

Christianity and Islam

The SON and the MOON

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Scripture quotations are mostly taken from the New International Version of the Bible. Some are also from the New Living Bible, or possibly the NASB. **(Different versions of the Bible have slightly different wording, but exactly the same meaning, the same idea. They are virtually interchangeable.)**

Quranic quotations are usually from Dawood's 1995 Koran, because the English is modern and easy to understand. Also, Dawood translates literally. However, since Muslim people favor Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall's 1935 Koran over Dawood's, I usually used Pickthall's version in those cases where Dawood's reading varied slightly in meaning from Pickthall's. I also use the 2004 edition of Yusuf Ali's Qur'an. It is in modern English, like Dawood's, but more generally accepted, especially by Muslim people.

Given some Quranic translators' penchant for slightly changing certain word meanings to make them more acceptable, (ie: "make war" becomes "strive against" and "beat" becomes "tap lightly," it's best to compare various translations to make sure you have the truest reading possible.)

PUBLISHED by SONRISE ENTERPRISE PUBLICATIONS

National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Fletemier, Curt, 1956-

Christianity and Islam : the Son and the Moon / Curt Fletemier

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 1-55306-520-4; LSI Edition 1-55306-522-0

1.Christianity and other religions – Islam. 2.Islam – Relation – Christianity. I. Title.

BP172.F44 2003 261.2'7 C2003-900422-8

Previously published as "The Son and the Moon," 1999, in the Indonesian language.

*This book is dedicated to the service of the living God, Lord of the Universe, Father
Son and Holy Spirit.*

*It's also dedicated to the memory of my best friend, my father, Marvin O.
Fletenier, and to another friend, Osa Milla - two good people who were taken home
early.*

FORWARD **(15 Nov. '13)**

This book was originally written for Christians in Indonesia. In 1996, bookstores in Jakarta had stacks of books that told outright lies about Christianity, Christians, and Christ, but Christians were NOT ALLOWED to have any material that might tell the TRUTH about Muhammad or his Quran. We, at SonRise Enterprise, amateurs though we were, wanted to provide Christians the ammunition they needed, and began researching Islam to put together a book for the Christians of Indonesia – an un-censorable book. Three years later, in 1999, we put out our first edition, printing 2000 copies and giving them away to churches from Jakarta to Bali, but then I returned to Japan and worked to make the book better. By 2003, the new version, this version, was published in Canada at a vanity press, and in 2004 it was translated into Bahasa Indonesia. We've since printed five new editions and sold more than 10,000 copies throughout the Indonesian Isles. We've found that it's best to sell them, to make sure the person who gets a copy really intends to read it and use it, but any money made in sales went to further the Lord's Kingdom in Indonesia, and the number of books in circulation here continues to grow.

This book is intended to tell the reader why we believe that not only Islam but also atheistic evolution are indefensible lies, but the first two-thirds tells why we truly believe that the Bible is true, that Jesus is real, and that he is true man and true God. There is a lot of material packed into this little book.

When I first wrote this, I really did try to give proper references. Basically, everything in this book comes from the sources mentioned in the bibliography. If I have failed to give anyone credit for their scholarship, I really do apologize and will fix it as straightaway.

These passages might be considered our mission statement.

1 Peter 3v14: Even if you should suffer for what is right you are blessed. Do not fear their threats, but in your hearts set apart Christ 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 and respect.

2 Cor.10v5: We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.

Eph.4v15: Speaking the Truth in Love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head – that is, Christ.

John 8v32: You shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

The SON and the MOON

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CHAPTER ONE :
LOVE versus FEAR
(Bible versus Quran)

The Quran claims to agree with the Gospel.

- **(Quran 2:87...91)** *“To Moses we gave the scriptures, and after him we sent other apostles. We gave Jesus...and now a book confirming their own has come to them from God...But they deny what has since been revealed, although it is the truth, corroborating their own scriptures.”*
- **(Quran 3:3)** *“He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of mankind, to distinguish between right and wrong.”*
- **(Quran 57:27)** *“After them, we sent...Jesus the son of Mary. We gave him the Gospel and put compassion and mercy in the hearts of his followers.”*
- **(Quran 5:47-48)** *“Let the people of the Gospel judge by what God has revealed in it...We revealed the book in truth, attesting to that which is between their hands from the scripture, and guarding it.”*
- **(Quran 5:66)** *“If the people of the Book...observe the Torah and the Gospel and what are revealed to them from their Lord, they shall enjoy abundance from above and from beyond.”*

The Quran claims that it confirms the Bible -- that it witnesses to the truth of the Gospel.

- **(Quran 2:101)** *“And now an apostle has come, confirming their own scriptures.”*
- **(Quran 2:136)** *“Say, we believe in that which was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, to Moses, and Jesus and the other prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them.”*
- **(Quran 3:84)** *“ Say, we believe in God and what is revealed to us, in that which was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, and in that which the Lord gave Moses, Jesus, and the prophets.”*
- **(Quran 29:46)** *“ Be courteous when you argue with the people of the Book, except with those among them who do evil. Say, “We believe in that which is revealed to us and which was revealed to you. Our God and your God is one. To him we surrender ourselves.”*

The Quran even tells Muhammad to check the accuracy of his revelations by asking the Christians and Jews about it!

- **(Quran 10:94)** *“If you (Muhammad) are in doubt regarding that which we have revealed to you, ask those who read the book from before you.”*

Muhammad's problem was that he really believed that his Quranic revelations agreed with the Gospel, which came before them. But since there was no complete Arabic translation of the Bible at the time, he had no idea what the Bible actually says. Apparently a portion of the gospels was all that was available to him. So his knowledge of the Bible was, for the most part, second hand. The two books -- the Bible and the Quran, in fact, disagree entirely. For example:

The Quran disagrees with the Gospel on Love

Quran	Bible
Quran 3:148 <i>“God loves the righteous.”</i>	Romans 5:6-8) <i>“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”</i>
Quran 4:107 <i>“God does not love the treacherous, or the sinful”.</i>	Romans 5:10 <i>“when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son”.</i>
Quran 5:64 <i>“God does not love the evildoer”.</i>	Ephesians 2:4-5 <i>“Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in sins”.</i>
Quran 49:9 <i>“God loves those who exercise justice.”</i>	I John 4:19 <i>“We love because he first loved us”.</i>
Quran 5:18 <i>The Jews and the Christians say, ‘We are the children of God, and his loved ones.’ Say -- why then does he punish you for your sins?”</i>	Hebrews 12:6 <i>“Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”</i>

According to the Quran, God does NOT love sinners. But according to the Gospel, he DOES love sinners. They cannot both be correct. The Quran says almost nothing positive about love. The giving of alms is encouraged, but the motive is nothing more than religious duty. According to I Corinthians 13:3 of the Bible, alms-giving without love as its motivation is worthless.

- **I Cor. 13:3** *“If I give all I possess to the poor, and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing”.*

The Bible constantly talks about love. Love is the centerpiece of every book of the New Testament. After all, God is LOVE.

- **Matthew 22:37-40** *“Love the Lord your God, with all your heart...soul...and mind...and love your neighbor as yourself.”*

- **Luke 6:27** *“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you.”*
- **John 3:16** *“God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*
- **John 15:12-13** *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than that he lay down his life for his friends.”*
- **Romans 13:10** *“Love is the fulfillment of the law”.*
- **I Corinthians 13:4-8** *“Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love never fails.”*
- **I John 3:17** *“If anyone has material possessions, and sees his brother in need, but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?”*

Probably 2/3 of all the text of the entire New Testament is related to the importance of Love.

THE GOSPEL IS A LOVE STORY

The Gospel is a love story because the whole Bible is the story of God’s love for us. God created a huge universe, awesome in its size, to prepare the way for us. He created us in his image. That means he gave us our intellect, and our free will, even though he knew we would make bad decisions. When Adam and Eve made that bad decision, and we fell into sin, God still loved us, and provided a way for us to reach Heaven, in spite of our sin.

His plan was to come to earth himself. However, it was important that the people of the world understand why he was coming. So he chose one nation, one group of people, to serve as messengers, to tell the world about the “Messiah” who was to come. The Lord had a close relationship with this nation, and this long relationship was recorded in the pages of the Old Testament. God’s love for his people is there for you to read about.

When Jesus arrived, he proclaimed that God’s love is for ALL his people. So now we can read about the Jews in the Old Testament, and we can see that we are just as lost as the Jews were. Then, we can see that God loves us in exactly the same way that he loved the Jewish people of that time. And he STILL loves them, and he loves us too. Well, when the time was right, God himself came to earth in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. He came here, lived a perfect life, taught people, helped people, saved people, and then died a criminal’s death, sacrificing himself for people. He sacrificed himself to pay for your sin and my sin – all of the sins of the whole world.

In other words, all the sins I would ever commit were already paid for before I was born. Now, if I trust in HIS sacrifice, Heaven’s door is open to me. All I need to do is to rely on HIS power and NOT on mine. And all of this that is true for me – is true for YOU the READER as WELL. What horrible sins have you committed? ALL of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. But no matter how big our sins are, or how little – JESUS has FORGIVEN us, and he brings us into HEAVEN, if we trust in him. He loves us. The Bible compares Jesus’ love for his people to a husband’s love for his wife. He’s IN LOVE with us. TRUST HIM !

There is an old song. People think of it as a children’s Sunday School song. But I have seen grown adults with tears in their eyes as they sang the words:
“Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong. They are weak but He is strong!”

The QURAN disagrees with the GOSPEL concerning women.

Quran	Bible
Quran 4:34 <i>“Good women are obedient...As for those from whom you fear rebellion -- admonish them, refuse to sleep with them, <u>AND SCOURGE THEM</u>”.</i>	Col. 3:18-19 <i>“Wives, submit to your husbands,as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, <u>LOVE your wives, and DON'T BE HARSH WITH THEM</u>”.</i>
Quran 33:59 <i>“Tell the wives of true believers to draw their veils close around them...so that they may not be molested”.</i>	Matt. 5:28-9 <i>“Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out.</i>

In Sura 4:34, Yusuf Ali inserts the word, “lightly,” in parentheses, after the verb “scourge,” or “beat.” But in the Arabic, there is no word meaning lightly. Clearly he is not giving us the simple meaning of the Arabic. He’s adding something, to make it more acceptable. How do you BEAT someone “lightly?” Some Islamists will claim that the Arabic word for "scourge" or "beat" actually means "to tap lightly on the wrist with a twig." Well, imagine this Arab husband with his disobedient wife. He talks to her strongly, then tries ignoring her, and she's still disobedient. But when he gets the twig, she screams, "Okay, okay. I'm sorry -- oh, please -- oh please -- don't tap lightly on my wrist with a twig!!! No!! N-O-O-O!!!"

Does this scenario make sense? Of course not! The beating spoken of in this verse is given as a last resort, after less severe methods have failed. Obviously, it's talking about a serious beating. Actually, the Arabic word used here is the same as for beating a camel, or a dangerous criminal.

Abu Bakr's daughter, Asma, was the 4th wife of Zobayr bin Ol-Awwam. She is reported to have said, "Whenever Zobayr was angry with one of us, he used to beat her until the stick broke." (Dashti, 116)

In the Bible, it says that a wife has an honored position, and has to be treated nicely. This is one of the many teachings about women from the Bible. It’s in Proverbs as well as other places.

PROVERBS

- 31:15** *She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.*
- 31:16** *She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.*
- 31:17** *She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.*

- 31:18** *She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.*
- 31:19** *In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her Fingers*
- 31: 20** *She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.*
- 31: 21** *When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.*
- 31: 22** *She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.*
- 31: 23** *Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.*
- 31: 24** *She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.*
- 31: 25** *She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.*
- 31: 26** *She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.*
- 31: 27** *she watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness*
- 31: 28** *Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.*
- 31:29** *Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.*
- 31:30** *Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*
- 31: 31** *Give her the reward she has earned, and her works bring her praise at the city gate.*

There are other passages that show the huge difference between Jesus and the Allah of the Quran:

The QURAN disagrees with the GOSPEL concerning marriage

Quran	Bible
Quran 4:3 ..., "To treat orphan girls fairly, you may marry women who seem good to you – two, three, or four of them.	1 Cor. 7:2 "Each man should have his own wife, and each woman, her own husband ". 1 Tim 3:12 "A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. (A deacon is a person who does ministry in church)
Quran 66:5 "If he (Muhammad) divorce you, his Lord will give him, in your place, wives better than yourselves.	Eph 5:25-33 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for her...In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies...Each of you must...love his wife as he loves himself".
Quran 33:51 "You may put off any of your wives you please, and take to your bed any of them	1 Cor 7:4 "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him

you please”.	also but also to his wife”.
Quran 4:24 <i>You are also forbidden to take in marriage ... women who are already married, EXCEPT THOSE WHOM YOU OWN AS SLAVES.</i>	I Peter 3:7 <i>“Husbands, in the same way, <u>be considerate</u> as you live <u>with your wives</u>, and <u>treat them with respect</u> as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, <u>SO THAT NOTHING WILL HINDER YOUR PRAYERS.</u>”</i>

The QURAN disagrees with the GOSPEL concerning Man and Woman.

Quran	Bible
Quran 2:228 <i>“Women ..have rights...but Men have a status above women”.</i>	Gal. 3:28-9 <i>“There is neither...male nor female, for you are all one in Christ”.</i>
Quran 4:11 <i>“A male shall inherit twice as much as a female”.</i>	1 Cor 11:11 <i>“In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman”.</i>
Quran 4:34 <i>“Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other.”</i>	1 Cor 11:12 <i>“For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.”</i>
Quran 4:15 <i>“ If any of your women commit fornication, ...CONFINE THEM to their houses TILL DEATH overtakes them...If two men commit indecency, punish them...and let them be.”</i>	John 8:3-11 <i>“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery...Now what do you say?’ ...He straightened up and said to them, ‘if any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.’ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there... ‘Then neither do I condemn you,’ Jesus declared. ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’”</i>

The QURAN disagrees with the GOSPEL concerning Divorce.

Quran	Bible
Quran 2:229 <i>“Divorces may be pronounced twice, and then a woman must be retained, or allowed to go with kindness.”</i>	Mark 10:6-9 <i>“But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate”</i>

Quran 4:20 <i>“If you wish to replace one wife with another....”</i>	<i>Matt. 19:9 Anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.</i>
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Sura 4:3 allows a man four wives. Sura 2:229, 4:20, and 66:5 make it easy for a man to get rid of any of his wives. Sura 33:59 puts the blame for a rape on the victim. After all, she should have covered herself. Sura 4:24 allows you to take a slave-woman to your bed, even if she's married. And Sura 4:15 prescribes life-long imprisonment for any woman who misbehaves.

By contrast, the Gospel demands that men treat women as partners, equally worthy of respect.

The QURAN disagrees with the GOSPEL concerning Religious Bigotry

	Quran	Bible
1	Quran 48:29 <i>“Muhammad is God's apostle. Those who follow him are RUTHLESS TO the UNBELIEVERS, but merciful to one another”.</i>	Matt. 5:43-44 <i>“You've heard it said: "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you: LOVE your ENEMIES, and pray for those who persecute you.”</i>

Christians are encouraged to be friends with everyone

	Quran	Bible
1	Quran 3:28 and also, 4:144 <i>“ Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers. Whoever does that has no connection with Allah”.</i>	Peter 2:12 <i>“Live such good lives among the pagans...that they may glorify God.”</i>
	Quran 3:118 <i>“You who believe, don't take anyone as an intimate friend who is not of your own people.”</i>	Rom. 12:18 <i>“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”</i>
	Quran 9:23 <i>“Choose neither your fathers nor your brothers for friends if they take pleasure in disbelief.”</i> Qoran 4:138:139 <i>“to the Hypocrites give the glad tidings than there is for them (but) a grievous penalty. Yes, those who take for friends Unbelievers rather than Believers: is it honor they seek among them....”</i>	Luke 6:31-32 <i>“Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you , what credit is that to you? Even sinners’ love those who love them.”</i>

The Quran does have some verses that are very, very complimentary toward Christians and Jews. When Muhammad was just starting out, he respected the Jews and Christians. His words in the Quran reflected that. But later, when they rejected his teaching, hostility grew between the two sides. So the later Quranic suras, which cancel out the earlier ones, are full of hatred.

	Quran	Bible
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	Quran 4:46 “Some of those who are Jews change words from their context...distorting with their tongues and slandering religion”.	Romans 10:12 “There is no difference between Jew and Gentile. The same Lord is Lord of all.”
	Quran 5:51,..64 “Take not the Jews and Christians for friends... The Jews spread evil in the land...The Jews say Allah’s hand is chained. They are cursed for saying that. It’s their hands that are chained.”	Romans 3:9 “Are we any better? Not at all! Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin”.
	Quran 4:160-161 “Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews, we forbade them good things. The Jews... practice usury, and cheat others.”	1 Cor 12:13 “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, Slave or Free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”
	Quran 5:82 “Strongest among men in enmity to the believers will you find the Jews and Pagans...”	1 Cor 10:32 “Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the Church of God.”

The QURAN disagrees with the GOSPEL concerning Revenge

Quran	Bible
Quran 5:45 “Life for life, and eye for eye, and the nose for the nose, and the ear for the ear and the tooth for the tooth, and for wounds – <u>retaliation</u> .”	Matt. 5:38-39 “You have heard it said, “Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.” But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”
Quran 2:194 “And one who attacks you, <u>attack him</u> in like manner. Observe your duty to Allah.”	Rom. 12:17-21 “Do not repay anyone evil for evil...Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath...If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”
Quran 2:178 “ <u>Retaliation</u> is prescribed for you in the matter of the murdered: The free man for the free man, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female.”	Hebrew 10:30 “For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay”, and again “The Lord will judge His people.”

Jesus commands us to forgive our enemies. The Quran does NOT have any kind of command like THAT

Quran	Bible
Quran 3:128 “ <i>It is no concern of yours whether he will forgive or punish them. They are wrongdoers.</i> ”	Matt. 6:14-15 “ <i>If you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.</i> ”
Quran 9:113 “ <i>It is not good for the Prophet, or the believers to beg forgiveness for idolators, even though they are related to them.</i> ”	Mathew 18:21-22 “ <i>Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me” Up to seven times?...Jesus answered “ I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.</i> ”

The Quran disagrees with the Gospel regarding War

It is impossible to force a person to become a Christian. That's because Jesus' Kingdom is in men's hearts. No weapon on earth can change a man's heart. We therefore use the Lord's weapons -- Prayer, the Word of God, the Spirit, and Wisdom:

Quran	Bible
Quran 2:216 “ <i>War is sometimes good for you, though you dislike it.</i> ”	II Cor. 10:3-5 “ <i>We do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world...We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.</i> ”
Quran 4:104 “ <i>Relent not in pursuit of the enemy.</i> ”	Luke 6:35 “ <i>Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.</i> ”
Quran 5:33 “ <i>Those that make war on Allah will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides.</i> ”	Eph. 6:11-17 “ <i>Take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against...the spiritual forces of evil... Take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.</i> ”
Quran 8:12 “ <i>I will instill terror into the hearts of the infidels. Strike off their heads then, and strike off from them every fingertip.</i> ”	John 18:36 “ <i>Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest."</i> ”
Quran 8:39 “ <i>Make war on them until idolatry is no more, and God's religion reigns supreme.</i> ”	Matt. 26:52 “ <i>Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "For all who draw the sword will die by the sword."</i> ”
Quran 9:5 “ <i>Kill the idolaters wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in</i>	

<i>ambush everywhere for them.”</i>	
Quran 9:29-30 <i>“Declare war upon those to whom the scriptures were revealed, but...who do not forbid what God and his apostle have forbidden, and who refuse to acknowledge the true religion.”</i>	
Quran 9:73-4 <i>“Prophet, make war on the unbelievers. They renounced Islam after embracing it.”</i>	
Quran 47:4 <i>“When you meet the unbelievers, strike off their heads. Then when you have slaughtered many, carefully tie up the remaining captives.”</i>	
Quran 48:16 <i>“You shall be called on to fight a mighty nation, unless they embrace Islam.”</i>	
Quran 66:9 <i>“Prophet, make war on the unbelievers and hypocrites, and deal sternly with them.”</i>	
Quran 8:59 <i>“Let not the unbelievers think they will ever get away. They have not the power.”</i>	

Islamists have been working overtime, trying to find one example of a passage where Christians are told to make war in Jesus' name -- to show that the two books agree. Maybe they should just give up.

The best they can do is Luke 22:36-38. But there is nothing there at all about war. In that passage, Jesus was eating a meal with his disciples. He reminds his disciples how he had sent them out, much earlier in his ministry, without any money or provisions. Now they should take money with them, along with a bag, and a *μαχαίρα* a short sword or knife. This knife was carried by everyone who traveled outside the city, for protection against animals or thieves. (In the Septuagint, in Genesis 22:6 *μαχαίρα* clearly means ‘knife.’)

When Jesus said that, one of the disciples picked up two "swords" (They were probably the kitchen knives from the table setting.) He said, "Here are two swords, Lord." And Jesus says, "It is enough." Well, if two "swords" were enough for 12 men, it doesn't look much like Jesus was trying to form an army.

Of course, the Israelites did fight holy wars in the Old Testament. Joshua 6:21, Numbers 31, and I Kings 18:40 are examples. Why God commanded the Israelites to kill every man, woman, and child in certain cities -- I really don't know. However, we do know from archaeology that it was a common practice in Canaan for families to throw one of their children into Molech's fire, as a human sacrifice. And God loves little children. (Mark 9: 36, 10: 13-16, Luke 17: 2)

Perhaps the reason God told Joshua and others to kill entire cities, including their children, was to wipe out that culture completely. Perhaps the Lord knew that one generation

had to be completely sacrificed in order to completely end, forever, the barbaric practice of child sacrifice. And don't forget, the Lord has those children with him in Heaven.

At any rate, the Lord's orders were for those particular cities at that particular time in history, around B.C. 1400. The first verse of Numbers 31, for example says, "*The Lord said to Moses...*" He told MOSES to kill those people. He was speaking to Moses – not to me. He has NEVER given ME any such orders.

He never told me. In the entire Old Testament, there are no “general orders” that tell future generations to make war. That’s the difference. The Quran is FULL of those kinds of orders for all subsequent Muslims. Imams will tell you that the commands of the Quran are for all time, unless they are abrogated by other commands. Anyways, I get my marching orders from the New Testament. The New Testament has none of those “Jihad” style passages. The Quran has a LOT of them.

Defenders of Islam like to point out that Muhammad's wars were defensive in nature. But the prophet says to "Make war", to "Relentlessly pursue" the enemy. He says that "They won't get away." He tells his followers to "Kill them wherever you find them," and "Lie in ambush for them." He tells them to "Cut off their hands and feet." He says to do this, "Until they embrace Islam," and "God's religion reigns supreme." This is aggressive warfare. It is offensive, in every sense of that word. One does not "relentlessly pursue" an attacker. One pursues someone who is running away.

Furthermore, these are late Medinan passages. They are the most current Quranic orders, and are, therefore, still in effect for modern, 21st century Islamists. Of course, ordinary Muslim people have the good sense and human kindness to ignore such hideous passages.

- **Quran 9:111** *They will fight for the cause of God, Kill and be killed. Such is the true promise... in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Quran.*

(In the Gospel? Where? Show me.)

The Quran focuses on war, while the Gospel focuses on love. If a person becomes a fanatical follower of the Quran, he learns to look down on everyone that is non-Islamic, or even to hate them. In some cases, he learns to kill them. If, on the other hand, he becomes a fanatical follower of the Gospel, he starts to become like Mother Theresa. We're commanded to love.

The Quran also disagrees regarding Paradise.

Obviously, Jesus and the Quran disagree about marriage in the after-life. They cannot both be right. To be surrounded by incredibly beautiful, sensuous women, and to live a life of ease, wrapped in luxury -- This is the Quranic view of Paradise. (It's also any ordinary man's dream. So, I believe this idea came from an ordinary man.). In contrast, the Heaven spoken of by Jesus has God at the center. Jesus' picture of Heaven seems to have come from God.

Quran	Bible
Quran 44:51-54 <i>“ The pious will be in a peaceful abode, among gardens and fountains, clothed in satin and brocade,</i>	Matt. 22:30 <i>“At the resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage. They'll be like the angels</i>

<i>face to face... We shall marry them to wide-eyed houris. In utter tranquility, they will demand all kinds of fruit.”</i>	<i>in Heaven.”</i>
Quran 38:49-53 <i>“The gardens of Eden with their gates wide open where, reclining on beds, they will ask for abundant fruits and exquisite drinks. All the while, next to them will be blushing virgins as companions. This is what has been promised you on Judgement Day.”</i>	Rev. 7:9-11 <i>“A great multitude...from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb(Jesus)...wearing white robes and...holding palm branches...they fell down on their face and worshipped God.”</i>
(Quran 37:48-9 <i>“Near them shall be blushing virgins with large, beautiful eyes who will be like hidden pearls.”</i>	Rev. 7:17 <i>“For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their Shepherd. He'll lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”</i>
Quran 78:31-3 <i>“But for the God-fearing is a blissful abode, enclosed gardens and vineyards, damsels with swelling breasts for companions, and a full cup.”</i>	Rev.22:13-14 <i>“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may go through the gates into the city.”</i>

The Quran disagrees regarding God's Truthfulness.

- **I Samuel 15:29** *“He who is the glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind”.*
- **Titus 1:12** *“A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time”.*
- **Hebrews 6:18** *“So God has given us both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore we who have fled to him for refuge can take new courage, for we can hold to his promise with confidence”.*

The Bible, in the verses above and others like them, states very clearly that God doesn't lie. The Quran is not so clear.

Just before one of his many battles, Muhammad told his men that Allah had shown him in a dream that the enemy in front of them had only a few troops. But, as they found out during the battle, the enemy actually had thousands more soldiers than Muhammad. To try to explain this mistake, Muhammad had another "revelation":

- *(Quran 8:43) God made them appear to you in a dream as a small band. Had he shown them to you as a great army, your courage would have failed you”.*

If Allah could lie to Muhammad and his followers about the size of the army facing them, then he could be lying in the Quran too. The 3-in-1 God of the Christians does NOT ever lie.

Further Disagreements

There are other points of disagreement which we'll cover in later chapters. For example, the Quran (4:157-9) seems to say that Jesus was never crucified. But the last couple

of chapters of all four Gospels talk about the death and rising of Jesus. It's the focal point of our faith.

The Obvious Conclusion

Sura 5:46-7 says that Christians should judge the Quran based on its agreement with the Bible. If we judge the Quran on that basis, we have to reject it. Furthermore, if we look at the "spirit" of the writing, the Quran is harsh, and vindictive. That's very different from the New Testament, which endorses love and forgiveness above all. On this basis, we would also have to reject the Quran.

The Islamic response to all this, as you well know, is that the Gospel has been changed. They say that the 27 books we read in the New Testament are not the same as what earlier generations of Christians read. They like to quote from radical left-wing Bible "scholars".

This charge has no basis in fact. We'll prove that to you in the next few chapters.

CHAPTER TWO :

OUR GOSPEL MANUSCRIPTS

We presently have over 5,300 ancient Greek manuscripts of New Testament books, in addition to another 15,000 ancient copies translated into other languages, such as Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Coptic. Of course some of the manuscripts are much older than others. The oldest are by far the most important. Those are the Greek “uncials” and “papyri.” We have 268 uncials, but they are mostly from the fifth century and beyond. A few are older. In addition, we currently have 85 recognized, catalogued Greek papyri and some of these go back almost to the apostles. Among those papyri, there are a few very important fragments that should be catalogued and probably will be in the future.

UNCIALS

One of the oldest complete manuscripts of the entire New Testament is the Codex Sinaiticus, from about A.D. 350 (Almost 300 years before the time of Muhammad). A "codex" is an ancient book, produced by hand, prior to the invention of the printing press.

These large codices containing the entire New Testament, or even the whole Greek Bible, are called “uncials” because the text is usually written all in capital letters. These large uncial texts, usually written on sheep skin, were produced after the persecutions stopped, around AD 325, simply because Christianity was no longer an “underground” faith, making big Bibles, complete collections of the New Testament or even the entire Bible in one volume, more practical.

These sheep-skin manuscripts, although not as old as the papyri, provide us with indisputable proof that our modern Bible is the same as the Bible of Muhammad's day in spite of his claims to the contrary in the Quran. Following is a short list of the oldest, most authoritative uncials, on which our modern day translations are based. I also give the approximate date when they were produced, and the cities in which they are kept.

Codex Vaticanus	AD 325 – 350	Rome, Italy
Codex Sinaiticus	AD 350	London, England
Codex Alexandrinus	AD 400	London, England
Codex Ephraem	AD 400	Paris, France
Codex Bezae	AD 450	Cambridge, England

(Photographic copies of these manuscripts, as well as some of the papyri, are available at your nearest Bible Society branch office.)

Our modern translations are based mostly on the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. But when the King James Version was produced, 400 years ago, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were not available. So the KJV was made with a completely different set of manuscripts called the “Textus Receptus.” But yet, when you compare the KJV with the New International Version or other popular modern-day versions, the meaning of the verses is always the same. That’s because all of our Greek manuscripts SAY THE SAME THING.

But our manuscript evidence goes a lot further back than these uncials. With the papyri, we can pretty much prove that our modern Bible is the same as the ancient Bible of Peter’s day. It has never changed at all. *In fact, our modern Bible IS the ancient Bible !*

PAPYRI

In addition to those large codices, each of which holds the entire New Testament, there are other manuscripts which are much older. These are called "papyri", because they are

written on papyrus, an ancient form of rough, grainy paper made from a kind of reed called the papyrus plant. These papyri are smaller. They each contain different portions of the New Testament. Some contain Paul's letters, while others contain John's Gospel, Matthew, or some other book. In fact the very original documents, the "autographs," written by the apostles themselves, were almost certainly papyri. The Greek word for the papyrus plant, the reed from which these documents were produced, is "BIBLOS." That's where we get the English word, "Bible."

υτωνη
καιτι
ννησ
θησα

ηναυτωνηκαρδιαπεπωρωμ
ενη καιδιαπερασ αντεσηλθο
νεισΓεννησαρετκαιπροσ
ωρμισθησανκαιεξεληθοντων

* The phrase -- επι την γην -- meaning "on the land," is found, at this point, in the UBS text, which is based on our best existing manuscripts. But this phrase was possibly not in the original Gospel of Mark.

Gennesaret (the city) was located on the shore of Gennesaret Lake. But the city was destroyed completely in AD 70. When the Gospel of Mark was first written, long before the Romans came, the city still existed. Everyone KNEW Gennesaret was the name of the CITY also, and not just the name of the lake. So there was no need to specify Gennesaret ON THE LAND.

Later on, when the city had been completely destroyed, the phrase was added, probably by a scribe, to maintain the sense of the passage. Without it, a person who did not know about the city by that name would read that Jesus is leaving Gennesaret Lake to go to Gennesaret Lake, and the passage would make no sense.

When it was first written, Mark probably did not include that phrase, since the city was well-known. Without that phrase in the passage, the letters that we detect on the 7Q5 fragment line up perfectly where they ought to be.

Fragment 7Q5 was found in cave number seven at Qumran. Cave number seven was overrun by the Romans in AD 68 and was never reoccupied, so the fragment was definitely produced before AD 68. But more remarkably, virtually all experts in paleography (The study of ancient writing) agree that the style of the Greek letters is early first century, so it is probably from prior to AD 50.

Above, you can see the fragment. With high-tech equipment, the 18 letters shown above have been detected. Compare those letters with the text from Mark 6:52-53 shown just below them. The document is ALMOST a perfect match. The majority of **professional papyrologists** agree this is from Mark 6. The only scholars who disagree are liberal theologians who do not want to admit that the Bible is authentic.

Dating the Papyri

Archaeologists have found all kinds of records, bills, receipts and private letters all written in ancient "Koine Greek." And lots of these have dates on them. They can then look at how the shapes of the letters gradually changed, over centuries of time. (English, for

example, has changed a lot in the last 200 years. On the Declaration of Independence, from 1776, you'll see "f" everywhere where we write "s" now) The style of writing tells them how old the document is. Documents can then be dated by comparing the style of lettering with the styles of lettering on those documents that carry a date, or can easily be given a date.

Sometimes the author mentions a historical event for which we have a date. Sometimes a reference in the document is made to something for which we have a date from archaeology. And sometimes the documents are found in a place that has been "dead" since a certain well-known date. For example, a lot of documents were found under the volcanic ash of Pompei, the Graeco-Roman town that was buried by a volcano in AD 79. As another example, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves that were overrun by the Romans in AD 68.

The dating of old papyri has become a true, and fairly exact, science. But back in the 1930s-1950s, when many of them were first found, there was still a lot of guesswork involved. Those documents that were dated back then are now being looked at again. One by one, many of those dates are being changed. We're finding that, in general, the papyrus documents are much older than we had thought. In particular, the third-century dates formerly given to a number of these papyri were based on two false assumptions:

The first false assumption had to do with books.

For a long time it was thought that the idea of binding pages into a book, the "codex," had not been invented till about AD 200. So, without the tools to really do a full analysis, almost all of the papyri that came from book pages (not from scrolls) were automatically given very late dates. It was an honest mistake that people fell into. But now we know that the old Roman poet, Martial, wrote between AD 84 and 86 about this new invention, the codex.

He said the codex, the book, was easier to carry than the scroll. Books used both sides of the paper. Scrolls only used one side. So books could hold almost twice as much writing for the same amount of paper. He also said they were easier to use. It's easier to go to a numbered page than to roll to the right point in a scroll. He even gave the address of a store where you could buy one of these new "books." Martial's mention of the book at this early date is absolute proof that the book had already been invented by the latter half of the first century.

Christians were obviously some of the first people to use the book. In fact, some historians have speculated that Christians were the people who invented the book. Faced with the desire to carry large amounts of writing to their secret meetings, they could have devised a clever solution, easily carried, easily concealed, that has become a blessing for the whole world – the book. Of course, there's no way to know for sure.

At any rate, the first-century origin of books is very important for the dating of our earliest papyrus manuscripts. Some manuscripts that had seemed to be first century were given third-century dates, simply because they were in book form. Since we now, however, know that the book was already being used in the first century, a number of these papyri have already been re-dated, and others are being re-examined.

The second false assumption was made by "liberal" theologians who don't believe in any sort of supernatural power.

(I have never understood why such people would become theologians in the first place. What's the point?) At any rate, because of the prior assumption of natural causes for any event, these folks felt that the New Testament must have been written more than a

hundred years after Jesus. You see, it takes about a hundred years for legends to develop. They felt that the stories of miracles were simple legends – not eyewitness accounts.

Finally, having given the documents a late date based on their prior assumption, they turned around and said Jesus’ divinity must be a myth because the earliest documents we have are from centuries after him.

It is circular reasoning, and the left-wing theologians use it all the time. They still do. These are, of course, the “Christian authorities” that Islamic propagandists love to quote. Of course, you and I know that anyone who refuses to believe in Jesus’ divinity is not a Christian at all (I Corinthians 12:3, I John 4:15). In fact, I John 4v15-16 is a pretty good definition of a Christian.

These skeptical theologians also dismiss the prophecy of Matthew 24:2, Mark 13:2, and Luke 19:44, where Jesus said not one stone of the Temple would be left on another. Since this prophecy of Jesus is there in the gospels, the critics claim that the gospels must have been written AFTER AD 70, when the temple was destroyed, and therefore our manuscripts must ALSO be from AFTER that date. Christians, however, know the truth. Following is a list of the oldest complete papyri we have. The four columns show the papyrus’ number, the approximate year it was produced, its contents, and the city wherein it is now kept.

Our Oldest Substantial Papyri

P#	Papyrus Age	Papyrus Content	Papyrus Location
P 32	Ca. 175	Paul's letters	Manchester, England
P 45	Ca. 150	4 Gospels and Acts	Dublin, Ireland
P 46	Ca. 81-96	10 of Paul's letters	Ann Arbor, Michigan
P 66	Ca. 100-150	John's Gospel	Cologne, Switzerland
P 70	Ca. 150-200	Matthew 2,3,1,12, and 24	Florence, Italy
P 77	Ca. 150	Gospels	Oxford, England
P 87	Ca. 125	Paul's letters	Cologne, Germany
P 90	Ca. 150	Gospels	Oxford, England

P46, Beatty II Papyrus

One of the oldest of these papyri is Beatty Papyrus II. The pages are in Michigan, in the U.S.A. The authorities at U of M have printed the entire text in a single volume, part of the *Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri* series. There are copies of this volume all over the world.

This papyrus is not a scroll. It is in book form – a codex. It includes the following epistles of Paul: Romans, Hebrews, I and II Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and I and II Thessalonians. Of course a line or two has been lost at the bottom of each page, as the edges crumbled away over the centuries. In addition, mildew has eaten through the first 17 verses of Romans, as well as 6:14 through 8:15, and part of the Thessalonians.

It has been dated to anywhere from about A.D. 81 to about AD 96. That’s only about 55 years after Jesus’ death and rising. Professor Kim Young-Kyu did the analysis, and his conclusions, although contested by some, have gained some acceptance. Some of the points Kim makes in his technical paper, the reasons for the first-century date, are given for you below:

- a) The feet of the letters have “finials,” something you see in writings from BC 250 to AD 50.
- b) Letters such as α, β, ε, μ, ρ, and ω are written in a very early form, which was already gone by about AD 90.
- c) The writing is not influenced at all by a new form that began in the second century, a form that paleographers call the “Blob-Ornamental” style.
- d) Earlier manuscripts, those from the first century, have an “eg” prefix in words where later manuscripts use an “ek” prefix. This papyrus, p46, uses the “eg” prefix.

When it was first discovered back in 1936, Sir Fredric Kenyon, a great Christian man, didn’t have the tools that we now do. He originally dated it to AD 200-250, the third century, like other manuscripts. But we DO have the tools now. Kim made a strong case that this manuscript was produced at some time between AD 81 and AD 96. Theologians who don’t believe the Bible to be true refuse to accept the evidence, as do a lot of others. However, nobody has yet put forward a solid rebuttal.

P66, Bodmer II Papyrus

Papyrologist Herbert Hunger has dated papyrus p66 to about A.D. 100-150. Another professional, Mr. Comfort, is more cautious, dating it to about AD 125-175. It contains the entire Gospel of John.

FRAGMENTS

A lot of the oldest manuscripts we have are also the smallest, and the least complete. In fact, these aren’t even manuscripts at all. They’re fragments – just tiny pieces of manuscripts. However our modern day powers of forensic investigation are amazing, and we are able to fix dates to these fragments that are in many cases as accurate as the dates of larger texts. Here are some of the most important fragments we have:

P #	Papyrus Age	Papyrus Content	Papyrus Location
P1	Ca. 100	Matt. 1:1-9, and 12:14-20	Philadelphia, PA
P4	Ca. 85-100	Luke 3:23, 5:36	Paris, France
P29	Ca.180-220	Acts 26: 7-8	Oxford, England
P52	Ca. 117-138	John 18:31-33	Manchester, England
P64	Before AD 66	Matt. 26:7-8, 10:14-15,22-23, and 31	Oxford, England
7Q4	Before AD 66	I Tim. 3:16	Barcelona, Spain
7Q5	Ca. 50	Mark 6:52-3	Barcelona, Spain
P67	Before AD 66	Matt. 3:9,15, Matt. 5:20-22,25-28	Barcelona, Spain
P69	Ca. 80-120	Luke 22:41, 45-48, 58-61	Oxford, England

P52, The Rylands Papyrus

The John Rylands fragment was, for many years, the oldest piece of the New Testament that we had. Some would say that it still is. But that opinion is now out of date. The Rylands fragment was dated not just by paleographical analysis but also by mass spectrometer radiocarbon dating.

P64, The Magdalen Papyrus

Carsten Thiede found these three forgotten pieces of the gospel of Matthew in an old glass case, in a small college library, in England. He knew immediately, from the style of Greek writing, that this fragment came from a first-century Greek manuscript. You can read his findings in his book, “The Jesus Papyrus.”

7Q4 and 7Q5, (not yet catalogued)

7Q4, and 7Q5 were found in cave 7 of Qumran, with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Qumran was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 68 and has been deserted since that time. So 7Q4 and 7Q5 must have been produced before 68. That’s what makes them so valuable. There is absolutely no question that these two manuscripts were produced by a copyist’s hand at some point in time prior to the year AD 68.

In addition, the style of writing used in all four of the fragments is very old. For example, in the first century, A.D. 1 - 99, the copyists (scribes) would sometimes join certain letters together. But that practice was already disappearing by the start of the second century. The difference is fairly easy to recognize. For example, the letters Y and T, in the old Greek, were joined together at the top in first century manuscripts. . E and K were also joined, by extending the middle line of the E outward to intersect with the front of the K.

Jose O’Callaghan is a leader in the field of papyrology (the study of ancient writings on papyrus). In 1972, he did a thorough analysis of 7Q5 and *found it to be a tiny part of Mark’s Gospel*. The Austrian scholar, Kurt Schubert, agreed. Meanwhile, C. H. Roberts, an expert in Greek writing, from Oxford, analyzed the fragments to figure out their age. He found that, on the basis of writing style alone, the fragment must be from some time between B.C. 50 and A.D. 50. So AD 50 is about the latest possible date for this fragment. It could even be a few years older.

The little fragment only contains 20 letters, and some of them can only be read by using the latest technology we have – electron microscopy, and infrared photography.

