslim stories about the messenger of Islam (*sīra*, *maghāzī*, etc.) all contain multiple accounts of the same personalities or events.[459] There are striking differences between the accounts. Do these differences prove the corruption and/or falsification of these sources? Do differences between accounts in the sourcebooks of Islam prove the contents to be false?

Chapter 15 provides details about differences in the various qur'anic accounts of prophetic personalities and in the treatment of major themes such as predestination and violence. The subject is only mentioned here in order to bring some realism to the accusations against the Bible in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*.

For example, the story of Adam appears in three main accounts in the Qur'an, with several other short passages adding extra details. The three accounts have many differences. One of the differences is especially serious, because it has implications for the wider discussion between the Gospel and Islam about sin and salvation. The three qur'anic accounts of Adam are Q 2:30-38, Q 7:11-27, and Q 20:115-124. The action of Adam and his "spouse" in response to Allah's command not to "come near to this tree" is described in very

different ways. According to Q 2:36, "Satan caused them to slip (*azallahumā*) therefrom." In this account it is not clear that Adam and/or his spouse bear any personal responsibility. In another account, Satan is again involved, but Adam and his spouse accept responsibility. "We have wronged (*ẓalamnā*) ourselves," they acknowledge to Allah (Q 7:23), and plead for forgiveness and mercy. The third main account seems to add new characterizations of Adam's action. First it says, "he forgot (*nasiya*), and we found no firm intention (*ʿazm*) in him" (Q 20:115). After describing the couple's act of eating, this passage seems to assign major responsibility to Adam: "Adam disobeyed (*ʿaṣā*) his Lord, so went astray (*ghawā*)" (Q 20:121). The Arabic terms indicate significant differences between the three ways in which the action of Adam is described in the Qur'an. As it turns out, this is a point about which precision and unanimity would have been very useful.

If readers were to carefully examine the various qur'anic stories about Abraham, or the more than ten qur'anic accounts of the life of Moses, would they find the accounts to be identical, or at least unanimous on all details?[460] What about the commandments within the Qur'an about the treatment of non-Muslims? Would they find complete agreement among the verses on Allah's will and human responsibility?

Interestingly, the story of the messenger of Islam also appears in four major early accounts: the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq/Ibn Hishām, the *Maghāzī* of al-Wāqidī, the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd, and the *Taʾrīkh* of al-Ṭabarī.[461] Are all of the details of all the episodes in the stories the same? There are six collections of *ḥadīth* that are accepted as authoritative by most Sunni Muslims. Muslims believe these traditions contain the sayings of the messenger of Islam. Is the wording of traditions on the same subject identical in all *ḥadīth* collections? No, it is not. And yet the scholars of Islam formulated Islamic Law largely on the basis of *sunna* and *ḥadīth*.

Posing these questions is not a way of avoiding questions about the Gospel. Such questions will be treated presently. The intention

here is merely to ask: If one wants to accuse the Gospel of being corrupted/falsified on the basis of differences, how would the same approach work with the sourcebooks of Islam?

During the early centuries of Islam, when non-Muslims accused the Qur'an of containing contradictions,[462] or when Muslims themselves found "supposed contradictions" (*mawhim al-ikhlilāf wa ʾl-tanāquḍ*) in the Qur'an, Muslim scholars called these passages *mushkil al-Qurʾān* ("difficulties" or "unsolved questions of the Qur'an")[463] and attempted to argue, in line with orthodox Muslim belief about the Qur'an, that they were not actual contradictions.[464] If non-Muslims do the same with accusations against the Gospel, it is only understandable.

3. Differences in Gospel accounts

Long lists of accusations against the Bible—of "contradictions," "errors," "alterations," "additions," and "omissions"—tend to intimidate those who believe the Bible is inspired. Likely, intimidation was the intent of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*; and in this respect, the *Iẓhār* has been successful. However, anyone who takes the time to read through its lists of accusations and consider them in a scholarly way will soon realize there is no need to fear. As the authors of a Christian answer to a more recent list of Muslim accusations against the Bible wrote, "once we have weighed the evidence, many if not all of the seeming contradictions…can be adequately explained."[465]

Admittedly, this is not to say that all Muslims will be satisfied with the explanations! For Muslims polemicists, these accusations are not "seeming" contradictions but real.

Certainly, there are differences among the Gospel accounts. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* used them to make many accusations, among them: 1. If two Gospel accounts present a different sequence of events, one of the two must be erroneous (*ghalaṭ*)[466] (Nos. 56, 119). 2.

In case of a difference between two Gospel accounts, neither can be divinely inspired (*ilhāmī*)[467] (No. 52). 3. Differences in detail between accounts show "the usual (*ʿāda*) manipulation in the text"[468] (No. 114).

Most of the *Iẓhār*'s accusations have been adequately answered elsewhere, and there is no need to repeat those answers here. Many of the answers have come in direct response to the *Iẓhār* and/or Muslim polemic.[469] Others have come in publications written not particularly for Muslims, but for Christians who have themselves asked questions about the differences in the Gospel accounts.[470] The questions are also regularly treated in the countless commentaries written on individual Gospel accounts. The following *Iẓhār* accusations of contradiction in the Gospel have been selected because they raise important theological issues without giving them the treatment they deserve.

Accusation 108

Accusation 108 is a good first example of an accusation that raised a crucial theological issue but missed its importance.[471] Mawlana Kairanwi quoted from the Gospel according to Matthew 16:18-19 and 23. He then proceeded to ridicule the apostle (*ḥawārī*) Peter through quoting "statements of ancient Christians," even though the Qur'an says only good things about Jesus' disciples (Q 3:52).

There is in fact no contradiction in the Gospel passage that Mawlana Kairanwi referred to, and this is quickly seen if one considers the verses that he omitted. Jesus commended Peter in Matthew 16:17-19 because of Peter's famous confession in Matthew 16:16. Jesus had asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16:16). Jesus commended this confession of his identity as true, "not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven" (16:17). Mawlana Kairanwi omitted this entire context.

Jesus then spoke harshly to Peter in Matthew 16:23 because of Peter's statement in Matthew 16:22. Jesus had explained to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, must suffer many things there, must be killed, and would then be raised to life on the third day (16:21). Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Jesus. "Never, Lord," Peter said. "This shall never happen to you!" (16:22) This is the reason Jesus calls Peter "Satan," saying that Peter does "not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (16:23). Mawlana Kairanwi omitted this entire context. He quoted what he wanted out of context, presented this as a contradiction, then proceeded to ridicule an apostle.

From a scholarly point of view we notice that in the meantime, Mawlana Kairanwi completely ignored the two matters which are at the heart of the passage and could be topics of profitable discussion between the Gospel and Islam: 1. Jesus himself commended the confession that he is the Son of God. 2. Jesus predicted his own death and described as Satanic the objection that he should not die.

Accusations 54 and 56

These accusations point out differences in Matthew, Mark, and Luke in the sequence of events surrounding the sermons of Jesus. [472] Differences in sequence make up one of the main categories of the *Iẓhār*'s long lists of accusations.

The Gospel accounts do not themselves claim to arrange all of their materials in a strict chronological sequence. Many times, other organizational principles are at work, such as arrangement according to topic or theme, or grouping episodes about the same character. [473] It seems rather audacious for Islam to attack the Gospel in this area. The qur'anic stories of prophetic characters often follow vastly different sequences,[474] and Muslims openly acknowledge that the contents of the Qur'an in general are not chronologically organized. In fact, the principle of the Qur'an's arrangement has been a mystery to most readers.

Because of accusation, an opportunity to read and reason together is lost. The sermons the *Iẓhār* merely refers to contain words of Jesus not known in the Qur'an or in Islam, especially Matthew 5-7, the "Sermon on the Mount" (*wa ʿẓ al-jabal*). Those words teach ways of responding to conflict that would be very helpful in relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims today. This theme will be picked up in Chapters 19 and 23.

Accusation 81

Here, the *Izhar* referred to a report of Jesus healing a deaf man in one Gospel account (Mark 7:31-37), and to a report of Jesus healing many people in another account (Matthew 15:30-31), and called this a contradiction.[475] There is no contradiction, rather simply two separate reports. These Gospel reports provide an opportunity for reading and reasoning together; because in this case, the Qur'an agrees with the Gospel that Jesus was a healer (Q 3:49, 5:110). The two Gospel reports state straightforwardly that Jesus performed these healings (Mark 7:33-5, Matthew 15:30). The only contradiction to this seems to come in the Qur'an, which says repeatedly, "by permission of Allāh (*bi-idhni ʾllāh*)" (Q 3:49, cf. 5:110).

In the midst of this accusation, an opportunity is wasted for discussion of what the Gospel plainly states about the miracles of Jesus and what they mean for his identity. This theme will be picked up in Chapter 20.

Accusation 99

Mawlana Kairanwi quoted the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God," and stated that they contradict[476] Matthew 10:34: "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." These words of Jesus can only be seen as contradictory if the reader does not check the context of Matthew 10:34.

The teaching of Jesus on peacemaking is consistent throughout the Gospel accounts as well as the entire New Testament. This theme is discussed in detail in Chapters 19 and 23. Regarding "the sword," Jesus is much more famous for commanding one of his companions to "[p]ut your sword back in its place,..for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). In any case, Matthew 10:34 is not a contradiction. Jesus' words occur in the middle of a long passage of teaching about the suffering that will come to people who put loyalty to Jesus above loyalty to family and community (Matthew 10:28-39). Jesus predicted that for anyone who follows him, "a man's enemies will be the members of his own household" (10:36). Jesus urged his disciples to acknowledge him publicly (10:32), no matter what the cost. "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (10:28). This certainly happened to followers of Jesus in the first three centuries of Christianity at the hands of their Roman rulers.

These words of Jesus present an opportunity to read and reason together. Islam has formulated in Islamic Law that Muslims who want to leave Islam must be killed—including those who want to give their loyalty to Jesus. How are we to understand the intent of this accusation in the *Iẓhār*? It seems unkind to suggest that Mawlana Kairanwi was not aware of the meaning of Matthew 10:34, or that he did not bother to check the context. But the alternative seems even less kind: Did Mawlana Kairanwi knowingly use this verse to cast doubt on Jesus' message of peace? In the meantime, an opportunity is wasted to learn about the teachings of Jesus on the one hand, and to discuss the importance of freedom of religion and conscience on the other.

Accusation 110

This accusation quoted the reports in three Gospel accounts of what "the voice that was heard from heaven" said about the Sonship of Jesus at the time of his baptism.[477] "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). "You are my

Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). The *Iẓhār* simply stated, without comment, that the reports disagree (*ikhtalafū*).

Such is the quality of some of the *Iẓhār*'s accusations, that they can draw attention to the difference of a word or two in three reports of something heard, yet fail to mention that all three Gospel accounts unanimously affirm the divine Sonship of Jesus based on a voice from heaven. The reports provide an opportunity for reading and reasoning together, because the divine Sonship of Jesus has been a source of contention between the Gospel and Islam since the seventh century. The only contradiction in this case seems to be the Islamic teaching that Jesus is not the Son of God.

Accusation 113

In this accusation, the *Iẓhār* drew attention to differences surrounding two reports of Jesus' telling of the parable of the vineyard.[478] The reports of the parable are virtually identical, but in one report Jesus' listeners tell what the owner of the vineyard will do to the tenants (Matthew 21:41); while in the other, Jesus tells what the owner will do, and his listeners respond, "May this never be!" (Luke 20:16). Whether this deserves to be called a "contradiction" or not, the reader must ask whether these differences in the reports of Jesus' interactions with his listeners change the meaning of Jesus' parable. There is no contradiction in the central details of the parable—that the owner of the vineyard sends his own son and that the tenants kill the son (Matt 21:37-39, Luke 20:13-15). The owner of the vineyard in the parable represents God, the tenants represent the people God has created, and the son represents Jesus. The only contradiction on these points seems to be the Islamic denials of the divine Sonship of Jesus and his death to redeem God's lost creation. In the meantime, the opportunity to consider what Jesus himself said about his divine Sonship and death is lost.

Accusation 115

Mawlana Kairanwi quoted from reports of what Jesus said about his body and blood during the Lord's Supper (*ʿashāʾ al-rabbānī*). [479] "This is my body given for you" (Luke 22:19). "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (Mark 14:24). "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Despite his focus on the differences between "body," "blood," and "covenant", there is no contradiction among the Gospel contexts that contain these words. A quick check shows that both "body" and "blood" are featured in all three passages, as is the "blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20).

This accusation expressed surprise (*ʿajab*) that the Gospel according to John did not mention the words of Jesus about his body and blood at the Last Supper.[480] With four written sources already bearing witness to Jesus words,[481] however, by what standard is it obligatory for John to also report the words?[482] John provided other important information in his report of the event (John 13:1-17). Scholars have expressed greater surprise over the fact that though these Gospel accounts were circulating widely in the seventh century, and though the Lord's Supper was observed by Christians throughout the Middle East at that time, neither the Qur'an nor Islamic teaching in general seems to show any awareness of the concepts of blood atonement or Jesus as redeemer.[483] In order that another opportunity to read and reason together not be lost, this theme will be developed in Chapter 21.

Accusation 116

Accusation 116 quoted two expressions from Jesus' teaching in the Gospel according to Matthew: "…small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life…" (Matthew 7:14); and "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me […] for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:29, 30).[484] The *Iẓhār* commented, "So it seems (*ḥaṣala*) from the juxtaposition of these two sayings that following (*iqtidāʾ*) ʿĪsā, upon whom be peace, does not lead to life."

This comment, like many others in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, could certainly be described as a question that does not deserve to be dignified with an answer.[485] Quoting the words of Jesus merely to attack the Gospel places the *Iẓhār* at the extreme end of Muslim attitudes toward the Gospel. Many Muslims who do not otherwise trust the Bible would be willing to give credence to the words of Jesus in the Gospel. Islam has no other way to know Jesus' own words than through the Gospel that was fixed in writing and bound into a codex five centuries prior to Islam, was in existence during the rise of Islam in the seventh century, and reads the same today.

We answer because of the words of Jesus the *Iẓhār* omitted in order to set up its accusation. There is no contradiction between the two sayings of Jesus. Here is the entire passage from Matthew 11: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). We answer because we seek to follow the gentleness of the Messiah (2 Corinthians 10:1, 1 Peter 3:15).

These examples show some of the main themes of the *Iẓhār*'s many accusations of "contradiction" in the Gospel. Many accusations drew attention to differences in wording in Gospel reports of the same event or speech. A second major category is the differences in the sequencing of events. A third common theme is variations in names and numbers. All these themes have been dealt with adequately.[486] We have noted the tendency of the *Iẓhār*'s accusations to take verses out of context or, perhaps, to purposely not provide the context. In many cases, we have shown that with a little thought, differing texts turn out to be compatible.

Reading the *Iẓhār*, one is left with the impression of an attempt to find any and every difference in the Gospel accounts, however insignificant, in order to lengthen the list of accusations of "contradiction." The same could be done—and has been done—with

the stories and teachings in the Qur'an. However, when the subject of contradiction is taken up again in Chapter 15 of this *Gentle answer*, the intent is not to respond in kind, but rather to raise significant issues in theology and relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims.

4. Agreement on central Gospel truths

The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* used differences among the Gospel accounts to accuse the Gospel of contradiction, charging repeatedly that "one of the accounts must be wrong" or "this could not be inspired." Earlier in this chapter, we asked what it would mean if the same approach were applied to the differences in narratives about prophetic personalities or commands in the Qur'an, or to the differences of detail in the sources of the *sunna* of the messenger of Islam. We highlight some of the most important differences within the Qur'an in Chapters 15-17. However, another question suggests itself in regard to the *Iẓhār*'s accusations. If the *Iẓhār* used differences in the Gospel accounts to claim corruption, what would it then say about central affirmations on which all four Gospel accounts agree?

This question touches on the honesty and sincerity of the *Iẓhār*'s argument against the Bible. Was the argument made in the interests of knowing the truth about the important events reported in the Gospel? Or did it come out of ill will and perhaps political enmity?

For example, the *Iẓhār* attacked differences in some of the details of the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus, but strikingly did not challenge the central event itself—the death of Jesus. This is because the Gospel accounts are unanimous that Jesus was crucified, and that he died. The contradiction comes not in the Gospel accounts, but rather in the Qur'an, as Muslims have understood Q 4:157.

The Qur'an states that four witnesses are needed in order to confirm an accusation against an adulteress (Q 24:4). What is the

significance of an accusation of adultery compared to the redemptive death of Jesus? Dr. Hurtado described the scholarly consensus on the Gospel accounts: "…all four renditions tell a story of Jesus in which his death and bodily resurrection are the climactic and crucial redemptive events."[487]

Another noticeable silence in the *Iẓhār*'s list of accusations is a charge of contradiction regarding the Gospel's affirmation that Jesus is the Son of God. This is because the Gospel accounts are unanimous on this point. "The New Testament writers unquestionably considered Jesus, the Son of God, to be God."[488] The contradiction comes only from the Qur'an. More than four centuries before Islam, the early Church leader Irenaeus wrote that the four Gospel accounts "have all declared to us that there is one God, Creator of heaven and earth, announced by the law and the prophets; and one Messiah, the Son of God."[489] University of Manchester professor F.F. Bruce summarized the modern consensus when he wrote that no matter how far scholars seek to go back in history, no matter how they organize the materials, "[a]ll parts of the gospel record are shown…to be pervaded by a consistent picture of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God."[490] More recently, Dr. Hurtado added that all four Gospel accounts reflect "the proto-orthodox stance that Jesus is Son of the God of the Old Testament who created the world."[491]

If this is true about both the Gospel accounts and modern scholarship on the New Testament, does it mean anything to those who accuse on the basis of difference? Does the testimony of four "witnesses" bear any weight in this case? The next chapter makes a case for the importance of eyewitnesses and their testimony in understanding the reliability of the New Testament.

CHAPTER TEN

Reliability of the New Testament

In Chapter 9 we explained that the Gospel, *euaggelion* in Greek, means the good news about Jesus. The New Testament contains four Gospel accounts that make up a multifaceted portrait of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In addition to these four accounts, the New Testament is comprised mainly of letters written by apostles to groups of believers and individual believers spread across what is now Turkey, Greece, and Italy. On the basis of Jesus' death and resurrection and their understanding of the benefits that flow from these, the apostles wrote the letters to instruct "Christians" (followers of the Messiah) in how to live. A Gospel account is very different in literary form from a personal letter. However, all parts of the New Testament are united by the concept of bearing witness to Jesus.

As we noted in Chapter 8, it is not appropriate to judge the Gospel by a truth claim Muslims make for the Qur'an. Rather, the Gospel must be allowed to speak for itself. What is it, then, that the New Testament claims to offer? It claims to offer a faithful, reliable witness to Jesus the Messiah. In the Gospel according to John, after the account of Jesus' death, we read, "The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony (*marturia*) is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe" (John 19:35). Further on in the same Gospel account, we read, "This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24). The Gospel's own emphasis is on the true testimony of an eyewitness.

This self-description continues in other parts of the New Testament. The first letter of John opens this way: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it…" (1 John 1:1-2). Similarly, Peter's second letter carefully qualified its report of the voice "from the Majestic Glory" that announced the divine Sonship of Jesus: "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty….We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain" (2 Peter 1:16, 18). These witnesses claimed to report what they saw, heard, and even touched.

The Gospel, after all, means good news—not a perfectly worded book "sent down" upon Jesus, as the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* claims.[492] What is appropriate to good news is that it be truly reported. In contrast, Islamic scholars worked out for the Qur'an an elaborate doctrine of its inimitability (*iʿjāz*). They argued that the Arabic words of the Qur'an are matchless.[493] This was a Muslim religious claim developed over the course of centuries, and its proof was not obvious to non-Muslims who knew Arabic well.[494] In any case, the early Christians did not make a claim for the perfection of the New Testament Greek. Rather, they claimed that the testimony of the New Testament was true. Irenaeus wrote around 180 A.D. that the Gospel "expresses the perfection of apostolic tradition about the Messiah."[495] In other words, for Irenaeus and for Christians before and after him, the perfection of the Gospel is in the true teaching about Jesus from eyewitnesses. In this sense, Irenaeus claimed the "clarity, reliability (*firmitas*), and perfection" of the four Gospel accounts.[496]

This chapter presents some of the reasons to trust the New Testament's witness to Jesus. We do not advance these reasons as "scientific proofs." To do so would be to misunderstand the concepts of testimony and reliability, and would misrepresent what the New

Testament says about itself. However, that doesn't make these reasons any less convincing.

1. Written down within a lifetime

One of the key questions related to the reliability of any account is the time gap between the event and the writing down of the account.[497] According to the best scholarship on the New Testament, the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written between 60 and 100 A.D.; that is, within thirty to seventy years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.[498] Scholars date the letters of the apostle Paul even earlier, to around 50-60 A.D.; that is, within thirty years of Jesus' death and resurrection. "The probable dates of the Gospels," wrote St. Andrews University New Testament professor Richard Bauckham, "make it entirely plausible that the text of the Gospels as we have them are at no great distance from the reports of the eyewitnesses. The probable dates of the Gospels also make it likely that they were written precisely because the eyewitnesses were dying and their authoritative testimony needed to be preserved in writing."[499]

By comparison, there seems to be a much larger time gap for the sourcebooks of Islam. Muslims claim the text of the Qur'an was fixed by the Caliph ʿUthmān approximately twenty years after the date when Muslims believe Islam's messenger died. However, there is no historical evidence for this claim.[500] Scholars currently date the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an to the last decades of the seventh century, and many scholars link the fixing of the text to ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 705) and al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 714).[501] This gap is around sixty to seventy years. University of Oregon professor Stephen Shoemaker recently wrote, "The precise circumstances of the Qur'ān's origins are in fact quite uncertain, and…its collection and standardization likely took place over an interval of time comparable in length to the gospel traditions."[502]

If we look at the dating of the earliest accounts of the life and sayings of Islam's messenger, we see a much bigger gap. If Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767) wrote his *Sīra* in the middle of the eighth century, the gap is about 120 years. But until now, Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīra* is not known to exist. We have it only in a heavily edited version by Ibn Hishām (d. 833) almost 200 years after the date Muslims give for their messenger's death.[503] The gap grows even larger if we look at the writing down of the collections of *ḥadīth* (Muslim traditions of what the messenger said). If al-Bukhārī (d. 870) and Muslim (d. 874) wrote down their collections in the middle of the ninth century, there is a gap of about 220 years. "Despite frequent assertions to the contrary, our historical knowledge concerning Muhammad and first-century Islam is far more limited and uncertain than is the case with respect to Jesus and first-century Christianity," wrote Dr. Shoemaker. The early Muslim biographies of Islam's messenger "are not at all equal in their historical quality to the canonical Christian gospels."[504]

The short time gap between the events of the Gospel and its fixing in writing speaks in favour of the reliability of its contents. It was set down within a lifetime—meaning that many witnesses of the events were still living and could check the written details and interact with their authors.[505] An example of this proximity is Paul's report of appearances of Jesus after Jesus rose from the dead. "After that [Jesus] appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:6). Paul invited his readers to speak with the hundreds of witnesses to check whether what he was reporting was true. He seemed to show no fear of being contradicted!

Given the large time gap for the Muslim sourcebooks, therefore, it seems disingenuous that the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* should accuse the Gospel accounts of not having "an uninterrupted chain of narrators."[506] When accounts are written by eyewitnesses or are based on the testimony of eyewitnesses, the chain of transmission is both short and strong!

2. Strong links in the chain of transmission

In the process of reliable transmission of the good news about Jesus, the importance of the role of the apostle Paul is often neglected. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, for example, treated Paul in the most dismissive manner.[507] From a scholarly point of view, however, Paul was the earliest writer to pass on crucial information about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul did not invent this information, but rather wrote that he was transmitting it faithfully: "For what I received (*paralambanein*) I passed on (*paradidonai*) to you as of first importance…" (1 Corinthians 15:3); "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you…" (1 Corinthians 11:23). Lund University professor Birger Gerhardsson explained in *The reliability of the Gospel tradition* that Paul's use of this terminology showed him to be part of an established tradition of faithful transmission.[508]

Scholars date the conversion of Paul to between 32 and 34 A.D.—at the latest, four years after the death and resurrection of Jesus in 30 A.D.[509] In addition to the immediate teaching he would have received from the Christians in Damascus and Jerusalem (Acts 9:19-28), three years later Paul spent fifteen days with Peter (Galatians 1:18). As Dr. Bauckham remarked, "Two weeks of conversation with Peter…is a lot of conversation."[510] We can reasonably assume that during that time, Paul became thoroughly familiar with the gospel account that was known and taught by the Jerusalem apostles who were the eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. This is most clearly seen in the "received" tradition of 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, where Paul tells of the death, burial, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. There, Paul said that his gospel message was in harmony with that of the apostles: "Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed" (1 Corinthians 15:11).

Before his conversion to Jesus, Paul had been a teacher among the Pharisees (Philippians 3:5, Acts 22:3). As such, he had learned the technical terminology for tradition that was part of Jewish Pharisaic practice. In this terminology, transmission was no casual activity. "Handing on a tradition 'means that *one hands over something to somebody so that the latter possesses it*,' while receiving a tradition 'means that *one receives something so that one possesses it*.'"[511] Paul, therefore, had an important role in the transmission of Jesus traditions that began with eyewitnesses. Dr. Bauckham suggested that the tradition about Jesus' words at the Last Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-25) shows Paul's dependence either on a written text or on an oral text that had been quite closely memorized.[512] "[Paul] therefore envisages a chain of transmission that *begins from Jesus himself* and passes through intermediaries to Paul himself, who has already passed it on to the Corinthians when he first established their church."[513]

Paul passed on what he had received both to the young churches in general and to selected individuals in particular. Paul established communities of believers in Jesus in different locations across modern-day Turkey, Greece, and Italy. He instructed these believers that they were responsible to retain and maintain the traditions (*paradoseis*) he taught (1 Corinthians 11:2, 15:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15). At the same time, Paul also transmitted the traditions to a few designated persons in each community—"people with the skills and gifts necessary for preserving the traditions and for being a resource for the traditions that belonged to the community as a whole."[514]

The traditions continued to be passed on orally, but were now also in writing to be passed on in material form—and to provide a check for the less reliable oral tradition. Paul's letters circulated among the communities he had established. "The rather important result is that designated persons in each Pauline community knew the Jesus traditions through a chain of only two links between themselves and Jesus himself, namely Paul and the Jerusalem apostles."[515]

The Jesus traditions Paul received from eyewitnesses focus on two themes that happen to be very important in the conversation between the Gospel and Islam. In both passages where Paul explicitly stated he was passing on what he received, the main affirmation is the death of Jesus. In one passage, Paul wrote, "the Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3); and in the other he wrote, "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The other theme is belief in the divine Sonship of Jesus. Immediately after his conversion to Jesus in 32-34 A.D., while still in Damascus, Paul "began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20, cf. Galatians 1:15-16). We saw in Chapter 9 that scholars believe Romans 1:1-4 also contains a tradition Paul received from others, that Jesus "was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).[516]

If it is true that Paul received both of these traditions from the earliest followers of Jesus within two to four years after Jesus' death and resurrection—as both the New Testament and modern scholarship affirm—then the issue between the Gospel and Islam is not a matter of corruption of text, or faulty transmission, or the alleged inventions of Paul. It means, rather, that these were the beliefs of Christians from the very earliest times, and that they are based on the testimony of men and women—eyewitnesses—who lived with Jesus, heard Jesus speak about himself, and saw his crucifixion.

3. From fourfold Gospel to New Testament

Early Christians eventually gathered Paul's letters, the four Gospel accounts, and other writings into the collection known today as the New Testament. The name comes from the concept of a "new covenant," found in the Hebrew scriptures. "'The time is coming,' declares Yahweh, 'when I will make a new covenant (*berīt*

chadāshāh) with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah'" (Jeremiah 31:31). At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). In the Jeremiah passage, God declared, "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts," and "I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:33, 34). Well before the Christian writings were called the New Testament, they were united by the theme of a new covenant with God established through the blood of Jesus shed on the cross.[517]

There are many misconceptions about how the New Testament writings were brought together into an authoritative collection and "canonized." It is helpful to think of this canonization process in two stages: an informal stage during the second century, and a formal stage during the fourth century.[518] During the second century, leaders of the early Christian communities came to accept the divine authority of some writings but not others. The word *kanōn*, after all, means "measure" or "rule." These two criteria were used by Christian leaders used to "measure" the authority of a writing: Is the work congruent with what is regarded as universal Christian beliefs? Was the work written by an eyewitness of Jesus, or at least someone who was an early, reliable witness to the New Covenant? [519]

The New Testament collection developed slowly within the life of the Christian communities spread throughout the Middle East and the Mediterranean regions. This was not a matter of imposing one particular text by political power or force of arms. There was no caliph or king in this process. During the second century, Christians were a powerless, persecuted minority within the Roman Empire. "The churches came to their decision on authenticity by that kind of silent and mutual agreement that baffles anyone trying to describe the process of Scriptural canonization. In this instance, they agreed that these four Gospels, and these four alone, bore authentic testimony to Jesus, both the man and his message."[520] Christian leaders began to acknowledge the authority of Paul's letters within the New Testament itself. According to 2 Peter 3:15-16, "…our dear

brother Paul…wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters….”

More than a hundred years before Christians had any political power, wrote New York University professor F.E. Peters, “all the works in our New Testament were already in the published edition in use among Christians, probably from the second century onward.”[521] Among Christians, there was “little disagreement on the details,” and “no other candidates and no debates” about accepting the four Gospel accounts as authoritative.[522] Limiting the circulation of apocryphal writings “required neither bans nor book burning,” Peters continued. The Christian communities and their leaders simply agreed on the works that met the “measure” of authority. “The Good News thus came from unimpeachable sources, a fact apparently that everyone knew and agreed on without benefit of a show of hands.”[523]

Historical evidence for this process of New Testament development in the absence of political power in the second century is found in the writings of Tertullian (ca. 160-220 A.D., Carthage, North Africa) and Clement (150-215 A.D., Alexandria, Egypt). Both testified to the authority of most of the books in the New Testament. The only writings about which there was significant doubt after the middle of the second century were Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Jude.[524] A manuscript discovered in 1740 and dated to 170 A.D., known as the *Muratorian Canon*, is the earliest known list of New Testament books.[525] The Muratorian list shows the process of canonization well on its way to the collection of works finally accepted.

In 325 A.D., the Roman emperor Constantine ended the long period of cruel persecution against Christians. It was only then that the writings regarded as “consensually accepted” (*homologoumena*) by the early Christian communities began to be normatively “prescribed” by the official Church.[526] “The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church

included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect."[527] When Athanasius (293-373 A.D., Alexandria, Egypt) offered his list of 27 books in 367 A.D., therefore, it was not a matter of imposing the canon on Christians, but rather codifying what was already the general practice of Christian communities.

4. Preservation of texts by believers

It is essential to realize that between 50 and 100 A.D., within twenty to seventy years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, believers in Jesus possessed a growing number of written documents in addition to their memories of Jesus and his teachings and the oral tradition through the apostles. Though the oral tradition remained strong, Christians did not need to depend on oral transmission to preserve the tradition in order that it could be written down accurately at some future point. They had in their hands the written texts that would eventually make up the New Testament. For example, copies of individual Gospel accounts circulated among the Christian communities during the last decades of the first century and the first decades of the second century. "With the composition of these Gospels writing came into its own as a means of ensuring the faithful preservation of the Jesus traditions."[528] At some point during the second half of the second century, the Gospel accounts were bound into a single codex and circulated as a "fourfold Gospel."[529] The letters of Paul were similarly gathered together and circulated as a written collection.[530]

One of the key factors in the reliable transmission of the New Testament documents is that in the first half of the second century, there was already regular reading of the Gospel accounts in Sunday gatherings of Christians.[531] Liturgical usage is "conservative"—it requires fixed forms of text. This practice of constant reading in worship continued uninterrupted through the centuries. "Clearly it

was that Christian 'habit' of assembling on a 'fixed day' to hear the Scriptures read that explains both the multiplicity and the survival of New Testament texts."[532]

In addition to circulating in their original Greek, the New Testament documents were translated into languages such as Latin, Coptic, and Syriac as early as the second century and circulated among gatherings of believers as far away as India and England. Christian leaders during the second and third centuries preserved the New Testament writings by quoting them. The writings were even preserved in the writings of heretics! From an early date, copies of the New Testament documents were also preserved in monasteries, for example the Monastery of Saint Catherine in present-day Egypt where the Codex Sinaiticus was found. These various methods of preservation carried the New Testament documents through to the Renaissance. The process of transmission of the New Testament documents speaks to their reliability. According to Martin Hengel, "The text of the Gospels is the best transmitted in the whole of antiquity." [533]

Of course (some readers might say), believers could be expected to claim they have preserved their own scriptures carefully. However, what do academic scholars of the New Testament have to say about the matter? Do they consider the New Testament documents reliable? *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986* is a survey of scholarship on New Testament Studies by Stephen Neill and Tom Wright. Readers will notice that the period of the survey begins just prior to the publication of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* in 1864, and follows the development of scholarship nearly to the end of the twentieth century. In Chapter 7, we indicated that this survey gives a much different impression of the direction of New Testament scholarship than does the *Iẓhār* in its use of European scholarly works from the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. [534]

Related to the text of the New Testament, for example, Neill and Wright described modern achievements in establishing the text,

especially the work of the two great Cambridge professors, B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort.[535] It was Hort, in the two decades following the publication of the *Iẓhār*, who worked out the principles of textual criticism that are still followed by scholars today. In summing up the progress of New Testament Studies since the *Iẓhār* and the impact of modern manuscript discoveries, Neill and Wright compared the state of the New Testament text with the works of Greek and Latin writers commonly accepted as historical. "No other ancient writing can compare with the New Testament in the wealth of the evidence by which it is supported; only in the case of Virgil is anything like comparison even remotely possible."[536] The comparison speaks to the trustworthiness of the text. "We have a far better and more reliable text of the New Testament," they wrote further, "than of any other ancient work whatever, and the measure of uncertainty is really rather small."[537]

The work of Westcott and Hort, as well as of many other New Testament scholars since the *Iẓhār*, has born fruit in establishing a reliable text. "Anyone who reads the New Testament in any one of half a dozen recent Greek editions, or in any modern translation, can feel confident that, though there may be uncertainties in detail, in almost everything of importance he is very close indeed to the text of the New Testament books as they were originally written."[538]

5. Many Gospel manuscripts from before Islam

The subject of biblical manuscripts is taken up in detail in Chapter 12. The purpose of the present section is simply to draw attention to the many New Testament manuscripts in existence today that predate Islam. The discovery of many, if not most, of these manuscripts in the century following the publication of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* in 1864 has fundamentally changed the ways in which scholars view the reliability of the New Testament text, and therefore qualifies much of the scholarship that the *Iẓhār* presented in order to attack the Bible.

In Chapter 6, we described the discovery of many Torah manuscripts that predate Islam. Of course, the great Greek uncials of the fourth and fifth centuries containing the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew scriptures contain the entire New Testament as well. We have already noted the purchase of the fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus from Russia by the British government in 1933—an event that for the first time made available to the public the kind of evidence needed to test claims for the reliability, or accusations of the corruption, of the New Testament manuscripts. However, an even better and earlier fourth-century manuscript, known as "B" or Codex Vaticanus, has been preserved in the Vatican Library since at least the fifteenth century. New Testament scholars commend the reliability of this manuscript: "If every other manuscript of the New Testament had perished, and the text was printed from B [Vaticanus] alone with only the correction of the obvious and superficial errors, we should still have in all essentials a true text of the words of Jesus and the Apostles."[539]

Even more significant for material evidence of the reliability of the New Testament text is the discovery of many papyri that substantially predate the fourth-century uncials.[540] Almost all of this evidence came to light well after the publication of the *Iẓhār*. In 1864 scholars were aware of only a handful of New Testament papyri, a situation that changed dramatically in 1896 when two Oxford scholars, Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, began to excavate an ancient rubbish dump in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt (modern al-Bahnasa). They eventually discovered some fifty-two New Testament papyri dating from the middle of the second century to the sixth century. The majority of these papyri are now preserved at the Sackler Library in Oxford.

At present, the earliest known witness to the text of the New Testament is a papyrus fragment known as P52, dated to 125 A.D. Discovered in Egypt by Grenfell in 1920, P52 was first published in 1935 and is now preserved in the John Rylands University Library in Manchester. In 1931, the Chester Beatty Papyri were made public. "A veritable goldmine"[541] for scholars, these papyri include most of

the Gospel accounts and Acts, the letters of Paul, and the book of Revelation. In 1956, the Bodmer Papyri were discovered and published in Geneva. They contain two major early witnesses to the Gospel according to John as well as most of the Gospel according to Luke, dated to 200 A.D. One of these papyri, know as P75, corresponds closely to the Codex Vaticanus. Today a total of 127 New Testament papyri are known and their number grows steadily. [542] Of these papyri, forty-nine are dated paleographically to the second and third centuries.

The importance of these recently discovered papyri is not only their age, but also the length and character of their text.[543] Their greatest contributions are that they take scholars back a hundred or more years earlier than the fourth-century evidence on which all NT textual criticism had rested previously, and give us a direct view of the transmission of the New Testament writings in the third century and into the second century.[544] The discovery of these papyri fundamentally qualifies the scholarship from the first half of the nineteenth century upon which the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* based its attack on the Bible.[545] This new material evidence, wrote Neill and Wright, "has led to a considerable revision of the picture of the way in which the New Testament has come down to us."[546]

In total, scholars are now able to study 206 Greek and forty-four Latin New Testament manuscripts that predate the seventh century. [547] Ordinary readers have full access to manuscripts of the New Testament that date to almost five centuries prior to the rise of Islam in the seventh century, and to after the seventh century. Advances in technology mean that many key manuscripts of the New Testament are not only accessible in hard copy in places like the British Library, but are also readily searchable through the Internet. As we did in Chapter 6 with the manuscripts of the Torah, we now invite Muslim readers to indicate the references to the messenger of Islam in pre-Islamic manuscripts of the Gospel that were changed or erased during the seventh century. This particular accusation seems to have started the entire Muslim accusation of the general corruption and falsification of the Gospel.

Now that abundant manuscript testimony is available by which to test the accusation, where is the evidence of corruption or falsification? New Testament scholars freely discuss variants, mistakes, and corrections in manuscripts. However, has any academic scholar indicated a change in the text that could reasonably be related to the messenger of Islam?[548] Until relatively recently, this accusation could be made from silence. The manuscript discoveries of the past century have broken the silence with many articulate voices from the past. Since this material evidence offers no grounds for the accusation, therefore, the accusation now needs to fall silent.

6. Sense perception and *tawātur*

The New Testament claim of providing eyewitness testimony and reliable transmission from Jesus finds an echo in an unexpected source—the Muslim commentary on the Qur'an written by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209). The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* quoted al-Rāzī in order to attack Gospel content[549] and to relay his arguments against the deity of Jesus.[550] However, al-Rāzī's commentary on two verses in the Qur'an related to the death of Jesus shows that the famous Muslim scholar had much more to say than the *Izhar* revealed. When al-Rāzī dealt with Q 3:55 and Q 4:157, he took the freedom to question traditional Muslim interpretations of these verses.[551]

Al-Rāzī wrote about the process of human knowledge and the obligatory role of sense perception and transmission. At Q 3:55 he presented six *ishkāl*, or "ambiguities", about the Muslim theory that someone was made to look like Jesus, and was seized and crucified instead of him.[552] He explained that the concept of casting the likeness of one person onto another leads to confusion.

> This would of course lead to the negation of all sacred laws. Moreover, the fundamental principle in all widely transmitted (*mutawātir*) reports is that the first narrator must report what he clearly perceived with his senses (*masūs*). But if erroneous

> confusion is possible with regard to what is seen with the eye, then the falsity of widely accepted reports is more probable. [553]

This passage shows al-Rāzī touching on the theme of *tawātur*. He compared the Gospel reports of the crucifixion of Jesus with reports in Muslim doctrine.

> Christians in their multiplicity the world over, with their great love for the Messiah and their extremist views concerning him, have reported that they witnessed him being crucified and killed. If we were to deny this, we would cast doubt on the principle of universally accepted transmission (*tawātur*). Casting doubt on this principle would also necessitate casting doubt on the prophethood of Muhammad and Jesus, and even on their very existence, as well as the existence of all other prophets, and that would be untenable.[554]

Al-Rāzī's point is that if we discredit eyewitness testimony, the purpose of transmission and the possibility of human knowledge are likewise discredited. He expressed his reasoning once more at Q 4:157. To say that Allah cast the appearance of one person onto another person would lead to

> …calling into question the idea of transmission of historical reports (*tawātur*) because a report which is historically transmitted can contribute to knowledge only on condition that its ultimate source is something perceptible to the senses. If we allow this kind of confusion to take place in things perceptible to the senses, then it will discredit historical transmission, and that will necessarily call into question all laws.[555]

Al-Rāzī was clearly troubled by the thought that sense perception of the death of Jesus was commonly discredited by the Muslim "substitution" theory. He realized that transmission of reports is meaningless if the original sense perception from which the reports originate cannot be trusted. Al-Rāzī shared this kind of common

sense reasoning with the writers and first readers of the Gospel accounts. They commended their reports of the death and resurrection of Jesus in terms of sense perception: seeing, hearing, touching.

In traditional Muslim thought, *tawātur* meant that the truth of a historical report or prophetic tradition is assumed to be guaranteed if supported by a large number of *isnād* strands, each beginning with a different companion or other ancient authority. "The reasoning behind this was that a sizeable number of people engaged in transmitting one and the same text would never by sheer coincidence, or indeed collusion, all relate a falsehood."[556] By the evidence we have described in this chapter, the Gospel accounts of the death of Jesus must certainly be granted *tawātur*.[557] Eyewitnesses passed reports of Jesus' death on to Paul within a few years of the event. Paul wrote down these reports only twenty years after the event. By 100 A.D at the latest, fixed written documents authored by five different authorities existed and were circulating among the Christian communities. From that point, the communities transmitted not only memories and oral tradition, but written records as well.

7. Like witnesses in a court of law

The New Testament describes itself as a faithful witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. According to the Gospel accounts and the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus himself appointed his followers to do exactly this: "[Y]ou also must testify (*martureite*), for you have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:27); "You are witnesses (*martures*) of these things" (Luke 24:48); "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). When the Holy Spirit "came on" Jesus' disciples, Peter testified to a large crowd in

Jerusalem, "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact" (Acts 2:32).

"Witness" is certainly not an unfamiliar concept in Islam. In the Qur'an, the disciples (*ḥawāriyyūn*) of ʿĪsā say, "count us among those who bear witness (*shāhidūn*)" (Q 3:53). The Muslim *shahāda* (a term which itself means "testimony") begins, "I bear witness…" (*ashhadu*). In the Gospel, however, "to witness" means more than simply to affirm a truth claim. Rather, it means to give evidence of what is actually taking place in history. This aspect of witness does not seem to be as prominent in Islam. The Qur'an does not claim to offer eyewitness testimony about people and events in the first half of the seventh century.[558] The legal sense of witness, however, comes out in verses such as: "those who accuse married women, and then don't bring four witnesses (*shuhadāʾ*)… (Q 24:4); "if the two be not men, then one man and two women, such witnesses as you approve of, so that if one of the two women errs the other will remind her" (Q 2:282).

If "witness" is thus valued in cases of debt and adultery, why would it not be even more highly esteemed in reports of events central to a "good news" message that promises benefits to humanity based on what happened in history? The legal sense of witness characterizes the Gospel, wrote University of Manchester professor Stephen S. Smalley. In the Gospel according to John, "[a]s in a courtroom, witnesses are called through the drama to bear testimony to the life-giving Christ."[559] The same observation applies to the Gospel according to Mark: "Here the dominant idea is of an onlooker who could 'bear witness' for or against an accused person."[560] Paul Barnett explained the sense of witness in these Gospel accounts. "Acting as a 'witness' meant telling others what you had actually seen or heard with as much exactness as if giving evidence in a trial…. 'Witness' is about hard facts, about details of date, time, place and circumstances of empirical and observable facts."[561]

Juries the world over base their judgments on eyewitness testimony. There is no other way to get at the truth of an historical event. However, Dr. Bauckham distinguishes the eyewitness testimony in the Gospel accounts from the testimony of random passersby who remember only the details that happened to strike them at the time. The witnesses of Gospel events like the death of Jesus, "were not mere uninvolved bystanders, but participants in the events. What their testimonies needed to convey were not peripheral details but the central gist of the events they recalled." Dr. Bauckham concluded, "The eyewitnesses behind the Gospel accounts surely told what was prominent in their memories and did not need to attempt the laborious processes of retrieval and reconstruction that make for false memories."[562]

If we accept what the New Testament says about itself, along with the scholarly support for that description, then we are in a better position to understand the differences between Gospel accounts such as those according to Mark and John.

> Perfect agreement in every detail might justifiably arouse a suspicion of some kind of collusion between the authors. As they stand, the two versions, with their distinctive styles and various loose ends, encourage confidence that our writers are men of truth writing independently of each other, and that through them we, the readers, are in contact with the events as they occurred.[563]

This authenticity is precisely what the New Testament claims for itself: not perfect language, nor identical reports, but rather reliable witness that strengthens confidence. "The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe" (John 19:35).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Reliability of the Hebrew Scriptures

The story of the textual history of the Hebrew scriptures includes some twists and turns that may interest Muslim readers—because these developments evidently took place in response to Muslims in Muslim lands. Tracing these twists and turns can help us become more realistic and even-handed about ancient manuscripts of scripture and their survival amid the ravages of war and politics.

The Aleppo Codex, dated to the first half of the tenth century A.D., is the oldest existing manuscript of the complete Hebrew scriptures. The Aleppo Codex was preserved in a synagogue in Aleppo, a city in northwest Syria, until 1947. Many believed the Codex was completely destroyed in citywide riots that year.

The remarkable feature of the Aleppo Codex is that it has a fully developed set of notations known as the *masora*. Some scholars believe that Jewish Torah experts developed this system of notation between 700 and 900 A.D. in response to the Arab Conquest. Hebrew University scholar M.H. Goshen-Gottstein wrote that the scribal family of Moses ben Asher toiled for generations "to save the purity of the Torah in the face of the encroachment of Islam."[564] The method they devised to save the purity of the text was to supplement the otherwise purely consonantal text with vowel signs, invented "because Hebrew was in danger of being lost after the Muslim onslaught."[565]

Originally conserved in Jerusalem, the Aleppo Codex travelled to Cairo and then to Aleppo where it was kept in the Great Synagogue

for about 500 years. In other words, it resided in cities controlled by Muslim rulers for most of the millennium since its creation. In 1947, however, after the United Nations voted to partition Palestine, Muslims rioting against the Jews in Aleppo set ablaze and destroyed the city's ten synagogues. The manuscript was lost and reported destroyed. Fortunately, it reappeared in Israel in 1958, though with some pages missing. The Aleppo Codex is now in Jerusalem where it began, safely preserved and accessible for scholarly study.[566]

The development and survival of the Aleppo Codex highlights two issues relevant to the authenticity and reliability of the Hebrew scriptures. Depending on your point of view, the *masora* can be seen either as a way to preserve the integrity of the Torah or as an unwarranted addition to the text. The remarkable survival of the Codex in the midst of political upheaval shows the fragility and vulnerability of the manuscript evidence we are discussing in this book—and the felicitous circumstance that any evidence at all has survived to the present day!

The Jewish development of the *masora*, if Goshen-Gottstein was right about its purpose to save the purity of the Torah, invites comparison to the development of the qur'anic text to supplement the earliest Arabic "consonantal skeleton" with not only long vowels and short vowels, but also with diacritic dots to distinguish consonants that otherwise have the same shape.[567]

This chapter considers the evidence for the reliability of the text and contents of the Hebrew scriptures, the books that both Judaism and Christianity believe to be the Word of God. With the story of the Aleppo Codex in mind, this chapter also indicates the limits of the evidence and invites a reasonable discussion of circumstances "beyond the evidence." The ravages of time remove a lot of evidence that otherwise might help us know more accurately how the Hebrew scriptures came together. At present, there is a kind of scholarly curtain on manuscript evidence beyond which we cannot go. The silence beyond the earliest evidence is shared by Jews, Christians and Muslims, because all three groups share an interest in the

stories of important figures who first appear in the pages of the Hebrew scriptures. Again, where there are gaps in evidence we cannot realistically speak of scientific proof. Rather, we work in the realm of reliability and trust that the Creator God would give and preserve his Word and get it into human hands in the way he intended. The alternative is to believe that the Creator God allowed his Word to become corrupted or falsified by humans—or perhaps that he was not powerful enough to protect his Word once revealed.

1. The history we share

Any discussion of the reliability of the Hebrew scriptures where Islam is concerned must take into account the large amount of material in the Qur'an, and in Islamic teaching generally, related to figures who first appear in the Hebrew scriptures.[568] The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* based its accusations against the Hebrew scriptures largely on quotations from European scholars who wrote during the first half of the nineteenth century. Remarkably, many of these accusations in the *Iẓhār* affect the Qur'an and Muslim teaching as much as they affect the Hebrew scriptures.

The Hebrew scriptures contain the earliest versions of the stories of biblical figures that constitute a major part of the Qur'an. Islam has no earlier written source for the stories of Moses, Abraham, Joseph, Noah, Adam, David, and Solomon. From a scholarly point of view, during the time that the Qur'an came together the stories of these major biblical figures were well known from both written and oral sources in the Middle East, among Jewish and Christian communities, and in many different languages. It is simply reasonable to assume that the qur'anic versions of these stories relate to the stories circulating in the Middle East during the seventh century.[569] In any case, scholarly critique of the historicity of the stories affects the Islamic versions as much as it does the Hebrew scriptures.

2. The Torah is with them

The Qur'an gives many indications that the Torah it refers to is the same Torah possessed by Middle Eastern Jews in the seventh century A.D. In fact, the Qur'an never refers to any other Torah. It says, "How will they make you their judge seeing they have the Torah (*ʿindahumu ʾl-tawrāt*), wherein is Allah's judgment?" (Q 5:43) "Bring the Torah and read it, if you are truthful" (Q 3:93). Muslim commentators on the Qur'an have commonly picked up on this language to describe the Torah as "with" (*maʿa*) the Jews and "between their hands" (*bayna aydayhim*).[570]

The Qur'an nowhere contains expressions like "the original Torah" (*al-tawrātu ʾl-aṣlī*), "the original book," or "the original books" as we find in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*.[571] Nor does the Qur'an speak of a Torah that the Jews possessed (past tense) only in former times. There is no hint in the Qur'an of expressions found in the *Iẓhār* about a Torah that existed only before Nebuchadnezzar, or before Ezra, or before Antiochus. Rather, all eighteen occurrences of *tawrāt* in the Qur'an give the immediate sense of a book existing at the time of the recitations.

It is remarkable that though the *Iẓhār* aimed to attack the integrity of the Torah, it cited not a single verse from what the Qur'an actually says about the Torah. Why would this be? One would expect a Muslim writer to thoroughly consult the book he believes to be "the Word of Allah."[572] Instead the *Iẓhār* claimed, contrary to the immediate sense of the Qur'an and without providing any material evidence, that the "original Torah" and the "original Gospel" were lost prior to the appearance of the messenger of Islam in the seventh century A.D.[573] The *Iẓhār* further claimed the Torah and Gospel were already corrupted (*taḥrīf*) before the seventh century.[574]

In these chapters, we present a scholarly case based on material evidence that the books of the Bible were in existence in an uncorrupted state in the Middle East during the time of the

messenger of Islam. In Chapter 6, we demonstrated that the Bible was not falsified by Jews and Christians in response to the messenger of Islam in the first half of the seventh century. Now we answer the *Iẓhār*'s accusation that the Bible was already corrupt or falsified prior to Islam. Before addressing this accusation, we respectfully ask two questions of the Muslim reader:

Question 1

Whenever the Qur'an mentions the Torah, it consistently describes it as a book in the possession of the Jews in the seventh century A.D.[575] Many of the greatest Muslim scholars have understood this meaning from the Qur'an, as we demonstrate in Chapters 3 and 4. We provide evidence in Chapter 6 that the text of the Torah did not change during the seventh century. Is it then reasonable for the *Iẓhār* to argue that when the Qur'an mentions the *tawrāt*, it means a book that either never existed or existed only beyond the earliest manuscript evidence available (Dead Sea Scrolls, third century B.C.)? When the Qur'an refers to the Torah, does it mean a book that only existed nine or more centuries before Islam? If this is possible, is it reasonable?

Question 2

If it can be demonstrated, as we now attempt to do, that there is no evidence for a change in the Hebrew scriptures related to the stories of famous biblical figures who also appear in the Qur'an, are Muslim readers willing to read the original stories? If not, why not? The Qur'an's versions of the stories of Moses, Abraham, Joseph, Noah, Adam, David, and Solomon omit many details normally considered essential for the intelligent comprehension of the stories.[576] Meanwhile, the Hebrew scriptures provide not only the original details of the stories, but the entire narrative context in a chronological account. Why would the Hebrew scriptures not be the "first stop" for research into the missing details of the qur'anic stories?[577] Why should later Muslim commentaries or works of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* ("Tales of the prophets") be preferred to the stories as they appear in the Torah?

3. Reliable transmission of the text

The very earliest pieces of material evidence for the text of the Hebrew scriptures are manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 at Qumran near the Dead Sea in present-day Israel. Dated as early as the third century B.C., the Dead Sea Scrolls took evidence for the historicity of the Hebrew scriptures back almost a thousand years. The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered more than eighty years after the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* was published and therefore fundamentally qualify the accusations the *Iẓhār* made against the Hebrew scriptures.[578]

We cannot penetrate beyond these manuscripts into either written record or oral tradition. Earlier written records are not yet known to exist. Oral tradition leaves no material evidence.[579] From an academic perspective, the best that scholars can do, whether Jews, Christians, Muslims, or people of other faiths, is to consider the available evidence and decide whether that evidence supports the reliability of the text of the Hebrew scriptures.

So, what does the evidence tell us? For a scholarly answer, it is best to go to those scholars who have known the Dead Sea Scrolls most intimately since their discovery in 1947.

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars found 200 biblical scrolls in the eleven Qumran caves, which they have dated between 250 B.C. and 70 A.D. They found manuscripts and fragments from every book of the Hebrew scriptures except Esther. The books of Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms are particularly well represented among the scrolls. "These finds inaugurated a new era in the study of the text of the Hebrew Bible, previously known almost exclusively from medieval sources."[580] Most of the scrolls have the same spelling as the textual tradition of the Aleppo Codex, known as the "Masoretic Text." However, a significant number are written with a previously unknown spelling.[581]

Close study of the Dead Sea Scrolls over several decades led University of Notre Dame scholar Eugene Ulrich to two main conclusions: first, the text of the Hebrew scriptures has been transmitted faithfully since the second century B.C.; and second, among the scrolls are several different textual traditions of the Hebrew scriptures.[582] Dr. Ulrich wrote, "the biblical text we have inherited in the traditional Hebrew Bible has been amazingly accurately preserved over the intervening two millennia; the scribes and their communities did a first-rate job of preserving the text accurately."[583] He also wrote that the Hebrew scriptures were "pluriform and dynamically growing"[584] in the second century B.C. and existed then in what he terms "variant literary editions."[585]

Hebrew University professor Emanuel Tov was Editor-in-Chief of the International Dead Sea Scrolls Publication Project 1990-2009. He wrote that among the biblical scrolls discovered at Qumran, scholars found four kinds of manuscripts. Some manuscripts reflect precisely the consonantal framework of the Masoretic Text. Other manuscripts show the basic Masoretic framework but with different spelling. A third group of manuscripts differs in many details from the Masoretic Text while agreeing with the Septuagint Greek translation or the Samaritan Pentateuch. Finally, some manuscripts do not agree with any previously known text.

During the period of the Dead Sea Scrolls and over the next few centuries, Jewish scholars chose to favor the Masoretic textual tradition. Use of other textual traditions died away in Judaism. During the period from the first to the ninth century A.D., "a single stabilized text attained unimpeachable authority and achieved hegemony over all others."[586] This development seems to have moved ahead strongly with the acceptance of the Masoretic consonantal text as authoritative by all Jewish communities in the course of the first century A.D.,[587] perhaps as a response to the need for Jewish cohesion and unity following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Before long, all other Hebrew recensions were discarded and passed into oblivion, leaving only a few traces behind.[588] In later centuries, when vocalization and

accentuation were added, the Masoretic text was accepted by all segments of the Jewish people.[589]

The earliest manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures reveal many differences in the wording, spelling, and punctuation of the text. Prior to Judaism's acceptance of the Masoretic textual tradition, there seems to have been a certain freedom among scribes to express the meaning of the text in various ways. The manuscripts also contain mistakes made by scribes in the course of textual transmission, along with corrections by the same scribes or later hands. Dr. Ulrich suggested what ancient scribes of the Hebrew scriptures may have done:

> Almost always, the scribes tried simply to copy faithfully the text that lay before them, or at least the text their eye or mind perceived. Occasionally, they introduced changes into the text, either making inadvertent mistakes (some of which were corrected, while some remained) or attempting to make the text clearer or smoother; these were intended not as changes in content but as minor improvements to bring out the inherent sense more clearly or to make the grammar flow more smoothly.[590]

Along with the acknowledgement of the mistakes of scribes, it is important to keep in mind that inadvertent mistakes in copies of the Hebrew scriptures do not imply either a permanent corruption of the original or the unreliability of the present text. The science of textual criticism, which is described in Chapter 12, deals with variants in manuscripts in such a way as to establish the likely wording of the original.[591]

As for deliberate changes, scholars have found that the impulse of scribes was to improve the text, rather than falsify it. Ernst Würthwein, professor of Old Testament at Philipps-Universität in Marburg, Germany, wrote, "In evaluating these alterations we much avoid thinking of them as 'corruptions.' They were made in good faith, with no intention of introducing a foreign element into the text,

but rather with the aim of restoring the true text and (from the copyist's view) preventing misunderstandings…."[592]

Typical of modern biblical scholars, Hebrew University professor Shemaryahu Talmon wrote openly about the "errors and textual divergences" among the manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures discovered in the Judean Desert.[593] Dr. Talmon explained that most differences are of a linguistic or grammatical nature and represent attempts to express the content in ways that were more readily understandable as the language changed. It is possible that differences could affect the intrinsic message of the text, wrote Dr. Talmon, but "only in relatively few instances."[594] "The scope of variation within all textual traditions is relatively restricted. Major divergences which intrinsically affect the sense are extremely rare."[595] Dr. Ulrich also forecasted that the instances of differences affecting the message of the text will be very few: "Very rarely, indeed virtually never, did a scribe introduce a theological change, and when this happened, it was not sectarian but in line with general Jewish views or impulses."[596]

Once the Jewish people decided to give authority to the Masoretic text (MT), however, all evidence points toward careful transmission of the text and very few manuscript variants of any kind.[597] Professor Tov wrote:

> Probably the most conspicuous feature of MT is its meticulous transmission over the course of a little more than two millennia. The precision with which the Masoretic manuscripts were copied is proverbial, since the copying included the smallest details in the manuscripts such as small dots above letters and the distinction between small and large letters. The rabbis did not allow a manuscript to be used for public reading if there were more than three corrections in one of its columns. [598]

By "a little more than two millennia," professor Tov meant since the start of the first century A.D.—a period that includes the seventh century and the early centuries of Islam. In other words, according

to today's best scholarship on the Hebrew scriptures, the Jewish communities throughout the Middle East were using and carefully transmitting a single textual tradition in the six centuries prior to Islam. During this period, other traditions such as the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint Greek translation were not relevant for Judaism. Therefore, the Torah copies in the hands of the Jews of Arabia during the seventh century were of the Masoretic text type, and the proof of their "meticulous transmission" throughout the period of the origins of Islam is the Aleppo Codex and other Masoretic manuscripts dated to the ninth and tenth centuries A.D.

4. Canon of the Hebrew scriptures

The Hebrew scriptures in today's critical editions contain twenty-four books.[599] These are the same books in most printed Bibles today, though most Christians call the collection the "Old Testament" rather than the "Hebrew Bible." The reason why the number of books in the Hebrew scriptures is different from the thirty-nine listed in most printed Bibles today is simply organizational. In the Hebrew scriptures, the twelve minor prophets are included in a single book; Ezra and Nehemiah form a single book; and the divided books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles each appear as single units. The Hebrew scriptures comprise 1574 pages in the critical Hebrew edition, more than three times as long as either the Qur'an or the New Testament.

According to most scholars, the process of limiting the Hebrew scriptures to twenty-four books began in the sixth century B.C. and ended in the first two centuries A.D.[600] Even prior to this process, according to 2 Kings 22:8, Hilkiah found "the Book of the Law" (*ṣefer ha-torāh*) in the Temple during the reign of King Josiah (around 622 B.C.). There is no suggestion the book was new, and Huldah the prophetess spoke in favour of its authenticity. The Torah was publicly read and accepted as binding in a national covenant ceremony (2 Kings 23:1-3). According to Nehemiah 8:1-8, Ezra read to the

Israelites from the "book of the law of Moses" (*ṣefer torāt mosheh*), in about 444 B.C., which indicates the Torah had already achieved canonical status by this time. This and other evidence suggests the collection, fixing, and practice of preserving the Torah took place during the Babylonian exile of the Jews in the sixth century B.C. [601]

The collection of Hebrew scriptures in addition to the Torah can be clearly seen in the Greek translation known as the Septuagint, compiled in Egypt from the third century B.C. onward. A second group of books collected under the heading "Prophets" was canonized by the late fourth century B.C.[602] This group included the "Historical Books" of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. A third group of books led to the tripartite arrangement of the Hebrew scriptures already known in the second century B.C.: in the Gospel according to Luke, Jesus spoke of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). Many other "Writings" were canonized along with the Psalms, such as Ezra, Chronicles, Daniel, and Job. Books like Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Esther were more difficult to decide. Around 100 A.D., Josephus referred to twenty-two "justly accredited books" (he combined Ruth with Judges, Jeremiah with Lamentations); however, Nahum Sarna suggested the collection of the "Writings" was not finalized until well into the second century A.D.[603]

Several major Christian churches include books in their Old Testament in addition to the twenty-four of the Hebrew scriptures. These Churches embraced the contents of the Old Testament as they appear in the Greek Septuagint translation. The Septuagint was translated from Hebrew when the number of books was not yet fixed. These extra books, known as the Apocrypha, were included in the Septuagint used by early Christians and are included in the Bibles of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches today. Protestant Churches, on the other hand, have followed the canonical template of the Hebrew scriptures as determined by Judaism. Some Protestants have included the Apocryphal books in their Bibles, but distinguish them from the canonical books as edifying reading.

The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* made a great fuss about the disagreement among Christian groups over the Old Testament canon, a disagreement that does not change the contents of any book in the list of twenty-four books all Jews and Christians share. One should also note that all the stories of biblical personalities who appear in the Qur'an, as well as all the passages relating to the issues between the Gospel and Islam, are contained in the books all Jews and Christians share.

5. Differences among the earliest manuscripts

The Masoretic Text of the Aleppo Codex represents the textual tradition of the Hebrew scriptures that became dominant in Judaism during the period between the first and tenth centuries A.D. The Aleppo Codex is not the only manuscript evidence for this textual tradition. As described in Chapter 6, other witnesses to this tradition include the Codex Leningradensis, a complete Bible written in Egypt in 1008 by Shmuel ben Yaʿaqov; the Petersburg Codex of the Prophets, dated to 916 A.D.; and the Codex Cairensis containing the Former and the Latter Prophets, written and pointed in 895 A.D. by Moses ben Asher. The Masoretic text type has ancient roots. It is represented in forty-eight percent of the Torah manuscripts discovered at Qumran[604] and in 100 percent of the Torah scrolls discovered at Masada, Wadi Sdeir, Naḥal Ṣeʾelim, Naḥal Hever, and Murabbaʿat.[605]

While the Masoretic Text became the *textus receptus* ("received text") of Judaism, scholars knew of two other textual traditions of the Hebrew scriptures. A second tradition was the Hebrew text behind the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures. This translation was made by Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt during the third century B.C. A third tradition was the Hebrew Samaritan text of the Torah, known as the Samaritan Pentateuch. Scholars date the Samaritan Pentateuch to around 100 B.C. or later.[606]

When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, they included manuscripts representing textual traditions similar to all three known textual traditions, as well as to some traditions unknown until then. Scholars of the Hebrew scriptures, including scholars committed to Judaism, are straightforward about the differences among the earliest manuscripts and seek to understand the reasons for these differences and what they might tell us about the state of the text prior to manuscript evidence. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* overstated these differences to advance its claim that the original text of the Hebrew scriptures no longer exists.[607] However, scholars discuss the differences in quite another way. They described a period prior to canonization when there was fluidity in the wording of the text and apparent freedom in the Qumran community to tolerate variation in the text. They also documented a transition away from this fluidity to a fixed text and meticulous written transmission.

To what extent did the apparent tolerance of textual differences among the Dead Sea Scrolls by the Qumran community affect key issues between the Bible and Islam? The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* accused the Hebrew scriptures of "alteration" (*taḥrīf*) because of the unique wording of the Samaritan Pentateuch at Deuteronomy 27:4.[608] This verse is indeed an acknowledged difference between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Masoretic Text. However, a closer examination of this difference is instructive for many reasons, not least in its answer to the question of whether this difference is a sign of a general trend in the biblical manuscripts.

The text of the Samaritan Pentateuch says "Mount Gerazim" at Deuteronomy 27:4, whereas the Masoretic Text has "Mount Ebal." This difference reflects the teaching in the Samaritan community about the place God had commanded for sacrifice. The Samaritan Pentateuch also has extra text at Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18, generally agreed to be a deliberate Samaritan interpolation designed to provide support for their claims that Gerizim is "the chosen place."[609] The Samaritan Pentateuch is a sectarian version.[610] Its text represents a later stage of development than

the Masoretic Text.[611] Investigation of the differences that goes beyond a mere excuse to attack the Hebrew scriptures reveals the following:

1. If the Deuteronomy 27:4 difference represents an alteration in the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch, it is not an alteration to the text of the Hebrew scriptures. The Jewish communities in the Middle East before and during the rise of Islam used only the Masoretic Text. The Samaritan Pentateuch was not part of the picture—it was actually not "rediscovered" until 1616.[612]

2. Modern critical editions of the Hebrew scriptures are straightforward on this variant, clearly listing it at the bottom of the page where Deuteronomy 27:4 appears.[613]

3. Disagreements among scholars about the relative value of manuscripts[614] does not affect the manuscripts themselves. All sound scholarship of qualified scholars should be respected and carefully studied. However, scholarly views, including views about the Samaritan Pentateuch, change with time and discovery.[615] The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* claimed that Benjamin Kennicott's 1759 arguments in favour of the Samaritan Pentateuch were "irrefutable," on the basis of a quotation from Adam Clarke.[616] By the time the *Iẓhār* was published in 1864, Kennicott's arguments had already been carefully refuted by W. Gesenius in 1815,[617] and Gesenius' verdict that the Masoretic Text was both superior and prior holds true in its main points to the present day.[618]

4. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* created the impression that this difference between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Masoretic Text represents a general pattern of confusion and corruption among the early manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures. The truth is quite different. It turns out that Deuteronomy 27:4 is the main—and in fact, the only—significant ideological difference scholars have found among the early Torah manuscripts.[619] "None of the new literary editions show indications of sectarian motivation, with *the single exception* of the Samaritan focus on Gerizim."[620]

The drastic conclusions the *Iẓhār* drew from this particular difference were neither scholarly nor correct.

6. Choice of a *textus receptus*

Scholarly descriptions of text types, textual traditions and "variant literary editions" of the Hebrew scriptures may surprise some readers of this *Gentle answer*. However, we find interesting parallels in what Muslim sources and Western scholars say about the formation of the Qur'an.[621]

Muslim sources tell a story of several different versions of the Qur'an in existence before ʿUthmān enforced his own text. Professor John Burton found in his research into early Muslim legal texts "the virtually unanimous acceptance of the proposition that the first stage in the history of the Qur'ān texts was marked by the circulation of a number of not quite identical recensions privately assembled and independently organized by a number of Muḥammad's contemporaries."[622] Qur'an commentators like al-Farrāʾ (d. 822) commonly cited variant readings, especially those of Ibn Masʿūd and Ubayy ibn Kaʿb.[623] Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 928) and others wrote works on the *maṣāḥif* in which they listed variant readings attributed to a range of companions.[624] The manuscript known as *Codex Ṣanʿāʾ I* now provides material evidence of a different "text type."[625] According to Muslim sources, variant versions were circumscribed by the power of the state during the reigns of ʿUthmān, al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 714), and Ibn Muqla (d. 940).[626]

Professor Frederick Leemhuis suggested that the version of the Qur'an attributed to ʿUthmān became the *textus receptus* ("received text") of Islam only during the first half of the second Islamic century.[627] Until then there was a degree of fluidity to the text.[628] The fixing of the consonants, short vowels and long vowels, however, took more than three centuries.[629] The timeline of these developments is not the same as that of the formation of the Hebrew scriptures, but the similarities are striking. A significant

difference is that Judaism's choice of the Masoretic Text as *textus receptus* was not accompanied by the forceful backing of a powerful state.

7. Differences between historical accounts

A large number of the accusations against the Hebrew scriptures in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* have to do with differences among the "Historical Books." On the one hand is the account in 1&2 Samuel and 1&2 Kings; on the other hand is the account in 1&2 Chronicles. These books contain the earliest stories of the prophets Samuel and Elijah and kings of Israel such as Saul, David, and Solomon. The differences between these historical accounts are well known by Christians, and many have worked to provide reasonable answers to the questions they raise.[630] Some have also directly answered questions advanced in Muslim polemic.[631]

The *Iẓhār*, similar to other polemical attacks, cited these differences as part of an accumulation of reasons to support its accusation that the Hebrew scriptures are corrupt or falsified. In fact, the *Iẓhār* called many of these differences "contradictions," repeated them as "errors," then maximized the accusation by calling the same differences "alterations."[632]

Reasonable answers to the *Iẓhār*'s accusations have already been written and are readily accessible, so there is no need to repeat them here. Almost all of the accusations concern differences in names and numbers that have no impact on the major themes of the Hebrew scriptures. However, it may be worthwhile to review the accusations to see whether they concern any matters at issue between the Gospel and Islam. Do the differences between the Historical Books affect the biblical teaching about who God is? Do the differences put in doubt the prophecies in these books about the coming of Jesus? Do the differences affect the basic details of the stories about personalities who also appear in the Qur'an? For example, is the account in 2 Samuel 11 about David's adultery with

Bathsheba, and his murder of her husband Uriah, contradicted elsewhere in the Historical Books?

It is actually difficult to find a single example among these accusations that concerns a significant theological theme. One accusation we may discuss is "Contradiction 45," which concerns David's numbering of the people of Israel and Judah.[633] The first biblical account says that Yahweh incited David against Israel and told David, "Go and take a census of Israel and Judah" (2 Samuel 24:1). The second account reads, "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel" (1 Chronicles 21:1). The *Iẓhār* described this difference as "a powerful (*qawīy*) contradiction".

A number of writers have reasonably argued that this difference does not amount to a contradiction. They have made the case that although Satan incited David, it was ultimately God who allowed Satan to carry out this provocation.[634] They have cited as analogy several other biblical incidents, including the way in which Satan was allowed to cause Job's suffering, and even the way in which both Satan and God were involved in Jesus' crucifixion—Satan hoping to destroy the Son of God but God saving humankind through the death of His Son. One answer drew on a number of qur'anic passages to appeal to Muslim readers that "God alone influences what happens."[635]

If we would treat this difference as a contradiction, we find a comparable situation with the Qur'an. Scholars estimate a gap of some 200 years between the writing of Samuel-Kings and the writing of Chronicles. Might the difference between 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1 reflect a development in the Jewish theological understanding of this event? Consider the situation in the Qur'an with regard to violence. Qur'anic *sūra*s described by Muslims as "Meccan" are largely peaceful and limit the actions of the "messenger" to preaching and verbal warning. In contrast, *sūra*s described as "Medinan" contain repeated commands to fight and kill non-Muslims. Islam deals with these differences by proposing the doctrine of abrogation, claiming Allah said, "for whatever verse we

abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring a better or the like of it" (Q 2:106).

The Islamic teaching on violence asks readers to allow for a major change in the commands of Allah within a space of 23 years. This change not only suggests a confusion about the identity of Allah. It has meant untold suffering for non-Muslims ever since the commands were first recited and continues to be used until today by Muslims who want to claim divine support for violence against non-Muslims. Seen in this way, a development in the understanding of David's numbering of the Israelites over a span of 200 years would become less "powerful" than the *Iẓhār* made it to be.

By citing these differences merely to accuse, however, the *Iẓhār* missed a good opportunity to read and reason together. Besides the opportunity to discuss the ways in which God works with the human heart, there is also the theme many readers of the Hebrew scriptures have gleaned from these passages for millennia: "David had apparently been building up an attitude of pride and self-admiration for what he had achieved in the way of military success and economic expansion. He began to think more in terms of armaments and troops than in terms of the faithful mercies of God."[636]

8. Original established to the limits of science

Scholars of the Hebrew scriptures work to establish the original text of the Torah through the science of textual criticism.[637] The "original text" recovered through textual criticism is the text-type that lies behind the Masoretic Text, the text that became authoritative in Judaism in the first century.[638] The history of the text gives good reason for confidence in both the reliability and the purity of the Hebrew scriptures.[639]

Even so, scholarship leaves many gaps in our knowledge of how the scriptures were written and how they came together in the

canonical three-part "Tanakh". The ravages of weather and war have limited the material evidence we need to fully plot the process from original manuscripts to present editions. We lack evidence to know for certain about decisions of canonization.

The important point for the conversation between the Bible and Islam, however, is that the silence beyond the evidence affects Islam as much as it does Judaism and Christianity. It is the Qur'an, after all, that explicitly and repeatedly refers to the *tawrāt* and the "book of Moses" and offers many stories of personalities who first appear in the Torah. From a scholarly perspective, during the time that the Qur'an was coming together the stories of these major biblical figures were circulating and well known in both written and oral form throughout the Middle East, among Jewish and Christian communities, and in many different languages. It is simply reasonable to assume these stories came into the Qur'an from this lively religious context.

Some scholars doubt the historicity of the stories in the Hebrew scriptures; however, scholarly critique of these stories applies to the Islamic versions as much as it does to the Hebrew scriptures. The "historical criticism" or "higher criticism" of the Bible from early nineteenth-century European scholars cited in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* is, properly understood, a challenge to Islam as much as it is to Judaism and Christianity.

The existence of several textual traditions among the Dead Sea Scrolls, reflected in differences among Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Septuagint, tantalizes scholars about the history of the text beyond the evidence. At the same time, differences among the textual traditions are "decidedly neither tendentious nor ideological."[640] Dr. Ulrich explained that the various groups at the time of the scrolls kept a check on one another:

> If one group tampered with the text of Scripture in order to promote its views, it would have been open to immediate demonstrable refutation. All the groups had limited viewpoints, but all apparently agreed that the text of the 'original'

> Scriptures should not be altered, and if there were problems, the texts should be corrected toward the 'original', not reshaped according to sectarian ideology.[641]

Judaism's choice of the Masoretic Text leaves some questions unanswered; on the other hand, all signs point to a careful transmission and preservation of the text Judaism chose.[642]

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Strength of Many Manuscripts

The manuscript history of the New Testament gives good reason for confidence that the New Testament we have today is substantially the same as the original manuscripts. The critical editions of the New Testament used by scholars and translators today are the result of painstaking and expert textual criticism that considers all of the best manuscript evidence. Many scholars are confident that the wording of these critical editions, for example the twenty-eighth edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, [643] is as close to the original of the New Testament as academic scholarship can determine.

Parts of the New Testament such as the Gospel accounts are among the best-attested documents in antiquity. There are more early manuscripts of the New Testament writings, and in better condition, than any other first-century writing. Famous works that are widely accepted as the writings of Greek dramatists and Roman historians, for example, are much less strongly attested. The New Testament writings are even better attested than writings of a much later era, such as the Muslim biographies of the messenger of Islam.

