



## **EXPLAINING TO MUSLIMS THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES ARE CORRECT**

The Bible is true. When speaking to a Muslim friend about Christ and salvation, one of their first objections is to claim the Holy Bible, especially the New Testament, was physically altered and corrupted to make Christ (the prophet) look like the Son of God. This gives them a reason to not listen to the truth of God's salvation and forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Their actual evidence for this physical corruption does not exist, but yet we must be prepared to explain to them in a friendly way that their idea is not true.

There are presently 5,686 Greek manuscripts in existence today for the New Testament, as studied by Norman Geisler & Peter Bocchino, (Unshakeable Foundations, Bethany House Publishers, 2001). There are more copies than any other ancient writing. The internal consistency of the New Testament documents is about 99.5% textually pure. That is an amazing accuracy result. In addition, there are over 19,000 copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages. The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 25,000.

Even Muslim scholars cannot give a specific example of corrupted written Scripture, other than a few minor copying mistakes in some manuscripts. Overall detailed studies show the Christian manuscripts are very near perfectly correct textually. In fact the Christian manuscripts have a much higher degree of textual correctness than the Koran does. None of these copying mistakes (0.5%) in any way take away the core Christian message--which is Jesus Christ was the Son of God and only Christ as the Son of God has the power and authority to offer forgiveness necessary to obtain eternal presence with God. Certainly in most cases the average non-scholar Muslim cannot cite any particular example, but rather this is something they were told.

### Taking the Extreme View of Muslim Scholars--and Still Showing the Gospel is Correct

Professor of Islam, Dr. Professor Abdullah Saeed describes three views on corrupted scripture:, (AM Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies Asia Institute University of Melbourne "The Charge of Distortion of Jewish and Christian Scriptures", The Muslim World. Vol. 92, 2002 pages 419-436)

"There are three broad approaches to this among Muslims: (a) the scriptures of Jews and Christians of which the Koran approves as uncorrupted are only those that were actually revealed to Moses (Tawrāt or Torah) and Jesus (Injīl or Gospel), not those that existed with the Jews and Christians at the time of the Prophet Mohammad or exist today; (b) significant parts of the scriptures that exist today are distorted and corrupted and it is difficult to know which these are; or c) there are no uncorrupted scriptures of Jews and Christians remaining today - those that the Koran refers to Torah or Gospel at the time of Moses or Jesus have been obliterated. This last appears to be the most popular and widely-held view."

“Although the Koran makes clear its respect for both the Torah and Gospels, these Muslims claim a number of Koran verses as the basis for their conviction that these scriptures as they exist today have been corrupted. Unlike the vast majority of Muslims, earlier scholars appear to be more cautious in their assessment of the issue of ‘distortion’.”

### The Most Extreme View

Let’s take the most extreme and narrow Muslim view and yet prove it completely wrong:

***“(a) the scriptures of Jews and Christians of which the Koran approves as uncorrupted are only those that were actually revealed to Moses ((Tawrāt or Torah) and Jesus (Injīl or Gospel), not those that existed with the Jews and Christians at the time of the Prophet Mohammad or exist today.”***

This group of extreme Muslim scholars state the only uncorrupted Gospel scripture concerning Christ was that actually available at the time of Christ. While this is not true--we can easily show that even this extreme position still in no way refutes the Gospel story of Christ-as the Son of God-sacrifice and redemption for all who believe.

Let’s go through four simple steps that simply prove the story of Christ beyond any doubt:

#### **1. We have today a complete Isaiah scripture text that when originally copied predated Christ and the Apostles—thus it is uncorrupted**

We know the Dead Sea Scroll Isaiah copy dates from 107 to 335 year before Christ. The scrolls have been carbon dated at least four times and every time they were proved to be copied between 107 to 335 years before Christ. Keep in mind the original Isaiah text was written about 730 years before Christ. Thus we can look at actual text today that existed when revealed to Jesus. This means even the most conservative Muslim scholars would have to agree this text was uncorrupted.

#### **2. We know for certain Christ read Isaiah, and it applied to Him**

Luke 4 (NIV)

16 He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And He stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. When He had unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

20 Then He rolled up the scroll, and He gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all those who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

24 He also said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you truthfully, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were closed for three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land. 26 Yet to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, a city of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet. But none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

28 All those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath. 29 They rose up and thrust Him out of the city and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down headlong. 30 But passing through the midst of them, He went His way.