In ancient Greek, there is never any space between words in a sentence. Writing materials were costly, so they had to use all the space they had. But there is a space between the last word of a paragraph, and the first word of the next paragraph. There is one of these paragraph spaces on the fragment, followed by the word “and.” This is a perfect fit for Mark 6:52-53.

Also, there are two of the Greek letters for “N” side by side. That’s a very unusual combination of letters in the ancient Greek language. It almost never happens. But in Mark 6:53, there is the name of a town called “Gennesaret.” There are the two Ns side by side. Furthermore, if you laid this little piece on top of one of the other old manuscripts we have, the letters all line up in pretty much the right places. That’s remarkable proof.

There are, however, two differences between this manuscript and others. Yet, these differences only serve to show how much OLDER this piece is than any other manuscript we currently have.

One difference is that the Greek in this fragment uses a Greek T in many places where later manuscripts use the Greek D. This makes sense from what we know of how the language changed. An old inscription, found in Jerusalem, used to be over the entrance to the Jewish Temple during the time when Jesus was on earth, prior to its destruction in AD 70. That inscription ALSO used the T instead of the D.

The other difference is that this older fragment leaves out a short Greek phrase that our other manuscripts have included. The phrase explains where Gennesaret was. Gennesaret was destroyed around AD 70. Someone living BEFORE AD 70 would not need to be told where it had been. At that time, the city was still there, on the lakeshore.

The counter-arguments put forth by critics are not very convincing. They ask how we can possibly get any identification from a tiny fragment the size of a postage stamp. This ignores the modern technology now available to us. Modern equipment can detect where ink lines on paper once were even though the ink is long gone. Other fragments from other places, even smaller, with fewer letters, have been positively identified before this.

Critics also say the Essenes who lived at Qumran would not have had a copy of Mark's gospel. The problem with that line of reasoning is that 7Q4, found in the same cave, has already been positively identified as part of I Timothy. So, if they had I Timothy, why not Mark. In fact, a number of other fragments found in that cave may also have come from the New Testament. Furthermore, there is something wrong with the assumption that members of one religious sect would have no interest in the literature of another sect. I'm a very devoted Christian, but I have a lot of Islamic books on my bookshelf.

In 1994, Orsolina Montevicchi, honorary president of the International Papyrologists Association, did her own analysis of the fragment. After finishing, she said, "*I do not think that there can be any doubt about the identification of 7Q5.*" She was convinced that it was from the Gospel of Mark. Other leaders in the field such as Heikki Koskeniemi, Herbert Hunger of Vienna, and Sergio Daris from Trieste have also examined the document and confirmed her verdict. Furthermore, experts on the dating of old documents agree that it is from around AD 50.

So we can now say, with great certainty, that we have a fragment of Mark's Gospel dating all the way back, nearly to the time when it was first written. It is theoretically old enough even to have been the original document, written by the apostle himself – but it is definitely not. This manuscript has a wide margin for notes that the original would not have had. This was made by a copyist, but it's one of the first copies.

The gospel books which I read today are virtually identical to the Gospel which was read in the first century by the very first Christians.

Church Fathers

Even if we had no manuscripts at all, we would still know almost all of what is written in the New Testament. The "church fathers" were constantly quoting from it. The church fathers that I speak of were the leaders of the churches in the early years, shortly after the last of the apostles died. The earliest ones were Clement and Ignatius, who both lived until about A.D. 100, Polycarp, who lived just a few years longer, as well as Justin Martyr, who died some time before AD 150, and finally Irenaeus, who was still alive in AD 180.

In their writings, which we still have, these church fathers from the early years, prior to 325, quoted the New Testament 36000 times that we know of. By the year AD 200, they had already quoted every verse in the entire New Testament, with the exception of 11 verses that we can't find a reference to. (This is based on the research of Sir David Dalrymple.) So even if there were no remaining manuscripts of the New Testament, we could easily reconstruct every book, every chapter, almost every single verse – just from the literature that these good men left behind.

Syriac Manuscripts

The Quran, in all those passages we gave you, says that the Gospel which was "between the hands" of the Arabian Christians of Muhammad's day, was God's Word. As we mentioned earlier, there was no complete Arabic translation at that time. The 7th century Arabian Christians read the Syriac translation of the New Testament.

Well, we also have old Syriac manuscripts. One of them, the Syriac 'H' manuscript, is from the 7th century (refer to U.B.S. Text, page. 916), during Muhammad's time. It contains the entire New Testament. In fact, we have other Syriac codices from the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries as well. They all agree perfectly with our present Bible.

Look at the Quran, verse 7:157, for example: "...whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them." That's Mohammad (a dedicated Muslim) Marmaduke's translation. The word he translates as Gospel is Injil (From the New Testament Greek word, εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion). And it is the Gospel that's *with them*.

IN CONCLUSION

Our huge collection of New Testament manuscripts can be divided into 3 categories:

- a) The very small, very old fragments, some of which date back to the middle of the first century. The fragments are pieces of old scrolls or codices.
- b) A number of codices of individual books, or groups of books, the oldest of them dating back to the end of the first century, AD 85.
- c) Several large, complete codices of the entire Bible in Greek, dating back to the fourth century, along with a lot of others that are not as old.

Given the testimony of the church fathers as well, we can confidently say that we have far better textual evidence for the reliability of our New Testament than Muslim people do for their Quran.

CHAPTER THREE : VARIANT READINGS -- NO PROBLEM

I used to be a seminary student, studying to be a pastor. Although I never graduated, the one thing that I gained from my experience there was an interest in the original manuscripts we have of the Bible, particularly of the New Testament. There are a lot of variant readings in the New Testament books. I was surprised when I first discovered how

many there were. But I was equally amazed at how tiny and insignificant the differences were. They don't affect the meaning of the text very much at all. Here are a few examples:

In Matthew 5:25, some manuscripts say:

He may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer.

Other manuscripts say:

He may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer.

The meaning is exactly the same, either way.

In Romans 5:1, Paul says:

Therefore since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But some manuscripts just say:

Therefore since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God.

There is also a third group of manuscripts that read:

Therefore since we are justified by faith, let us have peace with God.

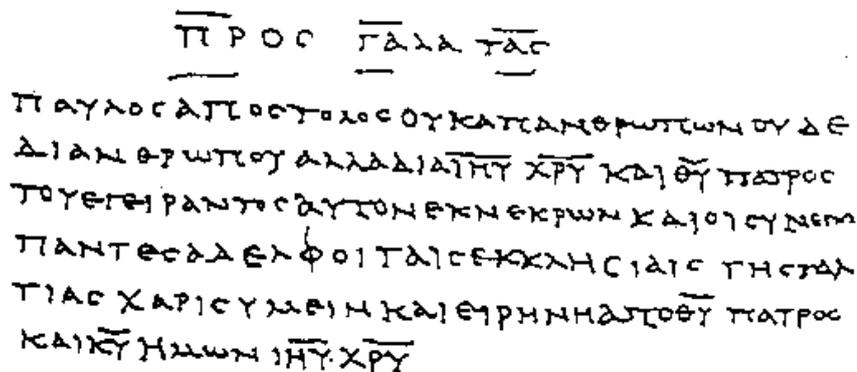
In Galatians 1:3, the modern Greek text, based mainly on the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, from A.D. 350, has:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Beatty papyrus, P46, from about A.D. 90, has:

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1v1-3, Beatty Manuscript (AD 90)



But here's the big question: Does it matter? The readings are all essentially the same. None of them contradicts the others, nor does anything here contradict any other passage of scripture. So these variant readings don't bother me at all.

We have, as I've already said, about 5,300 ancient manuscripts. If half of our manuscripts (2,650) have one reading, and half have a second reading, then critics could say there are 2,650 variant readings, just in that one place. Multiply that times the actual number of variants in the New Testament. That's how people are able to make wild accusations about the Bible being full of errors. The only error is in their thinking.

Nonetheless, if most of the earlier, older manuscripts have one reading, and only a few fairly late manuscripts have a second reading -- then we know that the correct reading is the first one. So we'll put that first reading in our published Greek New Testament Text. The United Bible Society's Greek New Testament is taken directly from those ancient manuscripts. Furthermore, it is the basis for every modern translation of the Bible. So our

Bible is the same Bible that our ancestors read in Muhammad's day, and it's the same Bible that the original Christians read in the first century.

On the bottom of each page of the U.B.S. text, there are notes that tell us about different variant readings. I checked 20 pages and found an average of about 2 variant readings per page. The U.B.S. text has 895 pages. So you could say there are about 2000 places in the New Testament where a variant reading, similar to what you see above, happens. They don't note the really minor things like a word with two different spellings. There are basically three kinds of variant readings:

1. Spelling changes, and scribal errors: As the language changed, over a long stretch of time, the spelling of a certain word might have changed. Sometimes a tired scribe would make a spelling mistake, or copy the same word twice. Of the 200,000 or so words in the New Testament, these insignificant differences occur in about 8000 places.
2. Ordinary Variant Readings: A sentence might have slightly different phrasing, as in the Matt. 5:25 example. Or, a word might be in a different place in the sentence, as in Galatians 1:3. None of these variants change the meaning very much. This happens in about 2000 places -- about 1% of the text.
3. Questionable Passages: There are only five passages in the New Testament which may or may not have been in the original writings: They are (Mark 16:9-20), (Luke 23: 34), (John 5:4), (John 7:53 - 8:11), and (I John 5:7-8). Altogether, they contain less than 500 words. Out of 200,000, that's less than 0.5% of the text. Furthermore, these are not critical passages. What is in these passages is also taught in other passages. So, if these passages were taken out, it wouldn't change any of our teachings.

Geisler and Nix compared the New Testament to other ancient books: "*Next to the New Testament, there are more extant manuscripts of the "Iliad" (643) than any other book. Both it and the Bible were considered sacred...The New Testament has about 20,000 lines...The Iliad has about 15,600. Only 40 lines of the New Testament are in doubt whereas 764 lines of the Iliad are questioned.*"

Thus, only one half of one percent of the New Testament text is in doubt. Now you have an idea how many variants there are, and you've seen a couple examples, so you know how serious they are. The truth is, they're not serious at all. The meaning is exactly the same or nearly so. Therefore, when your friends start to talk about how "unreliable" the New Testament is, share with them what you've learned, and set them straight.

CHAPTER FOUR : NEW TESTAMENT IN FORMATION

I) The Books were Written in the 50s and 60s of the First Century.

Most scholars, both conservative and liberal, agree that Paul's letters were the first books of the New Testament to be collected and written. I'm not so sure that they are right. I think Mark's gospel might have been the very first book written. But I could be wrong just as easily. At any rate, it is certainly well-known that Paul's letters were written very early.

Galatians

Was probably the first of Paul's letters. The book addresses some of the same issues as the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15. Although it would have been easy for Paul to refer the Christians of Galatia to the decisions of that council, he never even mentions it. It is therefore very likely this letter was written before that council happened. Conservative scholars give a date of about AD 47.

First Thessalonians

At the very start of I Thess. there is a greeting from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Chapter 2, verse 1 makes it clear the letter is being written after they had already visited Thessalonica, on Paul's second missionary journey. The only time they were able to be together, after Thessalonica, was in Corinth. It's mentioned in Acts 18: 5. So "First Thessalonians" must have been written at this time. Acts 18:12 says that this was when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia. Recently, an inscription was found at Delphi that reads, in part, "As Lucius Junius Gallio, my friend, and the proconsul of Achaia..." That inscription has a date on it which, on our calendar, would be A.D. 52. The proconsul's term of office was always for one year. So 1st Thessalonians was written at some time between 51 and 53.

I Corinthians

We know from I Cor.16:8 and similar verses that I Corinthians was written while Paul was in Ephesus, during his third mission journey. As stated above, the events of Acts, chapter 18 happened between A.D. 51 and 53. In chapter 19 of the book of Acts, which is a chronological history of the church, Paul reaches Ephesus. In chapter 24, Felix finishes his term as governor, and Festus takes over. We know from historical records that Festus took over from Felix at some point in time between A.D. 55 and 58. So we know that I Corinthians was written in the mid-fifties. If you look at a lot of other passages and really study the issue, then A.D.55 looks about right

II Timothy

Paul's epitaph is written in II Tim. 4:7-8: "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith." Paul wrote 14 letters in all, if we take him as the author of the letter to the Hebrews. In AD 64, shortly before his death, he wrote this last letter to the churches.

The Gospel of Mark

As stated above, it's virtually a proven fact, agreed upon by both conservatives and even radical anti-Christian types, that the book of I Corinthians was written somewhere between A.D. 52 and 57. But look at ***I Corinthians 15: 3-5: I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me - that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the scriptures said.*** (Living Bible). Paul, in this passage, refers to the Scriptures that talk about Jesus. That's the Gospel story, isn't it? Doesn't that mean the written Gospel already existed at that time? Well, okay. He could be talking about the prophecies.

But there is more to be said. There is very strong evidence that the first gospel actually was written right around A.D.45. Papias, a Christian historian, writing around A.D. 140, stated that, "*Mark, Peter's interpreter, wrote down from memory everything that was said or done by Christ, though not in proper order...Mark had only one purpose in mind: not to omit anything he heard or to make any false statements.*" (Early, 171)

Eusebius, a later historian, writing around A.D. 300, gives more detail: "*During the reign of Claudius,*" (41 to 54 AD) "*Peter came to Rome to speak to the Christians there.*" His message was so well received that, "*not satisfied with a single hearing or with the oral teaching of the divine message, they resorted to appeals of every kind to induce Mark... to leave them in writing a summary of the instruction they had received by word of mouth. Nor did they let him go till they had persuaded him, and thus became responsible for the writing of what is known as the Gospel according to Mark.*"

What we know from the Bible supports this account. In I Peter 5:13, Peter sends greetings from "Babylon", and from Mark, who was with him. Early Christians commonly referred to Rome as 'Babylon' because of its wealth, decadence, and worldwide influence. (In our present era, 'Babylon' would undoubtedly be Hollywood, California.) So Peter was, apparently, in Rome together with Mark. Also, according to Suetonius, a Roman historian, there were Christians in Rome at this time.

The evidence fits together. Remember our oldest fragment of the Gospel of Mark, 7Q5, from chapter two? It was produced by hand, ink on papyrus, at some time prior to AD 50. Of course, Mark's original was probably written a few years before that. (Thiede's analysis suggests AD 44-46.) ***SO MARK PROBABLY WROTE HIS GOSPEL ONLY 15 to 20 YEARS AFTER JESUS DIED AND, as we believe, ROSE AGAIN.***

The Gospel of Matthew

Papias says Matthew kept a collection of the sayings of Jesus in a Hebraic or possibly Aramaic style of Greek, or possibly even in Hebrew. Formerly having been a tax collector for the Romans, it seems Matthew probably served as Jesus' secretary, taking notes as Jesus preached. But Mark was probably the first to finish a complete account of Jesus' life -- the first gospel. It would have been quite natural for Matthew to have read Mark's book, and then to have added his sermon-notes to what Mark had already recorded. Some people have speculated that Matthew's might be the first gospel. This confusion leads me to believe that Matthew probably produced his gospel shortly after Mark was completed.

The Gospel of Luke and The Book of Acts

Acts is a chronicle of the events of the early church. The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the expulsion of all the Jews from Jerusalem, which happened in AD 70 were huge events that could not possibly have been ignored in the account. However, it is not mentioned once, not even one time, in the entire book of Acts, so it had not yet happened. Therefore we know for sure that Acts was written before AD 70. But we also know from history that Paul was killed at some point in time between AD 64 and 67. Neither Paul's death, nor Peter's death is mentioned. Furthermore, the Jewish historian Josephus tells us that in AD 62 the Lord's half-brother, James, was killed. Acts would have certainly recorded this event as well. The Book of Acts was already finished before this event happened. We can therefore date the Book of Acts to about AD 61.

Luke was the author of both books, Luke and Acts. Acts is the sequel to Luke – so Luke had to be finished before AD 61. That date would also fit with what we know (from Acts) of Luke’s travels with Paul.

The Gospel of John

There is disagreement over when John’s gospel was written. But there shouldn’t be. Papias says that John wrote his gospel when he was an old man. The following verse backs Papias up.

John 21:18-19 “Jesus said, ‘ ...When you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone...will lead you where you do not want to go.’ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God.”

This verse certainly sounds like it was written after Peter died. But Peter died during the Roman persecution of AD 64-67. That was already 35 years after Jesus died. If John had been a young man when he saw the empty tomb, then 35 years later, relatively speaking, he would be an “old man.” In fact, John 21:22-24 provides further evidence that John was older when he wrote this gospel. However, now, look at John 5:2 where he talks about the healing at the pool of Bethesda. He tells you where it IS. The words in the actual Greek say, “NOW there IS in Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, a pool which, in Aramaic, IS called Bethesda.” Well, obviously, when he was first writing these words to us, the pool was still there. But in AD 70, when the city was destroyed, the pool was also destroyed. Therefore, the Gospel of John was written prior to AD 70. If Peter died between 64 and 67, then John must have written his gospel between 65 and 69.

Other Books

The remaining books of the New Testament can be dated in similar ways. The entire New Testament, except for possibly Second and Third John, and the Revelation, was completed before AD 70. Most of the witnesses to the events were still alive, even at that late date. Every single book of the New Testament is quoted often by the church fathers, so we know that they were all, every single one, written before the end of the first century.

2) The New Testament is Historically and Archaeologically Credible.

Has anyone told you that the stories in the New Testament are just a bunch of fairy tales? Let’s look at just a few of those stories.

Look at the Christmas Star of Matthew 2. There seems to be no ancient record of a star suddenly appearing around BC 4, the approximate year of Jesus' birth. A “nova” might have been observed, but not recorded. A nova can also fade and then return later, as the Bethlehem star seems to have done in Matthew 2. So the star could have been a nova. On the other hand, according to Prof. Ernest L. Martin, on June 17, in the year B.C. 2, three planets lined up perfectly and would have been seen as an amazingly bright star, right over Bethlehem.

Whatever the star was, the wise men were probably Arabian scholars. (They were from the East, and east of the Holy Land is Arabia. Furthermore, their gifts, frankincense and myrrh, were Arabian products.) They were probably well versed in Babylonian learning (refer to chpt. 12). So they would quite possibly have been familiar with the prophecies of Daniel. Daniel was one of the Jews captured by the Babylonians and employed by their king. It’s therefore reasonable that the Babylonians knew the prophecies about the Messiah.

Jesus, in his day, was a wandering preacher, the son of a carpenter, a builder. He wasn't a celebrity outside of Judah. But he is, nonetheless, mentioned by a number of historians.

Tacitus: a Roman historian, verifies Biblical history: *"...(Nero) punished with exquisite tortures the persons commonly called Christians...Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius. But the pernicious superstition...broke out again...through the city of Rome also."* (Annals XV, 44)

Josephus: a non-Christian, Jewish historian, born in 37 A.D. wrote the following in his "Jewish Antiquities": *"At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive."* (Antiquities, XVIII, 33) (Perhaps the most probable date of the very first Easter, when Jesus rose from the dead, is April 9th, AD 30.)

The Jewish Talmud mentions Jesus' crucifixion.

Lucian: *A Greek comedian of Samosata talked about Jesus and his followers, making fun of the Christian belief in life after death.*

Suetonius: *a Roman historian, talks about the Christians, and Nero's persecution of them. Pliny the Younger also did.*

Here's another piece of evidence that I personally find to be really intriguing: While Jesus was on the cross, being crucified, Matthew 27:45 says, *"From the sixth until the ninth hour..."* (That's from noon till 3:00 pm.) *"...darkness came over all the land."* (Mark 15 and Lk 23 also) Well, around A.D. 52, a Greek man named **Thallus** wrote a history of the old Mediterranean world, from the Trojan War to his own time. (Habermas, Evidence, 122) We no longer have his book. But a number of other authors have quoted him, so we know some of what he said. He claimed the darkness was caused by an eclipse. But Jesus died just before the Jewish Pass-Over celebration, during a full moon period, when an eclipse is impossible.

Phlegon: Another historian that wrote about the darkness in his, "Chronicles". Like Thallus, he wasn't a Christian. But his reference to the darkness, and Thallus' reference as well, show that it really happened, and that the people who didn't know Jesus had no reasonable explanation for it.

The whole New Testament is completely accurate. The Gospel of Luke, and the book of Acts have both been under attack for years. But every time someone claims Luke is wrong, something is dug up from the ground that proves him right. Geisler points out that the Gospel of Luke mentions 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 islands without making any mistakes. For years, critics had been saying that the town of Bethsaida was pure fantasy, since no trace of it had ever been found. But then, recently it was found by Dr. Rami Arav, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Acts 18:12-17 refers to Gallio as the proconsul of Achaia. Historians claimed this was an obvious error. But later, an inscription was found at Delphi, with the exact same

name and title, dated A.D. 51. Lysanias, Tetrarch of Abilene was thought by historians to be pure fiction. Then a temple inscription, dated between A.D. 14 and 29, was found with his name on it. The "Erastus" of Acts 19:22 was thought to be a fictional character, until his name was found on an inscription near the theater in Corinth. In the original Greek text, Luke refers to titles such as "*Politarch*"(Acts 17:6-8), and "*The First Man of the Island*"(Acts 28:7). In each case, archaeology confirmed his accuracy.

The discovery of the graves of some of the first Christians has confirmed beyond any doubt that the New Testament is history -- not legend, as some say. In the Jerusalem suburb of Talpiot, there is a catacomb (a family burial cave). Some of the coffins are decorated with the sign of the cross, and have Greek inscriptions, dedicating the person inside to Jesus. One coffin has the name "Matthius" inscribed on it. It could be that of an early church leader, or possibly even the apostle. But Matthius seems to have been a fairly common name. However, another coffin had the name of "Simon Barsabas" (Acts 15:22) written on it. The tomb had been sealed around circa A.D. 42.

On the Mount of Olives, right outside Jerusalem, there's another catacomb with dozens of coffins occupied by some of the first Christians. These included the names Jairus, and Salome, among others. The name "Shappira" was also found on one coffin. The only first century reference to anyone with that name is Acts 5:1. One of the coffins is inscribed "*Shimon bar Yonah*", Simon, son of Jonah. It is possibly, though not necessarily, Peter himself -- buried with Jewish and Gentile Christians, all in the same tomb.

Another tomb found near Bethany has the names "Mary", "Martha", and "Lazarus" inscribed on three coffins, with dedications to Jesus, and Christian symbols. More Christian tombs from the early part of the first century have been found in Nazareth and other places, indicating that the number of Christians was substantial, even very early in the first century.

Charles Claremont-Ganneau was the first to discover the burial site of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. P. Bagatti found the large tomb nearby that held Shappira, some Greek Christians, and Simon (Peter) Bar-Jonah. Prof. Eliezer L. Sukenik also excavated some of the tombs. In addition to what's noted above, Dr. Rami Arav believes he may have identified Peter's house, in Capernaum, from inscriptions on the walls.

William Albright, a renowned archaeologist of the mid-20th century said, "*All radical schools in New Testament criticism which have existed in the past, or which exist today, are pre-archaeological, and are therefore...quite antiquated today.*"

Nelson Glueck, another leader in the field, has stated very directly, "*As a matter of fact, however, it may be clearly stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm, in clear outline or exact detail, historical statements of the Bible.*"

A.N. Sherwin-White, has said, "*For Acts, the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming...Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted.*"

Sir William Ramsay, went to Israel over a century ago. He was hoping to dig up archaeological evidence proving the Bible to be false. But everything he found confirmed the truth of the Biblical record. He finally, therefore, became an outspoken Christian.

This historical evidence is also important in the dating of the books. The fact that the writers are consistently correct in all details concerning people, places, and events shows that

these books were written by authentic first century authors. *A later writer could not possibly have gotten everything right.*

3) *Greek was the Language of the New Testament.*

Some skeptics claim that the “original” New Testament must have been in Hebrew. It’s a false notion. This idea fails to appreciate the fact that Jesus and his disciples were, in all probability, trilingual.

Already during the time of Isaiah, around 500 years before Jesus, the Jews were already speaking some Aramaic, as Isaiah 39:1-3 states. Around two hundred years before Jesus was born, some of the Jews had already forgotten their Hebrew so much that their Holy Book, the Torah, had to be translated into Greek. That’s when the “Septuagint” was made. By the time Jesus was born, Hebrew was mainly used for religious purposes, although it was still understood. The common household language in Palestine was Aramaic. But Greek was spoken by a very large percentage of the Jewish population. (Even the nationalistic Jews fighting the Romans at Masada in AD 70 wrote letters to each other in Greek.)

Jesus grew up in Nazareth, only four miles from the city of Sepphoris (population, about 25000). As builders, Jesus and his father probably helped in the construction of the Greek theater there. The plays performed were in Greek only, and the theater had 5000 seats, so most of the people in that town obviously could understand Greek.

In Mark 7:24-30, Jesus' conversation with the Syro-Phoenician woman was probably in Greek. In Mark 12, and Matthew 22, Jesus even uses a Greek word in an unusual way. In his day, the word “hypocrite” simply meant “actor,” meaning an actor in a Greek play. Most of his disciples also spoke Greek. Andrew, and Philip are Greek names. Peter spoke Greek with Cornelius in Acts 10. Mark was fluent. As a tax collector, Matthew would need Greek and maybe some Latin as well. For Paul, Greek was a first language.

Conclusion

We know the New Testament was written early. We know that these books were the ORIGINAL books.

But then, in that case – what about all these OTHER gospels that our critics keep talking about? We’ll look at those next.

CHAPTER FIVE :

THE EARLY CHURCH KNEW GOD'S WORD

The Canon

Critics and Islamists like to imply that there is some kind of “doubt” present about which books were chosen to be part of the New Testament. It’s easy to answer these people. The fact is - NO books were ever CHOSEN to be part of the Bible. Most of the 27 books in our New Testament were accepted as God’s Word from the very moment they were presented to Christians. That’s because they were presented to the Christians of that day either by the apostles themselves or by well-known, trusted friends of the apostles. So there never was any question where they came from.

Christians would read the new letter from Paul, for example, in their little house church. They would stay up all night hungrily taking in every little detail of the letter, and discussing how they should apply what Paul had taught them. Then the next day they would already set to work making copies of the letter to give to the other house churches. These would then make copies for other Christians. It was a “grass-roots” church with no central authority. The people knew it was God’s Word because they knew it came from Paul.

The only books that were not universally accepted right away were Hebrews, James, II and III John, II Peter, Jude, and Revelation. And even these books were being read regularly in many churches - just, not in ALL the churches.

Generations of Christians came and went without there ever being any serious doubt as to what was scripture and what wasn’t, with the exception of the few books which we’ve named above. And as we said, even those were in common use in most of the churches.

Nothing changed until the end of the first century. John lived to be a very old man, probably writing the Revelation when he was about 90 years old, while he was in exile on the island of Patmos. But when John died, the church was left without any apostolic guidance, for the very first time.

After John’s death a few new writings did emerge that some Christians for a short time thought of as being nearly equivalent to Scripture. However, most Christians could see the difference right away, and these newer books, like the Shepherd of Hermas, were never universally accepted by the churches the way the original books had been and still are.

In the second century, there emerged a number of groups, moving away from the Bible, that began to argue with the more conservative Christians who still followed the original teachings of the apostles. The Gnostics, in particular, caused some of the biggest problems. They were very legalistic, very works-oriented people. The Gnostics wrote a lot of spurious books. But unlike earlier apocryphal Christian literature, which at least had a little bit of worthwhile content, the books of the Gnostics were completely false, and completely unacceptable to true Christians. Since Christians placed so much confidence in the writings of the apostles, the Gnostics put apostles’ names on these new books they were writing. “I know you follow the apostles,” they might have said, “Here is a book that was long lost. It was written by one of the apostles.” Ironically, now almost 2000 years later, the enemies of Jesus still pick up these old books written by the Gnostics 100 or 200 years after Jesus died and rose, and say, “See, this is the REAL gospel.” Amazingly, they still use the same old lies.

Keep in mind, there was NO CENTRAL CHURCH to enforce any particular view. At this time there were a number of Christian centers, each important in its own way. The churches, mostly house churches, were united in the teachings of the apostles, as expressed in scripture.

Almost the whole New Testament was widely recognized and unquestioned in the early church. But this was the unity of the Spirit. There was no “enforcement” from anyone. How could there be? The heavy-handed, political Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages was still four or five hundred years in the future.

Finally, toward the middle of the second century, about 100 years after Jesus died and rose, someone wrote down a list of the accepted books - a written list, which we still have a copy of, today. The writings of the Gnostics made this necessary. This list is called the Muratorian Canon:

The Muratorian Canon is named after the guy that found this old manuscript containing this ancient list of New Testament books. That old manuscript was found back in the seventh century. But we know that the original list was made around AD 170, because the author makes reference to the episcopate of Pius the 1st of Rome as being very recent. Well, Pius 1st died in 157. So we figure the document couldn't have been written much later than 170.

The Muratorian Canon lists all four Gospels, Acts, and all of Paul's letters, but there are a few books it leaves out. Hebrews, James, and II Peter weren't mentioned on the list at all. As stated earlier, those books were constantly being quoted by church fathers even before the Muratorian Canon was written. So we know they are authentic. But the author of the Muratorian list apparently did not consider them to be God's word, and therefore left them out.

The Muratorian Canon does not mention any of the false books we outlined above - EXCEPT the Apocalypse of Peter. The author of the Muratorian Canon says that the Apocalypse of Peter is a book which *“some of us will not allow to be read in church.”*

By 225, when Origen made a list of books that were being read in churches, none of those fake books were even mentioned. Furthermore, Hebrews was considered to be as acceptable as any other book of the Bible. However, James, Second Peter, Second and Third John, and Jude were still disputed. They were read in most churches, but not all.

Now take a minute and think about this. NONE of those fake books even made it as far as the first ever listing of our New Testament Books. The integrity of our Bible was NEVER under any threat. Jesus says “My sheep hear my voice, and they know me.” It's true. In the end, church councils aren't even necessary. We KNOW what is Scripture and what is fake.

Finally around 324, Eusebius came up with another list of the books that were being used in churches at his time in history. On his list, every book of our present New Testament was included. Some were listed as being “disputed.” But that just means that some people rejected them while others accepted them. And again, there were no OTHER books on his list either -- just the books of our New Testament.

Now, in 325, the Council of Nicea was called. The Roman Emperor, Constantine had become a Christian. The churches had a lot of problems with false teachers. Now, since they were no longer being persecuted, they were free to gather - all the bishops from various places in the empire, to discuss a variety of matters. One matter they discussed was the Canon. But it didn't require much discussion.

As you know from what we've written above, ever since they had first been written, Christians had been using the books of the apostles in their churches. Only a few were ever questioned, and we've told you which ones they were. At the Council of Nicea, finally, those last few books were endorsed. But those books, even the disputed ones, the ones that were finally endorsed at Nicea, had been in use in churches around the world of that time - for 300

years already. *OUR NEW TESTAMENT HAS BEEN THE SAME SINCE THE BOOKS WERE FIRST WRITTEN.*

With reference to the FAKE gospels and epistles that were written a hundred years or more after Jesus, the Council also simply recognized what most Christians already knew - that these were fake books. They're called "apocryphal" books or "pseudepigraphal" books. "Pseudepigrapha" means FALSE WRITINGS.

Following is a fairly complete list of most of these fake books. It includes the earlier, well-intentioned books along with the Gnostic ones and some others. The names are long, so I've shortened them in some cases. As you can see, it's a long list. There were all kinds of "mystery religions" in the Roman Empire during the early centuries of the church, very similar to the "New Age" religions of today. So a lot of these books are not really Christian at all. A lot of them are just copy-cats, not even good counterfeits. Go ahead and read them if you wish. You will see how utterly inferior to the Bible they really are. It's easy to see why Christians of earlier times saw right away that they were "mere fables."

The Epistle Of Jesus to Abagarus	Secret Gospel of Mark
Teaching of The Twelve (Didache)	Acts and Martyrdom of St. Matthew the Apostle
Epistle of the Apostle	The Martyrdom of Matthew
Acts of Andrews	Gospel of Nicodemus
Acts of Andrews and Matthias	Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles
Acts of Barnabas	Gospel of Nazareans
Epistle of Barnabas	Preaching of Peter
Gospel of Barnabas	Acts of Peter
Gospel of Bartholomew	Acts of Peter and Andrew
Martyrdom of Bartholomew	Apocalypse of Peter
Apocryphon of James	Apocalypse of Peter II
Protevangelium of James	Gospel of Peter
First Apocalypse of James	Letter of Peter to Philip
Second Apocalypse of James	Acts of Philip
Acts of John	Gospel of Philip
Acts of John the Theologian	Acts of Thaddeus (Epistle of Pontius Pilate)
Apocryphon of John	Acts of Thomas
Book Of John the Evangelist	Apocalypse of Thomas
Revelation of John the Theologian	Book of Thomas the Contender
Third Corinthians	Consummations of Thomas
Acts 29	Gospel of Thomas
Acts of Paul	Infancy Gospel of Thomas (Greek A)
Acts of Paul and Thecia	Gospel of the Hebrews
Acts of Peter and Paul	Traditions of Matthias
Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena	Arabic Infancy of Gospel
Epistle of the Laodiceans	First Infancy Gospel of Jesus
Apocalypse of Paul	Gospel of Mary
Apocalypse of Paul II	Gospel of Nativity Mary
Revelation of Paul	John, on the Dormition of Mary
Paul and Seneca	History, Joseph the Carpenter
Shepherd of Hemas	Narrative, Joseph the Arimatea

I and II Clements	Avenging the Savior
Gospel of The Lord (Marcion)	Diatession
Revelation of Stephen	Epistles of Pontius Pilate
Letter of Aristeas	Sentences of the Sextus
Alexandrias	Gospel of the Ebonites
Gospel of Egyptians	Egerton Gospel
Infancy Gospel of Thomas (Greek B)	Infancy Gospel of Thomas (Greek C)
Gospel of Nicodemus (Acts of Pontius Pilate)	

It's amazing to me. People with college degrees, intelligent people, sometimes refer to these writings as "The Lost Books of the Bible." They were never lost. They never were part of the Bible. They never even existed until at least AD 100, and in most cases, much much later. The "Gospel of Barnabas" wasn't written, never existed, until about AD 1400 or even later !!

In the first place, we have absolutely NO first century copies, and in most cases no SECOND century copies of these books at all. Secondly, although the church fathers were constantly quoting the Bible, there are NO quotes from these books at all, until the second and third centuries. Finally, there are not even any comments regarding these books, or even any references made to them, in all of ancient literature – until you get into the second and third centuries. They did not EXIST until then.

Lately, the anti-Christian crowd has begun routinely referring to these books as "the earliest gospels." The next time you hear a friend use that phrase, ask them what evidence they have for that claim. When they fail to provide any, then show them the overwhelming evidence we have for the TRUE Gospels.

Some of the false books were intended to give support to the strange teachings of the Gnostics. The Gospel of Thomas, for example, taught that a woman cannot enter Heaven unless she first becomes a man. Others of them were just intended to be entertaining, like the Gospel of the Infancy, which has Jesus in his infancy, as a baby -- actually talking with adult sentences, from his cradle. These were storybooks, the paperbacks of their day, not usually taken very seriously. They don't have the depth of meaning, or the believability of the four true gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Lets look at one of these counterfeit "gospels": Quite a few Muslim people whom I've spoken with have mentioned the "Gospel of Barnabas" to me. In fact, a lot of Islamist writers claim that Barnabas is the TRUE Gospel, which was suppressed by wicked church councils.

Of course, as we've already mentioned, the Quran says that it was sent down to earth to confirm and protect the Injil sent down before it. But, the Quran doesn't agree with Barnabas any more than it does with the Christian's books. Barnabas says that the Messiah's name will be Muhammad, and that Jesus was NOT the Messiah. It says this, very clearly, in chapters 42, 82, 83, and 96. But the Quran, as revealed to Muhammad, says in 3:45 , 4:171-172, 5:19 , 5:75 , 5:78 , and 9:30-31 that Jesus WAS the Messiah.

Maybe people should read Barnabas before they start calling it God's word. There are a lot of excellent reasons why we know for a fact that it's a forgery from the 15th or 16h century.

- In the early Christian church of the first and second centuries, the early church fathers quoted every book of the New Testament so often that we could know the entire New

Testament, from their quotes alone, even if we didn't have all those old manuscripts. But there is not one reference, anywhere, to the Gospel of Barnabas.

- During Jesus' day, the year of the Jubilee came once every 50 years. But "Barnabas" says, in chapter 82, it is once every 100 years. Why? Well, in A.D. 1343, the Roman Catholic Church changed it, making it once every 100 years. This shows Barnabas was actually a forgery made during the medieval era, or later.
- The unknown author of Barnabas mentions wooden wine casks in chapter 152. But wooden wine casks had not yet been invented, in Jesus' time and place. Instead, the people of that time, in Palestine, had large jars of baked clay. (John 2:6)
- He mentions knights going off to war, in chapter 69. But in early first-century Palestine there were no knights, and no wars. The knights and barons Barnabas talks about were common in medieval Europe.
- He says that the province of Palestine had 600,000 soldiers in Jesus' day. (chpt. 91) But according to Tacitus, a Roman historian, in his "Annals", chapters 4-5, Rome had only 350,000 soldiers for the whole empire at that time.
- In chapter 63, he places Nineveh on the coast, when it was in fact 400 miles inland.
- After calming the storm, in chapter 20 of Barnabas, Jesus and his disciples land at Nazareth. In chapter 21 they move inland (go up) to Capernaum. But Capernaum is by the sea, and Nazareth is 15 miles inland from the coast.
- The anonymous, medieval author of Barnabas often quotes Bible passages in the exact wording of the Vulgate Bible, which wasn't produced until 400 years after Jesus. The Vulgate was used extensively throughout the medieval period.

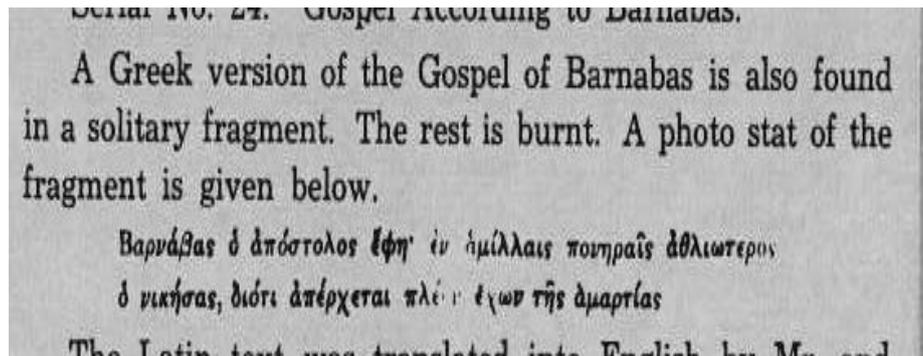
These are only a few of the most obvious reasons why there is not one serious scholar anywhere in the world who believes Barnabas is genuine. It is well known to be a forgery of the 15th or 16th century, written by someone trying to promote Islam. A book called "The Gospel of Barnabas" is mentioned by Pope Gelasius, A.D. 492-95. It is mentioned as a spurious book, a fake, rejected by the church.

That book, the fake one mentioned by Gelasius, did not survive the passing of time. But a clever forger saw the name, in the Middle Ages. This person decided to write a new book called Barnabas, but claim that it is the "original". So the book we know today as Barnabas is the second forgery by that name.

Finally, neither of these forgeries, (the one from the 5th, the other from the 15th century), should be confused with the "Epistle of Barnabas", which was not Scripture, but was a highly respected book in the second century Christian church. This has all been known for a long time. Even Muslim analysts know that Barnabas, the Gospel, is a fake. In 1959, Professor AAbas Mahmoud Aqad wrote in the Muslim newspaper, "Al Akhbar" (Oct 26th issue): *"...The Muslim who understands the contradictions in the Gospel of Barnabas' between it and the Quran, will not become involved in them."* Dr. Muhammad Chafiq Ghorbal, writing in the Arabic Encyclopedia, said Barnabas is, *"A forged (or Pseudo) gospel*

produced by a European in the 15th century; and in its description of the political and religious condition in Palestine at the time of the Messiah, full of errors."

At present, there is only one ancient manuscript remaining of pseudo-Barnabas. It is an Italian copy, from the 15th century, with Arabic notes written along the margins. I purchased an English copy of pseudo-Barnabas in Denver, in January of 2000. Mr. M. A. Rahim wrote a long introduction for the book in which he told a lot of lies. But on page 15 of his introduction, he tells a lie which is so obvious I can show it to you. He claims to have found an "ancient manuscript" of Barnabas which proves that it is real. Here is Mr. Rahim, presenting his "evidence."



Mr. Rahim typed his own "manuscript" and then told his readers it was from ancient times. It's obvious since he puts spaces between words, which the Greeks never did. And look at the nice, uniform letters -- exactly uniform. I can do the same thing with my wordprocessor: "*Βαρναβασ ο αποστολος...*" Look at the old text we showed you earlier. It's rough and uneven. That's how the first century scribes wrote Greek.

Mr. Rahim uses a tactic called the "Big Lie." He not only lies, but makes up all kinds of support for his claim, and lies about that too. In fact, it's a common tactic which some Islamists use, to trick sincere Muslim people into believing them. Sometimes they write things that they know are untrue. The person who wrote the forgery known as Barnabas was also using the Big Lie technique.