The abundance and quality of New Testament manuscripts carry great promise and encourage optimism for determining the original text of the New Testament. They also present enormous intellectual and methodological challenges to textual critics.[644] It is in this area that the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* most clearly reveals its unscholarly character and its merely polemical use of academic scholarship. The only information the *Iẓhār* provided about biblical manuscripts was a

brief description of the opinions of a few European scholars about three codices of the Bible from the fourth and fifth centuries.[645] The *Iẓhār* recklessly used these opinions to claim that neither these manuscripts nor any other biblical manuscripts were written before the rise of Islam.[646]

To the contrary, those three biblical codices were certainly written before the rise of Islam; and since publication of the *Iẓhār* in 1864, hundreds of pre-Islamic New Testament manuscripts have been discovered and made available to scholars, including on the Internet.[647] There is no doubt about the strength of the manuscript evidence. Scholars have developed academic methods for determining the original text of the New Testament from the manuscript evidence. Textual critics do not all agree about the correct methodology, how to describe the evidence, or what conclusions to draw from it; however, it is the nature of academic scholarship for scholars to contend with one another in collegial ways.

The most recent academic scholarship on the text of the New Testament is so complex that it is actually not very well known among many Christians. Doctrines about scripture that Christians adopt do not always match historical reality or what the New Testament says about itself. But what can be gained by ignoring the best scholarship? If there are complexities in the transmission of the text, it is much better to acknowledge the facts, apply one's mind to the questions, and seek to answer them to the best of one's ability.

1. Manuscripts and the ravages of time

The abundance and quality of biblical manuscripts in existence today is a circumstance for which scholars can be very thankful, considering the dangers to ancient manuscripts from the ravages of time. The stories of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Aleppo Codex and Codex Sinaiticus recounted in Chapters 6 and 11 emphasize the fragility and vulnerability of manuscripts and the possibility that all evidence

may well disappear. Jewish regulations required the destruction of worn and defective manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures.[648] In addition, wrote Ernst Würthwein, "manuscripts were often destroyed during the medieval persecutions of the Jews, sometimes by their adversaries, but sometimes also by the Jews themselves to prevent their sacred books from falling into the hands of infidels."[649]

The earliest manuscripts of the New Testament are papyri. Papyrus is an aquatic plant that grows in marshlands and was cut into thin, narrow slices in order to prepare a writing surface.[650] In a dry climate like Egypt papyrus manuscripts can be quite durable, and all of the earliest New Testament papyri have been found in Egypt.[651] But in the more humid parts of the Middle East where Christians lived, mold tends to destroy the material. Papyrus cannot match the durability of parchment.[652]

Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman noted that before the fourth century, "New Testament manuscripts were sought out and burned by imperial order" of the non-Christian Roman rulers.[653] They added that though the large collection of New Testament manuscripts in a library at Caesarea escaped the Roman emperor Diocletian's systematic program of destruction, the collection "was destroyed later by Muslims in the year 638."[654] The Arab Conquest thus had a negative impact on the transmission of the scriptures, and a work by the Egyptian exegete al-Biqāʿī (d. 1480) suggests the possible dimensions of the destruction of manuscripts. al-Biqāʿī was making a case for the Muslim use of the Bible, and one of the examples al-Biqāʿī brought to bear on the topic was the issue of the status of the paper on which the Bible was written. "Is it permissible to use it as toilet paper?" he asked.[655] Most legal scholars prohibited that use for fear of inadvertently desecrating the word of God. Al-Biqāʿī was indignant that the minority opinion allowed such use of the Bible.[656]

2. Abundance of Gospel manuscripts

In spite of the hazardous conditions affecting all ancient manuscripts, academic scholars today have a great number of New Testament manu-scripts at their disposal for establishing the original text. The number of available New Testament manuscripts represents a "massive increase" of evidence since the publication of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* in 1864,[657] bringing to scholarship both benefits and challenges. Benefits include optimism in the discipline of textual criticism for determining the original text of the New Testament. Challenges relate to extreme complexity in the academic study of the text.[658]

The number of Greek New Testament manuscripts available for study continues to grow. According to Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman, the number stood at 5735 in 2003,[659] including papyri, majuscule manuscripts, miniscule manuscripts, and lectionaries. In addition, there are more than 10,000 manuscripts of translations into languages such as Latin.[660] There are also more than one million quotations of the New Testament recorded so far in the writings of the Church fathers, which led Metzger and Ehrman to write, "…so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament."[661]

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the main New Testament manuscripts with which scholars were familiar were the great "uncial" parchment manuscripts: the Codex Vaticanus (fourth century), the Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century), the Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century), and the Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (fifth century). The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* mentioned Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi, but did not show an awareness that these codices contained both the New Testament and the Septuagint Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures.[662] The *Iẓhār* also denied these codices were written before the rise of Islam.[663] They are in fact, excellent pre-Islamic manuscripts of the New Testament; and the excellence of the Codex Vaticanus has been proven by subsequent manuscript discoveries. The Codex Sinaiticus,

discovered prior to the publication of the *Iẓhār* but not widely accessible until 1933, greatly added to the strength of the manuscript witness.

The big jump in the number of New Testament manuscripts available to scholars really began after the publication of the *Iẓhār*. Among these manuscripts is a Syriac palimpsest text of the Gospel accounts, discovered in 1892 in the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai and published in 1894; the Washington or "Freer" manuscripts of the Gospel accounts and portions from Paul's letters, discovered in 1906 and dated to the fifth century; and the Koridethi Codex of the Gospel accounts from a monastery in the Caucasus region, published in 1913 and thought to be from the ninth century.[664] Meanwhile, in 1896, fragments of early New Testament papyri began to be unearthed at an archaeological site near Oxyrhynchus in Egypt by Oxford archaeologists Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt. Many of the papyri are now preserved at the Asmolean Museum in Oxford.

Even so, when the discovery of the Chester Beatty Papyri was announced in November 1931, no New Testament manuscripts earlier than the fourth century were available to scholars, except for the few Oxythynchus fragments. The eleven Chester Beatty manuscripts were discovered in Egypt, perhaps near al-Fayyūm. Suddenly, scholars had at their disposal three substantial New Testament manuscripts from the third century, covering parts of ten books.[665] This was significant not only because the manuscripts were papyri from before the period of vellum paleography, but also because they were major manuscripts from before the period when political powers could be said to have had a hand in the wording of the text. The newly discovered manuscripts were named P45 (thirty papyrus leaves from the four Gospel accounts and Acts), P46 (ten leaves from the letters of Paul), and P47 (ten leaves from the book of Revelation).[666]

Frederic Kenyon, director the British Museum and an expert on the Chester Beatty Papyri, wrote that the manuscript of the Gospel

accounts and Acts is "a witness to the substantial integrity of our textual tradition, while making an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of the early stages of that tradition."[667]

More priceless New Testament papyri were discovered in 1952 near Dishna in Egypt. They were named the Bodmer Papyri after the Swiss collector who purchased them. Significant New Testament manuscripts among the Bodmer Papyri are P66 (seventy-five leaves from the Gospel according to John dated to around 200); P72 (containing the letter of Jude and the two letters of Peter); and P75 (fifty-five leaves containing most of the Gospel accounts of Luke and John, also dated to around 200). The discovery of P75 has proven especially important, because it bears witness to a particularly careful tradition of New Testament transmission that largely matches the Codex Vaticanus.[668]

The discovery and publication of New Testament papyri has continued since the 1950s, many of them coming from the archaeological site near Oxyrhynchus in Egypt. Publication of the discoveries at Oxyrhynchus has now reached seventy volumes. Among the discoveries are many third- and fourth-century New Testament manuscripts, and even a couple of fragments dated to the second century: P90 (from John 18-19) and P104 (from Matthew 21).[669]

University of Edinburgh New Testament scholar Larry Hurtado described the present state of the early manuscript evidence in a recent article.[670] Scholars now work with a total of 127 New Testament papyri. Some of these papyri come from the same centuries as the best-known parchment witnesses, such as the Codex Sinaiticus. However, a total of forty-nine New Testament papyri—as well as two parchment manuscripts—have been paleographically dated to the second and third centuries A.D.[671] In addition to the valuable Chester Beatty and Bodmer Papyri, special mention must be made of P52, the famous fragment from the Gospel according to John. Discovered by Bernard Grenfell in Egypt in 1920 but not published until 1934 by Colin Roberts, P52 is

often dated by scholars to 150 A.D.[672] Dr. Hurtado further wrote that new manuscripts from Oxyrhynchus—three manuscripts of the Gospel according to Matthew dated to the second or early third century—continued to be published as late as 1999.[673] These recent fragments "confirm the text of the great uncials which forms the basis of the modern critical editions."[674]

The significance of these manuscript discoveries, along with the problems they solve and the questions they raise, are discussed in the following sections. Perhaps you, dear reader, are beginning to sense and appreciate some of the excitement of the scholar most closely associated with the priceless Chester Beatty Papyri, Frederic Kenyon: "…it is reassuring in the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God."[675]

3. Comparison to Islamic sourcebooks

The abundance and quality of New Testament manuscripts cannot be fully appreciated apart from a comparison to the situation of famous works from the same time period and region. There is no classical Greek author whose writings are preserved on the scale of the New Testament. Homer's *Iliad*, for example, is found in fewer than 700 Greek manuscripts, and Euripides' tragedies in around 300. Many other ancient writings, such as the first six books of the *Annals* of the Roman historian Tacitus (d. c. 117), are preserved in only a single manuscript.[676] The Tacitus manuscript also illustrates the comparative quality of the New Testament manuscripts: the single Tacitus manuscript dates from the ninth century. By comparison, many of the New Testament manuscripts are early, and "the interval between the NT author's times and the transmission dates of a sizable number of extensive manuscripts is only a century, more or

less. In at least one case, P52 of John's Gospel, the interval may be as brief as twenty-five years."[677]

"The text of the Gospels is the best transmitted in the whole of antiquity," wrote Tübingen New Testament scholar Martin Hengel. [678] "No ancient text is as well attested as the Gospels," he added. [679] Stephen Neill and Tom Wright further extended the comparison: "No other ancient writing can compare with the New Testament in the wealth of the evidence by which it is supported; only in the case of Virgil is anything like comparison even remotely possible.[680]

In the case of Islamic sourcebooks, the earliest biography of Islam's messenger is the *Kitāb al-maghāzī* by al-Wāqidī (d. 822). [681] This important source for the details of the life of Islam's messenger is very poorly attested. Rizwi Faizer and Andrew Rippin wrote that only a single complete copy of the *Kitāb al-maghāzī* has been discovered so far, and it "is error-ridden and a significant challenge to use."[682] The best-known biography of the messenger of Islam, the *Sīrat al-nabawiyya* by Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767), is not known to exist. This biography can only be accessed in the thoroughly edited version of Ibn Hishām, who died roughly 200 years after the messenger (d. 833).

Princeton University scholar Patricia Crone put the situation in perspective through a comparison to early Christian writers. "Consider the prospect of reconstructing the origins of Christianity on the basis of the writings of Clement [d. 215] or Justin Martyr [d. 165] in a recension by Origen [d. 253]."[683] Dr. Crone commented that the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq is practically our only source for the life of the messenger, "written not by a grandchild, but a great-grandchild" of the messenger's generation.[684] By contrast, academic scholars agree that the four Gospel accounts were written within 40-70 years of the death and resurrection of Jesus. [685]

4. Text types and manuscript variants

The 5735 New Testament manuscripts available for study are not all the same. In fact they contain many variants. With a high number of manu-scripts comes a high number of variants. This variation has posed a challenge for scholars of the New Testament text. At the same time, the high number of manuscripts helps scholars to establish the original text through the science of textual criticism.

Scholars have categorized the manuscripts of the New Testament into three main "text types," which they have named the Byzantine, the Western and the Alexandrian. The Byzantine Text is the name given to a fourth-century edition or recension of the New Testament text in which the editors chose from the options available to them readings "that fit their sense of an improved text"[686] The Byzantine text type is characterized by lucidity and completeness. "Those who framed this text over a long period of time sought to smooth away any harshness of language, to combine two or more divergent readings into one expanded reading (called *conflation*), and to harmonize divergent parallel passages."[687] The earliest manuscript witness to this textual tradition is the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus, described in Chapter 6. Since this was the text type favored by and distributed by the Byzantine Empire, which began in the fourth century, Byzantine text-type manuscripts make up the vast majority of New Testament witnesses surviving today. The proliferation of such manuscripts also accounts for most of the variant readings.

Because the Byzantine Text is thought to have begun in the fourth century, and because its manuscript attestation is very late, scholars today do not consider this text type to be the most important for establishing the original text of the New Testament. It was the Byzantine Text, however, that was best known in Europe for centuries and became the *textus receptus* ("received text") for many, providing the basis for such well-known translations as the King James Bible (1611). When scholars began to discover manuscripts that came from an earlier textual tradition prior to the fourth century, they had to question whether the Byzantine Text should serve as the basis for the critical edition of the New Testament. This

is the reason for the confusion between the King James translation and the Revised translation, published in 1881. The scholars who discovered earlier text types needed to be true to the earlier readings.

"When it comes to establishing the original text….the earlier attested text forms, the Western and most especially the Alexandrian, are today considered by most critics to be far superior."[688] The Western Text is the name given to a text type that circulated widely and was used by a number of Church leaders in the second century. This text type shows a tendency of copyists to be quite free with the wording of the text. There are many examples of paraphrase and signs of scribes trying to "improve" the wording. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland suggest that this fluidity of transmission was still permitted at a period before the New Testament text was regarded as canonical.[689] During the second and third centuries, the text of the New Testament was not controlled by any Church or political authority.[690] In any case, early manuscripts of the Western text type show a "readiness to adapt the text, exhibited especially in stylistic changes, harmonizations, higher numbers of accidental changes, and even occasional changes motivated by doctrinal concerns."[691]

This free approach to the text of the New Testament, however, was not normative: "other evidence points to the careful and painstaking work on the part of many faithful copyists."[692] In contrast to the Western Text, manuscripts of the Alexandrian text type show scribes exercising a conscious and conscientious control in the copying of the books of the New Testament.[693] The city of Alexandria in Egypt was associated with a high quality of textual transmission from the earliest times. One of the key proofs of the reliable transmission of the New Testament in this text type is the striking similarities in text between the fourth-century Codex Vaticanus (referred to by scholars as "B") and the early third-century papyrus manuscript P75. Metzger and Ehrman write, "it is clear that the Christian scholars of Alexandria worked assiduously to preserve an accurate form of text….the excellent p75—B line of text." They

describe this text type as "the carefully preserved and relatively pristine Alexandrian text."[694]

Other scholars write in a similar way about the Alexandrian Text. The Alands describe P75 as a "strict text" and the very early papyrus P52 as a "normal text." They write that the number of manuscripts representing a "strict" text is substantially equal to the number of "free" manuscripts. The "strict" manuscripts "transmit the text of an exemplar with meticulous care (e.g., p75) and depart from it only rarely."[695] It is the Alexandrian text type that allows textual critics to determine the wording of the original in spite of the many manuscripts of the Byzantine or Western types.

A number of scholarly works discuss the variants among the New Testament manuscripts as well as the errors made by scribes in the course of transmission.[696] The "unintentional changes" listed in these works include the kinds of errors found in all ancient manuscripts, including the Qur'an.[697] Changes described as "intentional" give greater cause for concern. All of the examples of "intentional changes" provided by scholarship cannot be reviewed here. Many of them do not appear to be of significant consequence. [698] However, some of the variants among the manuscripts may be of greater interest to Muslim readers.

At John 1:18, manuscripts of the Byzantine text type have, "No one has ever seen God, but the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made him known." This is why the King James Version of 1611 has "Son" in its translation of this verse. When scholars began to discover textual traditions from earlier than the Byzantine Text, they noticed that the earlier manuscripts had "the only God" in this verse rather than "the only Son." "The only God" is the reading in the Alexandrian manuscripts, considered by scholars to be "carefully preserved and relatively pristine."[699] This reading is supported by Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, and the excellent early papyri P66 and P75. Paul McReynolds, after scrutinizing the evidence, wrote, "…both the early date of the [manuscripts] and their text (Alexandrian), which is generally

accepted as more accurate, favour ὴς Θεὸς ["the only God"] as the original reading."[700] Another scholar, Philip Comfort, wrote more recently, "The best text in [John] 1:18 reveals that Christ is the unique God, thereby affirming his deity."[701]

5. Science of textual criticism

The basic task of New Testament textual criticism is to recover the original text of scripture.[702] This is a difficult task that demands great learning and skill. However, many scholars are optimistic about the prospect of achieving solid results through this research.

New Testament scholar Eldon Epp described the situation facing the textual critic with the expression, an "embarrassment of riches."[703] By "riches," Professor Epp meant the abundance of New Testament manuscripts documented in Section 2 above. By "embarrassment," he meant the extreme complexity in the study of the New Testament text. Professor Epp did not mean scholars are embarrassed either by failure or an impossible task. Rather, "the embarrassment is that we have not often been able to agree on solutions or, in fact, to find satisfactory solutions at all for some of our leading problems."[704]

The evidence is not the problem. As Professor Epp explained, there are so many New Testament manuscripts that the original reading is sure to be present somewhere in the vast store of material available to scholars.[705] "Together with the great uncials since the fourth century, the numerous later manuscripts, and the early translations, the attestation of the original text is so strong that practically all the secondary alterations to the text and interpolations can be picked up in the unbelievably multiple textual tradition."[706] That should make the task of recovering the most likely original text relatively simple, but in fact, it is a great challenge.

Qualified scholars work in one of three main ways. The basic principles of textual criticism were set out by Cambridge scholar

F.J.A. Hort in his introduction to *The New Testament in Greek* in 1882.[707] The main principle is simple to state, if difficult to apply: "knowledge of documents should precede final judgment upon readings."[708] Hort meant that the first consideration in the determination of the original reading is the quality of the manuscripts—that is, their relative claim to be closest to the original. Professor Epp described this approach as the "historical-documentary method." Scholars proceed by attempting to trace the lines of transmission back through the existing New Testament manuscripts to the earliest stages "and then choosing the reading that represents the earliest attainable level of the textual tradition."[709]

A second method of textual criticism looks at internal rather than external criteria. Known as the "rigorous eclectic method," its dictum is, "knowledge of an author's usage should precede final judgment upon readings."[710] This method examines all the available variants and selects the variant reading that best suits the context of the passage, the author's style and vocabulary, or the author's theology. Critics who practice this method also look at scribal habits in the manuscript, Semitic forms of expression, and use of passages from the Hebrew scriptures.

The third method of textual criticism—the method of choice for many scholars today—is to combine the first two methods for maximum effectiveness. Critics using this "reasoned eclectic method," when faced with variants, select the variant reading "that appears to be in the earliest chronological group *and* that also makes the best sense when the internal criteria are applied."[711] Modern critical editions of the New Testament such as the *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* were developed in accordance with the reasoned eclectic method.

The science of textual criticism is clearly complex. Scholars do not all agree about the correct methods or the success of those methods. The high number and quality of New Testament manuscripts, however, eliminate at least one problem that plagues

textual critics of other ancient writings with weaker manuscript witness. Conjectures over the wording of the text, which plays so large a role in the textual criticism of classical literature, is almost nonexistent in New Testament studies.[712] Martin Hengel noted it is "extremely rare for conjectures or the removal of hypothetical glosses to be necessary."[713] Professor Hengel was also very positive about the results of textual criticism: "The text of the earliest Gospel 'according to Mark', which can be dated quite precisely to around the year AD 69/70…was not demonstrably very different from the form of the text in the twenty-seventh revised edition of Nestle/Aland 1993."[714] Neill and Wright took a similar view: "We have a far better and more reliable text of the New Testament than of any other ancient work whatever, and the measure of uncertainty is really rather small."[715] While freely acknowledging the differences of readings in manuscripts and the questions raised by the differences, these scholars suggested, "[t]he astonishing thing is that they are so few."[716]

Other qualified scholars do not agree with Hengel, Neill and Wright, or do not characterize the evidence in the same way. Challenging existing models and contending for new ones is the norm for academic scholarship. Many readers unfamiliar with the field of textual criticism will understandably be confused and bewildered. However, Professor Hengel suggested a distinction that may provide perspective on some of the writing on the New Testament that is most popular today.[717] Textual criticism, according to Hengel, "is based solely on textual evidence and above all on manuscripts." Literary criticism, on the other hand, operates in a much more speculative way, advancing "abundant hypotheses which can no longer be verified." This kind of speculation, in Hengel's view, has come to be favored by many New Testament scholars. Textual critics, by contrast, attempt to stick with the manuscript evidence and not go beyond it. They know the limitations of the evidence and the difficulty of working with it authentically, but work within those limits in the hope of determining the original text of the New Testament.

6. Strong manuscripts prior to political power

The text of the New Testament developed, and its authority was accepted by the followers of Jesus, without the involvement of political power. During the second and third centuries the followers of Jesus were a minority community persecuted by the Roman Empire, which ruled the Mediterranean. Yet it was during these centuries that all the basic decisions were made about the text and contents of the New Testament.

This point is important because of the questions that many readers understandably ask about the involvement of political power and physical force in the establishment of a text of scripture and the proscription of its contents. How much confidence can we place in political figures to correctly establish the Word of God by threat of physical punishment? But the text of the New Testament developed by a process of consensual acceptance of its contents by Christian leaders and churches long before Christians had any power to enforce its limits. The New Testament was "a more or less distinct collection of books" already in the early second century.[718] All the books of the New Testament were likely in the published edition in use among Christians from the second century onward. David Trobisch made the case that the edition of the New Testament took place in the middle of the second century.[719] It may be that greater distinction or definition of the contents came as late as the mid-third century. But political power only came in the fourth century after the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine in 325. At that point the writings that had previously been consensually accepted by Christians began to be normatively prescribed by the Empire.[720]

Partly because of ambiguous feelings about the involvement of political power, scholars of the New Testament text treasure the manuscripts dated to before the fourth century. Whatever their challenges in terms of variant readings and "text types," these

manuscripts cannot be accused of manipulation by political figures with vested interests. As we noted in Section 2 above, scholars now have 49 such manuscripts at their disposal, and their number is increasing with ongoing discoveries.[721]

One scholar of Islamic Studies suggested that some of the differences between the development of the New Testament text and the development of the Qur'an can be accounted for by the fact that early in its history, "the Qur'ān had the forceful backing of a powerful state."[722] Muslim tradition claims that the Caliph ʿUthmān ordered the editing of the Qur'an and then destroyed all variant versions. Additional Muslim sources tell of the role of al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, the governor of Iraq 694-713, in the establishment of the qur'anic text. "[I]ts standardization across the early Islamic empire was achieved primarily through al-Ḥajjāj's enforcement and destruction of any rival versions."[723] Stephen Shoemaker, who is familiar with comparable scholarship on the history of the New Testament text, made an interesting observation that helps focus the point at issue.

> [The] textual stability of the canonical Gospels (and other New Testament writings) emerged despite the remarkable diversity of the earliest witnesses and in the absence of imperial coercion, let alone a centralized campaign to round up and destroy all evidence of any variant readings, as the early Islamic authorities are reported to have done.[724]

The subject of the involvement of political power in the development of the text and contents of the Qur'an is picked up again in Chapter 18.

7. Scholarly answers to difficult questions

Many questions about Bible manuscripts still need to be answered. Moreover, scholars raise new questions or frame traditional questions in new ways, including in popular books and in online presentations.

Some questions are even featured in popular Hollywood movies such as *The Da Vinci code*. In Europe and North America, scholars are free to question traditional views of how the Bible came together. Scholars also take the freedom to appeal to modern skepticism about religion in writings that may appear on best-seller lists. At the same time, other scholars engage these writings at the level of ideas.

For example, in his book on the fourfold Gospel, Martin Hengel commented negatively on the thesis of an American scholar who has become very popular for his books on the New Testament manuscripts.[725] However, there is no hint of an attack on the scholar. Instead, Hengel helpfully distinguished between textual criticism and literary criticism and suggested the American scholar's idea belongs to the latter—a hypothetical thesis "which can no longer be verified." Hengel then challenged the American's thesis by calling him back to the historical evidence for Christianity in the second century. Since Hengel is an authority in the area of Early Christianity, his argument is worth following. This is how academic scholarship should work. The only way to challenge questionable scholarship is to return to the evidence, study it more carefully, and use better methodology.

The way forward with difficult questions about New Testament manuscripts is certainly not the way demonstrated by the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*.[726] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi prepared the material for the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* before 1854 and published the book in 1864, and therefore can easily be forgiven for not knowing about the manuscript discoveries and scholarly advances in textual criticism to come. His additional comments, however, raise a more serious question. After denying that the three codices were written before the rise of Islam, Mawlana Kairanwi wrote that if by chance he was wrong, in that case these codices were already distorted (*muḥarrafa*) before Islam. In fact, he wrote, if a thousand (*alf*) biblical manuscripts existed before Islam it would make no difference

because all of them would already be distorted![727] Would Mawlana Kairanwi have accepted any kind of manuscript evidence for the integrity and reliability of the New Testament?

Mawlana Kairanwi's false accusations continue to be published without any qualification in new printings of the *Iẓhār* in its Arabic original (1998) and translations in Urdu (1996) and English (1992). Modern publishers could easily do their research and discover the abundance of manuscript witness to the text of the Bible from before the rise of Islam; yet the Urdu translation continues to be distributed throughout South Asia by the Deobandi network, and the English throughout the world by the World of Knowledge for Publishing & Distribution in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Where is the will to pursue the truth about the scriptures? Are these "questions" asked in order to find answers, or only to attack?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Muslim Uncertainties about the Qur'an

Many promising encounters between Muslims and Christians concerning the Bible and the Qur'an become unrealistic and unhelpful because of an uneven treatment of the academic scholarship on these two scriptures. Some Muslim polemicists seem happy to use academic scholarship when they sense it raises questions about the Bible. The same polemicists tend to be silent about comparable scholarship—sometimes even written by the same scholars—that raises questions about the Qur'an. The resulting conversation is fundamentally uneven and unproductive.

The preceding chapters have provided a number of examples of how the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* made use of scholarship on the Bible available in the first half of the nineteenth century to attack the Bible's integrity. After using scholarship this way for most of its 1000 pages, the *Iẓhār* then turned to the Qur'an and presented it as perfect and immune from questions, with a certainty unmatched by traditional Muslim scholars of the Qur'an for most of the preceding 1200 years.

Author Rahmat Allah Kairanwi could have brought in academic scholarship on the Qur'an written before 1864 to balance his treatment of the Bible but chose not to do so. Even more striking is the author's decision not to acknowledge any uncertainty among Muslims about the traditional questions Muslim scholars themselves have raised concerning many aspects of the Qur'an's formation and content. The *Iẓhār* mentioned none of the traditional Muslim uncertainties about the Qur'an that were well known throughout Islam's history.

Chapter 14 lists some of the questions academic scholars have asked since before the publication of the *Iẓhār*, and are still asking, about the Qur'an. This present chapter describes the many uncertainties about the Qur'an in almost every area that traditional Muslim scholars openly discussed prior to the beginning of modern academic study—uncertainties which are comparable to the questions believing Jewish and Christian scholars have raised about the Bible and which the *Iẓhār* freely used against it.

Muslim uncertainties are offered in this chapter in the sincere hope of appealing to Muslim readers to be honest and realistic in our conversation about the Bible and the Qur'an. It is simply not true that scholarly questions may be asked about the Bible but not about the Qur'an. In fact, this chapter and the following five chapters demonstrate that many uncertainties of believers, and many questions of scholars, are the same or similar for both scriptures. This *Gentle answer* aims not to discourage Muslims from reading the Qur'an but to encourage them to read the Bible. Let's read each other's scriptures with care and intelligence and then meet together to discuss the truth claims of our scriptures. Our questions about how the scriptures came together, and our consideration of academic scholarship on our scriptures, should be something we share rather than something that drives us apart.

1. Uncertainty about original manuscripts

Muslims have traditionally claimed the continuing existence of original copies of manuscripts of the Qur'an, which they believe Caliph ʿUthmān sent out to the cities of the expanding Islamic empire around the middle of the seventh century.[728] In fact, wrote Turkish Professor Tayyar Altıkulaç, this "has been claimed until recently."[729] However, Dr. Altıkulaç stated the claim has been made out of uncertainty because scholars have not been able to examine the alleged manuscripts in a scientific way until very recently. For example, the manuscript traditionally attributed to

ʿUthmān kept at the Topkapı Sarayı Library in Istanbul was not actually available for scholarly study until 1999, and the first "serious evaluations" of Muslim claims for the manuscript were published in 2002.[730]

The details of Dr. Altıkulaç's careful study of the Topkapi *muṣḥaf* are provided in Chapter 18. Here, we note that when scholars finally began to examine the Topkapi manuscript in 2006, they recognized very quickly it could not be traced back to ʿUthmān.[731] Prof. Altıkulaç concluded:

> One of the most important questions of Qur'ānic history is the whereabouts of the Muṣḥafs attributed to Caliph ʿUthmān and whether any of them reached the present day. Unfortunately, we do not have a positive answer to this question. Though old sources provide some information as to where each of these copies was located, we are not able to say, 'a certain copy is kept in a particular library' today…. Unfortunately there is no definite information about these Muṣḥafs which are thought to have been lost or disappeared as a result of wars, fires and similar disasters. In our view, this situation is one of the greatest weaknesses of the Islamic world throughout history.[732]

The story of the Topkapi *muṣḥaf* is a good illustration of the unevenness between scholarship on the Bible and the Qur'an. Scholars of the Bible have been studying available manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures and New Testament since the 1500s and have written very openly about the questions raised by their research. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* eagerly used that scholarship to cast doubt on the Bible. In the case of the Topkapi manuscript (perhaps the most famous of the manuscripts that Muslims have claimed date back to ʿUthmān), the first Muslim application to study the manuscript in a scholarly way was not made until 1991[733]—some 137 years after the publication of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*. Even then, scholarly study of the manuscript did not begin until 2002, and the results of that

study, published in 2007, are still not generally known in the Muslim world.

2. Uncertainty about the "standard" text

Muslims generally describe the Arabic text of the Qur'an used by most Muslims today as identical with the book they believe Allah revealed to the messenger of Islam. However, today's "standard" text of the Qur'an is actually only one of fourteen variant readings that traditional Muslim scholars accepted as authentic during the medieval period of Islam.[734] The text most Muslims today regard as standard was in fact first published in Cairo on July 10, 1924. The Egyptian scholars responsible for the text chose to preserve one of the fourteen readings, known as the reading of Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿĀṣim.[735] They did not attempt to reconstruct the ancient form of the Qur'an based on the oldest available manuscripts. Instead, they studied the classical Muslim works on *qirāʾāt* ("readings") in order to establish the particular reading of Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿĀṣim.[736]

The idea that this reading was the only—or even the best—reading was anything but certain in Muslim writings for more than a millennium. One only needs to read the writings of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) to discern that medieval Muslim scholars seemed comfortable with this uncertainty. Al-Suyūṭī devoted six chapters or *anwāʿ* of his compendium *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* to the subject of variant readings.[737] The discussion is wide-ranging and intelligent, and certainly shows no dogmatism about a single original reading.

In fact, one telling sign of the comfort of earlier Muslim scholars with uncertainty about readings is the tradition cited by al-Suyūṭī, that one of the benefits (*fawāʾid*) of the differences among the variant readings is that it demonstrated the excellence and nobility of the Qur'an—because no other scripture had ever been revealed "except in a single way."[738] Whatever one can say about this claim

for superiority, it is not a statement of certainty about a single established text and reading.

3. Uncertainty about origins

Many Muslims share a set of beliefs about the origins of the Qur'an, a widely-known "doctrine of scripture" referred to in Chapter 8. The claim to divine revelation in particular is essential to Muslim formulations of the doctrine. But behind the confident expressions of this doctrine heard today is a long history of traditional uncertainty about the details of the doctrine.

Traditional Muslim discussion of the doctrine of scripture is presented, for example, by al-Suyūṭī in his *al-Itqān*. He titled one chapter, "Concerning the manner of [the Qur'an's] bringing down (*inzāl*)"[739] and opened it with the statement, "[Muslim scholars] disagreed (*ikhtalafa*) over three different teachings related to [the Qur'ān's] bringing down from the preserved tablet."[740] An important aspect of the disagreements listed in this chapter is that the opinions are based on *ḥadīth* and their diverse traditional interpretations. Al-Suyūṭī's third question concerned the tradition that "[t]he Qur'ān descended in seven readings (*aḥruf*)."[741] He listed forty differences among Muslim scholars about the meaning of this *ḥadīth*,[742] the first being that scholars did not agree about the word *ḥarf* ("reading"), "the meaning of which no one knows (*lā yadrā*)."[743]

The great classical commentator al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) was one of the Muslim scholars who advanced an early opinion about the seven *aḥruf*.[744] He argued that the meaning of the word *ḥarf* in the tradition is simply "dialect." The caliph ʿUthmān chose a single codex (*muṣḥaf*) and a single reading (*ḥarf*) in an effort to unite (*jamaʿa*) the Muslims, "and tore apart (*kharaqa*) whatever opposed (ʿ*adā*) the codex on which he had united them." "He required everyone who had a codex different (*mukhālif*) from the codex on which he had united them to tear it up."[745] Al-Ṭabarī gave no indication that

ʿUthmān chose one particular codex or reading according to a careful scholarly process, or out of a special prophetic ability. Rather, according to Ṭabari, he acted out of political expediency.

Al-Ṭabarī also transmitted the tradition about the "satanic verses," recounted in his *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa ʾl-mulūk*.[746] The story of how "Satan casts a false revelation on the messenger of Allah's tongue" has become a matter of Muslim sensitivity in recent years. However, the story did not originate from anyone wanting to offend Muslims but rather from some of Islam's most famous scholars.[747] "The satanic verses incident is reported in the respective *tafsīr* corpuses transmitted from almost every Qur'ān commentator of note in the first two centuries of the *hijra*."[748] The story was transmitted by Muqātil (d. 767), al-Thaʿlabī (d. 923), al-Māwardī (d. 1058), al-Wāḥidī (d. 1076), al-Baghawī (d. 1122), al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144) and al-Maḥallī (d. 1459).[749] Even Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) argued for its historicity.[750] Whether or not the event actually took place, at the very least this Muslim story reveals a sense of uncertainty about the origins of the Qur'an.

4. Uncertainty about the Arabic script

It is well known that the Qur'an is written in Arabic. Much less known is the fact that the Arabic script of the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an was inadequate to actually capture and fix the sounds of Arabic. Academic scholars of qur'anic manuscripts describe the Arabic of the earliest manuscripts as *scriptio defectiva*—a "defective script" a technical term which does not imply moral judgment, but simply draws attention to the absence in the earliest qur'anic manuscripts of long vowels like *alif*, short vowels, and diacritic points that distinguish consonants that otherwise have the same shape.[751]

Though these details about the Arabic script in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an are rarely known—and almost never revealed—among Muslims today, traditional Muslim scholars of an

earlier era had some awareness of the situation. Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), for example, wrote in his *Muqaddima*, "Arabic writing at the beginning of Islam was, therefore, not of the best quality nor of the greatest accuracy and excellence. It was not (even) of medium quality, because the Arabs possessed the savage desert attitude and were not familiar with crafts."[752]

The Arabic script at the beginning of Islam has been studied by some of the best academic scholars in the world today. New York University professor F.E. Peters wrote that the sounds of Arabic overwhelmed the few symbols of the Arabic script in use in the seventh and eighth centuries.[753] Yale University professor Gerhard Böwering wrote that Arabic orthography took more than two centuries to develop, and that the fully developed script that could fully accommodate and fix all of the sounds of Arabic took more than three centuries.[754] François Déroche, at the National Library of France, wrote similarly that the Arabic writing system as it is known today seems to have been introduced towards the end of the third century of Islam.[755] Professor Déroche also reflected on the implications of the defective Arabic script in the earliest qur'anic manuscripts: "…it was not, in fact, possible to adequately preserve the integrity of the Qur'an through writing" at the time of ʿUthman.[756]

Readers of Arabic, Persian, or Urdu will understand what it means to try to read a word lacking diacritic dots. Without dots, five important Arabic consonants share the very same shape in the middle of a word: *bāʾ*, *tāʾ*, *thāʾ*, *nūn*, and *yāʾ*. The consonants *jīm*, *ḥāʾ* and *khāʾ* are identical apart from dots. How then could the reader know for certain which consonants are indicated in a manuscript with no dots, or with few or inconsistent dots? "An unmarked set of characters within a word can have five, even six different meanings," Dr. Déroche explained.[757] Cornell University Arabic professor Younes Munther demonstrated that five different possibilities could come from each of only two words in Q 79:1, if undotted: *nāziʿāt* and *gharqā*.[758] Further details about the earliest qur'anic manuscripts are provided in Chapter 18.

The acknowledgments by traditional Muslim scholars and the descriptions of modern academic scholars urge a new mood of honesty and realism in the conversation between Muslims and Christians about their scriptures. The Greek script shown in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament is fully equipped with long vowels, short vowels and distinct consonants. The Hebrew script of the earliest manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures lacks short vowel pointings; however, the Hebrew equivalents of *yāʾ* and *alif* are included in the manuscripts from the beginning, and the consonants have distinct shapes. "The number of differences in single letters is relatively small, with most of them concerning small details," according to Hebrew University professor Emanuel Tov.[759]

5. Uncertainty about the text

During the second century of Islam, Muslim commentators on the Qur'an commonly cited variant readings, including not only the various possible pointings and vowellings of the Arabic consonantal skeleton (*rasm*), but also variants that depart from the skeleton altogether.[760]

Again, al-Suyūṭī showed an ability to consider many uncertainties. In his compendium of qur'anic sciences, he devoted six chapters to the question of variant readings (*qirāʾāt*).[761] He described the disagreements among traditional Muslim scholars as to whether the *bismilla* should be removed from the beginning of the *sūra*s. The Mālikīs and others, he wrote, advocated that it be removed. Al-Suyūṭī reported the discussion about whether Sūra 8 and Sūra 9 form a single *sūra* or two, because there is no *bismalla* between them. He transmitted a tradition, attributed to ʿAlī, that *Sūra* 9 has no *bismalla* "because [the *bismalla*] is peace (*amān*), and [Sūrat al-] Barāʾa descended with the sword."[762] Al-Suyūṭī also discussed the tradition that Ibn Masʿūd, considered by Muslims to have been a companion of Islam's messenger, denied that Sūra 1 (*Fātiḥa*) and the final two *sūra*s (*al-Falaq* and *al-Nas*) were part of the Qur'an.[763]

Muslim uncertainties about the text of the Qur'an in some ways resemble Christian uncertainties about the text of the Bible. One major difference was recorded by Muslim historians of Islam. During the third/ninth century of Islam, a scholar named Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid (d. 936) determined which variant readings of the Qur'an would be acceptable, limiting the possible number of readings to seven. This proscription of readings, including the well-known readings of Ibn Masʿūd and Ubayy ibn Kaʿb, was politically enforced. Whoever made use of the newly forbidden readings was flogged.[764]

The Qur'an's variant readings are explored more fully in Chapter 18. In terms of uncertainty, however, it is remarkable how often Muslims have accused the New Testament of showing a "human hand" in the establishment of the text, while being silent about similar actions in which the Qur'an is concerned. Ibn Mujāhid is reputed to have limited the possible variant readings to seven, but there is no suggestion that Ibn Mujāhid was a prophet or was somehow inspired for his decisions. Likewise, Muslims put great faith in the "consensus of the community," but the Muslim community is as human as any other. And finally, what does the political force of caliphs have to do with the fixing of scripture?

6. Uncertainty about completeness

In an earlier period in Islamic history, Muslim scholars expressed uncertainty about whether the Qur'an contained everything they believed Allah had revealed. It is important to note, before citing these Muslim scholars, that they were orthodox Sunni scholars who had no desire to cast doubt on the Qur'an. They simply showed freedom to ask questions in the midst of their faith commitment to the Qur'an.

One such scholar was Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. c. 837). In his book *Kitāb faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān* ("Book of the excellencies of the Qur'an"), Abū ʿUbayd included a chapter on the verses he

considered to have "fallen out" of the Qur'an. He wrote that no one had learned the whole of the Qur'an.[765] He said Sūra 33 used to be recited with 200 verses as opposed to the existing seventy-three. Sūra 33 used to be equal to Sūra 2 (*Baqara*) and used to include the "verse of stoning," which he quotes.[766]

Was Mawlana Kairanwi aware of such traditions when he wrote the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*? He gave no indication. However, academic scholars had begun to point out these traditions before the publication of *Iẓhār* in 1864. Theodor Nöldeke offered a section on "Revelations missing from the Qur'an but preserved elsewhere" in his 1860 *Geschichte des Qorâns*,[767] in which he quoted from al-Suyūṭī, al-Tirmidhī, al-Bukhārī, and Hibat Allāh. In more recent scholarship, University of Aberdeen professor John Burton wrote, "It was held by the most influential commentators and by a majority of the legal scholars that the entire Qur'an was never collected."[768] Dr. Burton also highlighted the well-known tradition that the "verse of stoning" was omitted from the Qur'an, citing the *al-Muwaṭṭa* of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795).[769]

A tradition attributed to ʿUmar's son, ʿAbd Allāh, says, "Let none of you say that he has the whole Qur'an in his possession. How does he know what the whole of it is? Many things from the Qur'an have disappeared forever (*qad dhahaba minhu qurʾānun kathīrun*)."[770] Another tradition attributed to ʿĀʾisha attempts to account for the absence of the "stoning verse" from the Qur'an by claiming that the sheet on which this verse was written was eaten by an animal at the time of the death of Islam's messenger.[771]

7. Uncertainty about omissions, additions and alterations

The early centuries of Islam witnessed vigorous discussions among traditional Muslim scholars about whether the text of the Qur'an was deliberately changed. Princeton University professor Hossein

Modarressi gave a good idea of the range of this discussion in his article, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān: A brief survey."[772] Many of the points of controversy relate to Shīʿa Muslims' claims for the family of Islam's messenger. Dr. Modarressi, who graduated with the certificate of *ijtihād* from the Islamic Seminary in Qom, knows this traditional material well.

Dr. Modarressi indicated substantial works written on omissions and alterations in the qur'anic text, as recorded by Ibn al-Nadīm (d. c. 998) (*Kitāb al-fihrist*) and Labīb al-Saʿīd in his 1967 study *al-Jamʿ al-ṣawtī al-awwal li ʾl-Qurʾān*.[773] A splinter group of the Khārijites, the Maymūniyya, claimed that Sūra 12 (*Yūsuf*) was not part of the Qur'an.[774] A number of traditions associated with the caliph ʿUmar tell of omissions. One tradition cites ʿUmar claiming that a part of the Qur'an was lost because of the death of the original memorizers.[775] According to another tradition, ʿUmar remembered the verse of stoning but was not able to insert it into the Qur'an.[776] ʿUmar thought that other verses had dropped out (*saqaṭa*) or were lost from the Qur'an, including verses about duty to parents and *jihād*.[777] ʿUmar's son ʿAbd Allāh, "maintained that much of the Qur'ān had perished before the collection was made."[778]

The above traditions are all from Sunni sources. In addition, Modaressi cited many Shīʿa writers who accused the Qur'an of being falsified. Academic scholars began to describe the Shīʿa writings in the early twentieth century.[779] Until the middle of the tenth century, most Imāmī-Shīʿī scholars believed the Qur'an was incomplete. They considered the so-called ʿUthmānic codex to be tendentious and decidedly anti-Shīʿī.[780] According to Modarressi, Sunni traditions on the corruption of the text of the Qur'an were introduced into Shīʿa literature in the late eighth century by al-Juʿfī (late eighth century), Yūnus ibn Ẓabyān (late eighth century), and al-Kūfī (late eighth century).[781] Later Shīʿa writers who wrote of alterations in the qur'anic text were al-ʿAyyāshī (d. 932), al-Baṣrī (mid-ninth century), al-Sayyārī (late ninth century), and ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (early tenth century).[782] al-Sayyārī and al-

ʿAyyāshī argued, "were it not that the text of the Qur'an has been altered, people would clearly see in it the proofs of the right of the house of the prophet."[783] Al-Sayyārī's *Kitāb al-qirāʾāt* is also known as *Kitāb al-tanzīl wa ʾl-taḥrīf* ("Book of revelation and falsification").[784]

Shīʿī accusations against the Qur'an continued in the writings of al-Kashānī (d. 1680), al-Baḥrānī (d. c. 1697), and al-Majlisī (d. c. 1700).[785] Al-Kāshānī came close to rejecting the existing Qur'an, alleging all kinds of intentional distortions, especially that those who had collected it "altered and distorted its meanings by omitting all direct references to the Imāms."[786] Al-Kashānī supplied a long list of alterations,[787] then concluded, "the Qur'ān which is in our hands is not the entire Qur'ān sent down by God to Muḥammad. Rather, there is in it that which contradicts that which God had sent down. There is, moreover, in it that which was altered and changed."[788]

As late as the nineteenth century, Shīʿa scholar Ḥusayn Taqī Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1902) accused the Qur'an of *taḥrīf* in a book devoted entirely to this subject, *Faṣl al-khiṭāb fī ithbāt taḥrīf kitāb rabb al-arbāb* ("The unmistakable judgment concerning proof of the falsification of the book of the Lord of Lords").[789] This work led to widespread discussion of the issue among Shīʿa scholars in the twentieth century.[790] "The question of *taḥrīf* never ceased to be a burning issue in Shīʿī-Sunnī discourse, to the point that 'there is hardly a new book on the general subject of the qur'ānic sciences whose author can afford not to include a long chapter dealing with *taḥrīf*."[791] The modern academic study of this subject is vast and growing.

The accusations of Muslim writers in the past do not prove the falsification of the Qur'an, but they do indicate uncertainty among Muslims themselves about the text of the Qur'an. Mawlana Kairanwi was a Shīʿī Muslim. We can assume that as a traditional Muslim scholar, he knew the history we have surveyed above. However, though he did his best in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* to attack the integrity of

the Bible, he gave no hint that similar accusations of *taḥrīf* can be made—and indeed have been made by Muslims up to the present[792]—against the Qur'an. The peaceful conversation we seek between Christians and Muslims about their scriptures requires a greater degree of honesty and candor.

8. Uncertainty about abrogation

Muslim scholars have not agreed about whether some verses in the Qur'an are abrogated by others, or about which verses are abrogated and which are abrogating. Al-Suyūṭī's straightforward description of some of the traditional views in his compendium *al-Itqān*[793] indicates a great deal of uncertainty among traditional scholars, as well as the freedom in the fifteenth century to openly discuss this uncertainty.

The Muslim scholars who established the theory of abrogation within the Qur'an commonly cited several particular verses: "Such of our verses (*āya*) as we abrogate (*nansakh*) or cause to be forgotten (*nunsihā*) we bring one better or the like thereof" (Q 2:106); "And when we substituted (*baddalnā*) a verse in place of a verse…" (Q 16:101); "Allah erases (*yamḥū*) what he wants…" (Q 13:39); and "We shall make you read so that you will not forget, except that which Allah wants" (Q 87:6-7). The Muslim theory of abrogation is described more fully in Chapter 15. At this point it simply needs to be noted that there has never been a consensus among Muslim scholars about which qur'anic passages the theory of abrogation affects.[794]

9. Uncertainty about contradiction

Many Muslim scholars have struggled with the suggestion that some verses in the Qur'an contradict other verses. Chapters 9 and 11 deal with accusations of contradiction against the Bible in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* and provide references to books about "Bible difficulties"

written by Christians in response to questions of contradiction. It turns out that Islam has had its own tradition of dealing with questions of contradiction—a reality not revealed by modern Muslim polemic. In fact, the Muslim tradition uses the very same word, "difficulties" (*mushkil*); and Muslim scholars used this word as a technical term (*mushkil al-Qurʾān*) to refer to passages within the Qur'an that appear to contradict.[795]

As early as Islam's second century, Quṭrub Muḥammad ibn al-Mustanīr (d. 821) wrote about intra-communal accusations of contradiction in *Fīmā saʾala ʿanhu al-mulḥidūn min āyi l-Qurʾān*.[796] Ibn Qutayba (d. 885) referred to claims of contradiction in the Qur'an in his *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*.[797] Al-Zarkashī (d. 1392) included a chapter on the subject in his *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*;[798] and al-Suyūṭī similarly included a chapter titled, "Concerning [the Qur'an's] difficulties and the suggestion of disagreement and contradiction"[799] in his *al-Itqān*.

The question of contradiction in the Qur'an is taken up in more detail in Chapter 15. Here we simply note that the question can be raised, and has indeed been raised in the past by Muslim scholars themselves. Though this subject holds "immense theoretical importance" for Muslim scholarship, wrote Eerik Dickinson, "most modern works ignore it."[800]

10. Uncertainty about collection and editing

The best-known Muslim stories about how the Qur'an came together were first written down in the third century of Islam, two centuries after the events they claim to report. The stories first appeared in the *ḥadīth* collection of al-Bukhārī (d. 870) known as his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Apart from Muslim tradition, however, there is no historical or material evidence the stories are true.[801] Those who believe these stories choose to trust them despite a great deal of uncertainty.

Interestingly, within the same *ḥadīth* collection of al-Bukhārī are stories of uncertainty about collecting the Qur'an at all. One tradition attributes to Abū Bakr the saying, "How will you do something that Allah's messenger did not do?"[802] and attributes the same question to Zayd ibn Thābit.[803] It is well known that al-Bukhārī did not relate the writing down of the Qur'an to a command from the messenger of Islam that connected seamlessly to its recitation. Instead, he described the impetus for collection to more accidental circumstances, namely, the death of Muslim warriors in battle and the disagreements of warriors about correct recitation.[804]

The problem is that al-Bukhārī's stories disagree with other early Muslim reports. Al-Bukhārī gave most of the credit for the collection to ʿUthmān, with an important but minor role to Abū Bakr, However, prior to al-Bukhārī, Ibn Saʿd (d. 845) wrote that the Qur'an was collected during the lifetime of Islam's messenger and during the caliphate of ʿUmar.[805] Ibn Saʿd wrote nothing about a collection during the reigns of either Abū Bakr or ʿUthmān. In addition, some Muslim traditions express doubts about the alleged edition of ʿUthmān or give credit for the fixation of the text to a later figure. According to one tradition, the Qur'an readers accused ʿUthmān, "The Qur'an was many books (*kutub*); you have abandoned all but one."[806] In the *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* of al-Sijistānī (d. 929), one of the grievances of the people of Miṣr al-Jaḥfa against ʿUthmān was that he erased the book of Allah (*maḥā kitāb Allāh*).[807] Malik ibn Anas is reported to have said that ʿUthmān's copy of the Qur'an had disappeared.[808] al-Suyūṭī transmitted the curious tradition that the codex (*maṣḥaf*) of ʿĀʾisha included a five-word phrase at the end of Q 33:56, according to Ḥumayda Bint Abī Yūnis, "before ʿUthmān altered (*ghayyara*) the codices (*maṣāḥif*)."[809] A letter attributed to the early Muslim scholar Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728) and addressed to the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 705) contains the statement, "O commander of the believers, take down (*anzala*) the book of Allah in its proper places; do not tamper with (*ḥarrafa*) it or misconstrue it."[810]

One of the mysteries about the traditional Muslim collection stories is why they are missing from some of the best-known Muslim accounts of the messenger of Islam and the first caliphs. For example, there is no mention of the writing down and collection of the recitations of the messenger of Islam during his lifetime in the *Sīrat al-nabawiyya* of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767), the *Kitāb al-maghāzī* of al-Wāqidī (d. 832), or in al-Ṭabarī's *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*. Al-Ṭabarī mentioned the collections by Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān in the introduction to his commentary *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*,[811] but did not include any information about the process of collection in the parts of the *Taʾrīkh* about the first caliphs. Michael Cook wrote that the date when the qur'anic text was established is uncertain because "the event seems to have had no place in the early Arabic annalistic tradition."[812]

Why would these famous Muslim narratives contain extensive details about military expeditions and battles but nothing about how the Qur'an came to be written? The Muslim traditions on the collection of the Qur'an and the substantial academic scholarship on the subject are presented in detail in Chapter 16. The gap of two centuries between alleged events and first written accounts, however, would seem to encourage a measure of modesty about these collection stories.

11. Uncertainty about meaning

The Qur'an contains the well-known verse, "He it is who has brought down upon you the book in which are clear (*muḥkamāt*) verses—they are the mother of the book—and others ambiguous (*mutashābihāt*)" (Q 3:7). The terms *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* are notoriously difficult to translate and even to understand by native Arabic speakers. Major Muslim commentators on the Qur'an have differed widely concerning every phrase of the verse.[813]

The obscurity of Q 3:7 is a good illustration of a general principle in interpretation of the Qur'an. Not only do Muslim commentators

disagree about the meaning of the terms *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*,; they also disagree about which verses in the Qur'an are indicated by "clear" and "ambiguous." This is double uncertainty. Further, many scholars argued against trying to interpret the *mutashābih* verses, because in their view, knowledge of these verses is limited to Allah alone.[814] Into this category many scholars put verses related to the End Times and to the controversial issue of free will versus predestination.

Anyone who reads the classical Muslim commentaries on the Qur'an realizes there is no unanimity about the meanings of the Qur'an among Islam's best scholars. al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), for example, frequently wrote near the beginning of his interpretation of a verse, "the interpreters (*ahl al-ta'wīl*) disagree concerning what Allah meant by his saying…."[815] He often went on to list a wide variety of traditional understandings of the verse. For example, the Qur'an tells about an unnamed "gentle son" whom Abraham intended to sacrifice (Q 37:101-2). Which son? Al-Ṭabarī listed seventeen statements in favor of Isaac and twenty-four favoring Ishmael, then concluded the son was Isaac.[816] Reuven Firestone found that in a listing of all the statements attributed to early authorities in classical commentaries, 130 said Isaac and 133 said Ishmael.[817] al-Ṭabarī concluded wistfully, "If only the Qur'ān were explicit in naming the son who was intended!"[818]

Another good example of a passage that is well known but not well understood is Sūra 112, *al-Ikhlāṣ*, an important *sūra* because Muslims frequently recite it in ritual prayer, and because it seems to contain a denial of Gospel teaching. In a text of only fifteen words are three *hapax legomena*—that is, three words that appear nowhere else in the Qur'an.[819] What do the words mean? Muslim commentators were not certain: for the term *ṣamad* (Q 112:2) alone, they offered more than a dozen different meanings.[820] In addition, "the attested canonical variants for this short Sūra are quite numerous and diverge considerably from the canonical text."[821]

One Arabist has gone so far as to claim that every fifth sentence in the Qur'an "simply doesn't make sense."[822] Lawrence Conrad drew attention to James Bellamy's studies on difficult words in the Qur'an and pointed out that the earliest commentators often tried to solve "textual anomalies" by guesswork and speculation. "Even words that would have been of great and immediate importance in the days of Muḥammad himself are argued over and guessed at, sometimes at great length, with no satisfactory result." Scholars in the Ḥijāz seemed to know no better, added Conrad. "Confusion and uncertainty seems to be the rule, and at the centre of it all, is a written text in which textual anomalies could not be solved, and for which oral tradition offered no help, and for which clarifying context was unknown."[823]

Dear Muslim reader, this chapter has indicated eleven areas about the Qur'an in which Muslim scholars have shown open uncertainty in the past. Each section could be expanded almost indefinitely, and more sections could be added, but to expand the chapter further is unnecessary if the main point is acknowledged: Muslim scholars for more than a millennium raised questions about the Qur'an and discussed them freely. They did not claim certainty about every detail but in fact often concluded discussions with expressions like *bi-lā kayfa* ("without knowing how"), *aṣaḥḥ* ("more correct"), or "Allah knows best."[824]

The uncertainties described in this chapter were not invented by non-Muslims who wanted to offend Muslims. Rather, these uncertainties were presented by Muslim writers who were open and honest about the complexities surrounding ancient manuscripts. In this sense, uncertainty is a human trait that Muslims share with Christians and Jews. Instead of accusing others that their scriptures are beset with questions while our own are immune, let's confess our uncertainties and seek to answer our questions together. In the meantime, we may read each other's scriptures and discuss their contents in friendly and peaceable conversation.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Questions scholars ask about the Qur'an

> Those of us who study Islam's origins have to admit collectively that we simply do not know some very basic things about the Qur'ān – things so basic that the knowledge of them is usually taken for granted by scholars dealing with other texts. They include such questions as: How did the Qur'ān originate? Where did it come from, and when did it first appear? How was it first written? In what kind of language was – is – it written? What form did it first take? Who constituted its first audience? How was it transmitted from one generation to another, especially in its early years? When, how, and by whom was it codified?[825]

The quotation above was written by a scholar of the Qur'an and Islamic Studies, Fred M. Donner, professor of Near Eastern History in the Oriental Institute and the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Dr. Donner was describing the state of academic Qur'anic Studies in 2005 at a conference on the Qur'an at the University of Notre Dame.

Dr. Donner explained that disagreements about answers to the questions being asked are not the predictable disagreements between those who believe that the Qur'an is the Word of God and those who do not. Rather, the questions about basic aspects of the Qur'an arise among scholars who have the training required to

research these things in the best academic tradition and are making their best efforts to understand.

Dr. Donner wrote that the world's best scholars ask many basic questions about the Qur'an. These questions are not well known because the subject matter is sometimes highly technical, the discussions appear mainly in hard-to-find academic journals and books, and the materials are frequently not in English.[826] This chapter offers short summaries of some of the questions that scholars are asking, largely according to the categories Dr. Donner identified in the quotation above.[827]

This information on scholarly approaches to the Qur'an is offered not from a desire to show disrespect to Muslims, nor as a Christian initiative, but in response to the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*. In friendly Christian-Muslim conversation, there is no particular need to present scholarship that asks critical questions about the Qur'an. It has become necessary only because Muslim polemic against the Bible has used scholarly writings in an attempt to support the traditional Muslim accusation of the corruption and falsification of the Bible.

The continuing popularity of the *Iẓhār* is arguably related to its strategy of using scholarly writings to attack the Bible. Traditional Muslim accusations against the Bible have been presented even more powerfully in many other Muslim works. The special feature of *Iẓhār*, which made it famous, was its use of material written by Western non-Muslims to support the Muslim accusation.

The *Iẓhār* presented the Bible in a critical way with all of the scholarly questions, while it presented the Qur'an only in a confessional way according to the traditional Muslim truth claims. Although scholarly critical works on the Qur'an were already in existence when *Iẓhār* was written, none of these works were brought in to evaluate traditional Muslim claims for the Qur'an. Since the *Iẓhār*'s publication, there has been a great deal of scholarly writing on the Qur'an, and the writing continues apace today.

Presenting the scholarly questions about the Qur'an puts the Qur'an and the Bible on a level playing field. Our goal is to show that scholars ask challenging questions of both scriptures—not just the Bible! Another qualification of the following summaries is that they are not presented in the belief that difficult scholarly questions prove anything about the Qur'an one way or another. Questions merely provide us with opportunities to seek answers. Since all ancient manuscripts are subject to a host of the same kinds of dangers, and the problems that affect them are similar, Muslims and Christians need to deal with the questions that scholars ask of their scriptures, take the opportunity to read one another's scriptures with open minds, and consider and discuss together the claims they make.

Dr. Donner compiled a series of nine questions the world's top scholars have been asking about the Qur'an. Many examples are available from the abundant and growing scholarly literature on the Qur'an to illustrate each question. This chapter provides a few examples from only five of Dr. Donner's categories, plus from one category he does not mention. Each annotation describes in a concise but accessible way the area of research, the scholar's question, and suggestions or conclusions each scholar has made out of his or her research.

1. Where did the Qur'an come from?

French scholar Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy was the first academic scholar of the Qur'an to ask critical questions about its origin, in the *Journal des Savants* in 1832. One year later, German scholar Abraham Geiger published his study, *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenomen?*[828] Geiger's study examined non-biblical details of the qur'anic stories of biblical characters and pointed out their resemblance to details in versions of the same stories found in rabbinic writings such as the Talmud. Another German scholar, Gustav Weil, first introduced a "historical-critical" approach to the Qur'an in his 1844 *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in*

den Koran.[829] Dr. Weil claimed a number of passages were added to the Qur'an by later hands for a variety of political and religious reasons and were not part of the original.[830] Dr. Weil also wrote about the similarity between prophetic stories in the Qur'an and rabbinic writings.[831] Again from Germany, in 1860, came Theodore Nöldeke's first volume of the *Geschichte des Qorâns*,[832] a standard work of academic inquiry into the origins of the Qur'an. Professor Nöldeke discussed the differences among qur'anic manuscripts available to him.[833]

All these works of scholarship on the Qur'an were in circulation before the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* was published in 1864. However, the *Iẓhār* gave no indication that such scholarship existed. Meanwhile, it made a major effort to obtain works of critical scholarship on the Bible to attack traditional Christian beliefs, giving the impression the Bible was beset by a host of problems while there were no comparable questions about the Qur'an. To the contrary, scholarly investigation of the Qur'an was gathering speed by 1864, and research has never been more active than in the present day. Below are some of the questions scholars have been asking in recent decades about the origins of the Qur'an.

> Angelika Neuwirth, "Vom Rezitationstext über die Liturgie zum Kanon: Zu Entstehung und Wiederauflösung der Surenkomposition im Verlauf der Entwicklung eines islamischen Kultus," in *The Qur'an as text*, ed. Stefan Wild (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 69-105.

Angelika Neuwirth described what she called a "paralyzing stalemate" among academic scholars of the Qur'an between those who accept the Muslim historical tradition about the Qur'an and those who question the historicity of that tradition. She asked whether there is any other way to conceive of the origins of the Qur'an. Neuwirth proposed that in between initial "recitation" and final official canonization was an extensive oral development of the materials of the Qur'an in Muslim "cult" or liturgy.

Claude Gilliot, "Les 'informateurs' juifs et chrétiens de Muḥammad. Reprise d'un problème traité par Aloys Sprenger et Theodor Nöldeke," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 22 (1998), 84-126.

Claude Gilliot considered the many Muslim accounts of foreigners who were in contact with the messenger of Islam, especially those written by Muslim commentators to explain Q 16:103 ("Only a mortal is teaching him"). He questioned the historicity of the accounts of these alleged informants, who tend to be poor Christians or Jews and who sometimes read the Torah and/or the Gospel. Gilliot concluded it is possible that whole sections of the "Meccan recitations" could contain elements originally established by, or within, a group of "God's seekers," in the milieu of the "deprived" or "have-nots" who possessed either biblical, post-biblical, or other information.

Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'an and its biblical subtext* (London: Routledge, 2010).

Gabriel Said Reynolds examined thirteen qur'anic passages Muslim commentators have found difficult to understand. Reynolds asked whether the meaning of these passages would become clearer if one read the Qur'an as having a "conversation" with the Bible and related Jewish and Christian literature. He suggested that considering this "Biblical subtext" accounts for the difficult passages in a much more helpful way than the explanations of both classical Muslim exegetes and many Western scholars.

Fred M. Donner, "Confessional self-identity in the early Islamic community," *al-Abhath* 50-51 (2002-2003), 9-53.

Fred Donner wrote that the earliest Islamic community was a nonconfessional monotheist group of believers (*muʾminūn*) who shared a set of beliefs and did not make distinctions on the basis of religion. After presenting the qur'anic material that he believed supported his thesis, Donner asked why a number of passages seem to contradict his position and instead sharply differentiate between

Jew, Christian and Muslim. He concluded that the early Islamic community did not know the Qur'an well and only later worked out the theological implications of the contradicting passages, subsequently excluding Jews and Christians from the community.

Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Reading the Qur'an as homily: The case of Sarah's laughter," in *The Qur'ān in context: Historical and literary investigations into the Qur'ānic milieu*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 585-592.

The Qur'an seems to comment on stories presumably known to its audience. Gabriel Said Reynolds focused on the laughter of the wife of Ibrāhīm in Q 11:71, noting that Muslim commentators have traditionally been very uncertain about the meaning of this laughter. Reynolds asked why, since the story is clearly allusive, Muslim commentators did not turn to biblical literature for the details. He suggested that since Q 11:71 seems to comment on a story about Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18, students of the Qur'an may feel free to also be students of the Bible.

2. In what kind of language was the Qur'an written?

Robert Brunschvig, "Simples remarques negatives sur le vocabulaire du Coran," *Studia Islamica* 5 (1956), 19-32.

From a background of scholarship on Classical Arabic in North Africa, Robert Brunschvig noticed that the vocabulary of the Qur'an is very limited in lexical range. He asked why the Qur'an lacks so many words the Arabic reader might expect to find, such as the vocabulary of seasons; animals; parts of the human body; or the common words for "date," "sand," or "desert." He listed 30 roots beginning with the letter *nūn* that occur frequently in Classical Arabic but are not found in the Qur'an. Brunschvig suggested the answer might be found in the "intellectual and social environment" of the

messenger of Islam, and perhaps in a conscious change from pre-Islamic beliefs and practices.

F.E. Peters, *The voice, the word, the books: The sacred scripture of the Jews, Christians and Muslims* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

F.E. Peters attempted to approach the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, and the Qur'an from the same critical academic perspective. Peters asked of the Qur'an, "Who would be writing in early seventh-century Mecca, and why?" Literacy was not widespread in Mecca and Medina at that time. "There are no traces, literary or archaeological, of writing in those parts, and certainly not in Arabic; indeed, the Arabs were still struggling with [the Arabic] script a century or more after Muhammad's death." Peters suggested that in the middle of the seventh century, when *ḥadīth* traditions claim that the text of the Qur'an was fixed in writing, there was no one who knew how to write Arabic, "and there was in fact no one to read it."

Peter Stein, "Literacy in pre-Islamic Arabia: An analysis of the epigraphic evidence," in *The Qurʾān in context: Historical and literary investigations into the Qurʾānic milieu*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 255-280.

A scripture being committed to writing assumes the existence of established writing practices and a minimum level of literacy among the community addressed by the scripture. Peter Stein researched whether this was the case in the *Ḥijāz* in the first half of the seventh century. He asked which materials were written upon, what was written, and who did the writing? He concluded that a few people "may have possessed the rudimentary kind of literacy necessary to conduct commercial activities," but that "mastery of the more advanced skills necessary to read literary works, for example, can be ruled out."

Jan Retsö. "Arabs and Arabic in the age of the prophet." In *The Qurʾān in context: Historical and literary investigations into the Qurʾānic milieu*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 281-292.

Jan Retsö considered that scholars have not yet found any documents from pre-Islamic Arabia written in *ʿArabiyya*, the language of the Qur'an. He noted that the Qur'an uses an Aramaic orthography which does not render all the details of the structure of the *ʿArabiyya*. Retsö asked about the meaning of *ʿarabī* in verses like Q 42:17 and Q 12:1 (*qurʾān ʿarabī*—"an *ʿarabī* recitation"). He suggested that pre-Islamic Arabs originally were a religious-cultic institution rather than an ethnic group, and that describing something as *ʿarabī* in the Qur'an was to claim its divine authority.

3. What form did the Qur'an first take?

Arthur Jeffery, "A variant text of the Fatiha." *The Muslim World* 29 (1939), 158-62.

Arthur Jeffery reported on two non-canonical versions of the first *sūra* of the Qur'an, one that circulated in Shīʿī circles and a second version he found in Cairo in a little manual of *fiqh*. In the second version, which Jeffery attributed to Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, there are nine clear differences from the *textus receptus*. Jeffery asked what would account for the two variant versions, since the differences are generally synonyms that do not change the meaning. He suggested that these variants are what one might expect in a prayer transmitted first in oral form, then fixed later in writing.

James A. Bellamy, "Some proposed emendations to the text of the Koran," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113/4 (1993), 562-573.

James Bellamy considered eleven terms in the Qur'an that neither Muslim commentators nor western scholars have been able to explain. He wrote, "The earliest generation of Muslim commentators,

although they did not emend the text, had no doubt that it did contain mistakes." Bellamy asked what would happen if these difficult terms were treated as corruptions containing copyists' mistakes, and if scholars would seek to emend the words. In each case, by changing a letter or two, Bellamy found emendations that he claimed make better sense than the received text.

Gerd-R. Puin, "Observations on early Qur'an manuscripts in Ṣanʿāʾ," in *The Qurʾan as text*, ed. Stefan Wild (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 107-111.

Gerd-Rüdiger Puin is one of the scholars most closely acquainted with the Qur'an manuscripts discovered in Ṣanʿāʾ, Yemen in 1972. This preliminary report revealed defective writing of the Arabic letter *alif*, many cases of deviations from the standard *rasm*, differences in verse counting and separation, and different arrangements of the *sūra*s. Puin asked what the different arrangements of *sūra*s meant: could there have been even more arrangements in use that differed from the official sequence? He described variations that seem to match what is reported about the Ibn Masʿūd and Ubayy ibn Kaʿb manuscripts, as well as other leaps "which are not even remotely reflected in one of the lists."

Omar Hamdan, "Können die verschollenen Korantexte der Frühzeit durch nichtkanonische Lesarten rekonstruiert werden?" in *The Qur'an as text*, ed. Stefan Wild (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 27-40.

Omar Hamdan examined three early books of Qur'an readings (*qirāʾāt*)—those of Abū Jāfar al-Ṭabarī, al-Hudhalī, and Abū Maʿshar al-Ṭabarī. His question is in his title: "Could the missing early text of the Qur'an be reconstructed through non-canonical readings?" Hamdan especially noted the apparent neglect of the early non-canonical reading of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and urged that critical editions of such "readings-encyclopedias" be prepared and published so scholarly investigation of the text of the Qur'an can move forward.

Frederik Leemhuis, "Codices of the Qur'an," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 347-351.

Frederik Leemhuis wrote that the oldest extant codices of the Qur'an only provide the "consonantal skeleton" (*rasm*), without diacritics to distinguish consonants of the same shape, and without vowel signs. He also noted that reports of variant readings in early Muslim sources presuppose a different *rasm* from the one Muslims associate with ʿUthmān. Leemhuis asked whether the evidence supports the Muslim story of the qur'anic text being definitively fixed at the time of ʿUthmān. He concluded, "Although the concept of the ʿUthmanic *rasm* suggests a uniform and invariable text, such uniformity is not presented by most of the oldest extant codices."

Gerhard Böwering, "Chronology and the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 316-335.

Gerhard Böwering recounted and analyzed the various collection stories in Muslim traditional sources. He asked how the Muslim community could have worked at fixing the text of the Qur'an in the middle of the seventh century when it was focused on conquest. He also noted that qur'anic orthography was at first defective because it was "merely a consonantal skeleton lacking diacritical marks that distinguish certain consonants from each other." He found that the fully-vocalized text of the Qur'an was established and completed only in the first half of the tenth century.

Frederik Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2006), vol. 3, 353-363.

Frederick Leemhuis noted that near the end of the second Islamic century, Muslim commentators like al-Farrāʾ and ʿAbd al-Razzāq still freely discussed variant readings on equal terms with the qur'anic text Muslims connect to ʿUthmān. Some of the variants were different pointings or vocalizations of the same consonantal skeleton,

but other variants departed from the *rasm* altogether. Leemhuis asked about the process which proscribed permissible readings to fourteen, based only on the "ʿUthmānic" *rasm*. He concluded that proscription by Muslim scholars began in the third Islamic century but was enforced by ʿAbbāsid power (i.e. flogging) in the fourth Islamic century.

Alba Fedeli, "Early evidences of variant readings in Qur'ānic manuscripts" in *Die dunklen Anfänge: Neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam*, eds. K.-H. Ohlig & G.-R. Puin (Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiller, 2007), 293-316.

Alba Fedeli examined two ancient parchment fragments of the Qur'an known as "Bonham's" and "Fogg's." They are palimpsests—there is a surface writing over a previously washed-off underlying text. In both cases, Fedeli found that the underlying Qur'an text is different from today's standardized Qur'an text. She listed omissions, different words, different sequences of words, orthographical variants, variant readings, errors, and corrections. Fedeli asked whether the underlying texts could be evidence of the reported non-canonical manuscript of Ibn Masʿūd, but answered in the negative.

Behnam Sadeghi and Uwe Bergmann, "The codex of a companion of the prophet and the Qur'ān of the prophet," *Arabica* 57 (2010), 343-436.

This article shows a commitment to basic Muslim beliefs, including that "Muḥammad dictated the revelations, and scribes wrote them down," but also acknowledges the scholarly discoveries from the Ṣanʿāʾ Qur'an manuscripts. The lower layer of a palimpsest known as "Ṣanʿāʾ 1" belongs to a "different textual tradition" from the Qur'an Muslims attribute to editing under Caliph ʿUthmān. The authors posed the question, "What might account for these differences?" The solution they suggested is "semi-orality"—the magnitude and number of the differences come from different ways of writing down an original recitation.

4. How was the Qur’an transmitted?

Alphonse Mingana, “The transmission of the Ḳur’ān,” *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society* 5 (1915-1916), 25-47.

A century ago, Alphonse Mingana signaled a new mood of questioning about the Muslim sources on the transmission of the Qur’an. Finding the Muslim accounts confused and contradictory, Mingana asked whether there were any other sources of information. He described the mention of—and sometimes the silence about—the Qur’an in non-Muslim writings in Arabic and Syriac, especially the *Risāla* of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī. Though Mingana’s ideas have not always been looked on with favour by scholars in subsequent years, they have formed a basis for scholars’ questions in recent decades.

François Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l’islam: Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

François Déroche, whom University of Toronto professor Walid Saleh calls “the leading scholar in qur’anic studies,”[834] devoted an entire book to the examination of a single fragmentary manuscript of the Qur’an. Déroche enquired into where the manuscript known as the *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus* fits in the history of the transmission of the qur’anic text. He concluded that this manuscript, which he dated to the third quarter of the first Islamic century, represents a time when Arabic writing was not yet subjected to norms and control, and the text of the Qur’an was still somewhat fluid. (We will speak more on this book in Chapter 18.)

François Déroche, “Written transmission,” in *The Blackwell companion to the Qur’an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 172-186.

In a more accessible short article, François Déroche examined the *hijazi*-style manuscripts scholars understand to be the earliest

written records of the Qur'an. He asked how it was possible to adequately preserve the integrity of the Qur'an through writing in the middle of the seventh century when the Arabic script at that time lacked short vowels; certain long vowels; and frequently, diacritic marks that distinguish consonants of the same shape. Déroche concluded, "The various deficiencies noted in the *hijazi*-style manuscripts mean that it was not, in fact, possible to adequately preserve the integrity of the Qur'an through writing" at the time when Muslim tradition claims ʿUthmān definitively established the text.

James A. Bellamy, "Textual criticism of the Qur'ān," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121/1 (2001), 1-6.

"All lengthy texts contain some corruptions," asserted James Bellamy in this article about proper names in the Qur'an. He asked what might explain names like Ṭuwan, Āzar, and ʿĪsā, which have challenged Muslim commentators and academic scholars alike. Bellamy suggested these are mistakes that resulted especially when early readers of the Qur'an misread the consonantal outline. As Bellamy noted, there were no diacritics in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an, no short vowels, and even the long *ā* sound was not indicated. Bellamy proposed emendations that take into account the defective script and possible mistakes of copyists and readers.

5. When, how, and by whom was the Qur'an first codified?

John Burton, "The collection of the Qur'ān," *Glasgow University Oriental Society, Transactions* 23, 1969-70 (1970), 42-60.

When John Burton read the traditional Muslim stories about the collection of the Qur'an, he found them "confused and contradictory." He asked why Muslim scholars distinguished between the Qur'an (the recitations in their entirety) and the *muṣḥaf* (the text as it exists). His investigation centered on the fact that both Islamic

Law and the *sunna* of Islam's messenger prescribe stoning for adultery, while no such punishment can be found in the Qur'an. Burton concluded that Muslim jurists fabricated all of the Muslim stories of the collection in order to have the freedom to allow for alleged omissions in the actual text of the Qur'an.

E.A. Rezvan, "The Qur'ān and its world: VI. Emergence of the canon: The struggle for uniformity," *Manuscripta Orientalia* 4/2 (1998), 13-47.

Russian researcher E.A. Rezvan reviewed the story of the Qur'an's origins as presented in Muslim tradition, then noted that the tradition differs significantly from the "true history" preserved by actual qur'anic manuscripts. The main problem is that the tradition was studied in isolation from the study of manuscripts. The isolation continued right up to the production of the 1924 edition of the Qur'an in Cairo under the protection of the Egyptian king Fuʾād I. Muslim scholars who produced this new edition relied not on an analysis of early manuscripts, but on contemporary Muslim works on "readings" (*qirāʾāt*). According to Rezvan, this edition represents the final step in canonizing the orthography, structure of the text, and rules of reading of the Qur'an.

Michael Cook, *The Koran: A very short introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Among many other themes in this short book, Michael Cook examined the various traditional Muslim stories of how the Qur'an came together. The contradictions in the Muslim stories raised a number of questions for him. Do the sources mean to say that ʿUthmān's work was an edition or an actual collection? Who collected the Qur'an? What was it collected from? "In historical terms the differences between the rival accounts are not trivial," he wrote. Cook suggested the process by which the Qur'an achieved canonical status had much to do with the initiative and authority of the early Islamic state.