Nazareth Hill Cliff 2016 Author's Photo

### **3. Isaiah describes Christ as God and the Messiah several times**

Isaiah 7 (NIV)

13 Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David. Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

**Isaiah 7 (Actual Hebrew/Aramaic Translation from Dead Sea Scroll)**

**(13) And He said, Hear now Oh House of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, will you also weary God, (14) therefore YHWH himself will give to you a sign.**

**Behold the virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and he shall call his name Immanuel.**

Isaiah 9 (NIV)

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with justice and with righteousness, from now until forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.

**Isaiah 9 (Actual Hebrew/Aramaic Translation from Dead Sea Scroll)**

**(5) Because a child shall be born to us and a son is given to us and the government shall be upon his shoulders and he shall be called wonderful, counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father, the prince of peace.**

**(6) Of the increase of his government and his peace there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David and over his kingdom to order it and to establish it in judgement and in righteousness from and until eternity. The zeal of YHWH of Hosts will perform this.**

#### 4. Isaiah 52-53 says Christ will die, come to life and forgive the sins of all who follow him

Isaiah 52 (NIV)

13 See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. 14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him— his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness—

15 so he will sprinkle many nations and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Isaiah 53 (NIV)

1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

11 After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.  
For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors

#### **Isaiah 52 (Actual Hebrew/Aramaic Translation from Dead Sea Scroll)**

**(13) Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and be very high. (14) As those who were astonished at him are many; because his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.**

**(15.) So shall he startle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which was not told to them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.**

#### **Isaiah 53 (Actual Hebrew/Aramaic Translation from Dead Sea Scroll)**

**(1) Who has believed our report and the arm of YHWH to whom has it been revealed (2) And he shall come up like a suckling before us and as a root from dry ground there is no form to him and no beauty to him and in his being seen and there is no appearance that we should desire him.**

**(3) He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and knowing grief and as though hiding faces from him he was despised and we did not esteem him. (4) Surely our griefs he is bearing and our sorrows he carried them and we esteemed him beaten and struck by God and afflicted.**

**(5) And he is wounded for our transgressions, and crushed for our iniquities, the correction of our peace was upon him and by his wounds he has healed us.**

**(6) All of us like sheep have wandered each man to his own way. We have turned and YHWH has caused to light on him the iniquity of all of us. (7) He was oppressed and he was afflicted and he did not open his mouth, as a lamb to the slaughter he is brought and as a ewe before her shearers is made dumb he did not open his mouth.**

**(8) From prison and from judgement he was taken and his generation who shall discuss it because he was cut off from the land of the living. Because from the transgressions of his people a wound was to him. (9) And they gave wicked ones to be his grave and rich ones in his death although he worked no violence neither deceit in his mouth.**

**(10) And YHWH was pleased to crush him and He has caused him grief. If you will appoint his soul a sin offering he will see his seed and he will lengthen his days and the pleasure of YHWH in his hand will advance.**

**(11) Of the toil of his soul he shall see light and he shall be satisfied and by his knowledge shall he make righteous even my righteous servant for many and their iniquities he will bear.**

**(12) Therefore I will apportion to him among the great ones and with the mighty ones he shall divide the spoil because he laid bare to death his soul and with the transgressors.**

**He was numbered, and he, the sins of many, he bore, and for their transgressions he entreated.**

#### Notes on the Isaiah Hebrew/Aramaic Translation

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It is generally believed during the time of Jesus, Jews in Judaea primarily spoke Aramaic with a decreasing number using Hebrew as a native language. Many learned Hebrew as a liturgical language only. The Essenes copied the Qumran Isaiah text into a “dialect” of Hebrew some 100 to 300 years before Christ. It is not a translation, but is characterized by modifications in spelling and personal pronouns to match the then current Aramaic dialect that the Essenes would have spoken. This translation shows what Jesus would have read.

The Qumran scribes used their own discretion to alter the text to fit their own dialect. Despite this, the consistency between the text of the Great Isaiah Scroll and the Masoretic text of Isaiah is all the more remarkable. In the Hebrew/Aramaic translation Fred Miller only changed word order within some lines but not between lines; for instance the Hebrew word order in line 6 of page 44 was “ground dry” and he changed it to “dry ground.” In English, adjectives usually precede nouns and in Hebrew they follow after the noun they modify.