Around 2003, another myth-maker wrote a novel that is based loosely on some of these old writings. That particular author suggests that the "Gospel of Philip" is the REAL gospel. He does this even though he knows very well that this "gospel" didn't exist until after about AD 120. Of course, the truth does not matter to these people. Look at the oldest Greek manuscript they have of Philip. It's from the Nag Hamadi texts found in Egypt. It's very clearly from about AD 350. There are no earlier fragments. There are no references to this text in any first century writings. It clearly didn't exist until long after the apostles were dead. And yet these "educated, sophisticated" people ignore the obvious, insisting this is the "REAL" Christianity. Some people would rather believe in fables than admit God is real.

CHAPTER SIX THE FIRST BOOKS FROM GOD

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

We've proven that the New Testament is the same now as it was in Peter's and Paul's time. I suppose if you're a skeptic, you could say our evidence is phony, made up. In that case, get copies of the manuscripts for yourself and go to the source. You'll see that we have been truthful with you.

What about the Old Testament? Can we PROVE that the Old Testament hasn't changed? No. But the evidence which we have suggests that it has not changed.

The ancient Hebrew writing of Moses' day did not use a complete alphabet. There were no vowel markings. So, for example, David's name would be written like "DVD". In fact, Hebrew had no vowels until the tenth century A.D. A group of Jewish scribes called the Masoretes finally gave Hebrew its vowel markings.

The oldest Hebrew manuscript we have of the entire Old Testament is a 'Masoretic' text, one that has the vowel markings. It's called the 'Leningrad Codex' and it was originally produced in A.D. 1005. It's currently kept in the State Library of St. Petersburg, in Russia. It's the basis of the Old Testament in our modern Bibles.

We really had no idea how accurate this codex was, until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Over a number of years, beginning in 1947, scrolls were discovered in caves by the Dead Sea, in the area of Qumran. The Qumran community was destroyed by the Romans after the Jews lost the war that lasted from AD 66 to AD 70. 40,000 books and fragments have been found in those old caves. 500 books have been identified. About 100 of them are copies of the Old Testament books. Of course, as I mentioned in the last chapter, it appears there are some New Testament books also represented.

Many books of the Old Testament were found almost in complete form -- Isaiah, Leviticus, and the Psalms, for example. Almost all the Old Testament books were found, at least in partial form. Esther is the only one that hasn't been found there. These old scrolls had been produced, hand copied, about a hundred years before Jesus was born.

Now we can compare our Bible with manuscripts from 2,100 years ago, 1,100 years before the time of the Leningrad Codex. Are they the same, word for word? No. There are small differences, like you saw in the New Testament books in an earlier chapter. In fact, there are other differences. The scroll of Psalms has an 'extra' Psalm that we don't have in our Bibles.

But what differences there are don't bother me. What is more remarkable is how little the text has changed. Hershel Shanks is neither a Christian, nor an orthodox Jew. In fact, He is often very critical of evangelical Christians. In 1991, he was the first to publish excerpts of the scrolls. He writes, on pages 142-143 of "The Mystery and Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls":

"Although the Biblical texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls are a thousand years older than the oldest Hebrew Bible, they indicate that, all in all, modern copies are amazingly accurate. There are relatively few discrepancies between the Qumran Biblical texts and later ones. Nevertheless, numerous minor changes -- and some not so minor -- have been incorporated into new Bible translations as a result of comparisons with Dead Sea Scroll Biblical texts."

Gleason Archer, one of the world's leading experts in archaeology and Semitic languages writes the following in his book, "A Survey of the Old Testament:"

"The two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran cave 1...proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text. The 5% variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variation in spelling. Look at Isaiah 53, which predicts the Lord's suffering for our sins. The Qumran manuscript has 17 letters that are different from the Masoretic Text that we had before. Ten of these differences are simply different ways of spelling the same word. You'd expect that in an older text. It's like the difference between "theatre" and "theater" in English. Four other differences are matters of style -- like the choice to use a conjunction, or just write two sentences. The other three letters are where the word "light" is added after, 'They shall see,' in verse 11. Of the 166 words in the chapter, only this one word is in question, and it doesn't change the meaning of the passage at all. This is typical of all the manuscripts."

THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are three reasons why the Old Testament is included in our Bible with the New Testament: First, it's God's Word. Secondly, Jesus was a Jewish man. The first Christians were Jews. The culture of the New Testament is Jewish. It's like the Old Testament is a cup of coffee, and the New Testament is the cream that was added to it. They go together. The third reason is that the Old Testament predicts Jesus' coming.

Jesus, along with his prophets who wrote the New Testament, often quoted passages from the Old. Usually, however, they would quote those passages from the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the "Septuagint". Interestingly, the Septuagint has that extra Psalm that they found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Also, in other places where there is a minor difference between the modern and the Dead Sea Scroll text, often the Septuagint has the same reading as the old Dead Sea Scrolls. Apparently the Septuagint was translated from an older source than that of the Hebrew manuscripts we currently have. Even then, however, the differences aren't very great.

In fact, we can show even older evidence that the words of the Old Testament have not changed. A small silver charm was found in a burial cave near the Temple by archaeologist Gabriel Barkay in 1979. The blessing of Numbers 6:24-26 was engraved on the back of the charm, and the words are exactly the same as in our modern Bibles. The charm is from around BC 600. So, even though our evidence doesn't go back to Moses' time, it does go far enough back that we can be sure we basically have the same words that he wrote.

HISTORICAL and ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Some of the best evidence for the truth of the Old Testament comes from what Science is now telling us concerning the origins of the universe and , in particular, of our planet. But we'll cover that subject in the chapter concerning faith, reason, and science, later in this book. So, we'll skip that portion for now. At this point in the book, we'll take you on a quick tour of some of the other old Bible Stories you learned as a child. You'll see that they are NOT just stories. The evidence suggests they really did happen.

The Flood

Earlier, we mentioned the DNA and Y-chromosome tests by which the human race can be dated. Women have mitochondrial DNA that they get only from their mothers. Although their basic DNA structure remains the same from one generation to the next, there

is a measurable buildup of mutated mitochondria. You could think of it as leftover genetic building materials. Every new generation of women has a little bit more of this buildup. Men have a natural buildup of Y-chromosome mutations. We can date the male side of humanity in exactly the same way.

The rate at which the buildup occurs was determined by directly measuring the differences between the number of genetic mutations of very old ancestors, in graveyards, and comparing it to that of their modern day descendants. Dividing the amount of buildup by the number of generations between your two samples gives you the rate at which the mutation occurs.

Finally, the buildup of these "genetic leftovers" in a large number of present-day people was analyzed, to get the average amount of mutation per person. After that, it was easy to divide the amount of mutation by the rate at which it occurs. The date found, in this manner, for the latest common ancestor of all men, was around 35,000 to 47,000 years ago.

Scientists are puzzled, however, because the date for the latest common female ancestor SHOULD be about the same. After all, this must be the couple that began the human race. But, instead, the women's latest common ancestor turns out to be from around 3000 to 30,000 years older than the men's! How can this be?

The DNA and chromosome methods always yield the same numbers in other studies. A comparison done in Finland shows that these two methods, the women's and men's, should always yield the same results. So why do the men's and women's studies give different results in this study? What happened? *THE ANSWER CAN BE FOUND IN GENESIS 7: 13.*

- ***Answer From Genesis 7:13***

We, as Christians, know that all of humanity is descended from Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives. (Gen. 7:13) The latest common male ancestor, then, is Noah. But the women in the ark weren't related. *So their latest common female ancestor would have been from much earlier, possibly all the way back to Eve.* Therefore, these studies have not only dated the human race, but have roughly dated the flood as well.

There is another way to date the flood. In Genesis Five it tells of men who lived to be 900 or more years old. But, beginning around the time of Noah, the human lifespan rapidly decreases until, only a few generations later, it's down to around 100 years. We now know that one of the main environmental causes of aging is "cosmic radiation." In 1981, the geophysicist, G. Robert Brakenridge studied the effects of a very strong supernova (an exploding star) that happened very near Earth, long ago. Most of the cosmic radiation that envelops our Earth, even now, comes from that explosion. It's called the Vela Supernova. When its radiation first came to earth, it would have probably shortened life-spans as drastically as Genesis records. There are different estimates as to the date of this eruption. One of the estimates would place the eruption at about 30,000 to 37,000 years ago.

If we then combine the dates from these two very different sources, the Y-chromosome study, and the Vela supernova, we can speculate that the flood might have happened around 35,000 years ago. Yes, it is speculation. But it is a reasonable possibility.

- ***Extent of the Flood***

At this point, there is a problem. In truth, the full weight of scientific evidence seems to be against any notion of a flood that covered the very highest mountains, around the entire globe. It is true that marine fossils, and animal skeletons covered in calcite have been found even on the highest mountains. But those remains are from long before the flood, when continents collided, forcing the seabed to the surface.

There is at least one place in Scripture that seems to argue against a global flood. If you read Psalm 104:5-9 in context, it is clearly talking about the early Earth, covered in water shortly after creation. In fact, the translators of the N.I.V. have even put that into their notes. If so - if it is talking about the earth just after creation, then a global flood is prohibited by God's own command.

In Noah's day, God said he would wipe man from the face of the earth. But, if he had wanted, he could easily have killed every person on Earth at the time just by flooding the Tigris-Euphrates plain. People had not yet moved out from that area. If any people had, then perhaps other disasters overtook them.

In Genesis 7:11-12, it tells the source of the waters of the flood. In Gen. 8:1-14, it describes the drying out process. It's very clear that the waters all came from the earth's own resources. Today, geologists can accurately measure the size of earth's groundwater reserves. Earth's water circulates, but the total amount doesn't change. So the waters of the flood are still with us. But if you added together all of earth's available water -- groundwater, oceans, lakes, streams, ice, snow, and vapor, there would only be about 22% of the amount needed to cover the highest mountain tops. (This comes from Hugh Ross.)

Furthermore, a global flood would leave geological signs. But there are none. Beyond that, the waves from such a flood would be incredible. The ark would have been torn apart. And there is no way the land could have dried out in a year. Then, in Gen. 8:11, Noah's dove returns, with an olive leaf in its beak. Olive trees grow on high hills, but not on mountain peaks. Finally, the Bible doesn't mention the names of any places outside the area of the Tigris-Euphrates plain until after the flood. The world of Noah's day WAS Mesopotamia. I firmly believe the Bible to be God's perfect word. It doesn't make mistakes. But I sometimes read it incorrectly.

When reading scripture, if you're not sure how to interpret a phrase, then find another passage that uses the same phrase. For example, in Genesis 41:56, there was a famine, "*over all the face of the earth.*" Do you think of Japan, when you read that verse? No. The famine covered the entire world of the Middle East of that time. Likewise in II Kings 10:24 the "*whole world*" came to talk to Solomon. Celts from England? No, it means Solomon's world. In Romans 1:8, we're told that the Christian church at Rome was known all over the world. Does that include China? No.

In fact Peter (II Pet. 3:6) tells us that the flood destroyed "*the world of that time.*"

However, Genesis 7:3 says, "*throughout the earth.*" 7:4 says, "I will wipe *from the face of the earth every living thing I have made.*" 7:19 says, "*All the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered.*" 7:21 says, "*Every living thing that moved on the earth perished.*" Verse 22 says, "*Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died.*" And verse 23 says, "*Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out.*"

The Hebrew word for 'earth' in all but one of the above passages is "aretz". It appears in practically every chapter of the Old Testament. It means "land". In Genesis 4:16, for example, it is the Land of Nod (the region of Nod). Genesis 7:23 uses 'adamah' which means 'ground', in Exodus 3:5 (standing on holy ground).

The flood, then, which I thought had covered the whole earth, may actually have covered the whole LAND (region). That's a big difference. Again, according to scripture, either view could be right.

Genesis 7:19 says, "*All the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered.*" This Hebrew word for 'mountains' is "hariym". The same word is used in I Kings 20:23, and Jeremiah 13:27, to talk about hills, not mountains. In Jeremiah 17:2 it talks about people worshipping false gods on the "*high hills*" (*hariym*). There are a lot of other examples. The

word can definitely mean hill as easily as mountain. In fact, in the King James, the old standard English Bible, Gen 7:19 says the high hills were covered.

Finally, there are seven different Hebrew words used in the various verses that describe the animals kept alive aboard the ark. The translation often just says "animal", as though every kind of animal was aboard. In fact, six of the words used refer to mammals, and the other refers to any kind of small bird. So the idea that Noah had to take every kind of animal aboard the ark is also false. The Lord made sure that Noah saved those animals that would be important for the rebuilding of civilization, and for the Tigris-Euphrates region to recover.

The evidence for the truth of the flood story can be found in the literature of ancient civilizations. There are more than 800 flood accounts, in about seventy different languages. They all describe a huge flood, and about 85% of them mention a large boat that saved the last surviving humans. (Gen. Ques. 167). But most of the stories are not realistic. For example, the "Gilgamesh" flood story has a cubicle ark, which wouldn't be seaworthy at all. By contrast, the ark's dimensions given in the Genesis account, 450 feet long, by 75 feet wide, by 45 feet high, would provide the most stable platform possible. A modern-day nautical engineer could not improve upon this design. How could an ancient builder, without knowledge of fluid mechanics, come up with such perfect proportions?

Another piece of evidence comes from the Chinese language. The ancient character for 'boat' or 'ship' is made up of a combination of (vessel)+(eight)+(mouths). Why eight? There were eight people in the first great ship, the ark, eight mouths to feed. The old Chinese character for 'flood' is made up of (eight)+(united)+(earth)+(water). The earliest Chinese religion was a belief in one God, the emperor above who reigned from Heaven: "*Shang-Ti*."

Babel

Philologists have found evidence that the world really did, at one time, speak the same language. Max Mueller and Otto Jespersen agree on this. Alfredo Trombetti says he can trace and prove the common origin of all languages.

Archaeologists have found the script of a story similar to the Biblical account of the Tower of Babel, at the site of ancient Ur, a place famous for huge, towering ziggurats.

The foundations of many of those old towers still remain. We don't know if any of them might be from the actual, original tower of Babel. But it still shows that this is a culture where they built such things. The Biblical story fits with what we see on the ground.

Abraham

Genesis 10:24-25, and 11:16-17, mentions "Eber" as Abraham's forefather. According to one ancient clay tablet, Eber was a king of Ebla. That would explain Abraham's power and wealth. He was the son of a king.

The 4000-year old 'Ebla' tablets found at 'Tel-Mardikh' mention names like "Abramu", "Esaum", "Ismael", "Israel," and "Yerusaluum". This shows that these names were common at that place and time. In fact, Abraham most likely passed through Tel-Mardikh, the center of commerce in his day, on his way to Canaan. The language Abraham spoke was the language of Ebla, very similar to Hebrew, with many identical words. These tablets contain the oldest word-lists in the world. In addition, the letters recovered from 'Mari' have names like "Jacob-el" and "Benjamites". Those letters also talk of a war with five kings against four kings -- the same kings, and the same war as in Genesis 14. Furthermore, the tablets recovered from an ancient library at Nuzu, in northeastern Iraq, have shown that the customs in Genesis (For example, using a servant girl as a surrogate wife, to gain an heir) are truly from Abraham's time and place.

For years, Bible scholars have been puzzled as to why Laban was so anxious to get his "household gods" back from Rachel and Joseph, in Genesis 31:19-23. The household gods were just little statues, figurines – not worth much. However, the Nuzi tablets record a lawsuit in which the son-in-law of a man claimed the right to inherit the man's fortune because he had possession of the family gods. No wonder Laban was worried! This shows that the writer of Genesis 31 was indeed familiar with the culture of that time -- was FROM the culture of that time.

Archaeologists have also found the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. The cities, and the whole area around them, show evidence of the fire that destroyed them (Genesis 19:24-25). Furthermore, the earth in that area is full of bitumen, highly flammable.

Joseph

The dating scheme, the chronology, used by Middle East archaeologists at the present time is based on a list of Egyptian kings from an ancient Egyptian historian -- Manetho. It had been thought that this was a list of consecutive Pharaohs. But it isn't. Courville and Velikovsky have found a high official listed among the Egyptian kings -- "Yufni", a name which has been tentatively identified as the Joseph of the Bible. Further down the list is "Chenephres" -- Moses' adoptive father.

If high officials, like Joseph, are included on the list, together with the Pharaohs they served, then the old chronology is wrong. The new chronology, not accepted by everyone, fits perfectly with the history in the Bible.

Geisler argues for the above chronology since it also closes the 300 year time-gap in our knowledge of Greek history. C. F. Aling, however, disagrees with this timeline. He doesn't believe that the 'Yufni' mentioned in the Egyptian list of kings is Joseph. He does agree, as do most archaeologists now, that the Biblical date for the exodus -- about 1450 B.C., is correct.

In fact, he has found the site of a Hebrew settlement in the city of Rameses, and believes he may have found Joseph's tomb. But the body itself was missing. In Joshua 24:32, we're told that, after being entombed in Egypt, Joseph's body was brought from Egypt and buried at Shechem, in Palestine. For centuries, there has been a tomb at Shechem that the local people say is Joseph's. A few years ago it was opened. It contained a very ancient body, mummified in Egyptian style. In the tomb, among other things, was the ceremonial sword of an Egyptian official.

The Exodus from Egypt

The Bible gives the date of the Exodus in three places -- I Kings 6:1, Jdgs 11:26, and Acts 13:19-20. With those passages, you can work out a date of about BC 1440. Recent research, such as that done by Bimson and Livingston in 1987, supports this early date. Even liberal, skeptical scholars are beginning to accept the late date, 1440, for the Exodus.

Additionally, a very old papyrus, written by an Egyptian priest named Ipuwer, tells of two big events: a series of plagues, and an invasion by a foreign power. It matches Exodus 7-12 well. It tells of the river turning to blood, crops being consumed, fire, and darkness. It even mentions the death of firstborn children.

Some of the most fascinating evidence for our scripture concerns Mt. Sinai, and the crossing of the Red Sea.

- **Mount Sinai**

For years, Bible maps have shown Mt. Sinai as being near the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula, Egypt. But Galatians 4:25 says very clearly that Mt. Sinai is in Arabia. The

Saudi Arabian government would not allow any archaeologists to search there. So, in 1988, two American adventurers, named Cornuke and Williams, launched a secret expedition, without permission, and discovered proof of the Exodus. We discussed their findings in the first edition of this book.

The Arabs have claimed, for centuries, that the mountain, "Jabal al Lawz," also known as "Jebel Musa," is the true Mt. Sinai. It's in present-day Saudi Arabia. (So the map in the back of your Bible is probably wrong.) It shouldn't surprise us that Mt. Sinai is in Arabia. *Just read Galatians 4:25.*

Approaching the mountain, they found a large plain (17:1-8), with a hill (v.10) overlooking it. This could possibly be Rephidim, where the Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites. Then they explored Jabal al Lawz itself, and the area around it. They found every one of the features mentioned in the Bible account.

Comment	Verses
They found grazing grounds	Exodus 3:1
They also found a natural one-man shelter, formed by two large rocks fallen against each other.	Exodus. 33:20-22
They found a cave	I Kings 19:8-9
They found a dried up riverbed from an ancient brook	Deuteronomy. 9:1
There was also a series of rock piles, each about four feet high and eight feet wide, spaced evenly apart, in a line, at the foot of the mountain, around the front of it. Nature, by itself, neither spaces stones so evenly, nor piles them so high. So it is not unreasonable to allow that these could be the boundary markers set up by Moses	Exodus 19:12
Closer to the foot of the mountain, within the circle of the marker-piles, there was another old altar	Exodus. 20:24-26
On the other side of the markers, further back from the base of the mountain, was an old altar made of stones, with the unmistakable picture of a cow etched onto one of the stones	Exodus. 32:19
They found one other feature, at the top of the mountain, which seemed neither to be natural, nor man-made. They described what they saw with these words: " <i>The dirt at the summit of Jabal al Lawz was as black as obsidian. The rocks were like lumps of coal.</i> "	Exodus 19:8

Another man named Ron Wyatt has also visited that mountain-top. I only recently learned about his work there. He reports that the rock actually IS obsidian. (Obsidian is burnt rock and sand that has turned to glass, ie: volcanic glass)

- **Red Sea Crossing**

Look at the story of the Exodus. Go back to the beginning of the Exodus, before they reached the Mountain. When traveling through "The wilderness of the Red Sea," (Ex. 13:18), with the Egyptians pursuing them, The Lord told Moses to turn southward. So Moses obeyed, and entered a canyon, a "wadi," which, from man's perspective, was not a wise thing to do. That's why the Israelites despaired, because they were hemmed in on both sides with no escape. Pharaoh knew this. He says so in Exodus 14:3.

The Wadi Watir, fits this description perfectly. It snakes around between two huge canyon walls, and finally opens up onto a beach (Nuweiba, Egypt) large enough to support such a great number of people as Moses had with him. There is even an old wreck of an Egyptian fortress on the northern flank of the beach. That fortress (Pihahiroth) might have been the place referred to as “Migdol” in Exodus 14:2.

The Israelites did not travel south along the Sinai Peninsula’s western coast, as Cornuke and Williams had thought. They apparently had headed E.S.E. across the peninsula. Cornuke and Williams made some great discoveries. But, with regard to the crossing site, they were disappointed when they put on scuba gear and went looking for evidence underwater. It now appears that the reason they didn’t find anything is that they were in the wrong place. Ron Wyatt has probably found the right place.

Here is some of the evidence that Wyatt ostensibly found:

- 1) First of all, he found two very old markers, one on each side of the crossing site, marking the exact place where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. One of the columns, found lying on its side near the water’s edge, was more exposed to the elements all these years, so the writing is gone. But the other column, found on the opposite shore, still had some very early Hebrew writing on it. All that can be read are the words, *“Egypt, death, water, pharaoh, Yahweh, and Solomon.”* Wyatt believes Solomon put these here, 400 years after the Lord led the Israelites out of Egypt.
- 2) The crossing site he found is deep enough that it would definitely have required a miracle to part the waters, and they would have seemed like walls on either side, as the Bible reports. This underwater ridge, where they could have walked, is about a half-mile wide. However, on one side of that ridge, the depth plunges to 3000 feet, and on the other, to 5000.
- 3) When the search crew dove at this site, they found remarkable coral formations. There was almost no underwater foliage at all – except for these coral “trees” that dotted the bottom. Coral cannot grow unless it attaches to something. The rough outline of the item it grows on is often visible. The formations on the bottom were like axles and wheels, long ago having disappeared under the growing corals. After studying the corals a bit, the crew was able to make out the hub-and-spokes pattern of the wheels. Almost all of the wheels have either four or six spokes. There was only one time in Egyptian history when BOTH kinds of wheels were used simultaneously – the 18th dynasty – the time of Moses.

There is one photograph of a particular wheel, fairly easy to identify, not completely encrusted in coral, that is really remarkable, provided it is authentic. Human bones are still there as well, and the bones of horses. This evidence has, according to Mr. Wyatt, been verified in forensic labs.

About halfway across the sea, everything -- the coral and the bones — disappears. That also tells you something. These are not natural formations. Whatever those corals started growing on only made it halfway across the sea, and then went no further. If this evidence is genuine, I’d say we’re looking at the remains of Pharaoh’s army.

Advanced Medical Knowledge

Archaeology has proven that the books of Moses were really written at that early time. Also, the writer is very familiar with Egyptian geography. He furthermore uses some Egyptian words. But yet -- NONE of the filthy, disease-causing medical practices of the Egyptians can be found in Moses' books (ie: A number of their treatments involved the excrement of different animals.)

In fact, Moses' way of treating diseases shows a modern knowledge of germs and how they spread --- a knowledge that Moses could not possibly have had! This is an example of what some call, "Scientific Foreknowledge."

Of the 613 laws in the Books of Moses, 213 are public health regulations. For example, few of them are:

- **Leviticus. 7:24**, forbids the Israelis to eat any animal that has died a natural death, or that was killed by another animal.
- **Leviticus.11:35**, told them not to touch anything on which a dead carcass had lain.
- **Numbers 19:14-19**, commanded anyone who had been in contact with a dead body to remain in quarantine, separated from others, for seven days. Then they were to wash in RUNNING water and "hyssop", their clothes as well, before being pronounced clean. (hyssop oil, we now know, is 50% carvacrol, an antifungal and antibacterial agent still used today.)
- **Leviticus13:42-46**, describes a reddish white skin infection with swelling around it, on the front or back of one's head. This is an infectious skin disease and must, by law, be quarantined. The infected person was commanded to live outside the camp, until the infection healed.
- **Leviticus 14:8, and 15:13**, when someone's open sores did heal, they still had to wait another seven days, then shave off all their hair, wash in running water, and wash their clothes also, before being examined and pronounced clean by the priest.
- **Deuteronomy 23:12-13**, commands the people to have a place outside the camp, where they go to relieve themselves. They are to carry a small spade with them to bury their poop. Numbers 31:19-24 tells them to purify everything captured from an enemy. Put metallic things, or things of stone through fire. Other things, wooden, or leather for example, should be washed with water. Finally,
- Genesis 17:12 commands the Israelis to circumcise their newborn babies on the eighth day of their young lives. Why on the eighth day? Well, a few years ago, researchers discovered that our levels of vitamin K and "prothrombin", two important blood clotting agents, are at their all time maximum level, 110% of normal, for just a short time, on the eighth day of our lives.

Europe went through the great Plague in the fourteenth century. It is believed that over 30% of the entire European population died of the disease. It was finally brought under control when some churchmen in Vienna turned to the Bible for an answer, and found it in these laws of Moses. Word spread, and soon all Europe was following their example. Unfortunately, however, the Europeans returned to their old, unsanitary ways as soon as the crisis was over. Even as late as 1845, doctors would routinely examine a dead corpse, then move on to the living without washing their hands. As a result, the world suffered more epidemics, and the death rates in hospitals were appalling. A Hungarian doctor named Ignaz

Semmelweis tried to change things, but he was ridiculed. It wasn't until early in the twentieth century that we really understood the connection between cleanliness and health. So if the knowledge of the ancient Israelites didn't come from God, where DID it come from?

Jericho, the Long Day, and Samson

- ***Jericho***

The old city of Jericho (Joshua 6) fell about forty years after the Exodus, when Israel finally entered the promised land. Jericho was excavated by John Garstang in the 1930's and the walls were found to have fallen all around the city, just as Joshua reported it. The amazing thing is that walls don't fall down that way -- all around the city. Armies always enter through a breach at some point. But only the North wall, with houses against it, remained standing. Rahab's house, perhaps? Furthermore, according to Garstang, the walls had fallen outward, not inward, which is something you won't see anywhere else.

Kathleen Kenyon did another dig, years later, and said the walls were too old to be those of Joshua's time. But her findings were not universally accepted. Even today, people live behind walls that were built hundreds of years before their time.

- ***The Long Day***

In Joshua 10: 12-15, the Bible tells us that the Lord lengthened a day (maybe by a whole 12 extra hours) in order to help Joshua win a battle. There is evidence from outside the Bible that "the longest day" really did happen. The Greek historian Herodotus wrote that a priest of Egypt showed him a record of a very long day. Chinese writings also talk about a long day during the reign of an ancient emperor.

- ***Samson***

The story of Samson, (Judges 13-16) might seem to be fiction. But two very old Philistine temples have been uncovered near Tel Aviv. One is at Tel Oasile and the other is at Tel Mione. Both temples feature two wooden pillars in the middle, about a meter and a half apart, which carried the weight of the entire roof. The pillars were held on their bases only by the weight. Under these conditions, a large, very strong man might have been able to push the pillars off their stone bases, if he had super-human strength. And Samson's strength came from God.

Contradictions in Counting

The Old Testament text is amazingly accurate, and well preserved. But, as Christians, we are not afraid to look at the Bible with our eyes open. I read something in Eerdman's Handbook to the Bible that, to the extent that I was able to investigate, rings true. The ancient Hebrew writing system, like old Arabic, had no vowels, and also had no symbol for zero. So, numbers were sometimes confused. Documents in all the ancient languages have this same problem. That's why 2 Sam.10:18 counts 700 chariots, while I Chron. 19:18 counts 7000 chariots. Numbers are often off by a factor of ten. II Kings 24:8 is another example. In this passage Jehoiachin is said to be 18 years old, but in II Chron. 36:9 he's just eight.

The fact that the Hebrew scribes didn't try to correct the mistake (not knowing what the correct number would be), but that they faithfully copied it out, shows the great respect they had for the Scriptures.

Two words in particular have caused additional problems -- "*eleph*" and "*alluph*". Without vowel marks, the two words look identical. But *eleph* means 'thousand', while *alluph* means 'general', 'captain' or 'heavy infantry'. So, for example, Judges 20:2 should

probably be read as 400 heavy infantry, 400 heavily armed professional soldiers. But in my English Bible, it reads "400,000 troops."

In the first chapter of Numbers we're told that the 70 people of Joseph's day had multiplied to two or three million by the time of the Exodus. This could be another case of the problem with numbers. But if the numbers are corrected, to allow for the confusion with eleph, alluph, and the lack of a zero, you end up with a total fighting force of 18,000 for the Israelis, and a total population of about 72,000 souls.

The confusion caused by these two words and the lack of a zero causes trouble in other places as well. In David's census, in I Samuel 24:9, the figures probably should be 120,000 men of military age, plus 100 captains. So the whole population of David's time might have been about 500,000. I've just given a few examples. I'm sure there are others.

Israel's Kingdom and Captivity

Ipuwer, that old ancient Egyptian priest who wrote about the plagues of Egypt, also reported that a foreign tribe came out of the desert and conquered Egypt. That tribe was the Hyksos. The Hyksos spoken of in secular history could very likely be the Amalekites of the Bible, according to Velikovsky. They dominated Egypt until they were defeated by Saul, which would explain the good relations with Egypt in David and Solomon's time. Of course, as with all nations, the good relations didn't last long.

Later on, when the kingdom was divided and weakened, Israel's enemies attacked. The records of those enemy nations provide some of the best proof of the Bible's accuracy. See how the Lord makes everything work for his purpose!

- **I Kings 14:25-26** - The invasion of Israel by Shishak is on record at the Temple of Amun in Thebes, Egypt.
- **II Kings 1:1, 3:4-27** - The revolt of Moab against Israel is mentioned in the Mesha inscription.
- **II Kings 17 and 18** - Sargon II of Assyria's capture of Samaria is described on his palace walls.
- **II Kings 18:13-16** - Sennacherib of Assyria recorded his campaign against Judah on the Taylor Prism. (He calls it a victory, but basically admits that he never took Jerusalem.)
- **II Kings 19:37** - Sennacherib's son, Esarhaddon, recorded for us the story of his father's murder.
- **II Kings 24:10-14** - Nebuchadnezzar wrote about the fall of Jerusalem in the Babylonian Chronicles.
- **Ezra 1:1-4, 6:3-4** - The Cyrus Cylinder tells about the decision of Cyrus the Great to let the Jews return to Jerusalem.

There are also a series of letters that were discovered, the "El-Amarna letters." They were sent by rulers in Palestine, asking Egypt for help against an invading people called the Habiru. Originally, the Habiru were thought to be the Israelis. But the place names and names of the rulers don't match the time of the Exodus. They are, on the other hand, a perfect match for Ahab's day, when he was threatened by the Moabites and Hittites. Even the commanding generals' names are correct.

In Daniel 5, the Babylonian ruler at the time of Daniel is called "Belshazar". Critics claimed for a long time that this was an error, since there never was a king by that name. But then records were discovered, which state that Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, spent the last few years of his reign in Arabia. The record states that he left his son, Belshazar, in the capital to rule the empire in his absence.

Fulfilled and Unfolding Prophecy

Another form of confirmation for the truth of the Old Testament is in fulfilled prophecy.

- 1) **Isaiah 43:5-8, Jeremiah 30:3, and Jeremiah 31:10-11**, These passages plainly state that Israel will be brought back after having been scattered around the world, and will be re-established in Palestine. That happened in 1948.
- 2) **Jeremiah 31:38-40**. In this passage, the rebirth of Jerusalem is foretold in great detail. Jeremiah even predicted the directions in which and the extent to which the city would grow, which areas outside the old city would be built up first, and where the new suburbs would be built. This was all predicted 2600 years ago, and it has all come true.
- 3) **Ezekiel 38:1-9**. *The Word of the Lord came to me, "Son of Man. set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, ... Persia, Cush, and Put, ... also Gomer, with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah, from the far North, with all its troops."* This prophecy, apparently related to the end times, while not yet fulfilled, seems to be becoming clearer. I can't claim to be sure about the interpretation, but it tells about the invasion of Israel by a number of nations, all of which are, today, part of the Muslim world. Gog will be some particular leader – of the land of Magog, which, according to Josephus, the Jewish historian, used to be called Scythia. The old tribe called Scythians lived in South of Russia. today they would be the "Stans," Tajikstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakstan, Kyrgystan, and Uzbekistan. In Genesis 10:2 you'll find Meshech and Tubal, sons of Japheth. Their descendants are believed by some modern day researchers to have settled in southern Iran, Turkey, and Russia. Persia is Iran. Cush is modern day Ethiopia, and Put is modern day Libya.

Ezekiel, 1000 years before Muhammad, knew that these tribes would be against Israel. David, in Psalm 83:2-8, makes a similar prediction. But these men lived more than a thousand years before the Anti-Jewish Islamic faith was born. How could they know that these particular tribes would hate the Jewish people? Were they really just lucky guesses?

- 4) **Zechariah 14:4**, Jesus' Return. Finally, there is another intriguing prophecy, about Jesus' coming return: *On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.* The Mount of Olives sits right on top of the Dead Sea Rift. Avi Shapira, head of the Geophysical Institute of Israel's seismology division, said on August 27th, 1999, that Israel can expect a major quake some time in the next 50 years. Could that be the one Zechariah meant? Maybe.

About Israel

The Palestinians are not "occupied." There never was any country of Palestine. And there have been Jewish people living in that part of the world, alongside the Arabs, since ancient times. Jewish people PAID for their lands long before the State of Israel was ever reconstituted. When the whole area was given back to the Jews, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem declared war on them, despite the Jews calling on Arabs to live within Israel in peace, as they always had.

Arabs have more rights and better incomes in Israel than they have in any Arab country. They can vote, and they hold office in government, with all the rights of citizenship. Arabs can take Jewish people to court and they often win. Are Jewish people treated as well in Arab countries? Not at all. Arab school-children are taught that Jewish people are sub-human.

If the Arabs really were interested in helping those in refugee camps, they could easily take the people in, just as Israel took in all the Jews that were driven out of Arab countries. But the Arabs instead use the Palestinians as pawns in a great propaganda war against Israel – a war that they seem to be winning. The whole world is already against the Jews, even now. That’s the truth. Armageddon will happen at some point in time.

Israel is not any different from other nations. Like any country, its government makes good decisions and bad decisions. Sometimes they ARE unfair. But they have also shown remarkable restraint, considering that the Arabs have kept them on a war footing during the entire history of their country, from the start.

The prophecies do make it clear that when that final battle comes, the Lord will be fighting on the side of Israel.

I don't know about you, but if I am still around when it happens, I don't want to be on the wrong side of that fight.

In Conclusion

As stated earlier, although we take our orders from the New Testament, these “First Books from God,” the books of the Old Testament, are still important for three reasons.

- First of all, they teach us about God’s character. We know how God loves us and cares for us from how he took care of his people in the Old Testament.
- Secondly, the Old Testament is the “coffee” into which the “cream” of the New Testament was poured, and, like cream and coffee, the two are inseparable. Jesus, and by extension the Christian church, is Jewish.
- Finally, and most importantly of all, the Old Testament prophecies provide an “address in history” for Jesus. The Old Testament is the complete story of how God prepared the world for the coming of his Son, Jesus.

For us Christians who follow him, Jesus is our very life. As Paul says,

“For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

CHAPTER SEVEN THE SON

Jesus is not my prophet. He's not my apostle. Jesus is my GOD. This is not because of some myth that developed over time. The facts argue against that. The facts indicate that Jesus really did claim to be God. The question is whether or not you believe him. Josh McDowell points out that if you don't believe him, you must conclude that he is either insane, or else he is a liar. Those are the only choices you have. If he was not insane, and if he was not a liar, then he IS your LORD, and you should follow him as such.

His early followers believed him because he did something so wonderful that they HAD to believe him. He rose from the dead, and he promised that we will too. His followers were so amazed at this that they dedicated their lives to spreading his Word.

Almighty God gives out perfect JUSTICE. But He also is the very essence of perfect LOVE. How can the two go together? The essence of justice is punishment for sins; the essence of love is forgiveness. Islam has no answer to this dilemma. JESUS, not as prophet, but as he truly is – as GOD – IS the ANSWER.

God so loved all the people of the world that he gave HIS son as the sacrifice to pay for OUR sin. He loves EVERYBODY, and because of his sacrifice his forgiveness is now available to everybody. The door to Heaven – ETERNAL LIFE – is OPEN.

- **John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.*
- **Ephesians 2: 3-9** *“All of us lived...at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts...But, because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... It is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast”.*

All that's required is to admit to God that you are a sinner, and to trust in Jesus' sacrifice – NOT in your own good works, because you don't actually have any good works. Nobody does, not even Mother Theresa – not from God's point of view. Be honest, is there anything that you or I or anyone can do that is going to IMPRESS God?

Finally, having admitted that we are unfit for Heaven, incapable of reaching it, we just ask Jesus to come into our life. And he does. Just talk to the Lord as you would to anyone. There is no mysterious ritual – just talk to him. Ask him to come into your life, and he will. But he is a gentleman. He won't come in unless he is invited.

One last thing: Line up all the world's religions and you will see that they ALL have similar messages. You must do something to earn points toward your final reward. And they all result in the same thing – spiritual pride. I've earned more points than you, so I feel I'm a better person. But believing in Jesus is different. I start off by recognizing that no matter what I do, I cannot score even a single point. I'm HOPELESS without Christ. So, although my human nature always wants to be proud, I really have no reason to be arrogant about anything. Everything I am is because of Jesus. I did nothing to deserve it. And that IS the TRUTH.

Jesus Fulfilled the Prophecies.

- **Isaiah 9:6** *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

From the time when Adam and Eve first fell into sin, throughout all the thousands of years of human history covered by the Old Testament, God had been promising mankind a Messiah. ("Messiah" is the Hebrew word for the Anointed One, as a king is anointed.) As the years went by, through his prophets, God gradually gave the Jewish people an ever clearer picture of who that Messiah would be.

No	Prophecies	Verses
1	It was predicted that he would be from Abraham's family	Gen. 12:1-3
2	It was predicted that He would be from his son, Judah	Gen. 49:10
3	He would be from the family of Judah's descendant, Jesse	Is 11:1
4	He would be a direct descendant of King David	2 Sam 7:12ff
5	He has existed since ancient times, and yet he would be born of a virgin	Is 7:14
6	He'd be an ordinary child, in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2
7	He'd be a prophet and a priest	Deut 18:18, Ps 110:4
8	A messenger would announce his coming	Is 40:3
9	His work would begin in Galilee	Is 9:1
10	He'd do miracles of healing	Isaiah 35:5-6
11	He'd speak in parables, not saying things directly	Ps 78:2
12	He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey	Zech 9:9
13	People from many nations would follow him	Is 60:3
14	His own people, the Jews, would reject him	Is 53:3
15	He'd be betrayed by a friend	Ps 41:9
16	He'd be sold to his enemies for 30 pieces of silver, but the money would later be thrown back into the temple	Zech 11:12-13
17	His closest followers would run away	Zech 13:7
18	He'd be accused by false witnesses	Ps 35:11,
19	But He would not answer them	Is 53:7
20	He'd be beaten	Is 53:5
21	He'd be spit upon	Is 50:6
22	His hands and feet would be pierced	Ps 22:16
23	His clothes would be gambled for	Ps 22:18
24	He'd be crucified with thieves	Is 53:12
25	He'd be thirsty, and they'd give him gall and vinegar to drink	Ps 69:21
26	He would pray for his persecutors	Is 53:12
27	Even his last words, spoken as he died, were predicted	Ps 22:1 and 31:5
28	He would die exactly 483 years after the declaration that Jerusalem was to be rebuilt	Dan 9:25-26
29	His side would be pierced	Zech 12:10
30	None of his bones would be broken	Ps 34:20
31	Darkness would come over the land	Am 8:9
32	He would be buried in a rich man's tomb	Is 53:9
33	He would not stay dead	Ps 16:10, Ps 30:3,

		Ps 41:10, Ps 118:17, Hos 6:2
35	After coming back to life, he would be taken up into Heaven	Ps 68:18
36	There he would have a throne on the right of his father, and people of all countries would worship him	Ps 110:1, Dan 7:13-14

The first of these prophecies was written down about 1,400 years before Jesus was born. The last of them was recorded around 400 years before his birth. We actually have a scroll of Isaiah, and a scroll of the Psalms, from Qumran. Both were produced about a hundred years before Jesus' birth. And the prophecies are there! All of these prophecies, taken together, serve as an "address in history".

One of the first prophecies listed was Genesis 49:10, *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes"*.

"Shiloh" is one of the names of the Messiah. The Jewish leaders knew, as we do, the passage means the Messiah would come before the Jews lose their authority to pass and enforce their own laws. When Rome took over Palestine, they saw the scepter starting to depart. Later, in 11 A.D., the Romans severely restricted the legislative and judicial authority of the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin. The Jewish leaders at that time recorded their thoughts in the "Talmud", which we, people of the present age, can still read today. It states the following in chapter 4, vol. 37: *"Woe unto us, for the scepter has been taken from Judah, and the Messiah has not appeared"*.

