

Thoughts on Islam

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I. Is the Bible corrupted?

A. No doctrinal variation among manuscripts

First, it needs to be stated that though we have many manuscripts (over 25,000 on the Bible), there is no variation on any major doctrine. This is crucial. The doctrine of the deity of Christ, the death and resurrection of Christ, and salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ is never denied. This means that matters raised in books on this subject have NOTHING to do with the concept of a 'Corrupted Bible'.

B. All condemn those who would alter the Bible

The verses in the Quran that condemn purposeful altering of the Bible are agreed to by all. Notice the condemnation by John in Rev 22: 18-19

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

II. The Bible according to the Quran

A. Never called corrupted.

Second, a central issue to you ought to be what the Quran says about the Bible. Nowhere does the Quran state that the Bible was corrupted. It condemns those who wish to corrupt it by word or deed. We will deal with that issue in another paragraph. For now, let us consider some of what the Quran says about the Bible. I may not quote all the verses (As you know, different translations use slightly different verse numbers. If you have a preference, let me know. I have Pickthall, Shakir, both editions of Yusuf Ali, and Dawood.)

B. The Christians and Jews are called 'people of the Book' in a number of places. (The people are condemned but their book is never condemned. I also would condemn most of what is called Christianity for I go only by the Book as I would wish for you!)

3:69-71—It is the wish of a section of the People of the Book To lead you astray. But they shall lead astray (Not you), but themselves, And they do not perceive! ... Ye People of the Book! Why do ye clothe Truth with falsehood And conceal the Truth, While ye have knowledge? (3:69, 71)

C. This book still existed in Muhammed's time and is regarded as truth (circa 600 AD) as is attested in a number of places in the Quran:

3:84—Say: "We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail; Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets, from their Lord: We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam).

The Quran mentions the Law (Torah), Psalms (Zabur) and Gospel (Injil). It also mentions the prophets, which would have to include their writings. Law, prophets, and Psalms is Jesus definition of the Hebrew scriptures (Protestant Old Testament) in Luke 24:44.

D. The Quran asserts that the above came from God in the following:

- a. LAW—3:2; 6:91, 154; 11:20, 112
- b. PROPHETS—2:130; 3:78
- c. PSALMS—17:57; 21:105
- d. GOSPEL—5:50; 57:27

E. The Quran was given to confirm those things in the Book (Bible or above writings):

35:28 (31 in Yusuf Ali)—That which We have revealed to thee of the Book is the Truth—confirming what was (revealed) before it: For Allah is assuredly—with respect to His servants—well acquainted and fully-observant.

- a. The above would claim that the Quran does not contradict or abrogate the Book! This is very important. (It also would be a problem when the Quran abrogates its own teachings but we will have to leave that to a future letter.)
- b. Those who reject the Book will be punished:

40:72, 73 (70-72 in Yusuf Ali)—Those who reject the Book and the (revelations with which we sent our messengers: But soon shall they know—when the yokes (shall be) round their necks, and the chains; they shall be dragged along—in the boiling fetid fluid; then in the Fire shall they be burned;

- c. This verse condemns those who disobey the Book. Admittedly, there are other verses (many) which condemn those who do not follow the Quran. But, if the two do not agree then one is not of God. Since both assert that the Book is of God and is to be followed, then it is of God no matter what! Think about it. This needs to be answered.

F. The Quran quotes the Bible authoritatively. (We do not quote the Quran as an authority. When visiting with a Muslim, we quote it so that he may see what it says but it is not an authority.) This shows that Muhammed trusted the Bible as an authority from almighty God!

- a. EYE FOR EYE—5:47-49 quoted from Exodus 21:23-25
- b. RIGHTEOUS INHERIT EARTH—21:105 is quoted from Psalms 37:29
- c. EYE OF NEEDLE—7:38 is quoted from Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25

G. There is no question but that Muhammed was aware of a Bible he taught was from God. This was in the seventh century. We have manuscripts of the Bible from many years earlier and many years after and they agree on every doctrine of importance. The notion that our Bible is corrupted but that the Bible Muhammed knew was not corrupted is without any foundation. It is well established that manuscripts survive very well in the hot dry climate of the Middle East. (Indeed some of the oldest manuscripts are from that region.) Where are they? All textual critics (those who study the manuscripts) agree that we have (essentially, doctrinally) what the original writers wrote (called 'autographs').