Harald Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān: A reconsideration of Western views in light of recent methodological developments," *Der Islam* 78 (2001), 1-34.

Harald Motzki noted the absence of hard physical evidence to confirm the traditional Muslim story of the collection of the Qur'an under the third caliph ʿUthmān. All we have to go on, he wrote, is "the Islamic tradition." The collection story is known to most from *ḥadīth* reports provided by al-Bukhārī or Ibn Saʿd in the third Islamic century. Motzki asked whether it could be traced back earlier. Through close analysis of the *isnād*s (chains of transmission) of the *ḥadīth* about the collection of the Qur'an, he argued that the story must have been known at the time of al-Zuhrī (died 742), in the first quarter of the second Islamic century.

Matthias Radscheit, "The Qur'ān – codification and canonization," in *Self-referentiality in the Qur'ān*, ed. Stefan Wild (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 2006), 93-101.

Matthias Radscheit considered the reports in Muslim sources about the involvement of the powerful governor of Mesopotamia, al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 714), in fixing the text of the Qur'an. Since "there are no complete Qur'āns from the first and second century of the *hijra*," Radscheit asked whether scholars should not question the reports in the ninth-century *ḥadīth* collections about the once-for-all fixing of the Qur'an's text during caliph ʿUthmān's reign. He suggested that besides al-Ḥajjāj, other Muslim governors were pushing to standardize the Qur'an around 700 A.D.

Alfred-Louis de Prémare, "ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān et le Processus de Constitution du Coran," in *Die dunklen Anfänge*, ed. Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-Rudiger Puin (Berlin: Hans Schiler, 2007), 178-210.

The inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock are the first Islamic religious writings that have been dated thus far and attested to by external documents, noted Alfred-Louis de Prémare. This raised a question for him: (1) were these inscriptions composed expressly for

the Dome; (2) were they fragments of a text still in the process of being assembled; or (3) were they from the fully-formed Qur'an that we know today? His investigation took into account the testimony of non-Muslims and especially Muslim traditions on ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (r. 685-705) and al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf. He concluded that his analysis excludes the third hypothesis.

Omar Hamdan, "The second *Maṣāḥif* project: A step towards the canonization of the qur'anic text," in *The Qur'ān in context: Historical and literary investigations into the qur'ānic milieu*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 794-835.

Omar Hamdan focused on the story Muslim sources tell about the work of al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf on the text of the Qur'an. He asked why scholars have rarely dealt with al-Hajjaj's reforms and whether the diacritics—the dots that identify consonants in Arabic—were added to the text of the Qur'an in al-Ḥajjāj's time. In support of this possibility, he quoted al-Dānī (d. 1053) in his *al-Muḥkam fī naqt al-maṣāḥīf*: "The Qur'an was bare [of all diacritics] in the *Maṣāḥif*. The points on the *yāʾ* and *tāʾ* were the first points to have been introduced [by the participants in the *Maṣāḥif* project]. They said: 'It does not go against the Qur'an. It will make the text of the Qur'an clearer.'"

Keith E. Small, *Textual criticism and Qur'ān manuscripts* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011).

Keith Small examined corrections he found in some of the earliest existing manuscripts of both the Greek New Testament and the Arabic Qur'an. He asked how they compared. Small discovered that while corrections in various isolated New Testament manuscripts do not seem to follow any discernible pattern, corrections to Qur'an manuscripts all appear to attempt to regularize the text. He suggested the corrections to the Qur'an were part of a larger ideological campaign to create a completely unified qur'anic text.

6. What does the Qur'an say about the death of Jesus?

Mahmoud M. Ayoub, "Towards an Islamic christology, II: The death of Jesus, reality or delusion (A study of the death of Jesus in *tafsīr* literature)," *The Muslim World* 70 (1980), 91-121.

Mahmoud Ayoub put a question mark to a belief most Muslims understand from the Qur'an. In this important survey of Muslim commentary on Q 4:157, he asked, "Did Jesus die?" Ayoub argued that the Qur'an does not deny the death of the Messiah. He supported this by stating that the Qur'an asserts Jesus' death at Q 3:55, 5:117, and 19:33. In particular, Ayoub claimed the Arabic verb *tawaffa* means "to cause to die" in general usage. Therefore, the difficult wording of Q 4:157 does not mean to deny the death of Jesus, but is rather an accusation against human pride and ignorance.

Martin Whittingham, "How could so many Christians be wrong? The role of *tawātur* (recurrent transmission of reports) in understanding Muslim views of the crucifixion," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19 (2008), 167-178.

The Muslim concept of *tawātur* concerns the reliability of a report based on sense perception, the sincerity of the reporter(s), and a sufficient number of independent chains of transmission. Martin Whittingham asked whether the New Testament reports of the crucifixion of Jesus could be accorded *mutawātir* status because of so many eyewitnesses and the early setting down of sense perception in written accounts. After consulting al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī, Whittingham concluded that as long as Muslims understand Q 4:157 to mean that Jesus did not die, they cannot consider the New Testament reports *mutawātir*, because the Qur'an "is exalted over all other evidence."

Gabriel Said Reynolds, "The Muslim Jesus: Dead or alive?" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72 (2009), 237-58.

Muslim commentators believed Jesus did not die, and on that basis, many Western scholars have assumed that this is what the Qur'an says. However, Gabriel Said Reynolds answered his title question by asserting that the Qur'an says Jesus died. *Tafsīr*—but not the Qur'an—denies that Jesus died. The key to the confusion, explained Reynolds, is the rhetoric of the larger passage surrounding Q 4:157, which contains the two themes of Jewish infidelity and perfidy, and divine control over life and death. Reynolds went so far as to claim that in its passage on the crucifixion, the Qur'an is in conversation with Christian tradition on those two themes.

Suleiman A. Mourad, "Does the Qur'ān deny or assert Jesus's crucifixion and death?" in *New perspectives on the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in its historical context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 349-357.

Muslim commentators interpreted Q 4:157 to mean that Jesus did not die, wrote Sulaiman A. Mourad, partly because of the needs of polemic. Muslims needed to legitimize their own religion by accusing Christians of being wrong about Jesus' death. Mourad answered his title question by asserting that the Qur'an means to say Jesus was crucified and God raised him from the dead. The concern of the Qur'an was to be clear that Jesus' crucifixion does not represent a defeat of God. Rather, God showed himself the ultimate victor by resurrecting Jesus from the dead.

The scholarly questions about the Qur'an described in this chapter help to set the Qur'an and the Bible on a level playing field and to facilitate a reasonable conversation about their contents. Scholars ask challenging questions of both scriptures. Since all ancient manuscripts are subject to the same kinds of dangers, and the problems that affect them are similar, Muslims and Christians

need to deal with the questions that scholars ask of their scriptures, take the opportunity to read one another's scriptures with open minds, and consider and discuss together the claims they make.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Contradictions and Alterations

Christians have no need to criticize the Qur'an in the way that Rahmat Allah Kairanwi attacked the Bible in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*. Christians are content to simply sit down with Muslims to read the scriptures together and discuss their contents in friendly and peaceable ways. Questions of truth and falsehood can then be taken up in the context of informed knowledge of the scriptures and mutual respect between the conversation partners.

However, there is a problem. Many Muslims will not even contemplate reading the Bible because of what they have been taught by sources such as the *Iẓhār*. Therefore, the hoped-for peaceable discussion cannot even begin.

The *Iẓhār* began by accusing the Bible of contradictions, then of errors, alterations, additions and omissions. A large part of its appeal works on the principle of accumulation: such long lists, and in so many categories, must prove that the Bible is corrupt and falsified! And indeed, for many readers the effect has been overwhelming—either to lead them to proclaim triumphant victory on the one hand, or to produce discouragement and frustration on the other. Neither result is conducive to peaceable conversation or mutual respect.

The *Iẓhār* did not seriously consider whether the same kinds of allegations could be made about the Qur'an. There are no matching lists of possible accusations against the Qur'an, but rather only traditional Muslim claims for the perfection of the Qur'an in the *Iẓhār*'s fifth section (*bāb*).[835] This leaves the Bible and the Qur'an

on an uneven playing field and creates the false impression that the Qur'an should be read while the Bible should be set aside and neglected.

Christians accept the questions that the *Iẓhār* poses by its long lists of accusations. As pointed out in Chapters 9 and 11, many Christians have applied themselves to deal with these questions, whether in explicit response to the *Iẓhār* or in general response to two millennia of non-Muslim questioners. Questions about ancient scriptures are perfectly normal. Questions can also be asked about the Qur'an, and many of the questions are similar, if not the same. This brings a measure of realism to the discussion of the scriptures, and can help lift the prohibition on reading the Bible.

This chapter follows some of the categories used in the *Iẓhār*. However, the intent is not to respond in kind. Instead of listing as many examples as one can find in each of these categories, each section will highlight one or a few examples that could lead to meaningful conversation about the contents of the scriptures.

1. Contradictions within and without

The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* accused the Bible of containing contradictions. If one would direct the same critical gaze toward the Qur'an, what would one find? Not only many contradictions, but such as continue to trouble the world today. Qur'anic contradictions may be found on two levels: material that contradicts the content of the earlier scriptures, and contradictions among diverse material within the Qur'an itself. Within the Qur'an, the contradictions include the questions of Muslim treatment of non-Muslims and whether Allah gives free choice to humanity.

The Qur'an contradicts the content of the Bible at many points. Many Muslims assume that wherever the Qur'an contradicts the Bible, it must be the fault of the Bible.[836] But why should this be so? Why should the newer judge the older? The older is much closer

to the events themselves, and in historical terms this is usually considered to be an advantage. According to a number of academic scholars, Muslim knowledge of the contradictions between the Bible and the Qur'an was one of the factors that gave rise to the Muslim accusation of the falsification of the earlier scriptures in the first place.[837] To the Muslim mind, accusing Jews and Christians of falsifying the Hebrew Bible and New Testament "solves the riddle of why, if all three scriptures derived from the same source, the qur'anic versions of accounts often contradict those of the Bible."[838] But if accounts contradict, why should this be the fault of the Bible?

The contradictions within the Qur'an may be considered even more serious, because they concern issues that go to the heart of relationships among humans and between humans and God. Mawlana Kairanwi's long list in the *Iẓhār* of contradictions in the Bible usually has to do with differences of detail between accounts of the same event.[839] The differences of detail usually do not affect the main thrust of the passage. Differences in detail raise questions that must be answered, of course, and some of these questions have been answered in Chapters 9 and 11. The Qur'an also contains multiple accounts of biblical and other personalities, and it would be relatively easy to respond to the Qur'an in kind. However, a number of the Qur'an's contradictions are significant internal disagreements that affect the entire message of the book.

The contradictions in the Qur'an related to violence,[840] for example, continue to be troublesome even into the twenty-first century. How should Muslims deal with non-Muslims? The answers within the Qur'an related to the treatment of non-Muslims are often "ambiguous and contradictory."[841] Islamists such as Usama bin Ladin have used qur'anic commands to fight and kill in an attempt to rally young Muslims to violence against non-Muslims.[842] Other Muslims say the Qur'an commands only peace. Who can settle this disagreement? Is it merely a matter of interpretation, or is it a problem of the contents of the Qur'an?

"A number of verses appear to contradict one another with regard to allowances and restrictions within divinely sanctioned or encouraged fighting."[843] The Qur'an contains twelve commands to fight and five commands to kill,[844] using the Arabic verbs *qātala* and *qatala*.[845] Forms of the root *qatala* are used forty-four times in relation to warfare.[846] One can see how this would raise the question of contradiction with much-touted verses such as "there is no compulsion in religion" (Q 2:256), and "whosoever kills (*qatala*) a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind" (Q 5:32). Already in the third century of Islam, a non-Muslim Arab living within the Muslim Empire pointed out the contradictions within the Qur'an on war and peace. Al-Kindī highlighted not the violent verses, but rather the peaceful passages—he was challenging his Muslim rulers to follow the peaceful passages in their treatment of non-Muslims![847] However, al-Kindī concluded by asking, "How are we to discriminate the true from the false, for the two sets of passages both being in your book, are directly opposed to one another."[848]

Muslim writers of earlier periods also freely discussed the possibility of contradictions within the Qur'an. Islam had its own tradition of dealing with questions of contradiction, using the word *mushkil* ("difficulties") as a technical term (*mushkil al-Qurʾān*) to refer to passages within the Qur'an that appear to contradict.[849] As early as the second century of Islam, Quṭrub Muḥammad ibn al-Mustanīr (d. 821) wrote about intra-communal accusations of contradiction in the Qur'an.[850] Ibn Qutayba (d. 885) referred to claims of contradiction in his *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*.[851] Al-Zarkashī (d. 1392) included a chapter on the subject in his *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*,[852] and al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) similarly included a chapter titled "Concerning [the Qur'an's] difficulties and the suggestion of disagreement and contradiction"[853] in his *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*.

One example of a Muslim writer who freely discussed the possibility of contradiction within the Qur'an was the scholar al-Ṭūfī (d. 1316).[854] Al-Ṭūfī attempted to answer the questions of an

anonymous Christian on the qur'anic verses about human destiny. Al-Ṭūfī insisted that all parts of the Qur'an were true and consistent, but also acknowledged there are parts that are apparently contradictory (*mā awhama ʾl-taʿāruḍ*).[855] The disagree-ment within the Muslim community about the Qur'an's content on human destiny has often been with the views of the Muʿtazila. Al-Ṭūfī listed the verses that the Muʿtazila cited in favor of human free will;[856] he then presented the traditional ways to harmonize the contradictory verses.

However, al-Ṭūfī then showed an unexpected willingness to discuss the presence of contradiction (*mukhtalifa ẓāhiran*) within the Qur'an concerning human destiny. Through a proof of seven points,[857] al-Ṭūfī argued that contradiction within the Qur'an proves the messenger of Islam could not have written it. His argument first asserted the virtue and wisdom of Islam's messenger. Wise men are alert to contradiction, he reasoned, and will not allow contradiction to remain in a written text. However, the Qur'an contains contradiction. Therefore, the messenger of Islam could not have written the Qur'an; the Qur'an must come directly from Allah, and this in turn proves the prophethood of the messenger.[858]

Other Muslim writers also found a contradiction between the qur'anic materials on human free will and Allah's predestination. Al-Rāzī wrote in his commentary that this problem "falls in the sphere of contradiction" *(fi ḥayyiz al-taʿāruḍ*).[859] Smith College professor Suleiman Ali Mourad wrote that the inconsistencies of the Qur'an in this area "caused immense anxiety for later theologians."[860] Dr. Mourad cited qur'anic verses like Q 7:179 that speak of a group of people being predestined for Hell. "On the other hand, there are Qur'ānic verses that seem to say the exact opposite." Dr. Mourad described the Qur'an's position on the doctrines of freewill and predestination as "rather conflicting," and observed that theologians attempted to deal with the contradiction by dismissing verses that disagreed with their view as requiring further scrutiny, or calling them ambiguous (*mutashābih*, Q 3:7).[861]

These two areas of contradiction within the Qur'an are not insignificant. They concern relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims and an important concept of God. "The order to fight involves the issue of attitudes toward the other."[862]

The Qur'an invites its readers to a process of deliberation when it says, "Will they not then ponder on the *qurʾān*? If it had been from other than Allah they would have found therein much disagreement (*ikhtilāfan*)" (Q 4:82). It is interesting to note that the Qur'an never uses the term *ikhtilāf* in relation to the contents of the Torah and Gospel, but only in relation to the Qur'an. This is opposite to what Mawlana Kairanwi did in the *Iẓhār*. Mawlana Kairanwi quoted the second part of Q 4:82 at the start of his section of accusations of contradiction in the Bible.[863] However, when he wrote about the Qur'an in a later section of his book, he did not pose the question of contradiction. The question is, does the Qur'an show itself to be free from contradiction?

2. The Islamic doctrine of abrogation

Muslim commentators on the Qur'an developed special techniques to deal with qur'anic contradictions, and the main technique was the doctrine of abrogation.[864] The Muslim doctrine of abrogation proposed a chronology for the recitations of the messenger and claimed that Allah "replaced" (*baddalnā*, Q 16:101) earlier recitations with later ones according to the needs of the situation.

> Muslim books on abrogation implicitly argue for the integrity of the Qur'ān despite the presence of contradictory verses within it, which, it was feared, might suggest some sort of indecision on the part of its author, not a trait of God, of course; thus the concern (in polemic at least) was that such contradictory verses might be taken as a suggestion of a non-divine origin for all or part of the book.[865]

According to the principle of abrogation, wrote Shari Lowin, "the Qur'ān altered and revised itself in the midst of being revealed; later qur'ānic rulings that appear to contradict earlier statements are, in fact, replacing them, terminating the earlier statements in favor of new decrees (for example, Q 4:11 abrogates Q 2:180, Q 24:2 replaces 4:15-6)."[866]

"The theological and political repercussions associated with the possibility of divine contradiction disturbed Muslim religious scholars…and probably from a very early period," wrote Professor Reuven Firestone.[867] "They eventually solved the problem of apparent contradiction by asserting that the equivocal concepts and injunctions depicted in the Qur'ān were revealed in response to specific occasions" within the life story of the messenger of Islam.[868] In other words, Muslim writers perceived a contradiction within the Qur'an related to war and peace, and attempted to deal with it by proposing the theory of abrogation.

The Muslim theory of abrogation, in its simplest expression, is that Allah replaced earlier revelations in the Qur'an with new commands that then took precedence over the earlier. For example, when the eighth-century commentator Muqātil ibn Sulaymān explained the phrase in Q 5:13, "yet pardon them, and forgive," he wrote, "the forgiveness and the pardon became abrogated (*mansūkh*); the sword verse in Barāʾ abrogated (*nasakha*) it." In Muqātil's view, the Q 5:13 command only had legal force until Allah gave a new command in the matter of the Jewish Banū Qurayẓa and Banū Naḍīr tribes, "and the command of Allah concerning them was killing, and captivity, and expulsion."[869] "The principal component of the general concept of *naskh* is 'change', 'replacement'. To this was joined the notion of 'withdrawal', 'omission', but solely in relation to the operation of *naskh* upon the Ḳur'ān."[870]

The principal of abrogation was an important subject in classical Muslim scholarship. "A surprisingly large number" of works were written on *al-nāsikh wa ʾl-mansūkh* ("the abrogator and the abrogated"): around fifteen well-known classical texts among a total

of over forty works referenced in the Muslim sources.[871] This number does not include the many applications of abrogation in qur'anic commentaries or the sections on this subject in works on the sciences of the Qur'an, such as al-Suyūṭī's *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*. Among the standard, well-established texts, often with the title *al-Nāsikh wa ʾl-mansūkh*, are those of al-Naḥḥās (d. 949), Hibat Allah ibn Salāma (d. 1020), and Ibn al-ʿAtāʾqī (d. c. 1308).[872]

Muslim writers frequently based their discussions of abrogation on a series of verses in the Qur'an. Two verses use the verb *nasakha*: "what we abrogate (*nansakh*) or cause to be forgotten (*nansahā*) we bring a better or the like of it" (Q 2:106) and "Allah abolishes (*yansakhu*) what Satan proposes" (Q 22:52). Other verses similarly have Allah as subject but use other verbs: "Allah erases (*yamḥū*) what he wants and establishes" (Q 13:39), "We substitute (*baddalnā*) a verse (*āya*) in place of a verse" (Q 16:101), and "We shall teach you this *qurʾān* and you will not forget—except what Allah pleases" (Q 87:6-7). Some Muslim scholars have also understood the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* verse (Q 3:7) to refer to the abrogating and abrogated verses: "the book wherein are clear verses…and others ambiguous."[873]

Most of the classical Muslim texts on abrogation discuss three modes of abrogation. The first mode is abrogation of the ruling and the recitation, which meant legal scholars not only considered that a divine ruling had lost its force, but also that the very ruling was lost. For example, an early tradition ascribed to Anas ibn Mālik says that a *sūra* used to be recited, equal in length to *Sūra* 9, but that he could only remember one verse.[874] The so-called "satanic verses" would also fall into this category.[875] The second mode occurs when the words are missing from the Qur'an but the ruling remains in force. Muslim writers commonly cited the so-called "stoning verse" as an example. The messenger of Islam is said to have recited the verse, people heard it and could quote it, but for some reason the verse did not make it into the written Qur'an (codex, *muṣḥaf*).[876] Another example is the number of times a child may be suckled before creating a bar to marriage (related to Q 4:23).[877]

The third mode of abrogation occurs when the ruling of one qur'anic verse is seen to be in conflict with another verse. This is the most common of the three modes; Ibn al-ʿAtāʾiqī wrote that this type of abrogation can be found in sixty-three *sūra*s. One example of abrogation concerned Q 8:65, in which the believers would overcome their enemies by a ratio of one to ten. Muslim writers on abrogation believed this verse was abrogated by the next verse, Q 8:66, which gives a ratio of one to two.[878] Another example is the series of verses on wine in the Qur'an. Wine (*sakar*) is one of the signs of Allah's grace in Q 16:67 and a mixed blessing (*khamr*) in Q 2:219. In Q 4:43, however, believers are commanded not to come to prayer drunk (*sukārā*), and Q 5:90 gives a clear prohibition of wine (*khamr*). Muslim writers dealt with the contradiction by asserting the verses were recited in this chronological order, and therefore a "sequential abrogation of verses" occurred.[879] Another example is the abrogation of Q 2:180 by Q 4:10-11 concerning testamentary provision for parents and nearest of kin.[880] The treatment of the conflicting verses on war and peace will be taken up in the next section.

In the classical Muslim discussions about abrogation, the maximum total of possible abrogated verses tended to be around 250. This is quite substantial considering that the total number of legal verses in the Qur'an is thought to be 500.[881] The number of abrogated verses grew from al-Zuhri (d. 742), who mentioned forty-two abrogated verses, to the later writers al-Naḥḥās, 138, and Ibn Salāma, 238.[882] It is important to note that these classical Muslim works on abrogation are about abrogation within the Qur'an.[883] In modern times, Muslim writers have not only denied the classical literature on abrogation, but have defined *naskh* as Islam's supersession of other religions.[884]

Muslim writers perceived contradiction within the Qur'an related to commands for war and peace. They attempted to deal with the contradiction by proposing the theory of abrogation.[885] For example, this was one of the first concerns of al-Suyūṭī in the chapter on abrogation in his *al-Itqān*. He cited the verse, "Forgive

and pardon until Allah brings his command" (Q 2:109), then discussed how Allah later brought the command in Q 9:23, "'"fight the associators totally as they fight you totally."[886] In the minds of these writers, the theory resolved the problem.[887] But was the fact of contradiction in fact resolved? Is the theory of abrogation anything close to a proof that the Qur'an is free from contradiction (*ikhtilāf*, Q 4:82)? Muslim writers first imposed a narrative context on the Qur'an from outside of the Qur'an, along with their chronology of the recitations. Then they decided that since the violent verses—according to their chronology—were recited later in time than the peaceful texts, the later would take precedence over the earlier. But how is this true beyond simply saying it is so? Reuven Firestone made a case against the traditional Muslim reading of the verses on war and peace, arguing that the conflicting qur'anic verses cannot prove this scheme, but that rather there was disagreement within the early Muslim community about the use of violence.[888]

Meanwhile, the contradictory verses remain in the text.

3. Abrogating power of *Sūrat al-Tawba*

Muslim writers in the early centuries of Islam attempted to resolve the contradiction related to war and peace in the Qur'an by asserting the theory of abrogation. Their solution, however, has arguably caused a great deal of suffering and death in the world. They proposed that some of the Qur'an's harshest commands superseded and cancelled verses in the Qur'an that take a more lenient approach to non-Muslims: "A broad consensus among medieval exegetes and jurists exists on the issue of waging war. The simplest and earliest solution of the problem of contradictions in the Qur'ān was to consider Q 9:5 and 9:29 as abrogating all the other statements."[889]

The ninth *sūra*, *al-Tawba*, was considered by many Muslim writers to have been one of the last to be recited.[890] Because the theory of abrogation gives legal priority to rulings recited last, *Sūrat al-*

Tawba was taken to have immense abrogating power in their minds. Of the 129 verses in this *sūra*, these Muslim writers considered none to be more important than Q 9:5 and 9:29. "Q. 9:5 became the scriptural prop of a formulation designed to cover any and all situations which might arise between the Muslim community and its enemies," wrote University of London professor John Wansbrough. [891]

> Called in the exegetical tradition the sword-verse (*āyat al-sayf*), Q. 9:5…achieved a quite extraordinary status in the elaboration of Islamic Jurisprudence, as the alleged abrogant of 123 Quranic verses. These included all passages in scripture which could be interpreted as recommending leniency (*ṣafḥ wa-ʿafw*; cf. Q. 2:109, 5:13) towards unbelievers.[892]

Q. 9:5 contains the command, "kill (*aqtulū*) the associators (*mushrikīn*) wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush." The command of Q 9:29 is focused on the People of the Book. "Fight (*qātilū*) those who do not believe in Allah or the Last Day, and do not forbid what Allah and his messenger have forbidden—such men as don't practice the religion of truth, being of those who have been given the book—until they pay the tribute (*jizya*) out of hand and have been humbled." On the basis of these two verses, wrote Dr. Landau-Tesseron, "it is clear that the purpose of fighting the idolators is to convert them to Islam, whereas the purpose of fighting the People of the Book is to dominate them."[893]

The sword verse (Q 9:5) became the verse that Islam's legal scholars considered able to abrogate more qur'anic verses than any other.[894] Cornell University professor David Powers explained that in the minds of some Muslim scholars,[895] Q 9:5 abrogated 124 other verses, including "every other verse in the Qur'ān which commands or implies anything less than a total offensive against the non-believers."[896] Dr. Powers provided a list of the verses abrogated by the *āyat al-sayf* according to Ibn Salāma,[897] which includes verses from fifty-three other *sūra*s.

It is clear from the preceding information that the importance of Q 9:5 and Q 9:29 extends well beyond the modern Islamists and so-called extremists of today's headlines. Just because the Qur'an contains commands to fight and kill does not mean that people will accept and obey those commands. People are free to believe and act as they like. However, human nature is already inclined to respond to conflict with violence. If that impulse is then supported by scriptural commands to fight and kill, believed to come from God, what then can we expect of human behaviour?

4. Contradicting the biblical accounts

The Qur'an contains many accounts about personalities who were known from the Bible prior to the rise of Islam. Qur'anic accounts of these personalities show some similarities to the biblical accounts, but they also show many differences. Since the accounts in the Hebrew scriptures were well established in the Middle East prior to Islam, and since they were universally accepted by Jews and Christians alike, it is reasonable to say the qur'anic accounts contradict what was written in the Bible. Muslim writers noticed these differences when they began to learn the contents of the Bible, and in many cases, the differences became a basis for polemic against the Bible. Academic scholars have also noted the differences in accounts, as well as the polemic.

The Qur'an calls the father of Abraham *Āzar* (Q. 6:74). However, the name of Abraham's father in the Torah is clearly *Terāḥ* (Genesis 11:24-32). Muslim exegetes as well as academic scholars have proposed many ingenious explanations to try to reconcile the difference, but none has been satisfactory to all.[898] Arthur Jeffery claimed that *Āzar* in the Qur'an was transferred from the name of Abraham's servant *Eliʿezer* (Genesis 15:2).[899] The Qur'an says that Maryam the mother of ʿĪsā was "the sister of Aaron" (Q 19:28) and "the daughter of ʿImrān" (Q 66:12, cf. 3:35). In biblical history, the mother of Jesus and the Miryam who was the sister of Aaron

and Moses are separated by more than a thousand years. Again, Muslim exegetes proposed a number of explanations, but evidence suggests that Q 19:28 was highlighted as an error in the Qur'an from the earliest period of Muslim-Christian relations.[900] The Qur'an says that Hāmān was in the court of the Pharaoh when Aaron and Moses appeared before him (Q 28:6, 8, 38; 29:39; 40:24, 36), while the Bible has Haman in the court of the Persian emperor Xerxes in the book of Esther many centuries later (Esther 3:1). Once more, Muslim writers made great efforts to account for the discrepancy,[901] but for academic scholars the matter remains unexplained.[902] The Qur'an says the Jews called ʿUzayr (Ezra) the son of Allah (Q 9:30). However, there is no such information in the Hebrew scriptures, and academic scholars have been at a loss to account for this qur'anic assertion.[903]

Many other such differences between qur'anic and biblical accounts could be mentioned if one simply set them side by side and carefully compared all details. The differences between multiple accounts of the same personalities within the Qur'an could also be detailed. Dr. Wansbrough called these differing accounts "variant traditions."[904] Consider, for example, the differences among the accounts of the single most-mentioned character in the Qur'an, Mūsā (Moses).[905]

Moses is one of the Qur'an's main characters; he is named 136 times in fifty distinct passages in thirty-six *sūra*s, for a total of 502 verses related to Moses.[906] An examination of the ten most important Moses narratives in the Qur'an shows that three of these passages contain nine or more narrative elements from the account of Moses found in the Torah. The remaining qur'anic passages have six or fewer of the biblical narrative elements. No two passages in the Qur'an contain the same narrative elements. No two passages arrange the narrative elements in the same sequence. Two passages contain details not found in the Hebrew scriptures, while the other accounts do not mention these details. Two other passages say that Hāmān was present at the court of Pharaoh, while the other passages do not mention Hāmān. One passage contains four

narrative elements that seem to match the traditional Moses story, but doesn't mention his name (Q 44:17-33).

How are readers to describe what they find in the qur'anic Moses passages? Where the qur'anic details are different from the account in the Torah, is this not contradiction? Where important details are missing from the qur'anic passages, is this not omission? Where details in the qur'anic passages are not found in the biblical account, is this not addition? And what of errors and alterations? The Torah account was established as far back as material evidence can reach —to the Dead Sea Scrolls of the third century B.C., more than eight centuries before the rise of Islam. The Torah account was well known and universally accepted by Jews and Christians at the time when Islam arose. If the Qur'an then presents versions of the story that are different from the Torah account, is this not alteration? Is this not error?

Certainly not all of the differences between the qur'anic and biblical accounts of the same personalities are consequential. For example, among the Qur'an's eight variant versions of Moses' appearance in Pharaoh's court, it is not particularly significant that Pharaoh threatens to cut off the hands and feet of his wizards (*saḥara*) and crucify them (Q 7:124, 20:71, 26:49).[907] However, among the many differences between the Gospel accounts of Jesus and the qur'anic accounts of ʿĪsā, three differences must be mentioned because they continue to cause misunderstanding and even deadly conflict between Muslims and Christians.

1. The name the Qur'an gives to Jesus is strikingly different from his name in the Gospel. The name of Jesus in the Gospel is *Iesou*— the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, or *Yahôshūaʿ*. Proof that the Gospel assumes this link with the Hebrew name is that the angel instructs Joseph, betrothed to Mary, "you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The name *Yahôshūaʿ* means "the Lord (*Yahweh*) saves." The three root consonants of the Hebrew word "to save" are *yod-shin-ayin*, and *hôshîaʿ* is the *Hifʿil* form of the verb. The name

the Gospel gives to Jesus, therefore, already has within it the information that Jesus will be the Saviour.

The Greek script has no way of rendering the Hebrew consonant *ayin*, therefore the Gospel simply gives *Iesou*. The Arabic script, however, includes the *ʿayn*, so the Qur'an could have rendered the name of Jesus so that the *ʿayn* is the final consonant in the Arabic form of the name. Arabic-speaking Christians referred to Jesus as *Yasūʿ*,[908] keeping *yod* as the first consonant and *ayin* in the final consonant. This maintains the link with the meaningful Hebrew name. But curiously, the Qur'an instead calls Jesus *ʿĪsā*, giving the *ʿayn* as the first consonant and the *yāʾ* as the final consonant. It thus flips the verbal root so as to create a completely different word. University of Michigan professor James Bellamy suggested that the qur'anic name *ʿĪsā* is "the most mysterious textual problem in the Koran," and wrote that no one—whether Muslim commentator or academic scholar—has satisfactorily explained why the Qur'an should call Jesus *ʿĪsā*.[909] Muslim commentators made many suggestions for the meaning of *ʿĪsā*, based on the root letters *ʿayn-sīn-yāʾ*.[910] Dr. Bellamy found the word *ʿĪsā* to be a mistake, and suggested that the initial *ʿayn* be emended to a *mīm*, rendering the word *masiyyā*—similar to the Greek *Messias*.[911] Later, Dr. Bellamy reconsidered this suggestion and wrote that *ʿĪsā* is "a corruption of the Arabic *al-Masīḥ*, from which the definite article was dropped when the prophet rejected the regular name for Jesus, *Yasūʿ*."[912]

2. The name change in the Qur'an cuts off the name of Jesus from its meaningful connection to God's salvation. An even more striking separation of Jesus from salvation, however, is in the Qur'an's apparent denial that Jesus was crucified (Q 4:157). The qur'anic material related to the death of Jesus will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 17. The question at this point is how to describe the Qur'an's denial of the crucifixion of Jesus as other than a contradiction.

It is interesting that the lists of accusations of contradiction against the Bible in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* do not include accusations of

contradiction among the Gospel reports that Jesus died on the cross. In fact, this is a case in which four separate witnesses are unanimous. If the *Iẓhār* treats differences between Gospel accounts as a sign of corruption, how does it deal with cases of crucial details on which the four accounts agree? And if the Qur'an denies the Gospel consensus, how should we describe the qur'anic account?

3. The commands to fight and kill in the Qur'an contradict the teaching in the Gospel to forgive and even love enemies. Jesus blessed the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9), not those who die fighting. The entire New Testament contains no imperative to fight except once in a figurative sense: "Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Timothy 6:11-12). On the other hand, the New Testament contains many commands to love, while the Qur'an contains no command to love either God or humans.[913] Jesus' teachings on peace and love are given in more detail in Chapters 19 and 23. This difference is not inconsequential. Humankind is challenged daily by situations of conflict. Which commands will humanity choose to obey—the commands to fight and kill, or to love and forgive?

What is the right word to describe the differences in the qur'anic accounts related to Jesus? Contradiction? Error? Alteration? Omission? Some Muslims may say that whenever Gospel content is different from the Qur'an, it must come from the corruption or falsification of the Gospel.[914] But how is this true beyond simply saying it is so? This *Gentle answer* has shown that such a response can no longer be used with integrity.

5. Omissions

Muslim writers during the early centuries of Islam freely transmitted traditions that spoke of omissions from the text of the Qur'an. On the one hand, they wrote of materials they said were part of the original recitations of the messenger but for various reasons did not make it into the written text of the Qur'an (*muṣḥaf*). On the other

hand, commentators on the Qur'an implicitly acknowledged gaps in the text of the Qur'an when they brought in information from outside sources to complete the qur'anic narratives.[915]

Muslim legal scholars wrote of three modes of abrogation. The second type of abrogation was where the text, but not the ruling, of a qur'anic recitation was cancelled. For many Muslim writers, these were cases of omission or forgetting.[916] The best-known example of this type of abrogation was the ruling to stone adulterers.[917] "The vast majority of scholars…regarded the imposition of stoning as the penalty for adultery as an instance of a verse from the holy text being eliminated, although the ruling it contained remained in effect."[918]

The Islamic punishment of stoning for adultery is no insignificant matter. Even in the present day one frequently hears of calls within Muslim societies for the application of this punishment. However, this punishment cannot be found in the Qur'an. The Qur'an mentions a penalty for illicit sexual behaviour in Q 4:15-16, but doesn't specify what it is. At Q 24:2, the Qur'an gives an explicit punishment: "The adulteress and the adulterer, flog each of them with a hundred stripes."

Yet some famous Muslim traditions said that stoning adulterers was the practice of the messenger of Islam,[919] and Muslim jurists such as al-Shāfiʿī (d. 820) insisted the messenger had commanded this punishment.[920] The punishment was certainly encoded in Islamic law.[921] Some concluded this was a case of the messenger's practice abrogating the Qur'an.[922] As Dr. Burton noted, the penalty of death by stoning is "totally incompatible" with the penalty mentioned in the Qur'an.[923]

Many Muslim writers asserted that a verse commanding the stoning of adulterers had been recited by the messenger of Islam, but did not make it into the written text of the Qur'an. Several traditions attributed this statement to the second caliph, ʿUmar.[924] Some traditions even stated that the stoning verse had in fact

existed in print, but that an animal had eaten the page on which the verse was written.[925]

Al-Shāfiʿī accepted the "withdrawal" of a verse related to the age of suckling and the question of restricted degrees of marriage.[926] Shīʿa writers made many accusations of omissions from the text of the Qur'an, including verses from *Sūrat al-Nūr*, the *Sūrat al-Nūrayn*, and passages about ʿAli.[927]

As for omission of details from the biblical stories of prophets widely known in the Middle East at the time of the rise of Islam, a great many examples could be given. The previous section discussed narrative elements in the qur'anic Moses passages that are recognizable from the Torah account. But what about Torah details missing in the Qur'an? God reveals his name to Moses as *Yahweh*, "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14); this detail is missing from the Qur'an's burning bush passages (Q 20:10-48, 27:7-12, 28:29-35).[928] The Torah presents a careful account of the Passover, when the Children of Israel needed to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the doorframes of their houses (Exodus 12:1-28), yet Passover receives no mention in the Qur'an. The Torah gives the famous Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17); al-Biqāʿī cited the Ten Commandments as a proof of the divine nature of the Bible,[929] but they are not found in the Qur'an. The Torah gives extensive information on the way to bring about atonement between the people and God (Leviticus 16); however, there is neither mention of this information nor a concept of atonement in the Qur'an.[930] The Torah reports that God rebuked Moses and did not allow him to enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 32:48-52), but there is no reference to this in the Qur'an.[931]

6. Missing links of meaning

The stories of prophetic figures in the Qur'an leave out many details ordinarily considered essential for a clear understanding of the text. Academic scholars have described the Qur'an as being "referential,"

"allusive," and "elliptical."[932] Some scholars have called the Qur'an a text without a context,[933] meaning that it refers to many stories without giving the background or setting, as if the audience already knows the story and does not require the basic details.

Here are just a few of the gaps in the qur'anic narratives, listed in chronological order. The Qur'an does not give the name of Adam's spouse (*zawj*), even though the name is clear from the Torah (Genesis 3:20) and the New Testament (2 Corinthians 11:3). Muslim writers quickly supplied the name from information they received from the People of the Book.[934] The Qur'an does not tell the name of Abraham's wife Sarah, even though it is clear from the Torah (Genesis 17:15) and the New Testament (Hebrews 11:11). The Qur'an does not provide the name of Ishmael's mother Hagar, even though the Torah (Genesis 16:1) and the New Testament (Galatians 4:24) name her. This name would seem to be relevant to the audience of the Qur'an, which says so much about Ishmael. The Qur'an does not tell which son Abraham intended to sacrifice (Q 37:99-107), even though the Torah (Genesis 22:2) and the New Testament (Hebrews 11:17, James 2:21) clearly name Isaac.

The only *sūra* in the Qur'an that is entirely devoted to a single narrative is *Sūra* 12, *Yūsuf*. The Qur'an calls this *sūra* "the most beautiful of tales (*qaṣaṣ*) in what we have revealed to you that *qurʾān*" (Q 12:3). And yet, *Sūra* 12 is missing many details a reader familiar with the Torah account would expect. "Without benefit of exegesis the Quranic story of Joseph is anything but clear, a consequence in part of its elliptical presentation."[935] The Qur'an seems to invite analysis of Sūra 12 because in the final verse, it states, "it is not an invented tale (*ḥadīth*), but a confirmation (*taṣdīq*) of what is before it, complete in detail (*tafṣīl*) of every thing" (Q 12:111).

Sūra 12 (*Yūsuf*) mentions Joseph's father (Q 12:4) but not his mother, Rachel (Genesis 30:22-4). It mentions the "brother" of Joseph (Q 12:8), fellow son of Rachel, without giving his name, Benjamin (Genesis 35:16-18). The Qur'an mentions another brother

who wanted to prevent Joseph's death (Q 12:10) without giving his name, Reuben (Genesis 37:21); it mentions the sale of Joseph to a caravan (Q 12:19-20) without giving the name of the brother, Judah, who proposed it (Genesis 37:26). It does not specify the scene of the crime, Dothan (Genesis 37:17). The Qur'an mentions the man who purchased Joseph in Egypt (Q 12:21) without giving his name, Potiphar (Genesis 37:36). The Qur'an does not give the identities of the two men imprisoned with him, as in the Torah (Genesis 40:1-4). It mentions the people (*ahl*) of Joseph (Q 12:93) who would travel to Egypt, without providing any details about the sixty-six persons who made the journey (Genesis 46:8-26).[936]

Many other details present in the Torah but missing in the Qur'an could be given. Of course, not all of these details could be called important or necessary. However, some of the missing details raise questions, because the story itself seems to require their inclusion. In the case of the Joseph story, one wonders why the name Judah was not supplied for the intelligent brother who counseled his brothers not to kill but to sell Joseph (Q 12:10). The same unidentified character showed his intelligence at Q 12:80 and Q 12:96. He is an interesting character. Why not provide his name? Another example is the brother who, along with Joseph, was dearer to their father than all the other brothers (Q 12:8). This brother became a figure of considerable tension when Joseph demanded this brother come to Egypt as surety for the grain (Q 12:59-76). If the name Benjamin was known, why not give it?[937] What can the reader understand from the absence of important names in the qur'anic stories of the prophets? What should this be called other than omission?[938]

7. Additions

While on the one hand the stories of prophetic figures in the Qur'an are missing information the Bible reader would normally expect to find, on the other hand the Qur'an contains extra details about

prophetic figures not found in the *Tawrāt* or the *Injīl*. Additions to the Qur'an include both extra-biblical details in the qur'anic narratives and additions to the qur'anic text to bring it to the place where all consonants, vowels and marks of pronunciation were fully indicated.

University of Edinburgh professor Richard Bell described what many academic scholars have found when encountering extra details in the prophet stories of the Qur'an: "Where stories are recounted at greater length, they nearly always have details added to them which are not in the Old Testament," wrote Dr. Bell. "In a few cases stories are confused with each other, a detail from one being introduced into another to which it does not belong."[939]

Some academic scholars of the Qur'an recognized the extra details as coming from non-biblical writings such as the Jewish *Talmud* and Christian apocryphal writings. This is another vast area of qur'anic study that can only be briefly mentioned in this short chapter. Full treatments are given in such scholarly sources as *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran* by Heinrich Speyer[940] and, prior to the publication of *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, Abraham Geiger's *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenomen?*[941] Some of the additions of details from Christian apocryphal writings are noted in "The sources of Islam" by W. St. Clair Tisdall.[942]

Among the details in qur'anic narratives that are not in the Hebrew scriptures but are similar to stories in Jewish Rabbinic literature, some of the best known are the story of Abraham in the furnace (Q 2:260, 21:69-74, 29:23-27, 37:95-99; *Midrāsh Rabba*, Babylonian Talmud *Pasāḥīm* 118a),[943] the women's gathering at the home of Potiphar's wife (Q 12:31; *Midrash Yalkut*, *Midrāsh Haggādōl*),[944] the mountain hanging over the Children of Israel (Q 2:63, 93; 4:154, 7:171; *Abodah Zarah*, Babylonian Talmud *Shabbāt* 88a),[945] and Solomon receiving a report about the Queen of Sheba from a bird (Q 27:20-44; *Second targum on the book of Esther*).[946] Among the details in the Qur'an that are similar to Christian apocryphal writings are the story of Maryam under the

palm tree (Q 19:16-26; *History of the nativity of Mary and the Savior's infancy*, Latin *Gospel of pseudo-Matthew*),[947] the stories of ʿĪsā speaking from the cradle and creating a bird out of clay (Q 19:29-33, 3:49, 5:110; Arabic *Gospel of the infancy*),[948] and the story of the companions of the cave (Q 18:9-26; Stephen of Ephesus, Jacob of Serugh, Gregory of Tours).[949] Scholars have provided hundreds of examples of such details.[950]

Islam teaches that everything in the Qur'an was simply revealed by Allah, and revealed in the very form now found in the book, a religious truth claim for which there is no scholarly proof. The claim raises questions when put alongside two outside factors. First, the qur'anic narratives contain details not found in the Torah and Gospel as they existed in the Middle East in the seventh century, raising the question of the meaning of the repeated qur'anic affirmation that the Qur'an confirms (*muṣaddiq*, *taṣdīq*) the earlier scriptures.[951] Second, many of the extra details in the qur'anic accounts are also found in non-canonical Jewish writings and Christian apocrypha, raising the question of whether these details were overheard in verbal tellings of the stories and subsequently made their way into the pages of the Qur'an.

As for additions to the text of the Qur'an, the earliest Qur'an manuscripts show what scholars have described as a "consonantal skeleton," in which the shapes of consonants are given, but the diacritic dots that identify the consonants are either missing or inconsistently supplied. In addition, there are no short vowels or pronunciation marks such as *hamza* in the earliest manuscripts, and some manuscripts also lack the long vowel *alif*. The characteristics of the earliest Qur'an manuscripts will be described more fully in Chapter 18. At this point, we note that between the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an and the fully-pointed text Muslims use today, a great number of diacritic dots, vowel marks, and other marks presently part of the text needed to be added. "The initial *scriptio defectiva* script was replaced by *scriptio plena* – a development which may possibly be documented in an account

which tells of an Umayyad governor adding two thousand *ḥarf* (probably meaning 'letters') to the Qur'ān."[952]

It is difficult to know whether to describe these important developments as additions or alterations. Sorbonne professor François Déroche wrote, "The Qur'ān codex underwent significant alteration around the start of the second/eighth century: the original vertical format was replaced by an oblong format."[953] The process continued for several centuries. "It was only during the eighth and ninth century that Qur'anic orthography was fully developed to unequivocally represent the sound structure of the texts."[954] Dr. Déroche suggested that "The system as we know it today seems to have been introduced towards the end of the third/ninth century."[955]

How would one quantify the number of additions and changes that were involved in bringing the text of the earliest Qur'an manuscripts up to the text of the Qur'an as it is printed today? Virtually every word in the Qur'an has consonants that require dots in order to be clearly recognized. Every word in the present printed Qur'an has vowel markings and other vocalization marks. All of these marks had to be added between the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an—which were largely undotted and completely unvocalized—and today's printed Qur'an.

8. Alterations

The Qur'an itself contains verses that provide for the possibility of change within the Qur'an, but characterizes the change as the action of Allah. For example, when Muslim polemicists accuse the Bible of falsification, they often use the language of *baddala*/*tabdīl*. However, Q 16:101 says, "we substitute (*baddalnā*) a verse in place of a verse, and Allah knows better what he sends down." The Qur'an also says, "Allah erases (*yamḥū*) what he wants, and establishes" (Q 13:39).

The concept of Allah changing the Qur'an has already been taken up earlier in this chapter in the section on the theory of abrogation. The changes to the written text of the Qur'an have also been mentioned in the previous section, and are dealt with more thoroughly in Chapter 18. One other kind of alteration needs to be briefly noted here, as described by academic scholars: the changes between various qur'anic versions of the same prophetic stories.

Many stories of prophets in the Qur'an come in several versions of the same events. For example, Dr. Wansbrough set out three versions of the story of Shuʿayb (Q 7:85-93, 11:84-95, 26:176-190), identified their literary elements, then asked about the possible meaning of the differences.[956] Dr. Wansbrough wrote that such variant versions suggest "the existence of independent, possibly regional, traditions incorporated more or less intact into the canonical compilation, itself the product of expansion and strife within the Muslim community."[957] In other words, Dr. Wansbrough concluded from literary analysis that early Muslims gathered into the book different tellings of the same story from different parts of the Arab Empire.

Free University (Berlin) professor Angelika Neuwirth took quite a different approach to variation among the qur'anic narratives and has published studies of several sets of stories: the stories of Adam and his spouse,[958] the Moses narratives,[959] and the golden calf stories.[960] Dr. Neuwirth freely and frequently described the differences among qur'anic narratives about the same subject, as well as differences between the Qur'an and the Bible (which she sometimes found "diametrically different").[961] Yet she made a sustained argument for "development in the Qur'anic representation of prophets and messengers."[962] Dr. Neuwirth explained that various differing versions of the same story developed with time out of the interaction among speaker, audience, and "those adjacent groups who acted as transmitters of the multiple traditions current in the Late Antiquity Near East."[963] She suggested that the story changed with the gradually developing theological insights of the speaker and his audience—"the continuous and lively feedback on

the proclamation by the listeners…made these amendments mandatory."[964]

Dr. Neuwirth, known in Europe for attempting to foster a collegial relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Islam, is not a scholar who would want to say something negative about Islam or the Qur'an. Her theory of development within the stories of prophets therefore seems intended to account in a reasonable way for repetition of the same story and differences between the various versions within the Qur'an. She accepts Muslim tradition about the early Muslim community and the messenger of Islam and tries to account for differences between qur'anic versions of prophetic stories from this assumption.

This chapter has shown that reasonable questions can be asked of the Qur'an, and that Muslim scholars have asked some of these questions in the past and tried to address them. While the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* was zealous in questioning the Bible, Mawlana Kairanwi did not take the opportunity to ask similar questions of the Qur'an. This set up the scriptures on an uneven playing field. The impact has been to discourage Muslims from both reading the Bible and addressing questions arising from the Qur'an. It is the hope of this *Gentle answer* to bring some realism to the discussion of the scriptures, and to re-open conversation between Muslims and Christians.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Confusion about the Collection

Muslim tradition tells a story about how the Qur'an came together. The story is well known and there is no need to tell it again in these pages. In the early Muslim sources, the main parts of the story appear most completely in the *ḥadīth* collection of al-Bukhārī.[965] Many modern non-Muslim authors and scholars also present the story substantially as it is known in Muslim tradition.[966]

The Muslim story of the collection of the Qur'an is popular and has a certain narrative appeal, even to non-Muslims. "But there are problems in terms of both what happened afterwards and what went before,"[967] wrote Princeton University professor Michael Cook. Dr. Cook's treatment of the Muslim story typifies the academic scholarly method. Instead of taking tradition at face value, academic scholars look at the evidence for traditional claims and ask reasonable questions about them. In the case of the Qur'an, there is no evidence, either in manuscripts or within the text of scripture, to support the Muslim stories of how it came together.[968]

The Muslim stories about the collection of the Qur'an come to us as part of a larger package of Muslim religious claims that attempt to make the case that "the sequence of worldly events centered on the time of Muḥammad was directed by God."[969] Perhaps at least partly because of this attempt, the collection stories have attracted the attention of a number of academic scholars, who have subjected the stories to a range of questions. This chapter reviews the scholarly treatment of the Muslim collection stories from 1860 until today, first chronologically, then thematically.

Scholarly perspectives on the question of the Qur'an's formation began with the translation and description of the traditional stories of two sequential collections of the Qur'an as told in Islam's authoritative *ḥadīth* collections.[970] Detecting contradictions and other discrepancies in the stories, scholars then looked into other material provided by Muslim tradition. On the basis of this material, they tended to prefer one story over another. A third development of scholarship was to look outside of Muslim tradition for literary, legal, or historical evidence by which to evaluate the traditional stories and establish a firm foundation for their investigation.

A number of scholarly perspectives, including some of those described below, began to be caricatured and repudiated before they were actually thoroughly examined and understood. The scholarly method questions not only tradition, but also the views of other scholars. The views of qualified scholars may always be questioned and rejected. However, those views should first be appreciated in their own terms.

Dear Muslim reader, this chapter is about the modern academic treatment of the traditional Muslim claim about the origins of the Qur'an.

1. Testing the traditions

Göttingen University professor Theodor Nöldeke (1836-1930), one of the first academic scholars to write a full monograph on the Qur'an, presented the story of the Qur'an's formation basically as he found it in Muslim tradition. In his 1860 *Geschichte des Qorâns*, Nöldeke relayed the *ḥadīth* of al-Bukhārī about a first collection under Abū Bakr and a second collection under ʿUthmān.[971] By the time of the first revised edition of the *Geschichte*, however, scholars had begun to take a more careful approach to these *ḥadīth*. Nöldeke's student Friedrich Schwally, who prepared the revised edition, included a much longer section on "Die Sammlung des Qorāns," in which his conclusions were quite different from Nöldeke's.[972]

Schwally argued against the historical reliability of the Muslim story of the collection under Abū Bakr.[973]

One of the factors that likely encouraged Schwally to take a more critical approach to the traditions was the scholarly study on the *ḥadīth* by Ignaz Goldziher in volume two of his *Muhammedanische Studien*.[974] Goldziher argued the *ḥadīth* are not what they claim to be. He detected an historical progression from defining *sunna* as the practice of the Muslim community during the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid periods to *sunna* as the practice of the messenger of Islam. He concluded the *ḥadīth* gave authority to local rulings of a later time by associating them with Islam's messenger. From this insight, Goldziher suggested that the *isnād*, or "chain of transmitters" leading back to Islam's messenger, is essentially a fiction.

Since the earliest traditions about the collection of the Qur'an are part of the same *ḥadīth* collections as the *sunna*, Goldziher's arguments affected the scholarly treatment of the collection stories as well. For example, Italian scholar Leone Caetani argued in his *Annali dell'Islām* that the tradition of a collection under Abū Bakr was invented.[975] The same argument appeared later in Schwally's revision of *Geschichte des Qurāns*. Caetani and Schwally made the case that the traditional lists of Muslims killed in the battle of al-Yamāma contain very few names that are also found in traditional lists of persons well known for their knowledge of the Qur'an.[976]

Even prior to Caetani, but going well beyond the conclusions drawn by Caetani and Schwally, was the case made by Paul Casanova in his 1911 study, *Mohammed et la fin du monde*.[977] Professor of Arabic at the Collège de France, Casanova was the first academic scholar to argue that contrary to the traditions of al-Bukhārī, the Qur'an was first collected and officially distributed during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 705) on the initiative of his governor al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 714).[978] Casanova also mentioned the *Apology* of al-Kindī and advocated its importance for the discussion of the history of the qur'anic text.[979] On the other

hand, wrote professor Casanova, the story of a recension under ʿUthmān is nothing but a "child of whimsy" and a "fiction."[980]

Explicitly linking to Casanova and other French scholars of the period immediately preceding World War I, Alphonse Mingana addressed the theme of "The transmission of the Ḳur'ān" in 1915.[981] Mingana began his article by writing that Muslim traditions about the collection of the Qur'an come from "oral *ḥadīth*" rather than from history.[982] He drew attention to the time gap between the events in the traditions and their first setting down in writing by Ibn Saʿd (d. 844) and al-Bukhārī (d. 870). Ibn Saʿd's traditions, Mingana pointed out, mention ten companions who collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of Islam's messenger.[983] The traditions also tell about a collection by ʿUthman during the reign of ʿUmar,[984] as well as about a collection by ʿUmar,[985] but no story of a collection under Abū Bakr.[986] Mingana asked why Western scholars should prefer al-Bukhārī's traditions of collections during the reigns of Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān, when Ibn Saʿd at least had the advantage of "priority of time."[987]

The discrepancies in the Muslim sources, wrote Mingana, continue into the various lists of those who collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of Islam's messenger, from such writers as al-Wāqidī, al-Ṭabarī and the author of the *Fihrist*. Mingana described a "second series of traditions" from Ibn Duqmāk, al-Maqrīzī and al-Suyūṭī that credits a collection of the Qur'an to the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 704) and his governor Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf.[988] Finally he offered an account from Yāqūt, attributed to al-Khaṭbī, of the arrest and flogging of Ibn Shanabūdh for reciting the readings of Ibn Masʿūd and Ubayy ibn Kaʿb in the fourth Islamic century.[989]

In an attempt to get outside of the confusion he found among the Muslim traditions, Mingana asked whether there were any written sources closer in time than Ibn Saʿd and al-Bukhārī to the alleged collections. He proposed that such sources may be found in works written by non-Muslims who witnessed the Arab conquest and domination of the Middle East. Mingana noted that these sources

from the seventh and early eighth centuries do not mention the Qur'an.[990] It is only toward the end of the first quarter of the eighth century, he argued, that the Qur'an became a subject of conversation in Christian writings.

Mingana concluded that the recitations were not written down at the time of Islam's messenger, but rather later, by a number of the messenger's companions, including Ubayy ibn Kaʿb and Ibn Masʿūd. He raised questions about the development of the Arabic script and the prevalence of reading and writing in Arabia in the first half of the seventh century, as well as the literacy level of the companions. It was ʿAbd al-Malik and Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, wrote Mingana, who put the Qur'an together in a book form from whatever materials existed by their time.[991]

2. Further questions about *ḥadīth*

Around the middle of the twentieth century, Oxford University professor Joseph Schacht took another scholarly look at Muslim traditions. His focus was Muslim legal thinking in the second century of Islam, shown in such works as the *Kitāb al-umm* of al-Shāfiʿī (d. 820), the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795), the *Kitāb al-Āthār* of Abū Yūsuf (d. 798), and the *Kitāb al-Āthār* of al-Shaybānī (d. 805).[992] Schacht wrote that Muslim legal thinking grew out of the "living tradition" of each of the ancient schools of law around the middle of the second Islamic century, and moved from there to traditions attributed to the messenger of Islam only toward the end of the second Islamic century at the insistence of al-Shāfiʿī. He also found a tendency for *isnād*s to grow backwards with time: first they went back to the figureheads of the schools of law, then back to the Successors, then further back to the Companions, and finally to the messenger of Islam.[993]

Schacht laid out his investigation in detail in *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*.[994] He commented specifically on the "historical" traditions that include the stories of the collection of

the Qur'an. "The important point is that to a much higher degree than hitherto suspected, seemingly historical information of the Prophet is only the background for legal doctrines and therefore devoid of independent value."[995] Schacht wrote that it was possible to observe the growth of material concerning the messenger of Islam throughout the second Islamic century, with new traditions appearing at every successive stage of doctrine. He concluded, "A considerable part of the standard biography of the Prophet in Medina, as it appeared in the second half of the second century A.H., was of very recent origin and is therefore without independent historical value."[996]

Schacht's writings, drawn as they were from his careful study of Muslim source materials, naturally exerted an influence on the academic study of Islam.[997] Two British scholars published major studies on the collection and canonization of the Qur'an in the 1970s. University of Aberdeen professor John Burton and University of London scholar John Wansbrough both accepted Schacht's conclusions about the *ḥadīth*[998] and found the Muslim traditions about the collections of the Qur'an "confused and contradictory."[999] Beyond this, however, they took very different approaches. Looking for evidence outside of the traditional stories, Burton found a clue in the tendency of Muslim legal scholars to distinguish between the Qur'an and the *muṣḥaf*. By "Qur'an," Muslim scholars meant the concept of the totality of revelation given to the messenger of Islam. By "*muṣḥaf,*" they meant the book Muslims use. Burton found Muslim scholars virtually unanimous that the Qur'an was never collected in its entirety.[1000] The traditional Muslim accounts of the collection of the Qur'an "are a mass of confusions, contradictions and inconsistencies," Dr. Burton concluded. "By their nature, they represent the product of a lengthy process of evolution, accretion and 'improvement.'"[1001]

Dr. Wansbrough also looked outside of the Muslim collection traditions for another approach to the question of the Qur'an's formation. The clues he found, however, were in the text of the Qur'an itself. He scrutinized major themes and motifs, formulaic

patterns, and differing versions of the same narratives, which he called "variant traditions."[1002] He argued that close literary analysis of the Qur'an suggests Muslim scripture is composite and the establishment of its text must have taken more than a single generation.[1003] Wansbrough's study of the structure and content of the Qur'an suggested to him "not the carefully executed project of one or of many men, but rather the product of an organic development from originally independent traditions during a long period of transmission."[1004] In other words, the evidence the qur'anic text itself gives about its origins does not match the Muslim collection stories.

Regarding canonization, Wansbrough also brought forward the use of the Qur'an in early Muslim legal sources. As a starting point, he accepted Schacht's thesis that in general terms, Islamic Law was not derived from the contents of the Qur'an. The practice of deriving law from the Qur'an, Wansbrough argued, flourished only in the ninth century. He also found it significant that the Qur'an is not mentioned in the *Fiqh Akbar I*, a Muslim legal text dated to the middle of the eighth century. From this and other information, Wansbrough concluded that though qur'anic material existed during the first two centuries of Islam, the establishment of a standard text of the Qur'an—as the ʿUthmān collection story implies—could not have taken place before the period of intense Muslim literary activity at the end of the second Islamic century.

One of Wansbrough's arguments was that the Muslim collection stories show a polemical character.[1005] Islam was distinguishing its scripture from the Torah and Gospel. For example, the words of Ḥudayfa ibn al-Yamān to ʿUthmān in the *ḥadīth*: "Commander of the believers, set this people right before they disagree about the book [like] the disagreement (*ikhtilāf*) of the Jews and the Christians."[1006] Collection stories also had much to do with making a case for the prophethood of Islam's messenger. This feature should indicate to the scholar that the collection stories are in the realm of religious truth claims. Scholars now acknowledge the significance of the time gap between written Muslim accounts and

the events in early Islam they purport to recount (the minimum agreed-upon gap now seems to be 150 years). The question for many scholars has simply become whether these written accounts are trustworthy. In other words, it is a matter of faith. A unique feature of Dr. Wansbrough's research is that he asked, in the absence of both historical evidence and a faith commitment to the truth claims of Islam, "What can the scripture itself tell us about how it may have come together?"

3. Scholarship in the twenty-first century

Michael Cook's 2000 book, *The Koran: A very short introduction*, includes a summary of scholarly perspectives after Wansbrough and an indication of things to come. Cook reviewed the Muslim tradition about a collection under ʿUthmān and then addressed "problems in terms of both what happened afterwards and what went before."[1007] What happened afterwards is that there were Muslim writers quoting qur'anic passages that do not match the present text. Cook cited in particular the quotations in a letter that claims to have been written around 700 A.D. by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728). [1008] Such sources suggest that the text of the Qur'an was not yet as firmly fixed in the decades after ʿUthmān as it came to be later. [1009]

As for "what went before" the date of a collection under ʿUthmān according to al-Bukhārī, various other traditions give credit for the major collection to Abū Bakr or ʿUmar, and some tell that the material had already been assembled during the lifetime of Islam's messenger. Some traditions tell of ʿUthmān merely editing a codex that had already been prepared before him, while other traditions describe ʿUthmān as actively collecting bits of text written on shoulder blades of animals and stripped palm branches. "We thus face serious contradiction in our source material regarding two issues: who collected the Koran, and what it was collected from. In

historical terms, the differences between the rival accounts are not trivial."[1010]

In response to the questioning of Muslim traditions by scholars such as Cook, Mingana, Wansbrough, and Burton, Harald Motzki wrote a defense of the *ḥadīth* about the two collections in a 2001 article.[1011] Professor of Islamic Studies at Nijmegen University, Motzki argued that the Muslim traditions about the collections were in circulation well before they were written down by Ibn Saʿd and al-Bukhārī. He brought forward evidence of traditions about Abū Bakr's collection in earlier written sources, some of which have become available only recently.[1012] Motzki was not able to do the same for the story of a collection under ʿUthmān: complete versions of this story are only found in works by authors who died in the ninth century or later. However, he argued that "*isnād* analysis" leads back to the figure of Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 742) as transmitter of both stories.[1013] Motzki declined to offer a judgment on the plausibility of the traditional Muslim collection stories or on their historical reliability.[1014] He simply made the case that the traditions can be dated back to al-Zuhrī.[1015]

Another academic scholar who defended the reliability of *ḥadīth* was Leiden scholar G.H.A Juynboll. Juynboll noted, "the basic historicity of what [the Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān collection] stories tell us remains a matter of dispute among dispassionate historians."[1016] At the same time, he made a case for an "historical source" for the tradition of the Abū Bakr collection even earlier than Motzki's examples. The *Maghāzī* of Mūsā ibn ʿUqba (d. 758) is said to have contained the tradition. However, Juynboll's reference for this source appears in the very late *Fatḥ al-bārī* of Ibn Ḥajar (d. 1448), and the *Maghāzī* itself is lost, except for a small fragment.[1017]

In 2005 and 2006, a number of scholars published studies that focused on the figures of the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 705) and his governor al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 714). Oxford University Islamic history professor Chase F. Robinson wrote that the work of

establishing the text of the Qur'an suited the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik much better than the reign of ʿUthmān.[1018] He questioned the plausibility of the official distribution of a fixed text by around 650 A.D. The processes of fixing the text of other monotheist scriptures took a long time, Robinson reasoned. In the case of Arabic, however, the early script only imperfectly described vowels and consonants. ʿUthmān was deeply unpopular in many quarters and his reign was short and contentious. Robinson asked if he really had the authority and military power to do what he is credited with. There is also the evidence, he wrote, of early qur'anic manuscripts that depart from the "official" version. "Scholars committed to the idea that the Qur'an was fixed and closed at a very early date minimize the myriad ways in which these texts differ from the received version."[1019]

ʿAbd al-Malik, by contrast, had the motivation and would have had the power to order a redaction of the qur'anic text and impose it, concluded Robinson.[1020] Other scholars who have recently highlighted the role of ʿAbd al-Malik include Pierre Larcher,[1021] Alfred-Louis de Prémare,[1022] Omar Hamdan,[1023] Matthias Radscheit,[1024] Stephen Shoemaker,[1025] and François Déroche.[1026] Larcher wrote in 2005, "For most Islamologists, the *muṣḥaf ʿUthmān* is the 'conventional' name of the official version imposed by the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik."[1027] Even more recently, Stephen Shoemaker suggested that "[t]he reign of ʿAbd al-Malik has emerged as a period in which the Qur'ān's final collection and standardization seems highly likely."[1028]

Lawrence Conrad also took the approach of evaluating Muslim tradition on the basis of historical criteria. He enquired into the circumstances of the rule of the so-called *Rāshidūn* caliphs and suggested their authority remained at the level of tribal leaders. "So far as we can tell from the early Arabic tradition, at no time in his career ʿUthmān enjoyed the vast 'power over…' that would have been required to compel Muslims everywhere to bow to his will on a matter like codification of the Qur'ān."[1029] Taking a slightly different angle, Yale University professor Gerhard Böwering reasoned

that the Muslim community was focused on conquest in ʿUthmān's time rather than on standardizing the text of the Qur'an.[1030]

New York University professor F.E. Peters treated the question of the Qur'an's formation in the context of similar treatments of the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament.[1031] Peters' approach to the question was to enquire into the history of Arabic writing and reading and the development of the Arabic script in the seventh and eighth centuries. In his view, literacy was not widespread in Mecca or Medina in the seventh century. He noted the absence of Arabic literature at the time, and found the possibility of skilled scribes under ʿUthmān in Medina "highly problematic."[1032] Regarding the Arabic script, Peters wrote that in the seventh and eighth centuries, Arabic was a defective script. At first, it had no way of recording vowels and only a very limited supply of consonantal symbols. "At that stage of its development the Arabic script was a crude instrument indeed and hardly adequate for making notes, much less taking them down from dictation."[1033] For these and other reasons, Peters found it impossible that the text of the Qur'an was written down and fixed under ʿUthmān around 650 A.D. as Muslim tradition claims.

Scholars of the development of the Arabic script and the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an have also commented on the Muslim traditions in the light of their expertise. Peter Stein, a scholar of Ancient South Arabic, addressed the question of the level of literacy in the area of Mecca and Medina in the first half of the seventh century. He wrote that a few people "may have possessed the rudimentary kind of literacy necessary to conduct commercial activities," but that "mastery of the more advanced skills necessary to read literary works, for example, can be ruled out."[1034] François Déroche, director of studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, viewed the Muslim traditions from the perspective of what he has learned about the development of the Arabic script from the earliest Arabic manuscripts. He concluded, "The various deficiencies noted in the *ḥijāzī*-style manuscripts mean that it was not, in fact, possible to adequately preserve the integrity

of the Qur'an through writing as the caliph ʿUthmān intended when, according to the tradition, he decided to document the revelation."[1035]

Academic scholars remain divided in their approach to Muslim traditional sources. In a book titled *The death of a prophet*, Stephen J. Shoemaker made a vigorous case for the fixing of the qur'anic text during the era of ʿAbd al-Malik.[1036] Shoemaker argued that unevenness persists between scholarly study of the Qur'an and the New Testament. He asserted that in fact, many of the historical questions are the same, writing that the collection and standardization of the Qur'an "likely took place over an interval of time comparable in length to the gospel traditions."[1037]

4. Main themes

This chronological survey of academic perspectives on the traditional Muslim collection stories reveals a number of distinct themes in the thinking of scholars:

1. The question of historical reliability

In the early stages of academic study of the Qur'an, Western scholars tended to evaluate one particular Muslim tradition on the basis of other traditions that came from the same traditional body of material. Later scholars realized they would need to make a decision on the historical reliability of the whole body of traditional material before they could use one part to judge another. "For the historian approaching the early Muslim period, it is vital to form an opinion as to how far this material can be trusted."[1038]

Alphonse Mingana questioned what he considered the arbitrary choice of Western scholars like Nöldeke to accept the traditions crediting Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān, but not the traditions about a collection during the lifetime of Islam's messenger. Nöldeke justified his choice by asking why—if the collection had already been made previously—would Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān have gone to so much

trouble.[1039] Of course, this question betrays a prior commitment to the truth of Muslim tradition on Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān! Wansbrough suggested, many years later, that the advocacy of particular traditions by Nöldeke and Schwally was "accepted with conspicuous lack of intellectual vitality by Orientalist scholarship."[1040]

The Muslim collection stories are part of a larger body of traditional material about the origins of Islam. Goldziher and Schacht urged that scholars approach this material with caution. More recently, University of California professor R. Stephen Humphreys wrote, "Both the accuracy and authenticity of every report attributed to [the first decades of Islam] are open to credible challenge."[1041] Similarly, F.E. Peters observed, "At every turn historians of Muḥammad and of early Islam appear to be betrayed by the sheer unreliability of their sources.[1042]

It is interesting to note that Motzki, though he went to great lengths to argue the traditions of a collection under Abū Bakr and an official edition under ʿUthmān were circulating by the beginning of the second Islamic century, declined to express an opinion as to their plausibility, "let alone their historical reliability."[1043]

2. Two-century time gap

In the minds of some scholars, the trustworthiness of the collection stories is related to the fact that the tradition of the collection under ʿUthmān first appeared in writing around 200 years after the event it purports to describe. Mingana seems to have been one of the first scholars to draw attention to the time gap, "238 years after the Prophet's death".[1044] Motzki, after a careful study, could find no written source for the complete ʿUthmān story earlier than versions attributed to authors who died in the ninth century.[1045] Princeton University professor Patricia Crone put the time gap in perspective in her comment about the challenge to historians from the earliest biography of the messenger of Islam, written by Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767) but available only in an edition by Ibn Hishām (d. 833): "Consider the prospect of reconstructing the origins of

Christianity on the basis of the writings of Clement [d. 215] or Justin Martyr [d. 165] in a recension by Origen [d. 253]."[1046]

Shoemaker recently engaged Dr. Crone's scenario and speculated about what such a time gap would mean for modern New Testament studies.[1047] He noted the deep skepticism of some New Testament scholars about the Gospel accounts, "even though they were first written down approximately forty years after the events that they purport to describe."[1048] Shoemaker contrasted this with the Islamic traditions, "which first seem to have been compiled more than a century after the events themselves." And yet, he writes, "our historical knowledge concerning Muhammad and first-century Islam is far more limited and uncertain than is the case with respect to Jesus and first-century Christianity."[1049]

3. Confusion among the collection stories

Burton and Wansbrough described the various Muslim accounts of the early collections as confused and contradictory, as detailed above in Section 2. Mingana was one of the first to query the diversity among the Muslim collection traditions. Burton conveniently set out and discussed the details of different collection accounts.[1050] A.T. Welch wrote, "Most of the key points [about collection] are contradicted by alternative accounts in the canonical *ḥadīṯ* collections and other early Muslim sources."[1051] For example, he noted, "each of the first four caliphs is reported to have been the first person to collect the Ḳur'ān."[1052]

4. The roles of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf

Within the last decade, a number of scholars have affirmed a suggestion first made by academic scholars more than a century ago: rather than seeing Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān as responsible for the fixing of the Qur'an, one should look to the involvement of the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik and his governor al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf. This recent convergence seems to have surprised some other scholars.[1053] It was Casanova and Mingana who first highlighted this Muslim story in the West. Both mentioned the account of al-

Kindī in which the role of al-Ḥajjāj is featured.[1054] Arthur Jeffery also noted the reference to the role of al-Ḥajjāj in another early Christian document, the correspondence attributed to Leo III.[1055] After a considerable hiatus, a wide range of scholars have investigated the story for a variety of reasons.

5. Plausibility and other questions

Academic scholars who are—as Chase Robinson puts it—"committed to the idea that the history made by Muslims is comparable to that made by non-Muslims," take the freedom to ask a variety of questions of the traditional Muslim collection stories. Dr. Böwering asked whether ʿUthmān would have had the time and energy, not to mention the inspiration and insight, to guide the standardization of the Qur'an at a time of vigorous conquest.[1056] Dr. Peters and other scholars wondered whether ʿUthmān really had the power around 650 A.D. to enforce a standardized text.[1057] "ʿUthmān was deeply unpopular in many quarters; his reign was short and contentious."[1058]

Scholars also ask the reasonable question of how the Arabic script in the mid-seventh century would have been able to fix the sounds of the original "recitation." Dr. Déroche's investigation of the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an led him to conclude it was not possible to preserve the integrity of the Qur'an at that time. On this basis he questioned the traditional account of ʿUthmān's motivation. According to the famous *ḥadīth*, ʿUthman's intended his edition to solve the problem of Muslim warriors reciting the Qur'an in differing ways. However, wrote Dr. Déroche, the Arabic script in ʿUthman's time was not sufficiently developed to accomplish that purpose:

> …the manuscripts of that period, with very few diacritics, no short vowels or orthoepic marks, simply could not have provided the solution which the caliph is said to have been seeking according to the classical account of this event. The additional variants found in the manuscripts and a review of the canonical lists suggest that the *rasm* itself did not reach the shape we know until a later date.[1059]

A number of scholars also ask whether it is possible for the canonization of a major scripture to take place within something like two decades, as Muslim tradition claims. Wansbrough quoted Schwally's opinion that the formation of the qur'anic canon was fundamentally different from that of the Jewish and Christian scriptures,[1060] then wrote, "it seems to me at least arguable that the evidence of the Qur'ān itself, quite apart from that of the exegetical tradition, lends little support to that assertion."[1061] Instead, Wansbrough argued the evidence indicates a longer period of development.[1062]

6. Apologetic and polemical needs of Islam

Mingana suggested the Muslim traditions about the collection of the Qur'an arose in an atmosphere of polemic between Muslim writers and the People of the Book.[1063] A clear suggestion of polemic is found in the words of Ḥudayfa ibn al-Yamān to ʿUthman in the *ḥadīth*: "Commander of the believers, set this people right before they disagree about the book [like] the disagreement (*ikhtilāf*) of the Jews and the Christians."[1064] Wansbrough also found evidence for this theme.[1065] Peters suggested it was a later period in Baghdad, "with its large and vocal Christian and Jewish communities," that provided "the apologetic motive for converting Islam's oral Quran into a written Book on the familiar Scriptural model."[1066]

7. Scholars disagree

The last forty years have seen a number of theories of qur'anic origins emerge that question both Muslim tradition and the Western scholarly "consensus." Motzki suggested a reasonable way of approaching these new theories: "Each is a sophisticated piece of scholarship that deserves to be carefully studied for the quality of its arguments and methods."[1067]

Academic scholars disagree with one another. Wansbrough modeled a way of writing about ideas with which he strongly disagreed in his review of Burton's *The collection of the Qur'ān*.