This is documented proof from outside the Bible. The Jews were looking for Messiah to come at precisely the time in history when Jesus was walking the hills of Palestine as a 15 year old boy. He was right there in front of them, but they didn't know it.

We've listed more than 30 prophecies here. There are others as well. What are the chances of a man fulfilling all of them, by coincidence alone? Professor Peter Stoner used proven techniques of statistical probability in an attempt to answer that question. He narrowed his analysis down to just eight of the prophecies. Despite using a very cautious approach, he found that the chance of a man fulfilling all eight prophecies was one in 10 to the 17th power. The American Scientific Affiliation verified that his work was scientifically accurate and objective.

(It's an easy calculation. If I have five shirts, what are the chances that you can predict which shirt I wear tomorrow? One chance in five. If I have five shirts and five pairs of pants, what are the chances that you can predict my whole outfit? The chances are one-fifth times one-fifth. That's one chance in twenty-five. Now you go ahead and try to apply this principle to the prophecies about Jesus and see what you come up with.)

Of course Jesus could have studied the prophecies, and tried to make his life fit them. But the exact year and place of his birth was predicted. It was predicted that his parents would move to Nazareth. How his enemies would react to him was predicted, and how they would kill him and what they would do to his dead body. These are things that a person cannot plan.

Jesus not only fulfilled the eight prophecies Stoner examined. Altogether there are over sixty. He is, without a doubt, the Messiah, the Christ. (Christ is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, Messiah.)

He Claimed To Be God.

The last prophecy we listed is Daniel 7:13-14. In these verses Daniel describes his vision of the "Ancient of Days", our Father God, welcoming the "Son of Man". We quote it:

- Daniel 7:13-14 *"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...He was given authority, glory and sovereign power. All peoples, nations, and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed".*

The "one like a son of man" is clearly the Messiah. All people will worship him. The Jews understood this prophecy in the same way. So, when Jesus called himself The Son of Man, they knew what he meant. He was calling himself God. This was his favorite title. It's used 83 times in the New Testament. When he was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, he quoted Daniel 7:13-14.

- **Matthew 26: 62-68** *Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus..., "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God. "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied, "But I say to all of you: In the future, you will see the Son of Man, sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of Heaven." Then the High Priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy!"..."He is worthy of death!" they answered. Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ, who hit you?"*

Obviously, Jesus had told the High Priest, quite plainly, that he was the Son of God. That's why he was sentenced to death. It's blasphemy for an ordinary man to make such a claim -- and the High Priest refused to believe Jesus was divine. "The Son of Man" was a title for the Messiah.

The entire Bible proclaims Jesus to be the Son of God. But please don't misunderstand. It has nothing to do with sexual relations, in the way that human beings are born. Jesus himself has no beginning. He is referred to, in the last book of the Bible, as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end of all things. The *"only begotten"* or *"one and only"* son in John 3:16 refers to Jesus' special relationship with the Father, and the authority that he therefore holds (Matt 25:31-35). In Arabic, Jesus is not the *"walad"* of God. He's the *"ibn"* of God. In Arabic, a *"walad"* is a son born of sexual relations. *"Ibn"* is used in a wider sense. It describes the essence of something. A sailor, for example, is a "son of the sea"

The Quran claims Jesus never said he was God's son. Yet the record of the gospels shows that he often spoke, in many ways and to many people, of being God's Son.

- In **Matthew 16:15-17**, Peter says to Jesus, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!"* Jesus then blessed Peter for his statement of faith
- In **Mark 2:5ff**, Jesus told a man that all his sins were forgiven. The teachers of religious law were shocked by this. They responded, *"Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*
- In **Luke 3:22**, It is recorded that a voice came from heaven saying, *"You are my beloved son. In you I am well pleased."*
- **John 1:1** says, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* In verse 14, *"The Word became flesh and lived among us...the one*

and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.... Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Islamists often claim that John 1:1 should say the Word "was of God" (theou, ΘΕΟΥ). But out of all our ancient manuscripts of John's Gospel, not a single one has that. Every single manuscript says the Word "was God" (theos, ΘΕΟΣ).

- In **John 5:17-18**, on another occasion, the Jewish religious leaders tried to kill him because *"He was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God."*

He said he was the "Judge of all men" (John 5:27ff), a title reserved for God (Joel 3:12). When asked how he could possibly have been alive before Abraham, Jesus used God's unique name as his own by saying, *"Before Abraham was, I AM!"* (Jn.8v58: not, "**I was**", but "**I am**") The name Jehovah (Exodus 3:14) is the English spelling of the Hebrew for "**I AM**", God's name.

- In **John 10:30-33**, He said, *"I and my Father are one."* It continues, *"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him."* When Jesus asked why, they replied, *"Because you, being a man, make yourself out to be God."*
- In **John 14**, Jesus said, *"I am in the Father, and the Father is in me...It is the Father living in me, doing his work."*
- Read **John 20:26-31**. Thomas, upon seeing Jesus alive after he was crucified, exclaimed, *"My Lord and my God!"* Jesus accepted this worship and told Thomas it was good that he had finally come to believe.

Islamists claim Thomas was swearing, as in, "My god!" But Greek, the language of the New Testament, has a different structure for oaths. Furthermore, Jesus answered by saying, *"Because you have seen me, you have believed; Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed."* (John 20:29)

- In **Colosians 1: 16-17**, Jesus is shown as the primary force in creating and maintaining the universe.
- **Colosians 2:9** says, *"For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily."*
- **Titus 2:13** says he is, *"Our Great God and Savior."*

If you need stronger proof than anything mentioned thus far, we have it. But you need to learn one Greek word. It is pronounced PROS (as in CROSS) + KIN (as in IN) + EO (as in ECHO) == PROSKINEO. It means to, "worship God." □ΠΡΟΣΚΥΝΕΟ□□ "Proskineo" worship is for God alone!

- **Matthew 4:10** *"Jesus said to him, "...It is written: 'Worship (proskineo) the Lord, your God, and serve him only.'"*
- **Acts 10: 25-26** *"As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence (proskineo). But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."*
- **Revelation 19: 9-10** *"The angel said to me, "...These are the true words of God." At this I fell at his feet to worship (proskineo) him. But he said to me, "Do not do this! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship (proskineo) God! For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."*

Jesus accepts proskineo worship.

- **Matthew 2:11** *"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped (proskineo) him.(Alright, at that time he was a baby, and couldn't say no. But there are other verses.)"*

- **Matthew 14: 33** “Then those who were in the boat worshipped (*proskineo*) him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God!" (And Jesus did not try to stop them.)
- **Matthew 28: 9** “Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped (*proskineo*) him.” (And Jesus accepted this.)
- **Hebrews 1: 6-8** “When God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship (*proskineo*) him."....About the Son he says, "Your throne, Oh God, will last for ever and ever." (another quote of Daniel 7:14) JESUS ALLOWED HIS FOLLOWERS TO WORSHIP HIM AS GOD, AND PRAISED THEM FOR IT.
- **Revelation 1: 13-18** “And among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet...Then he placed his hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the first and the last...I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and ever!"

We Christians know that he is still alive, and that he is to be worshipped. It is not just some kind of irrational, religious nonsense. Some of our evidence is very subjective. That's true. Part of the reason I know Jesus lives is because he answers my prayers, helps me and always takes care of me. But our best evidence is historical, factual. There is a lot of evidence, for example, that Jesus really did come back to life on that first Easter, after being dead for about 39 hours.

He Rose from the Dead.

- 1) The early Christians claimed that they had seen Jesus alive, talked with him and spent time with him, after he had been killed on the cross. They claimed that more than 500 people saw him. Many of those who claimed to have seen him alive after his death were living in Jerusalem, or the surrounding area.
- 2) The tomb where Jesus was buried was within easy walking distance from the city of Jerusalem – just outside the city wall. So anybody in Jerusalem could have gone to look at the tomb, any time they wanted to.
- 3) During Jesus' life, the number of believers was very small. But the discovery of a large number of first century Christian graves has shown that within a few years of his death, there was already "an early, growing Christian community" in the center of Jerusalem.
- 4) Every argument that the Jewish religious leaders advanced against Christianity concentrates on explaining why the tomb was empty. They seem to agree that it was, in fact, empty. They never tried to stop Christianity by showing Jesus' dead body to the people. This would have been the obvious course of action, if they had had his body. Obviously, they didn't.
- 5) The followers of Jesus who wrote the New Testament all suffered severe persecution. Peter, Paul, and a few of the others endured slow, gruesome torture before being allowed to die. Yet none of them ever changed their testimony. Nobody would be willing to die the most painful death imaginable for something they KNOW is a LIE. The fact that they never changed their story leads this writer to consider the possibility that they were really telling the truth.
- 6) In first century Palestine, women were not allowed to testify in courts of law. The common attitude of men at that time was that women were untrustworthy. Yet all four accounts of the first Easter, all written by men, agree that women were the first witnesses of Jesus' rising. If the New Testament prophets were just creating their own story, they would not have involved women in it. No way!

EXPLAINING the EMPTY TOMB

1) The story that the religious leaders circulated to explain the empty tomb was that the disciples had stolen the body during the night. But this was never very convincing. Everybody in Jerusalem knew about the Roman guard.

The normal number of soldiers in a Roman guard unit was four. One would stand watch, while the others rested all around him, so that it would be impossible for him to lie down. According to the Roman historian, Polybius (book VI, 37-8), if a legionnaire were to somehow fall asleep on guard duty, his life was over. All four guards would be executed.

The Roman soldier carried a pike, a long shaft with a sharp iron head. He could charge with it or throw it. Once his right hand was free of the pike, he would draw his sword. In close combat, the last weapon he takes from his belt is the dagger on his left hip. The guards would work together, fighting as a unit. With backs to the wall and flanks protected, they could hold off a very large force.

The disciples demonstrated their fighting ability when Jesus was taken prisoner. Only two of the twelve had a "sword", probably just the kitchen-knife kind. Peter attacked an unarmed slave, missed, and only managed to slice off his ear. After that brief stand, the others all ran away. John Mark was so terrified that when he ran, his cloak fell off, and he ran naked into the woods (Mark 14:51). Peter cautiously followed the soldiers, at a distance, as they took Jesus away.

I don't think it's possible that the disciples defeated the guard and took the body. For one thing, Jesus' last command, before he was taken, was for Peter to put away his sword. If you've ever lost a loved one, you know how important those final words are.

But there's another reason that's much stronger. It's a fact that if Rome lost any of its soldiers that day, Jesus' followers would have been hunted down and destroyed like dogs within days. But, in fact, they were allowed to continue to preach openly, with no charges against them for many years afterward. They obviously had not been so foolish as to attack a Roman guard.

They couldn't have avoided the guard, and we know they didn't attack them. Hence, the disciples could not possibly have stolen the body.

2) Another popular idea is that Jesus didn't really die on the cross, but only fainted. He was revived inside the tomb, rolled away the stone, somehow avoided the guard, and walked away. This idea only survives because people no longer understand how completely the body is destroyed by the old Roman torture of crucifixion.

- First, Jesus was scourged. The whip that they used was a Roman "flagrum". The 3 long tails of this whip had sharp, jagged pieces of bone or metal tied into the ends. It would slice through the muscle, laying open the bones of the victim. The long tails of the flagrum gouged his back, then swung around and ripped open his chest. They struck low into his legs and groin, tearing open the flesh there as well. The Jewish whipping was limited to 39 lashes. But Jesus was whipped by Romans. His was probably more severe. By the time the slashing was finished, he had lost a lot of blood.
- Then, the crown of thorns was pushed into his skull. According to one doctor, "The stage was set for circulatory shock. He was probably in serious to critical condition before he was crucified." (Skeptics, 120)

- He was also beaten by the soldiers. His face would be cut and swollen; possibly some teeth missing. Then he was made to carry the beam of his cross, weighing about 45 kilograms, out to the place of execution.
- Arriving at Golgotha, they ripped off his clothes, pushed his torn, bleeding back against the rough, wooden cross and began to nail him to it. The seven inch long, square nails would have been pounded between the bones just below his wrists. Then another nail would have been hammered through both feet, pinned sideways in an awkward pose. (A person nailed to a cross in this manner can't breathe unless he tries to lift himself up with each breath. But lifting himself up causes screaming pain. His wounds fester, and gangrene sets in. Finally, after a day of agony that really does last 1000 years, he'll die of suffocation, no longer able to lift himself up. Dying was a slow, terrible process. But nobody ever survived a crucifixion. The Romans feared the very mention of the word, "cross.")
- The soldiers made sure he was dead by running one of their pikes through his heart. The head of that spear was as big as a man's hand. So later, (Mark 15: 44-45), when the centurion in charge was asked if Jesus was really dead, he confirmed it. John was watching when they pierced Jesus with the spear. (John 19:34-35) He reported "a sudden flow of blood and water." The apostle was surprised to see this, and seems to believe that he had seen some kind of miracle. In fact, what he had seen was:
"Semi-solid dark red clot seeping out, distinct and separate from the accompanying watery serum. This is evidence of massive clotting of blood in the main arteries, and is exceptionally strong medical proof of death. It is all the more impressive because the evangelist could not possibly have realized its significance to a pathologist. The 'blood and water' from the spear-thrust is proof positive that Jesus was already dead." (Green, Evidence, 225)
- Finally, before being buried, the body was wrapped with long strips of cloth, all glued together with sticky, sweet-smelling spices. The gummy ointments converted the wrappings into a hard body-tight casing. The weight of these spices was about seventy-five pounds according to John 19:39. Another respected teacher, Gamaliel, had been buried with 85 pounds of spices, according to Josephus. So, once again, John is historically credible. But here's the main point: How would a man free himself from all that, especially a weakened man, severely wounded from the cross?

3) Then, there is the "wrong tomb" theory, which states that they only thought the tomb was empty because they went to the wrong one. But John says in 20: 3-9 of his testimony that they saw the empty wrappings. The hard shell of linen strips, cemented together by the gummy herbs, was still there, including the wrappings for his head. Well, this tells me they had the right tomb. I don't think any other tombs in the area had a set of empty grave clothes in them. We're also told that there was a space between the body wrappings, where Jesus' neck had been. It sounds as if the wrappings were undisturbed, still all stuck together like a shell -- but no longer containing a body, as if Jesus had passed through them when he rose. John says, referring in the third person to himself, "He saw and believed!" Seeing the body-wrappings lying there with no corpse would sure make a believer out of me!

4) Some of the sophisticated, sophomoric critics claim that the followers of Jesus were all hallucinating, seeing illusions. But according to the four gospels, they were as shocked as you or I would be when they saw him standing there, and wouldn't believe it was really him, until he sat down and ate a meal with them. He appeared to lots of people in the same room

at the same time, traveled the roads of Palestine with them, stayed with them and taught them for forty days. An illusion cannot do all that. (Acts 13:31)

5) The Islamic idea, as I understand it, is that God made Judas to look like Jesus, so that it was really Judas who was crucified. But that makes Jesus into a liar, because he allowed his disciples to believe that he had been killed, when he actually had not. (Even Islam recognizes Jesus as a prophet.) Besides, although we cannot quite PROVE that Jesus rose from the dead, we can come close to proving, at least, that the tomb was empty. But why was the tomb empty if it were Judas who was killed? Maybe Judas was crucified, and Jesus was immediately taken up into Heaven. But then, in that case, who appeared to the disciples and taught them afterwards? Judas?

There are only two options left. Either Jesus really did rise from the dead, as the writers of the New Testament testified, OR the four Gospels are complete fiction -- nothing more than a fanciful story.

IN Conclusion

People don't rise from the dead. But what if he really was God, as he claimed? According to those Gospels, he became a man for this very purpose -- to die, as a PERFECT sacrifice for our sin. Our sin separates us from God. We cannot ever be good enough to lift ourselves into heaven. NONE of us can. So God himself paid for our sins. He did this because he LOVES each and every one of us. That's why, as we said earlier, the Gospel is a love story.

So, finally, it all comes down to whether or not you believe the witnesses. They are the APOSTLES of Christianity.

CHAPTER EIGHT :
THE WITNESSES, OUR APOSTLES
(Those to Whom God's Word was Revealed)

Matthew Levi , A Galilean Jew, he formerly worked as tax collector for the Romans, but became a disciple of Jesus. He was probably the secretary of Jesus' band of followers, writing down the main points of Jesus' sermons. Later, he wrote the first gospel.

John Mark , He was from Jerusalem, Barnabas' cousin, and went with Paul on his first mission trip but deserted him. Paul held it against him at first. But later on Mark became a great comfort to Paul when Paul was in Prison. He was also very close to Peter, as his interpreter. John Mark was the author of the second gospel, The Gospel According to Mark. He listened to Peter's sermon describing Jesus' life and wrote everything down. (The case has been made, based on passages from Acts and Paul's writings, that when John Mark left Paul, it was so he could meet with Peter to show him the gospel he had written.)

Luke , He was a Greek, and a highly educated physician, as well as Paul's travel companion. He interviewed all Jesus' early followers and wrote a detailed history of Jesus' ministry. Then, afterward, he continued his history book with "Acts," a history book about the growth of the early Christian Church.

John , He was a Galilean Jew, formerly a fisherman, and a close companion to Jesus. Based on Matt. 27:56, Mark 15:40, and John 19:25, he may have been Jesus' cousin. He wrote the fourth gospel, the only one that includes the earliest period of Jesus' ministry. He also wrote 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, and the Revelation. The Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, has a lot of prophecies concerning the last days. John reportedly lived into his 90s. That means that some of our oldest Bible manuscripts were probably made while he was still alive.

Simon Peter , He was a Galilean Jew, formerly a fisherman, and a close companion to Jesus. He often took a leadership role among Jesus' disciples and in the early church at Jerusalem. Besides Mark's gospel, Peter wrote the 1st and 2nd book of Peter.

Paul , He was fully Jewish, but born a Roman citizen. Formerly called Saul, he was a former member of the strictest sect of the Jews. He saw Jesus in person. But it was after Jesus died and rose from the dead. Paul wrote 13 or 14 books of the New Testament, depending on whether or not he wrote the book of Hebrews. Most of these books are actually letters written to the various groups of Christians that met in each others' homes. A lot of the letters deal with specific problems in those churches. A lot of our theology comes from Paul's books.

James , He was a Jew from Nazareth, and Jesus' own half-brother. But he apparently did not believe Jesus was The Son of God until later in his life. He wrote the book of James. His book is a very practical book on how to live as a Christian.

Jude , The brother of James, he was also Jesus' half-brother. He wrote the book of Jude.

The Apostles were united in the teachings of Jesus! The writings of Paul, and of the Gospel writers agree regarding every teaching of Jesus. For example:

Jesus died for our sins.	Matt. 26:28, Mark 10:45, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 1:7
Jesus' rising from the dead, shows us that we will also rise.	Romans 10:9, Luke 24:46-7, John 20:25-29
We cannot ever be good enough for Heaven.	Matt. 19:25-6, John 14:6, Eph. 2:8-9
We're saved by trusting in Jesus' sacrifice.	Mark 1:15, John 6:4, Romans 10: 9-10
Jesus changes our life completely.	Luke 14:25-35, John 15:1-11, II Cor. 5:17

Peter reached out to the Gentiles.

- **Acts 10:34** *“Then Peter began to speak, “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.”*

Paul reached out to the Gentiles.

- **Acts 21:17-20** *“When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly...James and all the elders were present. Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God”.*

Peter considered Paul's writings to be Holy Scripture.(Peter's words)

- **II Peter 3:15** *“...Just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction”.*
- **II Peter 1:21** *“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”.*

Paul considered Peter’s writings to be Holy Scripture. (Paul's words)

- **Galatians 2:7-10** *“For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry to the Gentiles. James, Peter, and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave Barnabas and I the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews”.*
- **I Corinthians 15: 3-5** *“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins ACCORDING TO the SCRIPTURES, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day ACCORDING TO the SCRIPTURES, that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep”.*

Anti-Christian theologians and Islamists continue to push the idea that Paul's Gentile Christians fought against Peter's Jewish Christians in the early days. However, the Christians of that early time have spoken out, today, to prove the critics wrong. Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles are buried together, in amongst each other, in the same tomb, just outside

Jerusalem. Christian symbols are on all of the coffins. Obviously this was a united community -- one in Christ.

We believe the Bible is God's Word, and that the authors of all its portions are prophets. Those who wrote the New Testament are called apostles. God spoke through them and the books they left us are God's Holy Word. We believe God gave them his thoughts. But our idea of prophecy, of revelation, is different from that of Muslim people. We don't believe that our apostles fell into some sort of trance, being completely overwhelmed by God's Spirit. God gave them the thought, and let them choose the words to express it, but guided them so that they wrote perfect Truth. Their personalities can be seen in their writings. God enjoys allowing us to express ourselves, as we serve him. God enjoys this because he loves us.

As stated in the previous chapter, the foundation of Christianity is our belief that Jesus really is who he claimed to be -- the Son of God. His rising from the dead, coming back to life, proved his claim to be true, and proved that one day, we will also rise. But the only way we can prove to you that he really did rise, is with the testimony of our witnesses, the men who wrote the books and letters which we call the New Testament. So, our task in this chapter is to show you why we believe that these men are trustworthy.

There are three reasons why I believe what the apostles wrote.

- I believe what the apostles wrote, because I know that at the time when they wrote down and circulated their accounts of Jesus' life, it was only about 15 to 20 years after the events that they describe. Other people who witnessed those same events would still be alive, and would challenge any false stories. So what we have here in the New Testament is a collection of historical accounts taken from eyewitness testimony. The New Testament is NOT just a collection of "pretty stories." But we've already discussed the dating of the New Testament documents in earlier chapters
- Their testimony has the sound of sincerity, the ring of truth to it. They themselves were skeptical, as we usually are, about supernatural events. Furthermore they were honest and open about their own worst character flaws -- their stupidity, cowardice, arrogance, and worldliness. In other words, they didn't try to make themselves look good. If they were honest about themselves, maybe they were also being honest about Jesus.
- The four Gospels are four corroborating witnesses. They tell the story from four different viewpoints, each with different details. Yet they all agree.

The Gospel writings have the "Sound of Truth".

1) *The apostles gained no profit from their prophecy.*

No wealth came to them, for their trouble. On the contrary, they lost everything, and spent the rest of their lives under severe persecution from their enemies. Paul writes,

- **I Corinthians 4:11-13**, *"To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty. We are in rags. We are brutally treated. We are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless. When we are persecuted, we endure it. When we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we are the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world."*
- **I Corinthians 11:24ff**, he lists some of his trials: *"Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked...I have been in danger from rivers, bandits, from my*

countrymen, and from the Gentiles (foreigners, non-Jews)...I have labored and toiled and often gone without sleep...often gone without food...cold and weak."

All the apostles faced these trials. Peter's difficult life ended around A.D. 67 when he was crucified upside down, in Rome. Paul died there too. Stephen's death is recorded in Acts. James was also killed. And of course, others were murdered as well, suffering hideous tortures in the process. Yet, through it all, they continued to tell anyone who would listen that Jesus was alive -- the Son of God. Why did they believe it so strongly? I think they believed in it strongly because they really saw him alive, after watching him die.

2) ***They were inclined to be skeptical, perhaps even more so than you or I.***

They lived in an age when a large portion of children were dead before their fifth birthday. They knew more about death than we modern people, and they knew that dead people don't "wake up". Just read the report of their actions, upon seeing Jesus -- alive:

- **Luke 24: 36-39** *"While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."*

The account goes on to say that they wouldn't believe it was really him, until he finally sat down and ate with them. When they later told Thomas that they had talked with Jesus, Thomas replied, *"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side (Where the spear pierced him), I will not believe."* (John 20: 25)

3) ***They openly discussed their own worst faults.***

The writers, our apostles, were sometimes very slow to understand what Jesus was telling them. They don't hide this when they describe their time with him:

- **Mark 4: 13** Jesus said to them, *"Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"*
- **Mark 7: 18** *"Are you so dull?"* He asked.

Sometimes they were cowards, like all men. And they didn't hide this fact either, when they wrote:

- **Mark 4: 40** *"He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"*
- **Mark 9: 32** But they did not understand what he meant. And they were afraid to ask him about it.
- **Matthew 26: 73-75** *"After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, 'Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away.' Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, 'I don't know the man!'....and he went out and wept bitterly."*

Sometimes the apostles tell us how self-centered and argumentative they were:

- **Luke 9: 46-48** *“An argument started among the disciples as to which one of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all -- HE is the greatest”.*
- **Matthew 26: 8-10** *“When the disciples saw this, they were indignant (angry). “Why this waste?” They asked. “This perfume could have been sold at a high price, and the money given to the poor!” Aware of this, Jesus said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.”*

Finally, sometimes the disciples only saw things from a human, worldly perspective:

- **Matthew 16: 22-23** *“Peter took him(Jesus) aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” He said, “This shall never happen to you!” Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”*

The extraordinary thing is that we know these weaknesses and shortcomings of the apostles precisely because THEY told us about them. They circulated their Gospels throughout the world of that time. Everybody became well acquainted with their personal failings. If they were this honest about their own character flaws, then they must have been writing the truth in other matters as well. They wrote about the miracles Jesus did, because they really saw him do them. And finally, they saw him after he rose from the dead.

4) Besides the above, They also realized how incredible their story is, and they often plead with us, in their writings, to believe them, repeating over and over that these things really happened:

- **Luke 1:1-3** Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who, from the first, were eyewitnesses...I myself have carefully investigated everything, from the beginning.
- **John 19: 35** *“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 is speaking of himself, but in the third person.)
- **Acts 2: 32** *“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact”.*
- **Acts 26: 25-26** *“I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied, “The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.”*
- **I Corinthians 15: 14** *“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is useless, and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God... But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!”*
- **2 Peter 1: 16** *“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”.*
- **I John 1: 3** *“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard”.*

The four Gospels are four witnesses to the same events, just as in a court of law. You are the jury.

If all four stories sounded exactly the same, even using the exact same words, and nobody could give many details -- what would you think? You'd think that they had all met

beforehand to make sure they told the same story, right? So it would probably be a cover-up, a lie of some kind.

On the other hand, if the four witnesses gave four different versions of the same story, and if they agreed, but they didn't all use the same words, then you would think that maybe they were telling the truth. You'd feel that way even more strongly if each of the witnesses were able to back up their story with personal details, and they each gave different details, but complementary ones. That is the "sound of truth."

The four gospels give the same basic account of Jesus' life, but they don't record the same events. John begins with the existence of "The Word," God's Son, long before he came to earth as the baby Jesus. John also records how Jesus met Andrew, Cephas (Peter), Philip and Nathaniel. The others don't mention it. Matthew and Mark are the only two that record Jesus paying the temple tax with a coin found in a fish. Luke doesn't mention Jesus walking on water, but the others do. Jesus' most famous sermon, the "Sermon on the Mount" is only recorded in Matthew and Luke.

When two of the witnesses describe the same event, the story is often not the same because they remember different details. For example, Matthew (17:14-18) and Mark (9:14-27) both tell of the same event in which Jesus healed a boy who had a demon. But Mark records more of the conversation between Jesus and the boy's father. That's evidence of credibility.

Sometimes the same event is seen from different points of view. When the women entered the tomb and found it empty on that first Easter, Mark 16:5 says that they saw an angel sitting to the right of them. Luke 24: 4 says that while they were wondering about the empty tomb, suddenly two angels stood beside them. This is not a contradiction. Maybe they saw one sitting, and as they saw him, he stood and was joined by another.

Obviously, Mark did not say there was ONLY one angel. I own two Bibles. If someone asks me, "Do you have a (one) Bible?, I'll say, "Yes, I do." If I have two, then I definitely have one.

Critics will say that the Bible really does contradict itself, and they'll point to hundreds of passages, demanding an immediate answer from you. If you can't think quickly enough, they'll say, "See! I told you!" The truth is that all the supposed contradictions, even the tiniest ones, have already been explained, very rationally, long ago, in books much better than this one. The best ones still in print are:

- *"WHEN CRITICS ASK,"* (Geisler and Howe, BakerBooks, 1997)
- *"ENCYCLOPEDIA of BIBLE DIFFICULTIES,"* (Gleason Archer)

The apostles knew each other well, and doubtless read each other's books. They would never have thought to change any of those troublesome passages that don't SEEM to agree, because they knew that indeed they DO agree.

When people speak the truth, there's no need to "get your story straight." Of course a person with a lawyer's hair-splitting, critical mind could probably rip apart an innocent letter I'd written home, showing a hundred supposed "contradictions." The problem is not in the letter, but in the mind that reads it.

A lot of people refuse to even consider the possibility that the Christian scriptures could be true. They won't take Jesus or Christianity seriously because, after all – who can believe a religion that says there is one God, but there are three persons who are God.

It's too bad that people allow this to stop them from learning more about Jesus. The truth is, the teaching of the Trinity is one of the best examples of a teaching that couldn't possibly have been invented by men.

CHAPTER NINE AN AMAZING GOD

We Christians believe in only ONE God. Our GOD is ONE GOD. *However, our God is not a simple God, easy for humans to understand.* This **ONE GOD** comes to us in three persons. Furthermore, this One God is a personal, loving friend to billions of Christians, all at the same time, and answers all their prayers.

These things are not easy to understand, but if we don't understand every little detail, that's okay. Does the clay understand the potter? We accept, on faith, that God is three in one. He is spiritual, after all, and not limited to our world. For the Muslim person who might be reading this book, please keep reading. Don't put it down yet. Your Quran CORRECTLY points out that God is ONE. The Bible says the same thing.

The confusion comes from the fact that God, in the Bible, goes a little further in describing himself to us. He gives us a little peek "under the hood." In other words, the Bible gives a little bit more information about God's inner workings than the Quran does.

You know that God is one. Do you, or I, know what God is made of? Of course not. He's spirit. Okay, what IS spirit? We don't know, and cannot imagine. Well, in the Bible, God gives us just a tiny hint of his nature, and we cannot understand even this little bit. All we know, is that there are three distinct persons, but He is ONE GOD.

See, in the Bible, when we read about the Father, the Son, and the Spirit each being God, yet each being separate from the other, and yet all being "one," we're getting to see just a little peek of God's ANATOMY. Look inside me, and you'll see all the parts that make up this body of mine – my anatomy. The Trinity is God's basic anatomy. But, just as I have only one body, so there is only one God.

Why would Christians make up such a difficult doctrine? Why would we insist on a teaching that has caused terrible divisions, and centuries of confusion, and has also given our enemies an easy target to poke fun at? Why would we make up such a silly teaching? The answer is, "We didn't make it up."

We say we follow the Bible. Well, if we really do, then we have to follow everything in it, even if we don't quite understand it. The Bible says four things on this subject.

- It says God is ONE (Deut. 6:4, Mark 12:29, I Cor. 8:4-6). So according to the Bible, God is one. There is only one God, not three. BUT, it ALSO says that
- Jesus is God (John 20:28-9, Col. 2:9).
- It says the Holy Spirit is God (II Cor. 3:17, Acts 5:3-4),
- It also says that the Father is God (Isaiah 63:16, John 8:54, Philippians 2:11).

We cannot deny that the Bible refers to 3 different persons as God. There are a lot of other passages that say this, besides the ones we've given you here. Just ask any Bible-reading Christian. They can show you.

So we say there are three persons, but one God, not really quite understanding it completely. And we have given a name to this strange idea. We call it the "Trinity". The word doesn't come from the Bible. It's just a name that we have given to this particular Bible teaching. The teaching itself DOES come from the Bible.

People who ridicule the trinity say, "One plus one plus one equals three. We Christians do, of course, know how to add. But if you're going to reduce the Almighty God to a child's equation, then maybe you should multiply: One times one times one equals one.

I still don't understand how a radio works. Is it really so strange that my little brain cannot understand the essence of the infinite God? Actually, this strengthens my belief that it is God's word. Men wouldn't make up such a strange teaching, knowing it would be ridiculed. C.S. Lewis said, "*If Christianity were something we were making up, of course we could make it easier. But it is not made up. We cannot compete, in simplicity, with people who are inventing religions. How could we? We are dealing in facts. Of course, anyone can be simple if he has no facts to bother about.*"

But is it really so difficult to understand. I would say this to a Muslim: Can I hide from Allah? What is his answer? Of course not! Of course nobody can hide from Allah because Allah is everywhere, correct? He has to agree. If he doesn't, I can remind him of Suras 2v115, 2v142, 4v126, 37v5, and 57v4, which confirm that, according to his own Quran, Allah is everywhere all at once. Our Bible says the same thing in many places. Jeremiah 23:23-24 is one of them. God is everywhere. You cannot escape him, right? Okay. Good. We agree.

So at that point, I have just one more question. If you can so easily say that God is everywhere, all at the same time – WHY is it SO DIFFICULT for you to believe God can be in three persons, all at the same time? The second wonder is smaller than the first. Yet you believe the first and ridicule the second.

That's MY favorite way to explain the Trinity, because it's NOT an analogy. It's the truth, plain and simple. If God can be everywhere, why can't he be in three separate persons? Somebody, please tell me, what's so hard about that? Sure, I can't understand how it works. But I can't understand how God can be everywhere, either. I just accept that being everywhere is part of who God is. Why not accept the Trinity in the same way?

Of course, down through the ages, Christians have used different analogies to describe the Trinity. Maybe one of these will help.

Augustine looked closely at 1st John 4:8, which says, "God is Love." He thought about this, and pointed out that for love to exist, you need three things. You need a Person who loves, you need a Person who is the object of that love, and you need a Spirit of Love between them. So, the Father Loves the Son. The Son receives and returns the Father's Love. The Spirit, of course, is the Power of their Relationship. (However, the Spirit, according to the Bible, is also a conscious person, just like the other two persons: John 14:26, 16:13, I Cor. 12:11, Eph. 4:6.) Augustine basically says that the essence of God is love, and all three persons share that essence.

I like Augustine's, but I think we can get closer yet. Jesus often said, "I do the will of my Father, who sent me." Think of an ambassador who represents his country, and speaks for his country. He carries the authority of his country with him. When he speaks, it is his country speaking. In a sense, Jesus, the Spirit, and the Father are like ambassadors. But they are very different from any ambassador you or I have ever known. They each carry that whole country inside of them, and that country is the ESSENCE of GOD. That Essence is the ONE TRUE GOD. That's why Jesus could say, "Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father." Both Jesus and the Father have the same exact essence.

Here's the hard part. That Essence is God. He is 100% present in Jesus. He is also 100% present in the Father, and the same with the Spirit, all at the same time. It's difficult to fully imagine how God can be 100% present in each person all at the same time. (But then again, don't we all – Muslims too -- believe that God is present everywhere, all at once? So, as I said earlier, why should it be difficult for him to be in three persons at the same time? Obviously, he still is only ONE God.)

Now in the computer age, maybe we CAN imagine one God in three persons. Think about this:

At this time, there are millions of computers in the world. But imagine for a moment there are three unique, one-of-a-kind computers, each in a different place. They're the only computers that exist. (I know, it sounds silly. But, imagine it for just a moment.)

Each computer has 100% access to the same inbox, which is God's essence. The essence of God is that inbox, shared by all three computers. Each has 100% of it. But although there are three different computers (persons), there is only one inbox (essence of God). And inside each of those three computers (persons), there is the full, entire, complete inbox (essence of God).

So, each person of the Trinity, since he has God's essence, has all of God's qualities, and is equally -- God. There aren't three Gods though -- just one. These three "ambassadors" could never disagree because the three are one, each one 100% filled with that one essence. Just like those computers I mentioned above. The inbox is the same for all three. Now I know what Paul meant when he said (Col. 2:9), "In Christ, the FULLNESS of GOD lives in a human body."

When God created mankind in his image, he made a bunch of little computers that could access his inbox. (We were able to pray and have fellowship with God.) But a virus infected all of us little computers through Adam. So God sent his son, Jesus, with the UNCORRUPTED disk. When Jesus comes INTO us, then he cleans out our system and we become free of that virus again. Now we can once again access God's inbox.

This explains a couple of things:

- One of God's qualities is that he is immortal. So that's why God had to desert Jesus when Jesus died on the cross (Mark 15v34: My God My God, why have you forsaken me?). In other words, when God deserted him, he lost access to that "inbox" for a time. Obviously, I'm speculating here. None of us can fathom what actually happened.
- Secondly, that's why I can pray using Jesus' name, or I can pray using the name of the Father, or even to the Holy Spirit, and I'm praying to exactly the same God in each case. The essence of God is ONE, whichever person of the Trinity I am addressing. Jesus said, "I and the Father are ONE." My prayer touches all three persons, whichever person I am addressing. Like that inbox: Any e-mail (prayer) sent to the divine in-box (the three-in-one God) will reach all three computers (persons) at the same time.

The subject of prayer also raises a question. How can God really care about my little problem when there are millions of people out there with much greater needs? How can God be a "personal" God to billions of people?

The answer to this question might be a little easier to understand if we talk a little bit about "time" first. In the following few paragraphs, we'll answer the question by going through a little bit of science first.

As you probably know, modern physics began with Albert Einstein. He published his "Theory of General Relativity" in 1916. One of the things this theory claimed was that the universe must be expanding. Richard Tolman, in 1922, realized that it must, therefore, have been cooling off from a very hot, explosive beginning. Finally, in 1929, astronomer Edwin Hubble took measurements on 40 different galaxies, and found that they are, in fact, moving away from each other.

Scientists were, at this point, fairly certain that Einstein's theory was a good one. And they also knew that the universe began in one giant explosion called the "Big Bang". We Christians call it – "**Creation.**"

By 1970, Stephen Hawking, George Ellis, and Roger Penrose had worked together to take the equations of general relativity one step further, yielding the theorem we mentioned earlier-- the Space-Time Theorem of General Relativity. Nowadays, 30 years afterward, General Relativity has been exhaustively confirmed. It's the most thoroughly tested theorem in science. Based on that theorem, their formulas show that there **MUST BE** at least 10 dimensions, maybe eleven.

They proved it mathematically. Of course, nobody, not even the scientists, can picture those dimensions, because 3 dimensions of space (length, width, and height), plus time, is all we know. A person who has been blind from birth cannot understand the difference between red and blue. How could they? In the same way, it's natural that we cannot picture other dimensions. Neither can the men that proved the theorem. However, they know that math doesn't lie.

Actually, we don't need science to tell us that *God can function outside our four dimensions*. This simply confirms it for the more "scientific, cerebral types," as a friend of mine used to say. In fact, we know God operates from outside of creation. So he's even beyond that eleventh dimension.

Those mathematical formulas have shown that all of these dimensions, including *TIME ITSELF*, *BEGAN*, when the universe started its expansion -- basically, at the moment of the Big Bang. Of all the world's Holy Books, only the Bible mentions something happening **BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF TIME**.

Perhaps you may find such passages in the Quran. I couldn't. But in the Bible, I can point to the following:

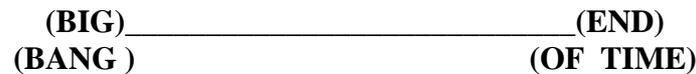
- **II Timothy 1:9** *"This Grace was given us in Christ Jesus **before the beginning of time**".*
- **Titus 1:2** *"A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised **before the beginning of time**".*

There are other passages, as well, that are interesting, because they talk about conditions before our world began.

- **John 17:5**, *"And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began"*
- **John 17:24**, *"You loved me before the creation of the world."*
- **Ephesians 1:4**, *"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight."*

- **I Peter 1:20.** *“He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake”*
- **Exodus 3:14,** *“God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM” This is what you are to say to the Israelites. I AM has sent me to you”.* God is not limited by time. That is why his name is "I AM",
- **Psalm 90:4** *“For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night”.*
- **II Pete 3:8** *“With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day”.*

Here is a human picture of how God looks at time. Below, you see a straight line with a beginning point and an end-point:



Time, for us, is a straight line. We have to go from point A, 1999, to point B, 2000, to point C, 2001, one day at a time. But our Father God, living outside of time, sees the whole line at once. Right now, God is watching his apostle, Paul, travel across the Mediterranean in the days of the Roman Empire. He's watching all the new countries becoming independent after the Second World War, and he's also watching the armies of the Beast, marching against Jerusalem in the final days of our planet. It is all NOW for him.

So can I pray to God that he correct the damage caused by my past sins, my blunders, and the things I should have done, but didn't? Yes, I can! Because for him, it is all still happening. In fact, I believe when he forgives us, he does fix the damage (though not always in a way that we can see) I agree with Billy Graham that Romans 8:28 includes the mistakes we've made, too.

This also explains how God can be a "personal" God to over a billion people, all at the same time. For God, it's not at the same time. If a billion Christians all pray at the same time, with urgent requests, it's no problem. God can listen to your prayer, spend a whole day thinking about your situation, and listening to you, then hand-carve a beautiful answer to your prayer, and insert it into the time-line, into the very moment you finish praying. He can do that for a billion other people, and yet we've all been answered immediately, in a close, intimate, personal way.

Think of it another way. Maybe we are all great works of literature, you and I and all his children. God works together with us, to write our life's book. For example, a guy named Frank “writes” these words in his own book: "And Frank prayed earnestly that his wife's fever would break, and that she'd recover." God reads that, but then opens another Christian's book, and writes on that page for awhile. He can write on the pages of a billion other books, and then come back to Frank. Then he thinks about Frank’s situation, and decides what is best. Finally, God writes, "And immediately, she opened her eyes and said his name." For Frank, God’s answer came immediately after he prayed (II Peter 3:8). His wife, Rose, got better. I don't know – it's interesting to ponder, isn't it?