Relative to the time of a verb: as to it being past or present time: Hebrew verbs are not time defined. Only the context can determine the time (past, present, or future) Thus in the translation it is legitimate to change the tense of the verb to suit what you believe to be the case. For instance line 8 of page 44 it would be just as accurate to write “he is despised and we do not esteem him. Surely our griefs he bore” as would be “he was despised and we did not esteem him. Surely he is bearing our griefs.”

On line 15 of page 44 at the end of verse 8 he left the literal words “a wound was to him” instead of smoothing it out to “he had a wound” or “he was wounded.”

## The Gospel Makes Clear Isaiah Was Not Writing about Himself

Acts 8 (NIV)

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."

30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

34 And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

## Using the Koran Verses: The Koran Does Not Say the Bible Was Physically Corrupted!

***The Koran is not the word of God.*** However, the Koran is the earliest record we have that details the beliefs and practices of the first Muslims. As such, it can be useful to persuade Muslims to use the Koran to ultimately support the authenticity and reliability of the Holy Bible. Hopefully, by God's sovereign grace, the goal is to lead Muslims to reexamine their view of God's pure Word, the Holy Bible, and embrace its teaching on the real Jesus of history for salvation.

Without Christ, Muslims have no possibility of an eternal relationship with God. All Muslims do not know whether or not they are saved. Mohammad is quoted as saying he did not know if he was saved. Most Muslims believe the only certainty of salvation belongs to those who die in jihad, but this of course is not true either. Only by accepting and believing the gift of Jesus Christ can a Muslim live in the presence of God for eternity.



A careful reading of the Koran verses related to Jews and Christians is that the Koran states they did not physically alter the text, but rather the alleged "distortion" or "corruption" was perhaps an act of disobedience or faulty interpretation. This view was particularly true with early Muslim commentators, and only later ones decided to make the charge that the Scriptures were actually physically changed.

To be clear Muslims have no evidence that the Scriptures were physically changed. In fact this would have been impossible given the thousands of Christian manuscripts that were quickly circulating across a wide variety of geographic areas--making widespread collusion impossible.

In helping a Muslim friend understand the Scriptures are correct the discussion can take place in two phases. The first is to show that the Koran instructs the reader to study and follow the Word of God--which includes the Christian Scriptures that were previously correct. The second is that the Koran never says the Christian Scriptures were physically corrupted; only the Koran may claim the interpretation was not correct.

***Putting these two discussions together--the conclusion is a good Muslim should follow the Word of God and read the Christian Scriptures which were revealed to the Apostles as correct.***

#### Koran Verses Instructing the Reader to Follow All the Books and Word of God

Additional commentary on these verses was adapted from: Nasr, Seyyed Hossein; Dagli, Caner K.; Dakake, Maria Massi; Lombard, Joseph E.B.; Rustom, Mohammed (2015-11-17). *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* HarperCollins. Kindle Edition

**Koran 2:89** *And when there came to them a Book from God, confirming that which they had with them— and aforetime they used to ask for victory over those who disbelieve— so when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it. So may the curse of God be upon the disbelievers.*

Explanation for 2:89 Here the "Book" refers to the Koran, which in several verses is described as confirming the previous scriptures--meaning Jewish and Christian scriptures of "People of the Book." (examples: Koran 3:3; Koran 5:48; Koran 6:92; and Koran 35:31).

**Koran 2:91** *And when it is said unto them, "Believe in what God has sent down," they say, "We believe in what was sent down to us," and they disbelieve in what is beyond it, although it is the truth, confirming what is with them. Say, "Then why did you slay the prophets of God aforetime, if you were believers?"*

Explanation for 2:91 This question is a rebuke in light of the Jews' claim that we believe in what was sent down to us, meaning the Torah, because those slain prophets were Israelites who only commanded their people to follow the Torah. That they slew even them shows that their refusal to follow the Prophet stemmed from something other than faith in the Torah, since those prophets also confirmed the truth of what was with them, and their murder was forbidden in any case. Thus the Koran confirms the Torah is also the word of God.