[1068] Wansbrough acknowledged areas of agreement and affirmed wherever possible; he was straightforward in disagreement, providing reasons; and he confined his comments to the arguments and methods in Burton's work, thus highlighting their importance. Even when the theories of particular scholars are doubted or become very unpopular, the careful research upon which the conclusions are based may be helpful to many. The academic approach to the Qur'an represented by Wansbrough's *Quranic studies* has been strongly criticized by many scholars in recent decades. In its defense, however, Conrad explained, "Its results may be skeptical, but its methodology simply asserts that in historical research all evidence must be considered and its relative merits assessed: the great majority view of the sources is not correct simply because it is the majority view."[1069]

This chapter has presented the views of a number of academic scholars about the important Muslim truth claim that the recitations of the messenger of Islam were collected, edited, and established in a fixed, unchanging document under the caliph ʿUthmān around 650 A.D. Because these scholarly views disagree with Muslim tradition, it would be easy to think that the scholars want to oppose Islam and Muslims. However, this way of thinking would be a misunderstanding of modern academic scholarship, in which the ideal is to refrain from judgments about religious truth. Rather, as G.H.A. Juynboll wrote, "the basic historicity of what both stories [of collections under Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān] tell us remains a matter of dispute among dispassionate historians, especially in the case of the second."[1070]

Joseph Schacht, the scholar whose research revolutionized the study of *ḥadīth*, wrote that he did not approach his topic with any intention of what he was to find. "No one could have been more surprised than I was by the results which the evidence of the texts has forced upon me during the last ten years or so; but looking back I cannot see what other result could possibly be consistent with the

very foundations of our historical and critical study of the first two or three centuries of Islam."[1071]

Conrad explained that the "critical gaze" some scholars cast on the Qur'an is the same sort of academic approach they had long been taking to Christian and Jewish scriptures. "The work of such pioneering Orientalists as Goldziher, Nöldeke, and Wellhausen is methodologically based on the work of Wilhelm Geiger, the great critic of the Old Testament, and through him back to the work of Strauss, Bauer and the Tübingen School."[1072] The work of Strauss, Bauer, and the Tübingen School is the very material that the *Iẓhār al-haqq* attempted to use against the Bible.[1073]

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Crucial Weakness on History

Probably the best-known historical fact about Jesus is that he died on a Roman cross.[1074]

In 2012, a British novelist and historian named Tom Holland published a book titled *In the shadow of the sword*. Holland had set out to research the history of the Arab Empire. A typical modern Western writer, Holland approached his research as a secular historian with no agenda to attack Islam or defend Christianity or Judaism. He had already published popular histories of the Roman Empire, the Persian Empire, and the rise of Christendom.

Holland was not an expert on Islam, but he consulted much of the academic scholarship on Islam, including many of the writings referred to in this book. Holland wrote that when he began his research, he was surprised not to find a wealth of historical sources about Islam dating from the seventh century.[1075] For example, he learned that the best-known Muslim sources about the origins of Islam come from two hundred years or more after the events they describe. No Muslim documents exist from the first 150 years that later Muslim histories claim to record.[1076] Holland also learned that Muslim writers based the truth of their reports not on the criteria of historical authenticity familiar to him but rather on the chain of transmission (*isnād*), an Islamic system that academic scholars like Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht had previously described as fabricated. "At every turn," according to one scholar,

"historians of Muhammad and of early Islam appear betrayed by the sheer unreliability of their sources."[1077]

Holland discovered the task he had set for himself was more complicated than he'd anticipated. "The same questions that had been confronting scholars of early Islam for the past forty years were now staring me full in the face."[1078]

These questions raise the issue of the relationship of the Qur'an to history. Chapters 9 and 10 of this *Gentle answer* made a case for the reliability of the New Testament, especially the Gospel accounts and in particular the death of Jesus, on the basis of history and eyewitness reports. This chapter probes the Qur'an's approach to history, focusing on the biblical history it transmits. What is the Qur'an's interest in history—is history important to the Qur'an's concept of revelation? When the Qur'an presents the story of a personality who is known from the Bible, does the Qur'an treat the Bible as a book of history?

This chapter also examines the use of history in Muslim interpretations of events about which there is inadequate information in the Qur'an. Who was the intended victim of Abraham's desire to sacrifice his son? The Qur'an does not say. However, later Muslim commentators became virtually unanimous about the son's identity. What happened in the moments after the authorities came to seize Jesus, intending to kill him? The Qur'an does not say, but Muslim commentators developed an elaborate theory to cope with the vagueness of their scripture. The so-called "Gospel of Barnabas" is an example of a fully developed Muslim narrative about the question of Jesus' death. What is the origin of this document, and how does it stand up to historical investigation? The reflections of a famous Muslim commentator are brought in to lend perspective to this question.

1. The Qur'an and history

A basic difference between the Bible and the Qur'an is their approach to history. In the Bible's view, God acts in history. The record of God's acts, therefore, shows what God is like; and the record of God's self revelation through these acts is accepted by Jews and Christians as the Word of God.

The Hebrew scriptures begin with an account of the acts of God from creation, through the deliverance of the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and all the way up to Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Jerusalem, dated to 605 B.C. This historical accounting takes up the first 674 pages (out of 1574) of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Only after giving this historical context do the Hebrew scriptures present the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets.

The New Testament similarly starts with the account of Jesus by four witnesses. It is an account anchored in history, with the names of rulers and the years of their reigns supplied (Luke 2:1-2, 9:7-9, 23:1-25). Following the Gospel accounts, Luke wrote the history of the first followers of Jesus from the resurrection of Jesus from the dead to the apostle Paul's imprisonment in Rome (61 or 62 A.D.). History comprises the first 528 pages (out of 895) of *The Greek New Testament*. This history then provides the context for Paul's letters and the other books that fill out the New Testament.

History is important to the Bible, because according to the Bible, God gave the proof of his love for humankind in history. According to the Gospel, "God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that those who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The message of the New Testament is that God brought about the salvation of humanity in history, through a particular person, at a particular time and place.

Scholars have noted a difference between the Bible and the Qur'an in this regard. "The Torah is…a continuous, extended historical account," wrote professor Marilyn Waldman. "The Qur'ān contains very little narrated history (in fact, very little narration at all) and, in the standard order of the suras, is a disjunctive and discontinuous book of lessons, warnings, instructions, and

exhortations."[1079] Dr. Waldman found that this difference in their approaches to history extends to the concepts of revelation in the respective scriptures: "Qur'anic language presents itself as God's speech, verbatim; the Torah is not constructed throughout as God's quoted speech but rather as reliable third-person narration of divine action."[1080]

Professor Angelika Neuwirth made a similar comparison. Quoting Robert Alter, Dr. Neuwirth wrote, "In the Bible…the narrator's work is almost all *recit*, straight narration of actions and speech, and only exceptionally and very briefly *discours*, disquisition on and around the narrated facts and their implications."[1081] Dr. Neuwirth also characterized the biblical concept of history "as a promise for the future."[1082] Comparing Psalm 136 and Sūra 55, she found that the psalm sees the proof of God's presence "in the drama of historical acts of salvation on the one hand and divine bestowals on the other." The Qur'an rejects this notion of history, according to Dr. Neuwirth. In *Sūra* 55, "[c]oncrete persons are not named—in contrast to the psalm, which conjures a plethora of historical persons and events each evoking narrative memories."[1083]

University of Chicago professor Fred Donner wrote that the Qur'an "…adopts a profoundly ahistorical view of the world and of mankind. The very concept of history is fundamentally irrelevant to the Qur'ān's concerns."[1084] Dr. Donner found this to be the case especially in the Qur'an's depictions of prophets and peoples in the pre-Islamic past and even in its portrayal of the messenger of Islam. He took this impression from the Qur'an's treatment of biblical figures. Discussing the list of prophets given at Q 6:83-87, Dr. Donner suggested that neither taking out any of the names nor adding others would change the basic meaning of the passage. The prophets are not named for the unique role each plays in the story of the community's development, but rather serve as "merely repeated examples of an eternal truth."[1085] The Qur'an, wrote Dr. Donner, "is simply not concerned with history in the sense of development and change."[1086]

Initially, it seems highly unlikely that the Qur'an would not be concerned with history in its portrayal of the messenger of Islam. However, Princeton University professor Michael Cook picked up this point in his listing of the historical material he found in the Qur'an.[1087] The Qur'an names four religious communities, three Arabian deities, three humans, two ethnic groups, and nine places from its contemporary context. "Identifying what the Koran is talking about in a contemporary context is therefore usually impossible without interpretation," wrote Dr. Cook.[1088] Regarding the messenger of Islam, there is very little the Qur'an makes clear. The Qur'an gives the name of Islam's messenger four times, always in the third person.[1089] Readers of the Qur'an might infer its protagonist was the messenger of Islam, but they could not—for example—tell that the sanctuary was in Mecca or that the messenger came from there. This extra information about context was supplied by outside writings such as the *Sīrat al-nabawiyya* of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767) as edited by Ibn Hishām (d. 833).

The Qur'an cannot be assumed to be a primary document in constructing the life of Islam's messenger, according to University of Victoria professor Andrew Rippin. "The text is far too opaque when it comes to history; its shifting referents leave the text in a conceptual muddle for historical purposes."[1090] Dr. Rippin explained that an analysis of the addressee of the Qur'an shows that while much of the text is in second person singular, the majority of the text is in second person plural, and there are even occurrences of second person dual.[1091] There are also "disruptions," where within a single passage, the addressee shifts back and forth between singular and plural. Many readers assume the singular addressee to be the messenger of Islam, but it is also possible to understand it as the reader or reciter of the text in general. To what extent, asked Dr. Rippin, are assumptions about the addressee based on descriptions of context from outside of the text?[1092]

These scholars have identified a difference in the approach to history between the Bible and the Qur'an that lends perspective to the question of the concepts of revelation in the two scriptures. In

the Bible, the concept of the Word of God includes a faithful record of God's acts in history. Is the fact that the Qur'an lacks an internal historical context equivalent to the Bible satisfactory reason to claim that qur'anic recitation is from God, but biblical revelation is not?

2. Biblical history in the Qur'an

For at least seven centuries before the Qur'an appeared, the stories about figures such as Abraham, Joseph, and Moses were fixed in the text of the Torah. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, they took the dating of the Torah manuscripts back a thousand years to as many as 850 years before Islam. Interested readers can now examine the stories of famous biblical figures as they stood in the Torah in the second century B.C.[1093]

The Qur'an presents its own version of stories about figures readily recognizable as the personalities of the Torah. The Qur'an's version of these stories, however, is clearly different from the biblical accounts. Furthermore, the qur'anic accounts contain details not found in the Torah but similar to details known from extra-biblical writings such as the Jewish *Talmud* and the Christian apocryphal books.

What is the reader to make of the qur'anic stories? The Qur'an only offers positive and respectful statements about the Torah (Arabic *Tawrāt*) and the Gospel (*Injīl*).[1094] The texts of these earlier scriptures were established hundreds of years prior to the appearance of the Qur'an.[1095] If the Qur'an then presents stories that are not only different from the biblical stories but also contain added details not present in the earlier scriptures, how should the reader understand these differences? Are the earlier scriptures to be faulted because the newer qur'anic stories are different?

Some Western scholars have noted the differences between the biblical and qur'anic accounts of prophetic figures while seeking to dissociate themselves from the question of whether either is true,

"better," or "basic".[1096] Any telling of a story is a legitimate telling, according to these writers.[1097] However, most Muslims and orthodox Christians in the world, and certainly the Bible and the Qur'an, do not share this worldview. The Qur'an itself invites comparison and evaluation when it names the Torah and the Gospel in positive and respectful ways and claims to confirm them (*muṣaddiq*, *taṣdīq*),[1098] and also when it claims to be giving the true version of accounts in dispute.[1099] To examine the qur'anic accounts, therefore, is not inappropriate to the Qur'an or disrespectful to Muslims. Rather, it takes seriously what the Qur'an says about itself and what Muslims openly profess.

Some Muslim writers have been very hard on differences among some biblical narratives.[1100] Chapter 15 demonstrated through highlighting contradictions, errors, changes, omissions, and additions that differences between the Bible's accounts and the Qur'an's accounts are actually much greater than those within the biblical narratives. There is no need to repeat those details here. The question in this chapter is what these differences mean in terms of history.

One possible response is to make subjective judgments on the basis of personal preferences. Rahmat Allah Kairanwi did not like some of the details in the biblical accounts of Lot, Judah, David, Solomon, and Aaron. Therefore, without any historical evidence in his possession, he simply declared, "we consider these narratives and [others] like them false (*bāṭil*)."[1101] Mawlana Kairanwi did not take into account the fact that the biblical accounts are the oldest accounts of these events that humans possess, and thus the closest to the events themselves. He simply called them false. Will this way of dealing with difference help us to determine the truth?

Rather, why not let history arbitrate in cases where the Qur'an differs from the biblical record? Principles of history include the importance of proximity in time to the events that sources claim to record.[1102] History also depends on accounts of events that come from eyewitnesses, or at least, from the testimony of eyewitnesses.

History trusts human sense perception for the origin of a report—what people saw, heard, and experienced. How else can a historical report begin? The following four sections discuss these two principles.

3. Can dogma determine history?

One of the most famous stories shared by Islam, Christianity, and Judaism is the account of Abraham preparing to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, well known to all three faiths. Which of the sons did Abraham prepare to sacrifice? On the basis of the account in the Torah (Genesis 22), Jews and Christians agree the son was Isaac. The New Testament affirms the son as Isaac (Hebrews 11:17-19, James 2:21). Many Muslims in the early centuries of Islam also agreed the son of sacrifice was Isaac. However, most Muslims since that time have asserted the son was Ishmael.[1103] The disagreement serves to illustrate different approaches to history.

In many places, the Qur'an mentions both Isaac (*Isḥāq*) and Ishmael (*Ismāʿīl*).[1104] The Qur'an calls Ishmael a prophet at Q 19:54, and Isaac a prophet at Q 37:112. Only one version of the account of Abraham's readiness to sacrifice is offered in the Qur'an, at Q 37:101-111. This passage indicates a son but gives no name for the son: "Then we gave him the good tidings of a prudent boy; and when he had reached the age of running with him, he said, 'My son, I see in a dream that I shall sacrifice you; consider, what do you think?' He said, 'My father, do as you are bidden; you will find me, God willing, one of the steadfast.'"

Which son is the reader of the Qur'an to understand? The history of Muslim commentary on this passage shows that it was not at all clear.[1105] Many of the Muslim commentators during the first three centuries of Islam understood the son to be Isaac, some without any apparent thought that it could be otherwise.[1106] "It is the oldest versions of the story and those that are relatively free from religious

influence that preserve the identity of Isaac and the siting of the sacrifice in Jerusalem."[1107] Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, for example, in the earliest extant complete commentary on the Qur'an, simply wrote that the son was Isḥāq and the place of the intended sacrifice was Jerusalem.[1108] Another early exegete, ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 826), specified not only Isaac but also the son of Sarah (*Sāra*).[1109]

Al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) wrote at length on the son of sacrifice in both his *tafsīr* and his *taʾrīkh*.[1110] "The earliest scholars of our prophet's nation disagree (*akhtalafa*) about which of Abraham's two sons it was that he was commanded to sacrifice."[1111] Al-Ṭabarī believed the question could be settled from the Qur'an itself. Traditions attributed to the messenger of Islam named both Ishmael and Isaac, he noted; but "only the Qur'ān could serve as proof that the account naming Isaac is clearly the more truthful of the two."[1112] Al-Ṭabarī argued that since the victim of the sacrifice was the son about whom God gave Abraham the good news (*bashshara,* Q 37:101), he must be Isaac—because in every reference in the Qur'an to the good news (*tabshīr*), the son intended was Isaac.[1113]

By the time of al-Ṭabarī, commentators were able to list many traditions favoring either Isaac or Ishmael. Prior to al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Qutayba (d. 885) also preferred Isaac. Ibn Qutayba wrote that his judgment was based on finding Isaac to be the name of the son written in the Torah.[1114] Like al-Ṭabarī, al-Naḥḥās (d. 949) and al-Sāmarqandī (d. bet. 983 and 1003) listed the traditions from the early centuries and then opted for Isaac.[1115] The famous grammarian Ibn Jinnī (d. 1002) also favored Isaac.[1116] For centuries, Muslim writers such as Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201) and al-Qurṭubī (d. 1272) continued to indicate Isaac as the intended victim. Al-Qurṭubī noted that Isaac was preferred by seven companions, numerous successors, the two peoples of the book, and exegetes like al-Ṭabarī and al-Naḥḥās.[1117] However, other commentators favored Ishmael, and some were undecided.[1118]

Ibn Kathīr (d.1371), writing in the eighth Islamic century, put forward a notable argument in favor of Ishmael.[1119] He discounted any information from the People of the Book, which he disparagingly called *isrāʾīliyyāt*, and then alleged the Jews had inserted (*aqḥama*) the name Isaac into the text of the Torah at Genesis 22:2. University of Manchester professor Norman Calder noted Ibn Kathīr preferred a Muslim dogmatic agenda to the narrative of Isaac as it had been received from the Torah and historical transmission. "Ibn Kathīr's use of the Bible, like his use of the term *isrāʾīliyyāt*, is controlled entirely by his prior theological convictions. Where information in the Bible, or information provided in the broader tradition of prophetic tales is useful, he accepts it; where it conflicts with his faith, he rejects it."[1120]

The academic scholar who has likely studied Muslim interpretations of Q 37:102 most deeply is University of Southern California professor Reuven Firestone.[1121] Dr. Firestone noted the dramatic shift in Muslim interpretation in favor of Ishmael after al-Ṭabarī[1122] and asked the reason for the change. He suggested the answer has to do with the growing importance of Ishmael for Arab and Muslim identity.[1123] There was no new historical evidence—no discoveries of pre-Islamic inscriptions or manuscripts naming Ishmael—to support the change in interpretation. Rather, the change was largely a case of "reactive theology,"[1124] wrote Dr. Firestone. The Jewish and Christian communities in the Muslim Empire, though conquered, said they remained within God's covenant through Isaac, and that Ishmael symbolized the rejected covenant. Muslims responded by claiming the son referred to in Q 37:102 was Ishmael, that Ishmael was the true hero of the sacrifice, and that Allah had chosen rather to establish his covenant with the Arab Muslims. Muslim commentators then began to accuse Jews and Christians of distorting their scriptures from Ishmael to Isaac.[1125]

Dear Muslim reader, what should we think about this process in which the son of sacrifice changed from Isaac to Ishmael? Here are the steps in the process:

The Torah states the son of sacrifice was Isaac (Genesis 22:2). Jews and Christians agreed the son was Isaac, because it is written thus in the Torah. The son of sacrifice was Isaac in the Torah in existence when the Qur'an was written: from the Dead Sea Scrolls (first century)[1126] to the Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century)[1127] to the Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century)[1128] to the Leningrad Codex (eleventh century),[1129] the son of sacrifice was Isaac. There are no existing Torah manuscripts that give Ishmael as the son of sacrifice. The Qur'an refers to the son of sacrifice but does not name the son. The majority of early Muslim traditionists adjudged Isaac to be the intended victim. The earliest extant complete Qur'an commentary states the son of sacrifice was Isaac. The great scholar al-Ṭabarī concluded, in both his commentary and his history, that the son of sacrifice was Isaac. However, a later generation of Muslim commentators, offering no new historical sources or evidence, declared the son of sacrifice was Ishmael. These writers then began to use their new doctrine as a basis to accuse the Torah of textual corruption.[1130]

Is this reasonable? Is it historical? Is it faithful to scripture?

4. Can polemic determine history?

The "Gospel of Barnabas" is the name given to a pseudepigraphic Islamic book written in the late Middle Ages, or early modern period.[1131] The book is not a Gospel in the sense of a good-news account of Jesus based on eyewitness testimony and written during the years following his death and resurrection. Rather, a European Muslim composed the book more than 1500 years later, some 900 years after the rise of Islam. But even so, during the past century, many Muslim writers have claimed that this book is the authentic Gospel and have used it to try to discredit the fourfold Gospel in the New Testament.[1132] This polemical effort provides a striking example of how some people willingly disregard the importance of historical evidence when their only purpose is to attack.

The author of the "Gospel of Barnabas" mixed Christian and Islamic material about Jesus to produce a story of Jesus that is unlike either the Gospel or the Qur'an. The book exists only in an Italian manuscript and a partial Spanish version. The Italian manuscript, more than 200 pages in normal print, tells a story about Jesus in 222 chapters, some of them quite short. The Spanish version lacks chapters 121-200.

George Sale mentioned this book in the "Preliminary Discourse" to his 1734 English translation of the Qur'an.[1133] Sale judged the book to be a forgery but quoted from the Spanish version in the notes to his translation.[1134] In the nineteenth century, Muslim writers in India familiar with Sale's translation began to refer to the "Gospel of Barnabas" to support their accusations against the Bible.[1135] In 1907, Lonsdale and Laura Ragg translated the Italian manuscript—found in the Imperial Library in Vienna—into English.[1136] Immediately, Muslim polemicists began to use the Raggs' translation. The English translation was further translated into Arabic and Urdu in the following decade.

The book blends details from the New Testament with Islamic teachings and apocryphal material about Jesus and portrays him as repeatedly foretelling the coming of the messenger of Islam. Jesus is "the voice crying in the wilderness" to prepare the way for the coming Messiah—here given as the messenger of Islam. In addition to contradicting the Gospel account, this story also differs from Muslim teaching, in which ʿĪsā is the Messiah (*al-Masīḥ*, Q 3:45). To call the messenger of Islam *al-Masīḥ* is unprecedented in Islamic tradition.[1137]

The book's account of Jesus' suffering and death illustrates well the manuscript's curious combination of details from disparate sources. After the Roman solders, led by Judas, come to arrest Jesus, Jesus is not crucified. Instead, Jesus withdraws fearfully into the house where he had earlier washed his disciples' feet. God commands four archangels to take Jesus out of the world through the south-facing window of the house and place him in the third

heaven. When Judas enters the house, God changes Judas so that he exactly resembles Jesus in speech and appearance. The solders then seize Judas.

Jesus then returns to console his mother Mary, Mary, Martha, and others and explains he has not died at all. Jesus says God is delaying his death until near the end of the world. Not only do most of his disciples mistakenly believe that Jesus died on the cross, but the entire world remains under the false impression that Jesus died. When the messenger of Islam comes, according to this book, he "shall reveal this deception to those who believe in God's law."

The incomplete Spanish manuscript of the "Gospel of Barnabas" contains a preface in which the writer claims he discovered the book in the sixteenth century and took it to be a Gospel written by the Barnabas named in the New Testament. However, recent historical research argued that the document originated in Spain in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.[1138] The existing Spanish manuscript dates from the eighteenth century; and no Greek, Hebrew, or even Arabic manuscript[1139] of such a Gospel is known to exist. Most scholars consider the text a forgery.[1140] "The Gospel of Barnabas reveals probably little or nothing about ancient Christianity."[1141]

In spite of this careful scholarly research on the manuscript, Muslims continue to use the "Gospel of Barnabas" in polemic against the Bible. In the introduction to their 1907 translation of the book, Lonsdale and Laura Ragg listed the basic reasons why the manuscript must be considered a forgery.[1142] However, a number of Muslim publishing houses published the translation without the Raggs' introduction, instead claiming the book's authenticity.[1143]

When people set aside academic scholarship in order to attack the scripture of another, how can they hope to have a friendly, reasonable conversation about the contents of their scriptures? In this case, Muslim polemicists choose to trust a sixteenth-century Spanish or Italian manuscript above the first-century Gospel accounts of the New Testament. The first-century accounts are

attested in Greek manuscripts dated to the second century, while the Spanish manuscript has no known existence prior to the eighteenth century. The claim that the "Gospel of Barnabas" gives a genuine version of the life of Jesus "runs contrary to the conscience of the historian"—whose responsibility is to "protect the integrity of the past."[1144]

5. Historicity of Jesus' death

The confusion in the so-called "Gospel of Barnabas"—a book actually written long after the writing of both the Bible and the Qur'an—is due at least in part to the Qur'an's vagueness surrounding Jesus' death. References in the Qur'an to the death of Jesus leave the reader in great uncertainty. It is surprising that the Qur'an would leave this crucial event in so much doubt. Not only is Jesus' death the central event in all four witnesses of the fourfold Gospel. Christians of all kinds had been talking about Jesus' death during the six centuries preceding Islam.

The best-known qur'anic verse related to the death of Jesus is Q 4:157. It says the Jews did not crucify (*ṣalaba*) ʿĪsā, but leaves what actually happened in mystery. The Arabic expression *shubbiha lahum* has been notoriously difficult to understand—and almost impossible to translate.[1145] For more than a millennium, this expression has challenged the best of Muslim commentators.[1146] Elsewhere, ʿĪsā says, "Peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die (*amūtu*), and the day I shall be raised alive" (Q 19:33). The verse uses the same verb for "to die" that is used about Yāḥyā (John the Baptist) in Q 19:15, and the most natural sense of the words would be resurrection after real physical death. Many Muslim commentators have interpreted the verse to mean that ʿĪsā will only die after he returns in the End Times. However, Neal Robinson wrote about Q 19:33, "there is not the slightest hint…that his death…lies in the future. On the contrary, given only this sūra, the assumption would be that it already lay in the past like John's."[1147]

A third verse about Jesus' death that has challenged scholars is Q 3:55. In this verse, Allah is the speaker, and he addresses ʿĪsā. But the first expression in Allah's speech is obscure: *innī mutawaffīka*. Again the commentary interpretations of this phrase, and its English translations, range widely. A straightforward translation of the Arabic would be, "I will cause you to die."[1148] In all other occurrences of forms of the verb *tawaffā* in the Qur'an, the verb is connected with death.[1149] But among the many available English translations of the Qur'an, many render the expression in very different ways, some seemingly unrecognizable.

Three verses about Jesus' death, and two pivotal expressions that seem impossible to understand clearly—on this shaky basis, most Muslims have concluded that Jesus did not die. For such an important event, this evidence seems greatly inadequate. Muslim commentators concluded the Qur'an means to say that Jesus did not die, but the words of the Qur'an itself do not clearly say so. At the very least, one would have to say that these verses leave the reader confused.

Compare the qur'anic material with the clarity and abundance of material in the New Testament. Each of the Gospel accounts devotes a major part of its content to the "passion" narrative—that is, the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They also foreshadow the passion to highlight the centrality of this information. The apostles base their report of Jesus' death on eyewitness testimony accounts. Their accounts are open to historical investigation—there are no mysteries that defy human sense perception.

According to the Gospel, Jesus knew he was about to die and "spoke plainly about this" to his disciples (Mark 8:32). The Gospel according to Mark signals this awareness already in Chapter 8 of its sixteen-chapter account. Jesus "began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31; also Matthew 16:21, Luke 9:22).[1150] As if to keep this fact in the forefront of the reader's mind,

Mark recorded Jesus' statement on a later occasion, in which he predicted his death in even more explicit terms: "We are going up to Jerusalem…and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise" (Mark 10:33-34; also Matthew 20:18-19, Luke 18:31-33). In the Gospel according to John, Jesus spoke of his death through the image of a "kernel of wheat" (John 12:24), and said, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). As the Gospel explains, Jesus said this to specify that he would die by crucifixion (John 12:33).

The apostle Paul, who became a follower of Jesus within a few years of the death and resurrection of Jesus, reported the death of Jesus as of "first importance": "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). He wrote that this teaching was not his innovation, but that he was passing on what he had received from Jesus' earliest followers. Paul also wrote that this information could be verified because Jesus had appeared to more than 500 people at the same time, "most of whom are still living," after his resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:6). Go ask them what they saw! This is no hidden knowledge accessible only to the enlightened. This is no confusing mystery. This is history, claimed Paul.

Non-Christian documents of Christianity's first centuries also referred to Jesus' death. For example, the Roman historian Tacitus referred to the death of Jesus in his *Annals*, written around 116 A.D. [1151] Jesus' death may have been a very minor event for the Romans when it took place in a less important province of their empire; but by 64 A.D., Jesus' followers had become a concern at the heart of the empire, in Rome. Tacitus wrote about the torture and cruel deaths of Christians brought about by Emperor Nero. In the midst of his report about Christians, he wrote, "The founder of this name, Christ, had been executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate."[1152] Tacitus had no love for Christians or

their faith, so it is interesting that he recorded not only Jesus' death but also the name of the Roman procurator whom the Gospel itself credits for his crucifixion (Matthew 27).

Theologians Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd considered the Qur'an's claim that Jesus did not die on a cross, then commented, "if there is any fact of Jesus's life that has been established by a broad consensus, it is the fact of Jesus's crucifixion. For the Qur'an to get it wrong at this most fundamental point raises serious questions about the historical reliability of *any* claim it makes about Jesus."[1153]

6. Sense perception and reliable transmission

The two qur'anic verses which have attracted the most extensive discussion of the death of Jesus from Muslim commentators are Q 3:55 and Q 4:157, and this is certainly the case in the *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209). Al-Rāzī's exegesis of these verses, however, demonstrates the kind of clear thinking possible even in the face of an opposing interpretation supported by many Muslims.

At Q 3:55, al-Rāzī discussed the interpretive trend that had by his time become well known—the substitution theory. Al-Rāzī proposed six *ishkāl*, or ambiguities, about the Muslim assertion that someone was made to look like Jesus and was seized and crucified instead of him.[1154] In the first ambiguity, al-Rāzī explained that the concept of casting the likeness of one person onto another leads to confusion. The same could be claimed for one's own child, or even for the messenger of Islam.

> This would of course lead to the negation of all sacred laws (*sharāʾiʿ*). Moreover, the fundamental principle in all widely transmitted reports[1155] is that the first narrator must report what he clearly perceived with his senses (*maḥsūs*). But if erroneous confusion is possible with regard to what is seen

> with the eye, then the falsity of widely accepted reports is more probable. In sum, opening the door of this possibility begins with confusion or sophistry (*safsaṭa*) and ends with the total negation of the prophethood of all prophets.[1156]

Al-Rāzī placed his discussion of the death of Jesus within the theme of *tawātur*, or recurrent transmission. He associated the reporting of the death of Jesus, obscure for Muslims, with reports of comparable events in the Muslim field of knowledge. This impression seems to be confirmed by the fifth ambiguity al-Rāzī proposed:

> Christians in their multiplicity the world over, with their great love for the Messiah and their extremist views (*ghulūw*) concerning him, have reported that they witnessed him being crucified and killed. If we were to deny this, we would cast doubt on the principle of universally accepted transmission (*tawātur*). Casting doubt on this principle would also necessitate casting doubt on the prophethood of Muḥammad and Jesus, and even on their very existence, as well as the existence of all other prophets, and that would be untenable (*bāṭil*).[1157]

In the remaining four *ishkāl*, no less interesting, al-Rāzī touched on the matter of God's character. In his third ambiguity, he questioned what God's purpose might be in casting the likeness of Jesus onto an innocent man who was subsequently condemned to death and killed. In the fourth ambiguity al-Rāzī reasoned that if the witnesses believed the substituted man was Jesus while Jesus was in fact taken up to heaven, this would mean the people were deliberately thrown into confusion and ignorance. "And this," he judged, "is not worthy of the wisdom of Allah (*wa hādha lā yalīqu bi-hikmat Allāh taʿālā*)."[1158]

At Q 4:157, al-Rāzī again raised the question of the logical possibility of Allah transferring the identity of one person to another.[1159] He repeated some of what he'd written at Q 3:55, but also extended his case:

> If it were permissible to say that Allah casts the appearance of one person onto another person, then this would open the door to sophistry. For if I see Zayd, perhaps it is not Zayd at all, but rather the appearance of Zayd has been cast onto this person. In that case, neither marriage nor divorce nor property could continue to exist and be trusted. It would also lead to calling into question the idea of transmission of historical reports (*tawātur*) because a report which is historically transmitted can contribute to knowledge only on condition that its ultimate source is something perceptible to the senses. If we allow this kind of confusion to take place in things perceptible to the senses, then it will discredit historical transmission, and that will necessarily call into question all laws. [1160]

However, the matter goes even further, continued al-Rāzī. Following this line of thinking would result in the unraveling of all rational discourse. Al-Rāzī concluded, "the opening of such a gate necessitates doubt in historical transmission (*tawātur*), and this in turn necessitates doubt in fundamentals (*uṣūl*), and this in turn necessitates doubt in the prophethood of all prophets. This is a branch necessitating doubt in fundamentals and must therefore be rejected.'[1161]

Many Muslims have explained the mysterious expression *shubbiha lahum* (Q 4:157) by claiming that Allah substituted another person in place of Jesus. al-Rāzī objected to this assertion with reasonable and compelling arguments. All reliable historical reports must be based on sense perception, he wrote. To claim that the one who died on the cross looked like Jesus to the witnesses, but was not Jesus, is to say that sense perception cannot be trusted. If sense perception cannot be trusted in this important case, who can know anything for sure about the past? Al-Rāzī realized that if Muslims denied the followers of Jesus the right to say they had witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus, Muslims would also forfeit their own right to make claims for Islam.

The death of Jesus is an historical fact in the New Testament and in the writings of the Roman historian Tacitus. And if the words of Jesus in the Gospel are accepted, the Hebrew scriptures also bore witness to his death from long before the fact: "This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day" (Luke 24:46). However, for most who believe it, the death of Jesus is not simply a matter of facts. Take, for example, the great African scholar Lamin Sanneh.

Lamin Sanneh was raised a Muslim in the Gambia, West Africa, and is now professor of history at Yale University. Dr. Sanneh wrote that when he was young, he was especially intrigued by the Muslim teaching that Jesus was not crucified, but that rather, someone else was put in his place. Dr. Sanneh reasoned that if God had indeed exchanged someone for Jesus, "then God surely bore responsibility for the death of this nameless victim."[1162] He became very interested in the life of Jesus.

"Who died on the cross? If we don't know his name, how can we know the God who put him there?" Dr. Sanneh asked while still a Muslim. "But suppose Jesus did die on the cross, and suppose God intended it to be so; how would that change our knowledge of God?" Sanneh found that of all the characters mentioned in the Qur'an, Jesus was the one for whom death on the cross was most intended—the one closest to it. This led him to the following insight (he says such thoughts came to him before he had met any Christian or read the Bible):

> In such a case, it would follow that God actually did demonstrate his solidarity with humanity by visibly entering our world and defeating death itself, allowing us to understand life in a wholly new way, with redemptive love able to overcome human wickedness and reveal the true face of God. Seen in the light of the cross of Jesus Christ, all of human nature, indeed all of history, appears to gather at one sharp, poignant place. It

all began to make sense to me. The need for the cross seemed so compelling and true to the way life is.[1163]

Sanneh reasoned that when God—through Jesus—entered human history, he became "the supreme subject and victim of history" and demonstrated the original divine intention of unconditional love.[1164] The death of Jesus on the cross in history is crucial for humanity's understanding of who God is, and of how—as Sanneh put it—"God loves me just as I am."[1165] In this sense, the death of Jesus *needed* to take place in history.

The New Testament approaches the matter from the other direction. Jesus did indeed die in history, and from this event flow all these benefits about which Sanneh spoke.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Variants in Manuscripts and Readings

The Qur'an that Muslims hold in their hands today is not the same text as the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an known to scholars. The *muṣḥaf*, or written codex of the Qur'an, went through dramatic changes even in its first century.[1166] In the past, Muslims have frequently made the claim that today's Qur'an is exactly the same as when it was first written down.[1167] However, to what extent have Muslims measured this claim against the manuscript evidence?

The "original" of the Qur'an is not known to exist. The earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an known to academic scholars today are themselves copies.[1168] If the *ḥadīth* story of the caliph ʿUthmān sending out copies of the Qur'an to the cities of the Arab Empire is taken to be true, then according to scholars, none of these "regional codices" survives today.[1169] Though Muslims have often made claims for the existence of Qur'ans going back to ʿUthmān, historians are not convinced by any of these manuscripts, "some of which show signs of being very poor forgeries."[1170] If one or more of these codices were to be discovered, scholars explain, it still would not be the "original" in the strict terms of an autographic text-form.[1171] If the *ḥadīth* story is taken to be true, it means that it is also not possible to recover the "original" through the science of textual criticism, because according to the story, ʿUthmān destroyed all rival "authoritative text-forms"[1172] on his own initiative.

The academic scholars best acquainted with the history of the Qur'an's text write that the development of the fully-pointed and

vocalized text took around three hundred years.[1173] The Arabic script of the earliest qur'anic manuscripts was incomplete and "defective," lacking both long vowels and short vowels, and rarely—and then, inconsistently—providing diacritic dots to distinguish consonants of the same basic shape.[1174] The orthography of Arabic took more than two centuries to develop. The number of ways in which the consonantal text could be vocalized was limited to seven, from many more possibilities, by Ibn Mujāhid (d. 936) in the fourth Islamic century.[1175] From seven, the acceptable readings then rose in number to fourteen. Of those fourteen accepted readings, one was simply chosen in 1924 by the *shaykh*s of al-Azhar in Cairo as the basis for the text of the Qur'an that is used by most Muslims today.[1176]

The fully-pointed and vocalized Qur'an most Muslims use today is therefore not the same as the text first written down. It is, in fact, one edited version of the earliest manuscripts, dotted and vocalized in order to preserve one particular reading.

Dear Muslim friend, the academic research reported in this chapter has not been written in order to offend you. These are simply the facts as some of the world's best scholars have described them.[1177] These serious questions about the qur'anic manuscripts are presented, rather, to nurture our conversation about the contents of the Bible and the Qur'an. As long as the Bible is described as being full of problems,—as in the *Iẓhār ul-ḥaqq*— while at the same time the Qur'an is presented as immune from problems, we will refrain from reading both scriptures and entering the reasonable conversation we need. In reality, the Qur'an faces the same kinds of questions that have been asked of Bible manuscripts. It turns out some questions are unique to the Qur'an, as the following pages demonstrate. Setting the facts out plainly puts the scriptures on a level playing field and can open the way for us to "read and reason together."

1. Arabic writing in the seventh century

In the seventh century, when Muslims believe the text of the Qur'an was established, the system of writing Arabic was still in its early stages of development. Scholars of paleography and orthography describe the Arabic script in the seventh century as a *scriptio defectiva*.[1178] This description of the Arabic script is not a moral judgment. Rather, it is a technical term indicating the script itself was not yet sufficiently developed to actually preserve all the sounds of Arabic in writing.[1179]

For example, the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an known to scholars today generally lack the diacritic dots that distinguish consonants of the same shape from one another. In the middle of an Arabic word, the pointed shape that scholars call a "tooth" could be any one of five different consonants, depending on the dots placed above or below the pointed shape. Without a dot, the shape signifies nothing in particular. One dot above makes the shape an "n"; two dots above make it a "t"; three dots above make it a "th"; one dot below makes it a "b"; and two dots below make it a "y". There are several other sets of consonants that are distinguished by dots. The shape for the strong "h" has no dots; put a dot above it and the shape becomes a "kh"; put a dot below it and the shape becomes a "j". Similarly, a dot above changes a "d" shape into a "dh"; an "r" into a "z"; a "ṣ" into a "ḍ"; a "ṭ" into a "ẓ"; and a "ʿayn" into a "ghayn". The shape for "s", when it has three dots above, becomes a "sh". The letters "f" and "q" share the same shape in most positions, except that "f" has one dot above and "q" has two.

People reading Arabic today need the diacritic dots in order to know what consonants are being used. However, the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an generally lack diacritic dots, and some have no dots at all. Other manuscripts provide dots only inconsistently, and some early dotting systems are different from others. In addition to missing diacritic dots to identify consonants, the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an are missing the *hamza*, the *sukūn*, and the doubling *tashdīd*, and often lack long vowels such as

alif. For this reason, scholars describe the Arabic script in the seventh century as "defective."

The ambiguity of the seventh century Arabic script carries implications for the history of the text of the Qur'an, according to Professor François Déroche.[1180] "The various deficiencies noted in the *ḥijāzī*-style manuscripts mean that it was not, in fact, possible to adequately preserve the integrity of the Qur'ān through writing as the caliph ʿUthmān intended when, according to the tradition, he decided to document the revelation."[1181] Dr. Déroche further highlighted the discrepancy between the manuscript evidence and the traditional story about ʿUthmān's motivation:

> the manuscripts of that period, with very few diacritics, no short vowels or orthoepic marks, simply could not have provided the solution which the caliph is said to have been seeking according to the classical account of this event. The additional variants found in the manuscripts and a review of the canonical lists suggest that the *rasm* itself did not reach the shape we know until a later date.[1182]

This judgment does not come from a theological rejection of Islam, but rather from a reasonable examination of physical evidence by an academic authority on Arabic manuscripts.

This problem of uncertainty about consonants in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an is not shared by biblical manuscripts. It is true that the Hebrew script of the Dead Sea Scrolls lacks extra markings for vowels. However, all the consonants have their own distinct shapes—except in a single case: the "shīn" is distinguished from the "sīn" by one dot above. Also, the letters "alif", "yōd," and "waw" had already been included in the earliest manuscripts of the Torah and the rest of the Hebrew scriptures. In the case of Greek, all consonants and vowels were distinct by the time of first-century Greek script, in which the Gospel and the rest of the New Testament were written.

Since the consonants of many words in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an are not specified, Muslim scholars needed to decide what these words would be. This was a human process of alteration and addition to the text. It is important to note that the ambiguity of many consonants in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an signifies a unique kind of textual variant—a kind of implicit unwritten potential variant—*prior to* the fixing of the consonantal text of the Qur'an in the *textus receptus*.[1183]

2. Early fluidity in transmission

Since the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an lacked many elements of the Arabic script that make the text unambiguous, Muslim scholars needed some time to work out all the details. Today's academic scholars of qur'anic manuscripts have written that it took three hundred years or more to fully develop the Arabic writing system. Muslim scholars needed to make decisions not only about the short vowels that modify the meaning of each word, but also about the identity of every root consonant requiring one or more dots for its fixation.

The diacritic dots, long vowels, marks for vocalization (short vowels), and other marks for pronunciation that appear in modern printings of the Qur'an were added by Muslim scholars over a 300-year period at the beginnings of Islam. These dots, marks, and letters were not part of the earliest manuscripts. They needed to be added. This means a change to the text. Muslim scholars needed to decide what the changes and additions would be. Not all the Muslim scholars who worked at this project agreed with one another.

Dr. Déroche found evidence in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an that the text was not yet finalized at the time they were written. "The text found in the early copies may…reflect a state of the Qur'ān's transmission predating the work of the scholars of the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries and still somewhat fluid".[1184] Dr. Déroche commented on whether the Parisino-petropolitanis codex

lines up in every way with what came to be known as the standard text, which he calls "ʿUthmānic". "When compared with the other witnesses of this period, it suggests that the corpus was not completely closed and that the 'ʿUthmānic' transmission was still running along parallel tracks."[1185]

Professor Déroche also noted a curious ambiguity about precise fixation of the consonantal text in the early manuscripts. He wrote that copyists often did not use diacritics "in places where they could have made the text easier to read."[1186] Some Muslim sources have suggested that diacritics were crucial for clarity and reliability of the text.[1187] The Muslim report of the later project of al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf to add the diacritics reveals this concern. Why would the early copyists not specify questionable consonants if they could? Dr. Déroche described this situation as a "relative lack of concern about the diacritics evidenced by the manuscripts,"[1188] and took it as evidence against the historicity of the traditional story that the caliph ʿUthmān solved the problem of different recitations of the Qur'an among the Muslim troops.

The uniformity and invariability of the qur'anic text that Muslims attribute to ʿUthmān is "not presented by most of the oldest extant codices."[1189] When, then, did Muslims agree to make one version of the consonantal skeleton the standard text of the Qur'an? University of Groningen professor Frederik Leemhuis wrote that early commentaries suggest Muslims established the consonantal text they attributed to ʿUthmān as *textus receptus* during the first half of the second Islamic century.[1190]

3. No ʿUthmānic manuscripts

To date, no manuscripts of the Qur'an have been discovered that academic scholars are able to connect with Muslim traditions about the collection and edition of the Qur'an by the caliph ʿUthmān. In the past, Muslims claimed ʿUthmānic manuscripts existed in places like Istanbul, Tashkent, and Samarkand.[1191] Scholars of qur'anic

manuscripts, however, are not convinced of the authenticity of any of the manuscripts that Muslims connect to the ʿUthmān story.[1192]

One of the most interesting scholarly studies conducted in recent years is Turkish scholar Tayyar Altıkulaç's examination of the Qur'an manuscript in the Topkapi Palace Museum, which Muslims have attributed to ʿUthmān until very recently.[1193] In his extensive study published alongside photographs of the actual manuscript, Dr. Altıkulaç concluded the manuscript does not in fact date back to the middle of the seventh century.[1194]

Dr. Altıkulaç provided a number of reasons why he believes the famous Topkapi manuscript could not connect to ʿUthmān.[1195] He wrote that since Muslim sources agree the *muṣḥaf*s attributed to ʿUthmān had no diacritic dots or marks for vowels, the diacritics in the Topkapi manuscript—though few and inconsistently applied—must indicate a later development in the text.[1196] Dr. Altıkulaç found that the manuscript shows no "discipline of spelling" of words like *ʿalā*, *ḥattā,* and *ṣirāṭ*; and that it contains many copyists' mistakes. "It appears that…the Topkapi Muṣḥaf was neither scrutinized after being copied nor one of the imāms of reading used it."[1197] The manuscript also contains signs for verse endings and separation of *sūra*s that Dr. Altıkulaç believes were not part of the *muṣḥaf*s attributed to ʿUthmān.

Scholars date the earliest complete Qur'ans to the third or fourth Islamic centuries.[1198] There are no complete Qur'ans dating from the first two centuries of Islam.[1199] Some fragments may tentatively be dated to the second half of the first Islamic century, based on writing style.[1200] But no consensus of their dating exists among scholars. "[N]o single clearly identifiable textual specimen of the Qur'ān was ever established or accepted with absolute unanimity."[1201] The fragmentary nature of the evidence prevents scholars from knowing whether the Qur'ans represented by the earliest manuscripts are the same as what came to be the standard text.[1202] Some scholars have argued that early Qur'an

manuscripts might be dated by carbon dating,[1203] but Dr. Déroche has recently described the unreliability of this method. [1204]

4. Variants in manuscripts

Section 5 deals with variant readings—that is, the different ways in which the consonants of the Qur'an could be vocalized by adding to the text markings for short vowels, *hamza*, *shadda*, *sukūn*, etc. This section discusses manuscript variants in the "consonantal skeleton" itself, often referred to by academic scholars as the *rasm* or *ductus* of the qur'anic text.

In the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an, the consonants in the text are not clearly identified because the Arabic writing system was still in an early stage of development. The diacritic dots that identify different consonants sharing the same shape are missing, or sporadically applied, or applied according to different systems. For example, the five copyists of the early Parisino-petropolitanus codex were not consistent in supplying diacritics for the consonants, and had no system for indicated short vowels or orthoepic signs. "All of this, joined to the *scriptio defectiva*, leaves open a vast range of possible readings of which it was sometimes quite difficult to retain one instead of another, and to affirm that it was this to which the copyist adhered".[1205] In other words, variants in the consonantal text are implicit in the ambiguity of the script itself.

For example, both Muslim traditional sources and academic studies mention the confusion between the consonants *tāʾ* and *yāʾ* at the beginning of an imperfect verb. The undotted shapes of both are the same. Two dots above make the letter a *tāʾ*; two dots below make it a *yāʾ*. But what is the consonant if there are no dots? The problem is mentioned by al-Suyūṭī[1206] and signaled in the *ḥadīth*, "When you are in disagreement as regards the yāʾ and the tāʾ, then write it with yāʾ."[1207] Academic scholars who examined the earliest manuscripts also observed the ambiguity.[1208] The

difference is not insignificant: with the prefix *tā'*, the imperfect verb means either third person feminine ("she") or second person ("you"); while with the prefix *yā'*, the verb means third person masculine ("he" or "they").

Beyond the verbal prefixes *tā'* and *yā'*, the absence of diacritics raises many other questions. Dr. Déroche wrote, "an unmarked set of characters within a word can have five, even six different meanings."[1209] Cornell University Professor of Arabic Mundher Younes demonstrated how changing the diacritic dots on four words in the standard text of the Qur'an can help make sense of a notoriously difficult passage, Q 100:1-5.[1210] Dr. Younes further demonstrated that five different possibilities could come from each of only two words in Q 79:1, if undotted: *nāzi'āt* and *gharqā*.[1211] University of Michigan professor of Arabic James Bellamy has also written a number of studies based on the possibility that mistakes entered the text of the Qur'an when early readers misread the consonantal outline, or through copyist errors.[1212] For example, he emends the mysterious *ḥiṭṭa* in Q 2:58 to *khiṭa* by adding a dot above the first letter.[1213]

In addition to the ambiguity of consonants created by the absence of diacritic dots in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an, there are also variants in the undotted *ductus*. In the Muslim sources on *qirā'āt*, wrote Dr. Leemhuis, "the existence of variant readings which presupposed a non-'Uthmānic *rasm* was considered a matter of fact."[1214] Scholars of early manuscripts also observe many variants in the consonantal skeleton itself. One of the most frequent variants in the early manuscripts is the absence of *alif* in many words that now contain an *alif* in the standard Cairo version. The common words *qāla* and *qālū*, for example, contain no *alif*s in some of the earliest manuscripts. Dr. Déroche detailed the defective spelling of *qāla* and four other words in the Parisino-petropolitanus codex affected by the absence of *alif*s: *'ibād*, *'adhāb*, *āyāt* and *shay'*.[1215] He wrote that the copyists were even inconsistent in their spelling of the word *qur'ān*.[1216]

5. Hidden under the writing surface

One weakness of the many Muslim reports of manuscript variants in early Muslim sources is that no evidence of manuscripts of this kind had been found—until quite recently.[1217] The evidence has come from palimpsests, that is, documents from which the original writing has been erased in order to make space for a later text. The original writing leaves traces scholars are able to detect and transcribe.

Among the Qur'an manuscripts discovered in a mosque in Ṣanʿāʾ in 1972, one was a palimpsest, known as *Codex Ṣanʿāʾ 1*. On this manuscript, a first text—termed by scholars the *scriptio inferior*—had been erased, and the parchment was used again for the transcription of a second text. Both texts are qur'anic, but the second text is different from the first.

Dr. Déroche provided a summary of academic research on the Ṣanʿāʾ palimpsest in his recently-published study, *Qur'āns of the Umayyads*.[1218] The first, underlying, text shows peculiarities in the sequence of the *sūra*s as well as in the text itself.[1219] Diacritic dots are not very numerous in the underlying text, and "variants cover a wide range of situations."[1220] The *Ṣanʿāʾ* palimpsest shows "variants of a substantially different nature from those found in the rest of the Qur'ānic manuscript tradition."[1221] There are also omissions and additions in the underlying text compared to the *textus receptus*, including the omission of Q 9:85 and additional words at Q 24:10.[1222]

"The *scriptio inferior* of the *Codex Ṣanʿāʾ 1*," concluded Dr. Déroche, "has been transcribed in a milieu which adhered to a text of the Qur'an different from the ʿUthmanic tradition as well as from the Qur'anic codices of Ibn Masʿūd and Ubayy." Several other scholars of qur'anic manuscripts agree with this description. Elizabeth Puin, the scholar perhaps most familiar with the palimpsest, called it "a different Qur'an" ("ein 'anderer Koran'"). [1223] Behnam Sadeghi and Mohsen Goudarzi wrote that the lower

writing of the *Codex Ṣanʿāʾ 1* "clearly falls outside of the standard text type."[1224] Similarly, Behnam Sadeghi and Uwe Bergmann wrote that the palimpsest belongs to a "different textual tradition" from the Qur'an Muslims attribute to editing under the caliph ʿUthmān.[1225]

Other qur'anic palimpsests or manuscripts like the *Codex Ṣanʿāʾ 1* may come to light that help scholars trace the early history of the Qur'an. Alba Fedeli's examination of two palimpsest fragments known as "Bonham's" and "Fogg's" also found differences from the now-standard Qur'an text: omissions, different words, different sequences of words, orthographical variants, variant readings, errors, and corrections.[1226]

6. Variants in readings

In addition to the ambiguity of many consonants in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an due to the absence or inconsistency of diacritic dots, the earliest manuscripts also lack any indication of short vowels. During Islam's first three centuries, Muslim scholars needed to decide what the vowels should be and work out a system to mark them so readers would know how to read and recite the words of the Qur'an.

In Muslim tradition, the "readings" (different ways of reciting the Qur'an) are known as the *qirāʾāt*. The earliest writings of Islam freely mention differences in readings. For example, early commentaries on the Qur'an discuss a wide range of variant readings, "from simple pronunciation variants through different case endings or verbal forms, synonyms or near synonyms, to interpolations of whole phrases."[1227] A well-known Muslim tradition claims the Qur'an was revealed in seven *aḥruf*.[1228] For many Muslim scholars, this term came to mean "variant readings" in the same sense as the *qirāʾāt*.[1229]

Dr. Leemhuis wrote that the grammarian al-Farrāʾ (d. 822) and traditionist ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Sanʿānī (d. 827) commonly cited variant readings associated with Ibn Masʿūd.[1230] These variants departed not only from the various possible pointings and pronunciations of the *rasm* attributed by Muslims to ʿUthmān, but some departed from that *rasm* altogether. In the commentaries of al-Farrāʾ, ʿAbd al-Razzāq, and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 778) there is no indication these alternate readings were unacceptable. Dr. Leemhuis concluded from this evidence that variant readings with a different *rasm* were still freely discussed in the second Islamic century. Nearly eighty years ago, Arthur Jeffery collected the variant readings that a variety of Muslim writers cited from what they said were early variant codices, such as those of Ibn Masʿūd, Ubayy ibn Kaʿb, and ʿAlī. In Muslim commentaries, he found recorded "a goodly number of old variants representing a different type of consonantal text from that officially known as the ʿUthmānic text."[1231] Dr. Jeffery listed variant readings Muslim writers attributed to fifteen old codices and thirteen secondary codices.[1232]

The restriction of the many possible variant readings circulating in the Muslim Empire seems to have been a gradual process taking several centuries. In the third Islamic century Muslim scholars began to limit the variants to what was possible with the developed consonantal skeleton that Muslims attributed to ʿUthmān. According to Muslim sources, in the fourth Islamic century the prohibition of rival codices, especially the popular *rasm* of Ibn Masʿūd, came from the intervention of Ibn Mujāhid (d. 936), enforced by the ʿAbbāsid vizier Ibn Muqla (d. 940). Ibn Mujāhid restricted the permissible readings to seven, and his first criterion was whether a reading was in accordance with one of the codices which—according to Muslim tradition—ʿUthmān had sent to five cities. Dr. Leemhuis suggested the "combination of the power of the ʿAbbāsid state and Ibn Mujāhid's authority" proved quite effective in establishing the seven canonical readings.[1233]

However, Muslim scholars later argued for three other readings, which were accepted, and then four more readings, for a total of

fourteen acceptable readings, each in two transmissions or *riwāya*s. [1234]

For centuries, variant readings tended to be associated with the regions in which they traditionally originated. Until today a variant transmission, known as Warsh, is used in West and North-west Africa.[1235] "The great unifying change came in the tenth/sixteenth century, as the Ottoman empire adopted the *Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿĀṣim* reading."[1236] Under the Empire, this reading became widespread; and when the Egyptian government printed an edition of the Qur'an in 1924, they also chose the *Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿĀṣim* reading from among the possible fourteen. The al-Azhar University scholars who produced this version of the Qur'an used the traditional Muslim literature on readings and orthography, but "never thought of looking for the earliest written witnesses, had they known how to identify them."[1237] This one reading thus came to dominate over all the others "without ever having been officially sanctioned except by the shaykhs of al-Azhar in Cairo."[1238]

7. Signs of standardization

The story of Ibn Mujāhid, Ibn Muqla, and the establishment of seven accepted readings introduces the theme of standardization into the history of the qur'anic text. Muslim sources from Islam's early centuries reported a number of efforts to standardize the text of the Qur'an and eliminate variants. According to the Muslim sources, the standardization efforts involved political power, physical force, and destruction of manuscripts. Whether or not these stories are true, scholars of Qur'an manuscripts today describe evidence in the earliest manuscripts that seems to show signs of a standardization process.

The best-known Muslim story of standardization of the text of the Qur'an is, of course, the tradition in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the caliph ʿUthmān ordered a collection and edition of the Qur'an during his reign. According to the *ḥadīth* story, ʿUthmān's motivation for the

edition was to solve the problem of differing recitations of the Qur'an among the Muslim warriors during their conquest of Armenia and Azerbaijan. When the edition was complete, according to al-Bukhārī, ʿUthmān sent a copy to every region and commanded that every sheet or codex containing part of the Qur'an in a different form should be burned.[1239]

However, other stories of standardization are reported in Muslim sources. The reign of Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik is associated with reforms that made Arabic the official language of the Muslim Empire. A number of recent scholarly studies have suggested that ʿAbd al-Malik was responsible for producing, distributing, and enforcing a uniform qur'anic text.[1240] Oxford University professor of Islamic History Chase Robinson wrote that unlike earlier caliphs, ʿAbd al-Malik had the resources to attempt such a redaction and to impose the resulting text.[1241] The governor of Iraq under ʿAbd al-Malik was al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf. Early Muslim sources say he led a project to improve the orthography of the qur'anic text by adding various marks to the text to make it less ambiguous, including diacritic dots to distinguish consonants of the same shape, *alifs* for long ā, and numbering of the components. In the end, according to Muslim accounts, copies were sent to various large cities of the Empire.[1242]

These Muslim accounts tell of changes to the consonantal text of the Qur'an during the first/seventh century of Islam. The story of Ibn Mujāhid and Ibn Muqla concerns the limitation of possible readings based on the consonantal text that was accepted as the standard. Ibn Mujāhid proscribed the permitted readings to seven, and Ibn Muqla decreed punishments for anyone who persisted in reciting other readings, including the well-known readings of Ibn Masʿūd and Ubayy ibn Kaʿb. Muslim sources relate that two learned Muslim scholars, Ibn Miqsam and Ibn Shanabūdh, disobeyed the caliph's decree and were brought to trial in 935 A.D. Ibn Shanabūdh was flogged and then, according to the sources, recanted his attachment to the reading of Ibn Masʿūd.[1243] Whatever the truth about these reports in Muslim sources, a common theme is the

involvement of political powers in enforcing a particular version—or set of readings—of the Qur'an from above. There is no mention in Muslim tradition about a scholarly or judicial decision to establish the texts of the editions credited to ʿUthmān and al-Ḥajjāj; rather, they were simply "authorized by the highest Islamic political authorities of the time."[1244]

Academic scholars today are finding material evidence of a process of standardization in the manuscripts themselves. Dr. Déroche wrote that some of the steps in the al-Ḥajjāj story echo what he has observed in early manuscripts. He also noted the involvement of rulers in standardization of the text: "the political overtone of the move [of al-Ḥajjāj] is quite obvious and the implication of the ruling circles may have resulted in the commissioning of copies which were to reflect the might of the dynasty and its religious commitments."[1245]

When Oxford researcher Keith Small examined some of the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an, he noticed that the corrections in the text seemed to show a pattern. Many corrections in the manuscripts changed earlier wordings in the direction of the text that eventually became the *textus receptus*.[1246] Dr. Small found that sixty-seven percent of the corrections were apparently made for this reason. He also noticed the wide variety of manuscript variants in qur'anic palimpsests. "Physical corrections in manuscripts and palimpsests," Dr. Small concluded, "provide substantial evidence of the standardization and suppression of variant texts."[1247]

Dr. Déroche found the same trend in his research. Concerning the points of difference between the Parisino-petropolitanus codex and the standard "Cairo" text, he wrote that "most have been erased and corrected by later hands."[1248] He added, "Like other manuscripts of this group, the Parisino-petropolitanus has been subjected to emendations and corrections over a comparatively long time span, so that most of the discrepancies with the ʿUṯmanic *rasm* and the canonical variants (including the verse endings) have been eliminated."[1249]

8. Does the "original" of the Qur'an exist?

The central accusation of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* is that the original Torah and Gospel no longer exist.[1250] The *Iẓhār* made this accusation by combining traditional Muslim polemic with early nineteenth-century European scholarship that seemed to lend support to the accusation. In presenting the Qur'an, however, the *Iẓhār* disregarded available academic scholarship and offered only traditional Muslim truth claims. A case for the original of the Torah and Gospel has been made in Chapter 12. The scholarly question now needs to be posed of the Muslim scripture: does the original of the Qur'an exist?

According to the traditional Muslim story, the caliph ʿUthmān destroyed the copies of the Qur'an that did not agree with the wording of his own edition.[1251] In terms of the Muslim claim for the fixation of the qur'anic text during the reign of ʿUthmān, this *ḥadīth* story seems to be useful. In terms of scholarship, however, the destruction of pre-canonical copies of the Qur'an would mean it is impossible to establish the "original" of the Qur'an through the science of textual criticism.

New Testament scholar Eldon J. Epp has helpfully discussed the dimensions of originality related to a scripture.[1252] Dr. Epp distinguished between a document's "autographic text-form" (its form as it left the author's desk) and "canonical text-form" (its form when its canonicity was sought or established). Dr. Small has added an extra dimension to make the comparison between the New Testament and the Qur'an more meaningful: the "authoritative text-form," which is "a form of text that acquired a degree of local geographic consensual authority,"[1253] like one of the versions early Muslim sources ascribe to the companions of Islam's messenger. Up to the present time, no autographic text-form of the Qur'an is known to exist.[1254] In this sense, it is on the same level as the Hebrew scriptures and New Testament. Until now, no authoritative text-form of the Qur'an—for example a copy that might

be attributed to ʿUthmān or Ibn Masʿūd—is known to exist.[1255] The earliest forms of the Qur'an that scholars are presently able to work with are copies of an early edited canonical text-form.[1256]

Therefore, the only way to determine the "original" of the Qur'an is through the science of textual criticism. Textual criticism requires a significant number and range of variant manuscripts. According to Muslim tradition, however, the variant manuscripts at the time of ʿUthmān were destroyed, and the variant readings in the versions of Ibn Masʿūd and Ubayy ibn Kaʿb were forbidden with threat of punishment. Is it possible, then, to establish the "original" of the Qur'an through textual criticism?

It is interesting that in a recent article about the Ṣanʿāʾ 1 codex, Behnam Sadeghi suggested that scholars treat the manuscript as a pre-canonical copy of the Qur'an that could now help to determine the original Qur'an.[1257] He recommended that scholars do the same with the qur'anic manuscripts that they have been doing with manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures and New Testament. In general, however, Muslim scholars have not subjected the Qur'an to textual criticism. E.A. Rezvan suggested, "The reconstruction of some original form of the text is today of lesser interest."[1258]

9. Comparisons to New Testament manuscripts

The question of "originals" brings us full circle to the *Iẓḥār al-ḥaqq*'s accusations and puts the Qur'an and the Bible on a level scholarly playing field. According to scholars, neither copies of the Qur'an connected with ʿUthmān nor the autograph copies of the New Testament writings exist. The time gap between original and earliest known manuscripts is longer for the New Testament than for the Qur'an. On the other hand, because of Muslim reports of official political editing and destruction of manuscripts, some of which seem to be borne out by manuscript evidence, the original of the Qur'an is more difficult to establish through the science of textual criticism.

Further comparisons of Qur'an and New Testament can usefully be made. Section 1 of this chapter showed that the ambiguities of the Arabic script in the seventh century is a problem unique to the Qur'an. The Hebrew of the earliest manuscripts of the Old Testament is without short vowels, but the consonants are distinct—with the single exception of *sīn* and *shīn*. Letters for long vowels are also part of the script from the beginning: *aleph*, *he*, *waw*, and *yod*. The Greek of the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament is fully supplied with distinct consonants and vowels. By contrast, the Arabic of the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an lacks short vowels, some long vowels like *alif*, and diacritic dots that distinguish consonants of the same basic shape. So, while there are more actual textual variants in early New Testament manuscripts, there is a host of potential or implicit textual variants in the early qur'anic manuscripts due to the defective Arabic script. On the other hand, if the palimpsests represent the kinds of manuscripts that according to Muslim tradition were destroyed, they "contain the same breadth of variety of variants as found in the New Testament manuscripts, especially including variant words, phrases, and even sentences."[1259]

Beyond originals and scripts, a helpful comparison can be made between the Qur'an and the New Testament related to the correction of manuscripts. When Dr. Small compared the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an with the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament, he found material evidence of corrections in both. However, his most significant discovery was the difference in the reasons why corrections were made. In the case of the New Testament, the corrections show no observable pattern: they were made to correct earlier scribal mistakes, to improve grammar or style, or to match another manuscript thought to be more trustworthy.[1260] The Qur'an manuscripts, on the other hand, showed a pattern of correction according to a concept of a standard reading: "the corrections were mostly to cause the text to conform to what is now considered to be the standard ʿUṯmānic consonantal text."[1261]

During the first three centuries of Christianity, there was no Christian political power at work making decisions about the text of the New Testament. There was an informal process among Christian leaders of copying, circulating and accepting their authority (canonization).[1262] There are stories of anti-Christian Roman rulers destroying manuscripts of the Bible, but not of Christians destroying copies of their own scriptures. It is these manuscripts from the first three centuries that are now the most valuable for establishing the original New Testament text.

This chapter shows that there is plenty of scholarly material that raises questions about the manuscripts of the Qur'an. More sections could be added, and many more examples could be given in each section, an effort that might be interesting, but ultimately superfluous if the main point is acknowledged. Academic scholars ask many questions about ancient documents, including both the Bible and the Qur'an. This dispassionate inquiry puts the Bible and Qur'an on a level scholarly playing field. It can help Muslims and Christians stop making unrealistic comparisons between their scriptures with intent to attack.

Questions in themselves do not prove anything. Questions are questions—and as such, provide opportunities for dedicated research, careful analysis, and new discoveries. In this respect, the Qur'an and the Bible are on the same level. It is possible that earlier manuscripts of these scriptures will be discovered—perhaps even the autographs. That could change the present discussion substantially. Given the present state of scholarship, however, unanswered questions about manuscripts and provenance are questions Muslims and Christians share, not reasons to drive the two communities apart. In the meantime, why not read and consider the contents of the scriptures themselves? The resulting conversation promises to be both enlightening and life giving.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Prophecy and Fulfillment

When Jesus had risen from the dead, according to the Gospel, he joined two men who were walking from Jerusalem to the town of Emmaus. The two were talking about the events of the previous days in Jerusalem: how Jesus had been crucified, how they had now heard that Jesus' tomb had been found empty, and about a report of a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive.

The two men were both bewildered and discouraged. "We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel," they said (Gospel according to Luke 24:21).

So Jesus entered the conversation. "Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" (Luke 24:26), Jesus asked. "And beginning with Moses and all of the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

According to the Gospel, Jesus himself presented his identity and assignment as the fulfillment of the prophecies of his coming contained in the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament). Later, when he appeared to his disciples before his ascension, Jesus reminded them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44). These three terms represent the three sections of the Hebrew scriptures— the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. What in particular did Jesus have in mind? What is it that Jesus wanted his disciples to understand from

the scriptures? "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47).

Since Jesus declared he had been prophesied in the Old Testament, it would be appropriate and authentic to pay attention to the prophecies and trace their fulfillment in Jesus according to the Gospel. If Jesus' words are true, the Old Testament prophecies provide a trustworthy clue to both his identity and his work. The intent of this final section of *The gentle answer* is simply to commend the biblical Jesus to you, dear reader. Questions about the reliability of the Bible have been adequately — though not exhaustively — answered in the previous chapters, and the Qur'an has been shown to be a book with questions of its own. Controversy can now take a rest, and a friendly conversation about the contents of the scriptures may move forward.

This final section of *The gentle answer* contains a number of claims for the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in Jesus. It is not enough to simply declare that a certain figure fulfills prophecies in scripture. There must be good reason to connect the prophecy with a particular person or event. True, to say a prophecy is fulfilled in a certain person is a religious truth claim. The believer accepts the claim by faith. However, is this all one can say about prophecy? What does it mean for a particular individual or event to fulfill prophecy?

The Gospel is diligent to demonstrate fulfillment on a number of levels. Sometimes it records that Jesus claimed to be the fulfillment of prophecy, as in the Luke 24 passage. In other cases, the Gospel writers highlighted Old Testament prophecies and explicitly claimed their fulfillment in Jesus. The writers also provided details of events in the life of Jesus that, to their minds, matched the prophecies. They strove to establish correspondence between the ancient prophecies and the events they were witnessing. For them, the

confirmation of fulfillment was in the realities they experienced—the things they saw, heard, and touched.

1. Prophecies in Isaiah about a Servant

The book of the prophet Isaiah presents a series of beautiful prophecies about a mysterious "servant of the Lord (*Yahweh*)." Many readers of the Bible have come to know these prophecies as the *Songs of the Servant*. Because a number of the songs (or poems) described the suffering this servant was to endure, many readers understand the portrait of the servant to be that of a "suffering servant.".

The Songs of the Servant are contained within a remarkable section of Isaiah, Chapters 40-55. However, some scholars also include the first part of Chapter 61 among the Servant Songs, even though the word *servant* does not appear in that passage. The first Servant Song appears in Isaiah 42, where the Lord first famously introduces the servant with, "Here is my servant, whom I uphold…" (Isaiah 42:1). The second song is found in the first part of Isaiah 49, while the third song starts at Isaiah 50:4 and continues to the end of the chapter. The best known of the songs is the fourth, Isaiah 53, although the song actually seems to start in the final verses of Chapter 52.

It turned out that the prophecies in Isaiah were very important for the Gospel.

The Gospel accounts match verses from Isaiah's Songs of the Servant with events in Jesus' ministry and his personal characteristics. Many other New Testament passages contain direct quotations from these songs, or identifiable echoes of them. The earliest Christians understood the Servant Songs to be prophecies of Jesus' coming; and the songs in turn provided language for the ways in which Christians described Jesus' nature, the things he did, and the way in which he did them. Similarly, during the early centuries of

Islam, Eastern Christians living within the Muslim Empire brought forward Isaiah's prophecies to make a case to their Muslim rulers for the divine glory of Jesus.

2. Strength of the Isaiah manuscripts

Dear Muslim friend, this interesting and worthwhile conversation about the prophecies in Isaiah and the question of their fulfillment need not be hindered by uncertainties about the text of Isaiah. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* attempted to cast doubt on the biblical manuscripts in the hope that people would not read and consider the contents of the Bible. However, that was before the amazing manuscript discoveries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[1263] From a scholarly point of view, the accusations of the *Iẓhār* against the biblical manuscripts can no longer be sustained.

Manuscript witness to the Isaiah prophecies is available as far back as the evidence reaches. In fact, when the Dead Sea Scrolls (DDS) were discovered at Qumran in 1947, one of the first manuscripts to be discovered was a complete scroll of the book of Isaiah (known as 1Qisa or The Great Isaiah Scroll). The Isaiah scroll is the longest (734 cm), the best preserved, and the most complete of all the biblical scrolls discovered at Qumran. This discovery took the text of Isaiah back to the second century B.C. — nearly eight centuries before the rise of Islam. Scholars can now compare the text of Isaiah from eight centuries before Islam with the Masoretic text of Isaiah from three centuries after the rise of Islam. Moreover, both texts are accessible online to anyone who wants to examine the evidence.[1264]

There is no mystery about the Isaiah scroll discovered at Qumran. No scholar who knows the scrolls well has found a prophecy in the DSS Isaiah scroll that was erased or changed in the Masoretic text—for example, one that might be related to the messenger of Islam. To the contrary, scholars have found the Dead Sea Scrolls to be

virtually free of any kind of sectarian variation;[1265] and where there is variation, it cannot be related to the messenger of Islam.

At this point in time, academic scholarship can do no more. So why hesitate? Let's take the freedom to read these passages and reason together.

3. "He will not shout or cry out"

The Gospel provides a number of details about Jesus' life and actions that strongly suggest correspondence with the details in the first Servant Song of Isaiah, which most scholars consider to extend from verse 1 to verse 7 of Isaiah 42.

The song opens with God saying, "Here is my servant (Hebrew *ʿabdî*), whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight" (Isaiah 42:1). This is strikingly similar in tone to the voice of God in the Gospel according to Matthew at the time of Jesus' baptism: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17; also Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22). Again, at the time of Jesus' transfiguration, Peter, James, and John heard the voice of God say, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Matthew 17:5, Luke 9:35).

The term *servant*, of course, could apply to many people. However, the Gospel connects this term with Jesus in a number of interesting ways. In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus said about himself, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). When Jesus' disciples argued about which of them would be the greatest, Jesus said, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27). The Gospel according to John presents a picture of Jesus serving: Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, drying them with a towel that was wrapped around him (John 13:5). Though he was their "Lord and Teacher," Jesus served his disciples and said to them, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for

you" (John 13:14-15). Elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul described Jesus' entry into the world: Jesus "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant (Greek *doulos*), being made in human likeness" (Philippians 2:7).

The Isaiah song continues with God saying, "I will put my Spirit on him" (Isaiah 42:1). The Gospel claims a match both in what it reports from eyewitness testimony and what Jesus said about himself. At the time of Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist said, "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him" (John 1:32; also Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10 and Luke 3:22).

On another occasion, Jesus read from the Prophets in a synagogue service in Nazareth. After reading Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor," he then announced to the congregation, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:18-21).

The Isaiah song prophesied a gentle and humble person: "He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out" (Isaiah 42:2-3). The Gospel quoted this passage explicitly to claim a match with Jesus' behaviour. In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus was healing all who were sick among those who followed him, warning the people "not to tell who he was" (Matthew 12:15-16). Matthew wrote, "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah…" (Matthew 12:17); then Matthew quoted the entirety of Isaiah 42:1-4. The question of why Jesus told the people not to tell who he was is an important one and deserves special attention. This theme will be developed more fully in Chapter 22. However, one should not miss the fact that Matthew made a direct Gospel claim that Jesus fulfilled the first Servant Song.

There are other points of correspondence between Isaiah's prophecy and the Gospel accounts. That God would make his servant "a light for the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:6) found an echo in the Gospel when Jesus himself claimed, "I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). The words of Isaiah are also very similar to those of Simeon when he held the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God for allowing him to see the one who would become "…a light for revelation to the Gentiles and a glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:32).

The Isaiah song also prophesied that the servant would "open the eyes of the blind" (Isaiah 42:7). Who is more famous for healing the blind than Jesus? The Gospel provides many accounts of Jesus healing the blind, for example Matthew 9:27-31. Muslim writings also affirm that ʿĪsā (the qur'anic Jesus) healed the blind (Q 3:49, 5:110). This theme of the miracles of Jesus will be developed more fully in Chapter 20. For now, Jesus' miracles must simply be recognized as a possible point of correspondence to the prophecy in the first Servant Song.

One feature of the servant in Isaiah 42 that may inspire a question about its fulfillment is the prophecy, "he will bring justice (Hebrew *mishpāṭ*) to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1; also verses 3 and 4). Many readers will picture, at first thought, a political or legal justice. However, this is not the kind of justice one finds in the work of Jesus in the New Testament. Rather, God is shown to have established his justice in the way he has dealt with human sin and has established a new way of making people righteous through Jesus' death.

> God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice (Greek *dikaiosunēs*), because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (Romans 3:25-26).

This passage explains how Jesus brought justice to the nations. Because of Jesus' death, God can justly forgive human sin, as the apostle John wrote: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"

(1 John 1:9). The way God forgives human sin through Jesus' death will be explained further in Chapter 21.

4. "Gentle and riding on a donkey"

Isaiah prophesied that the coming servant would not break a "bruised reed" or snuff out "a smoldering wick" (Isaiah 42:3). What should the reader picture from this highly unusual description? It seems to portray a person who would treat other people with profound gentleness. Is there reason to conclude that Jesus fulfilled this picture?

Yes, there is good reason to make this connection—in the Gospel citation of Old Testament prophecy, in what Jesus said about himself, and in Jesus' behaviour and teaching. Another striking prophecy from the Hebrew scriptures is found in the book of the prophet Zechariah. Zechariah explicitly used the language of gentleness in a prophecy of a king to come. According to Zechariah, "your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle (Hebrew *ʿānî*) and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). The passage further prophesied that this king would "proclaim peace (*shālōm*) to the nations." Through this person, "the battle bow will be broken" (Zechariah 9:10).

In the Gospel, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem peacefully, seated on a donkey, while a large crowd shouted praises. Reflecting on the meaning of this event, the Gospel accounts expressed an echo of Zechariah's prophecy. Matthew wrote, "This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet," then quoted Zechariah 9:9 in full (Matthew 21:4-5, also John 12:15). The Greek word for "gentle" in Matthew's citation is *praus*,[1266] the same word used in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

When Jesus described himself in the Gospel, he used this same word, *praus*. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn

from me, for I am gentle (*praus*) and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). In the Gospel according to Matthew, at the same time that Jesus described himself this way, he had an opportunity to demonstrate gentleness in his behaviour. Jesus met a man with a shriveled hand (Matthew 12:10) and wanted to heal him. However, the Pharisees, intending to find a reason to accuse Jesus, said it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath. In spite of the danger from these Jewish religious leaders who wanted to kill him, Jesus told the man with the shriveled hand to stretch out his hand. "So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other" (Matthew 12:13). If there was to be a correspondence to the prophecy of a servant who would not break a bruised reed (Isaiah 42:3), could such a correspondence be any more fitting than Jesus' healing of this man with a shriveled hand?