Of course, the Lord's wisdom is way beyond ours and we don't understand his ways. God often makes us wait for a long time. That's to increase our faith. And he sometimes doesn't give us what we ask for, for various reasons. Often it's because he has something much better for us, but which we may not like. Children want candy, but their parents give them vegetables. Nobody can understand all the secrets of the Lord. I can't imagine how great he really is.

While preparing the Indonesian version of this book, I heard a sermon on the Trinity by Dr. James Kennedy. Basically, he said that if the universe was made by the three-in-one God, then he would probably have left his "fingerprints" on it. In other words, Dr. Kennedy was saying that if God is three in one, there should be things in the universe he made, that are three in one, like God.

He then went on to point out that in fact the universe is built on three elements -- space, time, and matter. All three elements began together, simultaneously, at the moment of the Big Bang. In addition, each of these are themselves made up of three things.

- Space is made of length, width, and height. But think -- the essence of all three is distance. Length is the distance along its axis. Width is the distance from side to side. Height is the distance from the ground up. There are three separate dimensions, but one essence.
- Time is made of the past, present and future. But think -- today is the present. But yesterday, this today was the future. Tomorrow, this today will be the past. There are three distinct, separate times. Yet all, from God's point of view, are one.
- Drawing my own analogy from matter, I thought of Einstein's famous equation, energy equals mass times the square of the speed of light $E = m(cc)$. Energy includes both of the other two variables within it, and so do the other two. Although they are separate and distinct, each variable can be expressed in terms of the other two. The three are, in actual fact, one.

Keep in mind, this last point is NOT an analogy. The point I'm making, by talking about space, time, and matter, is that it is logical to assume that God's creation, because it is a product of God, would reflect his nature. As I said, you can see his "fingerprints" on his creation. I'm not talking about God at all, here. I'm talking about the things that God created. They tell us something about him.

In Summary:

God comes in three different persons, but each one carries the essence of God within himself. There is still, nonetheless, only one essence -- one God. So we pray to Jesus or we pray to the Father and it doesn't matter. In either case, we are praying to the one true God.

Furthermore, he cares passionately about each one of us. He knows my name and my deepest secrets. He answers all our prayers, despite the fact that there are billions of us praying at once, because he is independent of time and space.

These things do not conflict with science at all. God created the very laws that science seeks to explain, and God created our ability to reason. These things don't go against science or reason, but they do go beyond them.

CHAPTER TEN: FAITH + REASON = SCIENCE

SCIENCE LOOKS at the BIBLE

Islamists and Secularists both think that Christianity is irrational. They think that you cannot be a Christian, and still be a thinking person. As a former engineer, I find that view to be incredibly naive. The intent of this chapter is to demonstrate that, in Jesus, we Christians are able to explore new ideas with more freedom than people of any other faith. We know that the Lord has given us our intellect as a gift, and expects us to make the most of it.

Jesus often taught people by means of stories. But he would not immediately explain the meaning of the story. He waited for someone to ask him what it meant. He was teaching his followers to ask questions.

Through his apostles, he continues to encourage us to test what we believe.

- **Acts 17:11** “*The Bereans...examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true*”.
- **Romans 12:2** “*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's good will is*”.
- **I Thessalonians. 5:21** “*Test everything. Hold on to the good!*”
- **I John 4:1** “*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God*”.
- **Rev. 2:2** “*I know your deeds...that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false*”.

This idea, that we should not be afraid to test the things that we believe in, is found throughout the scriptures. In fact, the founders of most branches of modern science were either Christian or Jewish.

Science cannot prove that the Bible is God's Word, or even that it is true, because Science changes. On the other hand, we should always pay attention to science, and take it seriously. The Bible is the revealed truth, and science is the search for deductive truth. They go together.

Some Christians are very suspicious of science, for good reason. For the past 50 years or more, scientists seemed to be at war with ALL religion, not just Christianity. On the other hand, a lot of scientists ARE Christians. Sometimes these people have not found a lot of acceptance in churches, as though their faith was “suspect.”

For the record, I will always stand firmly against anyone who tries to either add to or take away from anything in scripture. Genesis teaches very clearly, by any honest interpretation, that God made each kind of animal independent of the other kinds. It also teaches that man was created separately, independent of any other species, and that humans have a special position. Humans are above the animals, made with a soul, made in God's image.

On the other hand it is true that the Bible was not intended to be a science textbook. The creation account is a very simplified account of a very complex process, and the Lord's intent was to give us the gist of the story – not all the details. The Genesis account does not, for example, give a clear indication of the earth's age, or of the age of the universe. Even the genealogies are unclear. In our anxiousness to counter atheistic teachings, we should not turn a 6000 or 10,000 year-old earth into an article of faith. That is adding something to the scriptures. That is also wrong.

“Young-Earth” creationists believe our earth is 6,000 - 10,000 years old. “Old-Earth” creationists believe the earth is probably about 4.6 billion years old. At the moment, I'm leaning toward the old-earth viewpoint. But after all is said and done, in the final analysis, either viewpoint could be correct. The Bible doesn't tell us, and science will never be sure. Maybe we will never really know for sure how old the earth really is until we finally enter Heaven, and then it won't matter anymore. Therefore, we should not let the issue divide us from each other. Read Romans chapter 14.

The Lord seems to be giving us confirmation in these "latter days." Earlier chapters showed how the sciences of scriptology and papyrology, the study of ancient writing and documents, has shown that what we read in the Bible today is virtually identical to what was first written, with very minute variations. Some of the findings I referred to in those chapters are fairly recent. The more accurate re-dating of a number of manuscripts has only happened within the last ten or fifteen years. Of course, the skeptics still argue. In this chapter, you'll discover how other branches of science have also confirmed the Bible's accuracy, and a lot of these findings also have occurred in just the last ten years. In fact, we believe that the Lord has given us all this confirmation of our faith at this time in history, to prepare us for the trials ahead. Persecutions will come. For some, it has already been going on for a long time. But if Jesus spoke the truth, then we will all live on forever, long after we are killed. And lately, even science itself seems to be proving that the Lord spoke the truth.

Creation

The Hubble telescope was launched by NASA in 1990. This new technology, along with other advances, finally gave astronomers the ability to measure various aspects of the universe. By 1997, five unrelated studies, pursued independently, by different people, had measured various, unrelated aspects of the universe. Each of the studies came to the same conclusion, that the universe is roughly 15 to 18 billion years old. Now, new information seems to pour out of science journals every month. The age estimates have dipped lower and lower. At the time of this writing, April, 2001, the latest evidence suggests a universe that is about 11-16 billion years old. To be honest, there are still a lot of unanswered questions. But the universe is definitely a lot younger than was formerly thought.

Even if evolution were possible (and it's not), the amount of time it would need is just not there. On the other hand, a lot of Christians claim the world is only 6,000 to 10,000 years old. But actually, just as evolutionists have been guilty of misinterpreting the fossil record, so we may have been guilty of misinterpreting Genesis. It's possible. There is room here for different opinions.

A lot of Christians claim that the Hebrew word "Yom" can only mean a typical 24-hour day. Therefore, they argue, God made everything in six 24-hour periods of time. But that might not be true. The evidence is right there in the Bible. The Hebrew word, "yom" is used in Genesis 2:4 to show an indefinite period of time, certainly NOT 24 hours.

Genesis 2:4 – *“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.”* (KJV).

It's used the same way in Isaiah 4:2, Zechariah 14:8, and Hosea 6: 1-2. (We say, "In my father's day...")

- **Hosea 6:2** *"Come, let us return to the Lord, for he has torn us, but he will heal us. He has wounded us, but he will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before him".* (NASB)

It refers to a sequence of numbered periods of time, just as in the Genesis passage. This is the verse that convinced me. This passage is talking about Israel's disobedience, its coming captivity, and eventual release. And "YOM" is used for numbered, consecutive, long periods of time, (decades anyway), just as the old-earth people say it might be used in Genesis. Take look at these passages:

- **Genesis 1:24 to 2:25.** *"God made more mammals, made Adam, then had Adam name the various animals. After awhile, Adam grew lonely."* This was not a single 24 hour period.
- **John 5:16-18, or Heb 4:4-11.** These passages talk about God's seventh day rest, and they seem to say that he is still in that day. In Genesis, all the other "days" have a beginning and an end. But in the creation account, the seventh day is the only one in which God does NOT say, *"Evening and morning..."* That's because the seventh day has not yet ended. We're still in it! Well, that's the reasoning, anyway.

The Genesis account says God "rested". It does not say he was tired. It says "rested", as in a musical score. A rest is a pause, where the instrument stops playing for a moment. God rested -- he stopped creating new species. And science once again confirms the Bible. Not a single new species of animal has appeared on the planet since the introduction of human beings. God hasn't made any. The seventh day rest has lasted from creation until now.

Hugh Ross feels that the Hebrew words for "evening" and "morning" could also be translated "ending" and "beginning". I believe he's probably right about this, but I haven't been able to confirm it for myself. "Yom," does have other meanings. "Erev" and "boqer" usually mean evening and morning. Maybe they can also mean ending and beginning.

For those of you who insist that the Lord did make the universe in six 24 hours-days, there is no need to argue the point. "Yom", of course, can also mean a normal day, and usually does. The only way to advance that viewpoint is to say that God made the world with the "Appearance of Age", and that he made million-year-old light from stars -- 10,000 years ago. That's not impossible. Adam seems to have been made with the appearance of age - as an adult. If the Lord could make an adult Adam in an instant, he could just as easily make an "adult" (billions of years old) earth in just an instant, along with 10,000 year-old light from stars. Young-earth creationists question the accuracy of carbon 14 dating along with some of the other assumptions made by the scientific community. I am not so sure that the young-earth creationists are right. They might be...Maybe. However:

Please read how closely the Bible account really fits with modern scientific theories, before you make up your mind.

- **Genesis 1:1** *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth".*

"Heavens and earth" was a Hebrew idiom that meant "everything that is". Today, we would say, "the universe". Before the Big Bang there was nothing. Empty space did not exist

either. All of a sudden, (science cannot say why), a piece appeared, smaller than the point of a needle. Dimensional space, and time began at that moment. It exploded and expanded outward, becoming bigger than our galaxy in less than a micro-second. It continued on, ever expanding, until finally, more than 300,000 years later, galaxies, stars, and planets began to form.

- **Job 26:7** "He *spreads out* the northern skies over empty space. He *suspends* the earth over *nothing*."
- **Isaiah 45:12** "*With my hands I stretched out the heavens. All the millions of stars are at my command.*"

(Read Isaiah 44:24, and Isaiah 48:13. There are other such passages as well.)

- **Genesis 1:2** "*earth...formless...empty...darkness...Spirit of God...hovering over the waters*".

Here, the point of view changes. The Spirit of God is hovering just above the earth's surface – over the waters. From this point onward, the rest of the account is given from the surface of the earth. That is what the text says in Gen.1:2. You must understand this, in order to see how well the creation account fits with modern science.

Hovering" is the same Hebrew word used in Deuteronomy 32:11 for an eagle hovering over the eggs in her nest, (preparing for life).

Present day scientists believe that our earth was formed about 4.59 billion years ago. Originally it was enveloped in a dense, dark haze of gas, dust and debris. No light could penetrate. Within the next 0.3 billion years or so, it also became covered with water from countless asteroid impacts. Studies of ancient rocks reveal that long ago, the entire earth was covered with water. According to the Bible, these were the initial conditions, when the "Spirit hovered over the waters." (Read II Peter 3:5, where it speaks of the earth being initially formed of water, and also Psalm 104:5-9, where it talks poetically about the early earth, covered with water, and about how God later caused the dry land to appear.)

- **Genesis 1:3-5** "*And God said...light...separated the light from the darkness...day...night...first day*".

According to the latest scientific theories, about 4.25 billion years ago, the debris surrounding our planet (leftover from a huge meteor collision) came together to form our moon. This helped to thin out the dark haze that surrounded earth. Light reached the surface for the first time. The atmosphere became translucent. Day and night were discernible. But the sun, moon and stars were not yet visible. The skies were always heavily overcast with thick clouds. (Like a typical early spring day in Michigan.)

- **Genesis 1:6-8** "*God said...an expanse between...waters, to separate water from water...separated water under the expanse from the water above it...called the expanse, "sky"...second day*".

The atmosphere continued to gradually clear. Little by little, the troposphere (the lowest level of our atmosphere) separated from the upper-levels, and the "water-cycle" began to function.

- **Genesis 1:9-10** *God said...water be gathered to one place...dry ground appear...land...gathered waters...seas.*

The ancient earth was still covered with water. But then, the radiation in the earth's crust, (left over from the meteor collision that gave us our moon), along with other factors, caused a period of intense earthquakes and volcanoes. This, in turn, caused about 29% of the earth's crust to rise above the waters. (Psalm 104:6-9 and II Peter 3:5 also refer to this part of the creation account.)

- **Genesis 1:11-13** *“Then God said...land produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants, and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it...third day”.*

The Hebrew words that are used here are very general terms which could include almost any kind of plant. Scientists will tell you that the first life forms on earth were primitive plants, about 4 billion years ago. But life did not have that much time to “evolve.” Earth was still being bombarded with meteors and asteroids. The fragile life forms were always being wiped out and had to start over again and again, many times.

- **Genesis 1:14-19** *“God said, let there be lights in the sky to separate the day from the night...serve as signs ...mark... seasons...greater light..day...lesser light..night...also made the stars...fourth day”.*

About one billion years ago, as the earth's rotation continued to slow down, the surface winds died down. They no longer kicked up as much salt-spray from the surface-waters, so fewer clouds formed. The radiation in earth's crust was decaying, so earthquakes and volcanoes didn't happen as frequently. Furthermore, the new plant-life had been consuming the carbon dioxide and replacing it with oxygen. All these factors combined to thin out the atmosphere. It became clear, transparent. Earth had its first sunny days, and star-filled nights. *The sun, moon, and stars would have appeared, in that order, as the sky became clear.*

- **Genesis 1:20-23** *“God said, let...waters teem with living creatures, and...birds...great (1)'creatures of the sea'...(2)every living thing with which the water teems...fifth day”.*

There is strong Biblical evidence that "creatures of the sea" may not be the right translation for the Hebrew word, "*taneen*". It's a rare word, but does appear in one other Bible verse. In Ex.4:3 and 7:15, Moses' staff turns into a snake (*nahash*). But in 7:10, it turns into a "*taneen*". So *taneen* must be the larger group of animals to which snakes belong -- REPTILES (So, in the Genesis passage, the great “taneen” becomes -- the Great Reptiles --- DINOSAURS !)

The word "nephesh" is used here for 'living things'. It indicates 'mammals'. This would include small land mammals that play in the water. The first sea mammals appeared during this era as well.

Zoology has divided all animals into 34 different body-types. Until 1985, they thought one or two simple types of animals had "evolved" gradually, into the 34 different categories we have today. But then a large number of well-preserved fossils were found, purposely hidden away, in the Smithsonian Institute, which disproved that idea. The geologist who buried them in the storage rooms of the Smithsonian did that because he knew that they were enough to prove evolution to be false. He couldn't handle that because, like some modern geologists, his reputation was BUILT on evolution.

These fossils show that all 34 body-types appeared at roughly the same time, about 530 million years ago. The only explanation is that some "higher intelligence" put them here. Scientists now routinely refer to "Intelligent Design." Of course, the die-hard atheists insist that this is just a new, faster form of evolution. But the facts are against them. This is obviously -- CREATION.

Dinosaurs appeared on the Earth about 250 million years ago. The first small mammals appeared about 200 million years ago. The dinosaurs were probably wiped out by a very large asteroid impact. Some mammals were apparently able to survive.

(Plants died in the perfect world, before Adam's fall. They must have, because animals ate them, right? At least in some cases they did. So if living plants could die, why not animals? The human race enjoyed a brief time of perfect immortality, before sin entered the world, since humans were made in God's image. After we sinned, we became mortal, just like the animals, although we are still able to relate to God, through prayer. We're still made in his image. But now that image is tarnished by death. If you read Romans 5:12, it does not mention animals. But it does say that death came to all PEOPLE -- that we became mortal, like the animals, when man sinned.)

- **Genesis 1:24-25** *"Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds, livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind".*

After the dinosaurs were wiped out, the world was quickly repopulated with smaller wildlife, including many kinds of mammals. The Hebrew word for livestock is "*behemot*". It basically means any large mammal. The creatures that move along the ground were "*remes*", fast moving rodents and reptiles.

Hundreds of fossils of man-like animals, called hominids, have also been found, dating all the way back to between 4 and 6 million years ago. But there is no evidence among these ancient hominids of any human behavior. There is very little tool-making, no art, and no spiritual activity. These are the remains of animals. All of these ancient hominids (except for "*neandertals*") had died out long before humans first appeared. *This was God's way of gradually preparing the earth for the arrival of Man.*

- **Genesis 1:26-27** *"Then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness...so God created man in his own image...male and female created he them".*

In the above verse, the Hebrew word "*asa*" is used for "make". It means to make something which is familiar, or to uncover something. But "*bara*" in the next line means to design and build something completely new and different -- to create something. These two verbs, used together, mean that when God made man, he made something that was ordinary, but also new. Adam was formed out of the ground (Gen. 2:7), the same as the animals (Gen. 2:19). But God breathed the "Breath of Life" into his nostrils (Gen. 2:7). He was made "in God's likeness".

For a few thousand years, Neandertals shared the earth with humans. "Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA" studies have shown that the human race is roughly 40,000 to 60,000 years old. Neandertals, the last surviving hominids, were still, according to the latest theories, walking the earth until about 25,000 years ago. But humans are NOT descended from the Neandertals.

Don't expect National Geographic or the Discovery Channel to admit to the errors in their theories. Don't expect high school biology teachers to admit that Darwin was wrong. Their reputations have all been built on evolution. Evolution and the intellectual arrogance associated with it has become a multi-million dollar INDUSTRY. Evolutionists are, furthermore, just as RELIGIOUS as Christians. Evolution IS a religion. Anthropologists have successfully convinced most of the developed world that we are descended from the Neandertals, and they will not easily give up the privileged position they have enjoyed. If evolution is false, then they are not really scientists at all. Certainly they'll fight to keep their theory, and their valued position in society – right or wrong.

NONETHELESS, that idea has now been discredited. Nowadays, science is ever more increasingly on OUR side of the debate!

In 1997, after 30 years of searching, researchers finally found a sample of DNA large enough for analysis, in the fossilized remains of a neandertal skeleton. Patricia Kahn and Ann Gibbons compared the neandertal DNA to human DNA. *The greatest possible difference between the DNA of any two human beings, no matter what their race, is to have eight nucleotide links that are different. The Neandertal had twenty-six nucleotide links that are different from ours.* They also compared the neandertal's DNA to that of ancient humans, with the same results. There can be no greater proof. They are NOT related to human beings in any way. They were animals. We are not.

The special origin of human beings, distinct from any earlier hominids, is now a proven fact. Neandertals are not related to us in any way, and all other hominids, as even our opponents admit, were extinct before humanity appeared.

What does the Bible say about the age of mankind? How long ago did Adam and Eve walk the earth? The only clues given in the Bible are the well-known genealogies found in Genesis and Matthew. But they are not identical. That's because they are both just partial lists, not complete. The Hebrew word "Av" can mean father, grandfather, or ancestor. "Ben" can mean son, grandson, or descendant. Hugh Ross has said that an ancient Jewish person, reading the Genesis genealogy, would understand it as, "When ___ had lived ___ years, he became the father of a family line that included, or ended with ___." Because of this, the Biblical record would allow for the human race to be almost any number of years old, depending on how many generations were actually skipped in the lists. The gaps could be very, very wide, or there could be one or two big jumps within the list, larger than the other gaps.

However, as stated above, at the time of this writing, molecular biology has placed the origin of humanity at 40,000 to 60,000 years ago. The numbers seem to change back and forth quickly, but this latest estimate seems to agree with both the Biblical genealogies and the fossil evidence.

The only pieces of evidence against a 40,000 to 60,000 year old human race are a jawbone or femur, and a few teeth, found recently in Israel and a couple other places. Geologists claim these remains are 80,000 to 100,000 years old. *However, in contrast, there are dozens of museums absolutely FULL of homo-sapiens remains that go back to only about*

40,000 years ago. Therefore I tend to believe that humanity's age is about 40,000 years old, and the very few bones found that were much older are probably not human at all, but from human-LIKE creatures, or perhaps the dating is off. Anyway, I obviously am no expert, but even amateurs like you and me are capable of logically evaluating the arguments that experts make.

What about evidence of human activity? The ability to make art is a characteristic that only humans have. The earliest cave-paintings we've found that are indisputably "art" are about 32,000 years old. That fits. But what makes us truly human is our ability to relate to God -- our spirituality. Currently, our oldest archaeological evidence of worship is a stone-age altar in Spain, believed to be 24,000 years old. Of course, older items could possibly be discovered in the future. Still, these finds are consistent with an age for humanity of about 40,000 years.

Genesis 2:21 describes the creation of Eve. The Hebrew, translated very literally, says that God used a piece of Adam's side to make Eve. According to the Hebrew, it doesn't have to be a rib. It could be just a piece of skin. Given what we now know about DNA and the human genome, this makes good sense. A small piece of tissue from Adam would contain his complete DNA blueprint, from which his perfect mate could in fact be "designed."

Take a moment to think about it. The Bible's first chapters were written roughly 3500 years ago. The entire book was finished almost 2000 years ago. Yet this extremely ancient text makes statements that scientists are only now becoming certain of. It records that time itself had a beginning. It states that light was visible on earth's surface before the sun or moon could be seen. It correctly describes the pre-historic earth as covered with water, and it gives the correct order in which life appeared on earth: First -- plants, then -- marine life, and birds, next -- land animals, and finally -- people. Furthermore, although the age of mankind cannot be known from scientists, nor from scripture, there is obviously no real disagreement between the two.

The ancient creation myths from other societies, like the "*Enuma Elish*", from Nineveh, tell wild stories about bloody battles between gods, passionate love affairs, and murders. An Iroquois myth says the world is a bunch of mud on the back of a turtle. By contrast, only the Bible, Genesis, gives a straightforward, ACCURATE accounting of the facts. Further along in the Bible, Psalm 19:1 says, "*The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands.*" The Bible says, right here, that if we study the skies, the universe, we will see evidence that it was designed by God. In our present day, a lot of astronomers and physicists have already seen that evidence. It is changing the way they think about the universe.

God's Fingerprints

In just the last five or ten years, science has discovered that almost everything in the whole universe seems to be specially designed, along very precise specifications, for the sole purpose of maintaining life on one small planet, called Earth. They call it the Anthropic Principle. Men who were outspoken atheists ten years ago are now talking about ---- God! George Greenstein, in his book, "The Symbiotic Universe," says:

"As we survey all the evidence, the thought insistently arises that some supernatural agency --- or rather, Agency, must be involved. Is it possible that suddenly, without intending to, we have stumbled upon scientific proof of the existence of a supreme being? Was it God who stepped in and so providentially crafted the cosmos for our benefit?"

Hugh Ross, in his book, "The Creator and the Cosmos," page 118 - 121, lists 26 measurements of the universe, different aspects that have very fine tolerances, which need to be fine-tuned to ensure our survival. Most of the information presented here is from his writings.

For example, the expansion rate of the universe is exactly right. If it were expanding faster, there'd be no galaxies -- if any slower, no stars would form. Likewise the total mass of the universe is exactly what it must be. If there were more stars than we have now, too much deuterium would form, causing the stars to burn too rapidly, and too irregularly for life. If, on the other hand, there were not as many stars, then the heavier elements, necessary for life, like carbon, would never have formed.

Furthermore, if certain constant properties of nature, like the charge of an electron or the mass of a proton were even a little bit different, we could not exist. Also, the average distance between galaxies and even the average distance between stars has to be exactly as it is for life to survive.

Our sun's position in the Milky Way galaxy is crucial, too. It has to be out on one of the spiral arms, but not too far out. And the number of planets in our solar system has to be as it is. Also, a Jupiter-sized planet located in the exact place where Jupiter actually is, is absolutely essential to protect Earth from meteorites. And Saturn's and Jupiter's orbits must be exactly as they are. Furthermore, Earth's surface gravity, distance from the sun, and age must be right for us to be here. The axial tilt and rotation period of our planet cannot be greater or less.

Of course, the chemical makeup of our atmosphere is vital, and ours seems to be the only planet with such an atmosphere. The oxygen to nitrogen ratio, carbon dioxide level, ozone level, and the amount of water vapor are all maintained within very narrow parameters, in order to make life possible.

Our sun's brightness has increased 35% since life first began on planet Earth. That is enough to KILL all life. But life continues, because the gradual increase in brightness was balanced off each step of the way by a weakening of the greenhouse effect in Earth's atmosphere. That weakening was made possible by the, "*careful introduction into our world of just the right species of life in just the right quantities at just the right times.*" (Ross)

The parameters mentioned here are just a small fraction of the number listed in Ross's book, and scientists have discovered many more since that book was published. So who is holding the whole, vast machine together, gently adjusting the settings? Christians would say it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

- **Col. 1:16-17**, "*For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth...He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*"

Paul Davies, a British astrophysicist who used to write books promoting atheism, now writes: "*It seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the Universe...The impression of design is overwhelming.*"

Fang Li Zhi, China's famous astrophysicist writes: "*A question that has always been considered a topic of metaphysics or theology, the creation of the universe, has now become an area of active research in physics.*"

Stephen Hawking, Roger Penrose and George Ellis who worked out the equations that prove the existence of those other dimensions. Stephen Hawking is still very skeptical about a creator. But in his "Life in the Universe" lecture, he does concede: "*The universe is so*

finely tuned. Maybe this is evidence that the universe was specially designed to produce the human race."

Penrose has come out in favor of design. He writes: *"I would say the universe has a purpose. It's not there just somehow by chance."*

Ellis writes, *"Amazing fine-tuning occurs in the laws...Realization of the complexity...makes it very difficult not to use the word 'miraculous'."*

John Archibald Wheeler, the physicist who proved that black holes exist, has said, *"The necessity to produce life lies at the center of the universe's whole machinery and design."*

Arno Penziaz, who shared the Nobel Prize for physics wrote: *"Astronomy leads us to... a universe which was created out of nothing...and one which has an underlying plan."*

Robert Griffiths, winner of the Heinemann prize for mathematical physics, noted, *"If we need an atheist for a debate, I go to the philosophy department. The physics department isn't much use."*

Dr. Michael Denton, Senior Research Fellow in Human Molecular Genetics, writing in 1998 in his book, "How the Laws of Biology Reflect Purpose in the Universe," had this to say: *"All the evidence available in the biological sciences supports the core proposition... that the cosmos is a specially designed WHOLE in which all facets of reality have their meaning and explanation in this central fact."*

But Robert Jastrow says it best: *"For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance. He is about to conquer the highest peak. As he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."*

Dr. Harold Urey, also a Nobel prize winner, is left with only a blind faith in evolution in spite of the facts: *"All of us who study the origin of life find that the more we look into it, the more we feel it is too complex to have evolved anywhere. We believe, as an article of faith, that life evolved from dead matter on this planet."*

<p>Why would God make such a huge, complex, well- crafted universe JUST for us?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"When I consider the heavens, ...the moon and stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:3-4)</i></p>
<p>The Bible gives the answer:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"The earth is full of his unfailing love." (Ps. 33:5) "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him!!" (Ps. 103:11)</i></p> <p>If a young guy is madly in love with a woman and decides to ask her to marry him, he wants to show her the great depth of his feelings for her. So when he buys her a ring, he gets the biggest, most exquisitely cut diamond he can find --- to show his love for her. That is why God created such a vast, breathtaking universe for us. He is "in love" with us. That is what</p>

the Bible is saying. That's why the New Testament compares Christ's love for his church to the love of a husband for his wife.

It really is not so surprising that science always tends eventually to confirm the Biblical record and never seems to find any errors. What would you expect? You can't argue with the Truth.

On the other hand, is it possible that something may, in the future, be discovered which seems to clearly contradict the Bible? Yes, it is. It's possible, because there are always new discoveries being made, and one discovery never gives the whole story. It's also possible because the discovery may have been misinterpreted. Of course, this is true for any scientific discovery from any branch of science. Finally, the third possibility is that we may have misinterpreted the Bible.

Let's not make the mistake that some Islamists make. Let's not brag that "Science proves the Bible!" The truth is, we KNOW the Bible is true, with or without science. We know the Bible is true, because the Spirit of God is inside us, assuring each of us of God's love for us. We trust in Jesus

SCIENCE EXAMINES the QURAN

Our knowledge of science begins with the early Greeks. Their ancient books were NOT, as some say, saved by Islam. In fact, the destruction of the Islamic invasions is what nearly destroyed them. Some were brought to Europe by Greek Christians escaping from Constantinople just before it fell, in 1453. Other Greek science books were translated by Persian, Christian and Jewish scholars into Arabic. Those translations also came to Europe, and were then translated into medieval Latin and other European languages. That's why modern science still includes a lot of Arabic words, such as "algebra," and "alcohol."

Islamic science learned from what the Greeks left behind. But Muslim scientists like al-Haitham, and al-Farisi also made dramatic contributions of their own. On the other hand, according to Ibn Khaldun, most of the credit for scientific advancement in the Muslim empire should go to its Persian, Christian and Jewish subjects. Even the "Arabic" numbering system, including the invention of the zero, was borrowed from the Hindus.

Warraq makes the point that the early Islamists were just as suspicious of science as the medieval Roman Catholic church. But what about the Quran itself? What scientific treasures can be found among its pages? Here are few examples:

▪ **Ants and Birds used to talk, (Sur 27:15-44)**

And there were gathered unto Solomon his armies of the Jinn's (genies) and humans and birds, and they were set in battle order until they reached the valley of the ants. An ant said, "Oh ants! Enter your homes lest Solomon and his armies crush you without noticing."

He (Solomon) inspected the birds and said, "Where is the lapwing? I cannot see him. If he does not offer me a good excuse, I shall sternly punish him or even slay him." The bird, who was not long in coming, said: "I have just seen what you know nothing of."

To be fair, in the Bible, the snake spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden, and Balaam's ass spoke to him. But in both cases, the Bible says that a spiritual being was using the animal

to convey a special message to a human being. (Not animals talking with each other) And these were the only two cases recorded. They were very special cases. In the Quran, an ant is talking with other ants. Ants and birds line up in formation, apparently as a regular part of the army. It's a routine occurrence. Furthermore, as you saw in earlier chapters, this story in the Quran began as a children's story in a book of folktales. But in the Quran, it is taught as history.

▪ **The sun goes down in a mud puddle, (Sur 18:86)**

"And he followed a road till, when he reached the setting place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring." (Quoted from Muhammad Pickthall). Here the Quran is talking about Alexander the Great's journey to the Western edge of the earth. When he finally arrived there:

As for Mr. Sun hiding in a mud puddle every night, I'm sure Islamists have a way to explain it. Maybe it's the reflection of the sun that Alexander saw. But according to the Quran, that's where the sun goes.

The main claim Islamists make is that the Quran has scientific "foreknowledge." It teaches some things that would be impossible for an ordinary man of Muhammad's day to know. I believe that is a valid test. I've used the same reasoning for the Bible. Let's see how that reasoning holds up for the Quran:

Comment	Qoran	Bible	Explanation
<u>the water cycle</u>	<u>suras 7:57, 25:48-9, 30:48, 35:9, 45:5, and 50:9-11.</u>	Amos 5:8, Hosea 2:21, Isaiah 55:9-11. Hosea 2:21. Amos 5:8	The Quran teaches that clouds carrying water drift over land and then drop their water, which soaks into the ground, causing flowers to grow. Sure, this is scientific, but – foreknowledge? Every farmer since Cain has observed this.
<u>The currents in the sea</u>	<u>Sura 24:39-40</u>	Psalm 8:4,6,8. Jonah 2:3-6	" <i>Waves upon waves,</i> " says one author, " <i>Shows knowledge of currents in the ocean.</i> " Maybe it does, or maybe it's just talking about a lot of waves. It's not "foreknowledge." If this is "foreknowledge" from "Allah," then why didn't he say something more specific, like " Paths in the sea "? That's what Jehovah, the God of the Bible calls them. Jonah 2:1 actually talks about currents directly. And this was written over 1000 years before Muhammad. Give the ancient sailors some credit. They understood currents.
<u>Relation between thunder, lightning, hail, and</u>	<u>Sura 13:12-13, and 24:43.</u>	Eccl. 1:7, 11:3, Job 28:24-6, 36:27-9, and 37:16	The Bible says the same. But really, couldn't the people of early medieval times figure this out by themselves? Of course there's a connection. It's called a thunderstorm.

<u>rain</u>			
<u>Expanding universe</u>	<u>Sura 51:47.</u>	Job 26:7, Isaiah 44:24, 45:12, & 48:13	Now that DOES sound scientific, except that the author misquotes the Quran here. The Arabic says "vast" universe. Again, the Bible says God <i>spreads out</i> the skies. That's much clearer.
<u>Barrier between salt & fresh water</u>	<u>sura 25:53 and 55:19-21</u>		<u>The Quran talks about a barrier between salt and fresh water.</u> But any fisherman could have written these verses. Just taste the water.

Contradiction Between Quran and Science

<u>Comments</u>	<u>Qoran</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
The conquest of space.	Sura 55:33	When you read it, you see it actually says that it's a nearly impossible task, requiring the help of the "Jinns." JINNS -- GENIES! Oh, yeah, this is very scientific!! (Could this be a divine prophecy – foreknowledge of the 1960's T.V. show, "I dream of Jeannie", with astronaut Tony Nelson, and Barbara Eden as the Jeannie?)
Quran shows how mountains guard against earthquakes	Sura 21:31, 16:15, 31:10, 78:6-7, & 88:17-19	The Quran shows how mountains guard against earthquakes. But -- they don't. If mountains stop earthquakes, explain Japan.
Quran explains that a fetus begins life as a single blood clot	in sura 2:259, 22:5, 23:12-14, and 40:67	The bones are formed first, and then the outer body takes shape. This would be wonderful scientific foreknowledge, I suppose, if any of it were true. Of course, we have known for a century that this is not how a baby is formed. The Quran is merely parroting the conventional wisdom of Muhammad's day.

I have given alternative word definitions for the Hebrew or Greek at various points in this book, and showed you other verses in the Bible where those words have the meaning I supplied. That's valid. If I'm unable to do that, I'll say so.

But the author that I spoke of earlier changes Quranic word meanings at will, with no references. He broadly reinterprets passages within the suras, to hammer them into line with modern knowledge. Then he gasps in wonderment at how amazing it is that such an old book as the Quran shows such foresight.

Frankly, I think he's too smart to actually believe the things he writes. Of course, that's just my opinion. Anyway, these tactics are common throughout the whole "scientific Islamist" book industry.

Another popular fantasy in the Islamic book industry is the idea that the number '19' is repeated over and over throughout the Quran, and that this somehow proves that it is from heaven. But this attempt falls pretty flat.

First of all, subtle changes in spelling have to be made in the Arabic to make the theory work. Secondly, for every sum of letters or lines that add up to 19, we can show another that doesn't. Finally, even if there were a numerical code, it wouldn't prove anything. The people who "discovered" the Bible code did a similar thing, in my opinion. Scientists have shown that these kinds of number games can be played with any text. It means nothing.

History in the Quran

Finally, what about history? The Quran is only a collection of the sayings of Muhammad. There is no context. Because of this, there's very little historical information in the Quran, and a lot of the stories in the Quran, as we've said, come from folk-tales. So they often contradict the earlier Biblical accounts. For example:

- **Sura 28:8-9**; Moses was not adopted by Pharaoh's wife, but by Pharaoh's daughter. Compare (Ex. 2:5). The Muslim person can claim it is the Bible that is mistaken. But the Biblical account is the OLDER account, closer in time to the actual events. Furthermore, it has been proven to be historically reliable, as we've already shown. What proof is there of the Quran's historical reliability?
- **Sura 7:136, and 7:59ff** ; Noah's flood did not happen in Moses' day. If it had, then why wasn't it recorded by the Egyptians during the time of Ramses? (compare Gen 7). The Quran says that Haman lived in Egypt during Moses' time and worked for Pharaoh, building the Tower of Babel! Refer to the Book of Esther, along with Suras 27:4-6, 28:38, 29:39, 40:23,24, 36,37.
- **Sura 19:27-28**; Muhammad seems to have confused Mary, the mother of Jesus with Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron..
- **In Sura 20:87, 95**; We are told that the Jews made the golden calf at the suggestion of the "Samaritan". However, it seems that Samaria did not exist until many centuries later.
- **Sura 105**; Here we are told that the army of Abrah was defeated by birds, dropping stones on Abrah's elephants. But according to the history books, Abrah broke off the attack because an epidemic of smallpox spread through his entire army.
- **Sura 17:1** ; According to all the Muslim commentators, this speaks of Muhammad being taken to the Temple in Jerusalem, from where he ascended into heaven. But the verse never actually says it was the Temple in Jerusalem. In fact, the Temple no longer existed in the days of Muhammad. It had been destroyed by the Romans years earlier. Is this another case of Islamic myth?, Actually, some earlier Muslim authors took this verse to be referring to the Kaaba, in Mecca. And it probably does. The idea that it refers to the Temple in Jerusalem is just a convenient way to claim Jerusalem as sacred Islamic soil, and thereby give purpose to their centuries-old war against Jews.

The Quran has no tightly woven, chronological, step-by-step creation story, as the Bible has – so you won't find any proof of accuracy there, as you DO in the Bible. Of course, given the Quran's lack of detail, you won't find very much that disagrees with science either - - Well, except for talking, conversing ants. The fact is, there just isn't much substance at all in the Quran.

CHAPTER ELEVEN ADMIRING ISLAM

We have not tried to hide the fact that this book was written by Christians, followers of Jesus. It's written, for the most part, TO Christians. But we also wanted it to be a suitable book for any Muslim people who are truly seeking real truth.

The first ten chapters talked about the SON. This chapter begins the discussion of the MOON, which is Islam, and its Quran. In the early chapters, we told why we believe in the Son. Now we'll show why we don't believe in the Moon.

But before we talk about the negatives, there is one positive thing, which Christians should learn from Islam.

We should take the time to learn the original language of our scriptures. Islamists say it's impossible to translate the Quran into other languages, but that's not true at all. It has already been translated many times into many languages. However, it IS impossible to translate any book PERFECTLY.

Islamists say that the poetry of the Quran cannot be translated because it thereby loses its beautiful rhythm and rhyme. They say the only REAL Quran is the Quran in ARABIC. Isn't it strange -- that God, the author of all languages, can only speak in one? Does God love the Indonesian people, and the Indonesian language less than he loves the Arab people and the Arab language?

The poetry of Jehovah doesn't use rhyme. The Psalms rely on paired, matching phrases as their poetic device. Therefore the poetry of the Bible retains its beauty in any language.

Furthermore, the Bible in Indonesian or any other language is still THE BIBLE. God speaks to Christians in whatever language we speak and love.

Nonetheless, since Muslim people have such a great respect for the Arabic of the Quran, they go to great lengths to learn it. We, as Christians, should have a little more respect for the original languages of OUR scripture. Islamists are able to argue that our Christian scripture has been corrupted (even though they are wrong), in part, because we are so ignorant concerning the history of our own Scriptures.

In earlier chapters, you saw how the translation of a few words could make a big difference in the meaning of a text. So Christians, start learning Greek, and Hebrew too! You don't have to learn the vocabulary. We have dictionaries for that.

A lot of the Muslim people who can read Arabic don't really know what they're reading. They can't tell you what it means. They just know how to read the sounds from the letters. But that's still a good thing, because if you do that with your Greek, then you can recognize the Greek words, look them up, and check how they're used in various places in the text. So even that little bit of knowledge helps a lot toward understanding your scriptures.

Greek is a lot easier to learn than Arabic, because the alphabet is very similar to the Roman alphabet. In fact you could easily learn how to make the sounds in one weekend! Actually, since Jesus quoted from the Greek Septuagint when he quoted the Old Testament -- just learning Greek alone would be sufficient for the whole Bible. If you are more ambitious,

you could spend a little longer, and learn Hebrew as well. It's not hard, just to learn to make the sounds and recognize the words. The benefits are innumerable.

In closing this brief chapter, I'd like to say there's one other thing I admire about Islam. I admire the sincerity of ordinary Muslim people and their dedication to their faith. There is something beautiful about the devotion shown in their five daily prayers. There are a few things we would do well to learn from Muslim people.

Although I believe their devotion is misplaced, I hope that we Christians are as devoted to our faith as they are to theirs. It's often hard to tell.

CHAPTER TWELVE :
THE ALLAH OF THE QURAN

“If a Muslim says, ‘Your God and our God is the same,’ either he does not understand who Allah and Christ really are, or he intentionally glosses over the deep-rooted differences.” From Abd-Al Masih, author of “Who is Allah in Islam?” Villach, Austria, Light of Life, 1985

Same God?

❖ **Why It Matters**

Muslim Islamists love to make outrageous assertions that Muslim people are actually the "true", "real" Christians -- that the way to follow Jesus is to be a good, practicing Muslim. They contend that the Quran is the final authority, superseding both the Old and New Testaments. They then boldly proclaim that their god is our God, and that he wants us to become Muslims.