**Koran 2:140** *Or say you that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say, "Do you know better, or does God?" And who does greater wrong than one who conceals a testimony he has from God? God is not heedless of what you do.*

Explanation for 2:140 This denial of retroactive exclusive religious identity, instead of broad religious allegiance to God, is also found in Koran 3:65, where the People of the Book are asked, Why do you dispute concerning Abraham, as neither the Torah nor the Gospel was sent down until after him? In Koran 3:67 it is emphatically stated, Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian, but rather was a ḥanīf, a submitter. Clearly Abraham was not a Christian since he lived before Christ as evidenced by the Gospel to the Apostles that was sent down after Abraham.

**Koran 3:3-4** *3 He sent down the Book upon thee in truth, confirming what was before it, and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel 4 aforetime, as a guidance to mankind. And He sent down the Criterion. Truly those who disbelieve in the signs of God shall have a severe punishment. And God is Mighty, Possessor of Vengeance.*

Explanation for 3:3-4 The first part of v. 4 should be read as continuous with v. 3. Although some understand a distinction between the two instances of sent down in v. 3, arguing that the former (nazzala) reflects that the Koran (the Book) was revealed in parts and the latter (anzala) indicates the Torah and Gospel were revealed all at once.

For Muslims, Tawrāt (Torah) usually refers to the five books of Moses (much less commonly, it is thought to denote the entire Tanakh), and Injīl (Gospel) refers to the revelation given to Jesus.

Translations of the Bible into Arabic are known from the early Christian churches in Syria, Egypt, Malta and Spain. Some of these translations are from Syriac (the Peshitta), Coptic or Latin. The earliest fragment of the Old Testament in Arabic is a text of Psalm 77, found in the Umayyad Mosque, dating from the 8th century. The first Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible, and the bible translations by Roman Catholic clergy date from AD 1000. One of the oldest Arabic bibles was discovered at Saint Catherine's Monastery. The manuscript called Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 151, and was created in AD 867.

Thus there was most likely no Arabic translation of the Bible at the time of the revelation to Mohammad; such a translation only appeared at least a century later. It is unlikely that in the early seventh century the texts in circulation would have been significantly different from the texts approved by Jewish and Christian authorities at the end of the fourth century, when both canons and the central doctrines of Christianity, including the Trinity, were formally established.

These verses state that these books were revealed in the past, but the Koran confirms what was before it (ma bayna yadayhi), which is understood to mean “previous to” by the commentators, but which can also mean “in the presence of,” as does the English word “before.”

Sensitive to this question, al-Rāzī asks himself, “How can this phrase refer to what is past?” and answers, “That lore, owing to how familiar it is, is referred to in that way,” namely, as though it is present to the revelation of the Koran and commonly known if only in a general way. Jesus is spoken of in a similar fashion in Koran 5:46, where Jesus and the message given to him confirm the Torah, and Koran 5:47 follows with language very similar to that in Koran 3:6.

The Koran confirms what was before it, including the content of that existing teaching. If both the texts and interpretation of the People of the Book are true and correct, it would be through their moral shortcomings that they fail in their religion. If the texts are true, but the interpretation is incorrect, this would support the position of those who accuse the People of the Book of distorting (taḥrīf) the meaning, but not the text of scripture (see Koran 2:75; Koran 4: 46; Koran 5:13, Koran 5:41). For example, in later times some Muslims incorrectly argued that the Trinity (one God in three forms), as described in the Nicene Creed, is nowhere to be found in the Biblical text, but results from a faulty interpretation.

The Koran praises monks in Koran 5:82 but claims that monasticism was not prescribed for them, but was a practice they initiated themselves. This would make the existing Gospel a different kind of Divine book than the Koran, constituting a work of Divinely inspired or approved authors rather than a message delivered directly through Gabriel. This would agree with the view of Christians themselves that the text is guided and sanctioned by God, but not directly revealed.

In this way, the truths and commands of the Injīl given to Jesus are communicated to Christians through that which they had with them (see Koran 2:89 above) and what is before the Koran. A Muslim could conclude that the Koran, when referring to the Injīl that the Christians have with them, includes both the text and the normative tradition around that text insofar as they convey Christ’s original message to his apostles, which was given to them by God.