H. A matter of importance is the issue of, "Who is a Christian?" Many of those quoted by the critics of the Bible are not saved and are not Christians as defined by the Bible! This is crucial to any matter of discussing Christianity. The Bible is very clear that a Christian is one whose heart God has changed and this is manifested by his doctrine and practice.

- a. His doctrine requires that he believe that Jesus is Jehovah (God) and that the only way to be saved is through the death and resurrection of Christ and that he in submission call upon the name of the Lord (Jehovah or God):

Rom. 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile --the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- b. His practice is that which is not dominated by sin and which shows the work of the Holy Spirit in his life:

Gal. 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. 19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

- I. Another matter of importance is the issue of, "Who is a Muslim on whom God looks with favor?" I have a pamphlet entitled, "ISLAM at a glance," and published by the CSUN Muslim Student Association. It lists the Pillars of Islam (the five which I'm sure you know). There is a very compelling question concerning the Slyam.
 - a. Fasting (Slyam): To observe fasting during the month of Ramadan. It is abstention from food, drink, and intercourse from dawn to sunset and also from all evil intentions and desires. ...
 1. The question is, "Has anyone (other than Christ-you might disagree about him) ever gone thirty days without a single evil intention or desire?" I'm sure that in your life the answer is no! I know that in my life the answer is no! The Bible is clear that the answer is no!

Consider the following from Isaiah (whom we both agree was a prophet) as he pondered his own worth:

Isa. 6:3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

2. Look at your own life. Your day by day life. Think of all of the times that you do indeed have an evil intention or desire. My friend, none can measure up to this standard. The apostle Paul, as he pondered his own life wrote:

Rom. 7:14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do --this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God --through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

3. There is no possibility of finding favor with God if we must attain that type of perfection, even if this is only required 30 days of the year. Such a doctrine leaves you with no hope. It is my hope that you will see the absolute necessity of a savior who took our place on the cross of Calvary.

III. A Table of Responses to a Muslim

Your Assertion	Response
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<p>Muhammed is not talking about today's Bible when he talks of the Book of the Jews and Christians. The Bible they had in 600 AD has been corrupted and destroyed.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The textual evidence is quite contrary to this assertion. We have enough manuscripts to conclude with near certainty that we have a text so close to the autographs (what the original writers wrote) that no doctrine is affected by any differences. 2. No other book in all of history is so well attested. 3. The Quran nowhere refers to the Bible as corrupted. Modern Muslims state this but the Quran does not. Here you are at variance with the Quran. (By the way, I am compelled to believe what the Bible teaches even if all modern Christians disagree with me.) 4. The adherents of the Bible are commanded by the Quran to obey the Bible (S 5:68, 47). 5. The Bible is recommended in S 5:44, 46, 48. 6. One can't call a book corrupt without evidence. You keep repeating this assertion but offer no proof or evidence. A Muslim can't call the Bible corrupt without contradicting the plain statements of the Quran.
<p>The Quran is the final revelation and contains some of the earlier scriptures which were lost and interpolated.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The NT claims to be the final revelation so Muhammed contradicts the plain teaching of the Bible. 2. What scriptures are lost. Christ (see following) clearly accepted the Jewish canon of the OT. So, there are no lost scriptures that date prior to Christ. Thus, this is a groundless assertion. 3. The Quran clearly accepts the Bible of 600 AD so such lost scriptures or corrupted scriptures must have been lost or corrupted since 600 AD. 4. Since the Quran clearly accepts the Bible of 600 AD then there is no reason for it to contain material lost or corrupted from the scriptures. Modern Muslims have invented this 'corrupt Bible' theory. The Quran criticizes the interpretation of the Bible not its contents. 5. What does interpolated here mean? Does it mean that the Quran contradicts the Old and New Testaments? You bet it does. But, unless you can prove that there has been the type of corruption that changes doctrine, such contradictions stand as evidence that the Quran is WRONG.
<p>The Catholics and Protestants (you said Christians) say they believe the Bible but have different books.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The only difference between the Bibles is in the Old Testament. All agree as to the content of the New Testament. 2. The Protestants have EXACTLY the same books as do the Jews (Paul has nothing to do with this issue.) When Muhammed applauds the Jews, he must be applauding this Bible for the Jews reject the additions of the Roman Catholic Church. 3. Christ rejected the books which the Roman Catholic Church has in her Bibles. He did this by approving of a Bible whose sections were Law, Psalms, and Prophets (Luke 24:44). This has always been the division of the Jewish Bible (Old Testament). 4. Muhammed refers to these same sections in the Quran (S 3:25; 2:130; 17:57). 5. We conclude based on the Words of both Jesus and Muhammed that the Catholic Bible is absolutely wrong. 6. The reformers refused the Catholic books and returned to the OT of Jesus.