When Christians living within the Islamic Empire wanted to account for their faith to their new Muslim rulers, they often quoted from the Old Testament prophets in an effort to show that passages from the prophets "show us Jesus the Messiah in a clear mirror and point to him."[1267] They described the teaching of Jesus that urged his followers to treat others with kindness and grace,[1268] and even explicitly connected Jesus with the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9-10.[1269]

5. He came and preached peace

In addition to describing Jesus' gentle behaviour, the Gospel contains the commandments of Jesus to humankind to live in peace with other people. In Jesus' teaching recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus addressed a number of common situations of violence and instructed his followers to respond peaceably. The teaching is contained in a substantial passage known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Anger and name-calling between people is certainly a very common occurrence. The Torah says, "You

shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). Jesus, however, said that anyone who is angry with his brother would be subject to judgment, and anyone who called his brother a disrespectful name would be in danger of the fire of hell (Matthew 5:22).

Jesus reminded his hearers of the verse in the Torah, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot…" (Exodus 21:24).[1270] Jesus, however, taught that retribution was not God's original intention. Instead, he commanded, "I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39).

Many people who do not know the Gospel know the expression "turn the other cheek." This expression is unique to Jesus. However, Jesus' commandment to love one's enemies is perhaps even more famous. To love one's neighbor and hate one's enemy is normal. "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?" Jesus asked. "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Many have called these commandments of Jesus unreasonable and impractical, and some Muslim scholars have even decided that Jesus could not possibly have delivered them.[1271] Such responses should not cause the reader to miss the fact that these commandments are part of the Gospel, that they are the words of Jesus, and that they teach a gentle way for people to behave. By contrast, al-Kindī cited Matthew 5:44-45 as an illustration of the divine law that Jesus taught. "This law is divine, above nature, higher than reason. Here are mercy and forgiveness and all that corresponds to the divine nature."[1272]

Interesting, Jesus said explicitly that he had not come to abolish the Law (Torah) and the Prophets, but rather to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17). How could Jesus' commandments be understood to fulfill the Torah? In each of these cases, Jesus took an expression related to violence, familiar to his hearers from the Hebrew scriptures, and turned it in the direction of peaceful behaviour between people. To "fulfill" in this case meant to take the Word of God forward into realizing the completeness of God's original

intention of peace for humankind. More details on the commandments of Jesus related to peaceful behaviour are given in Chapter 23. At this point, however, it must be clearly noted that according to the Gospel, Jesus' behaviour was perfectly consistent with what he taught his followers.

6. A rival claim of fulfillment?

Correspondence between scriptural prophecy and fulfillment is not something that can be proven in the sense of a "scientific proof." A claim of fulfillment is a religious truth claim, and people are free to either believe it or not. As the previous sections have demonstrated, good reasons can be given for a claim of fulfillment: Jesus' own claim to be the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, the explicit citing in the Gospel of Old Testament prophecies linked with particular events, and details of events or Jesus' personality that seem to match the prophecies.

However, there may be claims that a particular prophecy is fulfilled in someone other than Jesus. This seems to be the case with an expression from the first Servant Song of Isaiah.

A number of early Muslim sources transmit a tradition they claim to be a quotation from the Torah given by ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ. According to al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), for example, ʿAṭāʾ ibn Yasār asks ʿAbd Allāh to tell him the reference to the messenger of Islam in the Torah. The tradition given by ʿAbd Allāh contains the phrase, "…he is not crude, nor uncouth, nor clamorous in the markets (*laysa bi-faẓẓin wa lā ghalīẓ wa lā ṣakhkhāb fī ʾl-aswāq*)…."[1273] Some academic scholars have written that this expression in the Muslim tradition sounds similar to Isaiah 42:2.[1274]

The claim that this expression is fulfilled in the messenger of Islam would need to be measured against the messenger of Islam's actual behaviour. Do the earliest accounts Muslims wrote about their messenger portray him as a gentle and peaceable person? The *Sīra*

of Ibn Isḥāq? The *Maghāzī* of al-Wāqidī? The *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd? The *Taʾrīkh* of al-Ṭabarī?

In terms of the Qur'an, the claim of a messenger who was *lā ghalīẓ* would need to be measured against several verses that use the same Arabic root, *ghaluza*. The Qur'an says, "O Prophet! Strive (*jāhidi*) against the disbelievers and the hypocrites! Be harsh (*aghluẓ*)[1275] with (*ʿalā*) them" (Q 9:73). The same wording appears in another *sūra*: "O Prophet! Strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern (*aghluẓ*) with them" (Q 66:9). A similar commandment applies to Muslims: "O ye who believe! Fight (*qātilū*) those of the disbelievers who are near to you, and let them find harshness (*ghilẓa*)[1276] in you" (Q 9:123). At Q 48:29, one of four verses where the messenger of Islam is named, the Qur'an offers a parallel statement: "…those with him are hard (*ashiddāʾ*) [1277] against the unbelievers and merciful among themselves."[1278]

There appears to be a contradiction between the witness of the Qur'an and the tradition that the messenger would be *lā ghalīẓ*. How should the reader understand this apparent contradiction?

7. An example of gentleness for believers

The gentleness that Jesus claimed for himself in the Gospel became the very behaviour the writers of the New Testament recommended to Jesus' followers after his death and resurrection. Jesus himself said to his followers, "learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (Matthew 11:29). For this reason, the apostle Paul wrote, "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near" (Philippians 4:5). Paul included gentleness in his lists of the qualities he instructed Jesus' followers to show in their lives: "clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12); "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:11); "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,

peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

On this detail, the Qur'an seems to confirm the Gospel. The Qur'an says that Jesus' followers would be gentle: "…and we caused ʿĪsā, son of Mary, to follow, and gave him the Gospel, and placed compassion (*raʾfa*)[1279] and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him" (Q 57:27).

Of all the qualities of Jesus the New Testament recommends to the followers of Jesus, none is more important than a peaceful response to situations of conflict. The apostle Peter wrote that it is commendable to suffer for doing good and to endure it. "To this you were called, because the Messiah suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). Here is how Peter described Jesus' behaviour:

> When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (1 Peter 2:23-24).

Interestingly, in the midst of this passage, Peter connected this behaviour of Jesus to the fourth Servant Song in Isaiah, quoting explicitly, "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22, quoting Isaiah 53:9).

For this reason, the New Testament writers required gentleness even in the way followers of Jesus were to speak with others. Peter wrote that Jesus' followers should always be ready to explain their faith to anyone who asked, and they needed to do this "with gentleness (*prautētos*) and respect" (1 Peter 3:15). Paul prefaced his appeal to the reader in 2 Corinthians 10:1, "By the meekness and gentleness of the Messiah…." Likely, both apostles also had in mind the proverb from the Hebrew scriptures, "A gentle answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1).

Muslim reader, it is sincerely hoped that you have, at some time, experienced gentleness or compassion from a follower of Jesus, or a gentle answer to a question. If not, there is reason for sadness and —as far as this author is able to represent the followers of Jesus— reason to ask for your forgiveness. This book certainly makes no claim that Jesus' followers, least of all this author, have always lived up to his teaching and example in the Gospel. However, this deficiency does not change the nature of Jesus' teaching and example in the Gospel. The problem is not with either the reliability or content of the Gospel but rather with human weakness. Jesus' teaching and example match the picture of the gentle servant prophesied in Isaiah 42:2-3. And the Gospel clearly commands Jesus' followers to follow in his steps.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The One Who Was to Come

The Gospel according to Matthew reports that on one occasion Jesus healed three men, two of whom were blind and one who was mute. The account of these healings illustrates the pattern of miracle stories in the Gospel. The miracles stories in turn provide evidence for the claim that Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament[1280] prophecy.

The two blind men followed Jesus as he walked, calling out to him, "Have mercy on us!" They even followed him into a house. "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Jesus asked them. They answered yes. "Then he touched their eyes…and their sight was restored." Jesus told the healed men not to tell others about their healing, but instead, "they went out and spread the news about him all over that region" (Matthew 9:29-31).

When Jesus was leaving the house, a man who was mute was brought to him. According to the Gospel, the man was possessed by a demon. Jesus drove out the demon, and the man began to talk. People who witnessed the miracle were amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel" (Matthew 9:33).

Also present at the miracle were representatives of a group of religious leaders, the Pharisees. These witnesses said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons" (9:34).

This is just one of several reports of Jesus' healings of blind or mute men in the Gospel accounts, but several elements of this short passage are typical. First there is a human need. Jesus responds to

the need and performs a miracle out of his own power. The people credit Jesus for the miracle. The people see the miracle, and the Gospel presents this as evidence it took place. Some of the religious leaders respond negatively to the miracle.

The Gospel accounts record thirty-seven miracles of Jesus, including four distinct accounts of healing the blind. According to the Gospel, Jesus also healed lepers, raised the dead, healed cripples and paralytics, and cured a woman who had been suffering from bleeding for twelve years. Jesus walked on the surface of the Sea of Galilee, calmed the storm, and fed thousands of people from a few loaves of bread and several fish.

Of all the issues between the Bible and the Qur'an, this is perhaps the least controversial. Jesus' miracles reported in the Gospel accounts have been problematic for many people in the West who have grown up with a modern rationalist worldview and are skeptical of the supernatural. However, miracles and the supernatural have not generally been a problem for Muslims, and the Qur'an explicitly tells about ʿĪsā—the qur'anic Jesus—performing a number of miracles. Furthermore, in the Qur'an, it is only ʿĪsā who does these specific miracles, so there is no sense in the Qur'an of a comparison or competition between Jesus and other figures.[1281]

The Gospel reports of Jesus healing the blind turn out to be important evidence that Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The previous chapter discussed the prophecy of the first "servant song" of Isaiah (Isaiah 42:1-7) and asked what would be required in order to demonstrate its fulfillment. According to the Gospel, Jesus fulfilled that prophecy. John the Baptist asked Jesus whether he was "the one who was to come." Coming from a devout Jew, this question represented an expectation based on Old Testament prophecy. Jesus answered by pointing to his miracles: "The blind receive sight…" (Luke 7:22). What did Jesus' miracles have to do with John the Baptist's expectation of "one who was to come"? How do the miracles of Jesus provide evidence that he was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy?

Dear Muslim reader, we agree that Jesus performed miracles; but there may be a question between us about the meaning of the miracles for Jesus' identity. This chapter explains what the miracles of Jesus mean in the Gospel.

1. "Are you the one who was to come?"

All over the world, one of the best-known characteristics of Jesus is that he was a miracle worker. According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus began to perform miracles very soon after his baptism (for example Gospel according to Mark, chapter 1). The Gospel accounts intersperse reports of Jesus' miracles with Jesus' teaching and other content. On one occasion, Jesus described his miracles as the fulfillment of prophecy.

John the Baptist was in prison and heard about the things that Jesus was doing. He sent his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Luke 7:18-20). His question was about the fulfillment of prophecy. John and his disciples were "expecting" someone they knew about from the Hebrew scriptures. Jesus' answer is interesting:

> Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me (Luke 7:22-23).[1282]

In this speech, Jesus did not merely claim he was "the one who was to come" in the expectation of John the Baptist. He told John's disciples to bear witness to what they had seen and heard. In other words, Jesus offered John eyewitness accounts of his miracles—the evidence that John would need in order to know that Jesus was "the one who was to come."[1283]

How else was John to know that Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecy except through the evidence that sensory perception

provides?

Jesus drew attention to his miracles as evidence of his identity. Once in a conversation with Philip, Jesus said, "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves (*dia ta erga auta*)" (John 14:11). On another occasion, Jesus said, "Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:37-38). Jesus also said, after healing a crippled man, "I have testimony weightier than that of John [the Baptist]. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me" (John 5:36). In all these verses, Jesus himself spoke about the importance of humans perceiving with their senses what he actually did in front of witnesses.

2. Prophecy that "your God will come"

When John the Baptist asked whether Jesus was "the one who was to come," his expectation was based on his knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures as a prophet. What particular prophecy or prophecies might he have had in mind? It is possible that John the Baptist was thinking of an expression from the fourth "servant song" of Isaiah, "Surely he took up our infirmities…" (Isaiah 53:4). The Gospel explicitly cites this verse after a report that Jesus "healed all the sick." "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, 'He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases'" (Matthew 8:17).

However, because of the specific words that Jesus used in the Gospel (Luke 7:22), it seems more likely that John the Baptist was thinking of another text from Isaiah. Isaiah 35 tells of a time to come when people will experience God's healing:

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy. (Isaiah 35:5-6)

The context for these remarkable verses is a chapter full of expressions of hope and joy. Immediately before the verses of healing comes the prophecy "your God will come," and "he will come to save you" (Isaiah 35:4). The verses are surrounded by the joyful proclamation that water will flow in the parched desert, and the wilderness will blossom with flowers (vv. 1-2, 6-7). The chapter proclaims, "they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God" (v. 2). The Lord will indeed save his people: he will "redeem" and "ransom" them, and their sorrow will be replaced by joy (vv. 9-10). The verses of healing, in other words, are part of a larger picture of God's salvation.

It is striking that three of the four details prophesied in Isaiah 35:5-6 are healings that Jesus said people could freely witness in his own miracles: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, and the deaf hear (Luke 7:22).[1284] The fourth detail in the Isaiah prophecy, that the mute will speak, though not found in Jesus' speech, is well attested in Jesus' miracles in the Gospel accounts (for example, Matthew 9:32-3).

During the early centuries of Islam, when Christians living within the Muslim Empire wanted to commend Jesus to their rulers, they often cited Isaiah 35:4-6 to show that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. For example, Timothy the Patriarch quoted this passage after saying to the caliph Mahdi, "the prophets reveal to us the miracles that [Jesus] will work at his coming."[1285] Similarly, ʿAbd al-Masīh ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī quoted Isaiah 35:4-6, then appealed to his Abbasid dialogue partner, "May God guide you into the truth, that you might see how our scriptures witness to the fact that the Messiah did all this."[1286]

3. The integrity of the texts

As established in Chapter 19, the text of Isaiah is not in dispute. The earliest manuscripts present a text basically the same as the critical text used as the basis of all translations today. The text of Isaiah 35:5-6 in the Dead Sea Scrolls from the second century B.C.,[1287] eight centuries before Islam, matches the wording of the Masoretic text from the tenth century A.D., three centuries after the rise of Islam.

Similarly, the text of the accounts of Jesus' miracles in the Gospel is not in dispute. The very earliest documents about Jesus in existence contain reports of him performing miracles. They are part of the Gospel. The miracle accounts were not added much later in documents that were written after a gap of two hundred years or more. Rather, New Testament scholars date the Gospel accounts to between thirty and seventy years after the Jesus' death and resurrection, when eyewitnesses were still living. In terms of textual criticism, they are part of the "original" Gospel.

If there is a difficulty with the accounts of miracles, it is not the Gospel text that is in question but rather the approach of modernist scholars to miracles. In other words, scholars do not say that miracle accounts are not part of the Gospel, but rather they don't believe the miracles took place. This modernist approach would treat any references to miracles in the Qur'an in the same way. A good illustration of this is the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*'s seventy-sixth accusation of "contradiction" in the Gospel.[1288] The *Iẓhār* presents the accounts of the raising of the synagogue ruler's daughter from Matthew 9 and Mark 5. According to the *Iẓhār*, the scholars "Nander… Balish… Shliemasher and Shashan" do not believe the girl was dead. The *Iẓhār* then concludes, "According to their opinions, here is no miracle of the resurrection of the dead."[1289] To what extent does the opinion of these scholars depend on their belief that Jesus did not raise people from the dead? Islam, on the other hand, has no problem with miracles, and the Qur'an affirms that ʿĪsā raised the dead (Q 3:49, 5:110).

4. The blind receive sight

Most of the Gospel reports about Jesus' miracles are concise and straightforward, providing basic information about the event and the people involved. The Gospel according to John, however, offers a number of passages which show people struggling with the meaning of the miracle. Chapter 9 is a full chapter of forty-one verses reporting on Jesus healing a blind man. The first seven verses relate the healing itself; the remaining thirty-four deal with the various responses to it, which ranged from high praise to unbelief. Though it may seem strange to find something wrong with Jesus' healing of a blind man, some people did indeed "fall away" on account of Jesus.

Early in Chapter 9, the Gospel reports the healing itself: Jesus spit on the ground, made a little mud from the saliva, put it on the blind man's eyes, then told the man to wash in the "Pool of Siloam." The blind man obeyed and "came home seeing" (John 9:6-7). When the neighbours asked the healed man, he told them clearly that he was the man whom they formerly used to see sitting and begging and how he had been healed (vv. 8-11). Seemingly skeptical, the neighbours asked about the identity of the healer (v. 12).

The neighbours brought the man "who had been blind" to the Jewish religious authorities, the Pharisees. The healed man again told how he had been healed (verse 15). The Pharisees first disputed the identity of the healer because, they claimed, anyone who healed on the Sabbath could not be from God (v. 16). The healed man himself said that Jesus was a prophet, but neighbours and Pharisees still would not believe until they had asked the healed man's parents. Even this was inconclusive for them, because the parents—out of fear—did not want to acknowledge Jesus as the healer (vv. 20-23).

The Pharisees pursued their claim that the healer was a sinner, but the healed man simply affirmed, "I was blind but now I see" (verse 25). The Pharisees asked how he had been healed. The healed man made a case that the one who healed him must be

godly. "Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind" (v. 33). The Pharisees then insulted the healed man and threw him out.

Later, Jesus met the healed man and asked whether he believed in the "Son of Man." The healed man asked Jesus to tell him who this Son of Man was so that he could believe. Jesus answered, "You have now seen him; in fact he is the one speaking with you" (v. 37). The healed man responded, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Jesus (v. 38).

As in most of the stories of Jesus' miracles in the Gospel accounts, Jesus simply healed the blind man in his own power, without qualification (John 9:6-7). The main theme of the subsequent discussion about the meaning of the article is Jesus' identity. At the end of the story, the healed man worshipped Jesus, and Jesus did not refuse that worship (v. 38). Through this miracle, Jesus revealed his divine glory.

5. Many different responses to the miracles of Jesus

In many other cases, the Gospel accounts relate the responses of the people who saw Jesus' miracles. Many witnesses simply rejoiced and praised God. Others, however, responded negatively. Jesus said, "Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me" (Luke 7:23). His comment suggests some people would take offense.

It seems strange that people would react negatively to a healing, yet the Gospel accounts report many such responses. In many of the healing stories in the Gospel, the Jewish religious leaders known as Pharisees responded negatively because they objected to Jesus performing miracles on the Sabbath. However, this was not their only reason for taking offense.

For example, the Gospel according to Matthew reports that "[t]he blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them" (Matthew 21:14). Children who witnessed the healings began to

shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (v. 15). Hearing this, the chief priests and the teachers of the law became indignant, and asked Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" (Matthew 21:16). They thought it inappropriate for the children to say "Hosanna" to Jesus and for him to accept it. "Hosanna" is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew expression *hōshīʿah na*, which means "Save now!" In Psalm 118:25, this Hebrew expression is addressed to God (Yahweh): "O Lord, save us; O Lord, grant us success."

Jesus showed no signs of considering this praise inappropriate. Instead, he quoted a verse from a famous psalm about children praising God: "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise" (Psalm 8:2). Here Jesus both associated himself with an Old Testament text and accepted praise meant for God ("O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth," Psalm 8:1).

Another report of the same incident appears in the Gospel according to Luke. In this account, "the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen" (Luke 19:37). They recited Ps. 118:26: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord," and "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." They were praising the "king." The Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke his disciples (v. 39), but Jesus answered, "if they [the disciples] keep quiet, the stones will cry out" (v. 40).[1290]

Why did the most "religious" members of Jewish society take offense at Jesus' miracles, while the common people simply rejoiced and praised God? This question is a worthwhile topic for discussion between Christians and Muslims. In this incident, the issue was the Jesus' identity. The religious leaders objected to the praise people offered to Jesus when he performed miracles, and to the way in which Jesus accepted their praise.

6. Signs of his glory

In most of the miracle stories in the Gospel, Jesus simply responded to human need with divine power to heal. However, at a number of points, the Gospel highlights Jesus' miracles for what they say about his identity. In the account of the healing of the man born blind, the healed man worshipped Jesus and Jesus accepted his worship (John 9:38). The focus of their conversation is Jesus' identity and whether the healed man believed in him (John 9:35-8).

The Gospel according to John calls Jesus' miracles "miraculous signs" (*sēmeia*) (John 2:11). After Jesus performed the miracle of changing water into wine, the Gospel comments, "He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (John 2:11). In John's Gospel account, the miracles of Jesus are part of the evidence for the identity of Jesus from the opening testimony: "We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The Gospel continues to use "miraculous signs" in this way, for example, in connection with Jesus' healing of the official's son (John 4:54), the lame (John 6:2), and the blind (John 9:16), and his feeding of the five thousand (6:14).

Jesus himself drew attention to his miracles as evidence of his identity. Jesus said the miracles demonstrated "that I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:11). The issue was his claim that "[a]nyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). On another occasion, the issue was Jesus' statements, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), and "I am God's Son" (John 10:36). The religious leaders had accused Jesus of blasphemy and wanted to stone him, but he answered them, "Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:37-38). In both cases, Jesus said that the miracles revealed his deity and the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.

Near the end of the Gospel according to John, the writer indicated explicitly that he told the stories of Jesus' miracles in order to highlight Jesus' identity. "Jesus did many other miraculous signs

(*sēmeia*) in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30-31). The Gospel ends with another reference to the author's selectivity: "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (John 21:25).[1291]

The miracles of Jesus not only support the claims he made for himself, but also show that the salvation he brought is secure. "This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will" (Hebrews 2:3b-4). Arab Christians living in the Muslim Empire during the early centuries of Islam argued that God confirms the authenticity of his revelation by miracles.[1292] ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī and Theodore Abū Qurra (both d. ca. 825) insisted that miracles were the signs of true prophecy. Some scholars suggest it was this challenge from Christians that produced the desire in Muslims to search for miracles in the story of the messenger of Islam.[1293]

7. Miracles of ʿĪsā in the Qur'an

The Qur'an mentions a number of miracles done by ʿĪsā. ʿĪsā says, "I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead" (Q 3:49, cf. 5:110). All three of ʿĪsā's miracles in the Qur'an are part of Jesus' own testimony in the Gospel: "The blind receive sight… those who have leprosy are cured…the dead are raised" (Luke 7:22). All three miracles are also well attested in the Gospel.

There is, therefore, no disagreement on what Jesus actually did. However, the Qur'an seems to allow the reader to be diverted from the Gospel meaning of Jesus' miracles. After reporting that ʿĪsā does these miracles, the Qur'an adds, "by permission (*idhn*) of Allah" (Q

3:49; 5:110 has "by my permission" twice). This expression has been used by many Muslims to deflect the thought that performing miracles revealed Jesus' deity.[1294] The polemicists say that divine power to heal and to raise the dead should be credited to Allah, and not to ʿĪsā.

Does the Gospel attempt to deflect divine glory away from Jesus? The account of Jesus' healing of "one born blind" in John 9 has already been examined. The central question of the account is clearly Jesus' identity. When his neighbours asked the once-blind man how he had been healed, he simply said, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see" (John 9:11). The healed man was not in doubt about who did the miracle, and when he learned of Jesus' identity, he worshipped him (John 9:38). The healing of the blind man revealed the glory of God, but the Pharisees don't want to acknowledge this because Jesus "put mud" on the blind man's eyes on the Sabbath.

The healing of a man with leprosy was one of the first miracles reported in the Gospel according to Matthew. A man with leprosy came to Jesus and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean" (Matthew 8:2). Jesus said, "I am willing," and commanded "Be clean!" Immediately the man was cured of his leprosy (Matthew 8:3; also Luke 5:13). This healing story is typical of the Gospel accounts: Jesus simply healed out of his own power.

In another Gospel report, Jesus healed ten lepers at the same time (Luke 17:11-19). Only one of the ten returned to thank Jesus—a Samaritan. "One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him" (Luke 17:15-16). The passage does not distinguish between Jesus and God. Neither does Jesus' question, "Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" (Luke 17:18) make such a distinction. If this leaves room for ambiguity, the Gospel seems comfortable with it.

The best-known Gospel report of Jesus raising a person from the dead is the raising of Lazarus (John 11). In order to evaluate the qur'anic expression *bidhn Allāh*, one must read this Gospel report very carefully. From beginning to end, the report's central concern is Jesus' identity and the responses to him. Jesus identified himself as "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), and Martha responded that she believed he was "the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world" (John 11:27). Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). When Jesus addressed the "Father" just before raising Lazarus from the dead, his prayer was not that of a mere human prophet to the Almighty God. Rather, it was God the Son conversing with God the Father: "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me…" (John 11:41-2). Elsewhere, Jesus said, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it" (John 5:21).

One should not miss the fact that the issue here is a disagreement between the Gospel and Muslim perceptions of the meaning of *bidhn Allāh*. As we have asked frequently in this book, why should Muslim perceptions in the seventh century and later be assumed to be able to cancel what was written in the Gospel six hundred years earlier?

8. Proof of Jesus' identity

John the Baptist asked Jesus, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else" (Luke 7:20). Jesus answered that he was indeed the one who was to come, but he answered with something better than a bare claim. He replied, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard" (Luke 7:22). At that very time Jesus was curing people who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits. He was giving sight to many who were blind. Jesus answered the first part of John's question affirmatively with actions clearly accessible to human sense perception.

Jesus said that the miracles provided evidence of his divine glory. "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father," Jesus said to his disciple Philip. "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves" (John 14:9, 11). Through his performance of miraculous signs Jesus "revealed his glory" (John 2:11). Jesus was the one who was to come.

This means that the second part of John's question was answered in the negative. No, John and his disciples should not expect someone else. Jesus proved by his miracles that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah 35. There was no need to wait for another. "We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The one who witnessed the evidence was free to believe or disbelieve as he or she chose. The stumbling block for the witness was often the acceptance of the identity of Jesus. Was he truly the glorious divine figure that the miracles showed him to be? Jesus said, "Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me" (Luke 7:23).

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Look! The Lamb of God

When John the Baptist first saw Jesus walking toward him on the dusty road to Bethany, he exclaimed, "Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Gospel according to John 1:29).

What weight of prophecy was packed into the particular imagery which John the Baptist chose for this first public introduction of Jesus in the Gospel? What was the divine necessity that inspired the Baptist to specify the Lamb's assignment right at the start?

John the Baptist's description of Jesus provides an opportunity to explore the complex relationship of prophecy to fulfillment within the Bible. After his death and resurrection, Jesus explained to his disciples that biblical prophecy carries within itself the obligation of fulfillment. "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Gospel according to Luke 24:44). Why "must" (*dei*)? When something is prophesied in the Bible, it means it is God's plan from the beginning. Fulfillment means more than a coincidence or imagined correspondence of incidental details. It means that God's plan is fully realized. Fulfillment is the completion of the divine assignment that allowed Jesus to say, "It is finished" (Gospel according to John 19:30).

Interestingly, both the Qur'an and the book of the prophet Isaiah relate to John the Baptist's exclamation, though in different ways. In the Gospel, when the Jewish religious leaders from Jerusalem asked John the Baptist to tell them who he was, the Baptist answered "in the words of Isaiah the prophet," "I am the voice of one calling in

the desert, 'make straight the way for the Lord'" (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:3). In the Qur'an, angels tell Zakaria that his son Yaḥya will "confirm a word from Allah" (Q 3:39). "A word from Allah" has been understood in the Muslim interpretive tradition to mean Jesus.[1295] Both references seem to indicate deity in the one to come: in Isaiah 40:3, the Hebrew of "Lord" is the divine name "Yahweh"; and the qur'anic "word from Allah" mysteriously evokes the figure in the first verse of the Gospel according to John, the Word who "was God." However, when the prophetic voice of John the Baptist "confirmed" Jesus, he chose to call him "the Lamb of God."

When we begin to explore the meaning of this description, "the Lamb of God," we find that the phrase is linked with a number of important stories and texts in the Hebrew scriptures. The book of Isaiah, in fact, provides one of the most helpful passages for understanding this phrase. By the first century A.D., these stories and texts were understood by many Jews to point to the salvation of humanity through atonement.[1296] The New Testament picked up on many of the atonement passages from the Hebrew Bible and made the case that Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. The second part of John the Baptist's introduction, that the Lamb of God "takes away the sins of the world," is explained in many other parts of the Gospel. The Gospel tells how the world is in the grip of sin and is in need of salvation. It explains how God the Father gave his Son in order to provide a way of salvation for humanity. The Son of God was obedient to the Father's will and voluntarily lay down his life to save humanity.

These famous affirmations in the New Testament and Hebrew Bible are not echoed in the Qur'an. Some of the Islamic understandings of sin, sacrifice, and the need for salvation are briefly discussed at the end of the chapter. The Qur'an and the Gospel appear to offer quite distinct diagnoses of the human condition and, therefore, clearly divergent cures. The two scriptures also disagree about whether it is possible for God to come very close to humanity in the form of a Suffering Servant.

1. Background in the Torah

The first passage in the Hebrew scriptures that helps prepare the reader for John the Baptist's exclamation about Jesus is a story from the Torah about Abraham, also referred to in the Qur'an. Genesis 22 tells the story of how God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Abraham obeyed God and set out to sacrifice him on one of the mountains in the region of Moriah. On the way, Isaac asked his father, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (Genesis 22:7-8).

On the mountain, when Abraham picked up a knife to kill his son, Yahweh's angel told him not to harm the boy. Abraham had proven himself obedient to God's command. Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. "He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son" (Genesis 22:13). In this story a ram is sacrificed rather than a lamb, but it is clear from the context that this ram is the "lamb" that God provided (vv. 8, 14). The incident suggests the concept of substitution, that an animal could be sacrificed "instead of" a human.

The second passage from the Hebrew scriptures that helps illuminate "lamb of God" is the story, also from the Torah, of the plagues that came upon Egypt when Pharaoh refused to let the Children of Israel leave their slavery. On the night of the final plague in Egypt, each Israelite family slaughtered a lamb "without defect." The family then took some of the blood of the lamb and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of their houses (Exodus 12:22). When Yahweh "passed through" Egypt to "strike down every firstborn," he "passed over" the homes of the Israelites who had applied the blood of the lamb (Exodus 12:13, 23).

A third passage from the Torah which could possibly come to mind if one heard that the Lamb "takes away the sin of the world" is the instruction for observing the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16.

The book of Leviticus is greatly concerned with sacrifice for human sin. The sacrifice of a variety of animals, including lambs, is required for various situations. "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement (Hebrew *kipper*) for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (Leviticus 17:11). On the Day of Atonement, Aaron was to slaughter a goat to make atonement for the "uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites" (Leviticus 16:16). However, the most striking picture is that of a second goat Aaron was to release alive into the desert. He would lay his hands on the head of the goat and confess over it "all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head" (Leviticus 16:21), then send the goat out into the desert. "The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place" (Leviticus 16:22). In the Torah, the concept of taking away the sins of humans is given this unforgettable image.

2. Background in the Prophets

However, the passage from the Hebrew scriptures that likely would have occurred most readily to John the Baptist and the readers of John is from the book of Isaiah. The fourth "Servant Song" paints a portrait of a figure who will bear the sins of others. Scholars usually consider the fourth song to be the final three verses of Isaiah 52 and the whole of Chapter 53. That this passage concerns the Servant of Yahweh is indicated at 52:13. This figure will have nothing in his appearance that would make people desire him (53:2). Instead, people will despise and reject him; he will suffer and is described as "a man of sorrows" (53:3). But this Servant of Yahweh will carry the sorrows of humanity, take up the infirmities of humanity, and bear the punishment that brings humanity peace (53:4, 5).

This evocative portrait of a Suffering Servant highlights the possibility that a "righteous servant" of God (53:11) may bear the sins of others. He will be pierced for the transgressions of humanity;

he will be crushed for the iniquities of others; healing comes to humanity through his wounds (53:5). The writer of this song included himself and all of humankind among the sinners who need salvation: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way…" (53:6). The song makes clear that the intention to save humanity through the suffering of the Servant is that of the Creator God himself. "Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (53:6). Later in the song, this intention is made even more explicit: "It was the will of Yahweh to crush him and cause him to suffer" (53:10).

There is good reason to find an echo of this Servant Song in John the Baptist's exclamation about Jesus, and the song seems to make the link even more appropriate: "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth" (53:7). Geza Vermes argued that by calling Jesus "the Lamb of God," the Gospel according to John consciously emphasized not only the Suffering Servant, but the Passover Lamb and the sacrifice of Isaac as well.[1297]

3. The Gospel fulfills the Torah and Prophets

The Servant Songs, of course, do not give the name of the figure who will fulfill these prophecies. To link the prophecies to an historical person is a religious truth claim. What is for certain is that this was exactly the claim made by Jesus' first followers. The process is illustrated in an interesting way in a story about Philip in the New Testament book of Acts. On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, Philip met an Ethiopian official who was "sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet" (Acts 8:28). He was reading the fourth Servant Song from Isaiah, particularly 53:7-8 about the lamb led to the slaughter (Acts 8:32-33).

However, the poetry of the song is mysterious, and the Ethiopian told Philip that he could not understand what he was reading unless

someone explained it to him. Referring to Isaiah 53:7-8, he asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" (Acts 8:34) Philip's response was to link the portrait in Isaiah with Jesus. He "began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:35).

Many other New Testament passages connect the materials on the "lamb" from the Hebrew Bible explicitly to Jesus. Paul, for example, wrote, "the Messiah, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Peter told his readers they were "redeemed" from their former way of life "with the precious blood of the Messiah, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:19). The book of Hebrews, in particular, links the animal sacrifices of the Torah with the sacrifice Jesus made: by laying down his life Jesus "offered for all time one sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:12). In Hebrews and in other New Testament passages, the shedding of Jesus' blood is necessary for human salvation, and "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22).

Martin Hengel argued that the language of Romans 8:32 brings to mind the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son: "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"[1298] At the same time, Geza Vermes concluded that by the first century, a strong tradition had developed among Jews that Isaac cooperated willingly to offer himself for sacrifice, and that his self-sacrifice had atoning power.[1299]

At least one Christian leader living among Muslims in the early centuries of the Muslim Empire used this affirmation to try to make a case for the Gospel witness to the death of Jesus. The Chalcedonian bishop of Harran in Syria, Theodore Abu Qurra, wrote that only the shedding of the blood of the Messiah could maintain the balance between law and forgiveness. Abu Qurra hoped that by arguing from both the Torah and Gospel, scriptures named in the Qur'an with only the greatest respect, he could get a hearing from Muslims.[1300] In an early document attributed to the Byzantine emperor Leo III, the

emperor wrote to the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar II, "if the Children [of Israel]…were preserved from destruction by the blood of an unreasoning lamb, could not we be saved from eternal death by the blood of the immaculate Lamb?"[1301]

In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus himself spoke about the imminent shedding of his blood during his final meal with his disciples. When Jesus took the cup and offered it to his disciples to drink, he said, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:25). By doing so, argued Leo III, Jesus announced his death "as the sacrifice of the Lamb, innocent and pure, a sacrifice often announced in the Old Testament."[1302]

The New Testament ends with a series of vivid visions in the book of Revelation. One of the most striking pictures is that of a lamb, "looking as if it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6). In the vision, heaven is preoccupied with the question of whether there is anyone worthy to "open the scroll." At last, an elder announces that the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" is worthy. However, when the worthy one appears he has the appearance of a Lamb. The elders and other beings in the vision sing a "new song" to the Lamb: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God members of every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9). Myriad angels then surround the Lamb and sing, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:12) Apocalyptic literature like the Revelation text requires sensitive interpretation. However, the vision certainly suggests the peculiar logic of the New Testament concept of God. The glory of the Lamb is not in an arrogant seizure of power, but rather in his willingness to "purchase people for God" through his own slaughter. This important theme is further developed in the willingness of Jesus to lay down his life, described below.

4. The sin of the world must be taken away

John the Baptist's exclamation about the approaching Lamb of God includes two aspects that profoundly impact humanity. If the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world, it follows logically that the world has sin, and this sin needs to be taken away. Otherwise, what need would there be for a Lamb?

The Greek word for "world" in John 1:29 is *kosmos*, the same word that is the object of God's love in John 3:16: "God so loved the *kosmos*…." The *kosmos* includes all the people in the world, including those who rebel against God. Throughout the Bible, whether in *Tawrāt* (Torah), *Zabūr* (Psalms), or *Injīl* (Gospel), all people are characterized as prone to sin and shown to commit sin.

When the book of Isaiah refers to sin, it uses at least three important terms from Hebrew vocabulary. Sin is first of all *ḥaṭṭāʾt* (Isaiah 53:12), "missing the mark". But there is more. Sin also has to do with human nature. It is *ʿawôn* (Is. 53:5, 6, 11), "iniquity," activity that is crooked or wrong. There is something twisted in our very characters as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience. Third, sin involves a deliberate act that breaks relationship. It is *peshāʿ* (Is. 53:5, 12), "transgression," revolt or rebellion against God.

All three kinds of sin were to be confessed by the priest on the head of the sacrificial animal on the Day of Atonement, according to Leviticus 16:21. On this and other occasions, the Hebrew Bible does not distinguish between the sinful and the righteous. All are assumed to be sinners in need of atonement. "*All* we like sheep have gone astray. *Each* of us has turned to his own way. And Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity (*ʿawôn*) of us *all*" (Isaiah 53:6, italics for emphasis).

The Hebrew scriptures provide the background to what the New Testament says about sin. Paul used the same language when he stated, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The language of one bearing the sin of others is also found in the New Testament: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the

tree" (1 Peter 2:24). Significantly, the affirmation that Jesus is the "atoning sacrifice" for "the sins of the whole world" comes in several different parts of the New Testament (1 John 2:2, 4:10; Hebrews 2:17; Romans 3:25).

The means by which God forgives sin—takes it away—is the death of the Lamb. Not all faith commitments agree that all humans are sinners who need salvation. However, the Gospel is consistent in this matter. And because the diagnosis is deep and serious, the cure the Gospel offers is able to reach to the bottom of what afflicts humanity.

5. God places human sin on the Lamb

The Song of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah states five times that the Servant of the Lord will bear human sin. The best-known expression is 53:6: "Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all." This verse shows that it was the intention of God himself to save sinful humanity through the suffering of a "righteous servant". Is this theme borne out in the New Testament in general, and in the Gospel according to John in particular? Did God intend for Jesus to suffer for the sins of humanity? This is sometimes a point of contention between the Gospel and Islam. If a servant of God is indeed righteous, some ask, why would God permit—much less cause—his suffering?

One of the most famous affirmations in the Gospel is that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16). The details of this verse relating to "Son of God" need to be fully explored, which is done in Chapter 22. At this point it is important to emphasize that God the Father gave God the Son, with the express purpose of saving the world through the Son (John 3:16, 17). It was God's intention, his plan, and his act. God's "giving" of Jesus is further explained elsewhere in the New Testament, including, "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his

blood" (Romans 3:25), and "[God] sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

As for the appropriateness of God allowing his righteous Servant to suffer for humanity, the Gospel clearly runs according to the unique divine logic, as illustrated by a verse from the book of Hebrews: "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through what he suffered" (Hebrews 2:10).

6. Jesus lays down his life

In addition to teaching that the Father gave up his Son to save the world, the New Testament also affirms that the Son laid down his life willingly. In the Gospel according to John, this theme is best developed in a passage that flips the imagery of "lamb of God." In John 10, Jesus is presented as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). This picture contrasts the wolf that only comes to destroy and the hireling who will not risk his life with the Good Shepherd who cares for the sheep and will lay down his life to keep them safe. Jesus said he had received the command to lay down his life from his Father but was free to obey the Father or not. "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus showed himself willing to obey the Father's will, even to death. That Jesus' laying down his life is a matter of command and obedience proves that it was the Father's plan from the beginning. Paul also affirmed that Jesus was "obedient unto death" (Philippians 2:8).

The Good Shepherd passage gives an important indication of the unique and—for many—counterintuitive glory of Jesus. Jesus said, "the reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life." Glory, in the minds of many, is associated with an arrogant and aggressive seizure of power, often at the expense of many others. But not so the glory of Jesus. In fact, the opposite is true. The glory of Jesus is in his laying down his life so that many others can live. This

understanding is echoed in Paul's words in Philippians 2:9-10: it was after Jesus became "obedient unto death" that the Father "gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full," said Jesus (John 10:10). But for people to have life required Jesus' willingness to submit to death. He said about himself, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Gospel according to Mark 10:45).

7. Silence of the Qur'an on atonement

There are few echoes in the Qur'an of the biblical material on the Lamb of God. In fact, salvation is not a major theme in Muslim scripture. The differences from the Gospel approach seem to begin with the name of Jesus itself. This is one of the mysteries between Qur'an and Gospel that is not easy to understand, but which seems to set the two scriptures off in different directions.

In the Gospel according to Matthew, God designated a name full of meaning for the Messiah even before the child was born. The angel of God said to Joseph about Mary, "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The Hebrew name *Yahôshūaʿ* means "the Lord (*Yahweh*) saves." But the qur'anic and Muslim name for Jesus is *ʿĪsā*, which has no such meaning.[1303] And though the Qur'an tells a story about the birth of ʿĪsā which resembles the Gospel story in some ways, the angel's instructions to Joseph are not included in Muslim scripture (Q 3:36-47; 19:16-34). Elsewhere, there is no indication in the Qur'an that Jesus is in any way connected with salvation.

Interestingly, both the Hebrew name *Yahôshūaʿ* and the qur'anic name ʿĪsā share the Semitic letter *ʿayn*. However, while *ʿayn* constitutes the final consonant in the Hebrew name, as well as in the

Hebrew verb "to save" (*hôshîaʿ* from the root *yashaʿa*), the Muslim name mysteriously puts the *ʿayn* at the beginning of the word. In this way the Qur'an cuts off Jesus' name from its meaningful associations with the history of God's salvation.

There are other omissions in the qur'anic presentation of biblical stories that seem to limit the body of materials available for developing the theme of atonement. For example, though the Qur'an offers a number of versions of the story of Moses pleading with Pharaoh for the release of the Children of Israel, it does not report the Passover, the slaughter of lambs, and the need for blood on the doorposts.[1304]

The Qur'an gives no indication of the extensive materials on the sacrifice of animals for the sins of people in parts of the Torah such as Leviticus. There is no mention of a Day of Atonement. The verses about the sacrifice of a cow at Q 2:67 & 71 use the Arabic verb *dhabaḥa*. But in those passages, there is no sense of a sacrifice to bring about forgiveness of sin. Similarly, Isaiah's prophecy of one "led like a lamb to the slaughter" does not appear in the Qur'an.

These differences have led a number of scholars of Islam to express surprise at the lack of discussion of the theme of sacrifice in Islam, either in relation to the Torah or in relation to Jesus. Hebrew University professor Hava Lazarus-Yafeh asked why Jesus is never described in the Qur'an as a redeemer. Surely, she suggested, this was one of Jesus' outstanding features described by Christians at the time. "It seems that Islam...felt no need for redemption and therefore did not develop this notion—neither in its beginning, in the Qur'an, nor in later theology…."[1305] University of London scholar Gerald Hawting examined the vocabulary of atonement in Islam, and wrote, "…there seems to be no idea of a general act of atonement for guilt which is shared by the whole community of the whole of mankind as exists in Judaism and Christianity…."[1306]

Apparently, the only place in the Qur'an where the biblical concept of sacrifice may be reflected is in a passage about Abraham.[1307] Abraham says, "O my son, I see in a dream that I shall

sacrifice (*dhabaḥa*) you" (Q 37:102). After Abraham begins the sacrifice, and God calls to Abraham that he has passed the test, the Qur'an reads, "We ransomed (*fadā*) him with a mighty sacrifice (*dhibḥ*)" (Q 37:107). But there is no further discussion of this concept in the Qur'an, and it does not seem to have been picked up by Muslim scholars for further development.

Reflecting on the differences, University of Leiden professor Hendrik Kraemer concluded, "There is hardly any surmise, either in the Quran or in its standard theologies, about the stirring problems of God and man that are involved in the terms sin and salvation. The whole drama of salvation between God and the world, so vivid in Biblical realism, from which Islam, historically speaking, is an offshoot, is entirely absent."[1308]

Muslim scholars do not generally deny the silence in Islam on the theme of salvation. However, they indicate a different concept about the meaning of human sin, the need for salvation, and the possibility that a "Lamb of God" can take away the sins of the world.

8. Sin and salvation in Islam

There is no development in the Qur'an of the active salvation of the New Testament, in which God himself rescues humankind from the power of sin. When Muslims talk about "salvation," it is generally with the vocabulary of success, achievement, or guidance.[1309] There is indeed, fairly extensive teaching about sin, repentance, and forgiveness in the Qur'an, but there is no particular mechanism whereby God saves humankind from the power of sin and provides forgiveness for sinful acts. In response to the Gospel claim that Jesus takes away the sin of the world, Islam does not seem to allow for vicarious atonement. The Qur'an states in 35:18 (cf. 6:164, 17:15, 39:7, 53:38):

> No soul laden bears the load of another;
> And if one heavy-burdened calls for its load to be carried,

> Not a thing of it will be carried, though he be a near kinsman. . . . Whosoever purifies himself, purifies himself only for his own soul's good.

Many Muslims understand such verses to preclude the possibility that any "Lamb of God" could take away the sin of humans.[1310] But some Muslim scholars claim that in any case, human sin is not so serious as to require a slain Lamb. "The Christian belief in the redemptive sacrificial death of Christ does not fit the Islamic view that man has always been fundamentally good," wrote Badru Kateregga.[1311] "According to the Qur'an," wrote Muzammil Husain Siddiqi, "punishment is not the necessary and unavoidable consequence of sin."[1312] "Islam holds man to be not in need of any salvation," wrote Ismaʿil al-Faruqi. "Instead of assuming him to be religiously and ethically fallen, Islamic *daʿwah* acclaims him as the *khalifah* of Allah, perfect in form, and endowed with all that is necessary to fulfill the divine will indeed, even loaded with the grace of revelation! 'Salvation' is hence not in the vocabulary of Islam."[1313]

The appropriate Islamic language, explained al-Faruqi, is *falāḥ*, "success," or "the positive achievement in space and time of the divine will."[1314] Another scholarly source confirmed this impression: "Contrary to the final Christian salvation (*khalāṣ*), which supposes deliverance from sin and death for reconciliation and communion with God, the qur'ānic 'supreme success'…is always the ultimate purpose of human life."[1315]

These scholars suggested the qur'anic response to the Gospel declaration that the Lamb of God "takes away the sins of the world" is to say there is no need for a Lamb. There is no hint in the Qur'an of a figure who will bear humanity's sins, suffer, and die. There is no suggestion that the "messenger" of the Qur'an fulfills the prophecies in the Torah and the Prophets of one who will save his people from their sins. This is not a point of competition; rather, this is a matter in which the Qur'an contradicts both Torah and Gospel.

9. The original divine intention

But where does this leave the Muslim who looks for a Lamb?

The picture of the Suffering Servant continues to appeal to people of many backgrounds who long for fellowship with a God who comes close to humanity. Yale University professor Lamin Sanneh, who grew up as a Muslim in the Gambia, felt the need for this intimacy but says he found the impulses of his heart forbidden by Islam's orthodox theology. In the Servant Songs of Isaiah, he saw the portrait of a prophet who could bring God and humanity together.

> Rather than rendering him immune to the tragedy of human disobedience, such a prophet is in fact the supreme subject and victim of its consequences. 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him.' [Isaiah 53:10] No proximity to the human condition is more poignant than that. It is too lifelike to be mistaken for what it is, a full-blooded encapsulation of the original divine intention. God through him would know our plight and feel our sorrow. Jesus is God in full engagement. Put to grief in the unspeakable agony of human sinfulness, Jesus is the definitive measure of God's 'numbing' capacity to take on our suffering, the Suffering Servant.[1316]

Dr. Sanneh found Isaiah 53 and the Gospel to satisfy the longing awakened during his Muslim youth. Listening to the conversation about Jesus between Isaiah and the Gospel, he heard the biblical affirmation of a unique Saviour: "Redemptive suffering is at the very core of moral truth, and the prophets were all touched by its fearsome power. But only One embodied it as an historical experience." That clear note about the Lamb opened a door for Dr. Sanneh into what he calls "a right and fulfilling relationship with God."[1317]

The "original divine intention," as Dr. Sanneh put it, is what the Bible means by prophecy. In this chapter, we have seen God's

intention revealed in the Torah's pictures of a ram sacrificed in place of a boy, of the blood of a lamb shed to save a people from the angel of death, and of a scapegoat bearing the sins of Israel into the wilderness. We have studied the poetry of Isaiah's fourth Servant Song, where the Servant is led like a lamb to the slaughter bearing the sins of all people. When John the Baptist exclaimed, "Look, the Lamb of God," therefore, he was speaking from a great weight of prophecy. The fulfillment of such a central divine intention is not a coincidence, or mere "mention," or imagined correspondence of incidental details. Rather, it must fully realize God's plan. This is indeed what happened when Jesus shed his blood on the cross to take away the sin of the world. "By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Hebrews 10:14).

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

"You are my Son"

How much difference can a few Semitic syllables make?

The Hebrew of Isaiah 9:6 is *kī yeled yūllad lānū.* The Arabic of *Sūra* 112, verse 3, is *lam yalid wa lam yūlad*. The consonants of the verbs in both languages are the same, as are the prefixes for the imperfect masculine singular. Even some of the vowels are the same. But the repeating Arabic negative *lam* sets the expressions off in different directions. So, while the phrase from Isaiah means, "for a child is born to us," the phrase from the Qur'an means, "he does not beget nor was he begotten." The first phrase has been understood by many to prophesy the coming of the Son of God; the second seems to declare that a Son of God is not possible.

In between, as if caught in the middle of the conversation, is the insistent witness of the Gospel that Jesus is the Son of God. In fact, the author of the Gospel according to John made it known that his whole purpose for writing the book was to show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. He wrote that it is by believing exactly this about Jesus that the reader may have life in his name (John 20:31).

And yet it is this confession in particular which became the focus of what Israeli scholar Hava Lazarus-Yafeh called "the earliest Qur'anic anti-Christian quotations"[1318] (that is, earlier than any securely-dated Qur'an manuscript). The controversy over the Christian confession of Jesus' divine Sonship seems to have begun not from Christian polemic against Islam, but rather from Muslim denial of the well-established Christian confession. The "quotations"

Lazarus-Yafeh referred to are the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.[1319]

1. Denial under the Dome

When the Arab armies rode out of the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century to conquer the Middle East, they aimed for the population centers of the Sassanid Persian empire to the northeast and the great cities of Syria and Palestine in the northwest. Under the second caliph, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the Arab armies conquered Damascus and Jerusalem in 638 A.D.

Who was living in Jerusalem at that time? Mostly Christians of the Byzantine communion. In the seventh century, Jerusalem was "the Christian city par excellence," wrote Harvard professor Oleg Grabar.[1320] ʿAbd al-Malik, the third caliph in the Umayyad dynasty, built the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in 691 A.D. Why did he build this beautiful dome? The inscriptions in the building itself provide tantalizing clues.

Visitors approaching the entrances of the Dome from the east and the north see inscribed in Arabic above those portals, most of what is now the 112th *sūra* of the Qur'an: "He is Allah, One, Allah the *ṣamad*, he does not beget nor was he begotten, and there is none like him."[1321]

Entering the Dome and circumambulating the outermost galleries or ambulatories, they find a monumental 240-meter line of Kufic Arabic script running along the top of both sides of the octagonal arcade. Here they read *Sūra* 112 a third time,[1322] as well as other anti-Sonship texts which match much of what is Q 17:111, 4:171-2 and 19:33-36 in today's Qur'ans.

Dr. Grabar, one of the preeminent scholars on the Dome and its inscriptions, believes the words on the outer and inner faces of the arcade form a single text.[1323] Visitors who walk into the dome first read on the outer face of the colonnade: "Praise belongs to

Allah, who has not taken a son, and who has no associate in power…."[1324] Continuing on the inner face, the visitor reads: "O people of the book, do not go beyond the bounds of your religion, and do not say about Allah except the truth….believe in Allah and in his messengers and do not say 'three'; desist, it is better for you. Allah is only one god. Glory be to him—that he should have a son!"[1325] The inner inscription also includes the statement, "It is not for Allah to take a son…."[1326]

The denial of the divine Sonship of Jesus is one of the main themes of the Dome's inscriptions. It is certainly remarkable that in the text of the inner inscriptions, material concerned with the identity of Jesus takes up 175 out of 370 Arabic words. The longest units of material in the inscriptions also found in today's Qur'ans are likewise concerned with the theme of Son of God. Why did the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik consider it so important to target the divine Sonship of Jesus in the complicated mosaic inscriptions of the Dome? The denial of Son of God is certainly one of the most insistent themes of the Qur'an as it eventually emerged and a central theme of authentic Muslim-Christian faith conversation today. For this reason, it is essential to try to describe what the Gospel meant when it called Jesus the "Son of God", and it is also important to understand why the Qur'an finds this title so abhorrent. Is this sharp and enduring disagreement a mere confusion of terms, or is this a basic disagreement about the identity of Jesus?

2. The Son of God in the Gospel

The Gospel consistently affirms that Jesus is the Son of God. The affirmation has a number of important dimensions in the Gospel according to John: "Son of God" is a title which Jesus used and accepted for himself; other characters in the story about Jesus confessed that he is the Son of God; John punctuated his Gospel account with claims about the importance of this title; and God the Father described Jesus explicitly in this way. This is no title imposed

on Jesus by imperial fiat in the fourth century, or by some enemy of the true gospel during three centuries of imperial persecution of Christians. Rather, the clear affirmation of the New Testament is that Jesus is the Son of God.

The divine status of Jesus is first signaled in John's prologue where he described his personal experience of the 'Word made flesh.' He testified, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only (*monogenous*),[1327] who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." From this point on, the attentive reader will be looking for ways in which John connected Jesus' identity with glory, grace and truth in the unfolding narrative.

The reader does not need to wait long until characters in the story begin to confess Jesus as the Son of God. John the Baptist—the prophet who explained his own mission by quoting Isaiah, the *Yaḥyā* who the Qur'an says would "confirm a word from Allah" (Q 3:39)—witnessed a divine revelation while performing Jesus' baptism. "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him," recounted the Baptist. "I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32, 34). Other characters in John's account who confessed Jesus as the Son of God are Nathanael, whom Jesus knew when he was "still under the fig tree" (John 1:49-50); and Martha the sister of Lazarus, who responded to Jesus' claims with the words, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world" (John 11:27).

Jesus accepted the title "Son of God" for himself at a number of points in the Gospel according to John. In one episode, Jesus explained his relationship to God the Father in answer to a direct question about his identity from Jewish religious leaders, ending his speech with, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The leaders wanted to kill Jesus, because in their minds he was "a mere man" who was claiming to be God (10:33). Jesus did not repudiate the charge that he was claiming deity. Instead, he acknowledged that he had said, "I am God's Son" (John 10:36), and challenged the leaders to pay attention to the miracles he was doing before their eyes. If he

was indeed doing what God the Father did, Jesus told the leaders, then they should accept that "the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:38). Clearly, the religious leaders understood Jesus to be referring to his deity, because they continued to try to stone him for blasphemy.

In a similar episode, when Jewish leaders claimed Jesus was "making himself equal with God" because he had called God his own Father, Jesus explained his relationship to God the Father in greater detail. John 5:19-47 is a central passage for understanding what the Gospel means when it calls Jesus the Son of God, and some aspects of this meaning will be explored below. It is important to note that speaking about himself, Jesus says, "a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:25, 26). Whether Jesus was in fact "making himself equal to God," as the leaders claimed, needs to be examined. The divine glory of Jesus is in his obedience to the Father unto death, not in his grasping at equality with the Father (Philippians 2:6-8). However, Jesus' claim to deity, and to divine Sonship, is clear from the John 5 passage.[1328]

While Sonship language for Jesus is most concentrated in the Gospel according to John, the same language is used frequently in other Gospel accounts, as well as in the rest of the New Testament. As in John's Gospel, we find various witnesses testifying to Jesus' identity as Son of God, including the Roman centurion present at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:54), and the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:32). Jesus' disciple Peter confessed to him, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus accepted Peter's confession. In fact, Jesus blessed Peter and said his confession was not natural human insight but rather was revealed "by my Father in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). Elsewhere in the Gospel accounts, Jesus spoke of himself as the Son of God and accepted that identity for himself (Matthew 11:27, 26:63-64, 27:43; Mark 14:61-62; Luke 10:22, 22:69-71).[1329]

A wide variety of New Testament texts freely affirm this identity for Jesus. Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with the Messiah and I no longer live, but the Messiah lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). The author of the letter to the Colossians wrote, "[God the Father] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (Colossians 1:13). The book of Hebrews begins with the statement, "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" (Hebrews 1:1-2). Many other well-known passages from the New Testament could be cited. They show us that belief in Jesus as the Son of God was ubiquitous among his earliest followers.

New Testament scholars have noted how Paul seemed to call Jesus the Son of God at crucial points in his letters.[1330] According to the Acts of the Apostles, the belief in Jesus as the Son of God was the first message Paul preached after his conversion (Acts 9:20). Contrary to some ill-informed (and perhaps unkindly motivated) attacks on the person of Paul, he did not invent the belief in the Son of God and thus "pervert" the simple faith of the early church. Rather, according to scholars, Paul inherited the belief in Son of God from the earliest community of Jesus' followers, as he stated it in texts such as Romans 1:3-4.[1331]

The letters traditionally attributed to John took the confession of Son of God and made it a kind of touchstone of true faith (1 John 4:15; 5:5, 10-12). "Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son" (1 John 5:10).

3. The meaning of Son of God in the Gospel

According to John Chapter 5, Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. Instead of acknowledging the healing as a sign of his divine glory, the Jewish leaders persecuted Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. Jesus said in his defense, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working" (John 5:17). The religious leaders jumped to the conclusion that by calling God his own Father, Jesus was "making himself equal with God" (5:18). When Jesus explained his identity, however, he first spoke about the submission of the Son to—and dependency on—his Father. Throughout this substantial and meaning-filled speech (5:19-47), Jesus told of his obedience to what he saw his Father doing (5:19); he indicated his Father as the source of his power and authority (5:26-27); and he claimed to judge justly because he sought the will of the one who sent him (5:30).

In the same speech, Jesus explained the things that make him the Son of God. The Father loves the Son and shows him all he does (5:20). Just like the Father, the Son gives life to whomever he likes (5:21). The Father entrusts "all judgment" to the Son (5:22). This particular claim introduced the central statement of the speech: "Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him" (5:23). Jesus repeated the strong claims that he has power to give life to the dead (5:25-26) and authority to judge (5:27). He brought Father and Son together in the amazing claim, "whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged, but has crossed over from death to life" (5:24).

Jesus' claim to deity and divine Sonship in this speech is clear. No mere human prophet can make such claims. Some Muslim polemicists have attempted to use Jesus' expressions of obedience to the Father to argue against his deity,[1332] but this is a misunderstanding of the particular nature of Jesus' deity and Sonship. He did not show his deity by "making himself equal with God," as the Jewish religious leaders mistakenly concluded. Quite to the contrary, Jesus manifested his deity by refusing to "consider

equality with God something to be grasped." Being in very nature God, Jesus emptied himself and became human (Philippians 2:6-8).

One aspect of the Sonship of Jesus referred to in the John 5 passage, and the "flipside" of the lively obedience of the Son to the Father, is the unique love the Father has for the Son (John 5:20). Elsewhere in the Gospel, we read that because of his great love for the Son, the Father has placed everything in his hands (John 3:35). The reason why the Father loves the Son so much, said Jesus, is because he lays down his life—only to take it up again (John 10:17). We learn that the Father has loved the Son with that unique love since "before the creation of the world" (John 17:24)!

God the Father's love for God the Son is also at the heart of two important events in Jesus' life reported by all three other Gospel accounts. As indicated above, John the Baptist testified Jesus was the Son of God after witnessing his baptism (John 1:34). The Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke explain further that an audible voice from heaven was heard at Jesus' baptism: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17; also Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22).

The same three Gospel accounts also report another occasion when God the Father explicitly identified Jesus as his Son. Once, Jesus took his disciples Peter, James, and John with him up a mountain, where he was transfigured before their eyes. "His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). As the disciples were wondering what to make of this display of divine glory, a voice again came from heaven saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Matthew 17:5; also Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35).

According to these Gospel accounts, when the three disciples saw the transfiguration of Jesus, Peter was uncertain how to respond. Impetuously, he offered to build a shelter for Jesus, as well as for Moses and Elijah, who had appeared talking with Jesus. The New Testament helpfully goes beyond Peter's momentary confusion. We can read a mature reflection on the transfiguration event in 2 Peter

1:16-18, which asserts the disciples' report of the transfiguration was not a "cleverly invented story"; rather, they told about what they had seen and heard. Here we have a fourth New Testament report of the words of God the Father, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (2 Peter 1:17).

Why did God the Father call Jesus his Son? The 2 Peter 1 passage suggests a number of meanings that can be compared with Sonship texts in the Gospel according to John and the rest of the New Testament. First, God the Father called Jesus his Son because of Jesus' "power" (2 Peter 1:16). This reason matches what we read elsewhere about Jesus' power to raise the dead (John 5:21) and to give eternal life to those who believe his voice (John 5:24). "I tell you the truth," said Jesus in the Gospel according to John. "A time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live" (John 5:25).

Second, the writer of 2 Peter wrote, "we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). He continued, "For [Jesus] received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love…" (2 Peter 1:17). The meaning of Son of God has to do with the "honor and glory" which God the Father gave Jesus. Jesus used the word "honor" when he said it was God the Father's intention "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" (John 5:23). Jesus' glory is also a theme in the letters of Paul, who calls the Christian message "the gospel of the glory of the Messiah, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The third reason God called Jesus his Son, according to the 2 Peter 1 passage, is because of the unique love the Father has for Jesus. The Father was "well pleased" with Jesus because of his obedience (2 Peter 1:17). This matches the frequent statements in the Gospel according to John about the Father's special love for the Son. Jesus said, "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay it down my life—only to take it up again" (John 10:17). That unique love

began "before the creation of the world," said Jesus (John 17:24). No one else could claim this kind of love.

The Gospel reports of the transfiguration suggest one more reason why God the Father called Jesus his Son. In those accounts, the Father commanded the disciples, "Listen to him!" (Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35). God the Father called Jesus his Son because of Jesus' authority. "The crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as the teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:28). Jesus is the Lord. Only he can say how humans should live. The command of God the Father to obey Jesus is an important aspect of the meaning of Jesus' divine Sonship.[1333]

We emphasize that in the Gospel accounts, the Christian confession of Jesus as the Son of God is based on what God the Father actually said, according to eyewitness reports. "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16).[1334]

4. Jesus' command to guard his identity

There is a hint of mystery in some of the New Testament Sonship texts that suggests that even though the Gospel declaration of Jesus as the Son of God is clear, it is by no means universally accepted. A number of the characters in the Gospel accounts questioned Jesus' identity as Son of God. For example, immediately after God the Father announced Jesus to be his Son, the devil tempted Jesus with the repeated phrase, "If you are the Son of God…" (Matthew 4:3, 6). People in the crowd watching Jesus' crucifixion and seeking to insult him used the same phrase, "If you are the Son of God…" (Matthew 27:40). The Jewish religious leaders who had said Jesus was blaspheming when he called himself the Son of God (Matthew 26:63-65), then joined the crowd in mocking him on the basis of that very claim (Matthew 27:43).

While these passages are not direct affirmations from Jesus or his apostles about Jesus' identity as the Son of God, they indicate this identity was a flashpoint of controversy in the Gospel. Why would Satan, the enemy of humankind, bait Jesus with this particular introduction, "If you are the Son of God…"? (also reported in Luke 4:3, 9). Why did those who wanted to mock and insult Jesus while he was suffering on the cross taunt him with the same title? It is important to note that in the Gospel, it is Satan and Jesus' enemies who questioned—or denied—his Sonship. On the other hand, when Peter confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, Jesus said, "this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

Even more mysterious was Jesus' tendency to warn his disciples to keep quiet when his identity as Son of God was confessed or affirmed. In Matthew 16, for example, immediately after Peter's confession that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, Jesus "ordered them not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah" (Matthew 16:20). After Peter, James, and John saw Jesus' glory and heard the Father call him his Son, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead" (Matthew 17:9).

Jesus' instructions seem to go against common sense. Since Jesus truly was the Son of God, one might expect him to have said so as frequently and openly as possible. In the Gospel according to John, even Jesus' own brothers thought this way. "No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret," they advised Jesus. "Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world" (John 7:4). Why did Jesus not broadcast his identity as the Son of God? Why did he ask his disciples to be quiet about the title? From the Gospel, one can discern at least two reasons: because of the way humans are, and because of the particular quality of Jesus' deity.

After recording the advice of Jesus' brothers, the Gospel according to John comments, "For even his own brothers did not believe in him" (John 7:5). The Gospel begins with this sobering

insight into humanity: "[The Word] was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:10-11). Even about people who believed in Jesus because of his miracles, the Gospel says, "Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man" (John 2:24-25). Did Jesus perceive that if he openly publicized his identity as Son of God, as his brothers advised, many would misunderstand and pervert that title? The Gospel connects this mystery with the prophecy in Isaiah, "…they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn…" (Isaiah 6:10, John 12:39-40).

Another possible reason why Jesus told his disciples to keep "Son of God" to themselves is the particular quality of Jesus' deity. Jesus' nature was to humble himself rather than to exalt himself (Philippians 2:6-8). In the Gospel, Jesus made his claim to deity mostly in images like "the light of the world" (John 8:12) and "the bread of life" (John 8:35); and through parables, including one about the son of the owner of a vineyard (Matthew 21:33-39). This practice was appropriate to Jesus' own logic, whereby he himself defined what deity and Son of God would be, rather than following the faithlessness and misunderstandings of the people. His humility should not be seen as lack of certainty in his identity. Rather, it should be clearly understood as *his own* definition of this identity and title.

5. Denial of Son of God in the Qur'an

The Qur'an contains a number of passages that focus on the concept of "son of Allah" and deny it in sometimes very strong terms. The wording of *Sūra* 112, which appears three times on the Dome of the Rock, has been noted above: "[Allah] does not beget, nor was he begotten" (Q 112:3).[1335] Several verses exclaim "glory to him" (*subḥānahu*) at the suggestion Allah would have a son (*walad*) (Q

2:116, 4:171, 10:68, 19:35). Two of these verses, as well as several others, claim that unidentified people are saying, "Allah has taken (*ittakhadha*)[1336] a son" (Q 2:116; 10:68; 17:111; 19:35, 88, 92).

The longest single passage on son of Allah calls the act of saying that Allah has taken a son "a hideous thing", such that at this utterance, "almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins" (Q 19:89-90). Another passage revealing strong feeling against the confession of Son of God is Q 9:30: "the Christians say the Messiah is the son (*ibn*) of Allah….Allah fights them (*qātalahum*). How perverse they are." In addition to these verses that strongly deny the concept that Allah would have a son, the Qur'an contains a curious verse which seems to admit the possibility: "Say: 'If (Arabic *in*) the All-merciful has a son (*walad*), then I am the first of the worshippers (*ʿābidūna*)'" (Q 43:81).[1337]

In all but this last verse, the Qur'an seems to strongly deny that Jesus is the Son of God. It is not always clear that the verses apply to Jesus, but several of the verses explicitly mention ʿĪsā or the Messiah (Q 4:171 and 19:34-35 with *walad*; Q 9:30 with *ibn*). If these verses are taken to apply to Jesus, and the confessors understood to be Christians,[1338] then there is a problem with the frequent qur'anic claim, "they say, 'Allah has taken a son.'" As we saw earlier in this chapter, the Gospel declares Jesus to be the pre-existent Son of God, and the community of Jesus' followers made this confession from the earliest stage of its formation.[1339] Were there Christians in the seventh century who said, "God took a son"? This confession is very different and would have to be established by independent evidence if it were not to be seen as an error in the Qur'an.

6. Meaning of the qur'anic denial

Why does the Qur'an deny that God has a Son? Some of the verses seem to provide reasons for the denial, and works of qur'anic

commentary (*tafsīr*) explain how Muslims have understood the denial verses throughout the history of Islam.

One reason for denying Son of God seems to be that the Qur'an understands belief in the Son of God to ascribe to Allah needs that he does not have. "He has no needs. All that is in the heavens and the earth is his" (Q 10:68). Therefore, no one has the right to say Allah has taken a son. This theme seems to be further explained in Q 17:111, the text of which features prominently in the Dome inscriptions: "[Allah] has no son or partner (*sharīk*)[1340] in his rule, he is not so weak as to need a protector."[1341] The Qur'an seems to imply that to confess the Son of God would be to say Allah needs help.

In *Sūra* 112, the difficult word *ṣamad* has often been translated in terms of need (Q 112:2).[1342] The wide range of renderings in translations of the Qur'an and Muslim commentaries includes "self-sufficient."[1343] Many Muslims understand the term to mean that Allah is not in need of anything, while all else is in need of him. *Ṣamad* is then juxtaposed to the concept of a God who neither begets nor is begotten.

The second reason is related to the first. Belief in the Son of God is understood to be inappropriate to Allah's identity. The frequent occurrence of the expression *subḥānahu* ("glory to him") seems to suggest that saying Allah has a son impinges on, or insults, his glory. Idiomatically, the expression *subḥāna ʾllāh* can mean, "Allah is far above…" or "Allah is beyond…."[1344] But Q 19:92 makes this reason explicit: "it is not appropriate (*mā yanbaghī*)[1345] for the Beneficent to take a son."

A third reason for the Qur'an to deny Son of God comes from an understanding that those who confess the Son of God believe in a relationship between God and a woman. This seems to be the thrust of Q 6:101: "The Originator of the heavens and the earth! How can he have a child, when he has no female companion (*ṣāḥiba*)?" Accusations that Christians believe God had relations with a woman are featured in many early Muslim works as well as in written

"dialogues" that purport to come from the early centuries of Islam. In these dialogues, Christians go to some lengths to correct the Muslim misunderstanding and to explain what they mean by Jesus' divine Sonship.[1346] However, the misunderstanding lingers to the present day.

If it is true that the Qur'an understands the Christian confession of Son of God to mean that Christians believe God had relations with a woman, then one must conclude that the Qur'an is in error. When the New Testament does not make this link; when for 600 years Christians around the world confessed that Jesus is the Son of God without believing that God had relations with a woman; when Christians of the Eastern Church were especially careful in how they spoke about Mary—why should the declarations of a book that appeared in the seventh century be taken as true and able to judge all else?

Even if this evident qur'anic misunderstanding were patiently corrected according to the New Testament and the beliefs of the earliest Christians, would the qur'anic objection to Son of God subside? This question points to a further—and possibly even more important—reason for denying Son of God. Mahmoud Ayoub wrote, "on the basis of the Gospel and the Qur'an the disagreement between Christians and Muslims is not over the Divine sonship of Christ, figuratively speaking, but over his divinity."[1347] That statement may sound surprising. Mahmoud explained that some Muslim writers have been willing to admit that the Gospel calls Jesus the Son of God, but say the term was meant metaphorically.[1348] In any case, Ayoub's statement highlights a key reason for the qur'anic denial of Son of God. The "literal" understanding of the term that Ayoub says is at the heart of the disagreement is not the misunderstanding that Christians believe God had relations with a woman, but rather a correct assumption that in the Gospel, "Son of God" points to the deity of Jesus.

Much more could be said, both about the biblical confession that Jesus is the Son of God and about the Muslim denial of this confession. However, we have presented sufficient evidence to help us with the question posed in Section 1 above: Is the disagreement between the Gospel and the Qur'an over the Son of God merely a matter of misunderstanding, or does it represent a basic disagreement about the identity of Jesus?

On the one hand: If the Muslim denial is based on the concept of God having a human "consort," then the qur'anic and Islamic objection shows a misunderstanding of what the Gospel actually says. The New Testament material described above gives no suggestion that the Gospel understands God to have had relations with a woman. The passage in the Gospel according to Luke in which the angel Gabriel announced to Mary she would give birth to Jesus and he would be called "the Son of God" (Luke 1:32, 35), is actually remarkably similar to the qur'anic accounts of the birth of ʿĪsā. But nowhere does the New Testament even hint at the notion that Jesus is called the Son of God because he had a human mother.

On the other hand, if the denial is based on the understanding that "Son of God" points to the deity, glory, and exaltation of Jesus, then the Muslim objection indicates a fundamental disagreement about his identity. The materials on "son of Allah" in the Qur'an, set out above, are mostly concerned with theology—that is, who is the Creator of the universe? Most of the subsequent Muslim discussions of Son of God, as well, are concerned with what the title might say about Jesus' identity and its implications for who God is.

Muslim friends, should this disagreement be taken as a sign of the corruption or falsification of the Bible? All four Gospel accounts proclaim Jesus to be the Son of God, basing this claim on eyewitness testimony at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, in addition to many other occasions during his ministry. Muslim polemicists have freely used the differences in details among the Gospel accounts to accuse the accounts of corruption or falsification.[1349] But all four

accounts agree about the significant matter of the divine Sonship of Jesus. In all fairness, shouldn't this unanimity count for something?

According to the New Testament, belief in Jesus as the Son of God is a touchstone of true faith. While the Qur'an seems to say "son of Allah" is blasphemy, the New Testament says "Son of God" is the measure of truth. "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12). Christians study and understand the qur'anic and Islamic denials. Muslim friends, are you willing to read and consider the witness of the Gospel to the identity of Jesus as the Son of God?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

"You must listen to him"

Who has the authority to tell humankind how to live?

What differences in human behaviour would appear depending on which figure was given authority?

The teachings and examples of various political or religious leaders can be very different. If people give their loyalty and obedience to these leaders, their behaviour could be correspondingly very different. If a leader commands his followers to fight and kill, for example, and also provides in his own actions a model of responding to situations of conflict with violence, what shape will the obedience of his followers take?

These questions are not merely hypothetical. Reports of violence in many parts of the world fill the daily news media. In some of these reports, terrorists justify their violence by claiming God commands it. It is true that not all adherents of a faith will follow the teaching and example of their leader. In fact, it may even be that only a small percentage of believers follow their leaders' commands. However, this small percentage can have a significant impact on the ways people treat each other, whether in the direction of violence or in the direction of peace.

The Gospel according to Matthew says that Jesus "taught as one who had authority," not as a mere teacher of the law (Matthew 7:29). The Gospel places this statement at the end of three chapters of Jesus' own teaching about human behaviour. Known as the "Sermon on the Mount," this teaching blesses peacemakers, forbids

hypocrisy in religious practice, and commands people to love their enemies.

Some readers of the Gospel have described Jesus' teaching as idealistic and impractical. Regardless, this is what Jesus teaches in the Gospel. Furthermore, anyone who committed to obey his teaching and follow his example would display behaviour strikingly different from the behaviour of those who follow different religious teachings.

This chapter examines a prophecy with, in biblical terms, major implications for human behaviour. According to the Torah, the voice of God commanded obedience to a certain figure to come: "You must listen to him." God said that if anyone did not obey the words of this figure, God himself would "call him to account."

Whom did God have in mind? In order to fulfill God's command, one must know who this figure is. According to the Torah, obeying the wrong figure would have major consequences! Who is the person God said humanity must listen to, and what are the commandments and example this person provides to humanity? The New Testament provides an answer, explicitly connecting the words of the Torah prophecy to Jesus. The Gospel accounts provide details in Jesus' words and actions that match the prophecy. The disciples also hear a voice from heaven that indicates Jesus and says, "Listen to him!"

1. The prophecy of Deuteronomy 18

In the fifth book of the Torah (Arabic *tawrāt*), Moses prophesied, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet (Hebrew *nāvī'*) like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him" (Deuteronomy 18:15).

Moses also told the people of Israel that God had told him, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I

will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18).

The context of this prophecy in the Torah is a warning from God to the people of Israel not to imitate the occult practices of the people who lived in Canaan before them. The Canaanites listened to practitioners of sorcery, divination, and witchcraft (Deuteronomy 18:9-14), practices forbidden to the people of Israel. Instead, they were to listen to the prophet God promised to raise up for them.