**Koran 10:37** *This Koran could not have been fabricated by anyone apart from God; rather, it is a confirmation of that which came before it, and an elaboration of the Book in which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds.*

This verse states the Koran has not been authored by the Prophet, but is from the Lord of the world. The Koran is described here as confirming that which came before it, that is, the previous revealed scriptures, such as the Torah and the Gospel. It is also characterized as elaborating the Book in which there is no doubt, here understood to refer to the laws and beliefs that God has ordained for Muslims to follow.

## Koran Verses Showing the Christian Scriptures Were Intact and Correct

Additional commentary on these verses was adapted from: Nasr, Seyyed Hossein; Dagli, Caner K.; Dakake, Maria Massi; Lombard, Joseph E.B.; Rustom, Mohammed (2015-11-17). *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* HarperCollins. Kindle Edition

**Koran 2:75** *Do you hope, then, that they will believe you, seeing that a party of them would hear the Word of God and then distort it after they had understood it, knowingly?*

Explanation of 2:75 Often mentioned in this connection with this verse is the thesis that the scholars and jurists of the Children of Israel would make lawful what was forbidden and forbid what was lawful, in accord with their own desires. "After they had understood" means the meaning was distorted, not the text.

Although later Islamic commentators and theologians sometimes held a view that the Jews and Christians actually changed the text of the Bible--despite no evidence to prove this--the earlier commentators were not as eager to dispute the text of the Bible and preferred to view the "distortion" as an act of faulty and even malicious interpretation.

**Koran 3:84** *Say, "We believe in God and what has been sent down upon us, and in what was sent down upon Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in what Moses, Jesus, and the prophets were given from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them, and unto Him we submit."*

Explanation of 3:84 Since every prophet is believed to have been sent with this same essential message, the Koran commands Muslims to believe in all of them. Each phase of the Abrahamic tradition, and implicit other religious traditions, can thus be seen as the continuation of a single stream of revelation that began with Adam. This verse also means the Gospels--meaning Christian Scriptures of Jesus--are correct since no distinction is made.

**Koran 5:46-47** *And in their footsteps, We sent Jesus son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him, and We gave him the Gospel, wherein is a guidance and a light, confirming the Torah that had come before him, as a guidance and an exhortation to the reverent. Let the people of the Gospel judge by what God has sent down therein. Whosoever judges not by that which God has sent down— it is they who are iniquitous.*

Explanation of 5:46-47 That Jesus "confirms the Torah" means that he upholds the validity of all Torah rulings not specifically abrogated by the Gospel. Jesus comes to make lawful unto the Israelites part of that which was forbidden to them. The Gospel here is described as containing a guidance and a light. These two verses indicate that the Gospel remains a valid source of guidance for the people of the Gospel. This clearly states of Christians: Let the people of the Gospel judge by that which God has sent down therein. It would be contradictory for the Koran to speak of the efficacy of judging by the Torah and the Gospel if it were to also maintain that these scriptures have been abrogated or excessively distorted.

It would also make little sense to say that the religions in which these scriptures are applicable are defunct, or were defunct at the time the Koran was revealed, for it is the methodologies developed within the religions that would provide their followers with the ability to judge in accord with them.

If previous religions were abrogated by the revelation of the Koran, it would be implausible to tell the Prophet Mohammad to seek their counsel when it says, "Ask the people of the Reminder, if you know not." (Koran 16:43)

**Koran 3:78** *And there is indeed a group among them who twist their tongues with the Book, that you may suppose it to be from the Book. But it is not from the Book. And they say, "It is from God," though it is not from God. And they knowingly speak a lie against God.*

Explanation of 3:78 This verse is similar to Koran 2:79 (So woe unto those who write the book with their hands, then say, "This is from God"--describing an account of some Jews who wrote something down and pawned it off on the ignorant Arabs for a small profit. This verse has been interpreted to mean misinterpretations of the prophecies concerning the coming of the Prophet Mohammad, or the deception for worldly purposes of ignorant people who were told that the Torah says so-and-so when they did not have the ability to read the Torah for themselves, which suggests that these distortions were isolated incidents meant to deceive people who did not know the scriptures. "Twist their tongues" again supports the idea that the meaning was distorted, not the text.