Think of how arrogant this is. This is like King Sennacherib in II Kings 18:25 – He didn't even know the God of Israel, but he claimed to be following him, even SPEAKING FOR him. To appreciate what the Christian's response must be, consider the following analogy:

Let's say I'm a happily married man. I've followed Jesus' commands to be chaste. My wife is the only woman I've ever had. We have a son, whom we love very much. When I die, my son will inherit my fortune.

However, one day a boy comes to my door -- a stranger, and when I open the door he says, "Hi, Dad!" Quite confused, I invite him in to talk. He says he is my REAL, TRUE son and he says the inheritance belongs to him -- the stranger.

That's exactly what the Islamists do when they tell me that i don't know who I'm worshipping. In so doing, they become the IMPOSTER.

So what should I say to this strange boy whom I've never seen before? I know the truth. He cannot possibly be my son because I never fooled around before I got married, and have never been unfaithful since that time.

Should I meekly agree to this kid's demands, and thereby rob my son of his inheritance? Of course not. I have to defend my son's right of inheritance.

How do I defend my son's right of inheritance? Is it enough to simply show everyone my real son's birth certificate? No. IF what this new kid says is TRUE, then this new kid is my rightful heir. So, I MUST prove that this new kid is a LIAR. I have to show that he has no connection to me whatsoever. I have to give him the evidence of who his true father is.

When Islamists make this kind of groundless claim, they are launching a really dirty, deceitful attack, and just as with that boy in the analogy, such an attack has to be met head on. We have no choice but to show Islam who its real father was.

Actually, a very simple response to this attack is to simply say, “Well, if we worship the same God, then come to my church, and we'll pray to Jesus together.”

But this is NOT the ONLY reason why we need to point out the origins of Islam. There are others.

In some parts of the world, Christians are being forced to choose Islam or die. Christians are persecuted every day in Indonesia. Hundreds of thousands have been murdered in Sudan. Pakistani converts fear for their lives. Wherever you find Islam, you find persecution. At that point in one's life, when you're forced to make a choice, you have to know, really KNOW that what you have put your faith in is the truth, and that what the guy with the machete has is a lie. As Paul said, "*For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" (Phil. 1:21)

Also, when a young adult is tempted to marry into the other faith, they should be told of the VAST differences between our God, and the other. Obviously, a woman, in particular, puts herself in grave DANGER when she gives herself to a man who follows Muhammad's ways.

Missionaries who work in a contextual setting, sometimes without enough Christian fellowship, and without enough prayer support, can be drawn into compromise – unless they have a thorough knowledge of the differences between the Light, and the Darkness.

Finally, let's not forget that our mission, given us by the Lord, is to show his LOVE to all people. We are the means by which the Lord hopes to bring people into his kingdom, that they may live forever with us in Heaven.

We know that faith comes by hearing the Word of God, the Bible. If Muslims believe that their Quran is the real, true scripture, then there is no reason for them to listen to the truth of the Bible. We have to begin by showing them that they have been mis-led. They need to know that they have been following a delusion.

So where DID their delusion come from? Where did the Allah of the Quran come from? Who was Quranic Allah's real father?

❖ **The Facts of the Matter**

Some people claim that the allah of the Quran IS the moon-god. That's not true. Others say he WAS the moon-god in pre-islamic times. That might be true, but we cannot honestly say, for sure, given the evidence that we have. The undeniable TRUTH is this: The Allah of the Quran WAS CONNECTED TO moon-god worship and was, indirectly at least, the object of such worship in pre-islamic times.

Furthermore, a moon-god worshipper of pre-islamic Arabia would feel right at home on the present day HADJ, because nothing much has changed. Almost ALL of the rituals of present day Islam are exactly as they were in the days before Muhammad was born, back when the Arabs worshipped the moon.

The TRUE FATHER of the Allah of the Quran IS the MOON-GOD.

"Allah, the paramount deity OF PAGAN Arabia, was the target of worship in varying degrees of intensity from the southernmost tip of Arabia to the Mediterranean. ... With Muhammad he BECOMES Allah, God of the Worlds, ... Judaic and Christian concepts of God abetted the TRANSFORMATION of Allah FROM a PAGAN DEITY to the God of all Monotheists. There is NO REASON, therefore, to accept the idea that "Allah" passed to the Muslims from Christians and Jews." (Caesar Farah, Ph.D., "Islam, Beliefs and Observations" Barron's Educational Series, 2000, sixth edition paperback, p. 28, bold print and capitalization mine.)

What Mr. Farah says is that Muhammad encouraged the continued worship of this pagan Arabian god called allah, but borrowed the idea of monotheism from the Christians and Jews. As Farah rightly points out, the fact remains that allah came from that pagan god.

❖ The Evidence

First of all, it is an absolute, undisputed fact that the worship of the moon was widespread across all of Arabia in the years prior to Muhammad. Yusuf Ali, a practicing Muslim and Islamic authority states the following in pages 1621-1623 of his English translation of the Quran:

“Moon worship was equally popular in various forms...the moon was a male divinity in ancient India. It was also a male divinity in the ancient Semitic religion, and the Arabic word for moon, “qamar,” is of the masculine gender. On the other hand, the Arabic word for sun, “shams,” is of the feminine gender. The pagan Arabs evidently looked upon the sun as a goddess and the moon as a god.”

On page 1644 of his English Translation, footnote number 5798, Ali explains why “Allah” apparently swears by the moon in Sura 74:32. In the footnote he says, “The moon was worshipped as a deity in times of darkness.”

The most important symbol in moon-god worship, found throughout the entire ancient Middle East, wherever the moon-god was worshipped, under whatever name, is the crescent moon. It is found at archaeological sites in Arabia, Akkad, Canaan, Egypt, Persia, and Syria. It is usually, though not always, shown with a star floating just outside the open arm of the crescent -- exactly as you see it on top of Islamic minarets today. The star was usually the morning star, Venus, and the goddess associated with that planet. (Sometimes it was shown with an orb in front of it, representing the full moon.)

In the following sections, I'll go into detail to explain just how pervasive, how widespread the cult of moon-god worship was in the Middle Eastern world, in Muhammad's time. We'll start in the far North, and then move closer in to Medina and Mecca.

a. Mesopotamia, the Assyrians and Babylonians

Moon-god worship seems to have begun in Mesopotamia, where the moon-god was called by the name, “Sin,” or sometimes "Nanna." According to the Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, (N.Y., 1960) pp.54-56, “Sin was the chief god in an astral religion involving three main deities – Sin, the moon-god, Shamash, the sun-god, and Ishtar, the planet Venus.”

The Assyrians worshipped the moon. A bronze replica of the crescent moon, made to sit on top of a flag-pole, was recovered, for example, from an archaeological site at Tel-Sera, stratum VI, buried in an ancient Assyrian fortress. (Keel, p.297-298)

Eventually, the Babylonians overthrew the Assyrian Empire and built their own empire. In the famous Babylonian epic poem, "The Enuma Elish," the moon-god, Sin, takes a leading role. Two of the new empire's greatest cities, Ur and Harran, were completely dedicated to the worship of the moon-god.

The city of Ur was so obsessed with the moon-god that it was actually called by his name on some of the stone carvings that have been found. The Ziggurat of Nannar is there. Sir Leonard Woolley found a temple to the moon in Ur, and dug up a lot of examples of moon-god worship. Those items are now housed in the British museum, in London. The Ur-Nammu Stone has the crescent moon symbol placed at the top of a listing of the gods, showing that the moon-god was supreme.

The other city known as a capital of moon-god worship was Harran. The ancient historian, Herodotus, in IV, 13, 7, talks about the city and its moon-god temple. It was repeatedly rebuilt and expanded in ancient times by famous kings like Shalmaneser, Assurbanipal, and later, Nabonidus. The ruins can still be seen today. From 1900 BC to 900 BC, powerful kings were expected to swear by the Moon-god in any important treaty they made. They derived their authority from the Moon-god. So the Moon-god's name can still be found,

in cuneiform, on those old stone tablets. Much later, we read in Roman histories that Emperor Caracala was killed after he returned from visiting the moon-god temple at Harran.

Harran also had their own version of the god that is familiar to students of the Old Testament. According to researchers, Harran had its own BAAL. But in Harran, we are told, Baal was another manifestation of the moon-god.

In addition to the various names they had for him, different tribes of people had different ideas about the moon-god. A number of North Arabian tribes believed the moon-god was female. They had a moon-goddESS.

b. Canaan

Archaeologists working near Hazor, from 1955-1958, uncovered a temple to the moon-god there. They found two statues of a man seated on a throne, with the crescent moon carved into his chest. These could be representations of the moon-god himself, or possibly of his priests. They also found a carved stone showing hands raised in worship to a crescent moon above them. Finally, at the same site, they found pieces of several other statues with inscriptions identifying them as "The Daughters of God."

c. Arabia, North of Medina

The Arabs had probably worshipped the moon for as long as there had been Arabs. Desert wanderers would revere the moon for the relief it brings from the blazing heat of day. Thousands of artifacts dedicated to the moon have been recovered from the soil and sands of the Middle East, including Arabia. The crescent moon is found on ancient seal impressions, marker stones, pottery, amulets, clay tablets, cylinders, weights, earrings, necklaces, and other items as well.

We know from ancient records that the last Babylonian King, Nabonidus, went to Tayma, in the Hijaz, 1000 years before Muhammad was born. He stayed there for quite awhile, and while there, made Tayma a center for moon-god worship. A lot of inscriptions concerning the worship of the moon have been found in that area, including the "Stele of Nabonidus." On this old carved stone, the king himself is shown, with a very large symbol of the crescent moon right next to him.

Tayma is about 230 miles north of Medina. Other sites in the north have also been excavated. Carvings in stone and ceremonial bowls dedicated to the "daughters of Allah" have been found and documented. The three daughters, Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat, are sometimes shown with the symbol of the crescent moon above them -- the moon-god. (Even Professor Muhammad Mohar Ali, a lecturer in the history of Islam at the Islamic University in Madina, acknowledges in his lecture on pre-Islamic Arabia that pre-Islamic inscriptions to Allah have been found in the northern areas, areas where the moon-god was worshipped.)

Apparently the three daughters of Allah were very important to the Northern Arabians. If you wish, you can read more about these archaeological discoveries in the books listed below:

- 1) Aramaic Inscriptions of the 5th century, Jones, XV, 1956, pp 1-9 (Isaac Rabinowitz)
- 2) Another Aramaic Record of the North Arabian Goddess Han'Laat, Jones, XVIII, 1959, pp 154-155 (Rabinowitz)
- 3) The Goddess Atirat in Ancient Arabia, in Babylon and in Ugarit: Her Relation to the moon-god and the sun-goddess, *Orientalia Loviensa Periodica*, 3:101-109
- 4) Iconography and Character of the Arab Goddess Allat, found in *Etudes Preliminaries Aux Religions Orientales Dans L'Empire Roman*, ed. Maarten J. Verseren, Leiden, Brill, 1978, pp 331-351 (H.J. Drivers)

c. Southern Arabia, Right Up To the Town of Mecca, (and beyond)

The kingdom of Saba (Sheba) was located in the southern portion of Arabia. People from Saba were called Sabians. This was where the “Queen of Sheba” came from. (Gen. 10:26, Job 1:15, 6:19, I Kings 10:1-5, I Chron 9:1-4, Ezekiel 23:42, 27:22, 38:13, Joel 3:8, Matt 12:42) The word, “Sheba” is just the English rendering of the Hebrew rendering of the original word – Saba. This kingdom is well-known in History. It’s also well-known that the Sabians worshipped the moon, the sun, and the stars. In fact the word Saaba, in Arabic, means “star.”

The kingdom of Saba took up all of southern Arabia up to Yemen’s border with Arabia, and possibly even further. But its influence went beyond that border, into the city of Mecca itself. The Quran talks about the Sabians too (Sura 2:62, Sura 5:69, Sura 22:17, Sura 27:29). In fact the Sabians were traders, and their influence spread wherever their caravans travelled. Even to the west of Mecca and Medina, across the Red Sea in Africa, the Sabians worshipped their moon-god in the Sudan, and in Ethiopia.

The tribes of Saba and the other pagans had a lot of different names for their moon-god. He had names like Ilumqah, or Al-Maqah, Wadd, Amm, Hawbas, Hubal, Ilah, and Sin.

Sin was the same moon-god that was worshipped in Harran to the north. And the Harran moon-god worshippers also called themselves Sabians. In the early 1940s, Gertrude Caton Thompson uncovered a temple to the moon-god at Hureidha, inside the former kingdom of Saba. She found 21 inscriptions of the god’s name – Sin, in the temple area. An idol that might be the moon-god himself was also found.

Another moon-god temple was found at Awan, also in the Sabian kingdom. In the 1950s, Wendell Phillips, W.F. Albright, Richard Bower, and others found more evidence of moon-god worship in the cities of Qataban, and Timna, and in the ancient capital of Saba, Marib.

You can read more about their discoveries in the following books:

- 1) G. C. Thompson, “The tombs and Temple of Hureidha,” 1944
- 2) Carleton S. Coon, “Southern Arabia, a Problem for the Future,” Smithsonian, 1944
- 3) G. Rykmans, “Les Religions Arabes Preislamiques,”
- 4) Richard Le Baron Bower Jr. and Frank P. Albright, *Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1958, p 78ff
- 5) Ray Cleveland, *An Ancient South Arabian Necropolis*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1965
- 6) Nelson Glueck, *Deities and Dolphins*, New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1965

❖ *Hubal, (Inside the City of Mecca)*

Archaeology doesn’t say much about the city of Mecca itself because the people in charge, Islamists, are afraid of what might be uncovered. Access to the area is severely restricted. If any artifact ever did turn up that contradicted their narrow view of “history,” they would probably lock it away in secret or else just destroy it.

However, the good news is that there are some present-day Muslim writers and some medieval Muslim historians who have been honest enough to say something about the moon-god worship in Mecca. Al-Muslim had this to say:

About four hundred years before the birth of Muhammad one Amr bin Harath...bin Saba, a descendant of Qahtan and king of Hijaz, had put an idol on the roof of the Kaba. This was one of the chief deities of Muhammad's tribe, before Islam. It is said there were altogether three hundred and sixty in and about the Kaba...Besides Hubal, there was another idol, Shams, placed on the roof of the Kaba... Besides idol worship, they also worshipped the stars, the sun, and the moon. ("Muhammad the Holy Prophet," Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar, Pakistan, p.18-19, Muslim)

Okay, so we know there was an idol on the roof of the Kaba, an idol called "Hubal." Besides this, the author, Al-Muslim, tells us that there were 360 idols in and around the Kaba – and 360 just happens to be the exact number of days in the Lunar year. Also, Hubal shared the roof of the Kaba with one other idol, "Shams." Well, Yusuf Ali has told us that Shams was the sun-god. And in Babylonia, as we've already learned, Sin, the moon-god, ruled alongside the sun-god, Shamash. Hubal was, therefore, the moon-god.

Muslim, Christian, and secular sources agree that Hubal was a representation of the moon-god. Another respected Muslim author makes the following statement:

Among the many deities that the Arabs worshiped in and around the Ka'bah were the god Hubal and the three goddesses Al-lat, al-'Uzza, and Manat. Hubal was originally a moon god, and perhaps also a rain god, as hubal means "vapor."

(Mahmoud M. Ayoub, Islam: "Faith and History," Oneworld Publications, Oxford England, 2004, p. 15; underline emphasis ours)

Reza Aslan, now, in 2005, has another good book, "No God But God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam." On page 3 of that book, in which he takes the reader back to the pre-Islamic Kaaba, he states:

It is here ... that the gods of pre-Islamic Arabia reside: Hubal, the Syrian god of the Moon; Al-Uzza, the powerful goddess the Egyptians knew as Isis and the Greeks called Aphrodite ...

Azraki, in the following quote, calls Hubal a "stellar" deity. This means that it has something to do with the sun, moon or stars. He is not as specific as Ayoub or Aslan. But he basically makes the same point.

In the Ka'ba, Hubal must have preserved this original character of a stellar deity; but his most characteristic role was that of a cleromantic divinity. Indeed, it was before the god that the sacred lots were cast. (al-Azraki, 31)

Azraki also calls Hubal a "cleromantic" deity. What does that mean? "Cleromantic" means this is a "go-between." Hubal served, apparently, as a bridge to another god who had more power. You prayed to the "High" god through this lower god. Two of the earliest Muslim historians gave a pretty clear picture of what Azraki is talking about.

Ibn Kathir and Ibn Ishaq stated:

It is claimed that when 'Abd al-Mutallib received such opposition from Quraysh over the digging of zamzam (a famous well, next to the Ka'ba, in Mecca), he vowed that if ten sons were born to him who grew up and protected him, he would sacrifice one of them for God at the ka'ba.... (Years later, he had ten sons, and...) So they went back to Mecca and...'Abd al-Muttalib stood by Hubal and said prayers to Allah. Then they offered up 'Abd Allah (Muhammad's father) and the ten camels as

sacrifice and cast the arrow (This was a way of knowing god's will, like rolling dice. He wanted to know if he still had to go through with the sacrifice of his son.). At that point the men of Quraysh told 'Abd al-Muttalib, who was standing near Hubal praying to Allah, "It's all over! Your God is pleased, O 'Abd al-Muttalib"... (p. 126)

Two times we are told that Muhammad's grandfather, standing in the presence of Hubal, said prayers to Allah. This backs up what Azraki said. It seems that Hubal was the local deity whom Arabs went through to get to the high god, Allah. Either that is the case, or, the other possibility is that Hubal actually WAS Allah.

It doesn't really make any difference. The point here is that whether you go through the moon-god to get to Allah, or whether the moon-god is Allah, it is OBVIOUS that Allah, as the pagan Arabs understood him, was, in some way, closely connected to the moon-god. Therefore the "Allah" of the Quran did NOT come from Christianity. He has NOTHING to do with Jehovah, the "I AM" of our Bible.

Muhammad definitely DID borrow some ideas from Christians and from Jews. In fact, the biggest idea he borrowed from them was MONOTHEISM. Unfortunately, to keep his pagan Arab cousins happy, he created his own religion, made up out of pagan rituals, rather than choosing the Truth.

Khairt Al-Saeh, on page 29 of his book, "Fabled Cities, Princes and Jin from Arab Myths and Legends," published in 1985, has more to say about Hubal:

"Hubal was associated with the Semitic god, Ba'al, and with Adonis and Tammuz, the gods of spring, fertility, agriculture and plenty".

He links Hubal to Baal. And a lot of scholars agree with him. (Earlier in this chapter you read a quote from Mahmoud Ayoub, saying Hubal was a moon-god and perhaps also a rain god. That's interesting, because Baal was also often a god of rain – signifying fertility.

The name, "Hubal" cannot be explained from the Arabic language. (ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ISLAM by Gibb and Kramers). In his book "Specimen Historicae Arabum" the author (Pocock) suggests that the name might well have been derived from ha-Baal. "The old Hebrew and Arabic written languages had no vowels, so this would have been one of many common changes (e.g. one can read Mohamed, Muhamad, Muhammed, Mahomet etc.) The name HUBAL (In Arabic and Hebrew script the vowels were not noted = H B L). This shows a very suspicious connection to the Hebrew HABAAL (= the Baal). As we all know, this was an idol mentioned in the Bible (Num. 25:3, Hosea 9:10, Deut. 4:3, Josh. 22:17 and Ps. 106:28-29). Where was Baal worshipped? In Moab! It was the god of fertility."

(From Gerhard Nehls)

Amr ibn Luhaiy DID apparently bring Hubal from Moab. Here's what Ibn Kathir says:

Ibn Hisham states that a learned man told him that 'Amr b. Luhayy once left Mecca for Syria on business and reached Ma'ab [possibly the Moabites] in the Balqa' region. 'Amr then asked them to give him an idol he could take to Arab lands where it could be worshipped, and they gave him one named Hubal. This he brought to Mecca and set on a pedestal and ordered the people to worship and venerate it. (The Life of the Prophet Muhammad (Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya), Volume I, translated by professor Trevor Le Gassick, reviewed by Dr. Ahmed Fareed [Garnet

Publishing Limited, 8 Southern Court, south Street Reading RG1 4QS, UK; The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, 1998], p. 42)

It shouldn't surprise us to see Arabs worshipping Baal. The Bible mentions it in 2Chron. 26:7, which talks about King Uzziah of Israel: *"God helped him against the Philistines and against the Arabs who lived in Gur-Baal."* (The god of the Arabs living in the city of Gur was one of the Baals.)

Earlier, a few pages back, we talked about the moon-god worshipping city of Harran. We said that Harran had a Baal god also. But in Harran, that Baal was the moon-god. Apparently Mecca had the same arrangement.

❖ **Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat**

Al-Lat was said to have been brought to the Hijaz from Palmyra, through Tayma (The city that had been a center for moon-god worship.) On the other hand, some think she was actually the North Arabian moon goddess. She had a cubic stone, and stood in her own little temple at Al-Taif. The name "Allat" is simply the feminine form of Allah.

Al-Uzza was the goddess of love and beauty, almost always identified with the planet Venus, the bright morning star (The same star commonly seen with the crescent moon since long before Muhammad). She might have been the Arabian form of Astarte, or Ishtar, the "Asherah" of the Bible – a well-known sun goddess. Her idol stood at Nakhlat. Her cult was very strong.

Manat was the Arabs' original goddess. The name appears in BAAL's house, in Palmyra, in an inscription from 32 AD. Manat had a black stone on the road between Mecca and Medina. She stood near Qudayd. Manat was the goddess of destiny.

All three goddesses were very popular. All three of these goddesses, and Hubal as well, were pleased with human sacrifice. According to **Khairt al-Saeh**,

"As well as worshipping idols and spirits, found in animals, plants, rocks, and water, the ancient Arabs believed in several major gods and goddesses whom they considered to hold supreme power over all things. The most famous of these were Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, Manat, and Hubal. The first three were thought to be daughters of Allah (God) and their intercessions on behalf of their worshippers were therefore of great significance."

Yusuf Ali says the same thing about the daughters of Allah on page 1445 of his translation, footnote number 5096. He explains that Lat, Uzza and Manat were known as **"The Daughters of Allah."**

Al-Saeh and Ali both connect the three "daughters" to Allah. Archaeology connects these same "Daughters of Allah" to Hubal.

The earliest inscription of Hubal's name was found in Nabataea, in northwest Arabia, on the northwest border of the Hijaz. That inscription associates Hubal with "Ma-Na-Wat." That term, Mana – Uw – At, is a cognate word referring to the three goddesses, Manat, Uzza, and Lat.

These are the same "Daughters of Allah" that were represented on stones dug up by archaeologists in North Arabia – the same three daughters that were shown together with the crescent moon, the moon-god, hovering over them. Could their father, Allah, have been the moon-god? It's quite likely.

The three idols had direct ties to the moon-god. The three idols were called the Daughters of Allah. But there are different opinions about this. The evidence is not conclusive.

❖ The Satanic Verses

In pre-Islamic times, the Arabs, particularly those of Muhammad's tribe, used to walk around the Kaaba, as pilgrims do today. However, the words they chanted were quite different. They would chant as they walked, ***“By Allat and Al-Uzza, and Manat the third idol besides. Truly they are the most exalted females, whose intercessions are to be sought.”***

The Hadith al-Gharniq al-Ula, from At-Tabari, and Ibn-Sa'd (Respected Early Muslim historians) gives the following story. I've paraphrased it here:

*In the early days of his career, Muhammad saw that he would be able to win the Meccans over, if he allowed them to continue to worship the Moon-god's daughters, Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat. While sitting with some prominent men of Mecca one day, next to the Kaaba, he began to recite surat 53. It speaks of Gabriel's first visit to him. He then continued into some new “revelations from Allah,” in which he said: **What do you think of Lat and Uzza and Manat the third beside? These are exalted females whose intercession is truly to be asked for! These are the same words that the pre-Islamic pagans used in their worship of the goddesses.***

The Meccans were happy with this, but Muhammad's followers were upset. Their prophet was going back on his word. When it became clear that he'd made a big political blunder, another 'revelation' was sent down, telling him to replace the earlier words with the verse that you nowadays find in 53:19-21:

Have you seen Lat and Uzza, and another, the third (goddess), Manat? What? For you, sons, and for him, daughters? Behold, such would be a most unfair division! These are nothing but names which you have devised – you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority at all. They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire.

Of course, the new revelation, to please his followers, ridicules the worship of the three goddesses. Muhammad then explained to his followers that Satan had deceived him, but God had spoken, afterward, to straighten things out.

Keep in mind – this is NOT just Christian propaganda. It is recorded in the **Islamic histories**. I read a rebuttal to the “Satanic Verses” story, written by an Islamic apologist. The only way that he could counter the story was by questioning the truthfulness of his own Muslim historians. I would like to ask him the following question: If the Muslim historians cannot be trusted, then how can we know anything about Muhammad? In other words, his only defense against this story is to question the foundations of his own religion.

If there is any truth in Islam at all, then the story of the “Satanic Verses” must also be true. And Muslims must wrestle with the obvious implications of that story. I'm really glad that, as Christians, we don't have such problems.

❖ Evidence from the Quran

We should say very clearly, at this point, that the Quran really DOES condemn the worship of idols, as well as the worship of the stars, sun, and moon. But that very fact makes it clear that the pre-Islamic Arabs DID INDEED worship the stars, sun, and yes – also, the MOON. Why would Muhammad condemn something that nobody was doing? Sura 41:37 reads as follows: “*Adore not the sun and the moon, but adore the God who created them*”.

Muhammad makes the same point again, when he relates the story of Noah’s flood. In sura 71:23, he lists the names of a number of pagan Arab idols:

They have said, “forsake not your gods. Forsake not Wadd, nor Suwa, nor Yaghuth, and Yauq and Nasr.” And they have led many astray ... and because of their sins they were drowned.

Clearly he is very much against idolatry, naming some of the same idols we mentioned earlier in the chapter, different regional names for the Moon-god. The note in Pickthall’s Quran translation even states that these were the names of Arab idols. (*I cannot help but point one the problem with this particular reference, however: These idols were being worshipped in Muhammad’s time, in Arabia. How did they ever get into a story about Noah, who probably lived tens of thousands of years earlier in another part of the world? Is this the Islamic notion of history?*)

There is also another big problem with this list. Who is missing? **Hubal!** Isn’t it strange that Muhammad lists the names of other gods and goddesses, but not Hubal who once stood on top of the Kaaba, the number one deity in Muhammad’s own hometown? We know from those Muslim historians that Hubal was destroyed with the rest of the idols. But, given that he was the chief god in Mecca, how could Muhammad leave him off the list of condemned idols? I have an idea why. It’s just my opinion, just speculation. But it’s very interesting.

Muhammad’s early followers, it appears, were mostly former Hubal worshippers. Muhammad probably converted them by telling them that the high god (Allah) was the one to pray to directly, that it wasn’t right to go through Hubal. That might have been okay with the people, because they still had Allah. Even taking down Hubal’s statue would not be a problem, if the people figured that Hubal and Allah were the same, but that there should be no idol of him. Of course, under those conditions, condemning Hubal would be the same as condemning Allah – so Hubal would naturally be left off the list of condemned idols.

Need more evidence of the Quran’s background in astral worship? Look at the names of some of the suras. 53)The Star, 54)The Moon, 85)Mansions of the Stars, 86)The Morning Star, 91)The Sun (Shams, the same name as that of the idol standing next to Hubal, on top of the Kaaba, according to the Hadith.)

And one other thing – Why does Muhammad (Or, if you prefer, Allah) swear by the stars, sun, and moon? Why would a creator swear by his creation? The God of the Jews and the Christians swears in Jeremiah 44:26. But he swears by his own name. What else would God swear by?

- **Jeremiah 44:26** “*But hear the word of the Lord, all Jews living in Egypt: ‘I swear by my Great name’ says the Lord...*”

But “Allah” swears by the moon, sun, stars, and night in the following suras:

- Sura 74:32, *“By the Moon, and the night when it withdraweth,”*
- Sura 91, verses 1 to 5, he says, *“By the Sun and his brightness. And the Moon when she follows him....”*
- **Sura 56:75**, *“I swear by the places of the stars, and lo that truly is a tremendous oath, if you but knew it, that this is a noble Quran.”*

Doesn’t it seem a bit odd! “Allah” has to appeal to the authority of the stars to show how great his Quran is????

❖ What about the Bible Stories in the Quran?

The stories told in the Quran came from old Jewish and Christian folktales, sometimes from Persian folktales – but not from the Bible. Of course they often use names that we know from the Bible, but that’s all. **Surat 8:31** says that when Muhammad's followers recited new Quranic revelations, the Christians and Jews ridiculed them, saying, *“We've heard these stories before. They're just old folktales, fables from long ago.”* They were right.

The Christians and Jews didn't complain that those pretty stories had been stolen from their Scriptures. Not at all. They said the stories were just old fairy-tales, like the stories of "Paul Bunyan" or "Jack and the Beanstalk" that I learned as a child. They knew the stories were not Biblical, but were fiction, based on the Bible. And, they were correct. Their complaint was the obvious question: How can you put children’s fairy tales into a book, and then claim that the book is “God’s Word?”

- **Sur. 2:65 ; 7:163-6** The story of an entire village of people being turned into apes because they broke the Sabbath by fishing was already a popular legend in Muhammad's day.
- **Sur. 3:41-43 ; 5:119** "The Gospel of Thomas the Israelite", written circa A.D. 150, almost 500 years before Muhammad, included the fairy-tale about the young boy Jesus making birds out of clay, and then making them come to life. It is also found, in Arabic, in chapters 36 and 46 of "The Gospel of the Infancy."
- **Sur. 5:27-32** The story of a raven showing humans how to bury Abel is a Jewish folktale from Pirke Rabbi Eleazer, around A.D. 150 -- 200.
- **Sur. 7:148 ; 20:88** The story of the golden calf jumping out of the fire and mooing is another folktale from Pirke Rabbi Eleazer.
- **Sur. 7:171** The story of God lifting Mt. Sinai up over the heads of the Israelites was already written in a Jewish book, "Abodah Sarah", long before Muhammad's time.
- **Sur. 12** The story of Joseph featured in the Quran comes from Midrash Yalqut 146.
- **Sur. 18:8-26** Seven Christians hiding from persecution in a cave, and waking up 300 years later, is taken from the "Story of the Martyrs", written by Gregory of Tours, who lived long before Muhammad was born.
- **Sur. 19:29-31** The folktale about Jesus, as an infant, lying in his cradle and talking to people is in chapter one of a popular work of Christian fiction, "The Gospel of the Infancy". Again, it predated Muhammad by many years. It’s from circa A.D. 150.
- **Sur. 21:51-71 ; 29:16-17 ; 37:97-98** The fable of Abraham being delivered from Nimrod's fire was a Jewish folktale, written in the "Midrash Rabbah" 400 years before

Muhammad's time (Shorrosh, 205). Of course, Nimrod actually lived thousands of years before Abraham. The Quran often makes mistakes of that nature.

- **Sur. 27:17-44** The popular fable of Solomon, talking with animals such as birds and ants, as well as the provocative story of the Queen of Sheba thinking that Solomon's shiny floor was water, and therefore hoisting up her skirt. These were written in the II Targum of the Book of Esther", a collection of fairy tales that was in circulation around A.D. 200 – four hundred years before Muhammad was born.

❖ The Name Isa for Jesus

The Jews who rejected Jesus were, of course, never very complimentary toward Jesus. Among the Jews, if a teacher was very wise, they would begin to compare him to one of their former prophets. They might, for example, say, "He's the voice of Samuel."

Those Jewish people who rejected Jesus would make jokes – "Yeah, he's very wise! He's the voice of ESAU !!!" Of course, Esau was the moron that sold off his birth-right for a bowl of soup, the Jews number one example of a fool. (It is funny, if you consider it from their point of view.) At any rate, Muhammad actually seems to have thought that was his real name. Therefore, in the Quran, the name "Jesus" becomes "Isa".

❖ Same God? Evidence From the Bible

The Bible, just like the Quran, speaks out often against idol worship. Here are just a few examples.

- **In Exodus 20:4** it says, *"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God am a jealous God."*
- **Leviticus 19:4** *"Do not turn to idols or make gods of cast metal for yourselves. I am the Lord your God."*
- **Judges 3:7** *"The Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord; They forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs."*
- **In Judges 6:25**, the Lord tells Gideon, *"Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it."*
- **II Kings 21:1 ff** *"Manasseh ... did evil in the sight of the Lord. He ... erected altars to Baal, and made an Asherah pole ... He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshipped them... He sacrificed his own son in the fire."*
- **II Kings 23:4-6**, *"The King did away with ... those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and moon, to the constellations and to all the starry host."*
- **Isaiah 44:16-17** *"Half of the wood he burns in the fire ... From the rest he makes a god, his idol ... He prays to it and says, 'Save me. You are my god.'"*
- **I Corinthians 10:14** *"My dear friends, flee from idolatry."*

If the crescent moon symbol is connected to Baal through Hubal, and Asherah is the star seen with it, through Al-Uzza, then it would seem we don't worship the same God. I don't think our Lord would use these symbols as his own, since they come from his old enemies. Islam, on the other hand, still cherishes these symbols.

Look again at the Bible references I just gave you. Here is Baal, Asherah, the moon and the stars -- all connected, along with child sacrifice. And all of this is exactly what we also saw in Pre-Islamic Arabia. The Bible condemns it all. The Quran seems to condemn it,

but then goes on to compromise, continuing the old pagan practices, venerating the old pagan symbols, even as we speak, right up through the present day.

❖ Did the Ishmaelites worship the true God?

The Islamists claim that since Ishmael came from Abraham, as did Isaac, and since Muslims are descended from Ishmael, then we must all be worshipping the same God. The Quran, in fact, in sura 19, verse 54, calls Ishmael a “prophet.”

Muslims around the world believe what the Quran says about Ishmael. However, they might be surprised at what the Quran does NOT say about him. Read Sura 37, verses 102-105, for example. The story of Abraham almost sacrificing his son is told there. But it just says, “His son.” No name is given. You will not find Ishmael identified as the almost-sacrificed son either here, or in any other part of the Quran. It is claimed that earlier commentators agreed that the son spoken of was Isaac, just as in the Biblical account. I cannot, however, confirm that.

According to the Bible, the Ishmaelites represent only a portion of the Arab people, only part of the Arab nation. Other Arabs came from other ancestors. Some are mentioned in the following verses:

- **Genesis 10:26-29** The 13 sons of Joktan, and their descendants, were the very first Arabs in recorded history. And they were there long before Ishmael was born. Some of their names, such as Havilah and Sheba, became well-known place names.
- **Genesis 19:37-38.** Furthermore, Abraham’s nephew Lot had two daughters who gave birth to the Moabites, and the Ammonites. These people became Arab tribes too, settling in modern day Jordan -- and they were not descended from Ishmael either.
- **Genesis 36:1-43** Esau fathered the Edomites. They also settled in Jordan.
- **Genesis 25:1-6** Finally, Abraham had other children by his second wife, Keturah, long after he had Ishmael and Isaac. None of Keturah’s sons were descended from Ishmael. There were six – Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Their descendants, including the Midianites (Kenites), became Arabs too.

With all these tribes involved, there is no way you can make the claim that all Arabs came from Ishmael. It’s just not true. However, it is true that some Arab tribes DO descend from Ishmael:

- **Genesis 25:12-18.** Their names are very familiar. Names such as Kedar, Tema (Tayma), Dumah, and Nebaioth (the Nabateans) form part of the Arabian landscape. So there is obviously SOME truth in the claim of descent from Ishmael.

WHAT the BIBLE SAYS about ISHMAEL

- **Genesis 17:20,** Ishmael was promised he would become the father of twelve kings. That prediction was fulfilled already in the Genesis 25 passage mentioned above. Genesis 17 also predicted he would be as wild and free as a donkey, and he would be against his brothers. Genesis 25:18 confirms that the Ishmaelites lived in hostility toward their brothers. Wild and free would, furthermore, describe the bedouins of the desert pretty well.

Ishmael is never called a prophet in the Bible, and there is not even any evidence that he grew up to be a follower of Jehovah. Did Ishmael's descendants, according to the Bible, worship the True God? No. Definitely not.

- **Psalm 83:1-18** says, "*O God, do not keep silent. Be not quiet, O God. Be not still. See how your enemies are astir....With cunning they conspire against your people. They plot against those you cherish. 'Come,' They say, 'Let's destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more. ... They form an alliance against you – the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites of Moab, ... So pursue them with your tempest and... cover their faces with shame....May they perish in disgrace. Let them know that you, whose name is the Lord – that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.*"

So, if the Ishmaelites were enemies of the Lord, then whom did they worship? Very interestingly, the crescent moon was with the Ishmaelites, even back in Old Testament times, as the symbol of their god. In Judges 8:21,24, you read: "***So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna (two kings),and took the crescent-shaped ornaments that were on their camels necks,.....they were Ishmaelites.***" Apparently the worshipping of the moon goes back to the very earliest times in Arabia.

The Crescent Moon Symbol

Today, the Crescent Moon hasn't changed. Sometimes seen with the morning star, sometimes without it, the crescent moon symbol remains at the top of thousands of mosques around the world. Beyond that, the crescent serves as the centerpiece of the flags of 12 different Muslim countries -- Algeria, Azerbaijan, Brunei, Comoros, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Pakistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Islamists ask us to believe it is just a huge coincidence that the symbol of ancient Arab paganism is EXACTLY the SAME as the symbol of modern day Islam.

The Islamists will tell you that Islam took the crescent symbol from Constantinople after invading and conquering that city. One problem with this story is that the symbol of Constantinople was not the crescent. It was the double-headed eagle (Time-Life Series, "Great Ages of Man," Byzantium, page 171). Besides that, Constantinople wasn't conquered till 1453, but the crescent moon was already appearing on coins of the Islamic Empire at least as early as A.D. 696 (Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. III, Edt. Lewis, Menage, Pellet, Schlacht). Also, take a look at the first mosque. (*look at the picture appendix no 5 & 6*)

The Quba Mosque, mentioned in Sura 9:108 of the Quran, sometimes called the Masjid al-Taqwa, is said to be the first mosque ever built. Now, of course, Islamists will say that the crescent that sits on top of is an add-on from a much later point in time. Personally, I'm skeptical. I suspect it was there from the beginning, as a compromise with the pagan Arabs, Muhammad's cousins.

Even without the evidence that I've mentioned here, the "coincidence" -- the fact that pagan Arabs worshipped exactly the same symbol, the crescent moon, that modern Muslims use, is just too huge to explain away. And when Islamists attempt to explain it, they look ridiculous.

❖ Don't Christians also use pagan symbols??

Since they are completely unable to refute the truth about the origins of Islam, and of the crescent symbol, the Islamists try another tactic. They talk about Christmas trees, December 25th, or other Christian customs and say, "See, you Christians have pagan origins too!"

But there's one very large difference between Islam's pagan origins and Christianity's adaptation of some pagan customs. The difference is -- we can easily show that Christmas trees were NOT part of the original Christian Gospel. We can easily trace the December 25th date for Christmas back to Spanish missionaries and a winter solstice festival. Some Christians don't even celebrate Christmas, because of those origins -- and that's fine. All of these traditions are peripheral things -- unimportant, optional. They are not part of the heart of our faith. These Christian things came into Christian practice long AFTER the age of the apostles.

What about **the HADJ** and **the Five Daily Prayers** in Islam? These Islamic things came from paganism, but they are the very soul of Islam. The moon-god was part of Arab culture long BEFORE the age of Muhammad.

The central truth of our faith is that Jesus died for our sins on the cross. If Christians want to have Christmas trees and exchange presents, why not? But these things are not the heart of our faith. Jesus is the heart and soul of Christians, and we know him in whom we believe because we have the Bible.

Islamic Customs Rooted in Moon-god Worship

At least three of the five pillars of Islam were borrowed directly from pagan practices.

❖ Hadj

The Islamic Hadj happens every year in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah. This ritual was pulled directly from the pagans with almost no changes. The seven trips around the Kaaba that pilgrims do were, in pre-Islamic times, done in worship of Hubal and Shams (The Moon-god and Sun-god), the two idols on top of the Kaaba.

After washing and praying at the "sacred" mosque, Islamic pilgrims, even today, try to kiss the Black Stone. Long before Muhammad, Clement of Alexandria, writing in A.D. 190, said, "The Arabs worship stone." (Warraq 39).

Pagan people kissed the black stone in reverence to Hubal, their moon-god. In the 7th year after the Hijra, Muhammad and some of his followers came to Mecca and worshipped at the Kaaba along with the pagans. When Muhammad kissed the Black Stone, his followers were confused. Wasn't this the same kind of idolatry that their leader preached against? Umar, himself, the future caliph, said, "If I had not seen the Prophet kiss you, I would not kiss you myself."

The Black Stone is actually very dark brown in color. The stone there now is probably the same one that was Hubal's stone in pre-Islamic times. (However there is some question, because in 930 the Stone was taken by an Iraqi sect, and shattered. The pieces were returned later.) The pieces were put back together, sealed with pitch, and tied together, apparently with wire made of silver. The stone is in a special place in the east corner of the Kaaba. It's not very big. Peter Ochigrosso (The Joy of Sects, 1996), gives a good description of it. It is probably a meteorite and the ancient Arabs naturally thought it must be sacred, since they saw it fall from the sky. No tests have ever been done however, so we don't know for sure if it is a meteorite. What we do know is that it is a **STONE**, and that, even today, it is considered a good thing to kiss it.