<p>The third Sura claims that they changed the words.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the light of the context that means that they were not obeying what they read but changed it in their interpretation. 2. Any other reading makes the Quran to contradict itself. This not only contradicts your concept of the Quran being inspired but accuses Muhammed of stupidity. Whatever I may think of Muhammed, I know he was extremely bright. 3. If you claim that the words were physically changed, let me ask you which ones. 4. The older manuscripts we have discovered in recent years have only served to validate the contents of the entire Bible.
<p>The preface of the 1971 RSV says that the KJV has grave defects that call for a new translation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The preface to the RSV also states, "The King James Version has with good reason been termed 'the noblest monument of English prose.' ... We owe it an incalculable debt." 2. At no time was the RSV calling the KJV corrupt as you wish to refer to the Bible. 3. I have extensively used both the RSV and the KJV (and the NIV, NASB, NRSV, NKJV, etc.) and can assure you that there is no doctrinal difference worth noting between them. 4. I also own a number of translations of the Quran (Pickthall, Shakir, both editions of Yusuf Ali, and Dawood) and can assure you that there is more difference between these translations than there are between the KJV and the RSV.
<p>Why didn't Jesus write a book?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A number of prophets did not write books—Elijah, Elisha, etc. 2. David wrote most of the Psalms but no full book. 3. All scripture is inspired by God and the scriptures uniformly attest to the fact that Jesus is God incarnate. So Christ wrote it all!
<p>You claim that Renan's history of the people of Israel states that the Jews were divided into two parties—one that kept to the Law and Scriptures and one led by Paul who broke from the customs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Muhammed praises both the Jews and Christians as people of the book. In 600 AD there were no Christians who formally rejected Paul or his writings. If Renan is correct then Muhammed is plain wrong. 2. Paul and all Christians still acknowledged every line called 'scripture' by the Jews. This has nothing to do with the Bible issue. There is not a line of Jewish scripture that is not in my Bibles—all of them.
<p>After a time, many scriptures were destroyed.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No person who knows anything about the text will agree with this statement. 2. In fact, the newer manuscripts that people get excited about are dated a long time before 600 AD. Thus, they could have no impact on the Bible of which Muhammed (and Allah through him) allegedly wrote and loved.
<p>Why do we not fast today?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What you call a fast is never called a fast in scripture. When Jesus (and others) went 40 days without food, it means that he went without food 24 hours a day. 2. Indeed, Matt 4 uses the expression that he fasted for 40 'days and nights' 3. There are no commands in scripture for the believer of today to fast. 4. Those who add commands to scripture are in disobedience to the Word of God.
<p>The Quran and the Bible says that we fast to learn self restraint.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where in the Bible does it state that fasting is to learn self-restraint. 2. Obeying God's commands teaches us self restraint. 3. Fasting was concerned with certain ceremonies of Israel (like the vow) and was important there.

<p>Muhammed has for us the latest scriptures.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Muhammed is in violation of the warning in Rev 22: 18-19, "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." 2. The test of a prophet requires absolute perfection in all that which the prophet states came from God. Read and ponder what God says in Deut. 18:20-22, "But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death. You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him. 3. Isn't it the case that Muhammed admits (still in the Quran—S 22:52-53) that Satan deluded him in the passage about the deities (S 53:20-23)? 4. Doesn't the passage (by Prophet Moses) in Deuteronomy condemn Muhammed at this point? 5. Isn't it interesting that this very passage (by Prophet Moses) is in the context of a passage which Muslims claim foretells the coming of Muhammed?
<p>During the month of Ramadan one must abstain from food, drink, and intercourse from dawn to sunset and also from all evil intentions and desires.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first question is whether any man ever abstains from all evil intentions and desires for 30 days! Not a single author of scripture so claims. Christ is the only one who is called sinless. Even the Quran mentions the sins of Abraham, David and all of the others (with the lone exception of Jesus). The fact is that none (except Jesus) ever lived without sin. 2. The second question deals with the mercy of God. The Bible talks of mercy to those who repent. But, it is mercy that required the death of Christ. Jesus, whom you call a prophet, emphatically stated in Matt. 26:28, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." 3. This is based on a principle stated by Moses, whom you call a prophet, in Lev 17:11, "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life." The animal's blood was temporary but the blood of Christ cleanses men eternally. This is the message of Isaiah in Isaiah 53. 4. To talk of mercy without such is a denial of the justice of God. It is the mercy of God in connection with His justice that required Christ to die for our sins.