**Koran 3:113-115** *113 They are not all alike. Among the People of the Book is an upright community who recite God's signs in the watches of the night, while they prostrate. 114 They believe in God and the Last Day, enjoin right and forbid wrong, and hasten unto good deeds. And they are among the righteous. 115 Whatsoever good they do, they will not be denied it. And God knows the reverent.*

Explanation of 3:113-115 The Prophet Mohammad recognized that at least a portion of the Christians and Jews were righteous in following their own Scriptures. If the Scriptures had been physically corrupted they could not be righteous. Some Muslim scholars try to interpret these verses as a group of Jews or Christians who became Muslim, but the argument is illogical, as they would no longer be referred to as "People of the Book" after having joined the Islamic community. They would have instead been called Muslim.

Thus it could only refer to a group among the People of the Book who believe as opposed to a group who disbelieve in God, but still follow their own Scriptures. They are called righteous when following their own Scriptures.

## Many Muslim Scholars Agree the Bible Was Not Corrupted

1. Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, Mohammad's cousin and one of his companions.

"They corrupt the word" means "they alter or change its meaning", yet no one is able to change even a single word from any Book of God. The meaning is that they interpret the word wrongly. (Kitaab (the book of) Al-Tawheed, Baab(chapter) Qawlu Allah Ta'ala, Bal Huwa Qur'aanun Majeed, fi lawhin Mahfooth)

2. Mohammad 'Abduh, Egyptian scholar, claims that the charge of corruption of the Biblical texts, makes no sense at all. It would not have been possible for Jews and Christians everywhere to agree on changing the text. Consider that this would involve dozens if not hundreds of different writers over several centuries. The ability to keep conspiracy is silent is impossible. Even if those in Arabia had done it, the difference between their book and those of their brothers, let us say in Syria and Europe, would have been obvious. (Jacques Jomier, Jesus, The Life of the Messiah [C.L.S., Madras, 1974], p. 216)

3. Al-Razi (865 – 925) One of the most famous Muslim scholars, called "the Imam of Muslim Imams".

How could there be any alteration in the Book whose words' sharpness has reached a great level of circulation in the East and in the West? For no change can occur in a book that is well circulated among men. Every wise man can see that the alteration of the Bible was impossible for it was well circulated among men of different faith and backgrounds. (His third volume, page 327)

4. Fakhruddin Razi (1149 - 1209), was a Persian Sunni theologian.

The Jews and early Christians were suspected of altering the text of the Torah and Gospels; but in the opinion of eminent doctors and theologians it was not practicable thus to corrupt the text, because those Scriptures were generally known and widely circulated, having been handed down from generation to generation.

5. Dr. Mahmoud Mustafa Ayoub, is a Muslim scholar and professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Religion at Temple University (USA).

Contrary to the general Islamic view, the Koran does not accuse Jews and Christians of altering the text of their scriptures, but rather of altering the truth those scriptures contain. The people do this by concealing some of the sacred texts, by misapplying their precepts, or by altering words from their right position. (Uzayr in the Qur'an and Muslim Tradition" in "Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions", ed. W. M. Brenner and S. D. Ricks, The University of Denver, 1986)

6. Professor Abdullah Saeed, (AM Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies Asia Institute University of Melbourne)

The ordinary Muslim people acknowledge that the Gospel is the Word of God. Yet they also believe through hearsay that the Gospel is corrupted, even though they cannot indicate what passage was corrupted, when it was corrupted, and who corrupted it.

***“The wholesale dismissive attitude held by many Muslims in the modern period towards the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity does not seem to have the support of either the Koran or the major figures of tafsir.”***

In dealing with the problem of distortion, scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya were aware of the challenges Muslims faced in asserting that the Jews and Christians had completely corrupted their scriptures, not the least of which was the obvious lack, in the Koran, of any kind of attack on either Torah or Christian Gospel.

The Koran consistently refers to these texts as the “Book of God,” revealed to Moses and Jesus. But Ibn Taymiyya seems to resolve the problem by claiming the existence of “uncorrupted” books somewhere at the time of the Prophet. We know from the history of these two religious traditions that by the time the Prophet was preaching in the early seventh century CE, the scriptures of both Jews and Christians were documented. The Torah they had at the time is what they have now. The same is true for the Gospels. Since the Koran refers to those same scriptures, its references to them should equally apply in the modern era. This is perhaps the main challenge to Ibn Taymiyya’s position.