While on Hadj, of course the pious Muslim must run back and forth between the hills of As-Safa and Al-Marwa. Muslim people are told that the custom of running back and forth between the mounds during Hadj actually began with Hagar. The story is that Hagar was running back and forth, looking for water for Ishmael, until the well of Zam-Zam magically appeared.

The truth is not exactly like the story. In actual fact, the mounds are places where the idols Isaf and Naila once stood. As for Hagar, she was never anywhere near Mecca. (In fact, Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael were never anywhere near Mecca either. If they were, where's the evidence?) The real reason people run around those hills now is because that's what the idol worshippers used to do. The only way Muhammad could get them to join him was to allow some of their most cherished practices to continue. The Quran says, in:

- **Sura 2:158**, "*Lo (the mountains) As-Safa and Al-arwa are among the indications of Allah. It is therefore no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the house (of God) or visiteth it, to go around them (as the pagan custom is).*"

The explanations in parentheses are not mine, they are the translator's, Muhammad M. Pickthall's.

Finally, throwing stones at the "devil" is also an ancient pre-Islamic custom connected to false gods. According to Yusuf Ali, in footnote number 223, page 80 of his English translation of the Quran, "**The whole of the [pagan] pilgrimage was spiritualized in Islam.**" That's a nice way of saying that Muhammad kept all the old religious practices, but just made up new stories to go with them.

❖ *Daily Prayers*

The moon-worshipping Sabeans had regular prayer times every day in which everyone would bow toward the Kaaba, just as Muslims do today. Their prayers were almost identical to those of present day Muslims. Islamists object to this line of attack, pointing out that the Jews also had regular prayer times. Given the account of the Queen of Sheba (I Kings 10v6-9, and 2 Chron.9v12), it stands to reason there might be similarities between Jewish and sabean worship practices. However, the Muslims bow and pray toward the Kaaba, just as the polytheists used to pray to the Kaaba when it was full of idols. Muslims follow the pagan practice. Jews prayed toward Jerusalem.

Islamists claim they pray to the Kaaba because Abraham built the Kaaba – but that's just a "pretty story." According to Reza Aslan, it is no accident that the Kaaba is next to the well of Zam Zam. The weary desert traveler finds water, and what is the first thing he wants to do? Give thanks to the Deity for this well. And, if that ancient weary traveler were one of the Ishmaelite merchants spoken of in the Bible, then he probably worshipped the moon. Moon worship was especially popular in desert areas among Bedouins – because the moon brings relief from the blistering heat of the sun. So it is also no accident that Hubal, who ended up on top of the Kaaba, was the moon-god.

(One point should be made. Why do Muslims in every country have to pray to Saudi Arabia? Muslims are expected to go on Hadj – on Saudi planes, and Saudi tours, at Saudi prices. I hear talk of cultural imperialism directed against the USA all the time. But nobody forces anyone to buy a hamburger at MacDonalds, or to buy a movie ticket. Are not the MANDATORY prayers and the Hadj examples of Arab cultural imperialism? What else would you call it? You are told that to be a good Muslim you MUST do these things, unless you have a good EXCUSE. Why should Indonesians spend their small incomes to make Saudi travel agents rich?)

Christians? We pray in any and all directions because the one true God is there, wherever we look. No country is more sacred than another. God made them all. I am an American, and I love my country. But it's just a country. My home is in Heaven, with Jesus. I have much more in common with an Indonesian Christian than I do with an American who is not a Christian. When I pray, I need no special ritual, no mandatory clothes, or proper position for prayer. Our prayers are simple conversations with God. For us, real prayer and

real worship is that which is done sincerely and inside your spirit. We believe that the Lord actually lives inside our hearts. The real “temple” then, of God, is our bodies (I Cor. 6:19) (II Cor. 6:16). So we don’t bow down to any other temple. ***Christian prayer is as natural as it is for children to talk earnestly and honestly with their Father who loves them.*** That’s all it is – a conversation with our Father in Heaven.

❖ ***The Fast at Ramadan***

The Sabean month of fasting began with the crescent moon. Then it didn’t end until the moon had gone through its phases and the crescent was visible once again. (Just like the present day festival) Muhammad was simply continuing the same practice that the pagans had. Abd Allah b. Abbas reported that Muhammad, referring to Ramadan, declared, “Do not begin to fast until you have seen the crescent and do not leave the fast until you see it again, and if there are clouds. Complete thirty days.”

That having been said, it should also be remembered that the Jews of Muhammad’s day also had ceremonial fasting. And, to be fair, the Jewish calendar was also based on the moon, so they had their New Moon festival also. However, Leviticus 23 makes it clear that those New Moon festivals were NOT begun by Jehovah. Their other festivals were directly commissioned by the Lord himself.

Even today, we Christians also fast. Some of us fast regularly. Most Christians that know, myself included, fast when we are earnestly praying for something, or seeking guidance. It’s a way of focusing our minds on the Lord. But the Lord warns us against taking religious pride in it, or “showing off.” He says it’s better if nobody really knows that we are fasting (Matt.6v3-4, & 16-18). It is not a “religious duty” for us.

Our only “religious duty” is to realize that we are sinners, completely unworthy of Heaven, and to trust in Jesus to bring us home. Then, out of simple gratitude for what he’s done for us, nothing more – we seek, quite naturally, to follow Jesus and to try to help others, in his name.

❖ ***Other Practices and Beliefs***

Superstitions such as the Jinn, the evil eye, and magic stones were all well-known to the pagan Arabs of central Arabia long before Muhammad was born. Special charms were worn for protection. The practices of polygamy, easy divorce, female circumcision, and slavery were all taken from the pagans. And all of that is still practiced today.

Evidence From the Arabian Christians of Muhammad’s Day

If you read the Quran, it becomes quite obvious quite quickly that practically the entire book is one long tedious argument. Over and over again, Muhammad writes, “They say.....; Say to them....” On and on it goes. Reading the Quran is like watching kids argue on a playground.

Consider for a moment why it reads this way. It’s because Muhammad spent his whole later life ARGUING with his enemies, the Christians and Jews – those troublesome people who just refused to give up their God or their Scriptures. Just pick up a translation of the Quran and start paging through it. I am just casually paging through it right now and what do I see on the pages?

- **Sura 2:28** “How disbelieve ye in Allah when he gave life to you?”
- **Sura 2:42** “Confound not truth with falsehood, nor knowingly conceal the truth”.

- **Sura 2:77-78** *“Are they then unaware that Allah knoweth that which they keep hidden and that which they proclaim? Among them are unlettered folk who know scripture not, except from hearsay. They but guess.*

If I wanted to list all the argumentative passages in the Quran, I’d practically have to quote the whole book. Obviously, the people were rejecting Muhammad’s apostleship. The Jews and Christians considered him to be a FALSE prophet. (Of course, we still do.)

A pre-Islamic inscription, from the year AD 542, found in Yemen, begins with the words, *“In the power of the **Al-Rachman** and His Messiah and the Holy Spirit.”* ‘Al-Rachman’ means “The Merciful.” (You’ll find this term often in the Quran.) Well, prior to Muhammad’s era, Christians, used various terms to refer to God. Like others, they would use the term “Allah” as well. However, after Muhammad began his hybrid, composite religion, Christians stopped using the word “Allah,” but kept on using Rachman as an alternative. (“Reach Out to the Muslim World,” Vol. 6, No. 3 and 4, Horizons International, Box 18478, Boulder, Colorado, 80308-1478;1993, p.8).

The first Arabic translation of the Bible was produced around the ninth century after Christ, about 200 years after Muhammad’s death. That Bible translation does NOT use the name “Allah” at all – not even once. This is, of course, further evidence that the Christians of the early Islamic era completely rejected Muhammad’s notions about God. (In subsequent translations, Christians were pressured into inserting the name, “Allah.”). Look at Sura 8:31 again. I quote it here from Muhammad M. Pickthall’s translation:

- **Sura 8:31**, *And when our revelations are recited to them they say: We have heard. If we wish we can speak the like of this. Lo! This is nothing but fables of the men of old.*

It really does NOT sound like the Christians or Jews were buying the brand of religion that Muhammad was trying to sell. Unfortunately, not many of the writings of Christians from that time and place remain. Muhammad was in the habit of killing those who disagreed with him. (Some things never change). But here is one Christian’s viewpoint which, happily, did survive.

According to N.A. Newman, author of “Three Early Christian-Muslim Debates” (Hatfield, PA. 1994), *Al-Kindi, one of the early Christian apologists against Islam, pointed out that Islam and its god, Allah, did not come from the Bible but from the paganism of the Sabeans. They did not worship the God of the Bible, but the moon-god and his daughters al-Uzza, al-Lat, and Manat.*

But Doesn’t Islam Teach Tolerance? Doesn’t the Word “Islam” Mean Peace?

The word “Islam” did not originally mean “peace” as Islamic propagandists are now beginning to say. Dr. Jane Smith, at Harvard University, argues that the word slowly developed the meaning of “submission” after Muhammad introduced his religion.

Originally, according to “The Spiritual Background of Early Islam,” by Dr. M. Bravmann, the word “islam” referred to the courage of someone who dies defiantly in battle. It referred to the strength of the desert warrior who would fight to the death for his tribe. (Perhaps its meaning was similar to “resignation” or “submission to one’s fate,” like the old American Indian saying, “It’s a good day to die.”)

According to the two Caner Brothers, in their book, “More Than a Prophet,” on page 193, the word “islam” does not come from the word for peace, “salam,” but from the infinitive form, “salama.” (Not PEACE, but PACIFICATION) So maybe that’s where the oft-spoken meaning of “submission” comes from.

The best explanation that I have found (From Caner and Caner) comes from letters that Muhammad sent to Arabian tribal leaders asking them to surrender. He would always sign, “Aslem, Taslam.” This phrase literally means, “Surrender and you’ll be safe.” So Islam meant “surrender,” at the point of a sword. He was not talking about spiritual surrender to God.

All About “Allah”

We’ve shown you that the Allah of the Quran was unquestionably connected to pagan worship of the stars, the sun, and especially the moon. The word “**Allah**,” as we’ve mentioned, comes from the article and the noun combination, “**al-Ilah**,” which means, “the god.” **Ilah** comes from the Babylonian term “**IL**” which was the name of their HIGH god. **IL**’s name can be seen right in the middle of their capital city’s name -- **Bab-YL-on**.

In Arabia, it became “**al-Ilah**” and was taken to mean “God.” Eventually al-Ilah was shortened to the term, “**Allah**.” So one tribe of the Sabians might call their moon-god “**Wadd**” by the name of Allah. Another tribe, referring to their moon-god, “**Ilumqah**,” might call him Allah as well. The Meccans would call **Hubal Allah**. In addition to this, in the kingdom of Saba, one of those moon-gods actually went by the name of **al-Ilah**, or “**Allah**.” That’s why I said earlier that we cannot PROVE that Allah really WAS the moon-god, though he may really have been. However, he certainly was, at the very least, VERY CONNECTED to the moon-god. That much, I must say, is a proven fact.

Well, the Babylonian term **IL** also found its way to Canaan. Here it gradually changed into the Canaanite and later, Hebrew term, “EL.” That’s why, in Hebrew, “Elohim” is the plural form for god, or gods. SamuEL’s name has that final EL, and so does IshmaEL’s. IsraEL has that word in his name as well. So, right away, Islamists will jump on this and say, “SO, your Hebrew god ALSO has roots in paganism.” I would then reply to them, “Nice try, guys!”

I LOVE the way the Bible, the TRUE GOD’s ONLY truly HOLY book, long ago anticipated every attack the enemy launches, 1000 years before they even had the thought. That’s why the Bible is our sword, with which we fight our spiritual battles. In Exodus 3:13-14, I really believe God led Moses to ask God for his name. I believe God made that happen so that even now, all these generations later, nobody would be in any doubt about who He is.

- **Exodus 3:13-14** *“Moses said to God, ‘suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your Fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I say to them?’” God said to Moses, “I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you”.*

See, the TRUE God didn’t mind his chosen people using a language that included some words from other, pagan tribes. He knew that every language is going to be partly corrupted with words from pagan sources, because MOST people ARE pagan. BUT, he would not let his name be confused with that of a pagan god.

So he gave himself a completely NEW, completely DESCRIPTIVE name, and to this day, that IS God’s name. It is the perfect name for him too – because it describes the main characteristic that makes him GOD – He is OUTSIDE of our dimensional world. He exists apart from time, space, or matter. He simply **IS** !

Who IS the Allah that Muslim People Worship Today?

As I pointed out earlier, it really is UNFAIR toward sincere Muslim people when Christians say that: “EVEN TODAY, they still worship the moon.” I hope nobody starts

saying that after reading this book. That is really unfair. But then, the question does have to arise – Okay then, if they are not worshipping our God, but they no longer worship the moon-god, then who ARE they worshipping?

There are two possible answers to that question.

- Muslim people believe they are worshipping the Almighty Creator of the universe, just as we believe that we are. I would argue that there is a lot of solid evidence to support our belief. The Muslim person, on the other hand, can only find support by stubbornly believing in fables, even though no historical evidence for those fables can be found. That's why Islam is so much more authoritarian. Questions cannot be tolerated, because questions might lead to the truth – and the truth is not Islam.
 - On the one hand, the Allah of the Quran is Muhammad's creation, the grand product of his imagination. On the other hand, the Allah of the Quran is a LIE that keeps people from knowing the REAL God who LOVES them. And behind that Allah of the Quran, there is a demon – either a very powerful one, or many of them. I believe that demons are real. I believe that every “pretension that sets itself up against the Kingdom of God” (I Cor 10:5) is championed and encouraged by a demon, or by many demons. That is true for ANY lie that keeps people from knowing God.
- **John 8:44** *“The devil is a liar and the father of lies. When he tells a lie, he speaks his native language”.*
 - **I Cor 10:20** *“The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons”.*

**So, Knowing All This, Is God Pleased When We Address Him as Allah?
(Christians outside the U.S. sometimes have this question.)**

YES, God KNOWS those who know him, and he is pleased when we show true, sincere LOVE for him. The language we speak in, or the name that we use to refer to him doesn't matter. The Lord hears our prayers when they are still in our heart, before they even get to our mouth. It's alright if you know him as Allah – as long as you know it's the Allah of the BIBLE you're praying to – as long as you know Jesus. As we've said a number of times in this book, Jesus taught that the true worshippers of God are those who worship him in Spirit and in Truth.

I mentioned earlier that the Arabian Christians used to use the name Allah, but stopped using it when it became identified with Islam. I believe I've also pointed out that the first Arabic translation of the Bible never used the name “Allah” for God.

However, as Islam became more and more powerful over a wider area, the Islamists were able to threaten and intimidate everyone with whom they disagreed. In subsequent translations in some Muslim-majority countries, Christians were forced to use the name "Allah" for God. If they refused, they could be killed or even tortured. Unfortunately, some translators did give in under pressure, giving the Islamists a valuable propaganda tool. At other times they might have used the word “Allah” simply because the language, long influenced by Islam, had no other word for God. At any rate, numerous Bible translations, in languages influenced by Islam, today use the word, “Allah” for “God.”

But our Lord hears your prayers NOT because you use the right name, but because you **honor** him with the right **heart**. As he has told us. True worshippers worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23)

As we mentioned earlier, did not the Jewish people still use the word EL to refer to God? God himself gave Jacob his new name, “Israel,” which contains that “El” root (Gen 32:24-30). Obviously, God is not too worried about people using it since he used it himself.

Secondly, if I were to worry about using the right name for God, then, logically, I should also use the Hebrew form – not the English form, or the Bahasa Indonesian form. After all, God gave his name in Hebrew. And even then, I should still worry about the pronunciation too. If I don’t pronounce it correctly, then I’m still using the wrong name, am I not? You see the point here, I hope. Once you start getting legalistic about something, it becomes ridiculous really fast. The Lord did give us some rules, but he also gave us PRINCIPLES to follow. And that is another advantage that Christianity has over Islam.

If you love the Allah of the Bible, and have prayed to him your whole life, then that word is almost as precious to you as the word, “Jesus.” And the Lord KNOWS how your heart is filled with warmth at the sound of his name – whatever name you know him by. The Lord knows you and you know him. This goes beyond words.

- **John 10:27** *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”* **A-**
MEN

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE QUR'AN

As a Christian, it is my duty to be honest with you. I will not try to cover the truth with sugar, to make it taste sweeter for you. You have the choice either to trust the Truth, the Son, or to close this book and close your mind. Or, you may decide to study the evidence a little more. Whatever you do, I wish you well, and I sincerely thank you for your time in reading this.

As previously stated, the aim of this book is to show you why we believe and trust in the Son, and to show you why we have no belief at all in the "Moon," in Islam. We've already shown you, in the early chapters of this book, 3 reasons why we don't believe the Quran:

- It claims to agree with the Bible, but obviously and completely disagrees with it.
- It encourages people to murder their fellow human beings -- simply because those human beings have a different opinion about God.
- It promotes the absolute subjugation of women, who are human beings, created in God's image, just as men are.

Later on, we gave you two more reasons why we don't accept the Quran.

- Most of the practices ordered by the Quran came out of pagan, idolatrous sources.
- The Quran includes fairy tales written by ordinary men long before Muhammad's time, which had never been anything more than mere children's fables.

This chapter looks more closely at the Qur'an itself, the foundation of Islam. In the first place, there are a number of passages in the Quran which do not seem to be the Word of God (in addition to those mentioned earlier).

Who's talking, God or "Prophet"?

A lot of the suras in the Quran begin with the word, 'say'. It's like a formula. It seems likely that the original collectors of the Quran put "Say" in there, to make Muhammad's words sound more like God's words. But the editors forgot to insert that phrase in a couple places. Look at Sura 27:91. The Arabic doesn't have "say" in that one. The translators usually do add it, with parentheses. Whose words are these?

"I am commanded only to serve the Lord of this land...and I am commanded to be of those who surrender." Is it Allah who is commanded to surrender?

Then, there are a number of places where God apparently feels that we won't believe him unless he backs up what he says with an oath. Here is a good example:

- **Sura 56:75** *"I swear by the shelter of the stars (a mighty oath, if you but knew it) that this is a glorious Quran!"*

Allah swears by the sun and the moon in the opening verses of Sura 91. Why does Allah need to swear by anything other than his own name?

Is Sura 111 from Allah?

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

Why does Allah say “MAY he perish?” Is Allah praying to someone? If Allah wants Abu-Lahab to perish, doesn't Allah have the power to do it himself? Or, is this actually MUHAMMAD talking, in this passage? It sounds like Muhammad was REALLY ANGRY!

Here is one really obvious proof that the Quran is nothing more than an ordinary book written by a very ordinary man. Whenever Muhammad wanted something, a revelation was conveniently sent down from "Allah", ordering his followers to give him what he wanted. The "Prophet" reminds me of one of our less spiritual presidents – Bill Clinton. Like Mr. Clinton, Muhammad appears to be rather egotistical and self-serving.

- **Sura 33:49-50** *“Prophet, we have made lawful to you the wives to whom you have granted dowries, and the slave girls whom God has given you as booty, your cousins, ... and your aunts, and any believing woman who gives herself to the prophet... in marriage. This privilege is yours alone, being granted to no other believe”.*

The last part of this sura was "revealed" to Muhammad when a stunningly beautiful woman named Omm Sharik offered to give herself to the "prophet". Even Aesha, Muhammad's wife and one of history's most celebrated Muslims, could not tolerate the hypocrisy of this "revelation". She is said to have remarked, "I see that your Lord is quick to grant your wishes!" (Dashti, 126) It might be instructive to compare this sura from the Quran with passages from the Bible, such as Lev.18v6-18, Lev.20v12, and I Cor.7v2. How can it be the same God, given these completely opposing views?

There are a number of other suras that shed light on Muhammad's character.

- **Sura 3:164** *“God has surely been gracious to the faithful in sending them an apostle of their own”.*
- **Sura 33:6** *“The prophet is closer to believers than they are to each other, and his wives are their mothers”.*
- **Sura 33:38** *“ No blame shall be attached to the prophet for doing what is sanctioned for him by God”.* (Of course, Muhammad is also the guy who decides what is sanctioned! How convenient!!)
- **Sura 33:53** *“Do not enter the houses of the prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time...Do not engage in familiar talk, for this would annoy the prophet...If you ask his wives for anything, speak from behind a curtain”.*
- **Sura 33:57** *“ The prophet is blessed by God and his angels. Bless him then with a worthy salutation”.*
- **Sura 33:57** *“Those who speak ill of God and his apostle shall be cursed by God in this life and in the life to come”.*
- **Sura 49:2** *“Believers, do not raise your voices above the voice of the prophet, nor shout aloud when speaking to him as you do to one another.*

If you compare these verses with the verses from the New Testament that we showed you earlier, where our apostles spoke of themselves, there is a big difference. Peter and Paul didn't take any titles for themselves. People spoke to them in the same tone of voice as to anyone else. Nobody ever called them Rabbi, or Teacher – just...Peter, and...Paul (Matthew 23:8-12). The apostles of the New Testament never demanded any kind of special treatment. Just read it, and you'll see the difference.

Who keeps Changing, God or "Prophet"?

One of the big differences between God and men is that God is constant, while we men are constantly changing. So, it seems logical that a book from God would be written once, with no rewrites or corrections.

A book from men would be like this one. I cannot begin to count the number of rewrites and changes we've gone through. And there are probably still one or two mistakes left, somewhere. Books are written by people, and people are imperfect. Muhammad made changes too.

A man named Abdullah Sarh used to suggest ways to rephrase certain suras, and Muhammad often took his advice. For example, when the Prophet had said, *God is mighty and wise (aziz, hakim)*, Sarh suggested, *...knowing and wise (alim, hakim)*, and Muhammad followed his advice. But finally, Abdullah renounced Islam because the revelations obviously weren't from God if they could be changed. He ran away to Mecca, and talked too much about the 'prophet'. When Muhammad, later on, took Mecca, he gave orders to kill Sarh wherever he might be found. He was caught. But Uthman pleaded for his life and he was spared.

The most famous of all changes to the Quran are the "Satanic Verses". In the early days of his career, Muhammad saw that he would be able to win the Meccans over, if he allowed them to continue to worship the Moon-god's daughters, Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat. While sitting with some prominent men of Mecca one day, next to the Kaaba, he began to recite surat 53. It speaks of Gabriel's first visit to him. He then continued into some new verses, in which he mentioned the names of the three popular goddesses, and said: *These are exalted females whose intercession is truly to be asked for.*

The Meccans were happy with this, but Muhammad's followers were upset. Their prophet was going back on his word. When it became clear that he'd made a big political blunder, another 'revelation' was sent down, telling him to replace the earlier words with the verse that you nowadays find in 53:21ff. Of course, the new revelation, to please his followers, ridicules the worship of the three goddesses. Muhammad explained to his followers that Satan had deceived him, but God had spoken, afterward, to straighten things out.

This story comes from two of the most authoritative Muslim historians, At-Tabari, and Waqidi. It cannot therefore be reasonably denied.

First Verses	Second Verses
Sura 73:10 <i>“And have patience with what they say, and leave them with noble”</i>	Sura 2:192 <i>“And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turn you out...”</i>
Sura 2:256 <i>“Let there be no compulsion in religion...”</i>	Sura 2:193 <i>“And fight them on until there is no more tulmut or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah...”</i>
Sura 29:46 <i>“And you do not</i>	Sura 9:29 <i>“Fight those who do not</i>

<i>dispute with the people of the Book...unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong and (injury): but say; we believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you..."</i>	<i>believe in Allah nor the last day,...nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the people of the Book, until they pay Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.</i>
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Abrogation

There is also the idea of "abrogation". Sura 2:106 says that sometimes Allah replaces an old command with a new one. So, for example, at first, Muslim people were ordered to pray toward Jerusalem. But, then it became clear to Muhammad that the Jews were not interested in his new religion. So, a new 'revelation' came, changing the direction of prayer, toward Mecca (Sur 2:142-147).

Suras 2:256-7; 7:198-99; and 43:89 order the Muslim people to tolerate unbelievers and respect their rights. 2:257, for example, says *"There is no compulsion in religion."* That was 'sent down' about one year after the Hejra (Ali Dashti, 153). But then, only about a year later, Allah changed his mind, and sent down new suras, which abrogated -- cancelled out, the old suras. Sura 2:186,245 orders Muslims to *fight in God's cause*. Sura 4:97 talks about the *war for God's cause*. Sura 9:5 says very bluntly,

"When the sacred months are over, kill the polytheists wherever you find them! Catch them, besiege them, and lie in ambush for them everywhere".

All the suras preaching tolerance are early, Meccan ones. Those that recommend killing, decapitating, and maiming are the late, Medinan suras. 124 peaceful verses are cancelled out, abrogated, by 9:5, which basically says to butcher them like animals.

So, Muslims were told to respect the rights of those who disagreed with them. And a year or so later, they were told to murder those who disagreed with them. Is the Quran God's word? No, I think these were Muhammad's words.

Whose Quran is the Right One?

The Quran was 'sent down' to Muhammad gradually, throughout his career, as Sura 25:32 confirms. All Muslim writers seem to agree that most of the suras are composite texts containing various passages from different times in his career. In fact, different verses in the same sura often seem to have no connection to each other at all. Muhammad used to say, "Put this verse in such and such a place" (as-Suyuti, *Al Itqan fii Ulum al Qur'an*, p. 141), or "Put this passage in the sura where so and so is mentioned."

Throughout Muhammad's career, Abdullah ibn-Masud was one of his closest companions and worked very diligently to learn the Quran by heart. The Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari, volume 5, page 96, records the following:

"(Bin Amr)... heard the prophet saying, 'Learn the recitation of the Quran from four: from Abdullah bin Mas'ud - he started with him, and from Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hudhaifa, Mu'adh bin Jabal and from Ubai bin Ka'b'.

This hadith is confirmed by Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p. 1312. Ibn Sa'd, in vol. 2, p. 457 of *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, states that Mas'ud had succeeded in collecting all the Suras, by combining his own massive collection (90 suras) with those of Mujammi ibn Jariyah. Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 6, pp.488-9 lists other companions who had their own collections of the Quran. Ubayy ibn Ka'b was at the top of that list.

According to Al-Bukhari, vol.6, p.474, Muhammad's revelations came more frequently in the period leading up to his death. So there was still no complete collection at that point. But shortly after his death, various companions began to write down their collections. Then a number of companions were killed at the battle of Yamama. Abi Dawud, in his Kitab, page 23, reports that:

“Many of the companions of the Prophet of Allah had their own reading of the Quran, but they died and their readings disappeared soon afterwards.”

So Abu Bakr, the first caliph, commissioned Zaid bin Thabit to collect all the suras and write them down (Al-Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 477). Page 478 of Bukhari gives Zaid's words:

"I started looking for the Qur'an and collecting it from palm-leaf stalks, thin white stones, and also from the men who knew it by heart, till I found the last verse of Surat at-Tauba with Abi Khuzaima al-Ansari, and I did not find it with anybody other than him."

Aesha, one of Muhammad's wives, stated that part of the Quran was lost when a goat ate the palm-leaves that it was written on. (from Ibn Majah). At about the same time that Zaid was completing his manuscript, a number of those other companions had completed theirs. Different areas of the Islamic Empire began using different versions of the Quran, since there was no standardized version for a number of years.

Ibn Mas'ud's Quran became the standard text for the entire Muslim community in and around Kufa, in Iraq. Ibn Ka'b's Quran became the standard text in Damascus and all of Syria. Abu Musa's Quran was the standard text of the Basra area. (Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab, p.13) The Qurans of Mecca, Medina, Basra, Kufa, and Damascus became known as the five Metropolitan Codexes. (Ibn Warraq, 108) Each was a little bit different from the others.

In addition to those five textual traditions, Muhammad's widow, Hafsa, had her own personal Quran, as did his son-in-law, Ali Ibn Abi Talib. There were a number of other texts floating around, as well.

There were other friends of Muhammad who had their own collections, although their Qurans did not become as famous. Altogether, we know of fifteen different Qurans, each with minor differences from the others. Muslim historians there was the:

Codex of Ibn Masud	Codex of Aisha
Codex Ubai b. Ka'b	Codex of Ibn Amr
Codex of Salim	Codex of Zaid b. Thabit
Codex of Ubaid b. Umair	Codex of Hafsa
Codex of Ibn Abbas	Codex of Abu Musa
Codex of Ali	Codex of Umar
Codex of Umm Salama	Codex of Anas b. Malik
Codex of Ibn az-Zubair	

(This list was taken from Arthur Jeffery's book, Materials for the History of the Text of the Koran")

At first, Zaid's text was just one out of many. Then the Islamic armies invaded Armenia and Azerbaijan about 15 or 20 years after Muhammad's death. Caliph Uthman's

army was composed of Syrian troops, who read Ka'b's Quran, and Iraqi troops, who read Mas'ud's Quran. Fights broke out among the troops. Each side accused the other of unbelief or of lying about the Quran.

When the problem was brought to Uthman's attention, he sent for Zaid's text, and had a committee of three Quraishi men go over it, making sure it was all written in good Quraishi dialect. He also ordered them to make any changes necessary. Then he made a number of copies of the revised text, and sent them out to the various provinces.

Finally, he also ordered that all other Quranic materials, partial collections as well as complete codexes, **be burnt**. (from Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 479) (Tabari's commentary, I, 20, also records these events, as does Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab, page 22.). Mas'ud was enraged at Uthman's action. He roared:

"I acquired directly from the messenger of Allah seventy suras when Zaid was still a childish youth! Must I now forsake what I acquired directly from the messenger of Allah?" (Ibn Abi Dawud, Kitab, page 15)

Mas'ud refused to give up his Quran until the day he died. Muhammad's widow, Hafsa, did, too. But, according to Dawud, p.25, these Qurans and all others as well, were eventually **burned**. At- Tabari, I, 2952, 10 ; 516, 5 records, ***"He found the Qur'ans many and left one; he tore up the book"***.

Uthman burned the original, first Qurans. The words on the pages were in the handwriting of Muhammad's closest friends! If those Qurans still existed, or copies of them at least, then Islam's credentials would be much stronger. You would have many witnesses to Muhammad's words, instead of just one. But, you would have more variant readings, too.

In fact, commentaries continued to quote from the original Qurans for hundreds of years after they were destroyed. Because of those commentaries, we still know some of the variants.

Arthur Jeffery secured a copy of Abi Dawud's *"Kitab al-Masahif"*, in the 1930's. (The oldest manuscript of Dawud's commentary is now at the Zahiriyah Library, in Damascus.) Using Dawud's book, he found almost 150 places just in the second sura alone where Mas'ud's text was different from Uthman's. By the time he had finished going through the old commentary, he had documented about 2000 variants just from Mas'ud's and Ka'b's texts alone. It took 94 pages for him to list all the variants. In this book, I'll just give a few examples, taken mostly from Mas'ud's and Ka'b's texts.

Just a Few Quranic Variants

- **Sura 1;** Masud did not include the first surat in his Quran, since it is obviously a prayer to Allah, and cannot be Allah's words.
- **Sura 2:204;** Today's text, *wa yush-hidullaaha*, is different from the text of Ibn Mas'ud, and that of Ubayy Ibn Ka'b, both of which used to read: *wa yastash-hidullaaha*.
- **Sura 2:238;** Today's text, *wa salatil wusta*, "*the middle prayer*", omits the additional phrase, *wa salatil asr*, "*and the afternoon prayer*", which was in Aesha's own codex, and in Hafsa's, owned by her before she had Zaid's.
- **Sura 2:275** "*Those who devour usury will not stand.*" But Ibn Masud's codex adds the Arabic words *yawmal qiyaamati* to the end of the sentence, changing the meaning to, "*...will not stand on the Day of Resurrection.*"
- **Sura 3:19** The present text has: *innadiina'indallahil-Islam*, "*the religion before Allah is al-Islam*." But Ibn Mas'ud's codex had *al-Hanifiyyah*, "*...is the upright way*", in place of

al-Islam. Before Muhammad's time, there was already a group of people in Arabia who were against idolatry. They were called the "Hunafa", meaning "The Upright Way".

- **Sura 3:39** Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud had, in his text, "*Then Gabriel called to him, 'O Zachariah'*", instead of the Uthmanic text, which reads, "*Then the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary*".
- **Sura 6:16** While today's text has, simply, *yusraf*, "averted", the texts of Mas'ud and Ka'b had *yusrifillaahu*, "averted by Allah".
- **Sura 6:153** The present-day Quran has *Wa anna haathaa siraatii*, "Truly, this is my path." But Mas'ud's text had *Wa haathaa siraatu rabbakum*, which means, *This is the path of your Lord*.
- **Sura 26:116** Al-Hajjaj changed the word *Al-Mukhrageen*, in Uthman's text, which meant "the cast out", to *Al-Margoomeen*, which means "those to be stoned to death".
- **Sura 26:167** After Uthman, this Quranic text was also changed. In this case, *Min Al-Margoomeen*, "those who are to be stoned to death," was changed to "*Al-Mukhrageen*, "those who will be cast out".
- **Sura 33:6** The Quran of our present day has *wa azwajuhuu ummahaatuhuu*, which means, "his wives are their mothers." But the codexes of Mas'ud, ibn Ka'b, ibn Abbas, Ikrima, Mujahid ibn Jabr, and Ar-Rabi ibn Khuthaim, all add the words, *wa huwa abuu laahum*, "...and he is their father." Ubayy ibn Ka'b is said to have recalled a time when surat "Suratul-Ahzab" (surat 33) was as long as "Suratul-Baqarah" (surat 2), which means it had at least 200 verses that are missing today.
- **Sura 57:7** *Wataqu*, which means "feared Allah", was changed, by Al-Hajjaj to *Wanfaqu*, which means "spend in charity".
- **Sura 112:1** While today's Quran starts this verse with *Qul*, "Say...", the Quran's of Ka'b and Mas'ud omitted that word completely.

Since they are obviously used as "charms", spoken by believers for protection, Mas'ud didn't include Suras 113 and 114 in his Quran. Abu Musa's Quran, once used by the people of Basra, had a verse about the greed of men which is not found in Uthman's text. (Muslim, Sahih 1, 285-6) That same verse is found in other Qurans as well.

Ubayy ibn Ka'b included two suras in his Quran, "al Hafd", *The Haste*, and "al-Khal", *The Separation*, which are absent from today's text. The Qurans of both Abu Musa and Ibn Abbas also included these two extra suras.

Dawud has preserved the evidence of a couple thousand variants, similar to these that you see here. Of course, he probably only listed the major variants. These came, mostly, from just two of the five Metropolitan Codexes. If we still had a record of the others, would we find as many variants in them? That would lead to about 5000 major variants, altogether, in addition to the smaller ones, which would, perhaps double that number. Of course there would be copyist's errors as well. The more copies made, the greater the number of such variants. Ultimately, the Quran would have as many, if not more variants than the New Testament, if Uthman had not burned the other collections.

Uthman's solution to the problem was to burn the old Qurans, destroying the evidence, and pretending that the other Qurans were not as valid as his. The Christian way is to simply acknowledge that variants exist, but that they are mostly very minor, and don't affect any important article of faith. Christians are HONEST about it.

Variant Markings

Just like ancient Hebrew, the early Arabic writing of Muhammad's time had no vowel markings. Without the vowels, "H H D N C T" could be "He had on a coat" or "He hid on a cot." Furthermore, in Arabic, the dots are also important for showing different consonants. For example, a short, horizontal line with a little hook on one end could have any of three completely different sounds, depending on how many dots you put over the hook.

But the Arabic of Muhammad's day had no dots either. The Quran has thousands of variant readings from the inexact nature of the language -- from the lack of vowel marks and dots. Yet all these variants are accepted. Islamists acknowledge seven different readings for the Quran, and all seven readings are regarded equally as Allah's word.

There are two of these different readings still in use -- two competing versions of the Arabic Quran, even in our present day.

1. The "Hafs" text, from Kufa, is the common text in most areas of the Muslim world.
2. The "Warsh" text is used mainly in West, and North-West Africa, as well as by the Zaydiya in Yemen.

Of course, this could be changing. At any rate, the Hafs readings below are from the "usual" Quranic text, while the Warsh text is found in the Quran published by the Tunis Publishing Company in 1996. Here we offer you just a tiny sampling of the variants in today's Qurans:

Sura	Hafs	Warsh
2:9b	yakhda'una	yukhadi'una
2:125	wattakhidhu	wattakhadhu
2:132	wawassa	wa'awsa
2:140	taquluna	yaquluna
2:259	nunshizuha	nunshiruha
3:37	wakaffalaha	wakafalaha
3:81	ataytukum	ataynakum
3:133	wasari'u	sari'u
5:54	yartadda	yartadid
20:63	In hazayni	Inna hazani

I have no problem with Islamists who claim that these variant readings are all equally God's Word. But then, why do they have a different view of the variants in the Bible? There seems to be a double standard here. THAT is the point I am trying to make, in this section.

Scribal Errors

Finally, the Quran, just like the New Testament, had to be copied out by hand for centuries until the printing press was finally invented, about 800 years after the time of Muhammad. During that long period of time, more variants came into the text through scribal error.

Muhammad Hamidullah has written a detailed analysis of these variants in the preface to his French translation of the Quran. He discusses the variants caused by the lack of vowel marks, along with three other kinds:

- 1) Variants caused by a scribe who copies a word twice, skips a word or makes a spelling mistake.

- 2) Variants caused by notes written in the margin, which a later scribe takes as being part of scripture. (Hamidullah claims there are hundreds of variants from this cause alone.)
- 3) Variants caused by differences in dialect.

Concluding Remarks

The books and letters of the New Testament were originally written in the handwriting of the Apostles themselves, or in some cases our Apostles dictated them to scribes. Christians produced copies of those books and letters by hand. We have some of those copies with us, between our hands, in the present day. The oldest complete manuscripts we have in our possession are from about 30 to 50 years after the prophets' originals were penned.

In contrast, The Quran was NOT written by the hand of Muhammad. When the 'Apostle' of Islam died, a lot of the suras of the Quran had not yet been written down, held only in the memories of the Companions. Furthermore, there was no single agreed-upon text. Differing versions emerged and the only way to produce a standard copy was to burn all versions but one.

The New Testament, then, can be trusted and relied upon as the true writings of our apostles. After all, we know the content of all four of our gospels, and all of the other books as well. By contrast, there are, in reality, more problems with the Quran than with the Gospel. We've KEPT every copy we could find. However, Uthman BURNED all the Qurans but one. We will never know what was in those earlier versions of the Quran. Was it the same as what Muslims now read? Nobody really knows. No one ever will.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN QURANIC MANUSCRIPTS

Dating Quranic Manuscripts

The dating of Quranic documents is accomplished in the same way as the dating of the New Testament documents. Over time, the style of script changes. So the style of the writing tells how old the manuscript is.

Prior to the days of Muhammad, the only kind of Arabic script known was the *Jazm* script. It was a well-defined, angular style of writing. Until recently, no known fragments or text of the Quran have been found in this script.

The *al-Ma'il*, or "slanting" script is the writing style that you'll find used in the oldest Qurans currently available. It developed gradually in Mecca and Medina, shortly after the rise of Islam. Only a very few examples of Quranic al-Ma'il script are with us today. The British Museum, in London, has such a Quran, probably the oldest in existence. It has no dots or vowel marks, either. It could possibly be from about 130 A.H. (748 A.D.), possibly a few years earlier.

The *Mashq* and *Naskh* scripts also began to develop shortly after the al-Ma'il. The Chester Beatty Library, in Dublin, which holds one of our oldest New Testament documents, also has a complete Quran in Naskh script from A.D. 1001.

The *Kufic* script is properly known as al-Khatt al-Kufi. The letters in Kufic script are extended out horizontally. Most of the surviving Quranic texts are in this script. There are large numbers of them, mostly from the late eighth century, about 150 years after Muhammad's time.

The Blood of Caliph Uthman

Islamist writers often claim that some of the original copies of Uthman's Quran still exist. An old Quran is kept on display in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, Turkey. The "Ramadan Annual", published by the Muslim Digest in Durban, South Africa, had a photo of the **Topkapi Codex**, along with the comment, "*This Qur'an, written on deerskin, was being read by the Caliph when he was assassinated and the bloodstain marks are still seen on the pages of this copy of the Qur'an to this day.*" (Vol. 39, nos. 9 & 10, p. 107) I have a Turkish friend who swears it is all true because he saw the Topkapi Codex. I'm sure he saw the blood on the pages, in the museum. The Topkapi Codex is in Kufic script. Uthman's was a Medinan text which would have been written in al-Mail, or Mashq script. The Kufic script wasn't even used in its hometown of Kufa until long after the death of Caliph Uthman. The Topkapi Codex probably didn't exist until around 150 years after his death.

Another old Quran is preserved in a library at Tashkent in Uzbekistan. It's called the Samarqand Codex. It is also in Kufic script, probably about as old as the Turkish manuscript mentioned above. This codex also has blood on its pages. Yes, this is also the same Quran that the Caliph was reading when he was murdered! A book from Pakistan called "Muhammad in the Quraan" has a picture of the **Samarqand Codex** on its cover. The caption reads, "*This is the same Quraan which was in the hand of the Caliph when he was*

murdered by rebels and his blood is still visible on the passage, 'Fasa Yakhfihum...,'

Scholars who have studied the Samarqand Codex are convinced that it is made up from pages of several old Qurans. It's not even all one book. (So, my question is, how can both of these books be the very same Quran that Uthman was reading when he was murdered? Okay, maybe he had one in each hand. I suppose that would explain why it was so easy to kill him – he was caught with his hands full, so he couldn't fight back, couldn't grab a sword.)