God said in this passage that if anyone did not listen to the words the prophet would speak in his name, God would call him to account (Deuteronomy 18:19). However, the consequences for a false prophet are even more serious: "A prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death" (Deuteronomy 18:20). According to the Torah, the identity of the prophet is no small question. The prophet whom God promised to raise up would speak the words of God alone.

2. Strength of Deuteronomy manuscripts

The prophecy in Deuteronomy 18 should pose no problems to friendly conversation between Christians and Muslims because the text of Deuteronomy is so well attested in early manuscript discoveries. Among the 225 copies of biblical books found in the Qumran caves near the Dead Sea between1947 and 1956, copies of Deuteronomy are among the most numerous. Some thirty-two copies of Deuteronomy were found, second in number only to the Psalms.[1350]

As explained in Chapter 11 of this *Gentle answer*, and contrary to Muslim polemic against the Bible, the Torah (*tawrāt*) is available for study in the original Hebrew, as well as in many good translations. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls took the manuscripts of the Torah back to as early as the third century B.C.,[1351] more than

800 years before the rise of Islam. Academic scholarship cannot go back further than that. Yes, there are questions about the development of the Torah prior to the second century B.C. Since there is no material evidence for that earlier development, however, scholars can only go back as far as the existing evidence.

In examining the Qumran copies of Deuteronomy and comparing them with the Masoretic text of the Hebrew scriptures that existed during the rise of Islam in the seventh century, scholars have found no clear case of falsification in the areas of traditional Muslim accusation (such as changing or erasing descriptions of the messenger of Islam). If anyone would like to continue to make such accusations, therefore, the onus is on the accuser to explain exactly the nature of the falsification. If the accuser cannot provide evidence for falsification, the accusation must fall silent. The way is then open for friendly and reasonable conversation about the contents of the scriptures.

3. "Listen to him"

As earlier chapters have demonstrated, the Gospel provides a number of plausible reasons why particular Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus. The specific case of the Deuteronomy 18 passage is worth examining in the light of Jesus' life and ministry.

A prophet to come

The Gospel presents episodes from the life of Jesus that show people understood him to be that prophet prophesied by Moses. At the time when he began his work, there was an attitude of expectation among the Jews based on their knowledge of the Old Testament prophecies. When the disciple Philip first met Jesus, he told Nathanael, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law [Torah], and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). The Gospel does not say

which of Moses' prophecies from the Torah Philip had in mind. The reader would need further information in order to link this with Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

The Gospel according to John later reports how Jesus fed five thousand people at one time, one of his "miraculous signs" (Greek *sēmeia*, John 6:14). Seeing this miracle, the people began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus knew that the people wanted to take him by force to make him king, so he slipped away (John 6:15). Jesus did not deny he was that prophet, but he certainly had not come to be the kind of king these people had in mind.

A disciple claimed that Jesus fulfills Deuteronomy 18:15-19

Another disciple of Jesus, Peter, linked Jesus explicitly with Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Seven weeks after Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter made a speech to the Jews in Jerusalem that is recorded in the New Testament book of the Acts of the Apostles. The people were gathered because Peter and John had healed a crippled beggar near the temple "in the name of Jesus the Messiah from Nazareth" (Acts 3:6-7). Peter used the opportunity to explain about the one in whose name and power he and John had healed the cripple. He said the risen Messiah "must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets" (Acts 3:21). Then he quoted Deuteronomy 18:15 & 18 to the people, applying this prophecy to Jesus (Acts 3:22-23). "Indeed," Peter added, "all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days" (Acts 3:24).

To Peter, the disciple who had just spent three years with Jesus, Jesus was the fulfillment of the Deuteronomy 18 prophecy. When Peter quoted from Deuteronomy 18:15, "a prophet like me from among your own people," he was speaking as a Jew to an audience of Jews. Both he and his audience understood this prophecy to mean a prophet from the Children of Israel. Peter also quoted

Deuteronomy 18:19, the verse that warns of the consequences of not listening to the prophet whom God raises up.

Jesus linked his own work to Deuteronomy 18:18

In his own words, Jesus spoke many times in ways that seem to echo the expression from Deuteronomy 18:18, "I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him." Jesus said repeatedly, especially in the Gospel according to John, that the words he spoke were from God the Father. He said, "These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me" (John 14:24; also 14:10 and 7:16), and "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me" (John 8:28). The echo from Deuteronomy 18:18 seems to come through most clearly in John 12:49 and 50: "For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

Was Jesus therefore claiming to be the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18:15-19? In one intense conversation with Jewish religious leaders, Jesus said to them, "Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me" (John 5:45-46). Where did Moses write about Jesus? Is it not reasonable to assume that Moses wrote about Jesus in Deuteronomy 18:15-19? In what way might Moses have accused the religious leaders who did not believe in Jesus? If Jesus had in mind Deuteronomy 18:19, the accusation from Moses would be the words of God, "If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account."

It is important to note that in these speeches, Jesus was not identifying himself as a merely human prophet distinct from God. In the Gospel according to John, Jesus is supremely the Son of God. Rather, in these speeches, Jesus was distinguishing between God the Father and himself as God the Son in such a way as would prompt the hearer to link Jesus with the wording of Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

God the Father linked Jesus to Deuteronomy 18:15

"You must listen to him," Moses said about the prophet to come. The Gospel gives an account of an event called the "transfiguration," when Jesus' appearance was changed in the presence of Peter, James, and John. "His clothes became as white as the light," according to the Gospel (Matthew 17:2; also Mark 9:3, Luke 9:29). Just then, Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus.

At that time, a voice came from the "bright cloud" enveloping the disciples, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Matthew 17:5) In the presence of Moses, therefore, God used the very words for Jesus in the Gospel that Moses had prophesied in the Torah: "You must listen to him" (Deuteronomy 18:15). In this way, the Gospel seems to add further confirmation that the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18 is fulfilled in Jesus.

Interestingly, Jesus said to Peter, James, and John after the transfiguration, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead" (Matthew 17:9). This touches once more on the question of why Jesus told his disciples not to broadcast his identity before his resurrection. However, in keeping with the present theme, why did Jesus refer to himself as "the Son of Man"?

4. The authority of the Son of Man

In the Gospel accounts, Jesus' authority is often associated with another of Jesus' names, the "Son of Man." Some who want to deny Jesus' deity point out that he frequently referred to himself as the Son of Man in the Gospel accounts. On this basis they claim Jesus did not think of himself as the Son of God, but only as a merely human prophet.[1352] However, this claim shows a misunderstanding—and perhaps lack of knowledge—of the meaning of the title Son of Man.

Readers of the Gospel accounts will notice that when Jesus called himself the Son of Man, he was clearly thinking of someone more than a mere human. The term "son of man" first appeared in the Hebrew scriptures, in a vision that would most likely have been familiar to Jesus' hearers. In the book of the prophet Daniel, there is a vision of a heavenly throne room in which the "Ancient of Days" was seated.

> In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority (Aramaic *sālṭān*),[1353] glory and sovereign power (*malchū*); all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion (*sālṭān*) is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom (*malchū*) is one that will never be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).

Daniel's vision pictured a figure separate from the "Ancient of Days" who was given authority and who was worshiped. This is quite different from a merely human prophet who does miracles only "by permission of Allah." When Jesus then said in the Gospel, "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26), and "when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne" (Matthew 19:28), the meaning is much closer to Daniel's vision than to the denial of Jesus' deity.

Many passages in the Gospel accounts support the conclusion that when Jesus called himself the Son of Man, he meant much more than a merely human prophet. In the Gospel according to John, Nathanael called Jesus the Son of God. Jesus did not refuse that name, but told Nathanael that he would see greater things: "[Y]ou shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (John 1:51). On another occasion, Jesus said about himself, "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:8). Jesus also spoke about the future: "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done"

(Matthew 16:27). At other times, Jesus used the name Son of Man when speaking about his suffering, death, and resurrection from the dead (Matthew 12:40, 17:9). Jesus said, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Jesus predicted, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (Luke 9:22). These expressions certainly mean more than a mere human.

Moreover, in the Gospel, the name Son of Man is explicitly associated with authority. Jesus said about himself, "[God the Father] has given him authority (*exousia*) to judge because he is the Son of Man" (John 5:27). One of the best-known Gospel miracle stories is Jesus' healing of a paralyzed man who was let down in front of him through the roof (Mark 2:1-12). Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Your sins are forgiven." The teachers of the law thinking he was blaspheming, reasoned, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus answered them, "The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10), then healed the man "in full view of them all." Jesus' words clearly signify more than a merely human prophet, and should be understood in relation to Daniel's vision of "one like a son of man" (Daniel 7: 13-14).

The Gospel accounts also use other expressions to tell of Jesus' authority. In the Gospel according to John, Jesus said, "The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands" (John 3:35). Aware of the authority he had been given, Jesus said, "All things have been committed to me by my Father" (Matthew 11:27, Luke 10:22). Just before his suffering and death, Jesus had his last supper with his disciples. He "knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;" therefore, he got up from the meal to wash his disciples' feet to show them "the full extent of his love" (John 13:1-5).

At the end of his time on earth, Jesus declared to his followers, "All authority (*exousia*) in heaven and on earth has been given to

me”[1354] (Matt. 28:18). In this case, he was claiming the authority to command behaviour for humanity. Jesus told his followers to make disciples for him “of all nations.” Specifically, the followers of Jesus were to teach the disciples “to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). In the Gospel there is no prediction of another one to come after Jesus who would be a new authority for human behaviour. Instead, Jesus said, “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

So what did Jesus command? What was his teaching?

5. Jesus’ command to love

Jesus spoke in the imperative voice in many parts of the Gospel accounts. He commanded his listeners to behave in a particular way. Jesus’ commandments, which the apostle Paul called “the law of the Messiah” (Galatians 6:2), and the apostle James “the perfect law that gives freedom” (James 1:25) do not include an abundance of minute details of commerce and personal hygiene, but rather apply to broad areas of relationships among humans, and between humans and God. For example, Jesus taught people not to worry but to trust God (Matthew 6:25-34). He told people not to perform ritual acts such as almsgiving, praying, and fasting in order to be seen by others but in order to offer such worship only to God (Matthew 6:1-18). Jesus commanded people to forgive others (Matthew 18:21-35), and forbade people from judging or condemning others (Luke 6:37). He taught his followers to bless those who cursed them, and to pray for those who mistreated them (Luke 6:28).

However, the most striking part of the law of the Messiah is the command to love. From the Torah, Jesus confirmed the command to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37). Jesus called this the greatest commandment in the Law (Torah), and then highlighted a second commandment from the Torah, “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39). Jesus said,

"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:40). In this sense, the Gospel confirms (*muṣaddiqan*, Q 5:46) the Torah. Here, the Gospel also shows Jesus' pattern of summing up the law rather than multiplying details. Elsewhere, Jesus said, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

Jesus went beyond the Law and the Prophets when he commanded his disciples to "[l]ove your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Jesus' way of commanding in Matthew 5, "You have heard that it was said…but I tell you…" (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44) shows confidence and authority even to extend a Torah ruling. Jesus taught that people who love only those who love them show no special righteousness. "Your heavenly Father," Jesus explained, causes his sun to rise on both the evil and the good; and this Father is the model for human behaviour (Matthew 5:45-48).

Jesus said to his disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). This famous commandment shows not only the supreme value Jesus placed on love, but also the reason why he could require love of his followers. Jesus first demonstrated love in his own behaviour, then asked his followers to do the same. "We love because he first loved us," declares the first letter of John (1 John 4:19). Any religion that does not assure people of God's love for them or provide a tangible demonstration of God's love cannot really expect people to love God and other people. [1355] The Gospel of Jesus, however, provides the assurance, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, the Messiah died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The rest of the New Testament contains many expressions of human love for God and other people patterned on God's love for humanity. "Live a life of love," wrote the apostle Paul in his letter to believers in Ephesus, "just as the Messiah loves us and gave himself

up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2). Paul even commanded marital love based on Jesus' example: "Husbands, love your wives, just as the Messiah loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25). Paul also understood Jesus' principal of "summing up" rather than multiplying religious law. As a Jew well trained in the teaching of the Pharisees (Philippians 3:5-6), Paul understood about the multiplication of detailed religious laws. However, as a follower of Jesus, Paul saw God's law moving in the opposite direction. "The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:9-10).

Presenting the law of the Messiah to an Arab Muslim audience in the ninth century, ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī highlighted Jesus' words in Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount. He described this passage as "the new constitution, precepts and maxims of a spiritual order, teaching men that divine Law which represents the mind of God and is free from all carnal sanctions."[1356] al-Kindī explained Jesus' commands not to call another person by hurtful names (Matthew 5:21-22), not to look at a woman with lustful thoughts (5:27-28), not to divorce one's spouse (5:31-32), and not to swear oaths (5:33-37).[1357] After quoting Jesus' command to people to "turn the other cheek" to those who strike them on the face (Matthew 5:39), al-Kindī wrote, "So an end is put to vexatious litigation, so the fires of battle are quenched. All that alienates man from man is taken away, and they are drawn together in mutual love. The boorish manners are softened, their savage tempers refined. The age of universal brotherhood under the law of love begins."[1358] al-Kindī described three kinds of law.[1359] The "law of nature" is based on reason and determines human justice. The "law of Satan" is the command to do violence to others. But the command to love enemies in Matthew 5:44-45 is the divine law, "above nature, higher

than reason. Here are mercy and forgiveness and all that corresponds to the divine nature."[1360]

The importance of Jesus' command to love can be appreciated by considering that the Qur'an contains no command to love either God or people.[1361] The absence of such a command from a scripture would certainly influence the behaviour of those who consider it the word of God and strive to obey it. True, just because Jesus commanded love does not mean people obey him. However, if there is no command to love, what can we expect of human behaviour? [1362] al-Kindī, after describing the teaching of Jesus, asked, "How should I, with these words ringing in my ears…smite with the sword, and slay children of mine own species, the seed of Adam formed by the hand of the Almighty, and in the likeness of the Most High?"[1363]

6. Sharp sword of persecution

Some Muslim polemicists attempt to contradict the Messiah's commands to love others and live in peace with them by quoting Matthew 10:34, in which Jesus said, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword." Some polemicists claim this saying contradicts—and thus nullifies—the whole body of Jesus' teachings.[1364] Such a conclusion reveals a serious misunderstanding of the meaning of this saying.

If the reader examines the context of this verse, it becomes clear that the subject of the surrounding passage is the persecution and killing of Jesus' followers. Just prior to Matthew 10:34, Jesus asked his followers to acknowledge him before other people, no matter what the cost (Matthew 10:32). "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul," Jesus said. "Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). The cost of discipleship can indeed be high, Jesus forewarned. A son may turn against his father, and a daughter

against her mother, and "a man's enemies will be the members of his own household" (Matthew 10:36). Even so, Jesus asked his followers to count the cost and follow him, setting loyalty to him above all human relationships. This is the context for Jesus' saying, "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."

Turning to Islamic law, one can quickly see a potentially dangerous situation for some who want to follow Jesus' command to acknowledge him before people. Islamic law prescribes death for any Muslim who leaves Islam to follow the way of Jesus. Among the forty selected *ḥadīth* of al-Nawawī (d. 1278), the messenger of Islam says, "It is not permissible to spill the blood of a Muslim except in three [instances]: the married person who commits adultery, a life for a life, and the one who leaves (*al-tārik*) his religion and separates from the [Muslim] community."[1365] The tradition to kill anyone who leaves Islam also appears in the *ḥadīth* collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[1366] In this case of "apostasy" from Islam, the one who acknowledges Jesus publicly will not receive peace from his family and community, but rather a sword.[1367]

Dear Muslim reader, what should we say about those who quote Matthew 10:34 in an effort to cancel or confuse everything that Jesus said about peaceful, loving behaviour? The "sword" Jesus brought is most definitely not a weapon Jesus wanted his followers to use; rather, the sword is wielded by the ones who want to prevent people from following the peaceful way of Jesus. That sword continues to be used with deadly force in today's world, not least in Muslim communities.

7. Rival claim for authority

It is not possible to scientifically prove the fulfillment of a prophecy. To say a prophecy is fulfilled is a truth claim, and the reader may accept the claim by faith or reject it. According to evidence in the New Testament, there is good reason to believe Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18. The New

Testament supports this claim through explicit quotation of the Torah passage and its application to Jesus, through descriptions of events in Jesus' life that match the prophecy, through Jesus' own words that can reasonably be understood to mean he saw himself fulfilling that prophecy, and through the voice of God the Father as heard by witnesses.

However, people are free to claim the fulfillment of a prophecy in another. This is indeed what is happened in the case of Islam. A number of Muslim writers have claimed it is not Jesus but the messenger of Islam who fulfills the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18. In order to assess this claim, one must ask whether the messenger of Islam matches the Torah prophecy. One must also ask whether the teaching and example of that messenger, as Muslims have written about him in works of *sīra* and *maghāzī*, are the expression of God's will for humankind.

There is no doubt that Muslims decided to give authority to their messenger's words and example. Many verses in the Qur'an urge obedience to "Allah and his messenger." The Qur'an contains a series of twelve imperatives to obey Allah and the messenger, using the verb *aṭā ʿa*. The great jurist al-Shāfiʿī (d. 820) used these verses as a basis for his theory that Islamic law should be formulated from traditions attributed to the messenger of Islam.[1368] al-Shāfiʿī's theory eventually won the day, and Islamic law as we know it today is largely based on the *sunna* (example and teaching) of the messenger of Islam as Muslims understand it from *ḥadīth* and *sīra*.

8. Jesus invites people to follow him

According to the Gospel, Jesus has "all authority in heaven and on earth." However, Jesus does not compel people by force to obey his commands, but invites them to follow him and then gives freedom to accept or reject him—"the perfect law that gives freedom" (James 1:25). It is the same for the followers of Jesus, according to the Gospel. They invite people into discipleship to Jesus; and if that

discipleship is accepted, they teach people to obey everything he commanded. The Church is the international community of those who accept Jesus as their Lord and who voluntarily choose to follow his teaching and example.

Jesus said his way is not difficult. His law is not cluttered with hundreds of man-made rules designed to trip people up. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). Rather, Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). This invitation pictures the believer sharing a yoke with Jesus and learning the way from Jesus. When Jesus shares the yoke, the burden becomes light.

When Jesus asks his disciples to obey him, he invites them into a relationship. "If you love me, you will obey what I command," Jesus said (John 14:15). The law of the Messiah is not an oppressive system based on fear of offending him or not measuring up to rules and regulations, but rather a relationship of love and obedience with a gentle master. "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). The intimacy of this expression may seem surprising, but this is the voice of Jesus in the Gospel. "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

The following chapter describes further help for the believer that Jesus promised, according to the Gospel: another Counselor to be within the believer forever.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Promised Counselor

Just prior to his death and resurrection, Jesus spoke of another "Counselor" who would come to be with his disciples when Jesus' physical presence would no longer be on earth. Jesus called this Counselor the "Holy Spirit" or the "Spirit of truth." He said that among the benefits the Holy Spirit would provide, he "will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).

Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit in the Gospel helps explain the biblical concept of how mere humans were able to tell his story in such a way that it is the Word of God. That the Holy Spirit would guide the Gospel writers is consistent with New Testament teaching about the Hebrew scriptures: "…no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Gospel accounts and the other New Testament books tell of many other benefits from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. Humanity is weak and sinful. In order to obey the commands of a Holy God, humanity needs the power of the Holy Spirit. For example, Jesus said that in times of physical danger, the Holy Spirit would give the disciples of Jesus power to bear bold witness to him. The Holy Spirit produces behaviour in human lives that otherwise they could not achieve. The Holy Spirit even helps people to pray.

Jesus' teaching on the Counselor, or Holy Spirit, helps explain why the Gospel speaks of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also points forward with hope to a place of possible agreement between Muslims and Christians: the acknowledgement that our human resources are woefully inadequate and that we need the presence and power of the Spirit of the Creator God.

1. Reliability of John manuscripts

According to the Gospel, Jesus promised that another Counselor would come to be with his disciples when he departed from the earth. The information on this Counselor is spread over Chapters 14-16 of the Gospel according to John. The text of the Gospel according to John is the best attested of all the New Testament books, and therefore, is one of the best-attested books in all of antiquity. This should give us confidence to discuss the contents of the Gospel in a straightforward way. However, because some modern Muslim polemicists have made accusations of textual falsification against John 14-16,[1369] it is worthwhile to review what academic scholars have written about the quality of the text.

There are more papyri manuscripts of the Gospel according to John than of any other New Testament book: twenty-two manuscripts in all, eleven of them early.[1370] The two earliest New Testament fragments in existence are from John. The fragment named P52 by scholars contains John 18:31-33, 37-38 and is dated to about 125 A.D. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland wrote, "the consensus has come in recent years to regard 125 as representing the later limit, so that P52 must have been copied very soon after the Gospel of John was itself written in the early 90s A.D."[1371] The Alands further commented, "It provides a critical witness to the quality of the New Testament textual tradition, further confirming it by exhibiting a 'normal text', i.e., attesting the text of today."[1372] A second fragment from the second century, discovered more recently and designated P90, contains John 18:36-19:7.[1373]

The discovery of the Bodmer papyri in 1952 shone a bright light on the text of John. The papyrus designated P66 by scholars and dated to about 200 A.D. contained virtually the entire text of the Gospel. "Here was the gospel of John preserved in the form of a book, except for some minor damage around the edges: from the first folio with the superscription of the book there were 52 leaves… preserved in their entirety." Relevant to the discussion of the Counselor, P66 contains John 14:15-26, 29-30; 15:2-26; and 16:2-4, 6-7, 10-15.[1374] The Alands wrote, "No one had ever thought it possible that a papyrus manuscript could survive over 1750 years…in such good condition."[1375]

A second Bodmer papyrus brought further surprises. Dated to the early third century, P75 included twenty-seven almost perfectly preserved sheets of the Gospel accounts of Luke and John. Discovery of the manuscript changed scholarly understanding of how the New Testament text developed. The Alands wrote, "its text proved to be so close to that of Codex Vaticanus (B) that the theory of recensions, i.e., of thoroughgoing revisions of the New Testament text made in the fourth century, was no longer defensible."[1376] Relevant to the discussion of the Counselor, P75 contains John 14:15-30.[1377]

The New Testament book of "The Acts of the Apostles" (or "Acts") is also well attested by thirteen papyri, six of them early.[1378] The text is found as early as the third-century Chester Beatty papyrus P45, which contains parts of all four Gospel accounts as well as Acts 4:27-17:17.[1379]

2. Jesus' promise to his disciples

Since the text of the Gospel according to John is so well attested by manuscript evidence, we can approach John's record of Jesus' references to "another Counselor" with confidence. In the original Greek Gospel, the word translated "Counselor" is *parakletos*. *Parakletos* also has the sense of one who appears on another's

behalf; a mediator, intercessor, helper, or advocate.[1380] Jesus actually spoke five separate sayings about the Counselor, so it is appropriate to organize the information as Jesus gave it in his sayings. Each saying highlights one main characteristic of the Counselor. It is essential to glimpse the full picture of Jesus' promise before going ahead to search for the fulfillment.

In the first saying (John 14:16-17), Jesus called the Counselor the Spirit of truth. Jesus said this Spirit would be with the disciples of Jesus forever. The disciples knew this Spirit, Jesus said, and the Spirit would be in the disciples. The world, on the other hand, cannot accept this Spirit, because they neither see him nor know him.

In the second saying (John 14:26), Jesus called the Counselor the Holy Spirit, thereby connecting the Counselor, or *parakletos*, with everything the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament say about God's Holy Spirit. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach his disciples all things and would remind the disciples of everything he had said to them. "[The Holy Spirit] teaches with all-embracing authority and yet with strict adherence to Jesus and His message, maintaining, expanding and completing the work of Jesus, leading the disciples into all truth."[1381]

In the third saying (John 15:26-27), Jesus again called the Counselor the Spirit of truth. Jesus said the Spirit would help his disciples testify about him in times of danger, because the Spirit would bear witness through them. "He will testify about me," Jesus said. He predicted dangerous times ahead for his disciples in which "anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God" (John 16:2). This prediction came true in the first three centuries of Christianity when many of Jesus' disciples were killed, either by Jewish religious leaders or Roman military rulers.

The fourth saying extends the work of the Counselor to convincing the world of guilt in the areas of sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). While the Counselor is a helper or advocate for the disciples of Jesus, to the world he acts more as

counsel for the prosecution. "The Spirit bears witness to the world… that Jesus, rejected, condemned and put to death by the world, has been vindicated and exalted by God."[1382] The world refused to believe that God came in the humble person of Jesus; the Holy Spirit exposes that unbelief as sin.

In the fifth saying (John 16:13-15), Jesus once more called the Counselor the Spirit of truth. The work of the Spirit in this final saying is to bring glory to Jesus. The Spirit will do this by taking what belongs to Jesus and making it known to the disciples. "He will guide you into all truth," said Jesus, including the truth of what is yet to come.

These five sayings paint a portrait of a powerful Counselor who serves Jesus and helps his disciples. Jesus' promise can hardly refer to a mere human figure. What human could do all the tasks Jesus said the Counselor would do? Rather, Jesus repeatedly specified that the Counselor is the "Spirit of truth" and "Holy Spirit" who would indwell the disciples of Jesus forever. "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him" (John 14:17).

3. Fulfillment in the Holy Spirit

According to the book of Acts, Jesus' disciples witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit fifty days after Jesus' death and resurrection. The writer of Acts is the same Luke who wrote one of the four Gospel accounts. Some scholars have suggested Luke wrote his Gospel account and Acts as two parts of a single work—the first part about the life of Jesus on earth, and the second part about the life of the risen Jesus through his followers.

At the beginning of the book of Acts, the risen Jesus, before he ascended to heaven, instructed his disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit, who would come "in a few days" (Acts 1:4-5). On the Day of Pentecost (fifty days after Passover, the day when Jesus was killed), the Holy Spirit came, and the people saw and heard the signs of the

Spirit's arrival. They heard a sound like the blowing of a strong wind and saw "tongues of fire" come over each one of Jesus' disciples. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in languages they did not know (Acts 2:2-4).

Peter took the opportunity to explain to the onlookers the meaning of what they were seeing and hearing. He said this supernatural event was the fulfillment of the prophecy in the book of the prophet Joel, where God says, "I will pour out my spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17, Joel 2:28). Peter then proclaimed to the onlookers the death and resurrection of Jesus. "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear" (Acts 2:32-33).

It is interesting to note that Jesus' disciples did not simply assert and insist the Holy Spirit had come. Luke told about the coming of the Holy Spirit in terms of what people saw and heard (Acts 2:2-8). For example, the onlookers heard the disciples "declaring the wonders of God" in their native languages (Acts 2:9-11). When Peter then challenged the onlookers to acknowledge the hand of God in what was happening, he also appealed to what the people were experiencing at that moment: "Exalted to the right hand of God, [the risen Jesus] has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). Peter could already speak in the past tense. The Holy Spirit had come. The promise of Jesus had been fulfilled. The proof was in what the people were seeing and hearing.

Prophesying something that is then fulfilled is a characteristic of the prophet like Moses we read about in Deuteronomy 18. There, in Deuteronomy 18:22, it is the false prophet who makes predictions that do not come to pass. But in the case of John 14-16, Jesus made a prophecy that was fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul later wrote to Jesus' followers in Ephesus, "you…were included in the Messiah when you heard the word of truth, the

gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13).

4. Role of the Holy Spirit

Jesus' teaching on the Counselor—or Holy Spirit—in the Gospel is further supported by explanations of the role of the Holy Spirit in the rest of the New Testament. The key task of the Holy Spirit in the teaching of Jesus is to give his disciples power to bear witness to him. After his resurrection from the dead but prior to his ascension, Jesus told his disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Interestingly, the Qur'an describes the disciples of ʿĪsā as witnesses. The qur'anic name for the disciples is *al-ḥawāriyyūn* (Q 3:52; 5:111, 112; 61:14). The Qur'an offers only positive descriptions of the *ḥawāriyyūn*: it calls them Allah's helpers who believe in Allah and in ʿĪsā and who have surrendered (Q 3:52, 5:111). In the Qur'an, these disciples commit themselves to follow ʿĪsā and ask Allah to count them among the witnesses (*shāhidūn*) (Q 3:53). The *ḥawāriyyūn* ask to be witnesses of a miracle, whereby "we may know that you have spoken truth to us" (Q 5:113). The Qur'an even says that Allah inspired (*awḥaytu*) the disciples (Q 5:111). In the Gospel, Jesus said to his disciples after the events of his life, death, and resurrection, "You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48). He promised them that the Holy Spirit would remind them of everything he had said to them (John 14:26).

Jesus also said, however, that bearing witness to him would bring his followers into dangerous situations. He said his disciples would be forcibly brought up before local councils, governors, and kings to account for their witness to him (Matthew 10:17-18). Religious or political authorities might choose to persecute, harm, or even kill the disciples because of their loyalty to Jesus. Jesus said, "a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service

to God" (John 16:2). In such times of danger, the Holy Spirit would help the disciples. Jesus told his followers not to worry about what to say when called to account, "for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say" (Luke 12:11-12; cf. Matthew 10:19-20).[1383]

According to the account of Jesus' first disciples, these predictions of Jesus came true soon after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Almost immediately, religious authorities began to persecute the disciples, especially their leaders (Acts 4). In the face of this persecution, the disciples gathered to pray. They presented the threatening situation to God. "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31).

A disciple named Stephen was arrested and brought before a group of religious leaders called the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:12). According to the book of Acts, his accusers could not stand up against "his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke" (Acts 6:10). Stephen's bold message to the religious authorities is recorded in Acts 7. He spoke, "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:55-56). Infuriated, the religious leaders dragged Stephen out of the city of Jerusalem and stoned him. Stephen prayed as he died, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). The apostle Paul in particular was called up before both religious and political authorities, and the book of Acts records his speeches before both the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (Acts 23) and King Agrippa in Caesarea (Acts 26).

The New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit is active in the lives of Jesus' disciples to help them obey him. Jesus promised that the Counselor who lived *with* his disciples would be *in* them (John 14:17). The Holy Spirit lives *in* Jesus' disciples (Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Timothy 1:14), and helps people live in line with God's desires. He sanctifies those who believe in Jesus (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2). The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus' followers are to live "by the Spirit" rather than by "the desires of the sinful nature" (Galatians 5:16), and explained that the Holy Spirit

produces good fruit in the life of the believer: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness," wrote Paul (Romans 8:26). Human weakness comes from the sinful nature, which desires what is contrary to the Spirit. "They are in conflict with each other so that you do not do what you want" (Galatians 5:17). Weakness even affects the human ability to pray. Paul explained that humans do not know what they ought to pray for. Here, only the Holy Spirit can help, because the Spirit knows both human hearts and the will of God. "The Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Romans 8:26).

For many people, talk of sin and the sinful nature seems like nonsense. Humans seem more inclined to think of themselves as wise and righteous. This is another area in which the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. The Holy Spirit, Jesus promised, would "convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8). The Bible teaches that no one is righteous, and that in the presence of a holy God, the "righteous acts" humans claim to do "are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). Jesus taught that the things that make people unclean come from within them, not from outside (Mark 7:14-23). He told some pointed parables about "some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else" (Luke 18:9-14). People do not become righteous by following the law. Rather, knowledge of the law reveals how far we have failed (Romans 3:9-20). "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But without the help of the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, humans would not know the truth about human nature.

The Holy Spirit helps humans obey Jesus' teaching, "the law of the Messiah" (Galatians 6:2). Is it humanly possible to love those who consider themselves our enemies? This is exactly what Jesus commanded, according to Matthew 5:44: "I tell you: Love you enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Many would

consider Jesus' words impractical, and they are right as far as human abilities are concerned. How can humans love their enemies? The Spirit helps us in our weakness and gives us a spiritual source of love from within. "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:5).

Another dimension of weakness is human memory. The very New Testament writings we are considering are only possible because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised his disciples that the Counselor would remind them of everything he had said to them (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit reveals the very thoughts of God, wrote Paul (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). This revelation is over and above human sense perception, eyewitness reports, and faithful transmission. The concept of scripture in the Gospel includes the activity of the Holy Spirit to help the weakness of human memory.

Jesus' words in John 14:26 are helpful for the theme of this *Gentle answer* because one of the accusations of Muslim writers in the past has been that the Gospel accounts were not safeguarded from forgetfulness on the part of the writers,[1384] an accusation that neglects Jesus' words in the Gospel. It is true that humans are forgetful. However, Jesus promised his disciples the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, would remind them of everything he had taught them. There are signs of this reminding role of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel itself. Jesus prophesied his death and resurrection in a way that was misunderstood by the Jewish religious leaders. He said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19). By "temple," Jesus meant his own body. "After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken" (John 2:22).

Another good example happened when Peter witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit to a Gentile family, the family of Cornelius (Acts 10). Peter explained the event later, saying, "Then I remembered what the Lord had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 11:16). This memory not only helped Peter understand that the Holy Spirit came to non-

Jewish believers as well; it was also one of the pieces that soon after allowed the entry of Gentile believers into the Church. How did Peter remember this saying of the Lord Jesus? Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would remind his disciples of everything he had taught them.

During the early centuries of Islam, Christians answered the Muslim accusation by explaining that the authors of the four Gospel accounts "wrote and transmitted to us what they had heard and learned from Jesus the Messiah."[1385] They admitted that humans are weak and forgetful, but asserted that God is powerful to both give and protect his Word.[1386] The power of which they spoke was the power of the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus in the Gospel.

5. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

The New Testament teaching on the Holy Spirit helps explain why Christians understand God to be one God in three persons. Christians do *not* believe in three gods, as the Qur'an seems to claim. Rather, they read the Gospel and accept what it says about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, Rahmat Allah Kairanwi mounted an extensive attack against the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.[1387] However, most ordinary Christians believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit not because of a doctrine, but rather simply because the Gospel freely talks about all three. The Gospel according to John, especially John 14-16, is full of Jesus' words about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our Chapter 22 explained the meaning of Son of God in the Gospel. This chapter explains the role of the Holy Spirit as taught in the Gospel. And in the midst of Jesus' teaching about the Counselor, as well as in many other parts of the Gospel, he spoke extensively about his Father. The three come together in Jesus' words at the end of the Gospel according to Matthew, where Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

The Gospel teaches about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke a great deal about the relationship of the Son to the Father. It includes the Son doing whatever he sees the Father doing (John 5:17-19). Just as the Father raises the dead, so does the Son (John 5:21). Jesus said he did not speak of his own accord but only what the Father commanded him to say (John 12:49-50). He also said, "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11:27).

The relationship among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one of love and obedience. Jesus said, "The Father loves the Son and shows him all he does" (John 5:20). In return, Jesus said, "the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me" (John 14:31). The Son's obedience to the Father in the Gospel does not mean Jesus was merely human, or that he was somehow of a different nature from the Father.[1388] Rather, as Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The Son glorifies the Father, and the Father also glorifies the Son (John 17:1-4). The Father sends the Holy Spirit in the name of the Son (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit does not speak about himself but only what he hears from Jesus, thereby glorifying Jesus (John 16:13-14). The Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son, said Jesus, "that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him" (John 5:22-23).

6. Based on the Gospel

All these statements of Jesus are part of the Gospel, and this is why Christians believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The reader is free to accept or reject what the Gospel says about one God in three persons, but the reader should be clear that this is what Jesus actually taught in the Gospel.

The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* attempted to turn readers away from these Gospel truths first by making false accusations and second by refusing to take the Gospel seriously. Rahmat Allah Kairanwi wrote that related to the concept of trinity, he had proven corruption (*taḥrīf*) in the text of the Bible.[1389] This accusation provides one more good opportunity to answer the *Iẓhār*'s damaging attack in a gentle and reasonable way.

Some late manuscripts of the Latin translation ("Vulgate") of the New Testament added a set of words to 1 John 5:7-8, words that are not included in the earliest manuscripts of the Greek original. The earliest Greek manuscript containing these words is dated to the early sixteenth century.[1390] In fact, the passage does not appear in manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate before about 800 A.D.[1391]

The text of 1 John 5:7-8 in the earliest Greek manuscripts is, "For there are three that testify; the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement." Late manuscripts of the Vulgate added that there are three that testify "in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth."[1392] The *Iẓhār* reproduced these words as a proof of the corruption of the biblical text concerning the trinity. [1393] But is this what truly happened?

Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman suggested these extra words became part of some late Latin manuscripts when a copyist misunderstood some words written in the margin as part of the text. [1394] Centuries later, when the Dutch scholar Erasmus prepared the first published edition of the Greek New Testament in 1515, he did not include these words because he had not found any Greek manuscript that contained them. However, he included the words in the third edition of his work, which is how the words came to be part of the King James English translation made in 1611.

As soon as scholars became familiar with earlier manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, such as the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus, they immediately began to judge translations by the standard of the original Greek text. The great Cambridge

scholars Brooke Westcott and Fenton Hort began their work on a new critical edition in 1863—interestingly, a year before the publication of the *Iẓhār*. By the time they published their scholarship in 1881, the science of textual criticism was established and the text of the New Testament was placed on a firm foundation.[1395] The extra words in some of the late Latin manuscripts were not included in the new critical edition. Today, readers find a long footnote in *The Greek New Testament* under 1 John 5:7-8 indicating the late manuscripts that contain the extra words, but the text itself follows the original Greek.[1396]

The truth, therefore, is that there was no corruption in the original text of the New Testament, and the extra words in some Latin manuscripts were caught and eliminated. The original was not lost. Granted, this was not as clear in 1864 when Mawlana Kairanwi wrote his *Iẓhār* as after the work of Westcott and Hort in 1881. Nevertheless, the *Iẓhār*'s accusation proved to be false.[1397]

After making this false accusation against the Gospel, Mawlana Kairanwi showed that in any case, he was not prepared to take the Gospel seriously. At the end of his long section "God is not three," he stated that even if he assumed that some of Jesus' statements in the Gospel supported the concept of trinity, it would still not be acceptable. Why not? He fell back on claiming he had already proven errors, contradictions, omissions, and lack of inspiration in the text.[1398] However, as we have shown in this *Gentle answer*, he did not in fact establish his case.

Mawlana Kairanwi added that he only quoted from the Gospel in order to compel or coerce (*ilzām*).[1399] Such was his attitude toward the Gospel and Jesus' words recorded therein. What are the grounds for accusing the Gospel according to John, from which many of Jesus' sayings about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are taken, of being unreliable? According to academic scholarship, the text of John is among the best attested of any writing in antiquity. Where is the evidence it was distorted between its original writing and the earliest available manuscripts?

7. Rival claim of fulfillment

Jesus promised in the Gospel that another Counselor would come to be with his disciples after Jesus departed from the earth. Jesus called this Counselor the "Spirit of truth" and the "Holy Spirit." When the Holy Spirit then came on the Day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples welcomed this Holy Spirit as the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. The terms of Jesus' promise in John 14-16 match the description of the fulfillment in the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament. After the Holy Spirit came, Jesus' followers were not waiting for a human to come who would fulfill the prophecy of Jesus in John 14-16. Rather, they were fully satisfied that the Holy Spirit fulfilled Jesus' promise of a Counselor.

However, Muslim writers have claimed that Jesus' promise was fulfilled not in the coming of the Holy Spirit but rather in another.[1400] The claim seems to have been made from quite an early point in the development of Islam. In fact, a passage from John 14-16 is quoted in the *Sīrat al-nabawiyya* of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767) as edited by Ibn Hishām (d. 833). The *Sīra* quotes John 15:23-16:1, claiming it is a passage from the Gospel in which ʿĪsā describes the messenger of Islam.[1401] Following this quotation, Ibn Hishām wrote that the Syriac term *al-munaḥḥamannā* in the quotation indicates the messenger of Islam; in Greek, added Ibn Hishām, the term is *al-baraqlīṭas*.[1402]

This Muslim claim that the messenger of Islam fulfills Jesus' promise about the Counselor in the Gospel must first be checked against the words of Jesus' prophecy. When this is done, the Muslim claim is disproven by a number of strong arguments.

1. Jesus said the Counselor would be the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). His description of this Holy Spirit does not refer to a human being. The Qur'an also mentions the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-qudus*, Q 2:87, 253; 5:110; 16:102), and even there this expression clearly does not refer to the messenger of Islam. Jesus' promise was to his disciples for

their immediate first century situation. His words in no way relate to a purely human figure reputed to have come six centuries later. [1403]

2. Jesus said the Counselor would bring glory to him by taking what was his and making it known to the disciples of Jesus (John 16:14). "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit "will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26). Jesus said the Spirit of truth "will testify about me" (John 15:26). He said the Counselor would convict the world of sin because people failed to believe that God came to earth in the humble person of Jesus (John 16:7-9).[1404] However, the Qur'an actually tells very little about Jesus beyond his birth, [1405] saying almost nothing about his teaching and the rest of his life.[1406] And contrary to the testimony to the divine glory of Jesus in the Gospel (John 1:14), the Qur'an denies his divine glory altogether. The Qur'an says nothing about Jesus' work as Saviour, and even gives Jesus a different name—ʿĪsā—that removes the meaningful Gospel sense of "he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

3. A modern development in the Muslim claim for the messenger of Islam asserts that the word *parakletos* itself in the original Greek text of John 14-16 was a result of falsification. The new accusation was that Christians substituted the word *parakletos* in place of the original *periklutos*.[1407] This particular accusation does not seem to have been known among Muslim polemicists before the fourteenth century. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350) developed the most extensive applications of the Gospel's Counselor promises to the messenger of Islam,[1408] but they had no knowledge of the *periklutos* argument.[1409] It seems the *periklutos* argument first appeared in the Muslim "Gospel of Barnabas," a work composed in Italian or Spanish in the sixteenth century.

There are several problems with this accusation. First, it seems to show a false understanding of the Greek script, perhaps thinking

that it works like the Arabic script, which is basically consonantal. In order to indicate short vowels in Arabic, markings need to be added to the consonantal base. A word can therefore vary widely depending on the vowel markings one chooses to add, and the short vowels are easily changed. However, the Greek script contains all short and long vowels from the start, so to change the vowels means to completely change the word. In addition, "the two Greek words are themselves compounds and the prefixes and root verbs are both different. Suspicions of textual corruption here would be completely unfounded, on documentary, grammatical and exegetical grounds."[1410]

Second, the term *periklutos* is simply is not attested in any Greek New Testament manuscript of John 14-16.[1411] All known manuscripts of the Gospel according to John have *parakletos*. In fact, the term *periklutos* does not appear anywhere in the New Testament.[1412] According to New Testament scholars, there is no evidence of tampering with the word *parakletos* in these manuscripts.[1413]

Even more problematic is the absence of a plausible motive for this alleged substitution. As discussed earlier in Chapter 6, the accusation that Jews or Christians would change their Scriptures after the appearance of the messenger of Islam has a certain narrative appeal. As shown in Chapter 10, however, there is no evidence of alterations to the manuscripts of the Gospel accounts during the seventh century in response to the messenger of Islam. This being so, why would Christians in the first or second century, five hundred years before Islam, change a reference to the messenger of Islam when they did not know his name and had no idea of his coming? "Any deliberate attempt to 'divert' *parakletos* into *periklutos* would be impossible before Muhammad's time—by which time the text of the Gospel had been known and fixed for four centuries."[1414] The Muslim *periklutos* argument is a bare accusation lacking any evidence to support it, and needs to be laid to rest.

What can it mean to take Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel and claim it was fulfilled in a human leader?

Jesus did not say that people who commit blasphemy against him should be punished. The Gospel proclaims the deity of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "The New Testament writers unquestionably considered Jesus, the Son of God, to be God."[1415] Therefore, to speak against Jesus is truly blasphemy. Even so, Jesus said, "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven" (Matthew 12:32). However, in the same verse, Jesus gave quite a different teaching for the Holy Spirit. He said, "[A]nyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."

8. God's reliable guide to truth

Jesus promised his disciples "another Counselor" (*parakletos*) to come after his death and resurrection to be with them—and within them—forever. He called this Counselor "the Spirit of truth" and "the Holy Spirit." Jesus then described the work of the Holy Spirit as work no mere human could fulfill. He was clearly promising a spiritual power that would represent him and the Father and be the divine presence indwelling his disciples.

Humanity needs the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised. Humanity is weak and needs spiritual help. Human leadership may help point the way to the law, but it is powerless in the face of sinful human nature. Human weakness is something Christians, Muslims and all others share. To miss this fundamental truth in the midst of disagreement about religion and politics is a tragedy of interfaith conversation.

Human weakness extends to the intellect and the ability of people to answer all questions conclusively. This *Gentle answer* has been

written to respond to the central and most challenging accusation of the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* that the original Torah and Gospel are lost. In answer, we have shown how the scholarly discipline of textual criticism has established the text of the New Testament to the point that readers can have confidence they are reading the original.[1416] The critical text thus established is freely accessible in *The Greek New Testament*. We have shown that the manuscript witness to the text of the Hebrew scriptures was exponentially enriched through the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947.[1417] These ancient witnesses from nine centuries before Islam have been incorporated into the critical text *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. The history of the text gives good reason for confidence in both the reliability and the purity of the Old Testament.[1418] We have also shown that if Muslim tradition is accurate about the destruction of variant Qur'an manuscripts and the political proscription of variant readings, textual criticism is not able to establish the original text of the Qur'an,[1419] and we are left merely with a canonical version based on one authoritative text-form from among several.[1420] In fact, until today, no critical edition of the Qur'an is available.

We have presented all of this material to invite you, dear Muslim reader, to a peaceful conversation in which we read each other's scripture and discuss the content together. As long as we share our humanity, and the weaknesses inherent in it, why don't we live together in peace, read the Bible and the Qur'an together, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us? According to the Gospel, Jesus said when the Spirit of truth comes, "he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

[1] Walid A. Saleh, *In defense of the Bible: A critical edition and an introduction to al-Biqāʿī's Bible treatise* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 57-191.
[2] al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa ʾl-suwar* (Hyderabad, 1976), vol. 11, 321. Walid Saleh, "'Sublime in its style, exquisite in its tenderness': The Hebrew Bible quotations in al-Biqāʿī's Qur'ān commentary," in *Adaptations and innovations: Studies on the interaction between Jewish and Islamic thought and literature from the early Middle Ages to the late twentieth century, Dedicated to Professor Joel L. Kraemer*, eds. Y. Tzvi Langermann and Josef Stern (Paris: Peeters, 2007), 331.
[3] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʿIḍariyya, 1998), two volumes; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar ʿAlī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī book depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], three volumes; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], three volumes.
[4] Jon Hoover, "The apologetic and pastoral intentions of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's polemic against Jews and Christians," *Muslim World* 100 (2010), 481 (quoting from Ibn Qayyim's *Hidāyat al-ḥayāra fī ajwibat al-Yahūd wa l-Naṣārā*).
[5] The critical edition of al-Biqāʿī's original Arabic text is in Saleh, *In defense of the Bible*, 57-191.
[6] A thorough scholarly discussion of this *ḥadīth* is M.J. Kister, "Ḥaddithū ʿan banī isrā'īla wa-lā ḥaraja: A study of an early tradition," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), 215-39.
[7] Walid A. Saleh, "A fifteenth-century Muslim Hebraist: Al-Biqāʿi and his defense of using the Bible to interpret the Qur'ān," *Speculum* 83 (2008), 645.
[8] Saleh, "Muslim Hebraist," 649.
[9] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 302, 304; Urdu vol. 1, 571-73; English vol. 1, 28, 30.
[10] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 572-3; Urdu vol. 2, 238; English vol. 2, 245.
[11] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 55-6, 126-7; Urdu vol. 2, 296, 390-91; English vol. 2, 283, vol. 3, 40-41.
[12] See the comments by Muḥammad Taqī ʿUthmānī and others in his long introduction to the Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, vol. 1, 23-4, 215-18.

[13] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 37-8, 90-91; Urdu vol. 1, 240-41, 301-2 (not included in English version).
[14] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 90; Urdu vol. 1, 301 (not included in English version).
[15] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 305, cf. 129-30; Urdu vol. 1, 573, cf. 356; English vol. 2, 28, cf. vol. 1, 41. This claim is treated in Chapter 7.
[16] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 501, 507; Urdu vol. 2, 162, 167; English vol. 2, 188, 191-2. This claim is treated in Chapters 6 and 12.
[17] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 90; Urdu vol. 1, 301 (not included in the English version).
[18] Sidney H. Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic: An inquiry into its appearance in the first Abbasid century," *Oriens Christianus* 69 (1985): "Such has never been a Christian view of the Gospel" (128); "…one may conclude that the *Qur'ān* is the sole witness for the existence of such a Gospel" (130).
[19] Karl Ahrens, "Christliches im Qoran," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 84 (1930), 24. Arthur Jeffery, *The foreign vocabulary of the Qur'an* (Baroda: Oriental Insitute, 1938), 72.
[20] Raymond F. Collins, "Gospel," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second edition, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), vol. 6, 3641.
[21] F.E. Peters, *The voice, the word, the books: The sacred scripture of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 55-57.
[22] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Some neglected aspects of medieval Muslim polemics against Christianity," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996), 66.
[23] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān* (The copy at the Topkapi Palace Museum), prepared for publication by Dr. Tayyar Altıkulaç (Istanbul: Organization of the Islamic Conference Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 2007), 72.
[24] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 36; Urdu vol. 1, 238 (not included in the English version).
[25] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 27; Urdu vol. 1, 227 (not included in the English version).
[26] John A. Subhan, *How a Sufi found his Lord*, Second edition (Lucknow, India: The Lucknow Publishing House, 1943), 17-20.
[27] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 305-6; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī, (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 1, 574-5; English version

Izhar-ul-haq, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 2, 31-32.
[28] Arthur Jeffery, "The Qur'ān as scripture" *The Muslim World* 40 (1950), 202.
[29] Cf. Camilla P. Adang, "Torah," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2006), vol. 5, 300.
[30] At Q 3:3, 48, 50, 65 and 93 (x2).
[31] At Q 5:43, 44, 46 (x2), 66, 68 and 110.
[32] At Q 7:157, 9:111, 48:29, 61:6 and 62:5. Lazarus-Yafeh assertd that all eighteen occurrences appear in "sūras from the Medīnan period." "Tawrāt," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, eds. P.J. Bearman et al (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. 10, 393.
[33] Cf. Sidney H. Griffith, "Gospel," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2002), vol. 2, 342. Karl Ahrens and other scholars suggested that the qur'anic term *Injīl* comes from the Greek *euaggelion* via the Ethiopic *wangēl*. "Christliches im Qoran," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 84 (1930), 24.
[34] At Q 3:3, 48 and 65.
[35] At Q 5:46, 47, 66, 68 and 110.
[36] At Q 7:157, 9:111, 48:29 and 57:27.
[37] *Injīl* appears on its own only at Q5:47 and 57:27.
[38] Cf. J. Horovitz - [R. Firestone], "Zabūr," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, vol. 11, eds. P.J. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 372; and Dawid Künstlinger, "Die Namen der 'Gottes-Schriften' im Qurān," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 8 (1937), 74-75. The plural form *zubur* is treated below in "Other writings."
[39] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta, ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ta'rīkh al-'Arabiyya, 2002), vol. 1, 84.
[40] Closely resembling Exodus 21:23-25; cf. Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21. J. Horovitz, "Tawrāt," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. M. Th. Houtsma *et al* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1934), vol. 3, 706. Another passage which may be claiming to relay words from the Torah—though that name is not specified—is Q 2:83-84: "And when we took compact with the children of Israel: 'You shall not serve any save Allah; and to be good to parents . . . .'" This resembles parts of the Decalogue in Exodus 20. M.S. Seale claims that the Qur'an provides "a version of the Ten Commandments, even though an incomplete one" at 17:23-37. "How the Qur'an interprets the Bible," in his *Qur'an and Bible: Studies in interpretation and dialogue* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 74-75. Hartwig Hirschfeld points out that

Muslim commentators like al-Thaʿlabī also found the Decalogue at 17:23-37, as well as at 6:152-154. *New researches into the composition and exegesis of the Qoran* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1902), 81-82.

[41] English translations of qur'anic verses in this chapter are indebted to Arthur Arberry, *The Koran interpreted* (Oxford University Press, 1964); and occasionally to Marmaduke Pickthall, *The meaning of the glorious Qur'an* (Karachi: Taj Company, n.d.). However, translations sometimes reflect literal renderings of the Arabic text.

[42] Lazarus-Yafeh suggested that this may be a quotation from the Psalms (cf. Psalms 1:3; 72:16; 92:14). "Tawrāt," 393. But Carra de Vaux heard in Q 48:29 an echo of Jesus' parable of the sower. "Indjīl," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. M. Th. Houtsma et al (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1927), vol. 2, 502.

[43] Arie Schippers identified this with Psalm 37:9, 11 and 29. "Psalms," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 315. Lazarus-Yafeh called it an exact quote. "Tawrāt," (*EI*2), 393. Horovitz wrote, "Apart from Sūra xxi.105 the Ḳur'ān contains other passages bearing a close resemblance to verses from the Psalms, especially from Psalm civ. Moreover the majority of the passages in the Ḳur'ān which remind us, by sense and sound, of the Bible, are from the Psalms." "Zabūr," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. M. Th. Houtsma et al (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1934), vol. 4, 1184. See also Hirschfeld, *New Researches*, 73-77; and Richard Bell, "Muhammad's knowledge of the Old Testament," in *Presentation Volume to William Barron Stevenson* (Studia Semitica et Orientalia II) (Glasgow: Glasgow University Oriental Society, 1945), 14, for further suggestions of parallels between the Qur'an and the Psalms.

[44] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qur'ān*, eds. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Second edition (Cairo, 1955-69), vol. 9, 402.

[45] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 462.

[46] Occurrences of *kitāb* both singular and plural number 261. Cf. Daniel Madigan, "Book," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 242. Jeffery provides an overview of these occurrences in "The Qur'ān as scripture," 47-55.

[47] "Ṭabarī's exegesis of the qur'ānic term *al-kitāb*," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63 (1995), 768.

[48] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, 128-129.

[49] Muslim exegetes understood that all these cases refer to the Torah.

[50] Julius Augapfel, "Das *Kitāb* im Qurân," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 29 (1915), 386-390.
[51] Again, this is how Muslim exegetes have understood these verses.
[52] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 126.
[53] *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 6, 290. Also Muqātil, *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 269; cf. Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīra*, vol. 2, 394; Wāḥidī, *Asbāb*, 52. Herbert Berg writes, "in his commentary to the Qur'ān's use of the expression the *kitāb* of God, al-Ṭabarī explains the term using the full variation of the term *kitāb* generally except, oddly, the Qur'ān itself." "Ṭabarī's exegesis," 773.
[54] Q 2:285; cf. 4:136, where the belief is both in the book which Allah sent down before, and in the books of Allah.
[55] These are four of the five occurrences of *kutub* in the Qur'an. The fifth is at Q 34:44.
[56] Künstlinger, "Die Namen der 'Gottes-Schriften' im Qurān," 71-84, gave a wide variety of terms which he said refer to scripture in the Qur'an. Besides those treated here, Künstlinger investigated such terms as *dhikr*, *ḥikma*, *furqān*, *qawl*, and *āya*.
[57] Daniel Madigan, "Book," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 245. The phrase *al-ṣuḥūf al-ūlā* also appears at Q 20:133. Further on *ṣuḥuf*: Künstlinger, "Die Namen der 'Gottes-Schriften' im Qurān," 72-74.
[58] The second occurrence of this word is at Q 6:7: "had we sent down on thee a book on parchment (*qirṭāsin*)…."
[59] An *hapax legomenon*. On "parchment," see Julian Obermann, "Koran and Agada: The events at Mount Sinai," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages* 57 (1941), 30.
[60] See Obermann, "Koran and Agada," 37, on "tablets."
[61] Translation of Arberry and Pickthall. *Nuskha* is also defined as "transcript" or "copy."
[62] Of the remaining three occurrences of this root in the Qur'an, one is the singular *lawḥ* in, "Nay, but it is a glorious *qurʾān* in a guarded tablet" (Q 85:21-22).
[63] Josef Horovitz, "Zabūr," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. M. Th. Houtsma *et al*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1934), vol. 4, 1184. Horovitz added that occurrences of *al-zubur* at Q 54:43 & 52 refer to heavenly writings in which human deeds are recorded.
[64] Cf. Horovitz - [Firestone], "Zabūr," (*EI*2), 372.

[65] Collective form of *kalima*.
[66] John Wansbrough rendered *muṣaddiq* as "verification of earlier prophets and scriptures," *Quranic studies: sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 65.
[67] At Q 6:92; 35:31; 46:12, 30; and 61:6.
[68] Confirmation, attestation; belief; assent, agreement, approval.
[69] Frequently translated "that which was before it," but which means literally, "what is between his two hands." Madigan rendered it, "…what is already present." *The Qur'ân's self-image: writing and authority in Islam's scripture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 137.
[70] *mā ma'ahum*.
[71] "An exegetically justifiable paraphrase for this would read: 'Before the Qur'ān was the Tawrāh as a guide and a mercy. This Qur'ān is a book in an Arabic tongue which confirms the Tawrāh in order to warn. . . .'" Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "The Qur'ānic context of Muslim biblical scholarship," *Islam and Christian-Muslim relations* 7 (1996), 142.
[72] "The general position of the Qur'ān is that it confirms previous revelations, and in particular . . . of the Torah and the Evangel." William Montgomery Watt, "The early development of the Muslim attitude to the Bible," *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society* 16 (1955-56), 50.
[73] Brannon Wheeler wrote on Q 3:93, "At issue is not the revelatory status of the Torah or the accusation that the text of the Torah has been altered. On the contrary, the exegesis of Q 3:93 depends on the Torah to make its case." "Israel and the Torah of Muḥammad," in *Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in scriptural intertextuality*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 79.
[74] Camilla Adang adds to this category Q 16:43 and 21:7: "Ask the people of the remembrance (*dhikr*) if you don't know!" "Torah," 303.
[75] But cf. Q 62:5: "The likeness of those who were entrusted with the Torah, but who subsequently failed in those, is as the likeness of a donkey who carries huge burdens of books."
[76] "Taḥrīf," (*EI*2), 111.
[77] "Indjīl," (*EI*1), 503.
[78] *The Corân: Its composition and teaching; And the testimony it bears to the Holy Scriptures* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895), 222.
[79] "The early development," 50.

[80] "The early development," 53.
[81] *Muslim-Christian encounters: Perceptions and misperceptions* (London: Routledge, 1991), 32.
[82] Mahmoud Ayoub, "'Uzayr in the Qur'an and Muslim tradition," in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic traditions*, eds. W.M. Brinner and S.D. Ricks (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 5.
[83] Ignazio Di Matteo, "Il 'Taḥrīf' od alterazione della Bibbia secondo i musulmani," *Bessarione* 38 (1922), 96.
[84] "The charge of distortion of Jewish and Christian scriptures," *The Muslim World* 92 (2002), 429.
[85] John Burton, "The corruption of the scriptures," *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies* 4 (1992, publ. 1994), 95.
[86] "Corruption and/or misinterpretation of the Bible: The story of the Islâmic usage of taḥrîf," *Theological Review* 24/2 (2003), 71.
[87] Martin Accad. "The Gospels in the Muslim discourse of the ninth to the fourteenth centuries: An exegetical inventorial table," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14 (2003), 67-91, 205-220, 337-352, 459-79.
[88] *Die koranische Herausforderung: Die taḥaddī-Verse im Rahmen der Polemikpassagen des Korans* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1996), 82-83.
[89] Gordon Nickel, *Narratives of tampering in the earliest commentaries on the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 26-29.
[90] R. Caspar and J.-M. Gaudeul, "Textes de la tradition musulmane concernant le taḥrîf (falsification) des écritures," *Islamochristiana* 6 (1980), 62-3. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "The Qur'ānic context of Muslim Biblical scholarship," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7 (1996), 144.
[91] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 309-13; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī, (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 1, 580-86; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of knowledge for publishing and distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 2, 36-40.
[92] The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* includes only a single page of *tafsīr*, and that on a verse that can easily be understood to support the preservation of the earlier scriptures: "…confirming (*muṣaddiqan*) whatever Scripture was before it, and a watcher (*muhayminan*) over it" (Q 5:48). Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 306; Urdu vol. 1, 575; English vol. 2, 32.

[93] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Taʾrīkh al-ʿArabiyya, 2002), four volumes.
[94] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, eds. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Second edition (Cairo, 1955-69), 16 volumes (incomplete).
[95] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 109-110. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 2, 112-119.
[96] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 116-117. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 2, 244-249.
[97] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 2, 246.
[98] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 2, 247.
[99] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 2, 69. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 13, 178-9.
[100] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 180. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 4, 272-3.
[101] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 376-7. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 8, 433-7.
[102] See the explanation of the translation of this expression in Cristina de la Puente, "The prayer upon the prophet Muḥammad (*taṣliya*): A manifestation of Islamic religiosity," *Medieval Encounters* 5 (1999), 122-29.
[103] *huwa maktūbun ʿindahum fī ʾl-tawrāt*. The wording for the scriptural phrase, "written down with them in the Torah and Gospel" (Q 7:157), is *maktūban ʿindahum fī ʾl-tawrāt wa ʾl-injīl*.
[104] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 461.
[105] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 475-7. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 10, 303-4.
[106] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 10, 304-7, 315.
[107] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 10, 305.
[108] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 10, 307.
[109] Q 2:140, 146, 159, 174.
[110] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 2, 69.
[111] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, 571.
[112] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 143.
[113] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 152.
[114] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 156.
[115] At Q 2:77; 3:71, 178; 5:15; and 6:92.

[116] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 148.
[117] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 2, 257 (at Q 2:77).
[118] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, 568, 572.
[119] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 284.
[120] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 101.
[121] At Q 2:79, 174; 3:77, 178, 199; 5:44; 9:9 and 16:95.
[122] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 91.
[123] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 10, 135-6.
[124] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 2, 403-4.
[125] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 286. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 2, 270-271.
[126] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 118. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 6, 535-7.
[127] John Burton, "The corruption of the scriptures," *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies* 4 (1992, publ. 1994), 105.
[128] Abdullah Saeed, "The charge of distortion of Jewish and Christian scriptures," *The Muslim World* 92 (2002), 419.
[129] Adel-Théodore Khoury, *Polemique byzantine contre l'Islam (VIIIe-XIIIe S.)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 210.
[130] Hermann Stieglecker, "Die muhammedanische Pentateuchkritik zu Beginn des 2. Jahrtausends," *Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift* 88 (1935), 75.
[131] Eerdmann Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum in Mittelalter: Beiträge zur Geschichte der muslimischen Polemik gegen das Christentum in arabischer Sprache* (Breslau: Verlag Müller & Seiffert, 1930), 57.
[132] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 122.
[133] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 7, 496-500.
[134] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm* (Beirut: Dār al-andalus li 'l-ṭibā'a wa 'l-nashr, 1966), vol. 2, 185.
[135] For example http://www.altafsir.com/.
[136] (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984 & 1992).
[137] Another good example of tracing through a wide variety of commentaries on a single qur'anic passage is the translation of interpretations of *Sūra* 98 in Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi and Andrew Rippin, *Classical Islam: A sourcebook of religious literature* (London: Routledge, 2003), 103-133.
[138] J. Cooper, trans. *The commentary on the Qur'ān by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[139] D.S. Margoliouth, *Chrestomathia Baidawiana: The commentary of el-Baiḍāwī on Sura III* (London: Luzac & Co., 1984).
[140] A.F.L Beeston, *Baidawi's commentary on Surah 12 of the Qur'an: Text, accompanied by an interpretive rendering and notes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963).
[141] *The Qur'ān and its exegesis: Selected texts with classical and modern Muslim interpretations*, ed. and trans. Alford T. Welch (Oxford: Oneworld, 1996).
[142] al-Rāzī's exegesis of these verses is fully described in Gordon Nickel, "'Self-evident truths of reason': challenges to clear thinking in the *Tafsīr al-kabīr* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22/2 (2011), 164-5.
[143] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb: al-tafsīr al-kabīr* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1973), vol. 3, 134.
[144] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 107.
[145] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 10, 117-18.
[146] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 107; vol. 10, 118.
[147] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 11, 187.
[148] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 13, 78.
[149] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 2, 167ff.; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī book depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 2, 431ff.; English translation *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 3, 74ff.
[150] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 306-7; Urdu vol. 1, 575-6; English vol. 2, 32-3.
[151] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥīyā al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamīd (Cairo: Maktaba Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣabīh wa awlād, 1963), four volumes. English translation by Alfred Guillaume, *The life of Muhammad* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1955).
[152] W. Raven, "Sīra," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. C.E. Bosworth *et al* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. 9, 661-2.
[153] Uri Rubin, *The eye of the beholder: The life of Muḥammad as viewed by the early Muslims: A textual analysis* (Princeton: Darwin, 1995), 21-23, 217-218.
[154] Arent Jan Wensinck observed this expectation not only in Ibn Isḥāq, but in other early writers such as Ibn Sa'd and al-Wāqidī. *Muhammad and the Jews of Medina*, trans. and ed. Wolfgang Behn (Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: Klaus Schwarz, 1975), 39-43.
[155] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, 132.

[156] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, 137-139.
[157] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, 137. In two of the stories, the Arabs are predisposed to accept Islam by the prophecies of the Jews. However, the Jews deny Islam's messenger when he appears, in one case out of "wickedness (*baghy*) and envy (*ḥasad*)." *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, 138. In the third story, the Banū Qurayẓa are warned about the coming of a prophet who "will be sent to shed blood and to take captive the women and children of those who oppose him." *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, 139.
[158] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, 263.
[159] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 360-361.
[160] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 361. Ibn Hishām's edition of the *Sīra* does not suggest a Torah prophecy of the coming of the messenger of Islam. However, Yūnus ibn Bukayr's record of Ibn Isḥāq's lectures contains just such a suggestion. Yūnus transmitted a tradition that Umm al-Dardā' asked Ka'b al-Ḥibr what reference he found to the messenger of Islam in the Torah. Ka'b al-Ḥibr answered, "We find Muhammad the apostle of Allah. His name is *al-mutawakkil*. He is not harsh or rough; nor does he walk proudly in the streets. He is given the keys that by him Allah may make blind eyes see, and deaf ears hear, and set straight crooked tongues so that they bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone without associate. He will help and defend the oppressed." A. Guillaume, "New light on the life of Muhammad," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Monograph No. 1 (Manchester University Press, n.d.), 32.
[161] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 404-406.
[162] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 406.
[163] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 406.
[164] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 386.
[165] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 387.
[166] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 394.
[167] This story also appears frequently in works of both *asbāb al-nuzūl* and *tafsīr*. See al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, Second edition (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2006), 51-52. Muqātil wrote at Q 3:23 that the messenger of Islam claims, "I am written in [the Torah] that I am a prophet and an apostle." *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ta'rīkh al-'Arabiyya, 2002), vol. 1, 269. Cf. H. Hirschfeld, "Historical and legendary controversies between Mohammad and the rabbis," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 10 (1897-8), 105-106.

[168] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, 410.
[169] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ilmiyya, 2004), two volumes.
[170] Muḥammad ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1957), vol. 1, 360-363.
[171] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 360.
[172] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 360-361.
[173] This saying is substantially the same as a saying in the sixth tradition, which Ibn Sa'd attributed to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr al-Āṣ. *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 362. A similar tradition was also given by al-Bukhārī in association with Q 48:8, and by al-Ṭabarī at Q 7:157.
[174] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 361.
[175] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 362-3.
[176] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 363.
[177] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1981), vol. 5, 150 (book 60, *tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, on Q. 2:136).
[178] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, 3 (book 1, *kayfa kāna bad' al-waḥī*).
[179] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, 170 (book 60, on Q 3:93).
[180] The role of 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām as the one who gets the reader of the Torah to lift his hand from the stoning verse is discussed by Georges Vajda in "Juifs et Musulmans selon le Ḥadīṯ," *Journal asiatique* 229 (1937), 95.
[181] Abū Dāwud Sulaymān (d. 888), in his collection of *ḥadīth* known as *Sunan Abū Dāwud*, transmitted a tradition about the messenger of Islam visiting a Jewish school and being asked by the Jews to give a judgment on a man who had committed adultery. "They placed a cushion for the messenger of Allah (may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him), who sat on it and said, 'Bring the Torah.' It was then brought. He then withdrew the cushion from beneath himself and placed the Torah on it, saying, 'I believe in you and in him who revealed you (*āmantu biki wa miman anzalki*).'" *Sunan Abū Dāwud* (Tunis: Dār iḥyā' al-sunnat al-nabawiyya, 1977), vol. 4, 155 (book 33, *al-ḥudūd*, *bāb fī rajm al-yahūdiyīn*).
[182] al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1967), vol. 2, 479-80. *The history of al-Ṭabarī*, W. Montgomery Watt, trans., vol. 7, *The foundation of the community* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 85-6.
[183] al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, 479.
[184] al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, 646-51. *The history of al-Ṭabarī*, Michael Fishbein, trans., vol. 8, *The victory of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press,

1997), 100-7. The story also appears in Guillaume, *The life of Muhammad*, 654-7.
[185] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, 5-7 (book 1).
[186] al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, 649.
[187] al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, 650.
[188] al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, 651.
[189] al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, 650. Gordon Nickel, "Conquest and controversy: Intertwined themes in the Islamic interpretive tradition," *Numen* 58 (2011), 246-48.
[190] al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, Second edition (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2006), 17.
[191] Cf. Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Qur'an and its interpreters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 127.
[192] al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 51.
[193] al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 103.
[194] al-Zamakhsharī's version of this tradition gives the names of both the youths and their scriptures: "two slaves, Jabr and Yasār, who manufactured swords in Mecca and used to read (*qara'a*) the Torah and the Gospel." *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq*, vol. 2, 610 (at Q 16:103).
[195] John Wansbrough, *Quranic studies: sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 183.
[196] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-ta'rīkh al-'Arabiyya, 2002), vol. 1, 118.
[197] Gordon Nickel, *Narratives of tampering in the earliest commentaries on the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 100-101.
[198] *Tanwīr al-miqbās* (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1941), 12.
[199] Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, eds. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Second edition (Cairo, 1955-69), vol. 2, 270.
[200] *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 2, 271.
[201] *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 2, 271. Cf. J. Cooper, *The commentary on the Qur'ān by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 413.
[202] al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-risāla, 2006), vol. 2, 220-223.
[203] al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām*, vol. 2, 223.

[204] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿaẓīm* (Beirut: Dār al-andalus li 'l-ṭibāʿa wa 'l-nashr, 1966), vol. 1, 205-206.
[205] al-Maḥallī and al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, trans. Feras Hamza (Amman: Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2007), 14.
[206] al-Shawkānī, *Fatḥ al-qadīr al-jamiʿ bayn fannī al-riwāya wa al-dirāya fī ʿilm al-tafsīr* (Beirut: Dār al-maʿrifa, 2007), vol. 1, 70-72.
[207] *Tafsīr Muqātil*, vol. 1, 286.
[208] *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 4, 535-6.
[209] However, this does not match what is written at 3:78 in the *Tanwīr al-miqbās min tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbās*, attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās.
[210] al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlimiyya, 2006), vol. 1, p. 369.
[211] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb: al-tafsīr al-kabīr* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1973), vol. 8, 107, 109.
[212] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 107.
[213] al-Maḥallī and al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, 65.
[214] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿaẓīm*, vol. 2, 62.
[215] For example, at Q 5:13 al-Ṭabarī attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās a tradition about "the legal punishments (ḥudūd)" of Allah in the Torah. *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 10, (trad. 11586).
[216] al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, Second edition (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2006), 15. Cf. Andrew Rippin, "The function of *asbāb al-nuzūl* in qur'ānic exegesis," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 51 (1988), 15-16.
[217] *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 10, 129.
[218] This sentence is: *wa hādha min ṣifat al-qurūn allatī kānat baʿda Mūsā min al-Yahūd mimman adraka baʿḍahum ʿaṣra nabiyyina Muḥammad*. *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 10, 129. Burton's translation of the whole clause: "That conduct went on from the period after Moses up to the time of Muḥammad." "The corruption of the scriptures," 102.
[219] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1981), vol. 3, 163 (book 48, *al-shahādāt*, *bāb lā yus'alu ahl al-shirk*). The tradition repeats in slightly different wordings in the *kitāb al-tawhīd* and the *kitāb al-iʿtiṣām bi-al-kitāb wa al-sunna*. Goldziher highlighted this *ḥadīth* and called it the "*locus classicus*" of the accusation of falsification in the tradition literature. "Über muhammedanische Polemik," 344. Schreiner also gave the tradition a prominent place. "Zur Geschichte der Polemik," 593.

[220] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʻIḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 306-7; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar ʻAlī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī book depot, 1967), vol. 1, 575-6; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992), vol. 2, 32-33.
[221] Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The emergence of Islam: Classical traditions in contemporary perspective* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2012), 124-5.
[222] *Muslim writers*, 228.
[223] *Jāmiʻ al-Bayān*, vol. 2, 270-271 (trads. 1388, 1389, and 1393).
[224] "The function of *asbāb al-nuzūl*," 16.
[225] Goldziher noted that al-Maqrīzī associated Q 2:79 and the accusation of falsification with the *Mishnah*, rather than with the earlier scriptures, in his *Kitāb al-Khiṭaṭ*. "Über muhammedanische Polemik," 368.
[226] *New researches*, 104.
[227] "The early development," 51.
[228] *Intertwined worlds*, 20.
[229] *Jāmiʻ al-Bayān*, vol. 1, 568 (trad. 826); vol. 6, 505 (trad. 7227).
[230] *Jāmiʻ al-bayān*, vol. 2, 405. Translation by Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *The* Qur'ān *and its interpreters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), vol. 1, 128-9.
[231] Emanuel Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Third edition (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 202-4. Keith Small, *Textual criticism and Qur'ān manuscripts* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 95-102. François Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam: Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 45-50, 173-178. Behnam Sadeghi and Uwe Bergmann, "The codex of a companion of the Prophet and the Qur'ān of the Prophet," *Arabica* 57 (2010), 385, 388, 396, 406. Walid Saleh, "Review article: *Muhammad is not the father of any of your men*," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 6 (2010), 253-54.
[232] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. ʻAbd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ta'rīkh al-ʻArabiyya, 2002), vol. 1, 122.
[233] Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʻ al-bayān ʻan ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, eds. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, Second edition (Cairo, 1955-69), vol. 2, 335-6, 345.
[234] Muqātil wrote at Q 2:16 that the Jews find the description of Muḥammad in the Torah before he appears, and believe in him. But when Allah sends him from

among the Arabs, "they disbelieved in him out of envy." *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 91. See also al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, Second edition (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2006), 16 (on Q 2:89).
[235] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 1, 122.
[236] *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān*, vol. 2, 335 (trads. 1526, 1525); 336 (trad. 1533).
[237] *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān*, vol. 2, 345. This sub-theme that the Jewish tampering action took place only after Islam's messenger 'was sent' appears to continue throughout both commentaries. Still, at Sūra 98, Muqātil seems to say there is no problem with the earlier scriptures prior to the appearance of the messenger of Islam. On the scriptural words, "And they scattered not, those that were given the book, excepting after the clear sign came to them" (Q 98:4), Muqātil wrote, "Those who disbelieve never ceased agreeing on the truth (*taṣdīq*) of Muḥammad until he was sent, because they had his description (*naʿt*) in their books. When Allah designated him from the offspring of someone other than Isaac, they disagreed about him." *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, vol. 4, 780. On this particular point, al-Ṭabarī pursued the same line in his interpretation of the verse, "He is saying that when Allah sent him, they split into groups in their opinions about him." al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 12, 656.
[238] al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 59 (on Q 3:77).
[239] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, vol. 2, 410.
[240] *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 51 (on Q 3:12).
[241] *Tafsīr Muqātil*, vol. 1, 269.
[242] See for example Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) on Q 7:157. *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* (Beirut: Dār al-andalus li 'l-ṭibāʿa wa 'l-nashr, 1966), vol. 3, 229-34.
[243] al-Wāhidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 51.
[244] University of London scholar John Wansbrough wrote that Q 7:157 "provided a point of departure for the allegation that the Arabian prophet had been prognosticated in Hebrew and Christian scripture." *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 63.
[245] From his *Kitāb al-badʾ wa 'l-taʾrīkh*, cited in Camilla Adang, "Medieval Muslim polemics against the Jewish scriptures," in *Muslim perceptions of other religions: A historical survey*, ed. Jacques Waardenburg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 150.
[246] A. Mingana, "The apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12 (1928), 171.