Large-scale and deliberate commission and omission, in the case of texts that have a long tradition of transmission and are widely and thoroughly known, would be difficult. Mzi and Qumbi, in particular, seem to hold this view. Even if there is textual corruption associated with interpretation, the actual scriptures can still be relied upon and considered “Books of God.”

For the Koran, the concept of the “Book of God was appropriately used to the scriptures of Jews and Christians even though these may not be from the Muslim point of view “exactly as they were” during the time of Moses or Jesus and are, in some cases, translated from the original languages to other languages other than those who received the revelation.

The wholesale dismissive attitude held by many Muslims in the modern period towards the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity does not seem have the support of either the Koran or the major figures of tafsir. Further research is required to explore the complexities associated with the doctrine of takrif and the social, political and intellectual contexts in which this doctrine developed within Islam. (Prof. Abdullah Saeed - The Charge of Distortion of Jewish and Christian Scriptures, The Muslim World. Vol. 92, 2002 pages 419-436)

## The Dead Sea Scrolls



Although we know the Scriptures were not corrupted must be able to prove this to skeptics. The Dead Sea Scrolls are an essential document to conclusively prove Scriptures that physically existed long before Christ. It would be impossible to corrupt Scriptures before the fact. The easiest way to make clear to Muslims the New Testament is correct concerning Christ is to read the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially the Isaiah scroll. The scrolls have been carbon dated at least four times and every time they were proved to be copied between 107 to 335 years before Christ. Keep in mind the original Isaiah text was written about 730 years before Christ.

While Hebrew is the most frequently used language in the Scrolls, about 15% were written in Aramaic and several in Greek. The Scrolls' materials are made up mainly of parchment, although some are papyrus, and the text of one Scroll is engraved on copper.

In your witness to Muslims you can also impress on them the fact that Isaiah is a Jewish scripture from their holy book, which we call the Old Testament, written centuries before it came to pass. As the Jews have always disowned the possibility that God could have a Son (just as the Muslims do), it is striking to find such predictions in their own texts, where the very divinity of the eternal Son to come is undeniably present in clear prophecy, in view of their denial of what they teach.

This is no interpolated Christian scripture. Two scrolls of Isaiah were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls dating back to before the time of Jesus, yet they include these very same prophecies that could only have had one fulfilment. This also makes clear key Christian text in circulation at the time of Mohammad was verified by a carbon dated text in existence some 800-900 years before Mohammad and 107-335 years before Christ!



The Isaiah text proves the following key points about Christ were known long before his Apostles were in the world.

- ✓ Christ would be born of a virgin
- ✓ Christ would a Son, a God and Father all in one
- ✓ He would be treated poorly by men, yet he would not open his mouth
- ✓ He would suffer and die and be pierced
- ✓ He would be buried in a grave of a rich man
- ✓ He would come to life again; He would be great and honored
- ✓ He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors
- ✓ All (including all Muslims) have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- ✓ Christ's actions take away the sin of all who believe in him



Qumran Hillside Cave 1 Where Isaiah Scroll Found 2016 Author's Photo

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in eleven caves along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea between the years 1947 and 1956. The area is 13 miles east of Jerusalem and is 1300 feet below sea level. The mostly fragmented texts, are numbered according to the cave that they came out of. They have been called the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times.



Qumran Cave 1 Where Isaiah Scroll Found 2016 Author's Photo

The Isaiah text from the Dead Sea Scrolls absolutely describes Christ the God—with this manuscript copy conclusively written at least 100 years before Christ, and more likely this particular manuscript copy dates some 200 to 300 years before Christ—so the Apostles could not have altered this text in any way. Study the passages of Isaiah 7, 9 and 52-53.

### **Isaiah 7 (NIV)**

10 Moreover the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying: 11 Ask for a sign from the Lord your God. Make it either as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven.

12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, nor will I tempt the Lord.

13 Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David. Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. 15 Curds and honey he shall eat at the time that he knows enough to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread shall be forsaken of both her kings. 17 The Lord shall bring upon you, and upon your people, and upon your father’s house, days that have not come from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, even the king of Assyria.”