<p>The question of 2Sam 24:13 and 1Chron 21:11</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The problem you have raised twice on the possible famine in 2Sam 24:13 and 1Chron 21:11 is resolved by noting that the wording of the two statements is totally different. These were offers of punishment for the sin. There were actually two offers. Why God records one in 2Sam and the other in 1Chron you will have to ask Him. But, he does and there is no conflict when we realize that the first offer was in 2Sam and the final offer in 1Chron. 2. You may not like this answer but it does answer the problem raised and, logically, that is all that is required. Contradictions must be based on what can be absolutely proved! 3. These statements are in the very Bible which Jesus (you call a prophet) used and Muhammed recommended.
<p>You claim you have high regard for the Bible since it has a lot of truth in it.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is a meaningless statement since nearly every book ever written has a lot of truth in it. Books which I oppose totally may still contain some truth. Marx talked of the class struggle. He was right—there is one. His solution was wrong. 2. What condemns a book is not its lack of truth but its containing error. This is the test of truth in Deut. 18 referenced above and in Isa 8:20 and numerous other passages. 3. The fulfillment of prophecy in the Bible stamps it as God's. The Quran fails this test. 4. Consistency with already revealed truth (Isa 8:20) also stamps the Bible as God's. The Quran fails this test as it does not conform to already revealed truth. This is why Christ pointed to the OT as evidence of his truth and mission. 5. This is why the various well documented errors in the Quran are so important. The flood was not in Moses day as the Quran states. Moses was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter not his wife as the Quran states. The list is longer.
<p>The Quran commends men for following the unlettered prophet whom they (Jews and Christians) find in their own Scriptures in the Law (OT) and the Gospel (NT) (S7:157).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no mention in prophecy of the unlettered prophet. 2. Indeed, the major passage used by Muslims (Deut 18) has two major objections to its use: (1) It specifically refers to prophecies given by such a prophet and Muhammed gave none. (2) The NT states absolutely that this passage refers to Jesus. 3. When Law and Gospel are used as in this passage, there is no question that they refer to the Old and New Testaments—the entire Bible. 4. Such a statement is totally meaningless unless there is ultimate validity in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians. This validity you deny.

<p>Muhammed came to instruct them in the Scripture (62:2)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instruction does not require inspiration. It requires study (hard work or diligence) (2TI 2:15 'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.') 2. Why doesn't Muhammed instruct in the scriptures? 3. Where in the entire Quran does he take a passage of scripture and instruct us as to its meaning? 4. Where in the entire Quran does he explain the various offerings of Leviticus? 5. Where does he expound on the sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7)? 6. If the Bible is corrupt, what kind of man is it whose mission is to instruct in a corrupt book? 7. How can Muhammed be said to instruct us in the Bible when he contradicts the Bible as so many places? For example, the Bible (prophet Moses) clearly teaches that Abraham had Isaac on the altar when God provided the lamb. The Quran says that Abraham has Ishmael on the altar. This isn't instruction—it is contradiction.
<p>Muhammed came to sanctify them (62:2). Here, 'them' seems to refer to Jews and Christians.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Bible says that we are sanctified by God not by man. 2. Sanctification requires redemption which the Bible says required a blood offering. 3. This is the basis for the Biblical teaching (which you deny) of the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. 4. What did Muhammed ever do that sanctified anyone? Does this in any way conform to the Biblical teaching of sanctification? (Recall that 'sanctify and teach' are in the same verse in the Quran.)
<p>The claim of knowledge discovered in the future is prophecy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We might have to discuss specifics of this alleged knowledge. The ancients were more right than we often are taught. 2. However, this is not prophecy. Even the Bible's teaching of the earth as a sphere is not prophecy. Science must conform to the revelation of God not the other way around. 3. Human thinking tends is subject to change. God's Word is not subject to change. Hence, we cling to the unchanging Word of God. (This totally contradicts the Quran's teaching on abrogation.)