[247] Ignaz Goldziher, "Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-Kitab." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 32 (1878), 348.
[248] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Tawrāt," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. P.J. Bearman *et al* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. 10, 394. Similarly Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Tahrīf," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. P.J. Bearman *et al* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. 10, 3. Whether the accusation is "Ḳur'ānic" may be disputed, but the dating of the accusation to the beginning of Jewish and Christian denial of references to the messenger of Islam in their scriptures seems to be supported by the available evidence.
[249] Camilla Adang, "Torah," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2006), vol. 5, 304. Similar connections have been made by a variety of scholars, for example Kees Versteegh: "According to [the Muslims'] view, based on the teachings of the Qur'ān, the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) had received a true revelation, but they had been foolish enough to falsify this revelation. One of the proofs for this falsification (*taḥrīf*) was that neither in the Torah nor in the New Testament was there any mention of the coming of the prophet Muḥammad, although originally his mission had been announced to the Jews and the Christians." "Greek translations of the Qur'ān in Christian polemics (9th century A.D.)," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 141/1 (1991), 52-53. John Wansbrough noted: "Haggadic embellishment of the charge [of forgery] turned mostly upon the absence from Hebrew scripture of proof-texts announcing the mission of Muhammad." *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 189. Similarly Shari Lowin: "This claim [of textual alteration] explains why Muḥammad does not appear in either the Hebrew Bible or New Testament, despite the Muslim claim that his arrival and admission had originally been predicted there." "Revision and alteration," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 450.
[250] (Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003), 262.
[251] Tov, *Textual criticism*, 133. Ernst Würthwein, *The text of the Old Testament*, Second edition, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 73.
[252] At http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/manuscript.aspx, as well as at http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/codexsinai.html.
[253] Tov, *Textual criticism*, 133. Würthwein, *Text*, 73.

[254] Tov, *Textual criticism*, 133. Würthwein, *Text*, 73.
[255] At http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_1_d_viii_fs001r
[256] Würthwein, *Text*, 74.
[257] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʻIḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 501-8; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, Akbar ʻAlī, trans. (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967), vol. 2, 162-8; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992), vol. 2, 188-92. This astonishing claim of the *Iẓhār* will be picked up again in Chapter 12.
[258] Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 151. Würthwein, *Text*, 88.
[259] Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 152.
[260] Würthwein, *Text*, 81. These are actually fragments from the Cairo Geniza.
[261] Würthwein, *Text*, 100-101.
[262] Between 390 and 405 A.D. Tov, *Textual criticism*, 153. Würthwein, *Text*, 96.
[263] Jerome "understood the importance of the Hebrew source text," which he called the *hebraica veritas* ("the Hebrew truth"), and got the help of Jewish scholars. Tov, *Textual criticism*, 153.
[264] http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/. For example, the Great Isaiah Scroll can be examined at http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah. In addition, two-minute videos on the Digital Dead Sea Scrolls site and the Great Isaiah Scroll in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem are accessible at http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/dss_video and http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah_video
[265] M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, "The Aleppo codex and the rise of the Massoretic Bible text," *Biblical Archeologist* 42 (1979), 148. Würthwein, *Text*, 36. See also Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, "The authenticity of the Aleppo codex," *Textus* 1 (1960), 17-58.
[266] The Aleppo Codex can be examined online at http://www.aleppocodex.org/aleppocodex.html
[267] Würthwein, *Text*, 36-37.
[268] Würthwein, *Text*, 37.
[269] Tov, *Textual criticism*, 153.
[270] Würthwein, *Text*, 104. Tov, *Textual criticism*, 154.
[271] Nahum M. Sarna, "Bible (The canon, text, and editions)," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second edition, ed. in chief Fred Skolnik (Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), vol. 3, 585.

[272] *The gentle answer* Chapter 5, 68, 64-65.
[273] *The gentle answer* Chapter 5, 66.
[274] Emanuel Tov wrote of "Theological changes" (*Textual criticism*, 242-256) and Ernst Würthwein wrote of "Deliberate alterations" (*Text*, 111-112) in manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible. These are dealt with in Chapter 11. But neither scholar even remotely hints of a reference to the messenger of Islam. And along the way, these scholars made statements that lend perspective to our study. "In evaluating these alterations we must avoid thinking of them as 'corruptions,'" wrote Würthwein. "They were made in good faith, with no intention of introducing a foreign element into the text, but rather with the aim of restoring the true text and (from the copyist's view) preventing misunderstandings." *Text*, 111.
[275] The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, for all its accusations against the Torah, offered no manuscript evidence that references to the messenger of Islam were changed or erased from the Hebrew scriptures.
[276] Al-Azami, *The history of the qur'ānic text from revelation to compilation* (Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003), 256-261.
[277] Al-Azami, *History of the qur'ānic text*, 262.
[278] Eugene Ulrich, "The absence of 'sectarian variants' in the Jewish scriptural scrolls found at Qumran," in *The Bible as book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean desert discoveries*, eds. Edward D. Herbert & Emanuel Tov (London: The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 179-195.
[279] Ulrich, "The absence of 'sectarian variants,'" 179.
[280] Ulrich, "The absence of 'sectarian variants,'" 181-2, 191.
[281] Ulrich, "The absence of 'sectarian variants,'" 191, cf. 181.
[282] Tov, *Textual criticism*, 161, 166, 180-183.
[283] This point is picked up again in Chapter 11.
[284] (*Guidance for the confused concerning answers to Jews and Christians*), ed. 'Uthmān Jum'a Ḍumayriyya (Mecca: Dār 'ālam al-fawāid, 2008), accessible online at www.waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=1779
[285] Jon Hoover provided an English translation of the passage in "The apologetic and pastoral intentions of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's polemic against Jews and Christians," *Muslim World*100 (2010), 481.
[286] Hoover, "Apologetic and pastoral intentions," 481.
[287] *Hidāyat al-ḥayāra*. Hoover, "Apologetic and pastoral intentions," 481.
[288] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 90; *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, Akbar 'Alī, trans. (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī

Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 1, 301-2 (not included in English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"]).

[289] Ignaz Goldziher, "Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-kitāb," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 32 (1878), 343-344.

[290] Moritz Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache, zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1877). Goldziher, "Über muhammedanische Polemik," 341-387. Martin Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik zwischen Juden und Muhammedanern," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 42 (1888), 591-675. Hartwig Hirschfeld, "Mohammedan criticism of the Bible," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 13 (1900-1), 222-40. Ignazio Di Matteo, "Il 'Taḥrīf' od alterazione della Bibbia secondo i musulmani," *Bessarione* 38 (1922): 64-111, 223-60. Erdmann Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter: Beiträge zur Geschichte der muslimischen Polemik gegen das Christentum in arabischer Sprache* (Breslau: Verlag Müller & Seiffert, 1930). Kate Zebiri, "Polemic and polemical language," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 114-125.

[291] al-Jāḥiz, *Fī al-radd 'alā l-Naṣārā*, ed. J. Finkel in *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī 'Uthmān al-Jāḥiz* (Cairo, 1926), 24. David Thomas, "The Bible and the kalām," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity,* ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 179. Hirschfeld, "Mohammedan criticism", 230-232.

[292] ("Confirmation of the proofs of prophecy") 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Critique of Christian origins*, eds. and trans. Gabriel Said Reynolds & Samir Khalil Samir (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2010).

[293] Gabriel Said Reynolds, *A Muslim theologian in the sectarian milieu: 'Abd al-Jabbār and the* Critique of Christian origins (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 85.

[294] ("Judgment regarding the confessions, inclinations and sects") Goldziher, "Über muhammedanische Polemik," 363. Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik," 613. Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, 57. Martin Accad, "The Gospels in the Muslim discourse of the ninth to the fourteenth centuries: an exegetical inventorial table (part I)," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14/1 (2003), 72-73. Kate Zebiri called the *Kitāb al-fiṣal* "the first Muslim source to incorporate a thorough, systematic treatment of the biblical text." "Polemic," 123.

[295] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 26-35.

[296] ("Assuaging thirst in explanation of the alterations that have occurred in the Torah and Gospel")
[297] Thomas, "The Bible and the kalām," 186-7.
[298] Goldziher, "Über muhammedanische Polemik," 369-372.
[299] Goldziher, "Über muhammedanische Polemik," 372-5.
[300] Thomas, "The Bible and the kalām," 179. (al-Jāḥiz) ʻAbd al-Jabbār, *Critique of Christian origins*, 96-8.
[301] Thomas, "The Bible and the kalām," 187. (al-Juwaynī). Martin Whittingham, "Ezra as the corrupter of the Torah? Re-assessing Ibn Ḥazm's role in the long history of an idea," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 1 (2013), 264-7.
[302] ʻAbd al-Jabbār, *Critique of Christian origins*, 95-6. Reynolds, *A Muslim theologian*, 94.
[303] Thomas, "The Bible and the kalām," 179. (al-Jāḥiz)
[304] Maha El Kaisy-Friemuth, "*Al-ajwiba l-fākhira ʻan al-asʼila l-fājira fī l-radd ʻalā l-milla l-kāfira*," *Christian-Muslim relations, A bibliographical history*, gen. ed. David Thomas (Brill Online, 2013). (al-Qarāfī)
[305] Thomas, "The Bible and the kalām," 187. (al-Juwaynī)
[306] Hoover, "Apologetic and pastoral intentions of Ibn Qayyim," 481. Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, "Ibn Ḥazm," *Christian-Muslim relations, A bibliographical history*, gen. ed. David Thomas (Brill Online, 2013). El Kaisy-Friemuth, "*Al-ajwiba l-fākhira*." (al-Qarāfī).
[307] The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* distinguished itself from classical Muslim writing against the Bible by using Western scholarship, and it initiated a new trend among polemicists.
[308] Perlmann, "Medieval polemics," 122. University of Cordoba scholar Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala noted that Christians and Jews who answered Muslim accusations from within the Muslim Empire were united by Arabic, second-class social status as *ahl al-dhimma*, *jizya* taxation, and being accused of falsifying the Bible. "Maimonides under the messianic turmoil: Standardized apocalyptic topoi on Muḥammad's prophecy in al-Risālah al-yamaniyyah," in *Judæo-Arabic culture in al-Andalus*, ed. Amir Ashur (Cordoba: Oriens Academics, 2013), 178.
[309] Sidney H. Griffith, "'Ammār al-Baṣrī's *Kitāb al-burhān*: Christian *kalām* in the first Abbasid century," *Le Muséon* 96 (1983), 149-154.
[310] Arthur Jeffery, trans., "Ghevond's text of the correspondence between ʻUmar II and Leo III," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944), 269-321.

[311] A. Mingana, trans., "The apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12 (1928), 147-226.
[312] Anton Tien, trans., "The apology of Al-Kindi," in *The early Christian-Muslim dialogue: A collection of documents from the first three Islamic centuries (632-900), translations with commentary*, ed. N.A. Newman (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 381-545.
[313] Mark Beaumont, "'Ammār al-Baṣrī on the alleged corruption of the Gospels," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 246-8. Griffith, "*Kitāb al-burhān*," 165-8.
[314] S.T. Keating, "Refuting the charge of *taḥrīf*: Abū Rāiṭah (d. c. 835 CE) and his first *risāla* on the Holy Trinity," in *Ideas, images, and methods of portrayal: Insights into classical Arabic literature and Islam*, ed. S. Günter (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 41-57.
[315] Mingana, trans., "Timothy," 193.
[316] Jeffery, trans., "Leo III," 309. Mingana, trans., "Timothy," 171-2. Tien, trans., "Al-Kindi," 498.
[317] Mingana, trans., "Timothy," 183. Jeffery, trans., "Leo III," 292-3.
[318] Jeffery, trans., "Leo III," 290, 289.
[319] Tien, trans., "Al-Kindi," 498-9.
[320] Jeffery, trans., "Leo III," 288. Mingana, trans., "Timothy," 193. Tien, trans., "Al-Kindi," 498. Keating, "Abū Rāiṭah," 53.
[321] Jeffery, trans., "Leo III," 288. Mingana, trans., "Timothy," 193.
[322] Jeffery, trans., "Leo III," 296-7. ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī and other Christian writers also emphasized the multilingual spread of the Gospel as a proof of the divinely sponsored propagation of Christianity. Sarah Stroumsa, "The signs of prophecy: The emergence and early development of a theme in Arabic theological literature," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985), 111.
[323] Jeffery, trans., "Leo III," 296, 299. Cf. Beaumont, "'Ammār al-Baṣrī," 246-7.
[324] Tien, trans., "Al-Kindi," 498.
[325] Moshe Perlmann, "The medieval polemics between Islam and Judaism," in *Religion in a religious age*, ed. S.D. Goitein (Cambridge, Mass.: Association for Jewish Studies, 1974), 109.
[326] The history of Jewish answers has often been described in scholarly sources that are difficult to access, such as Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur*, and Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik," 591-675.

[327] Camilla Adang, "A Jewish reply to Ibn Ḥazm: Solomon b. Adret's polemic against Islam," in *Judíos y musulmanes en al-Andalus y el Magreb: Contactos intelectuales* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2002), 179-209. Harvey J. Hames, "A Jew among Christians and Muslims: Introspection in Solomon ibn Adret's response to Ibn Hazm," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 25 (2010), 203-219.
[328] Resianne Fontaine, "Abraham b. Dāwūd," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, eds. Gudrun Krämer et al (Brill Online, 2013). Ibid., "Abraham Ibn Daud's polemics against Muslims and Christians," in *The three rings, Textual studies in the historical trialogue of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, eds. Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis and Pim Valkenberg (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 19–34. Norman Roth, "Forgery and abrogation of the Torah: A theme in Muslim and Christian polemic in Spain," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 54 (1987), 208-9.
[329] Perlmann, "Medieval polemics," 121.
[330] (*The book of lights and watchtowers*) Haggai Ben-Shammai, "The attitude of some early Karaites towards Islam," in *Studies in medieval Jewish history and literature, Volume 2*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 23-37.
[331] Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik," 602-7.
[332] Camilla Adang, "Polemics (Muslim-Jewish)," *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, exec. ed. Norman A. Stillman (Brill Online, 2010). Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik," 610-612.
[333] Hartwig Hirschfeld, trans., *Judah Hallevi's Kitab al Khazari* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1905). Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik," 621-5.
[334] Adang, "Polemics (Muslim-Jewish)."
[335] G. Vajda, "Ibn Maymūn," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second edition*(Brill Online, 2013).
[336] Hirschfeld, "Mohammedan criticism of the Bible," 234-5.
[337] Moses Maimonides, *Moses Maimonides' epistle to Yemen: The Arabic original and the three Hebrew versions,* ed. Abraham S. Halkin, English trans. Boaz Cohen (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1952). Monferrer-Sala, "Maimonides under the messianic turmoil," 179-89. Perlmann, "Medieval polemics," 126-9. Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur*, 326-7. John Wansbrough, *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 64.
[338] Perlmann, "Medieval polemics," 122-6.

[339] Ibn Kammūna, *Examination of the three faiths*, trans. Moshe Perlmann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 47-77.
[340] ("Tract against Ishmael who wrote about the religions…") Adang, "Solomon b. Adret's polemic against Islam," 185-209.
[341] Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik," 628-39.
[342] Fontaine, "Abraham b. Dāwūd."
[343] Perlmann, "Medieval polemics," 121.
[344] Ben-Shammai, "Attitude of some early Karaites," 32. (al-Qirqisānī)
[345] Ibn Kammūna, *Examination of the three faiths*, 50-51. Perlmann, "Medieval polemics," 123.
[346] Adang, "Solomon b. Adret's polemic against Islam," 188, 195-8, 206-7.
[347] Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, 38, 40 (Arabic, in Hebrew script!), 38-41 (Hebrew), viii (English). Roth, "Forgery and abrogation," 208-9 (Abraham Ibn Daud).
[348] Ibn Kammūna, *Examination of the three faiths*, 52. Perlmann, "Medieval polemics," 123-4.
[349] Adang, "Solomon b. Adret's Polemic against Islam," 187.
[350] Adang, "Solomon b. Adret's polemic against Islam," 186.
[351] Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, 38 (Arabic), 38-39 (Hebrew), viii (English).
[352] Adang, "Solomon b. Adret's polemic against Islam," 188.
[353] Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, 40 (Arabic), 40-41 (Hebrew), viii (English). Monferrer-Sala, "Maimonides under the messianic turmoil," 184-5.
[354] Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
[355] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 36-37, cf. 33.
[356] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 295-303; Urdu vol. 1, 563-71; English vol. 2, 22-29.
[357] Second edition (London: John Chapman, 1847), vol. 1, 1, 11.
[358] (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1804-1812), three volumes.
[359] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 301; Urdu vol. 1, 568-9; English vol. 2, 26.
[360] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 302; Urdu vol. 1, 571; English vol. 2, 28.
[361] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 302, cf. 129-30; Urdu vol. 1, 571, cf. 356; English vol. 2, 28, cf. vol. 1, 41.
[362] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 115.
[363] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 115-120.
[364] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 116.

[365] *The text of the New Testament*, Second edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 52.
[366] Martin Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM Press, 2000), 68.
[367] Günter Lüling, *Über den Urkoran: Ansätze zur Rekonstruktion der vorislamisch-christlichen Strophenlieder im Koran* (Erlangen, 1974). Christoph Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koranspra*che (Berlin: Das Arabische Book, 2000). Again, German scholars! A good example of the scholarly way in which some of the world's top qur'anic scholars discuss the thesis of Luxenberg, whether agreeing with it or not, is Gabriel Said Reynolds, ed., *The Qur'ān in its historical context* (London: Routledge, 2008).
[368] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 273f.; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, Akbar 'Alī, trans. (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 1, 537f.; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 2, 1f.
[369] "When trying to determine the reliability of a source, the first questions a historian usually asks are: How far away in time and space is the source from the event about which it informs us?" Harald Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān. A reconsideration of Western views in light of recent methodological developments," *Der Islam* 78 (2001), 1.
[370] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 305; Urdu vol. 1, 574; English vol. 2, 31.
[371] The following Qur'an verses could reasonably be understood to refer to the earlier scriptures: Q 2:41, 89, 91, 97, 101; 3:3, 81; 4:47; 5:48; 6:92; 35:31; 46:12; 30; 61:6 (*muṣaddiq*); 10:37; 12:111 (*taṣdīq*). Gordon Nickel, *Narratives of tampering in the earliest commentaries on the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 47-8, 63-4, 188-91. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* quotes Q 5:48, but interprets it to mean that only those things from the earlier scriptures that agree with the Qur'an will be accepted as true. This is certainly not the obvious meaning of the verse, and it is not consistent with the qur'anic context. Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 305-6; Urdu vol. 1, 574-5: English vol. 2, 32.
[372] Arthur Jeffery, "The Qur'ān as scripture," *Muslim World* 40 (1950), 41-55, 106-134, 185-206, 257-275. William A. Graham, "Scripture and the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 558-69.

[373] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 2-3.
[374] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus: A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 14.
[375] Sidney H. Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic: An inquiry into its appearance in the first Abbasid century," *Oriens Christianus* 69 (1985): 128. Professor Griffith adds, "…one may conclude that the *Qur'ān* is the sole witness for the existence of such a Gospel" (130).
[376] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-haqq*, vol. 1, 305; Urdu vol. 1, 574; English vol. 2, p. 31.
[377]Kate Zebiri, "Polemic and polemical language," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 124.
[378] Graham, "Scripture and the Qur'ān," 563-5.
[379] Kairanwi, *Iẓḥār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 447-491; Urdu vol. 3, 390-451. The English version does not include this substantial section, but elsewhere makes judgments based on the accusation, vol. 2, 194, vol. 3, 31-32.
[380] W. Madelung, "ʿIṣma," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* New Edition, eds. C.E. Bosworth et al (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), vol. 4, 182-4. Paul E. Walker, "Impeccability," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2002), vol. 2, 505-7. A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim creed: its genesis and historical development* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1965), 94, 192-3, 217-18, 246-7. Tor Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds in Lehre und Glaube seiner Gemeinde* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1917), 139-145. David S. Powers, *Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men: The making of the last prophet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 302, nt. 1.
[381] Marty Abegg, Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The oldest known Bible translated for the first time into English* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1999).
[382] Here, Peter likely had in mind prophecies from the Torah and Prophets such as Exodus 12:5 and Isaiah 53:9. Chapter 21 develops this theme.
[383] Wensinck, *The Muslim creed*, 217.
[384] Walker, "Impeccability," 506.
[385] Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon: Derived from the best and most copious Eastern sources* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1874), book 1, pt. 5, 2069.
[386] G. Gilliot, "Les trois mensonges d'Abraham dans la tradition interprétante musulmane," *Israel Oriental Studies* 17 (1997), 37-87 (esp. 68-78). Norman Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the description of a genre,

illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham," in *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, eds. G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London: Routledge, 1993), 106-109. Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 159.

[387] Before the doctrine of prophetic sinlessness became established in Islam, Muslim commentators understood this verse to mean that Joseph began to act on his desire for the woman. Muqatil, *Tafsir*, vol. 2, 328-9 (against the strenuous objections of his modern editor, nt. 2!). Claude Gilliot, "Muqātil, grand exégète, traditionniste et théologien maudit," *Journal asiatique* 279 (1991), 70-71. Walker, "Impeccability," 506-7. Later Muslim commentators were clearly troubled by the word *hamma*. Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 173-4 (citing Ibn al-ʿArabī). There is no hint in the Torah account that Joseph either desired Potiphar's wife or began to act upon his desire (Genesis 39:6-12). Instead, Joseph "refused" and protested, "How…could I do such a wicked thing and sin (Hebrew *ḥāṭā'tî*) against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

[388] "Sin, major and minor," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2006), vol. 5, 25.

[389] The Hebrew noun *peshā*ʿ carries the meaning of rebellion and breach of covenant. See also Chapter 21, Section 4.

[390] Muqatil, *Tafsir*, vol. 3, 639f. al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* (Cairo: Dār al-maʿārif, 1967), vol. 1, 480-84. *The history of al-Ṭabarī*, Vol. 3, *The Children of Israel*, trans. William M. Brinner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 144-9. al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī musamma Jāmi*ʿ *al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿilmiyya, 2005), vol. 10, 566-74. al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi*ʿ *li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 2006), vol. 18, 153-185. Jean-Louis Déclais, "Le péché et la pénitence de David dans les premières traditions musulmanes" in *Figures de David à travers la Bible: XVIIe congrès de l'ACFEB (Lille, 1er-5 septembre 1997)* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999), 429-445. Anthony H. Johns, "David and Bathsheba: A case study in the exegesis of qur'anic storytelling," *MIDEO* 19 (1989), 225-266.

[391] al-Ṭabari, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, 562-4. *The history of al-Ṭabarī*, trans. Michael Fishbein, vol. 8, *The victory of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 1-4. Muqatil, *Tafsir*, vol. 3, 496. al-Shawkānī, *Fatḥ al-qadīr: al-jāmi*ʿ *bayna fannay al-riwāya wa 'l-dirāya min ʿilm al-tafsīr* (Cairo: Muṣṭafṭā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1964), vol. 4, 286. Gilliot, "Muqātil, grand Exégète," 71-75. Powers, *Muḥammad is not the father*, 48-50. Ze'ev Maghen, "Intertwined triangles: Remarks on the relationship between two prophetic scandals," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and*

Islam 33 (2007), 17-98. Ze'ev Maghen, "Davidic motifs in the biography of Muḥammad," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 35 (2008), 129. Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 134-5, 153-4.

[392] Camilla Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 240 (Ibn Ḥazm in his *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī 'l-milal wa 'l-ahwā' wa 'l-niḥal*). Kairanwi, *Iẓḥār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 478-481; Urdu vol. 3, 431-5. The English version only gives a brief mention, vol. 2, 194.

[393] To the contrary, see Abegg, Jr., Flint and Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 244-46. Craig A. Evans notes a "tendency to exculpate David" in the "Damascus document" discovered at Qumran. However, David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah is acknowledged in the "Damascus document," and the biblical text is not altered in any case. "David in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The scrolls and the scriptures: Qumran fifty years after*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 187.

[394] Powers, *Muḥammad is not the father*, 48-49, 271 (notes 40-46): Babylonian Talmud *Shabbāt* 56a and *Sanhedrīn* 107a. Maghen, "Intertwined triangles," 40-47. Heinrich Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1971), 379-80. Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 137.

[395] Isaac Hasson, "David," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 496-7. It is worth noting that in this case Muslims preferred extra-biblical sources to the canonical accounts that remain unchanged from the earliest manuscript evidence until today.

[396] Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 132, 135, 138-9, 154, 171.

[397] Hans Wehr, *A dictionary of modern written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1961), 312. Cf. Elsaid M. Badawi and Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 334-5. "Many commentators…consider terms like *dhanb* and *ithm*…to refer to major sins." Zaman, "Sin, major and minor," 19.

[398] Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 127-8.

[399] Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 153.

[400] Madelung, "ʿIṣma," 182.

[401] Wehr, *Dictionary*, 379. Cf. Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, 400.

[402] Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, 399.

[403] Note also the tradition attributed to Abū Hurayra: "When any human being is born, Satan touches (*yaṭ'anu*) him at both sides of the body with his two fingers, except ʿĪsā, the son of Mary, whom Satan tried to touch but failed, for he touched the placenta-cover instead." al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1981), vol. 4, 94 (book 54, *bad' al-khalq*, *bāb ṣifat Iblīs wa junūdihi*). G.C. Anawati, "ʿĪsā," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, New edition, eds. E. Van Donzel et al (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), vol. 4, 82.
[404] Madelung, "ʿIṣma," 182-3. Walker, "Impeccability," 505.
[405] Walker, "Impeccability," 506.
[406] Wensinck, *The Muslim creed*, 218.
[407] Wensinck, *The Muslim creed*, 94, 246. John Wansbrough, *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 67.
[408] Wensinck, *The Muslim creed*, 218.
[409] Graham, "Scripture and the Qur'ān," 565.
[410] Walker, "Impeccability," 505. Wehr, *Dictionary*, 617.
[411] Wensinck, *The Muslim creed*, 217.
[412] Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, 131-4. Wensinck, *The Muslim creed*, 218.
[413] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-haqq*, vol. 1, 304; Urdu vol. 1, 572-3; English vol. 2, 30. This is a good example of how the translations do not accurately convey the original Arabic.
[414] Walid A. Saleh, "A fifteenth-century Muslim Hebraist: Al-Biqāʿi and his defense of using the Bible to interpret the Qur'ān," *Speculum* 83 (2008), 649. al-Biqāʿī's original Arabic text is accessible in Walid A. Saleh, *In defense of the Bible: A critical edition and an introduction to al-Biqāʿī's Bible treatise*(Leiden: Brill, 2008), 57-191.
[415] Ibn Taymiyya, *A Muslim theologian's response to Christianity. Ibn Taymiyya's* al-Jawab al-sahih (Delmar, NY: Caravan, 1984), 213-40.
[416] Saleh, "Muslim Hebraist," 649.
[417] Saleh, "Muslim Hebraist," 649.
[418] Saleh, "Muslim Hebraist," 649.
[419] Saleh, "Muslim Hebraist," 645.
[420] Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, 143-5, 223-6. D.S. Margoliouth, "On 'The book of religion and empire' by 'Alī b. Rabban al-Ṭabarī," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 16 (1930), 168-70.

[421] David Thomas, "The Bible in early Muslim anti-Christian polemic," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7/1 (1996), 32-7. Mark Beaumont, "'Ammār al-Baṣrī on the alleged corruption of the Gospels," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 244-5.
[422] Translated in Robert Caspar and Jean-Marie Gaudeul, "Textes de la tradition musulmane concernant le taḥrîf (falsification) des écritures," *Islamochristiana* 6 (1980), 90-91.
[423] Caspar and Gaudeul, "Textes de la tradition musulmane," 94-5.
[424] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 309-10; Urdu vol. 1, 580; English vol. 2, 36.
[425] *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the three faiths*, trans. Moshe Perlmann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 137-143.
[426] *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the three faiths*, 140.
[427] Martin Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik zwischen Juden und Muhammedanern," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 42 (1888), 641.
[428] Ibn Taymiyya, *A Muslim theologian's response to Christianity*, 229.
[429] Ibn Taymiyya, *A Muslim theologian's response to Christianity*, 213-240. Jon Hoover, "Ibn Taymiyya," in *Christian-Muslim relations: A bibliographical history*, eds. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2012), vol. 4, 836, 840.
[430] Ibn Taymiyya, *A Muslim theologian's response to Christianity*, 213.
[431] W.J. Fischel, "Ibn Khaldūn: On the Bible, Judaism and the Jews," in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, eds. S. Löwinger et al (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1958), vol. 2, 147-171, 157.
[432] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), vol. 1, 20.
[433] Fischel, "Ibn Khaldūn," 154.
[434] Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh aw kitāb al-'ibar wa diwān al-mubtada' wa l-khabar fī ayyām al-'arab wa l-'ajam wa l-barbar*. Caspar and Gaudeul, "Textes de la tradition musulmane," 91-92.
[435] Fischel, "Ibn Khaldūn," 156.
[436] *al-Fawz al-kabīr fī uṣūl al-tafsīr*, Arabic trans. Muḥammad Munīr al-Dimashaqī (Deoband: Mukhtār & Co., 1986), 7. Cf. G.N. Jalbani, *Teachings of Shah Waliyullah of Delhi* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1967), 9.
[437] Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 55.

[438] Andrew Rippin, "Interpreting the Bible through the Qur'ān," in *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, eds. G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London: Routledge, 1993), 256-7.
[439] Saleh, "Muslim Hebraist," 642-50.
[440] Saleh, "Muslim Hebraist," 649.
[441] Saleh, "Muslim Hebraist," 649.
[442] Sidney H. Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic: An inquiry into its appearance in the first Abbasid century," *Oriens Christianus* 69 (1985), 128-131. Griffith wrote, "one may conclude that the *Qur'ān* is the sole witness for the existence of such a Gospel." "Gospel in Arabic," 130. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* passed on this claim without offering evidence of any kind. Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 308-13; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī, (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 1, 579-85; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 2, 34-9.
[443] Raymond F. Collins, "Gospel," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second edition, ed. Lindsay Jones (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 3642.
[444] Collins, "Gospel," 3640. Interestingly, the Hebrew participle *mabassēr* in these verses seems to be close in meaning to the Arabic *mubashshir*.
[445] Collins, "Gospel," 3641.
[446] Scholars agree that Paul wrote his letters between 50 and 60 A.D. Martin Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 2000), 1. Paul's conversion is dated to between 32 and 34 A.D.—no more than four years after the death and resurrection of Jesus in 30 A.D. Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the earliest history of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 31. This point will be revisited in Chapter 10.
[447] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the eyewitnesses: The Gospels as eyewitness testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 264-89. This important point will be explained in more detail in Chapter 10.
[448] Most scholars consider the Gospel according to Mark to be the earliest of the four Gospel accounts. Morna D. Hooker, "The Gospel according to Mark," *Oxford companion to the Bible*, eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (Oxford University Press, 1993), 492.
[449] Collins, "Gospel," 3642.

[450] Frans Neirynck, "Genre of Gospel," *Oxford companion to the Bible* , eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (Oxford University Press, 1993), 258.
[451] Collins, "Gospel," 3642. Martin Hengel wrote, "the Apostolic Fathers up to the middle of the second century were quite rightly strict in using the singular and never the plural." *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 3.
[452] Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 71-86. F.F. Bruce believed the codex was established even earlier in the second century, citing as evidence the expression of Ignatius in 115 A.D. about "the Gospel" as a single authoritative writing. *The New Testament documents: Are they reliable?*, 18. Professor Stanton's presentation of the evidence for and against an early collection of the four Gospel accounts is another good example of how academic scholars discuss questions about which the world's best biblical scholars may strongly disagree.
[453] Irenaeus, *Against the heresies* (*Adversus haereses*), 3, 11, 8. Quoted in Hengel, *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 11.
[454] Hengel, *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 22-23. Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 580.
[455] Hengel, *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 31-3.
[456] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 581. Hengel, *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 24-6.
[457] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 584.
[458] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 584.
[459] See, for example, John Wansbrough, *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 20-25. E.E. Elder, "Parallel passages in the Koran—the story of Moses," *Muslim World* 15 (1925), 254-259. R. Marston Speight, "A look at variant readings in the ḥadith," *Der Islam* 77 (2000): 169-79. Rizwi S. Faizer, "Muhammad and the Medinan Jews: A comparison of the texts of Ibn Ishaq's *Kitāb sīrat rasūl Allāh* with al-Waqidi's *Kitāb al-maghāzī*," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996), 463-89. This point is taken up more fully in Chapters 15 and 17.
[460] See D.S. Margoliouth and A. Mingana, "Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1918), vol. 10, 539.
[461] University of Oregon professor Stephen J. Shoemaker commented on these sources, "the early biographies of Muhammad, the *sīra* traditions…are not at all equal in their historical quality to the canonical Christian gospels." "Despite frequent assertions to the contrary, our historical knowledge concerning

Muhammad and first-century Islam is far more limited and uncertain than is the case with respect to Jesus and first-century Christianity." *The death of a prophet: The end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 273.

[462] William Muir, *The apology of al Kindy, written at the court of al Mâmûn (circa A.H. 215; A.D. 830)* (London: SPCK, 1886), 41-3. "The apology of al-Kindi," in *The early Christian-Muslim dialogue: A collection of documents from the first three Islamic centuries (632-990 A.D.)*, ed. N.A. Newman (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 478-81.

[463] Eerik Dickinson, "Difficult passages," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill 2001), vol. 1, 535.

[464] Jalāl al-Dīn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qur'ān* (Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Maʻārif, 1996), vol. 2, 75-85. Muslim scholars cited Q 4:82 to support their belief that the Qur'an could not contain contradiction (*ikhtilāf*). Dickinson, "Difficult passages," 535.

[465] Jay Smith, Alex Chowdhry, Toby Jepson, James Schaeffer, "101 cleared-up contradictions in the Bible." Posted at http://www.debate.org.uk/debate-topics/apologetic/contrads/

[466] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 168; Urdu vol. 1, 402; English vol. 1, 78.

[467] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 166; Urdu vol. 1, 398; English vol. 1, 76.

[468] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 196; Urdu vol. 1, 442; English vol. 1, 108 (numbered 111). The phrase in quotation marks is how the Arabic is rendered in the English version.

[469] A few examples are: *The true guidance, Part three: False charges against the New Testament* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, 1992), translation of the Arabic *Al-Hidāya* first published in 1904 and revised in 1987 and 1991. Smith *et al*, "101 cleared-up contradictions." Gerhard Nels, "Islamic allegations against the Bible," http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/tt2/t22.html.

[470] Even prior to Islam in Augustine, *Harmony of the Gospels*. Some recent examples are: Gleason L. Archer Jr., *New international encyclopedia of Bible difficulties* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980). Norman L. Geisler and Thomas Howe, *The big book of Bible difficulties* (Grand Rapids MI: 1992). Craig L. Blomberg, *The historical reliability of the Gospels*, Second edition (Nottingham: Apollos, 2007), 152-238. Blomberg, a New Testament scholar and a believer, presented his answer under seven major headings in the context of modern academic study of the New Testament.

[471] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 191-2; Urdu vol. 1, 435-6; English vol. 1, 105-6 (#107).
[472] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 168, 169; Urdu vol. 1, 400-1, 401-2; English vol. 1, 77, 78.
[473] Blomberg, *Historical reliability*, 168-171.
[474] The differences in sequence of narrative elements in the Qur'an's numerous Moses stories will be charted in Chapters 15 and 17.
[475] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 178; Urdu vol. 1, 414-15; English vol. 1, 89-90.
[476] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 188; Urdu vol. 1, 429-430 (English version omits this accusation).
[477] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 193 (verse references not given); Urdu vol. 1, 437 (English version omits this accusation).
[478] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 194-5; Urdu vol. 1, 439-440; English vol. 1, 107 (#110).
[479] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 196-7; Urdu vol. 1, 442-4; English vol. 1, 109 (#112).
[480] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 197; Urdu vol. 1, 442-4; English vol. 1, 109 (#112).
[481] A fourth witness to all three elements is the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.
[482] On this point see Blomberg, *Historical reliability*, 207-8.
[483] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Is there a concept of redemption in Islam?" in *Some religious aspects of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 57. G.R. Hawting, "The tawwābūn, atonement and 'āshūrā," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17 (1994), 170-171.
[484] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 197; Urdu vol. 1, 444-5; English vol. 1, 110 (#113). The Arabic original of the *Iẓhār* does not indicate the ellipsis in the Matthew 11 quotation.
[485] Interestingly, the English translation omits this comment, and the Urdu translation adds a substantial footnote to explain it. This treatment suggests that the "contradiction" is not quite so obvious.
[486] Blomberg, *Historical reliability*, 157-194.
[487] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 587.
[488] Philip Comfort, *Encountering the manuscripts: An introduction to New Testament paleography & textual criticism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005),

226.

[489] Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 66.

[490] F.F. Bruce, *New Testament documents*, 29.

[491] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 586-7.

[492] Raḥmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʻIḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 304-13; Urdu translation *B ā ʼ ibal se Qur ʼ ā n tak*, Akbar ʻAl ī , trans. (Deoband, India: Ḥ ā fiẓ ī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"] vol. 1, 572-86; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 2, 30-40.

[493] Kairanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 65-73; Urdu vol. 2, 305-318; English vol. 3, 1-6.

[494] William Muir, *The apology of al Kindi, Written at the court of al Mâmûn* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1882), 29-31. Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their religious beliefs and practices*, Fourth edition (London: Routledge, 2012), 34-5. University of Victoria scholar Andrew Rippin observed, "This sort of argument is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate, due to the lack of contemporaneous profane literature by which the rhetorical accomplishment of the Qur ʼ ā n can actually be assessed. The argument remains a dogmatic one, essential to the proof of the status of the text, but one which operates (like many other religious arguments) within the presuppositions of Islam alone." *Muslims*, 35.

[495] Irenaeus, *Against the heresies* (*Adversus haereses*), 3, 11, 8. Quoted in Martin Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 2000), 11.

[496] Irenaeus, *Against the heresies*, 3, 11, 7. Quoted in Hengel, *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 22.

[497] For example, University of Nijmegen scholar Harald Motzki: "When trying to determine the reliability of a source, the first questions a historian usually asks are: How far away in time and space is the source from the event about which it informs us? Are the date and place of origin which the source claims for itself correct?" Harald Motzki, "The collection of the Qur ʼ ā n: A reconsideration of Western views in light of recent methodological developments," *Der Islam* 78 (2001), 1.

[498] Stephen J. Shoemaker recently described the gap between Jesus' death and the first writing down of the account as "approximately forty years." *The death of a prophet: The end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 272.

[499] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus: A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 14.

[500] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 2-4. The theme of the "collection of the Qur'an" is will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 16.

[501] For example, Chase F. Robinson, *ʻAbd al-Malik* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 100-104. This scholarship is described in Chapter 16.

[502] Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet* , 139.

[503] "The earliest extant lives of Muhammad are far more distant from the events they describe than the Gospels are from the life of Jesus," wrote F.E. Peters. "The quest of the historical Muhammad," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23/3 (1991), 302. Peters also quoted Patricia Crone on the difference this makes to the modern historian: "Consider the prospect of reconstructing the origins of Christianity on the basis of the writings of Clement or Justin in a recension by Origen." (*Slaves on horses*, 203 nt. 10.) "Quest of the historical Muhammad," 312 nt. 50.

[504] Shoemaker, The death of a prophet , 273.

[505] Bruce, *The New Testament documents*, 43.

[506] Kairanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 304-13; Urdu vol. 1, 572-586; English vol. 2, 30-40.

[507] Kairanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 304, 308-9; Urdu vol. 1, 573, 579; English vol. 2, 30, 34.

[508] Birger Gerhardsson, The reliability of the Gospel tradition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 9-25.

[509] Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the earliest history of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 31. Paul Barnett suggested Paul was converted within a year of Jesus' resurrection. *Is the New Testament reliable*? Second edition (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 138.

[510] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the eyewitnesses: The Gospels as eyewitness testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 266.

[511] Bauckham, *Jesus and the eyewitnesses*, 265, quoting B. Gerhardsson, "Illuminating the kingdom: Narrative Meshalim in the synoptic Gospels," in *Jesus and the oral Gospel tradition*, ed. H. Wansbrough (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1991), 306, italics Bauckham's. See also Barnett, *Is the New Testament reliable?*, 137.

[512] Bauckham, *Jesus and the eyewitnesses*, 267.

[513] Bauckham, *Jesus and the eyewitnesses*, 268, italics Bauckham's.

[514] Bauckham, *Jesus and the eyewitnesses*, 270.

[515] Bauckham, *Jesus and the eyewitnesses*, 270.

[516] Martin Hengel, *The Son of God*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 59-60. "It might presumably go back in a simpler form to the first Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem." Hengel, *Son of God*, 60.

[517] F.E. Peters explained how "covenant" (Hebrew *ber ī t*) became "testament" through translation to Greek *diatheke* and then Latin *testamentum*. *The voice, the word, the books: The sacred scripture of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 52.

[518] Guy Stroumsa, "The body of truth and its measures: New Testament canonization in context," in *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Kurt Rudolph zum 65, Geburtstag* (Marburg, 1994),

308-11. Stroumsa distinguishes these as first a "religious" canonization and later a "cultural" canonization.

[519] Peters, *The voice*, 61.

[520] Peters, *The voice*, 116.

[521] Peters, *The voice*, 55.

[522] Peters, *The voice*, 56.

[523] Peters, *The voice*, 116.

[524] Bruce, *The New Testament documents*, 20.

[525] Bruce Metzger, *The canon of the New Testament: Its origin, development and significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 191-201.

[526] Peters, *The voice*, 61.

[527] Bruce, *The New Testament documents*, 20.

[528] Bauckham, *Jesus and the eyewitnesses*, 289.

[529] Larry W. Hurtado, "The early New Testament papyri: A survey of their significance," in *Papyrologie und Exegese: Die Auslegung des Neuen Testaments im Licht der Papyri*, Jens Herzer, ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 20-21. Hurtado described several recent studies that argue for a Gospel collection already in the earliest years of the second century, including Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 71-86.

[530] Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and readers in the early Church: A history of early Christian texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 99-100. F.E. Peters suggested that Paul's letters "were circulating as a collection at least by the end of the first century." *The voice*, 57.

[531] Gamble, *Books and readers in the early Church*, 205-31. Hengel, *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 30-31. Barnett, *Is the New Testament reliable?*, 44. These gatherings were churches meeting in homes. The Roman Empire persecuted Christians and did not allow them to build special meeting places prior to the fourth century.

[532] Barnett, *Is the New Testament reliable?*, 45.

[533] Hengel, *One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 28.

[534] For example, Kairanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 273-304, 313-334; Urdu vol. 1, 537-572, 586-612; English vol. 2, 2-29, 137-192.

[535] Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 65-86.

[536] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 75.

[537] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 84.

[538] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 86. The task of textual criticism will be explained further in Chapter 12.

[539] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 79-80. Strikingly different from what is written about Vaticanus in Kairanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 504-5; Urdu vol. 2, 165-6; English vol. 2, 190-191.

[540] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, Second edition, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 56-64, 83-102.

[541] Hurtado, "Early New Testament papyri," 4.

[542] Hurtado, "Early New Testament papyri," 1.

[543] Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 57.

[544] Hurtado, "Early New Testament papyri," 9. Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 81.

[545] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi claimed that there was no indication of the existence of the four Gospel accounts before the third century . K airanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq* , vol. 1, 302, 304-5; Urdu vol. 1 , 571, 5 7 3 ; English vol. 2, 28, 30-31.

[546] Neill and Wright, *Interpretation*, 81.

[547] D.C. Parker, *An introduction to the New Testament manuscripts and their texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 63.

[548] See for example the scribal errors listed in Chapter 7 of Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament: Its transmission, corruption and restoration*, Fourth edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 251-71.

[549] Kairanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 309-10; Urdu vol. 1, 580; English vol. 2, 36.

[550] Kairanwi, *Iẓh ā r al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 56-61; Urdu vol. 2, 297-302; English vol. 2, 283-6.

[551] al-R ā z ī' s exegesis of these verses is fully described in Gordon Nickel, "'Self-evident truths of reason': challenges to clear thinking in the *Tafs ī r al-kab ī r* of Fakhr al-D ī n al-R ā z ī ," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22/2 (2011), 165-8.

[552] al-R ā z ī , *Maf ā t ī ḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 70-71.

[553] al-R ā z ī , *Maf ā t ī ḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 70. Translation by Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *The Qur'an and its interpreters, vol. 2, The House of 'Imr ā n* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 177.

[554] al-R ā z ī , *Maf ā t ī ḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 70.

[555] al-R ā z ī , *Maf ā t ī ḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 11, 100.

[556] G.H.A. Juynboll, "Taw ā tur," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. P.J. Bearman et al (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. 10, 381.

[557] W.H.T. Gairdner, "Mohammedan tradition and Gospel record: The had ī th and the inj ī l," *The Moslem World* 5 (1915), 349-379.

[558] This feature of the Qur'an will be discussed in Chapter 17.
[559] Stephen S. Smalley, "The Gospel according to John," in *Oxford companion to the Bible*, 373.
[560] Barnett, *Is the New Testament reliable?*, 49.
[561] *Is the New Testament reliable?*, 50.
[562] *Jesus and the eyewitnesses*, 356.
[563] Barnett, *Is the New Testament reliable?*, 53.
[564] M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, "The Aleppo Codex and the rise of the Massoretic Bible text," *Biblical archeologist* 42 (1979), 162. See also *idem*, "The authenticity of the Aleppo Codex," *Textus* 1 (1960), 17-58.
[565] Goshen-Gottstein, "Aleppo Codex," 156.
[566] Including full access online at http://aleppocodex.org/newsite/index.html.
[567] François Déroche, "Written transmission," in *The Blackwell companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 173-77. E.A. Rezvan noted with interest that the efforts of the Masoretes and the development of the text of the Qur'an took place during the "same time period (seventh-ninth centuries)." "The Qur'ān and its world: VI. Emergence of the canon: The struggle for uniformity," *Manuscripta Orientalia* 4/2 (1998), 16-17. The development of the text of the Qur'an is described in Chapters 13-18.
[568] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Tawrāt," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. P.J. Bearman et al (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. 10, 393-395.
[569] Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur'an and its biblical subtext* (London: Routledge, 2010). *Idem*, "Reading the Qur'an as homily: The case of Sarah's laughter," in *The Qur'ān in context: Historical and literary investigations into the qur'ānic milieu*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 585-592.
[570] Gordon Nickel, *Narratives of tampering in the earliest commentaries on the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).
[571] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 304; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 1, 572; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992), ["English"] vol. 2, 30.
[572] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 63ff.; Urdu vol. 2, 303ff.; English vol. 3, 1ff.
[573] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 304; Urdu vol. 1, 572-3; English vol. 2, 30. The Urdu and English translations of these statements are quite different from the

original Arabic.
[574] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 507; Urdu vol. 2, 167; English vol. 2, 192.
[575] *mā maʿakum* ("what is with you"): Q 2:41, 3:81, 4:47; *mā maʿahum* ("what is with them"): Q 2:89, 91, 101.
[576] "Quranic narrative is nothing if not elliptic, often unintelligible without exegetical complement." John Wansbrough, *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 131. We pick up the discussion of this characteristic of qur'anic narrative in Chapter 15.
[577] For this reason, al-Biqāʿī quoted extensively from the Bible in his commentary *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa ʾl-suwar*. Walid Saleh, "'Sublime in its style, exquisite in its tenderness': The Hebrew Bible quotations in al-Biqāʿī's Qur'ān commentary," in *Adaptations and innovations: Studies on the interaction between Jewish and Islamic thought and literature from the early Middle Ages to the late twentieth century, Dedicated to Professor Joel L. Kraemer*, eds. Y. Tzvi Langermann and Josef Stern (Paris: Peeters, 2007), 337f.
[578] For example, Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 501-8; Urdu vol. 2, 162-8; English vol. 2, 188-192.
[579] Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Old Testament text," in *The Cambridge history of the Bible*, vol. 1, *From the beginnings to Jerome*, eds. P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans,(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 164-5. Nahum M. Sarna, "Bible (The canon, text, and editions)," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second edition, ed. in chief Fred Skolnik (Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), vol. 3, 583. Emanuel Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Third edition (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 161, 166, 180-183.
[580] Emanuel Tov, "Dead Sea Scrolls," *Oxford companion to the Bible*, eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (Oxford University Press, 1993), 159.
[581] Tov, "Dead Sea Scrolls," 160.
[582] Eugene Ulrich, "The Qumran scrolls and the Biblical text," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty years after their discovery*, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov and James C. VanderKam (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 51-59.
[583] Ulrich, "Qumran Scrolls," 51.
[584] Ulrich, "Qumran Scrolls," 54.
[585] Ulrich, "Qumran Scrolls," 52f.
[586] Sarna, "Bible," 585.
[587] Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 25.

[588] Sarna, "Bible," 585. Shemaryahu Talmon, "The transmission history of the text of the Hebrew Bible in the light of biblical manuscripts from Qumran and other sites in the Judean Desert," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty years after their discovery*, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov and James C. VanderKam (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 42f.
[589] Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 25.
[590] Eugene Ulrich, "The absence of 'sectarian variants' in the Jewish scriptural scrolls found at Qumran," in *The Bible as book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert discoveries*, eds. Edward D. Herbert & Emanuel Tov (The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 191.
[591] Ellis R. Brotzman, *Old Testament textual criticism: A practical introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 123-32. Ernst Würthwein, *The text of the Old Testament*, Second edition, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 113-22. Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 161-69, 263-68.
[592] Würthwein, *The text of the Old Testament*, 111-12.
[593] Talmon, "The Old Testament text," 162.
[594] Talmon, "The Old Testament text," 162.
[595] Shemaryahu Talmon, "Textual study of the Bible—a new outlook," in *Qumran and the history of the biblical text*, eds. Frank M. Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 326.
[596] Ulrich, "Absence of 'sectarian variants,'" 191.
[597] Würthwein, *The text of the Old Testament*, 111.
[598] Emanuel Tov, "The many forms of Hebrew scripture: Reflections in light of the LXX and 4Qreworked Pentateuch," in *From Qumran to Aleppo*, eds. Armin Lange et al. (Göttingen: Vanden- hoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 11.
[599] For example, the widely-used *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, eds. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1998).
[600] Sarna, "Bible," 575-9.
[601] Sarna, "Bible," 578.
[602] Sarna, "Bible," 578.
[603] Sarna, "Bible," 578-9.
[604] Emanuel Tov, "The scribal and textual transmission of the Torah analyzed in light of its sanctity," in *Pentateuchal traditions in the late Second Temple period: Procedings of the international workshop in Tokyo, August 28-31, 2007*, eds. Akio Moriya and Gohei Hata (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 58-59.

[605] Ian Young, "The stabilization of the Biblical text in the light of Qumran and Masada: A challenge for conventional Qumran chronology?" *Dead Sea discoveries* 9 (2002), 364.
[606] Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 77.
[607] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 337-58; Urdu vol. 2, 14-32; English vol. 2, 60-76.
[608] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 344-5; Urdu vol. 2, 20-21; English vol. 2, 66-7.
[609] John Macdonald and Ayala Loewenstamm, "Samaritan Pentateuch," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second edition, ed. in chief Fred Skolnik (Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), vol. 15, 754.
[610] Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 75, 77. This difference in the Samaritan Pentateuch brings to mind the claims of Shi'a scholars that Sunnis had removed or changed references to 'Alī and his family from the Qur'an. Hossein Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān: A brief survey," *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993), 5-39.
[611] Macdonald and Loewenstamm, "Samaritan Pentateuch," 754.
[612] Macdonald and Loewenstamm, "Samaritan Pentateuch," 753.
[613] For example, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 332.
[614] As portrayed, for example, in Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 337-47; Urdu vol. 2, 14-23; English vol. 2, 60-67.
[615] Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Samaritan Pentateuch," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 2/3 (1951), 144-150. Macdonald and Loewenstamm, "Samaritan Pentateuch," 753-4. Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 74-9.
[616] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 345; Urdu vol. 2, 21; English vol. 2, 66-7.
[617] Talmon, "The Samaritan Pentateuch," 145.
[618] Macdonald and Loewenstamm, "Samaritan Pentateuch," 753.
[619] Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 77, 87-8.
[620] Ulrich, "Absence of 'sectarian variants,'" 191 (italics added).
[621] The subject of the Qur'an's formation is taken up in Chapters 13-18. It is only forecast here in order to lend perspective to scholarship on the Hebrew scriptures.
[622] John Burton, *The collection of the Qur'ān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 117.
[623] E. Beck, "Die b. Mas'ūdvarianten bei al-Farrā'," *Orientalia* NS 25 (1956), 353-83; 28 (1959), 185-205, 230-56.

[624] Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, ed. Arthur Jeffery (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-raḥmāniyya, 1936). Arthur Jeffery, ed., *Materials for the history of the text of the Qurʾān: The old codices* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937), x, 10-14.
[625] François Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads: A first overview* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 48-56.
[626] Christopher Melchert, "Ibn Mujāhid and the establishment of seven qur'anic readings," *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000), 18-22.
[627] Fred Leemhuis, "Ursprünge des Koran als Textus Receptus," in *Akten des 27. Deutschen Orientalistentages*, eds. S. Wild and H. Schild (Würzburg: Ergon, 2001), 307.
[628] Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, 35, 71-72. Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet: The end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 147-48.
[629] Gerhard Böwering, "Chronology and the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 332
[630] Recent examples are Gleason L. Archer Jr., *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 174-228. Norman L. Geisler and Thomas Howe, *The big book of Bible difficulties* (Grand Rapids MI: 1992), 155-212.
[631] *The true guidance (Part two): False charges against the Old Testament* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, 1992, translated from the Arabic *Al-Hidāya* first published in 1904 and revised in 1987 and 1991), 169-217. Jay Smith, Alex Chowdhry, Toby Jepson, James Schaeffer, "101 cleared-up contradictions in the Bible." Posted at http://www.debate.org.uk/debate-topics/apologetic/contrads/.
[632] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 147-160, 200-228, 337-363; Urdu vol. 1, 373-389, 450-484, vol. 2, 15-66; English vol. 1, 53-69, 113-139, vol. 2, 60-81.
[633] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 160; Urdu vol. 1, 389; English vol. 1, 45.
[634] Geisler and Howe, *Bible difficulties*, 177. Archer, *Bible difficulties*, 186-8. Smith et al, "Cleared-up contradictions," (#1!).
[635] *True guidance (Part two)*, 188-9.
[636] Archer, *Bible difficulties*, 186-7.
[637] Brotzman, *Old Testament textual criticism*, 123-32. Würthwein, *The text of the Old Testament*, 113-22. Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 161-69, 263-68.
[638] Bruce K. Waltke, "How we got the Hebrew Bible: The text and canon of the Old Testament," in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, shape and interpretation*, ed. Peter

Flint (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 27-50. Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 25.
[639] Waltke, "How we got the Hebrew Bible," 47-50.
[640] Sarna, "Bible, 584. Also Ulrich, "The absence of 'sectarian variants,'" 191.
[641] Ulrich, "The absence of 'sectarian variants,'" 191.
[642] Dotan, "Masora," 606. Tov, "Many forms of Hebrew scripture," 11. Würthwein, *The text of the Old Testament*, 116.
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[644] Eldon Jay Epp, "Textual criticism," in *The New Testament and its modern interpreters*, eds. Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 91-92.
[645] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 501-8; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 2, 162-8; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 2, 188-92.
[646] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 501, 507; Urdu vol. 2, 162, 167; English vol. 2, 188, 191-2.
[647] http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/manuscript.aspx. http://csntm.org/News/Archive/2013/11/8/ChesterBeattyPapyri. https://www.vatlib.it/home.php?pag=BODMER_XIV_XV&ling=eng&BC=11.
[648] Ernst Würthwein, *The text of the Old Testament*, Second edition, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 11.
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[652] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 76.
[653] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 220.
[654] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 220.

[655] Walid A. Saleh, "A fifteenth-century Muslim Hebraist: al-Biqāʿi and his defense of using the Bible to interpret the Qur'ān," *Speculum* 646-7. From al-Biqāʿī's *al-Aqwāl al-qawīma fī ḥukm al-naql al-kutub al-qadīma*.
[656] Saleh, "A fifteenth-century Muslim Hebraist," 647.
[657] Hurtado, "Early New Testament papyri," 1.
[658] Epp, "Textual criticism," 91.
[659] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 50.
[660] Eldon Jay Epp, "Are early New Testament manuscripts truly abundant?" in *Israel's God and Rebecca's children: Christology and community in early Judaism and Christianity; Essays in honor of Larry W. Hurtado and Alan F. Segal*, ed. David B. Capes et al. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 77.
[661] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 126.
[662] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 501-8; Urdu vol. 2, 162-8; English vol. 2, 188-92.
[663] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 501, 507; Urdu vol. 2, 162, 167; English vol. 2, 188, 191-2.
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[665] Kenyon, *Recent developments*, 53.
[666] Kenyon, *Recent developments*, 52.
[667] Kenyon, *Recent developments*, 59.
[668] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 57. Also Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 278.
[669] The Oxyrhynchus papyri are accessible online at http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/.
[670] Hurtado, "Early New Testament papyri," 1-18.
[671] These facts fundamentally qualify the scholarship upon which the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* based its attack on the Bible. Rahmat Allah Kairanwi claimed that there was no indication of the existence of the four Gospel accounts before the third century. Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 302, 304-5; Urdu vol. 1, 571, 573; English vol. 2, 28, 30-31.
[672] Kurt and Barbara Aland date P52 to around 125 A.D. *The text of the New Testament*, 84, 99.
[673] Larry W. Hurtado, "The New Testament in the second century: Text, collections and canon," in *Transmission and reception: New Testament text-critical*

and exegetical studies, eds. J.W. Childers and D.C. Parker (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 6.

[674] Peter M. Head, "Some recently published New Testament papyri from Oxyrhynchus: An overview and preliminary assessment," *Tyndale Bulletin* 51 (2000), 16.

[675] Kenyon, *The story of the Bible*, 144.

[676] Epp, "Textual criticism," 91. Metzger and Ehrman added the example of the *History of Rome* written by Velleius Paterculus (d. c. 30), which survived in only one incomplete manuscript, discovered in 1515 but now lost. *The text of the New Testament*, 50. Stephen Neill and Tom Wright offered similar examples of the Greek dramatist Aeschylus and the Roman poet Catullus, whose works only exist in single late manuscripts. *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 75.

[677] Epp, "Textual criticism," 91.

[678] Martin Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 2000), 29.

[679] Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 31.

[680] Neill and Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, 29. Already in 1933, British Museum director Frederic Kenyon wrote that the New Testament text "is far better attested than that of any other work of ancient literature….In the case of no work of Greek or Latin literature do we possess manuscripts so plentiful in number or so near the date of composition." *Recent developments in the textual criticism of the Greek Bible* (London: British Academy, 1933), 74-5.

[681] ("The book of military campaigns") Rizwi Faizer, *The life of Muḥammad: Al-Wāqidī's Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, translated by Rizwi Faizer, Amal Ismail and AbdulKader Tayob (London: Routledge, 2011), xiii.

[682] Faizer, *The Life of Muḥammad*, xiii.

[683] Patricia Crone, *Slaves on horses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 202 nt. 10.

[684] Crone, *Slaves on horses*, 4.

[685] For example, F.E. Peters, *The voice, the word, the books: The sacred scripture of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 108-109. Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 1, 39.

[686] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 279.

[687] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 279-80.
[688] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 279-80.
[689] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 51.
[690] See Section 6 below.
[691] Hurtado, "New Testament in the second century," 8.
[692] Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 271.
[693] Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 277-8.
[694] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 278.
[695] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 64.
[696] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 282-97.
[697] Keith Small, *Textual criticism and Qur'ān manuscripts* (Lanham: Lexington, 2011), 31-103.
[698] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 259-71.
[699] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 278.
[700] Paul R. McReynolds, "John 1:18 in textual variation and translation," in *New Testament textual criticism: Its significance for exegesis*, eds. Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 106.
[701] Philip Comfort, *Encountering the manuscripts: An introduction to New Testament paleography & textual criticism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 328.
[702] Epp, "Textual criticism," 90, 92. Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 280-81.
[703] Epp, "Textual criticism," 91.
[704] Epp, "Textual criticism," 92.
[705] Epp, "Textual criticism," 91.
[706] Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 29.
[707] Neill and Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, 76-80.
[708] Neill and Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, 78.
[709] Epp, "Textual criticism," 92.
[710] Epp, "Textual criticism," 94-5.
[711] Epp, "Textual criticism," 96.
[712] Epp, "Textual criticism," 91.
[713] Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 29.
[714] Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 29.
[715] Neill and Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, 84.

[716] Neill and Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, 86.
[717] Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 30.
[718] Peters, *The voice, the word, the books*, 55.
[719] David Trobisch, *The first edition of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6-44.
[720] Peters, *The voice, the word, the books*, 55-61.
[721] Hurtado, "Early New Testament papyri," 3. Hurtado, "New Testament in the second century," 6.
[722] Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet: The end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 141.
[723] Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet*, 150. Cf. Omar Hamdan, "The second *Maṣāḥif* project: A step towards the canonization of the qur'anic text," in *The Qur'ān in context: Historical and literary investigations into the qur'ānic milieu*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 823-24, 829.
[724] Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet*, 141.
[725] Hengel, *The four Gospels and the one Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 29, 228-9 (ftn. 127).
[726] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 501-8; Urdu vol. 2, 162-8; English vol. 2, 188-92.
[727] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 507-8; Urdu vol. 2, 167-8; English vol. 2, 192.
[728] See for example, in relatively recent times, Muhammad Hamidullah, *Introduction to Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1973), 22: "…one of them is at present in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul. Another incomplete one is now in Tashkent."
[729] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān* (The copy at the Topkapi Palace Museum), prepared for publication by Dr Tayyar Altıkulaç, preface by Prof. Dr. Edmeleddin İhsanoğlu. (Istanbul: Organization of the Islamic Conference Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 2007), 34, 36, 65.
[730] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān*, 6, 72.
[731] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān*, 9, 10, 12, 13, 23, 35, 65, 71, 72, 73, 76, 78-81.

[732] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to ʻUthmān bin ʻAffān*, 35. Prior to the study of Altıkulaç, Ṣalah al-Munajjad had examined a number of early manuscripts claimed by Muslims to be ʻUthmān's own copy. al-Munajjid concluded that none of these manuscripts could be linked to ʻUthmān or any other early figures named in colophons. *Dirāsāt fī taʼrīkh al-khaṭṭ al-ʻarabī mundhu bidāyatihi ilā nihāyat al-ʻaṣr al-umawī—Études de paléographie arabe* (Beirut, 1972), 50-60. Since *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf*, Altıkulaç has published studies of two other early manuscripts, one in the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum and another in Cairo, in which his conclusions are the same. François Déroche, *Qurʼans of the Umayyads* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 3.
[733] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to ʻUthmān bin ʻAffān*, 6.
[734] François Déroche, "Written transmission," in *The Blackwell companion to the Qurʼān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 184.
[735] G. Bergsträsser, "Koranlesung in Kairo," *Der Islam* 20 (1932), 3-4.
[736] Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Introduction," in *The Qurʼān in its historical context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2008), 2-3.
[737] Imām Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qurʼān* (Riyad: Maktabat al-maʻārif, 1996), vol. 1, 211-231 (*anwāʻ* 22-27). English translation: *The perfect guide to the sciences of the Qurʼān*, trans. Ḥamid Algar, Michael Schub and Ayman Abdel Ḥaleem (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2011), vol. 1, 181-199.
[738] *ʻalā wajhin wāḥidin*. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qurʼān*, vol. 1, 228. Algar *et al.*, *The perfect guide*, 196: "…but that it had only one permissible reading."
[739] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qurʼān*, vol. 1, 116-143.
[740] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qurʼān*, vol. 1, 116.
[741] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1981), vol. 6, 100 (book 61, *faḍāʼil al-Qurʼān*, *bāb unzila ʼl-Qurʼān ʻalā sabʻat aḥruf*)
[742] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qurʼān*, vol. 1, 130-142.
[743] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qurʼān*, vol. 1, 131.
[744] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī musamma Jāmiʻ al-bayān fī taʼwīl al-qurʼān* (Beirut: Dār al-ʻilmiyya, 2005), vol. 1, 35-52. English trans. J. Cooper, *The commentary on the Qurʼān by Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 16-28.
[745] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, 50. Claude Gilliot, "Les sept 'lectures': Corps social et écriture révélée. Première partie," *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985), 5-25.
[746] al-Ṭabari, *Taʼrīkh al-rusul waʼl-mulūk* (Cairo: Dār al-maʻārif, 1967), vol. 2, 337-41. *The history of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 6, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, trans. W.

Montgomery Watt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 107-112. Also in al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 9, 174-6 (at Q 22:52).
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[748] Shahab Ahmed, "Satanic verses," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 533.
[749] Ahmad, "Satanic verses," 533.
[750] Shahab Ahmed, "Ibn Taymiyyah and the satanic verses," *Studia Islamica* 87 (1998), 75-8.
[751] Déroche, "Written transmission," 173.
[752] *The Muqaddimah: An introduction to history*, Second edition, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), vol. 2, 382.
[753] *The voice, the word, the books: The sacred scripture of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 145.
[754] "Chronology and the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill 2001), vol. 1, 332.
[755] "Written transmission," 175.
[756] "Written transmission," 173-4.
[757] "Written transmission," 185, nt. 5. Cf. François Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam: Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 52, 173.
[758] "Angels, stars, death, the soul, horses, bows – or women?" in *New perspectives on the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in its historical context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 272.
[759] Emanuel Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Third edition (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 6.
[760] Frederick Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 355.
[761] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, 211-31 (*anwā'* 22-27). English translation, 181-199.
[762] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, 183.
[763] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, 221-23.
[764] Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," 355. Christopher Melchert, "Ibn Mujāhid and the establishment of seven qur'anic readings," *Studia Islamica* 91

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[765] Arthur Jeffery, "Abu 'Ubaid on the verses missing from the Koran," *The Muslim World* 28 (1938), 62.
[766] Jeffery, "Abu 'Ubaid," 62.
[767] (Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1860), 174-188. Friedrich Schwally extended this section in the second edition of the work, *Geschichte des Qorāns* (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1909), pt. 1, 234-59.
[768] "Collection of the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 351. John Burton, *The collection of the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 117, 126-27.
[769] Burton, "Collection of the Qur'ān," 352. Mālik ibn Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭa*, ed. M. Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Dār iḥyā' al-kutub al-'arabiyya, 1951), vol. 2, 823-4 (book 41, *al-ḥudūd*). English trans. *al-Muwatta of Imam Malik ibn Anas: The first formulation of Islamic Law*, trans. Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley (London: Kegan Paul, 1989), 345-6.
[770] Michael Cook, *The Koran: A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 125. Jeffery, "Abu 'Ubaid," 62, from Abū 'Ubayd's *Kitāb faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*. Etan Kohlberg and Mohammed Ali Amir-Moezzi, *Revelation and falsification, The* Kitāb al-qirā'āt *of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sayyārī* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 16. John Burton, *The collection of the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 117, citing al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, 69 (*naw'* 47, *fī nāsikhihi wa mansūkhihi*).
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[772] *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993), 5-39.
[773] Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān," 22. An English adaptation of Labīb al-Sa'īd's work was published as *The recited Koran: A history of the first recorded version*, trans. Bernard Weiss, M.A. Rauf and Morroe Berger (Princeton: Darwin, 1975).
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[775] Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān," 27, 10, citing Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*.
[776] Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān," 10, citing Mālik ibn Anas and al-Bukhārī.
[777] Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān," 11, citing 'Abd al-Razzāq's *al-Muṣannaf*.
[778] Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān," 11, citing al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, 69.
[779] Nöldeke [Schwally], *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. 2, 93-112. Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung* (Leiden: Brill, 1920), 270-287.
[780] Meir M. Bar-Asher, "Variant readings and additions of the Imāmī-Shī'a to the Quran," *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993), 41. Meir M. Bar-Asher, "Shī'ism and the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 593-6.
[781] Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān," 32.
[782] Bar-Asher, "Variant readings and additions," 40. Translations from al-Qummī's *Tafsīr* on alterations of the qur'anic text are in Goldziher, *Richtungen*, 281-5; Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi, and Andrew Rippin, eds. and trans., *Classical Islam: A sourcebook of religious literature* (London: Routledge, 2003), 103-4; and Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Qur'an and its interpreters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984 & 1992), vol. 1, 172 (Q 2:143); vol. 2, 90 (Q 3:33), 294 (Q 3:110).
[783] Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity of the Qur'ān," 26.
[784] Etan Kohlberg and Mohammed Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Révélation et falsification. Introduction à l'édition du *Kitāb al-qirā'āt* d'al-Sayyārī," *Journal asiatique* 293 (2005/2), 663-722. Etan Kohlberg and Mohammed Ali Amir-Moezzi offer a critical edition of this work in *Revelation and falsification, The* Kitāb al-qirā'āt *of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sayyārī* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
[785] Bar-Asher, "Shī'ism and the Qur'ān," 595.
[786] Mahmoud Ayoub, "The speaking Qurʾān and the silent Qurʾān: A study of the principles and development of Imāmī Shī'ī *tafsīr*," in *Approaches to the history of the interpretation of the Qurʾān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 190.
[787] The alterations in al-Kāshānī's list, along with the lists of other Shī'a writers, is given by Meir M. Bar-Asher, "Variant readings and additions of the Imāmī-Shī'a

to the Quran," *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993), 51-72.
[788] Ayoub, "The speaking Qurʾān," 190, quoting from al-Kashānī's *Kitāb al-ṣafī fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān*.
[789] E. Kohlberg, "Some notes on the Imāmite attitude to the Qurʾān," in *Islamic philosophy and the classical tradition*, eds. S.M. Stern *et al.* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 218. The *Faṣl al-khiṭāb* is thoroughly described in Rainer Brunner, *Die Schia und die Koranfälschung* (Würzburg: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 2001), 39-65.
[790] Rainer Brunner, "The dispute about the falsification of the Qurʾān between Sunnīs and Shīʿīs in the 20th century," in *Studies in Arabic and Islam* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2002), 438-45. Brunner, *Die Schia und die Koranfälschung*, 70-117.
[791] Bar-Asher, "Shīʿism and the Qur'ān," 595, quoting Brunner, "Dispute about the falsification of the Qur'ān," 445.
[792] Brunner, "Dispute about the falsification of the Qur'ān," 444-5.
[793] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, vol. 2, 58-74 (*nawʿ* 47).
[794] Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an: A contemporary approach to a veiled text* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 67.
[795] Eerik Dickinson, "Difficult passages," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 1, 2001, 535.
[796] ("Regarding the verses of the Qur'ān that the heretics question") Dickinson, "Difficult passages," 535.
[797] ("Explanation of the difficulties of the Qur'ān") Ibn Qutayba, *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*, ed. S.A. Ṣaqr (Cairo: Dār al-turāth, 1973), 22. Yusuf Rahman, "Ellipsis in the Qur'ān: A study of Ibn Qutayba's *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*," in *Literary structures of religious meaning in the Qurʾān* (London: Curzon, 2000), 287.
[798] ("The proof of the sciences of the Qur'ān") al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: ʿĪsā l-Bābī l-Ḥalabī, 1957), vol. 2, 45-67 (*nawʿ* 35).
[799] *fī mushkilihi wa mawhim al-ikhtilāf wa l-tanāquḍ*. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, vol. 2, 75-85 (*nawʿ* 48).
[800] Dickinson, "Difficult passages," 536.
[801] Harald Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān: A reconsideration of Western views in light of recent methodological developments," *Der Islam* 78 (2001), 2-4.

[802] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 6, 98 (book 61, *faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, *bāb jam 'al-Qur'ān*).
[803] Kohlberg and Amir-Moezzi, *Revelation and falsification*, 14-15.
[804] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 6, 98-9.
[805] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār ṣādir, 1957), vol. 2, 355-7. Alphonse Mingana, "The transmission of the Qur'an," *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society* 5 (1915-16), 30.
[806] Gregor Schoeler, "Writing and publishing on the use and function of writing in the first centuries of Islam," *Arabica* 44 (1997), 431, quoting from al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 156. *The history of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 15, *The crisis of the early caliphate*, trans. R. Stephen Humphries (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 156.
[807] Munther Younes, "Charging steeds or maidens doing good deeds? A re-interpretation of Qur'ān 100 (*al-'ādiyāt*)," *Arabica* 55 (2008), 383-4.
[808] A. Jahdani, "Du *fiqh* à la codicologie. Quelques opinions de Malik (m. 179/796) sur le Coran-codex," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 56 (2006), 274. Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 3.
[809] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, 70.
[810] Hellmut Ritter, "Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit," *Islam* 21 (1933), 69. Chase F. Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 103.
[811] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, 48-50.
[812] Cook, *The Koran*, 119.
[813] See for example the English translations of a variety of interpretations in Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Qur'an and its interpreters,* vol. 2*, The house of 'Imrān* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 20-46.
[814] Leah Kinberg, "Ambiguous," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān,* gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 73-4. See also Leah Kinberg, "*Muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* (Koran 3/7): Implications of a Koranic pair of terms in Muslim exegesis," *Arabica* 35 (1988), 143-72.
[815] For example al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, 410 (at Q 2:75). See also Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Introduction: Qur'ānic studies and its controversies," in *The Qur'ān in its historical context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2008), 8. Suleiman A. Mourad wrote, "It is well known that the Qur'ān is a very complicated text in terms of its language, a fact attested by the degree of disagreement among exegetes as to the proper interpretation of most of its verses. At times the ambiguity of the language has left the exegete utterly

helpless….” “Does the Qur’ān deny or assert Jesus’s crucifixion and death?” in *New perspectives on the Qur’ān: The Qur’ān in its historical context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 350.

[816] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 10, 505-8. Norman Calder, “*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the description of a genre, illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham,” in *Approaches to the Qur’ān*, eds. G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London: Routledge, 1993), 121.

[817] Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in holy lands: The evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael legends in Islamic exegesis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 135. Dr. Firestone gives the complete listing on pp. 170-178.

[818] Firestone, *Journeys in holy lands*, 136.

[819] Manfred Kropp, “Tripartite, but anti-Trinitarian formulas in the qur’ānic corpus, possibly pre-qur’ānic,” in *New perspectives on the Qur’ān: The Qur’ān in its historical context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 248.

[820] Arne Ambrose, “Die Analyse von Sure 112: Kritiken, Synthesen, neue Ansätze,” *Islam* 63 (1986), 228-244. Etan Kohlberg and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi noted a similar “revealing uncertainty” among commentators about the expressions *jizya ʻan yad*, *īlāf*, *kalāla*, *ḥanīf*, *abābīl*, *sijjīl*, *al-qāriʻa*, and *kawthar*. Kohlberg and Amir-Moezzi asked, “why is it that Muslim scholars from a very early period, namely a few decades after the Prophet’s death, did not know (or no longer knew) the meaning of these words, expressions, and ‘opening letters’?” *Revelation and falsification*, 8-10.

[821] Kropp, “Tripartite, but anti-Trinitarian formulas,” 247.

[822] Gerd-Rudiger Puin in Toby Lester, “What is the Koran?” *Atlantic Monthly* (January 1999), http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/01/what-is-the-koran/304024/3/.

[823] Lawrence I. Conrad, “Qur’ānic studies: A historian’s perspective,” in *Results of contemporary research on the Qur’an: The question of a historio-critical text*, ed. Manfred Kropp (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2007), 13.

[824] Reynolds, “Introduction: Qur’ānic studies and its controversies,” 8.

[825] Fred Donner, “The Qur’ān in recent scholarship: Challenges and desiderata,” in *The Qur’ān in its historical context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2008), 29.

[826] For example, “Neue Wege der Koranforschung,” *Magazin Forschung*, Universität des Saarlandes, 1/1999, accessible at http://www.uni-saarland.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Campus/Forschung/forschungsmagazin/1999/1

/Neue_Wege.pdf. A popular description of this research is Toby Lester, "What is the Koran?" *Atlantic Magazine* (January 1999), accessible at http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/01/what-is-the-koran/4024/. See also Michael Marx, "The Koran according to Agfa: Gotthelf Bergsträßers Archiv der Koranhandschriften," *Trajekte* 19 (October 2009), 24-9.

[827] The reader is invited to check the original articles and books to make sure that these short summaries accurately represent the works cited. The author of *The gentle answer* has no desire to misrepresent the important research of these excellent scholars.

[828] (Berlin, 1833). Geiger's work was translated into English as *Judaism and Islám*, trans. F.M. Young, (Madras, 1898). The English translation is available at archive.org.