In reality, Someone probably pricked their finger to put some blood on those pages. This is the "Big Lie" technique again, just like the guy who typed up an original ancient text of the Gospel of Barnabas on his word -processor.

It angers me, because these people who invent lies don't seem to be concerned that they are keeping others away from the Truth. They deceive their own people -- people like my friend from Turkey.

The Yemeni Qurans

This information comes from an article in the Saturday Evening Post. Back in 1972, the Great Mosque of Sana'a in Yemen was being restored. Some of the workers found a lot of really old parchments with early Arabic writing on them. Eventually, President Al-Akwa of the Yemeni Antiquities Authority found out about them. A German scholar, Gerd-R. Puin, an expert in Arabic calligraphy, came to help restore the old manuscripts.

He quickly saw that some of the parchments might date all the way back to the first two centuries of Islam. Some of the writing seemed to be in the very early Jazm style. If so, this would definitely be the oldest Quranic text in existence. But it's still not been made public. Until it is, it's not confirmed.

The Yemeni Quranic sheets have now been flattened, cleaned, and chemically treated. They are at the Yemeni House of Manuscripts. Only two scholars have so far been allowed to examine the manuscripts: *Puin and his colleague, Graf Von Bothmer*. They found that a lot of the verses are not in the same order as in the Quran of the present day. They also found a lot of minor textual variations. In 1997, Von Bothmer finished taking more than 35,000 microfilm pictures of the texts. He then brought them back to Germany. Puin has said,:

"So many Muslims have this belief that everything between the two covers of the Koran is just God's unaltered word. They like to quote the textual work that shows that the Bible has a history and did not fall straight out of the sky. But until now the Koran has been out of the discussion. The only way to break through this wall is to prove that the Koran has a history too. The Sana'a fragments will help us to do this."

The two scholars have not yet published many of their findings, because the Yemeni authorities will not be happy with them, and may not allow any further access. Westerners are, in general, not allowed much access to the old Qurans in Islamic possession. Islamists are afraid that more variants will be uncovered. By contrast, if a Muslim person wants to see some of our old texts of the New Testament, all they have to do is ask. Andrew Rippin, a professor of religious studies, has said:

"The impact of the Yemeni manuscripts is still to be felt. Their variant readings and verse orders are all very significant. Everybody agrees on that. These manuscripts say that the early history of the Koranic text is much more of an open question than

many have suspected. The text was less stable, and therefore had less authority, than has always been claimed."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN : MUHAMMAD

His Coming

Islamists look for Muhammad in the Bible, in prophecy, but he's not there. So, rather than admitting the truth, they go to great lengths to invent prophecies. An Islamic writer, in one pamphlet, spends 10 or 15 pages arguing that **Deut. 18:15-18** must refer to Muhammad because "from among their brothers" must refer to the Arabs. Of course, the truth is explained right there in the text, but I don't think the writer cares about the truth. One page before Deut. 18, in Deut. 17:15, the phrase, "From among your brothers" is explained. It means "**A brother Israelite**". What can you say about a guy who doesn't even read the chapters surrounding the verses quoted?

Besides this, look up Acts 3:22 and you'll see that Peter knew this was a prophecy of Jesus. We know the prophecy refers to Jesus because one of our N. T. apostles has explained it to us. The Islamic author seems unaware of this.

Islamists then turn to **Deut. 33:2** and **Hab. 3:3**, saying "Paran" refers to an Arabian mountain. And they're probably right about that. But Paran is still far, far to the north of Mecca, Muhammad's hometown. So how can it be Muhammad? Furthermore, if you read the passage in context, it's clear from verses like Deut. 33:1, and Hab. 3:7,13 that the Lord is talking about protecting his holy people, Israel, from invaders. If Muhammad were Jewish, or if the text said a king would come out of Mecca or Medina, then maybe the Islamists would have a point. But that's not what it says.

Deut. 34:10 speaks of a prophet who would perform signs and wonders, and who would speak to God directly. Muhammad, by his own admission, in the Quran, never did any miracles (Sur. 2:118, 3:183), and he never spoke with God directly, but only through an angel (Sur. 25:32, Sur. 17:105). Like Deut. 18:15-18, this prophecy obviously refers to Jesus.

Psalms 45:3-6 speaks of one coming with a sword to subdue his enemies. Islamists sometimes say this has to be Muhammad, known as the prophet of the sword. They are correct in pointing to Muhammad's practice of converting people by violence. But the very next verse says that the bearer of the sword is God Himself. Christians see this as Jesus' second coming, still in the future, when he'll come with the armies of Heaven to rescue his people (Rev. 19:11-16).

And to those particular leaders among the Islamists who advocate the killing of Christians, we say this: Your day is coming. Every follower of Jesus whom you kill will give witness on that day. But while you live, it's not too late. Jesus' love and forgiveness is for you, too. Just ask him for it.

Isaiah 21:7 mentions "chariots of camels" and Islamists immediately claim it must be Muhammad even though the message of the charioteer, in verse 9, is that Babylon is fallen.

Apparently, these Islamists think anything referring to camels must be Muhammad, as though they never existed before him, or outside of Arabia. Obviously, this one isn't talking about Jesus or Muhammad. It's talking about the fall of Babylon.

They also talk about **Matthew 3:11**. Just read it along with the rest of the Gospel of Matthew. It's Jesus. "*One is coming after me*" because his ministry had not yet started.

In John 14:16, the Islamists actually change a Greek word from "*parakleton*" to "*periklytos*" to make it match Muhammad. But out of all the many manuscripts that have that reference, not a single one -- not one, has "periklytos". Islamists simply make up a lie because it serves their purpose. And thousands of good Muslim people are led away from the truth.

Anyways, John 14:17 continues, "But the helper (parakleton), **the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send, will teach you." So it's obviously talking about the Holy Spirit. Read it for yourself.

But there is one prophecy in the New Testament which would include Muhammad. Matthew 7:15-16 predicts the coming of false prophets. It says we will know that they are false because of their actions. Let's take a look at Muhammad's actions.

His Career

The second half of this book is intended to show you why we do not put any belief in Islam. So, admittedly, we will focus on the negative aspects of Islam, in our analysis. But I want to be fair to Muhammad.

I do believe that, in the beginning of his career, he was still a good man. I believe he really did see visions, and so he started to think that he was a prophet.

He began well, but ended tragically. He was loyal and faithful to his first wife, Khadija. Furthermore, a lot of his early Meccan suras show tolerance and compassion.

However, the Jews and Christians did not accept his message, because his message was in conflict with their Scriptures. So he went to Medina, where his following grew. He never forgot the rejection. He became vindictive. By the time he died, he had become an arrogant, cynical, murdering tyrant. I really wish that it were not true. But it is.

His Carnal Appetite

As Muhammad's fortunes rose, his head swelled. Sura 4:3 was sent down by Allah, through Muhammad. It's a rather generous sura, allowing a man four wives. But then, although Muhammad already had four wives, he became very attracted to his adopted son's new wife, Zaynab.

Conveniently, Muhammad had another "revelation" -- Sura 33:37, in which Allah told him it was all right for his son to divorce Zaynab, and for Muhammad to take her. Allah later told him he could take as many women as he wanted.

Altogether, he took over 20 women that we know of. Only 11 or 12 of the women listed below were actual wives of Muhammad. The others were slaves or consorts. The following list comes from Muslim Hadith sources.

1) Khadija	13) Asma, of Saba
2) Sawda	14) Zaynab, of Khozayma
3) Aesha	15) Habla
4) Omm Salama	16) Asma, of Noman
5) Hafsa	17) Fatema
6) Zaynab, of Jahsh	18) Mariya the Copt

7) Jowayriya	19) Rayhana
8) Omm Habiba	20) Omm Sharik
9) Safiya	21) Maymuna
10) Maymuna	22) Zaynab (3rd)
11) Fatema	23) Khawla
12) Hend	

Aesha, Muhammad's third wife, was seven years old when she was engaged to him, and about ten when he first slept with her. He was about 53 years old at the time. She was his favorite wife till the day he died. She was certainly his youngest! (At-Tabari vol. 7, page 7) (Dawud vol. 2, 2116) (Bukhari 7: 65)

Safiya was wife number nine, a 15 year old Jewish girl from a settlement Muhammad had attacked. He took her as booty after torturing her husband to death. He was trying to get more money out of him. (Ibn Ishaq, "Sirat Rasulallah," 516) (Al-Bukhari 1: 367)

Mariya was a slave in Egypt, sent to Muhammad as a gift. She was a follower of Jesus, and refused to follow the false "Prophet". She did not consent to marriage either, but Allah had given the prophet the right to force her, as his slave. (Al-Bukhari 39: 194)

Rayhana was Jewish, of the Qurayza. Her former husband and all her male relatives had been put to death, their heads sliced off, under Muhammad's authority. All the women and children of her tribe, all her friends and family, had been sold into slavery -- including herself. (Ibn Ishaq, "Sirat Rasulallah," 466).

How do you suppose Rayhana felt about Muhammad? Take a guess. Muhammad took her as "booty", and bedded her that very night. He had just finished murdering every man in her family and enslaving every woman. She would not profess Islam and refused marriage, preferring slavery, instead. What were Rayhana's feelings, I wonder, as the prophet mounted her? I'm just being honest. Let's recognize what this was -- It was rape.

Again, I'm not trying to offend anyone. But how can we be fair to this woman unless we refer to this act as what it really was? Muhammad has millions of people that are willing to justify, explain away, his actions. **Who does Rayhana have, to speak for her?**

According to Al-Bukhari:

- **1:367** Muhammad would often choose new sex partners from women captured in his conquests.
- **3:505 & 7:24** Women would often approach him, and give themselves to him.
- **7:22-23** He also had sex with the slave girls he owned, those that had been given to him, as well as those he had purchased.
- **2:541** Muhammad once said, "Oh women! I've not seen anyone more lacking in intelligence than a woman."

His Campaigns

After Muhammad had left Mecca, and established himself in Medina, he was ready to take revenge on the Meccans who had rejected him. Muhammad's first successful raid, at Nakhla, was during one of the sacred months. The Arab communities needed the truce of the sacred months so they could trade with each other safely. The guards weren't therefore expecting any trouble.

Eight of the Prophet's men, acting on his orders, attacked and captured the caravan, killing one of the guards in the process. That was the first blood on Muhammad's hands. The Arabs and Muslims alike were shocked at the treachery of the "Prophet", attacking during an

agreed truce. Of course, afterward, Allah sent Muhammad a "revelation", sura 2:217, to tell everyone it was Allah's will. How convenient!"

He led his own troops at Badr, and the victory brought more plunder. New converts flocked to him, eager for their share of the spoils. Now he knew the way to success. He ended up conquering Arabia, as everyone knows, killing for Allah.

According to Al-Bukhari:

- **1:24** Muhammad once said, *"I have been ordered to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's prophet, and offer prayers, and give obligatory charity. So if they perform all that, then they save their lives and property."*
- **3:495** Allah made the prophet wealthy through conquests.
- **4:283 & 9:50** No Muslim should be killed for killing an infidel.
- **4:370** The Prophet said, *"Whoever has killed an enemy and has proof of that, will possess his spoils."*
- **4:386** Our prophet, the messenger of our Lord, has ordered us to fight you, till you worship Allah alone or give Jizya.

His Killings

After Muhammad came to control Medina, the Jewish clans of the Banu Nadir and the Banu Qainurqa were expelled. Muhammad then stole most of their property and possessions, kept some for himself, and gave some to his followers.

It was after the battle of the Khandaq (the Ditch) A.D. 627 that the Banu Quraiza, Rayhana's Clan, which had not opposed Muhammad, was exterminated -- under Muhammad's authority, in his presence. Their crime was that the prophet was suspicious of them.

Trenches were dug, and the men were brought up in groups of five or six, to kneel in front of the trench. Their heads were sliced off and the lifeless bodies fell forward into the hole. The butchery continued all day, from morning into the dark of night. After the murders, the "prophet" then took Rayhana for his pleasure.

The Hadith also records that the wife of Hasan ol-Qorazi, a Jewish woman, was beheaded along with the men. Her offence was that she had thrown a stone at the Muslims that blockaded her street. Of course, Allah sent down another "revelation" to justify the "prophet's" actions once again. Sura 33:25 says that the murders were Allah's judgement.

Al-Bukhari 2:173, tells about an elderly man who saw Muhammad and some followers kneeling on the ground, touching their foreheads to the ground in prayer. They were proud of the dirt on their foreheads as a sign of their religious devotion. Without praying, the old man just rubbed some dirt on his forehead, laughed, and said, "That's enough for me." Bukhari records that the Muslims then murdered the old man.

The "prophet" finally began routinely ordering the death of anyone who said anything bad about him. The following examples are from Warraq, pp. 93-5, and Dashti, pp. 97-102, (Based on Ibn Ishaq and other Hadith)

- **Al-Nadr ibn ol-Hareth** was the man who (correctly) said that Muhammad's stories were just old fables. When Muhammad took Mecca, he ordered al-Nadr to be decapitated. (Ibn Ishaq, "Sirat Rasulallah" 360)
- **Ocba ibn Abi Moayt**, just before losing his head, cried, "Who will take care of my little girl?" Muhammad replied, "Hellfire." And the man was struck down. (Ibn Ishaq, "Sirat

Rasulallah” 308-309). Muhammad justified these murders by having Sura 8:68 revealed to him.

- **Asma bint Marwan**, of the Aws tribe, was a poetess, who had composed sarcastic poems making fun of Muhammad, and calling him a murderer. He asked for a volunteer to kill her. So his man, Umayr ibn Adi, crept into Asma's home while she was sleeping with her children, and ran his sword through her. (Ibn Ishaq, “Sirat Rasulallah” 675-676) (Ibn Sa’d, “Kitab Al-Tabaqat” vol.2, page 31)
- **Abu Afak, of the Khazrajite** clan, was another poet who dared to criticize the "holy man" of Islam. Although Afak was over 100 years old, the prophet ordered his death. Afak was also murdered while he slept. (Ibn-Ishaq, “Sirat” 675) (Ibn Sa’d, “Kitab” vol. 2, page 32)
- **Kab ibn al-Ashraf** was the son of a Jewess of the Banu Nadir. After Badr, he had gone to Mecca to raise the people's spirits. He composed poems, urging the people to continue the fight against the "prophet". Muhammad prayed publicly, "Lord deliver me from Kab, for his verses and his sedition." So Some Muslims pretended to be his friends, to lure him away from the protection of his house, and then killed him. When they gave the prophet Kab's head, he praised their good deed. (Al-Bukhari 4-52-270, 5-59-369, 3-45-607) (Dawud 19-4436) (Ibn-Ishaq 365) (Ibn Sa’d 1:37)
- On the morning after Kab's murder, the *Prophet declared, "Kill any Jew who falls into your power.* So one of his followers went off and killed a Jewish merchant named **Ibn Sunayna** who had always had good relations with the Muslim people. (Ibn Ishaq 369) (At-Tabari 3, page 97, vol 7) (Dawud 19-2996). When Mecca was taken there was a general amnesty, but Muhammad gave orders for six particular men to be killed, wherever they might be found. **Besides Sarh**, there was **Omayya, ol-Khatal, Sobaba, Abi Jahl**, and **ol-Howayreth**. (Ibn Sa’d 2:168) (Dawud 7-3145, 19-4434) (Bukhari 3-29-72)
- **Abdullah bin ol-Khatal** owned two slave-girls, named Fartana, and Qariba, who had sung satirical songs that made fun of the "prophet". Both of them, as well as their owner, were put to death. (Ibn Ishaq 550,551) (At-Tabari, vol. 8, p.179)
- **Sara**, a freed slave of Amr bin Hashem was also put to death for causing annoyance to the prophet. (Ibn Ishaq 551)
- **Sallam bin Abi'l-Hoqayq** was an influential Jew, an old friend of the Aws tribe, had moved away from Medina, to Khaybar. Some followers asked Muhammad for permission to go kill him. Muhammad said OK, and appointed a man to lead the squad. (Ibn Ishaq 714-715)
- Another squad was sent to kill **Yosayr bin Rezam**, another Medinan Jew who had run away to Khaybar. (Dashti 100).
- When **Refaa bin Qays** gave anti-Muslim speeches in his tribe, the prophet ordered Abdullah b. Abi Hadrad to bring back his head. The killer first shot him with an arrow from a distance, then knocked him down with an axe, and cut off his head, which he gave to the prophet. (Dashti 100)

These are only some of the victims that we know about. There are others.

His Character

According to Al-Bukhari:

Unlike Jesus, Muhammad did not want people to ask questions.

- **Al Bukhari 1:92** *"The prophet was asked about things which he did not like. When the questioner insisted, the prophet got angry."*
- **Al Bukhari 2:555 & 3:591** Muhammad said, *"Allah has hated you for asking too many questions."*

Muhammad was not above the racism of his day:

- **Al Bukhari 1:662 & 9:256** Both of these references show Muhammad calling black people "raisin-heads."
- **Al Bukhari 6:435** Muhammad apparently owned black slaves, according to this quote: *"A black slave of Allah's apostle was sitting on the first step."*

I don't really know what to say about the next couple of passages. They are just simply bizarre.

- **Al Bukhari 1:187-8** Muhammad's followers fought over who would get the dirty water left over from his washings. They would pour it over themselves or drink it, hoping to get a magic blessing from it.
- **Al Bukhari 3:891** "By Allah, whenever Allah's apostle spitted, the spittle would fall into the hand of one of them, who would rub it on his face and skin."

On his deathbed, he finally started to worry about his sins. I wonder if he was thinking about all those murders.

- **Al Bukhari 5:266** Muhammad said, "By Allah, though I am the apostle of Allah, yet I do not know what Allah will do to me."

A Simple Request

If a Muslim person is reading this, please let me explain something to you. Although I don't want to make you feel bad, I do want you to know the truth. Our goal is not to "score points" for "our side". I'm not trying to make you join a Christian church, but Islam is false. If you believe in Truth, then please, just try asking Jesus to come into your heart, and show you Truth. That's all I ask of you. I'll let Jesus speak for himself. Jesus is ALIVE. He knows your name, and he LOVES YOU. Just talk to him, and see what happens.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN EMPIRES

Separate Realms

I believe Jesus is God. If you, the reader, are a Muslim person, you believe he was only a prophet. But then, we both value his words. He commanded his followers, in Luke 20:25, to "*Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.*" In John 18:36, he said, "*My Kingdom is not of this world.*"

With those words, he was teaching his followers a principle. **A church (or mosque) is a spiritual organization. The government of any country is a "secular" – non-religious organization. Jesus was saying that the two should remain separate.** Both Christianity, and Islam have, in different ways, violated this principle.

The Sins of the Believers

The Christian church originally had no political power, and no buildings. It was simply groups of people meeting, often secretly, in each other's homes. This was the kind of church Jesus wanted for his followers. His kingdom was in people's hearts.

Christianity spread quickly, from the first Easter Sunday onward. Within a few years, a large portion of Jerusalemites were in Jesus' fold. Despite repeated murders of Christians, no Christian uprising ever occurred. The way of Jesus eventually spread through all the Roman Empire, by the purity of its ideas alone, with no fighting. That's the way of the Lord.

The love of Christians for others was widely known among the common people. They took care of the homeless and treated beggars with dignity. They rescued unwanted babies who had been abandoned, and raised them as their own. And they freely shared their possessions with one another. When they met in their houses for worship, the rich sat with the poor, men with women, and slaves with their masters, as equals. This was revolutionary at the time.

Of course, first with Constantine's conversion, and then, with the fall of Rome, the Medieval Roman Catholic Church was gradually being born. This was a drastic departure from Jesus' principles. The church steadily gained political power, and so began to function like a worldly government.

For example, in the early church, Peter and Paul dealt with false teaching by confronting the false teachers, debating with them, and showing them the scriptures. If the false teachers couldn't be won back, then they were let go. In other words, they agreed to disagree. The scriptures teach us that people made in God's image have a right, given by God, to think for themselves.

But later, after the church had gained political power, it became as oppressive as any other political power of the day. In 431, the Council of Ephesus declared that

"Nestorianism," was against scripture. The Council of Chalcedon, in 451, condemned "Monophysitism." These are two false teachings about Jesus Christ's human and divine natures. But in both cases the church itself also went against scripture by allowing bloody persecutions of the false teachers and their followers. Peter and Paul would have been outraged to see that the church that Jesus began had blood on its hands! (Christian leaders on BOTH sides should have prayerfully read Romans 14 together. It would have saved a lot of trouble.)

By A.D. 600, the Christian world was divided into warring camps. In the East, the Nestorian Persians were against the Monophysitists from Armenia and Egypt, along with the Arameans in Syria and Mesopotamia. It's true that the Persians and Byzantines were some of the most civilized people of their day. But they wore themselves down through bloody ethnic and religious wars, killing in the name of God.

Then, in 632, The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius decreed the forced conversion of all Jews in his realm. This of course caused a huge wave of cruelty and murder to sweep through the empire. Thousands were killed, increasing people's hostility toward Byzantine rule. The ground was prepared for the Islamic invasion.

Meanwhile, Arabia had been united by the armies of Islam. The Arabians were ready to turn their penchant for fighting outward, to begin their wars of aggression, to spread Islam across the world at the point of a sword.

When the "Christian" church murdered its thousands, it was turning its back on Jesus. But when Islamic armies butchered thousands of prisoners, and sold the women and children of the conquered territories into slavery, they were embracing Muhammad, and dutifully following the words of the Quran. They were following in the footsteps of Muhammad, as good disciples. Islam separates all people into two groups, dar-al-Islam and dar-al-harb. The first is the domain of Islam. The second is the domain of those with whom Islam is at war.

The famous Quranic sura 2:256, saying there was "no compulsion in religion," was abrogated and forgotten as soon as Muhammad realized that compulsion was the only way to spread his religion. At first, Muhammad didn't find many who were willing to accept his message. But when he proved successful in battle, he gained followers. Islam spread quickly after he embarked on wars of conquest. His soldiers were promised they could keep a large share of the stolen loot. And if they should fall in battle, they were guaranteed a place in Paradise, surrounded by beautiful women (Al Bukhari 1:35). By A.D. 631, they had all of Arabia.

Islamic Imperialism

After the death of Muhammad, in A.D. 632, most of the conquered Arabian tribes rebelled against Islam. They said that their vow of loyalty had only been to Muhammad, not to Islam. Abu Bakr, Muhammad's successor, did not send missionaries to try to win them back. He sent armies. After 2 more years of killing, the "Ridda (apostacy) Wars" were over, and all of Arabia was once again Islamic.

With his base secure, the Caliph decided to attack the fringes of the Persian and Byzantine empires, spreading Islam by the sword, and getting rich from the spoils. In the East, Islamist armies invaded Babylonia, Susiana, Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Persia up to the Sind. To the West, they took all the Christian provinces of the Eastern Mediterranean, beginning with Syria and Palestine.

The Syria-Palestine campaign began in 634. The whole Gaza region up to Cesarea was ransacked. Crops were burned. 4000 Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan peasants were massacred. Jerusalem fell shortly after the battle of Ajnain in 636.

The Jalalan (Al Suyti and Al Mahally) on page 156, states, "***The order to fight the people of the Book is because they do not forbid what the Prophet had forbidden, such as wine.***"

The towns that actively resisted the invaders paid a high price. Often, the people were completely wiped out. But then again, that often happened even if they did not resist at all. Often the women and children were rounded up, marched off, and sold into slavery while their men were slaughtered, or sometimes made slaves as well. Afterward, if the conquered families survived, they were often forced to become Muslim at the point of a sword. Those who spoke out against Islam were tortured or killed in front of their loved ones, just as they are today.

If a Christian managed to survive, and learned to keep his mouth shut, but refused Islam, he simply became one of the "Dhimmi" and was made to pay a heavy tax ("Jizya" from Arabic "Jazaa" or 'Punishment' tax). The dhimmi were people of an "inferior" religion who were not respected, but "tolerated."

On page 210 of the Tabari's commentary on the Quran, the author is referring to Sura 9:28-29. I took this quote from page 47 of a Book called "Unmasking Islam," by Abd El Scafi. Tabari states,

"The meaning of the Quranic statement: '...until they pay the poll-tax with submission and humiliation' (literally: to pay by hand and with forced submission) is that the Muslim will receive the tax imposed on Christians and Jews while he is sitting and they are standing. He will take it from their own hands since the Christian or the Jew should not send the money with a messenger but come himself and stand to pay it for the Muslim, who will be sitting. The saying, 'with forced submission', also means with humiliation"

For the rest of their lives, these people were second-class citizens in their own country. Jews and Christians were often made to wear special clothes or go barefoot, bow their heads in front of Muslims, and follow dozens of other laws designed to humiliate them.

In speaking of the conquered, dhimmi people of Muslim countries hundreds of years ago, Bat Yeor writes, "*Churches and synagogues were rarely respected. Regarded as places of perversion, they were often burned or demolished in the course of reprisals against infidels found guilty of overstepping their rights.*"

Whenever a country was taken, the Islamists completely erased the old culture, replacing it with Islam. That's cultural chauvanism -- imperialism of the worst kind. (Later on -- Europe became strong, and Europeans colonized the Middle East. But they did not do what the Muslims had done. They stole the countries' wealth in the same way, just as the Islamists had done before them. However, they did not forcibly convert whole populations.)

We won't say very much about the agony suffered by Christians under the boot-heel of Islam. We won't talk much about the various massacres that have happened and continue to happen. But we should spend at least a couple pages on it.

The "Prophet" set the example by killing men and selling their families into slavery. Islamists continue the practice to this day. The worst crime of all, which still happens today, most notably in the Sudan, is the stealing of children from their families, to be raised in the Islamic religion. Then there are the forced conversions and murders in places like the

Moluccas, thousands of them. In the Sudan – millions have had to flee their homes. Hundreds of thousands have been killed.

Every Islamic country applies pressure to its religious minorities. In every country with a Muslim majority, the minority people are regarded, to a greater or lesser extent, as dhimmi.

It also happens in “soft” Muslim countries like Indonesia. People can wear Islamic clothing in the office and there’s never a problem. However, if Christians have any kind of clothing or jewelry with a Christian theme, they often experience opposition. There are laws forbidding a church to be built next to a mosque, or to be more prominent in any way than its Muslim neighbor. Other laws, recently enacted, make it mandatory for Christian schools to have at least one Islamic teacher. Of course, Islamic schools don’t feel compelled to have a Christian teacher. Indonesian I.D. cards tell your religion, because dhimmi must be identified. Muslim books that tell lies about our faith are found everywhere, but Christian books that tell the truth about Muhammad are strictly censored. Muslim preachers blare out their messages at everyone in the city on Fridays. Nobody can escape because of the volume from the loud-speakers. But churches are forbidden even to ring their bells. And enough churches are always being bombed or burned to make Christians think twice before openly and enthusiastically sharing their faith. The message is, **“We’ll tolerate you – as long as you are a “good” Dhimmi.”**

Caesar's kingdom should be separate from God's. It was wrong for Christians to combine the two in the old medieval Roman church. It is wrong for Muslims as well.

The Arab-Islamic Empire continued to expand, conquering Egypt, and then taking all of North Africa, burning Carthage to the ground and murdering almost all its people. When Amr conquered Tripoli (Libya) in 643, he forced the Christian and Jewish Berbers to give up their wives and children as slaves to the Muslim armies. This was part of their Jizya (unbeliever’s tax).

Once the Berbers had been thoroughly Islamized, they themselves became the slave traders. Muslim pirates constantly raided the European coast in search of white slaves for the markets of North Africa. Even far to the north, the vulnerable Irish coast underwent constant attacks. From 1530 to 1780, Robert Davis, of Ohio State University has estimated that 1 million to 1.5 million Irish people were enslaved and taken to Algiers. A few were ransomed. Most of them disappeared into a long miserable death.

The practice continues today. The American Anti-Slavery Group has reported the following concerning the present-day Sudanese slave trade:

“Women and children abducted in slave raids are roped by the neck or strapped to animals and then marched north. Along the way, many women and girls are repeatedly gang-raped. Children who will not be silent are shot on the spot. In the north, slaves are either kept by individual militia soldiers or sold in markets. Boys work as livestock herders, forced to sleep with the animals they care for. Some who try to escape have their Achilles tendons cut to hamper their ability to run. Masters typically use women and girls as domestics and concubines, cleaning by day and serving the master sexually by night. Survivors report being called “abeed” (“black slave”), enduring daily beatings, and receiving awful food. Masters also strip slaves of their religious and cultural identities, giving them Arabic names and forcing them to pray as Muslims. (Islam Unveiled, Spencer, page 66)”

This horrible slave trade is happening today, right now, in our present time. According to Warraq, page 205, about 45,000 young black Africans are kidnapped each year and taken as slaves to the Middle East.

By contrast, it was primarily the Christians who ended slavery in most other countries of the world – like John Newton, for example, in England.

Islamic Invasion of Europe

Europe was attacked first from the sea. Entire populations were slaughtered or enslaved in Cyprus(649), Rhodes(672), and Crete(674). Constantinople was attacked and besieged in 673 but the attackers failed. They tried again in 717. In AD 717, the Muslims were more determined than ever to take it, so that they could then invade Europe. Their army of 112,000 Muslim invaders tried for almost a year to break the city's defenses. But in the end, the invaders were starved of supplies and almost completely wiped out. Leo the Isaurian, a name forgotten by history, saved Europe by keeping the door closed. The Islamic invaders were so badly beaten that they didn't try to attack Constantinople again for hundreds of years.

So then the Islamists tried to conquer Europe from the other end, from the West. They invaded Spain in 711, and had occupied about two-thirds of it by A.D. 715. Finally, in 735, Pelayo, fighting for the kingdom of Asturias, managed to defeat the invaders at the Battle of Covadonga, and began the reconquest of Spain. It's called the "Reconquista." It took 800 years of bloody warfare for the Spanish people to win back their country. But they did it.

Throughout that 800 year period, Islamist armies launched annual military campaigns into Europe from their bases in Spain and, later, Italy.

They tried twice to take all of Europe, through France, but were defeated in 720 at Naronne, and in 732 by Charles Martel, at Poitiers. Another jihad against Europe was stopped cold at the battle of Carcassone in 792.

Yet the constant raids by Arab-Islamic pirates continued. The coastlines of Sardinia, Sicily, Italy and southern France were depopulated in the years that followed. Syracuse fell in 878 after a nine-month siege. Thousands were murdered after they surrendered. Thousands more were sold into slavery. The Sicilians endured a long war of defense, and fought back heroically against the Muslim invaders. The war lasted from 827 until Sicily finally fell, in 902.

In 911, the Arabs took the southern coast of France and held it, cutting France off from Italy completely. By 940 they held most of Southeastern France, a large portion of Italy, and even parts of Switzerland.

In A.D. 1000, back in Spain where the centuries-long war continued, Castille was burned by the Muslims and the entire population enslaved.

Have you noticed, in this catalogue of the battles between Islam and the Catholic Christians of Europe, that all the place names are in Europe? That's because in all these centuries of constant killing, it was always the armies of the Islamic Empire that were invading Europe.

In all these **centuries** of constant invasions of Europe by the Islamic armies, countless Europeans had already been killed, or enslaved, lives ruined. And still, Europe never ONCE was able to launch a counter-attack against the Muslim lands.

Finally, in November of 1095, The European Pope, Urban II decided to use the Islamists' own idea against them. He called for a "Holy War," a "Crusade," against the people who had been attacking Europe for over 400 years. After 400 years of the Muslim

jihad, the pontiff decided that maybe the Europeans ought to launch a counter-jihad of their own.

The Crusades – (European Counter-Attack)

For centuries after they conquered Jerusalem, the Muslims, to their credit, allowed Christians to make pilgrimages there, provided that the Christians paid them a lot of money. But when the Seljuk Turks replaced the Arabs, European pilgrims heading for Jerusalem were persecuted and killed. Also, Alexis, the Eastern Emperor was under a new attack by Muslims and asked Europe for help. That's when the Pope made his decision.

Europeans were more than justified in finally trying to re-take the Holy Land, which Islamists had conquered centuries before. But the Catholic church should never have been making political, even military decisions. Jesus never wanted his church to become a military power.

Furthermore, the way the Crusades were conducted was ghastly. A lot of the Crusaders slaughtered innocents, no different from the Islamic armies before them. They even killed their own people in Constantinople.

The Catholic Church of that later era was not really Christian. By definition, a Christian is one who follows Christ, as found in the Gospel. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages followed the Pope in Rome, whether the Pope followed Christ or not. To disagree with the Pope was to die. A lot of brave Christians gave their lives, trying to bring the Catholic Church back to Christ.

The point here is that you cannot blame Christianity for the Crusades. At that time in history, the Christian church -- I mean the TRUE Christian Church, was very small, and weak, and oppressed by the Catholic regime. ***One of the Crusades was actually fought against Christians !!***

The only group that I know of, that seems to have been truly following the writings of the apostles, was the group known as the Waldensians, founded by a man named Valdes. The main belief of the Waldensians was the principle that the Bible, especially the New Testament, was the only true guide upon which to base your life. Large portions of scripture were obtained in the people's own languages, and were memorized by students at Waldensian schools.

The Waldensians were told by the Catholic Church to stop preaching, but they refused. In 1185, they were thrown out of the Catholic Church -- excommunicated. Later, Pope Innocent III launched a crusade against the heretics of southern France. It was aimed chiefly at the "Cathars" (another group, admirable, but not completely Christian). But it was also against the Waldensians.

The Waldensians survived that crusade, as a group, because by this time they could also be found in northern Spain, Austria, Bohemia, and eastern Germany, among other places. But the persecutions continued, and eventually, they had to hide from their pursuers. Their main headquarters were in the Alpine valleys, southwest of Turin. When the Reformation finally succeeded, later on, under Luther and Calvin, the Waldensians joined the new Protestant churches.

The Light of Jesus was almost put out in Medieval times. I think that's why we call them the Dark Ages!

The Change of Fortune

The Dark Ages continued for a while longer. By 1389 the new colonizers, the Turks had already occupied a huge amount of territory in Eastern Europe, from the Aegean Sea almost all the way to Varna, on the Black Sea coast. In that year King Lazar gathered a large army of Serbians, Bosnians and Albanians to throw the occupiers out.

He met the Muslim army on what is now called “The Field of Ravens” near Kosovo. They killed thousands of the enemy, but lost the battle anyway. Angry at the heavy Muslim losses, the Islamic general ordered Lazar and all his men, now prisoners, to be beheaded. Today, centuries later, the Serbs have not forgotten.

John Castriot of Albania, known as Skanderbeg, and Janos Hunyadi of Hungary kept fighting, and stopped the Jihad temporarily by defeating the occupiers at the battle of Varna, in 1444. Hunyadi beat them again at Belgrade in 1456.

Meanwhile, Constantinople had finally fallen to the Muslim attackers in 1453, leaving all of Eastern Europe open to invasion, only about 50 years after the Islamists had been driven out of Spain and Western Europe.

About a hundred years later, in 1566, Count Nicholas Zriny of Hungary was defending his small fortress at Sziget against a large Muslim army. He was outnumbered, almost eight enemy soldiers for every one of his. The garrison fought well, but it was hopeless.

Toward the end, with most of his troops dead or dying, Zriny prepared for his last stand. He positioned an artillery piece in the center of the courtyard, its loaded muzzle facing the main gate, and its gun-crew at the ready. He then touched off a slow fuse that led to the powder magazine under the fort, and took up a position next to the gun with his few remaining troops. He drew his sword and ordered the gate to be opened.

The enemy rushed in. The canon blew away their front ranks, but hundreds kept coming. Zriny and his men were cut down and the Islamic troops swarmed into the courtyard. “Allah” was victorious! The courtyard was jammed full of excited Muslim soldiers shouting, “Allahu Akhbar!” A few minutes later the magazine ignited. The fort disappeared into a fireball, and Zriny took three thousand of the enemy with him.

Europeans were fighting for the survival of their world, their culture. It was a time of desperate, savage warfare. But in the middle of all this carnage in the Dark Ages, the light was beginning to shine.

As stated earlier, at that time in history the medieval Catholic Church was often not following the Lord. However, eventually, men like Wycliffe, Huss, Tyndale, Luther, and Calvin finally succeeded in making the Bible available to the common person once again, and in breaking the strangle-hold of the medieval church. Their work marks the beginning of Europe's Renaissances.

The Reformation established Protestant churches, and eventually led to the idea of freedom of religion. It also led to the Council of Trent, which reformed the Catholic Church.

The Renaissance, in turn, brought new strength to Europe. Islamic armies continued to invade Europe. But the Europeans were getting much stronger. The Muslim soldiers were badly defeated on September 12th, in 1683, in front of Vienna. And they were finally beaten for good, at Belgrade. The date of the final defeat of the centuries old Islamic Jihad was September 11th, 1697.

Meanwhile, because of the Protestant Reformation, which had blossomed in the 16th century, Christians were reading their Bibles again. When the Bible was back in the hands of ordinary Christians, we once again learned what Jesus had taught his disciples. We learned, among other things, of the fundamental principle that God allows people to think for themselves, so *we should too*.

Islamists have never learned that lesson. The Quran, for the most part, doesn't teach it. Most Muslim people today are Muslim because at some point in the distant past, your ancestors were beaten by Muslim armies and terrorized into conversion. Not all -- but most. That is a fact of history. But even to this day, as that Jihad heats up again, small pockets of Christians remain, suffering but defiant, still loving their enemies, still bravely speaking the Truth, in the middle of the Islamic world.

JESUS IS COMING BACK !!!

- ***I Cor. 16:13 “Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be people of courage. Be strong. Do everything in love”***
- ***I Thess. 5:16-18 “Be joyful always. Pray continually. Give thanks in all circumstances.”***
- ***Philippians 1:21 “To live is Christ, and to die is gain”.***

ADDENDA

Of course, from the very early days of the church, right up to the present day, the enemy has continued to launch one attack after another against our faith. The Bible tells us we shouldn't be surprised about such things.

- The DaVinci Code

Enough has already been written to explode the myths of the DaVinci Code. There never was any war between Christians and pagans such as the book and movie describe. That's just Hollywood fantasy (Hollywood, keep in mind, is usually very anti-Christian). The idea that there was ever any "mystery" about the painting of the last supper is also a lie. We wrote a cute little book that makes fun of the Davinci Code story. We called it "The Mickey Mouse Code."

- The "Gospel" of Judas

In our museums and university libraries, we have preserved a lot of ancient books and letters from the first and the second centuries after Jesus. Some of those documents discuss other books of the time. However the first document to mention the Gospel of Judas doesn't come along until AD 180. The comments by Iraneus, in AD 180, are the very FIRST comments we find anywhere with regard to this book. If it had been in existence prior to AD 140 or 150, it seems that SOMEBODY would have mentioned it sooner. So experts date it at about AD 150.

Don't take my word for it. Let's talk to the men whose names appear on the front cover of the best-selling book called "The Gospel of Judas". Their names are Randolfe Kasser, Marvin Meyer, Gregor Wurst, and Bart Ehrman. Let's look at their words, taken from the pages of their book. Bart says, on page 91, "Scholars will differ on when it (the Gospel of Judas) was first composed, but most will probably date it to 140-160 or so." On page 11 of the book, Marvin says, "Without a doubt, it was composed in Greek,

probably around the middle of the second century." Gregor answers on page 122, "The existence of a gospel of Judas is first attested by the late second century bishop Irenaeus of Lyon." He says on page 132: "The Gospel of Judas must be placed in the second century."

Okay, Jesus was crucified somewhere between AD 26 and AD 36. We know that, not just from the Bible, but from Roman and Jewish sources as well. Tacitus, in his Annals XV, page 44, for example, confirms that it was during Pilate's term as procurator. Pilate ruled from 26 to 36.

Let's say the crucifixion was in AD 34, or thereabouts. The book, Judas, as shown above, was written around AD 150. There is a time-span of 116 years between the two events. Judas was already an adult when Jesus was killed. Let's say Judas was 20 years old. So he would have to have been, at the very least, 136 years old when that book, bearing his name, was written. In my opinion, even if Judas were drinking 'Extra Joss' in large quantities, I doubt that he could have lived that long. So I really think Judas was NOT the actual author. What do you think?

Bart Ehrman actually goes further, although he also tries to avoid drawing the obvious conclusion. On page 91 of 'Judas', quoted above, Bart says that the Gospel of Judas was probably composed around AD 140-160. On page 81 of their book he admits that he knows the Biblical Gospels were written much earlier:

"Mark, most likely the first of the canonical gospels to be written, was almost certainly composed by 65 or 70."

Bart acknowledges both facts. However, he doesn't want to put the two together on the same page, because then he would be forced to conclude the obvious – the New Testament is far more reliable, since it was composed within the apostles' lifetimes.

- The Tomb of Jesus

As soon as the sales of the "Gospel of Judas" were finally dying down, along came still another new lie. They have found a tomb, in Israel, with the name "Jesus" on it. The problem with the idea that it must then be Jesus' tomb is that "Jesus," or "Jeshua" in Hebrew, was one of the most common names of the time, and so was his father's name, Joseph. So was Mary's. In fact they've found something like four such tombs now I believe,

This is also why, when talking about Peter's grave, in the chapter on the apostles, I have to be very cautious in my conclusions. Simon was also a very common name.

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