### **Isaiah 9 (NIV)**

1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

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.

7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

### **Isaiah 52 (NIV)**

13 See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. 14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him— his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness—

15 so he will sprinkle many nations and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

### **Isaiah 53 (NIV)**

1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

11 After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.  
For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

#### The Koran Confirms Jesus Was Real

The Koran confirms the unique beginning and end of Jesus' life on earth. It confirms the historical Jesus, the one recorded in the works of his earliest disciples from his own era, the canonical gospels. It is because he was a pre-existent heavenly being, dwelling in the very presence of his Father and that he was born of a virgin woman. His special origin, from the highest heaven, was the reason for his special birth. It is the same reason for the unique way in which his time on earth ended. He was raised up above the earth, but he did not ascend to the lower heavenly realms – he returned to the presence of his Father above the heavens and sat down on the right hand side of the throne of God himself.

#### The Uncorrupted Gospels Tell the Truth about Christ

The Bible teaches that Jesus was crucified, died and rose from the dead. It was Jesus who ascended far above all the heavens (Ephesians 4:9), while Jesus himself declared 'He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne' (Revelation 3:21). Peter declared, in the first Christian sermon ever preached: 'This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses.

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear' (Acts 2:32-33).

#### Matthew 27 (NIV)

32 As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. This man they compelled to bear His cross. 33 When they came to a place called Golgotha, which means The Place of the Skull, 34 they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He tasted it, He would not drink it. 35 When they crucified Him, they divided His garments by casting lots to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, "They divided My garments among themselves and for My clothing they cast lots." 36 And sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. 37 They put His accusation over His head, which read:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then two thieves were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. 39 Those who passed by insulted Him, wagging their heads, 40 saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked Him, saying, 42 "He saved others. He cannot save Himself. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. 43 He trusted in God. Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him. For He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 Even the thieves who were crucified with Him insulted Him in the same way.

45 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. 46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

47 Some of those who stood there heard it and said, "This Man is calling for Elijah."

48 Immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, filled it with wine, and put it on a stick, and gave it to Him to drink. 49 The rest said, "Leave Him alone. Let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

50 And Jesus, when He had cried out again with a loud voice, released His spirit.

#### Matthew 28 (NIV)

1 At the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And then there was a great earthquake. For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his garments white as snow. 4 The soldiers shook for fear of him and became like dead men.



5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid. For I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here. For He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and indeed, He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him. Listen, I have told you."

8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. 9 As they went to tell His disciples, suddenly Jesus met them, saying, "Greetings!" They came and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

#### Josephus Acknowledged Christ's Crucifixion

The non-Christian Jewish historian Josephus (Antiquities 18: Chapter 3) mentions the crucifixion of Jesus in passing. The passage is judged authentic by most scholars once the obvious Christian annotations (marked here in brackets and italics) are removed:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, [*if it be lawful to call him a man;*] for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher [*of such men as receive the truth with pleasure,*] He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. [*He was the Christ.*] And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, (9) those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; [*for he appeared to them alive again the third day; (10) as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him.*] And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

Removing the later Christian annotations Josephus's work would read as follows:

**Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.**

There is also no doubt Pilate existed. This stone tablet with Pilate's name in the second line was found at Caesarea.



Stone with Pilate's name from Caesarea 2016 Author's Photo

### Conclusion:

The logical conclusion is a good Muslim should follow the Word of God and read the Christian Scriptures which were revealed to the Apostles as physically intact and correct. The wholesale dismissive attitude held by many Muslims in the modern period towards the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity does not seem to have the support of either early Muslim scholars or the Koran. ***The Koran does not say the Scriptures were physically corrupted, but instead shows great respect the Gospels.***

Isaiah 9 and Isaiah 53—exist today on verified copies of the full book of Isaiah—that were written hundreds of years before Christ and the Apostles, and nearly nine centuries before Mohammad. These Old Testament Scriptures confirm the message of the Gospels and make clear Christ was the Son of God, and that he died and rose to live again. All have gone astray—including all pious Muslims. By doing so Christ forgave the sins of all who accept him as a great gift from an all-powerful God. Only God has the power, authority and love to do this. A good Muslim should follow God, read the Gospel and accept his gift.

The Bible is true. Jesus is returning sooner than most people understand.