[829] (Bielefeld: Velhagen and Klasing, 1844). This work is also downloadable through archive.org.

[830] Weil, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung*, 42-86. Shari Lowin, "Revision and alteration," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 450.

[831] Gustav Weil, *The Bible, the Koran, and the Talmud, or, Biblical legends of the Mussulmans* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1846).

[832] (Göttingen 1860). This work is also downloadable through archive.org.

[833] *Geschichte des Qorâns*, 1, 234-59.

[834] Walid Saleh, "Review of *Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men*," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 6/1-2 (2010), 251.

[835] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 2, 63-105; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī (Deoband: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 2, 303-364; English version, *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 3, 1-24 (English version omits much of the original Arabic text).

[836] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 126-127; Urdu vol. 2, 390-391; English vol. 3, 40-41.

[837] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Tawrāt," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. P.J. Bearman *et al.* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. 10, 394. Similarly Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Tahrīf," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. P.J. Bearman *et al.* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), vol. 10, 111; and Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992),

20. See also W. Montgomery Watt, "The early development of the Muslim attitude to the Bible," *Glasgow University Oriental Society Translations* 16 (1955-56), 51.
[838] Shari Lowin, "Revision and alteration," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 451.
[839] For example, number of stalls for Solomon's chariots (No. 33); number of baths in the "molten sea" (No. 41); a donkey plus its colt or only a donkey or a colt? (No. 71); seventy-five people in Jacob's family or seventy? (No. 98). Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 147-200; Urdu vol. 1, 373-449; English vol. 1, 53-112.
[840] Ella Landau-Tesseron, "Jihād," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 3, 38.
[841] Landau-Tesseron, "Jihād," 38.
[842] Rosalind W. Gwynne, "Usama bin Ladin, the Qur'an and jihad," *Religion* 35 (2006), 61-90.
[843] Reuven Firestone, "Disparity and resolution in the Qur'ānic teachings on war: A reevaluation of a traditional problem," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 56 (1997), 1.
[844] Commands to fight: Q 2:190, 193, 244; 4:76, 84; 8:39; 9:12, 14, 29, 36, 123; 49:9. Commands to kill: Q 2:191 (2x); 4:89, 91; 9:5.
[845] *qātala* – "to combat, battle, fight"; *qatala* – "to kill, slay, murder, assassinate." Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (London: Macdonald & Evans, 1960), 742.
[846] Landau-Tesseron, "Jihād," 38.
[847] William Muir, *The apology of al Kindy, written at the court of al Mâmûn (circa A.H. 215; A.D. 830)* (London: SPCK, 1886), 41-3. "The apology of al-Kindi," in *The early Christian-Muslim dialogue: A collection of documents from the first three Islamic centuries (632-990 A.D.)*, ed. N.A. Newman (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 478-81.
[848] Muir, *The apology of al Kindy*, 43.
[849] Eerik Dickinson, "Difficult passages," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 1, 2001, 535.
[850] ("Regarding the verses of the Qur'ān that the heretics question") Dickinson, "Difficult passages," 535.
[851] ("Explanation of the difficulties of the Qur'ān") Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān*, ed. S.A. Ṣaqr (Cairo: Dār al-turāth, 1973), 22. Yusuf Rahman, "Ellipsis in

the Qur'ān: A study of Ibn Qutayba's *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān*," in *Literary structures of religious meaning in the Qur'ān* (London: Curzon, 2000), 287.
[852] al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: 'Īsā l-Bābī l-Ḥalabī, 1957), vol. 2, 45-67 (*naw'* 35).
[853] *fī mushkilihi wa mawhim al-ikhtilāf wa l-tanāquḍ*. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-ma'ārif, 1996), vol. 2, 75-85 (*naw'* 48).
[854] Ayman Shihadeh, "Three apologetic stances in al-Ṭūfī: Theological cognitivism, noncognitivism, and a proof of prophecy from scriptural contradiction," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 8 (2006), 1-23.
[855] Shihadeh, "Three apologetic stances in al-Ṭūfī," 9.
[856] Shihadeh, "Three apologetic stances in al-Ṭūfī," 11-12.
[857] Shihadeh, "Three apologetic stances in al-Ṭūfī," 13, 17-19.
[858] Shihadeh, "Three apologetic stances in al-Ṭūfī," 17.
[859] Shihadeh, "Three apologetic stances in al-Ṭūfī," 23, nt. 61.
[860] Suleiman Ali Mourad, "Theology: Freewill and predestination," in *The Islamic world*, ed. Andrew Rippin (London: Routledge, 2008), 181.
[861] Mourad, "Theology: Freewill and predestination," 181.
[862] Landau-Tesseron, "Jihād," 39.
[863] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 147; Urdu vol. 1, 373; English vol. 1, 53.
[864] Landau-Tesseron, "Jihād," 39. Mondher Sfar, *In search of the original Koran: The true history of the revealed text* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2008), 97.
[865] Andrew Rippin, "Abrogation," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, edited by Gudrun Krämer *et al.* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), vol. 3, 47. See also Andrew Rippin, "The exegetical literature of abrogation: form and content," in *Studies in Islamic and Middle Eastern texts and traditions in memory of Norman Calder*, eds. G.R. Hawting, J.A. Mojaddedi and A. Samely (Oxford University Press, 2000), 224.
[866] Lowin, "Revision and alteration," 449.
[867] Firestone, "Disparity and resolution in the Qur'ānic teachings on war," 1.
[868] Firestone, "Disparity and resolution in the Qur'ānic teachings on war," 1. Reuven Firestone, *Jihād: The origin of holy war in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 49-50.
[869] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, 'Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta, ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ta'rīkh al-'Arabiyya, 2002), vol. 1, 462. The "sword verse" in *Barā'* (another name for *Sūrat al-Tawba*) is Q 9:5.
[870] John Burton, "Naskh," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. C.E. Bosworth *et al.* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), vol. 7, 1009.

[871] Rippin, "The exegetical literature of abrogation," 213.
[872] David S. Powers, " The exegetical genre *nāsikh al-Qur'ān wa mansūkhuhu*," in *Approaches to the history of the interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 120. Andrew Rippin lists twenty-four such works in Rippin, "The exegetical literature of abrogation," 214-20.
[873] Powers, " The exegetical genre," 118.
[874] Rippin, "The exegetical literature of abrogation," 320. Powers, "The exegetical genre," 125.
[875] Powers, " The exegetical genre," 125. Rippin, "Abrogation," 44.
[876] Powers, " The exegetical genre," 125. Rippin, "The exegetical literature of abrogation," 320. John Burton, *The collection of the Qur'ān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 69-86.
[877] John Burton, "The interpretation of Q 4,23 and the Muslim theories of *naskh*," *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies* 1 (1986), 40-55.
[878] Rippin, "The exegetical literature of abrogation," 221.
[879] Powers, " The exegetical genre," 129.
[880] Burton, "Naskh," 1009.
[881] Rippin, "Exegetical literature of abrogation," 220.
[882] Powers, " The exegetical genre," 122.
[883] Rippin, "Exegetical literature of abrogation," 226. John Wansbrough, *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 196-7.
[884] Rippin, "Abrogation," 47-8.
[885] Firestone, "Disparity and resolution in the Qur'ānic teachings on war," 1-2. Landau-Tesseron, "Jihād," 40. Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an: A contemporary approach to a veiled text* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 65-66.
[886] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, 60-65.
[887] Mawlana Kairanwi offered less than three lines on this important question. He wrote, "this command [forbidding compulsion, Q 2:256] was prior to *jihād*. When the command of *jihād* descended, this [earlier] command was abrogated." Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 164; Urdu vol. 2, 430; English vol. 3, 73.
[888] Firestone, "Disparity and resolution in the Qur'ānic teachings on war," 2, 17-19. Firestone, *Jihad*, 67-91.
[889] Landau-Tesseron, "Jihād," 40.
[890] For example Ibn Abī Dāwūd in his *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, ed. Arthur Jeffery (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-raḥmāniyya, 1936), 9-10. Burton, *Collection*, 123-4.

[891] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 184.
[892] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 184.
[893] Landau-Tesseron, "Jihād," 41.
[894] Powers, " The exegetical genre," 130. Ibn Khuzayma (d. 1097) and Ibn al-Bārizī (d. 1338) wrote that the *āyat al-qitāl* (Q 9:29) abrogated nine other verses. Rippin, "Exegetical literature of abrogation," 223.
[895] Including Ibn Salāma and Ibn al-ʿAtāʾiqī.
[896] Powers, " The exegetical genre," 130.
[897] Powers, " The exegetical genre," 138.
[898] Reuven Firestone, "Āzar," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, vol. 1, 192. James A. Bellamy, "Textual criticism of the Qurʾān," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121/1 (2001), 3-4.
[899] Arthur Jeffery, "Āzar," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, ed. H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* (Leiden: Brill 1960), vol. 1, 810.
[900] Andrew Rippin, "Aaron," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 1-2.
[901] Adam Silverstein, "Hāmān's transition from jāhiliyya to Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008), 289-303.
[902] G. Vajda, "Hāmān, " *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, ed. B. Lewis et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1971), vol. 3, 110.
[903] J. Walker, "Who is 'Uzair?," *The Moslem World* 19 (1929), 303-6.
[904] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 21.
[905] E.E. Elder, "Parallel passages in the Koran—the story of Moses," *Muslim World* 15 (1925), 254-259.
[906] Youakim Moubarac, "Moïse dans le Coran," in *Moïse: L'homme de l'alliance*, eds. H. Cazelles et al. (Paris: Desclée & Cie., 1955), 375. Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 49.
[907] There is no such detail in the Torah account of Pharaoh's magicians (Exodus 7-9), who forfeit after the plague of boils (Exodus 9:11). This detail appears in three of the Qur'an's variant versions, but not in the remaining five; and Q 20:71 adds information not given in Q 2:124 and 26:49. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* based many of its accusations against the Bible on differences of detail between biblical accounts. If the qur'anic narratives were judged in the same way, what would the result be? Elder, "Parallel passages in the Koran," 255, 259.
[908] James A. Bellamy, "Textual criticism of the Koran," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121 (2001), 6.

[909] Bellamy, "Textual criticism of the Koran," 6.
[910] Neal Robinson, "Jesus," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 3, 9-10.
[911] Bellamy, "Textual criticism of the Koran," 6.
[912] James A. Bellamy, "A further note on ʻĪsā," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122 (2002), 587.
[913] Gordon Nickel, "The language of love in Qur'ān and Gospel," in *Sacred text: Explorations in lexicography*, eds. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala and Angel Urban (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 235.
[914] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 126-127; Urdu vol. 2, 390-391; English vol. 3, 40-41.
[915] Walid Saleh, "'Sublime in its style, exquisite in its tenderness': The Hebrew Bible quotations in al-Biqāʻī's Qur'ān commentary," in *Adaptations and innovations: Studies on the interaction between Jewish and Islamic thought and literature from the early Middle Ages to the late twentieth century, Dedicated to Professor Joel L. Kraemer*, eds. Y. Tzvi Langermann and Josef Stern (Paris: Peeters, 2007), 337-8. Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 134-5.
[916] Burton, "Abrogation," 15.
[917] John Burton, *The collection of the Qur'ān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 69-82.
[918] Burton, "Abrogation," 17.
[919] Mālik ibn Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭa*, ed. M. Fu'ād ʻAbd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Dār iḥyā' al-kutub al-ʻarabiyya, 1951), vol. 2, 819-24 (book 41, *al-ḥudūd*). English trans. *al-Muwatta of Imam Malik ibn Anas: The first formulation of Islamic Law*, trans. Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley (London: Kegan Paul, 1989), 344-6. Burton, "Abrogation," 17.
[920] In his *Risāla*. Burton, *Collection*, 74.
[921] Burton, *Collection*, 72.
[922] Burton, "Abrogation," 17.
[923] Burton, *Collection*, 72.
[924] Burton, "Abrogation," 17-18. Mālik ibn Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭa*, vol. 2, 823-4. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, 73-4 (*naw*ʻ 47, *fī nāsikhihi wa mansūkhihi*).
[925] Michael Cook, *The Koran: A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 125. Hossein Modarressi, "Early debates on the integrity

of the Qur'ān: A brief survey," *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993), 10, 27. Burton, *Collection*, 86, quoting al-Bājī's *Jawāb*.
[926] Burton, "Abrogation," 18.
[927] Lowin, "Revision and alteration," 450. Theodor Nöldeke [Friedrich Schwally], *Geschichte des Qorāns*, Second edition (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1919), pt. 2, 102-7.
[928] Gordon Nickel, "Burning bush (Islam)," *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, eds. Hans-Josef Klauck et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), vol. 4, cols. 672-74.
[929] Saleh, "Sublime in its style," 344.
[930] G.R. Hawting, "The tawwābūn, atonement and 'āshūrā." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17 (1994), 170-171.
[931] Malcolm Clark, "Biblical and early Islamic Moses," in *Biblical itinerary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 32-33.
[932] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 1, 42, 47, 131. John Wansbrough, The *sectarian milieu: Content and composition of Islamic salvation history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) 24-25. Andrew Rippin, "Literary analysis of *Qur'ān*, *Tafsīr* and *Sīra*: The methodologies of John Wansbrough," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 159-60.
[933] Stefan Wild, "The self-referentiality of the Qur'ān: Sura 3:7 as an exegetical challenge," in *With reverence for the word: Medieval scriptural exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, eds. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 422.
[934] Gordon Nickel, "Story of Adam and Eve (Islam)," *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, eds. Hans-Josef Klauck *et al.* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), vol. 1, 351.
[935] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 1. Dr. Wansbrough later added, "Shorn of the haggadah the canonical text was often meaningless." *Sectarian milieu*, 24. By "haggadah" he meant the elaboration of scriptural narrative found, for example, in the Muslim *quṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*.
[936] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 135. Mawlana Kairanwi highlighted the number of people in the family of Jacob as an example of contradiction between Genesis 46:27 and the sermon of Stephen (Acts 7:14). If the same set of stringent criteria were applied to the Qur'an, how should we describe the absence of any

number at all? Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 187-8; Urdu vol. 1, 429; English vol. 1, 100-101.

[937] Dr. Wansbrough noted that later Muslim story-tellers and exegetes provided details such as this. However, this later material "does not relieve the harsh ellipsis of the Quranic utterance." *Sectarian milieu*, 25.

[938] Even so, Mawlana Kairanwi claimed that Sūra 12 is an example of eloquence (*balāgha*) that proves it to be the Word of Allah. Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 67; Urdu vol. 2, 308; English vol. 3, 3.

[939] Richard Bell, "Muhammad's knowledge of the Old Testament," *Presentation Volume to William Barron Stevenson, Studia Semitica et Orientalia* 2 (Glasgow University Oriental Society) (1945), 1.

[940] (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1931).

[941] (Berlin 1833). Geiger's work was translated into English as *Judaism and Islám*, trans. F.M. Young (Madras 1898). The English translation is available at archive.org. Other important works of this type are I. Schapiro, *Die haggadischen Elemente im erzählenden Teil des Korans* 1 (Leipzig: Gustav Fock, 1907); J. Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen* (Berlin-Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & co., 1926); and D. Sidersky, *Les Origines des legends musulmanes dans le Coran* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1933).

[942] In *The origins of the Qur'an: Classic essays on Islam's holy book* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1998), 258-75.

[943] Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 142-4.

[944] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 138. Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 205-6.

[945] Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 303-4. Julian Obermann, "Koran and Agada: The events at Mount Sinai," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages* 57 (1941), 34-37, 41.

[946] Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 384-5, 390-91.

[947] Suleiman A. Mourad, "From Hellenism to Christianity and Islam: The origin of the palm tree story concerning Mary and Jesus in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew and the Qur'ān," *Oriens Christianus* 86 (2002), 206-216. Cornelia Horn, "Intersections: The reception history of the *Protoevangelium of James* in sources from the Christian East and in the Qur'ān," *Apocrypha* 17 (2006), 112-150. Robinson, "Jesus," 13.

[948] G.C. Anawati, "'Īsā," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, New edition, eds. E. Van Donzel *et al.* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), vol. 4, 86. Robinson, "Jesus," 13, 16.

[949] Sidney Griffith, "Christian lore and the Arabic Qur'ān: The 'companions of the cave' in *Sūrat al-Kahf* and in Syriac Christian tradition," in *The Qur'ān in its historical context* (London: Routledge, 2008), 120-124.
[950] Speyer gave 138 pages of examples just in the qur'anic Moses narratives. *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran*, 225-363. Israel Shapiro filled an entire book with examples of rabbinic details in Sūra 12 (*Yūsuf*). *Die haggadischen Elemente im erzählenden Teil des Korans* 1.
[951] Gordon Nickel, *Narratives of tampering in the earliest commentaries on the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 47-8, 188-91.
[952] François Déroche, "Written transmission," in *The Blackwell companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (London: Blackwell, 2006), 175.
[953] Déroche, "Written transmission," 176.
[954] Angelika Neuwirth, "Qur'an and history – a disputed relationship: Some reflections on qur'anic history and history in the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5 (2003), 7.
[955] Déroche, "Written transmission," 175.
[956] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 21-5.
[957] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 21.
[958] Angelika Neuwirth, "Negotiating justice: A pre-canonical reading of the Qur'anic creation accounts," pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 2 (2000), no. 1, 25-41, no. 2, 1-18. Angelika Neuwirth, "Qur'ān, crisis and memory: The qur'ānic path towards canonization as reflected in the anthropogonic accounts," in *Crisis and memory in Islamic societies*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth and Andreas Pflitsch (Beirut: Ergon Verlag, 2001), 113-152.
[959] Angelika Neuwirth, "Erzählen als kanonischer Prozeß: Die Mose-Erzählung im Wandel der koranischen Geschichte," in *Islamstudien ohne Ende*, eds. Rainer Brunner *et al.* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2002), 323-44.
[960] Angelika Neuwirth, "Meccan text—Medinan additions? Politics and the re-reading of liturgical communications," in *Words, texts and concepts cruising the Mediterranean Sea*, eds. R. Arnzen and J. Thielmann (Leuven, Peeters, 2004), 71-93. Angelika Neuwirth, "'Oral scriptures' in contact: The Qur'ānic story of the golden calf and its biblical subtext between narrative, cult and inter-communal debate," in *Self-referentiality in the Qur'ān*, ed. Stefan Wild (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 71-92.
[961] Angelika Neuwirth, "Two views of history and human future: Qur'anic and biblical renderings of divine promises," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 10 (2008), 1.

Neuwirth, "Negotiating justice, pt. 1," 30.
[962] Neuwirth, "Qur'an and history," 14.
[963] Angelika Neuwirth, "Orientalism in Oriental studies," 121.
[964] Angelika Neuwirth, "Review of *The Qur'ān and its biblical subtext*," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 14 (2012), 135.
[965] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1981), vol. 6, 98-9 (book 61, *faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, *bāb jam 'al-Qur'ān*). Also al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī musamma Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-'ilmiyya, 2005), vol. 1, 48-50. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Riyad: Maktabat al-ma'ārif, 1996), vol. 1, 163-81 (*naw'* 18). An English translation of two of the most popular episodes is James Robson, trans., *Mishkat Al-Masabih* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1970), vol. 1, 468-70.
[966] Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'ān* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1953), 38-43. A.T. Welch, "Ḳur'ān," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, eds. C.E. Bosworth *et al.* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), vol. 5, 404-5.
[967] Michael Cook, *The Koran: A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 120.
[968] Harald Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān: A reconsideration of Western views in light of recent methodological developments," *Der Islam* 78 (2001), 2-3.
[969] Andrew Rippin, "Literary analysis of *Qur'ān*, *tafsīr* and *sīra*: The methodologies of John Wansbrough," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 154. John Wansbrough, *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43.
[970] Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorâns* (Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1860), 190-233.
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[972] *Geschichte des Qorāns*, Zweite Auflage (Leipzig: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1919), Zweiter Teil, 1-121.
[973] Friedrich Schwally, "Betrachtungen über die Koransammlung des Abū Bekr," in *Festschrift Eduard Sachau zum siebzigsten Geburtstage* (Berlin, 1915), 321-325.
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[976] Caetani, *Annali dell'Islām*, vol. 7, 398-400. Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, Zweite Auflage, 20. Schwally, "Betrachtungen," 321-5.
[977] *Mohammed et la fin du monde: Étude critique sur l'Islam primitif* (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1911).
[978] Casanova, *Mohammed et la fin du monde*, 110-142.
[979] Casanova, *Mohammed et la fin du monde*, 119-122.
[980] "…n'a qu'une filiation fantaisiste" and "une fable." Casanova, *Mohammed et la fin du monde*, 127.
[981] Alphonse Mingana, "The transmission of the Ḳur'ān," *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society* 5 (1915-1916), 25-47.
[982] Mingana, "Transmission," 26.
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[985] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, 356-7.
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[990] Mingana, "Transmission," 35-39.
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[992] Joseph Schacht, "A revaluation of Islamic traditions," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1949), 145-6.
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[996] Schacht, "A revaluation of Islamic traditions," 151.
[997] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān, 10.
[998] John Burton, "The collection of the Qur'ān," *Glasgow University Oriental Society, Transactions* 23 (1969-70, pub. 1972), 42. Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 44.
[999] Burton, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 44. Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 50.
[1000] Burton, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 42.

[1001] John Burton, *The collection of the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 140.
[1002] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 21.
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[1007] Cook, *The Koran*, 120.
[1008] Cook, *The Koran*, 120-121. From Hellmut Ritter, "Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit I. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī," *Der Islam* 21 (1933), 67-82.
[1009] Cook, *The Koran*, 121.
[1010] Cook, *The Koran*, 125.
[1011] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān."
[1012] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 15-20.
[1013] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 21-29.
[1014] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 30.
[1015] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 28-31.
[1016] G.H.A. Juynboll, "Ḥadīth and the Qur'ān," *EQ* vol. 2, 384.
[1017] Juynboll, "Ḥadīth and the Qur'ān," 384.
[1018] Chase F. Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 100-104.
[1019] Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik* , 102.
[1020] Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik* , 103-4.
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[1026] François Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Ummayads* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 96-9.
[1027] Larcher, "Arabe Préislamique," 252.
[1028] Shoemaker, "In search of 'Urwa's *sīra*," 311, nt. 121.
[1029] Lawrence I. Conrad, "Qur'ānic studies: A historian's perspective," in *Results of contemporary research on the Qur'an: The question of a historio-critical text*, ed. Manfred Kropp (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2007), 12. F.E. Peters also raises this concern: "there is no reason to think that in 650 the caliph's reach was so broad or his grip so firm that he was able to achieve such an end." *The voice, the word, the books: The sacred scriptures of the Jews, Christians and Muslims* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 148.
[1030] Gerhard Böwering, "Chronology and the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 333.
[1031] Peters, *The voice, the word, the books*, 67-79, 127-150.
[1032] Peters, *The voice, the word, the books*, 143, 147.
[1033] Peters, *The voice, the word, the books*, 145-6.
[1034] Peter Stein, "Literacy in Pre-Islamic Arabia: An analysis of the epigraphic evidence," in *The Qur'ān in context: Historical and literary investigations into the Qur'ānic milieu*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 273.
[1035] François Déroche, "Written transmission," in *The Blackwell companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 173-4.
[1036] Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet: The end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 137, 147-50, 152, 158.
[1037] Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet*, 139.
[1038] Hugh Kennedy, *The prophet and the age of the caliphates* (London: Longman, 1986), 353.
[1039] Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorâns*, 160. Mingana, "Transmission," 30.
[1040] John Wansbrough, "Review of *The collection of the Qur'ān*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 41/2 (1978), 370.
[1041] R. Stephen Humphries, "Ta'rīkh," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), 274.

[1042] F.E. Peters, "The quest of the historical Muhammad," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23 (1991), 306.
[1043] Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān," 30.
[1044] Mingana, "Transmission," 26.
[1045] Motzki, "Collection of the Qur'ān," 28-9.
[1046] Patricia Crone, *Slaves on horses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 202, nt. 10.
[1047] Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet*, 270-73.
[1048] Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet*, 272.
[1049] Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet*, 273.
[1050] Burton, *Collection of the Qur'ān*, 117-89.
[1051] Welch, "Ḳur'ān," 405.
[1052] Welch, "Ḳur'ān," 405. Burton, *Collection of the Qur'ān*, 120-8. Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, Zweite Auflage, 15-18.
[1053] For example, Sinai, "Consonantal skeleton of the Quran I," 274-5.
[1054] The importance of al-Kindī as witness has been picked up recently by Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik*, 103; and Clare Wilde, "Is there room for corruption in the 'books' of God?" in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 232.
[1055] Arthur Jeffery, trans. "Ghevond's text of the correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944), 298.
[1056] Böwering, "Chronology and the Qur'ān," 333.
[1057] Peters, *The voice, the word, the books*, 148. Conrad, "Qur'anic studies," 12.
[1058] Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik*, 102.
[1059] Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 178. Similarly, Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*. 35.
[1060] *Geschichte des Qorāns*, Zweite Auflage, pt. 2, 120.
[1061] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 44.
[1062] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 43-51, 77-84. More recently on this point: Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik*, 101-2; and Radscheit, "The Qur'ān – codification and canonization," 93.
[1063] Mingana, "Transmission," 30, 46.
[1064] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 6, 99. Burton, *Collection*, 141-145.
[1065] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 43, 50.
[1066] Peters, *The voice, the word, the books*, 148.

[1067] Harald Motzki, "Alternative accounts of the Qur'ān's formation," in *The Cambridge companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 71.
[1068] John Wansbrough, Review of *The collection of the Qur'ān*, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 41 (1978), 370-71.
[1069] Conrad, "Qur'ānic studies," 15.
[1070] Juynboll, "Ḥadīth and the Qur'ān," 384.
[1071] Schacht, "Revaluation of Islamic traditions," 143.
[1072] Conrad, "Qur'ānic studies," 15.
[1073] A.A. Powell, "Maulānā Raḥmat Allāh Kairānwī and Muslim-Christian controversy in India in the mid-19th century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1976), 53.
[1074] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus: a very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 95.
[1075] Tom Holland, *In the shadow of the sword: The battle for global empire and the end of the ancient world*(London: Little, Brown, 2012), 46.
[1076] R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic history: A framework for inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 69. Patricia Crone, *Slaves on horses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 3. John Wansbrough, *The sectarian milieu: Content and composition of Islamic salvation history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 119.
[1077] F.E. Peters, "The quest of the historical Muhammad," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 23 (1991), 306. Stephen J. Shoemaker recently commented on these Muslim sources, "the early biographies of Muhammad, the *sīra* traditions…are not at all equal in their historical quality to the canonical Christian gospels." "Despite frequent assertions to the contrary, our historical knowledge concerning Muhammad and first-century Islam is far more limited and uncertain than is the case with respect to Jesus and first-century Christianity." *The death of a prophet: The end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 273.
[1078] Holland, *In the shadow of the sword*, 46-7.
[1079] Marilyn Waldman, "New approaches to 'biblical' materials in the Qur'ān," *Muslim World* 75 (1985), 5.
[1080] Waldman, "New approaches", 5, 8.

[1081] Angelika Neuwirth, "Qur'an and history – a disputed relationship: Some reflections on qur'anic history and history in the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5 (2003), 15, quoting from Robert Alter, *The art of biblical narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 184.
[1082] Angelika Neuwirth, "Two views of history and human future: Qur'anic and biblical renderings of divine promises," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 10 (2008), 1.
[1083] Neuwirth, "Two views of history," 15.
[1084] Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins: The beginnings of Islamic historical writing* (Princeton: Darwin, 1998), 80.
[1085] Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins*, 84. William M. Brinner detailed the differences between the biblical and qur'anic portrayals of prophets in "Prophets and prophecy in the Islamic and Jewish traditions," in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic traditions II*, eds. William M. Brinner and Stephen D. Ricks (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 63-82.
[1086] Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins*, 84.
[1087] Michael Cook, *Muhammad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 69-70.
[1088] Cook, *Muhammad*, 70.
[1089] Q 3:144, 33:40, 47:2, 48:29.
[1090] Andrew Rippin, "Muḥammad in the Qur'an: Reading scripture in the 21st century," in *The biography of Muḥammad*, ed. Harald Motzki (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 307.
[1091] Rippin, "Muḥammad in the Qur'an," 302-7.
[1092] Rippin, "Muḥammad in the Qur'an," 307.
[1093] *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, trans. Martin Abegg, Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich (New York: HarperCollins, 1999).
[1094] See Chapter 2 above.
[1095] See Chapters 9-12 above.
[1096] Waldman, "New approaches," 1-13. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins*, 77, 81.
[1097] Waldman, "New approaches," 1-5, 13.
[1098] The following Qur'an verses could reasonably be understood to refer to the earlier scriptures: Q 2:41, 89, 91, 97, 101; 3:3, 81; 4:47; 5:48; 6:92; 35:31; 46:12; 30; 61:6 (*muṣaddiq*); 10:37; 12:111 (*taṣdīq*). Gordon Nickel, *Narratives of tampering in the earliest commentaries on the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 47-8, 63-4, 188-91.

[1099] For example Q 3:62 about ʿĪsā: "Indeed, this is the true narration (*al-qaṣaṣu ʾl-ḥaqq*)."
[1100] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʿIḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 147-200; Urdu translation *Bāʾibal se Qurʾān tak*, trans. Akbar ʿAlī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī book depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 1, 373-449; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 1, 54-112.
[1101] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 512; Urdu vol. 2, 174; English vol. 2, 194.
[1102] "When trying to determine the reliability of a source, the first questions a historian usually asks are: How far away in time and space is the source from the event about which it informs us?" Harald Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān. A reconsideration of Western views in light of recent methodological developments," *Der Islam* 78 (2001), 1.
[1103] F. Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's sacrifice of his son in the early post-Koranic tradition," in *The sacrifice of Isaac: The aqedah (Genesis 22) and its interpretations*, eds. Ed Noort and Eibert Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 125, 127-9.
[1104] Isaac seventeen times and Ishmael twelve times. Reuven Firestone, "Abraham's son as the intended sacrifice (*al-dhabīḥ*, Qur'ān 37:99-113): Issues in Qur'ānic exegesis," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 34/1 (1989), 99.
[1105] Norman Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the description of a genre, illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham," in *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, eds. G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London: Routledge, 1993), 121-6.
[1106] Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1920), 79. Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's sacrifice of his son," 135.
[1107] Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr," 122.
[1108] *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Taʾrīkh al-ʿArabiyya, 2002), vol. 3, 614-15. Roberto Tottoli provided an English translation of Muqātil's exegesis in *Biblical prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim literature* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 99. Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's sacrifice of his son," 134.
[1109] ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām ibn Nāfiʿ al-Ṣanʿānī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿazīz* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1991), vol. 2, 123-24. Tottoli, *Biblical prophets in the Qur'ān*, 100-101.

[1110] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī musamma Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī taʾwīl al-qurʾān* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿilmiyya, 2005), vol. 10, 505-8. al-Ṭabari, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk* (Cairo: Dār al-maʿārif, 1967), vol. 1, 263-78. *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2, *Prophets and patriarchs*, trans. William M. Brinner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 82-97.
[1111] al-Ṭabari, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 1, 263.
[1112] al-Ṭabari, *Taʾrīkh*, vol. 1, 263.
[1113] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 10, 507. Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr," 121-2.
[1114] Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-maʿārif*, ed. M.I.A. al-Sawi (Beirut, 1970), 17. Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr," 123.
[1115] Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's sacrifice of his son," 135.
[1116] Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's sacrifice of his son," 136.
[1117] al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān*(Beirut: Mu'assasat al-risāla, 2006), vol. 18, 61-2. Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr," 123.
[1118] Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's sacrifice of his son," 127-9. Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr," 123. F. Leemhuis provided a chart of the choices of selected commentators, and Reuven Firestone gave an extensive listing of the opinions of traditionists according to the commentators. Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's sacrifice of his son," 138-9. Firestone, "Abraham's son as the intended sacrifice," 170-178.
[1119] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* (Beirut: Dār al-andalus li 'l-ṭibāʿa wa 'l-nashr, 1966), vol. 6, 24.
[1120] Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr," 124.
[1121] Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in holy lands: The evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael legends in Islamic exegesis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).
[1122] Firestone, "Abraham's son as the intended sacrifice," 115-116, 128-9.
[1123] Firestone, "Abraham's son as the intended sacrifice," 129-131.
[1124] Firestone, "Abraham's son as the intended sacrifice," 131.
[1125] Firestone, "Abraham's son as the intended sacrifice," 131.
[1126] Scroll 4Q225, f2i:8-f2ii, quotes Genesis 22 and clearly identifies the son as Isaac. The scroll is dated as a Herodian hand, 30 B.C.-20 A.D. I thank professor Martin Abegg for this information.
[1127] The name Isaac is clearly visible in Genesis 22:2 in a fragment from the Codex Sinaiticus. Another fourth-century manuscript known as Chester Beatty

Library BP IV (or Rahlfs 961) clearly displays the name of Isaac in Genesis 22:9. I thank professor Rob Hiebert for this information.
[1128] Preserved, along with the Codex Sinaiticus, in the British Museum. http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/codexalex.html
[1129] Readable online and available for download at https://archive.org/details/Leningrad_Codex
[1130] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, vol. 6, 24. Leemhuis, "Ibrāhīm's sacrifice of his son," 129. Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr," 124. Recently, M.M. Al-Azami, *The history of the qurʾānic text from revelation to compilation* (Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003), 259. Al-Azami cited the information on Isaac and Ishmael in Genesis 17-22 as his major example of "deliberate textual corruption" in the Old Testament. *History of the qurʾānic text*, 256-61.
[1131] Gerard A. Wiegers, "Gospel of Barnabas," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Gudrun Krämer *et al,*, (Brill Online, 2014). Gordon Nickel, "Gospel of Barnabas," *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its reception*, eds. Matthew A. Collins *et al* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), vol. 3, 533-36.
[1132] For example, Ghulam Murtaza Azad, "An introduction to the Gospel of Barnabas," *Islamic Studies* 21/4 (1982), 71-96. Oddbjørn Leirvik, "History as a literary weapon: The Gospel of Barnabas in Muslim-Christian polemics," *Studia Theologica – Nordic Journal of Theology* 56 (2002), 6, 10-11.
[1133] George Sale, trans., *The Koran, commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed*, Eighth edition (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincot & Co., 1884), "Preliminary discourse," 53.
[1134] Sale, *The Koran*, 42-3 nt. t, 117 nt. g.
[1135] Christine Schirrmacher, "Muslim apologetics and the Agra debates of 1854: A nineteenth century turning point," *The Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies* 13 (Jan-Jun 1994), 79. Rahmat Allah Kairanwi used the "Gospel of Barnabas" in this way in *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 440-442. The Urdu translation expands this material considerably, vol. 3, 354-384. None of this is included in the English translation. See also the reference to this document in Muḥammad Taqī 'Uthmānī's introduction to the Urdu translation, vol. 1, 159.
[1136] Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, trans., *The Gospel of Barnabas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907).
[1137] Leirvik, "History as a literary weapon," 8.
[1138] Leirvik, "History as a literary weapon," 5-6, 14-17.

[1139] Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, *Gospel of Barnabas*, xv-xvii, xliv-xlv. Oxford University professor of Arabic David Margoliouth added in the Raggs' introduction that he did not know of any Arabic or Persian work that made allusion to the "Gospel of Barnabas," including the works of Muslim polemicists like Ibn Ḥazm to whom news of this book "would have been very welcome." Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, *Gospel of Barnabas*, xlviii-xlix.
[1140] Wiegers, "Gospel of Barnabas."
[1141] Leirvik, "History as a literary weapon," 20.
[1142] Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, *Gospel of Barnabas*, xvii-xlv.
[1143] Leirvik, "History as a literary weapon," 6.
[1144] Leirvik, "History as a literary weapon," 20.
[1145] Kenneth Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim: An exploration* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 170-176.
[1146] Gabriel Said Reynolds, "The Muslim Jesus: Dead or alive?" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72 (2009), 238-45. Mahmoud M. Ayoub, "Towards an Islamic Christology, pt. 2: The death of Jesus, reality or delusion? (A study of the death of Jesus in *Tafsīr* literature)," *The Muslim World* 70 (1980), 95-103.
[1147] Neal Robinson, "Jesus," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 3, 17.
[1148] Including Sale, *The Koran*, 43. Suleiman A. Mourad, "Does the Qur'ān deny or assert Jesus's crucifixion and death?" in *New perspectives on the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in its historical context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 350-51. A.H. Mathias Zahniser, "The forms of tawaffā in the Qur'ān: A contribution to Christian-Muslim dialogue," *Muslim World* 79 (1989), 14-16, 23.
[1149] Q 2:234, 240; 3:193, 4:15, 97; 5:117; 6:60, 61; 7:126; 8:50; 10:46, 104; 12:101; 13:40; 16:28, 32, 70; 22:5; 32:11; 39:42; 40:67, 77; 47:27. Zahniser, "The forms of tawaffā in the Qur'ān," 18-23. Reynolds, "The Muslim Jesus," 239-40, 249. Robinson, "Jesus," 18.
[1150] According to the Gospel, Jesus not only prophesied that he would be killed, but also that he *must* (Greek *dei*) be killed (Matthew 16:21, 26:54; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22, 24:26; John 3:14, 20:9). This means his death was at the centre of God's plan. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 171. Mawlana Kairanwi quoted Luke 18:31-34 but used it

only to support his claim of ambiguity in the sayings of Jesus. He correctly explained that the disciples misunderstood Jesus' saying because they had other expectations. Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 571-2; Urdu vol. 2, 237; English vol. 2, 244.

[1151] Robert E. Van Voorst, *Jesus outside the New Testament: An introduction to the ancient evidence* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 39-53. F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian origins outside the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), 22-3.

[1152] Van Voorst, *Jesus outside the New Testament*, 41.

[1153] Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, *The Jesus legend: A case for the historical reliability of the Synoptic Jesus tradition*(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 172.

[1154] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1973), vol. 8, 70-1.

[1155] *wa ayḍan fa-madār al-amr fī 'l-akhbār al-mutawātira*. al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 70.

[1156] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 70. This translation M.M. Ayoub, *The Qur'an and its Interpreters*, vol. 2 (Albany, 1992), 177.

[1157] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 70.

[1158] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 8, 70.

[1159] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 11, pp. 99-101.

[1160] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 11, 100. B.T. Lawson, "The crucifixion of Jesus in the Qur'ān and Qur'ānic commentary: A historical survey, pt. 2," *Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies* 10/3 (1991), 12-13.

[1161] al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, vol. 11, 100. Mahmoud M. Ayoub, "Towards an Islamic Christology, pt. 2: The death of Jesus, reality or delusion? (A study of the death of Jesus in *tafsīr* literature)," *The Muslim World* 70 (1980), 101.

[1162] Lamin Sanneh, "Jesus, more than a prophet," in *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual journeys of thinking Christians*, ed. Kelly Monroe Kullberg (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 192.

[1163] Sanneh, "Jesus, more than a prophet," 193.

[1164] Sanneh, "Jesus, more than a prophet," 195.

[1165] Sanneh, "Jesus, more than a prophet," 194.

[1166] François Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads: A first overview* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 15, 94-102.

[1167] Fred Donner, "The Qur'ān in recent scholarship: Challenges and desiderata," in *The Qur'ān in its historical context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2008), 31.
[1168] For example, François Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam: Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 153, 174, 177.
[1169] Michael Cook, "The stemma of the regional codices of the Koran," *Graeco-Arabica* 9-10 (2004), 80. *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān* (The copy at the Topkapi Palace Museum), prepared for publication by Dr Tayyar Altıkulaç, preface by Prof. Dr. Edmeleddin İhsanoğlu. (Istanbul: Organization of the Islamic Conference Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 2007), 35. One early Arabic source, the *Risāla* attributed to al-Kindī around 820, stated that three of the four "'Uthmānic" codices were destroyed in various wars. Theodor Nöldeke, G. Bergsträßer and O. Pretzl, *Geschichte des Qurāns, pt. 3, Die Geschichte des Korantexts* (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlangsbuchhandlung, 1938), 6, n. 1.
[1170] François Déroche, "Written transmission," in *The Blackwell companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (London: Blackwell, 2006), 172. Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 3.
[1171] Keith E. Small, "Textual variants in the New Testament and qur'ānic manuscript traditions," in *Schlaglichter: Die beiden ersten islamischen Jahrhunderte*, eds. Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Markus Groß (Berlin: H. Schiler, 2008), 572-93, 586-90. Eldon Jay Epp, "The multivalence of the term 'original text' in New Testament textual criticism," *Harvard Theological Review* 92 (1999), 276-7.
[1172] Small, "Textual variants," 586, 588.
[1173] Déroche, "Written transmission," 175. Keith Small, *Textual criticism and Qur'ān manuscripts* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington, 2011), 9. Gerhard Böwering, "Chronology and the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 332.
[1174] Angelika Neuwirth, "Structural, linguistic and literary features," in *The Cambridge companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 99.
[1175] Christopher Melchert, "Ibn Mujāhid and the establishment of seven qur'anic readings, *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000), 20.
[1176] Déroche, "Written transmission," 184. Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Introduction," in *The Qur'ān in its historical context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds

(London: Routledge, 2008), 2-3. G. Bergsträsser, "Koranlesung in Kairo," *Der Islam* 20 (1932), 3-4. Small, "Textual variants," 589-90.

[1177] Interview with François Déroche, Paris, March 20, 2014. Andrew Rippin wrote about Déroche's study, *La transmission écrite du Coran*, that Déroche handles any historical questions about the Qur'an "carefully and strictly on the basis of the data in front of him." "Review of *La Transmission écrite du Coran dan les débuts de l'islam*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129 (2009), 708. See also Fred M. Donner, "The historian, the believer, and the Qur'ān," in *New perspectives on the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān in its historical context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 31-7.

[1178] Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 52, 173.

[1179] Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 21. Déroche, "Written transmission," 173.

[1180] François Déroche is director of studies in the history and codicology of Arabic manuscripts at the École Pratique des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne in Paris. University of Toronto Islamic Studies professor Walid Saleh wrote that Dr. Déroche is "the leading scholar in quranic studies." "Review of *Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men*," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 6/1-2 (2010), 251. E.A. Rezvan called Dr. Déroche "without doubt the most accomplished specialist in the field" of qur'anic manuscripts. "The Qur'ān and its world: VI. Emergence of the canon: The struggle for uniformity," *Manuscripta Orientalia* 4/2 (1998), 21.

[1181] Déroche, "Written transmission," 173-4.

[1182] Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 178, 164. Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 35.

[1183] Small, "Textual variants," 584.

[1184] Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 151, 177. Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 71.

[1185] Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 178, 168. Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 71-72.

[1186] Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 72.

[1187] Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 72, citing Omar Hamdan and al-Dānī's *Muḥkam fī naqt al-maṣāḥif*.

[1188] Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 72.

[1189] Frederik Leemhuis, "Codices of the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 350.

[1190] Leemhuis, "Codices of the Qur'ān," 349. Dr. Leemhuis wrote that, at the beginning of the second/eighth Islamic century, "…der Standardtext noch nicht allgemein akzeptiert war." "Ursprünge des Koran als Textus Receptus," in *Akten des 27. Deutschen Orientalistentages*, eds. S. Wild and H. Schild (Würzburg: Ergon, 2001), 307.
[1191] for example, in relatively recent times, Muhammad Hamidullah, *Introduction to Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1973), 22: "…one of them is at present in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul. Another incomplete one is now in Tashkent."
[1192] Déroche, "Written transmission," 172.
[1193] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān*, 34, 36, 65, 71.
[1194] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān*, 21-89.
[1195] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān*, 78-80.
[1196] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān*, 78-9.
[1197] *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān*, 80. Dr. Altıkulaç wrote in a similar way about the "Tashkent muṣḥaf": "apparently it was copied by a scribe who had no writing experience." *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf attributed to 'Uthmān bin 'Affān*, 71.
[1198] Déroche, "Written transmission," 172. Frederick Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 362.
[1199] Matthias Radscheit, "The Qur'ān—codification and canonization," in *Self-Referentiality in the Qur'ān*, ed. Stefan Wild (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz , 2006), 96.
[1200] François Déroche, "Manuscripts of the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 3, 257.
[1201] Böwering, "Chronology and the Qur'ān," 333.
[1202] Harald Motzki, "The collection of the Qur'ān. A reconsideration of Western views in light of recent methodological developments," *Der Islam* 78 (2001), 2.
[1203] For example, B. Sadeghi and U. Bergmann, "The codex of a companion of the prophet and the Qur'ān of the prophet," *Arabica* 57 (2010), 348-353.
[1204] Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 11-14, 54.
[1205] Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 52. ("…laisse ouvert un vaste éventail de lectures possibles dont il serait parfois bien difficile de retenir l'une plutôt que l'autre et d'affirmer qu'il s'agissait bien de celle à laquelle adhérait le copiste").

[1206] Imām Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qurʾān* (Riyad: Maktabat al-maʻārif, 1996), vol. 1, 213.
[1207] Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1920), 6, citing Ibn al-Atīr's *Usd al-Jāba*. Dr. Déroche also mentioned a reference to the problem by al-Dānī, citing his *Muḥkam fī naqt al-maṣāḥif*. *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, 72.
[1208] Alba Fedeli, "Variants and substantiated qirāʾāt: A few notes exploring their fluidity in the oldest qurʾānic manuscripts," in *Schlaglichter: Die beiden ersten islamischen Jahrhunderte*, eds. Markus Groß and Karl-Heinz Ohlig (Berlin: Schiler Hans Verlag, 2008), 413-19.
[1209] Déroche, "Written transmission," 185, nt. 5.
[1210] Munther Younes, "Charging steeds or maidens doing good deeds? A re-interpretation of Qurʾān 100 (*al-ʻādiyāt*)," *Arabica* 55 (2008), 362-386, 373-81.
[1211] Munther Younes, "Angels, stars, death, the soul, horses, bows – or women?" in *New perspectives on the Qurʾān: The Qurʾān in its historical context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 272.
[1212] James A. Bellamy, "Textual criticism of the Qurʾān," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121 (2001), 2. James A. Bellamy, "Some proposed emendations to the text of the Koran," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113 (1993), 562-573. James A. Bellamy, "More proposed emendations to the text of the Koran," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116 (1996), 196-204.
[1213] Bellamy, "Some proposed emendations," 566.
[1214] Leemhuis, "Codices of the Qurʾān," 349.
[1215] Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, 22-6. Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 54-9.
[1216] Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 71.
[1217] Behnam Sadeghi and Mohsen Goudarzi, "Ṣanʻā' 1 and the origins of the Qurʾān," *Der Islam* 87, (2012), 18-19.
[1218] Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, 48-56.
[1219] Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, 49.
[1220] Déroche, *Qurʾans of the Umayyads*, 52. Elisabeth Puin, "Ein früher Koranpalimpsest aus Ṣanʻā' (DAM 01-27.1)—Teil III: Ein nicht-uṯmānischer Koran," in *Die Entstehung einer Weltreligion I: Von der koranischen Bewegung zum Frühislam*, eds. Markus Groß and Karl-Heinz Ohlig (Berlin: Schiler, 2010), 262-275.
[1221] Small, "Textual variants," 585.

[1222] Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 53. E. Puin, "Ein früher Koranpalimpsest III," 269, 299, 273.
[1223] E. Puin, "Ein früher Koranpalimpsest III," 235.
[1224] Sadeghi and Goudarzi, "Ṣan'ā' 1 and the origins of the Qur'ān," 17.
[1225] Behnam Sadeghi and Uwe Bergmann, "The codex of a companion of the prophet and the Qur'ān of the prophet," *Arabica* 57 (2010), 344.
[1226] Alba Fedeli, "Early evidences of variant readings in Qur'ānic manuscripts" in *Die dunklen Anfänge: Neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam*, eds. Karl-Heinz Ohlig & Gerd-R. Puin (Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiller, 2007), 298-314.
[1227] Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," 354.
[1228] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1981), vol. 6, 100 (book 61, *faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, *bāb unzila 'l-Qur'ān 'alā sab'at aḥruf*).
[1229] Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," 354.
[1230] Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," 354-5. See also E. Beck, "Die b. Mas'ūdvarianten bei al-Farrā'," *Orientalia* NS 25 (1956), 353-83; 28 (1959), 185-205, 230-56.
[1231] Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the history of the text of the Qur'ān: The old codices* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937), 20-355. The variant readings were also studied extensively at around the same time as Jeffery in Theodor Nöldeke, G. Bergsträßer and O. Pretzl, *Geschichte des Qurāns, pt. 3, Die Geschichte des Korantexts* (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlangsbuchhandlung, 1938), 116-248.
[1232] Jeffery, 20-355.
[1233] Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," 358,
[1234] Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," 359-60.
[1235] Adrian Brockett, "The value of the Ḥafṣ and Warsh transmissions for the textual history of the Qur'ān," in *Approaches to the history of the interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 31.
[1236] Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," 361.
[1237] Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 14.
[1238] Déroche, "Written transmission," 184.
[1239] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 6, 99 (book 61, *faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, *bāb jam' al-Qur'ān*).
[1240] Chase F. Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 100-104. Prémare, Alfred-Louis de Prémare, "'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān et le processus de constitution du Coran," in *Die dunklen Anfänge: Neue Forschungen zur Entstehung*

und frühen Geschichte des Islam, eds. Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-R. Puin (Berlin: Hans Schiler, 2005), 179-212.
[1241] Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik*, 103.
[1242] Donner, "The Qur'ān in recent scholarship," 35. Déroche, *Qurʿans of the Umayyads*, 96-9. Omar Hamdan, "The second *maṣāḥif* project: A step towards the canonization of the Qur'anic text," in *The Qurʿān in context: Historical and literary investigations into the Qurʿānic milieu*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 794-835. Omar Hamdan, *Studien zur Kanonisierung des Korantextes. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrīs Beiträge zur Geschichte des Korans* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2006), 141.
[1243] Melchert, "Ibn Mujāhid," 20.
[1244] Small, "Textual variants," 589. Further on the "forceful backing of a powerful state" in the promotion of a standard text see Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The death of a prophet: The end of Muhammad's life and the beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 141, 150, 158; and Michael Cook, *The Koran: A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 126.
[1245] Déroche, *Qurʿans of the Umayyads*, 97.
[1246] Small, "Textual variants," 582-5, 591. Small, *Textual criticism and Qurʿān manuscripts*, 173-6.
[1247] Small, "Textual variants," 585. Small, *Textual criticism and Qurʿān manuscripts*, 137-9.
[1248] Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 175, 105-6.
[1249] Déroche. *La transmission écrite du Coran*, 178, 168.
[1250] Raḥmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʿIḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 302, 304.
[1251] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 6, 99. al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī musamma Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī taʿwīl al-qurʿān*, Beirut: Dār al-ʿilmiyya, 2005, vol. 1, 50.
[1252] Epp, "The multivalence of the term 'original text'," 276-7.
[1253] Small, *Textual criticism and Qurʿān manuscripts*, 7.
[1254] Small, *Textual criticism and Qurʿān manuscripts*, 162-4.
[1255] Déroche, "Written transmission," 172. Cook, "The stemma of the regional codices," 80.
[1256] Small, *Textual criticism and Qurʿān manuscripts*, 165-7.
[1257] Sadeghi and Bergmann, "The codex of a companion of the prophet," 344.
[1258] Rezvan, "The Qur'ān and its world: VI," 27.

[1259] Small, "Textual variants," 585.
[1260] Small, "Textual variants," 583.
[1261] Small, "Textual variants," 582.
[1262] F.E. Peters, *The voice, the word, the books: The sacred scripture of the Jews, Christians and Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 55-61.
[1263] Descriptions of these discoveries and their meaning for the reliability of the Bible can be found in Chapters 10-12.
[1264] The Great Isaiah Scroll can be examined online at http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah. The Aleppo Codex ("Masoretic") can be examined at http://www.aleppocodex.org/aleppocodex.html.
[1265] Eugene Ulrich, "The absence of 'sectarian variants' in the Jewish scriptural scrolls Found at Qumran," in *The Bible as book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean desert discoveries*, eds. Edward D. Herbert & Emanuel Tov (London: The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 179-195.
[1266] – "gentle, humble, considerate, meek…unassuming." William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 705.
[1267] "The apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi," trans. A. Mingana, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12 (1928), 169.
[1268] "The apology of al-Kindi," in *The early Christian-Muslim dialogue: A collection of documents from the first three Islamic centuries (632-990 A.D.)*, ed. N.A. Newman (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 481.
[1269] "The apology of al-Kindi," 496.
[1270] Interestingly, this verse also appears in an altered form in the Qur'an: "And we prescribed for them [in the *tawrāt* (vv. 43-44)]: The life for the life, and the eye for the eye, and the nose for the nose, and the ear for the ear, and the tooth for the tooth, and for wounds retaliation" (Q 5:45).
[1271] For example, al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 860) in his *Radd ʿalā al-naṣārā*. David Thomas, "The Bible in early Muslim anti-Christian polemic," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7 (1996), 29-38, 35. al-Qāsim simply "censored" Jesus' teaching on turning the other cheek from his description of Matthew 5 in the *Radd*.
[1272] "The apology of al-Kindi," 450.
[1273] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī musamma Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī taʾwīl al-qurʾān*, Beirut: Dār al-ʿilmiyya, 2005, vol. 6, 84 (at Q 7:157). Translation Jane Dammen

McAuliffe, "The prediction and prefiguration of Muḥammad," in *Bible and Qurʾān: Essays in scriptural textuality* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 118. Similar expressions in Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957) vol. 1, 360-62. A. Guillaume, "New light on the life of Muhammad," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Monograph no. 1 (Manchester University Press, n.d.), 32 (Ibn Isḥāq). al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Cairo: al-Arabi, 1955), vol. 6, 44-5 (*kitāb al-tafsīr*, bāb 273, on Q 48:8).

[1274] J. Horowitz, "Tawrāt'" *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. M.Th. Houtsma et al (Leiden: Brill, 1934), vol. 4, 706. Guillaume, "New light on the life of Muhammad," 32. W. Montgomery Watt, "The early development of the Muslim attitude to the Bible," *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society* 16 (1955-56), 57. H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 78. U. Rubin, *The eye of the beholder: The life of Muḥammad as viewed by the early Muslims: a textual analysis* (Princeton: Darwin, 1995), 30. McAuliffe, "Prediction and prefiguration," 118-19.

[1275] *ghaluẓa* – "to be or become thick, gross, course, crude, rude, rough, rugged; to treat (*ʿalā* someone) harshly, ruthlessly." Hans Wehr, *A dictionary of modern written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1961), 681.

[1276] *ghilẓa* – "thickness, grossness; coarseness, crudeness, roughness, ruggedness; harshness, ruthlessness, rudeness, impoliteness, boorishness." Wehr, *Dictionary*, 681.

[1277] *ashiddāʾ* – "strong, powerful, forceful, vigorous, stern, severe, rigorous, hard, harsh, violent, vehement, intense; bad, evil, ominous, calamitous, difficult (*ʿalā* for someone)." Wehr, *Dictionary*, 460.

[1278] Qur'an translations from Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *The meaning of the glorious Qur'an* (Karachi: Taj Company, n.d.).

[1279] *raʾfa* – mercy, compassion, pity; kindliness, graciousness. Wehr, *Dictionary*, 318.

[1280] Most Christians know the Hebrew scriptures as the Old Testament. This is certainly not to say something negative about the Hebrew scriptures, nor is it to say they are abrogated, but rather it follows from the concept of a new covenant ("testament") in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

[1281] Sadly, the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* only mentioned Jesus' miracles in order to make accusations of contradiction between the Gospel accounts. As noted in Chapter 9,

the *Iẓhār*'s approach to Gospel content destroyed many opportunities for worthwhile conversation between Muslims and Christians—in the case of Jesus' miracles, about something that the Gospel and the Qur'an have in common. Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 174-78 (nos. 69, 70, 76, 81); Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 1, 408-15; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English'], vol. 1, 84-90.

[1282] This speech of Jesus is reported in virtually the same words in Matthew 11:4-6.

[1283] Jesus also told his own disciples to believe in him "at least…on the evidence of the miracles themselves" (John 14:11).

[1284] It is also worth noting here that the three Gospel miracles of Jesus mentioned in the Qur'an are all found in this speech of Jesus (Q 3:49, 5:110). More about the Qur'an's references to Jesus' miracles below.

[1285] "The apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the caliph Mahdi," trans. A. Mingana, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12 (1928), 168.

[1286] "The apology of al-Kindi," in *The early Christian-Muslim dialogue: A collection of documents from the first three Islamic centuries (632-990 A.D.)*, ed. N.A. Newman (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 497.

[1287] *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, trans. Martin Abegg, Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 323.

[1288] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 1, 176; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī Book Depot, 1967), vol. 1, 411-12; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English'], vol. 1, 86-87.

[1289] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 176; Urdu vol. 1, 412; English vol. 1, 87.

[1290] This is a good example of how two Gospel accounts report the same event differently without contradicting. In fact, the two "angles" enhance reader comprehension of the significance of the story.

[1291] The Christian Arab al-Kindī wrote similarly in his "Apology" (around 830), after listing many of the Gospel miracles of Jesus, "He did many wonders; the apostles have not told them all, lest their writings should be too bulky, and we too

have left out many, lest we should transgress our limits." "The apology of al-Kindi," 509.

[1292] Sidney H. Griffith, "'Ammār al-Baṣrī's *Kitāb al-burhān*: Christian *kalām* in the first Abbasid century," *Le Muséon* 96 (1983), 164. "Apology of Timothy," 172-3, 225. "Apology of al-Kindī," 508-10.

[1293] Griffith, "'Ammār al-Baṣrī's *Kitāb al-burhān*," 165. Sara Stroumsa, "The signs of prophecy: The emergence and early development of a theme in Arabic theological literature," *The Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985), 107. See also Daniel J. Sahas, "The formation of later Islamic doctrines as a response to Byzantine polemics: The miracles of Muhammad," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27 (1982), 307-324. The *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* attributes a large number of miracles to the messenger of Islam—forty in all! Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 271-322; Urdu vol. 3, 115-172. The English version omits this substantial section (*maslak*).

[1294] David Thomas, "The miracles of Jesus in early Islamic polemic," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 39 (1994), 221-43. Kate Zebiri, "Contemporary Muslim understanding of the miracles of Jesus," *The Muslim World* 90 (2000), 75, 83. In a presentation titled "Additions in the Qur'an" at the "Early Islamic history & the origins of the Qur'an" conference in Helsinki on September 8, 2013, Cornell University Arabic professor Munther Younes said that the expression *bidhnī* in Q 5:110 seems to be rhetorical flourish added to the text to improve the appeal of the language.

[1295] See for example Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *The Qur'an and its interpreters, vol. 2: The house of 'Imrān* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 108-9 (on Q 3:39).

[1296] Geza Vermes, *Scripture and tradition in Judaism: Haggadic studies* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961), 218.

[1297] Vermes, *Scripture and tradition in Judaism*, 223-5.

[1298] Martin Hengel, *The Son of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 11.

[1299] Vermes, *Scripture and tradition in Judaism*, 193-227.

[1300] Mark Beaumont, "Debating the cross in early Christian dialogues with Muslims," in *Jesus and the cross: Reflections of Christians from Islamic contexts*, ed. David Emmanuel Singh,(Oxford: Regnum, 2008), 57-58.

[1301] Arthur Jeffery, trans., "Ghevond's text of the correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo II," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944), 316.

[1302] Jeffery, trans., "Ghevond's text," 316.

[1303] James A. Bellamy, "Textual criticism of the Koran," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121/1 (2001), 6.
[1304] The Qur'an refers briefly to the plagues at Q 7:133-135, but makes no mention of this final and most drastic plague.
[1305] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Is there a concept of redemption in Islam?" in her *Some religious aspects of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 57. Cf. Muzammil Husain Siddiqi, "The doctrine of redemption: A critical study," In *Islamic perspectives: Studies in honour of Maulana Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi*, eds. Khurshid Ahmad and Zafar Ishaq Ansari (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1979), 99.
[1306] G.R. Hawting, "The tawwābūn, atonement and 'āshūrā," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17 (1994), 170-71.
[1307] Siddiqi, "The doctrine of redemption," 100.
[1308] Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian message in a non-Christian world* (New York: Harper, 1938), 218.
[1309] James Robson, "Aspects of the qur'anic doctrine of salvation," in *Man and his salvation*, eds. Eric J. Sharpe and John R. Hinnells (Manchester University Press, 1973), 206-216. Fazlur Rahman, *Major themes in the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 63. Frederick M. Denny, "The problem of salvation in the Quran: Key terms and concepts," in *In quest of an Islamic humanism: Arabic and Islamic studies in memory of Mohamed al-Nowaihi*, ed. A.H. Green (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1984), 207.
[1310] This is the gist of the brief reference to atonement in Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 2, 35-37; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī book depot, 1967), vol. 2, 275-76; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of knowledge for publishing and distribution, 1992), vol. 2, 269 (the English version is greatly reduced on this point).
[1311] Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *A Muslim and A Christian in dialogue* (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1997), 141.
[1312] Siddiqi, "The doctrine of redemption," 99.
[1313] Isma'il al-Faruqi, "On the nature of Islamic da'wah," *International Review of Mission* 65 (1976), 399.
[1314] al-Faruqi, "On the nature of Islamic da'wah," 399.
[1315] Maurice Borrmans, "Salvation," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, gen. ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol. 4, 522.

[1316] Lamin Sanneh, "Muhammad, prophet of Islam, and Jesus Christ, image of God: A personal testimony," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8 (1984), 173-4.
[1317] Sanneh, "Muhammad, prophet of Islam," 174.
[1318] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Some neglected aspects of medieval Muslim polemics against Christianity," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996), 69.
[1319] Alfred-Louis de Prémare called the Dome inscriptions "the first Islamic religious writings that have been dated thus far and attested to by external documents." "'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān et le Processus de Constitution du Coran," in *Die dunklen Anfänge*, ed. Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-Rudiger Puin (Berlin: Hans Schiler, 2007), 179.
[1320] Oleg Grabar, *The shape of the holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 63.
[1321] Grabar, *The shape of the holy*, 61, (Arabic text) 186; neither is the complete text of Sūra 112 as it appears in today's Qur'ans.
[1322] Grabar, *The shape of the holy*, 59, (Arabic) 184; again not exactly the same as Sūra 112 in today's Qur'ans.
[1323] Grabar, 65.
[1324] Grabar, 59, (Arabic) 184.
[1325] Grabar, 60, (Arabic) 185.
[1326] Grabar, 60, (Arabic) 185.
[1327] The correct translation of the Greek term *monogenēs* is "only," from *monos* (one) and *genos* (kind). Dale Moody, "God's only Son: The translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 72/4 (1953), 213.
[1328] Scholarly support for the understanding that Jesus called himself the Son of God is provided by I. Howard Marshall in his article, "Divine Sonship of Jesus," *Interpretation* 21 (1967), 87-103.
[1329] For a scholarly study of how Matthew 27:43 fits into the narrative scheme to highlight "Son of God" in the Gospel, see Terence L. Donaldson, "The mockers and the Son of God (Matthew 27:37-44): Two characters in Matthew's story of Jesus," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 41 (1991), 3-18.
[1330] Martin Hengel, *The Son of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 8-10, 14. Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 104-107.

[1331] Hengel, *The Son of God*, 7, 10-12, 15, 59-62, 65. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 102, 107. Hengel wrote that in the case of Romans 1:3-4, it is the "unanimous opinion of scholars" that Paul's belief was inherited. *The Son of God*, 59. Hengel concluded that the title "Son of God" for Jesus had already attained a central significance for the Jewish Christians of Palestine by the time of Paul's call, which Hengel dated to between 32 and 34 A.D. *The Son of God*, 10, 65.
[1332] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʻIḍariyya, 1998), vol. 2, 37-39; Urdu translation *Bāʾibal se Qurʾān tak*, trans. Akbar ʻAlī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī book depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 2, 276-79; English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 2, 270-72.
[1333] This important theme is developed more fully in Chapter 23.
[1334] Timothy, the Patriarch of the Eastern Church, also said that he confessed Jesus as the Son of God because he learned it "from Christ himself in the Gospel and from the books of the Torah and the Prophets, which know him and call him by the name of 'Son of God.'" A. Mingana, "The apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the caliph Mahdi," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12 (1928), 153.
[1335] The verb *walada*("to beget") appears only once elsewhere in the Qur'an with Allah as subject, in Q 37:151-2: "Lo! It is of their falsehood that they say, 'Allah has begotten.' They are certainly liars."
[1336] *ittakhadha* (*akhadha* VIII) means "to take; to take on, assume." Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan, ed. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974), 7.
[1337] This is the literal translation of the Arabic followed by Arthur Arberry. However, the wording of the verse seems to have posed some challenges for Muslim translators. For example, Pickthall changed the first part of the verse into a negative statement: "The Beneficent one hath no son"(!); while Abdel Haleem substituted "offspring" (plural) for the more obvious singular "son" (*walad*)—the same word used in all but one of the denial verses above.
[1338] Many classical Muslim commentators interpreted the verses to refer to Jesus and Christians, even where ʻĪsā is not explicitly mentioned in the verse. Mahmoud M. Ayoub, "Jesus the Son of God: A study of the terms *ibn* and *walad* in the Qur'an and tafsir tradition," in *Christian-Muslim encounters*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Zaidan Haddad (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1991), 74-78.

[1339] Hengel, *The Son of God*, 10-12, 60, 66-76. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 364-369.
[1340] The expression *lā sharīk* ("no partner" or "no associate") appears frequently in the Dome inscriptions.
[1341] The interpretation of M.A.S Abdel Haleem in *The Qur'an: A new translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 182. The word rendered "weak" in the verse is *dhull* – lowliness, humility, meekness, etc. Wehr, *Dictionary*, 311.
[1342] The Arabic term *ṣamad* appears only once in the Qur'an, and the best of Muslim exegetes and non-Muslim scholars of the Qur'an have been challenged to say what it means. Rudi Paret, "Der Ausdruck *ṣamad* in Sure 112,2," *Islam* 56 (1979), 294-5. Cl. Schedl, "Probleme der Koranexegese: Nochmals *ṣamad* in Sure 112,2," *Islam* 58 (1981), 2-4.
[1343] Uri Rubin, "*Al-Ṣamad* and the high God: An interpretation of *sūra* CXII," *Islam* 61 (1984), 206-7.
[1344] Wehr, *Dictionary*, 393.
[1345] *yanbaghī* (*baghā* VII) means "it is desirable, necessary; it is proper, appropriate, seemly; it ought to be, should be; with *li-*, it behooves (him)." Wehr, *Dictionary*, 68.
[1346] For example, A. Mingana, "The apology of Timothy," 153. "The apology of al-Kindi," in *The early Christian-Muslim dialogue: A collection of documents from the first three Islamic centuries (632-900 A.D.), translations with commentary*, ed. N.A. Newman (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Research Institute, 1993), 388, 418-419.
[1347] Ayoub, "Jesus the Son of God," 70. The denial of the deity of Jesus is certainly the central concern of Rahmat Allah Kairanwi in the *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 547-593, vol. 2, 25-56; Urdu vol. 2, 210-297; English vol. 2, 224-283.
[1348] Ayoub, "Jesus the Son of God," 72-3. See also Lazarus-Yafeh, "Some neglected aspects," 79-80. Louis Massignon, "Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon al-Ghazālī," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 6 (1932), 523-536.
[1349] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 160-200; Urdu vol. 1, 389-449; English vol. 1, 69-112.
[1350] Emanuel Tov, *Textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Third edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 95-6.
[1351] Tov, *Textual criticism*, 99.

[1352] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ʻIḍariyya, 1998), vol. 2, 39-41; Urdu translation *Bāʾibal se Qurʾān tak*, trans. Akbar ʻAlī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī book depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 2, 279-81; English translation *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of knowledge for publishing and distribution, 1992) ["English"], vol. 2, 272-3.
[1353] The original Aramaic word itself closely resembles a comparable Arabic word: *sulṭān* – "power, might, strength; rule, reign, dominion, sway; authority; mandate, authorization; legitimation." Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1961) 422.
[1354] Translation in Arabic Bible, standard Van Dyke translation: *dufiʻa ilayya kullu sulṭānin fī ʼl-samāʾi wa ʻalā ʼl-arḍi*.
[1355] Muhammad Daud Rahbar, *God of justice: A study in the ethical doctrine of the Qurʾan* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 180. Gordon Nickel, "The language of love in Qurʾān and Gospel," in *Sacred text: Explorations in lexicography*, eds. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala and Angel Urban (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 242.
[1356] Anton Tien, trans., "The apology of al-Kindi," in *The early Christian-Muslim dialogue: A collection of documents from the first three Islamic centuries (632-990 A.D.)*, ed. N.A. Newman (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 504. William Muir, *The apology of al Kindy, written at the court of al Mâmûn (circa A.H. 215; A.D. 830)* (London: SPCK, 1886), 56.
[1357] Tien, trans., "The apology of al-Kindi," 504-5.
[1358] Tien, trans., "The apology of al-Kindi," 505.
[1359] Tien, trans., "The apology of al-Kindi," 449-52.
[1360] Tien, trans., "The apology of al-Kindi," 450.
[1361] Nickel, "The language of love," 235. Rahbar, *God of justice*, 180.
[1362] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi quoted Mark 12:29-31, the commands to love God and neighbor, and claimed that "these two commands (*ḥukmān*) emphatically remain in our *sharīʿa*." However, the Arabic verb for "to love," *aḥabba*, never appears in the imperative in the Qur'an. Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 513; Urdu vol. 2, 175; English vol. 2, 195. Nickel, "The language of love," 235.
[1363] Muir, *The apology of al Kindy*, 44.
[1364] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 188; Urdu vol. 1, 429-430 (English version omits this accusation).
[1365] *an-Nawawī's forty hadith*, trans. Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (Riyadh: International Islamic Publish House, 1997), 58-59 (*ḥadīth* 14).

[1366] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1981), vol. 8, 49 (book 84, *istitābat al-murtaddīna*, *bāb ḥukm al-murtadd wa 'l-murtadda*). Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1951), vol. 4, 417.
[1367] "From the first/seventh century to the present day, Muslim jurists have agreed that the punishment for apostasy from Islam is death." F. Giffel, "Apostasy," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pt. 1, 131.
[1368] Joseph Schacht, *The origins of Muhammadan jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 16.
[1369] Rahmat Allah Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-'Iḍariyya, 1998), vol. 2, 421; Urdu translation *Bā'ibal se Qur'ān tak*, trans. Akbar 'Alī (Deoband, India: Ḥāfiẓī book depot, 1967) ["Urdu"], vol. 3, 324; not included in English version *Izhar-ul-haq*, Second edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: World of Knowledge for Publishing and Distribution, 1992) ["English"]. G.C. Anawati, "'Īsā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, ed. E. van Donzel et al (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), vol. 4, 83.
[1370] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, Second edition, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 85.
[1371] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 85.
[1372] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 87.
[1373] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 102.
[1374] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 100. In total, P66 contained John 1:1-6:11; 6:35-14:26, 29-30; 15:2-26; 16:2-4, 6-7; 16:10-20:20, 22-23; and 20:25-21:9.
[1375] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 87.
[1376] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 87. On the "striking similarities" between P75 and Vaticanus, see also Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament,* Fourth edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 278.
[1377] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 101. In total, P75 contained the majority of Luke, and John 1:1-11:45, 48-57; 12:3-13:1, 8-9; 14:8-30; and 15:7-8.
[1378] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 85.
[1379] Aland and Aland, *The text of the New Testament*, 98.
[1380] William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 623-3. A thorough study of the term *parakletos*is J. Behm,

" ," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), vol. 5, 800-814.

[1381] Behm, " ," 813.

[1382] F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 319.

[1383] Behm, " ," 813.

[1384] David Thomas, "The Bible and the kalām," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity,* ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 179 (al-Jāḥiz, *Fī al-radd ʻalā l-Naṣārā*).

[1385] A. Mingana, trans., "The apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12 (1928), 183. Arthur Jeffery, trans., "Ghevond's text of the correspondence between ʻUmar II and Leo III," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944), 292-3.

[1386] Jeffery, trans., "Leo III," 290, 289.

[1387] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 543-593, vol. 2, 25-56; Urdu vol. 2, 206-297; English vol. 2, 222-283.

[1388] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 37-39; Urdu vol. 2, 276-79; English vol. 2, 270-72.

[1389] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 573, cf. 394-400; Urdu vol. 2, 238, cf. 67-72; English vol. 2, 245, cf. 107-110.

[1390] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 88.

[1391] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 148.

[1392] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 146.

[1393] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 394-400; Urdu vol. 2, 67-71; English vol. 2, 107-110.

[1394] Metzger and Ehrman, *The text of the New Testament*, 148.

[1395] Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 74-86. Philip Comfort, *Encountering the manuscripts: An introduction to New Testament paleography & textual criticism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 100.

[1396] *The Greek New Testament*, Third corrected edition, ed. Kurt Aland et al (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1983), 824.

[1397] Mawlana Kairanwi portrayed the efforts of scholars to solve the problem of the extra words in some late Latin translations as merely one more reason to accuse of falsification. The process in fact illustrates the scholarly approach to establishing the original text, given relevant manuscript evidence. Instead,

Mawlana Kairanwi used the story to cast major aspersions on Christians and their care of the biblical text. Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 1, 398-99; Urdu vol. 2, 70; English vol. 2, 109.

[1398] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 55; Urdu vol. 2, 296; English vol. 2, 282-283.

[1399] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 56; Urdu vol. 2, 296; English vol. 2, 283 (English version is not accurate). *ilzām* – coercion, compulsion, Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1961), 865; from *alzama* – to force, compel (with *ḥujja*, to force proof on someone, to force someone to accept an argument). Wehr, *Dictionary*, 864.

[1400] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 418-32; Urdu vol. 3, 321-40 (not included in English version).

[1401] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat al-nabawiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿilmiyya, 2003), vol. 1, 167. English trans. A. Guillaume, *The life of Muhammad* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 103-4.

[1402] A number of scholars have suggested that Ibn Isḥāq took the quotation from the Palestinian Syriac lectionary, though he made quite a number of alterations to the text. Guillaume, *The life of Muhammad*, 104 nt. 1. Alfred Guillaume, "The version of the Gospels used in Medina circa 700 A.D.," *Al-Andalus* 15 (1950), 294. Sidney H. Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic: An inquiry into its appearance in the first Abbasid century," *Oriens Christianus* 69 (1985), 138-40.

[1403] Kenneth Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim: An exploration* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 266.

[1404] Lesslie Newbigin, *The light has come: An exposition of the fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 212.

[1405] Kenneth Cragg noted, "within the limits of some ninety verses in all no less than sixty-four belong to the extended, and partly duplicate, nativity stories in Surahs 3 and 19." *Jesus and the Muslim*, 25.

[1406] Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The emergence of Islam: Classical traditions in contemporary perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 126.

[1407] Kairanwi, *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq*, vol. 2, 420-21; Urdu vol. 3, 324 (not included in English version). Anawati, "'Īsā," 83.

[1408] Martin Accad, "Muhammad's advent as the final criterion for the authenticity of the Judeo-Christian tradition: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Hidāyat al-hayāra fi ajwibat al-yahūd wa-'l-nasārā*," in *The three rings: Textual studies in the*

historical trialogue of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, eds. Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis and Pim Valkenberg (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 228-34.
[1409] Accad, "Muhammad's advent," 231 nt. 29.
[1410] Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim*, 266.
[1411] J.P. Monferrer-Sala, "Del Paráclito y el anuncio de la venida de Mahoma," *Revista de la Facultad de Humanidades de Jaén* 4-5 (1995-96), 9.
[1412] See, for example, its absence from *Moulton and Geden Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, Sixth edition, ed. I. Howard Marshall (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 874.
[1413] The term *parakletos* appears four times in John 14-16—there would be many opportunities to find evidence of a substitution in the early manuscripts of John. However, scholars have found none.
[1414] Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim*, 266-7.
[1415] Comfort, *Encountering the manuscripts*, 226.
[1416] Chapter 12.
[1417] Chapters 6 and 11.
[1418] Bruce K. Waltke, "How we got the Hebrew Bible: The text and canon of the Old Testament," in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, shape and interpretation*, ed. Peter Flint (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 47-50.
[1419] Chapter 18.
[1420] Keith Small, "Recovering the original text of the New Testament and the Qur'an: Possibilities and impediments," in *Islam and Christianity on the edge: Talking points in Christian-Muslim relations into the 21st century*, eds. John Azumah and Peter Riddell (Victoria, Australia: Acorn, 2013), 30-35.