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<u>Home</u> > <u>Islam and Christianity</u>, A <u>Comparative Study</u> > <u>Chapter 1: Historical Comparison</u> > Christian Leaders Can Change the Bible

Chapter 1: Historical Comparison

A Brief History of the Bible and the Qur'an

The Qur'an is the most sacred book of Islam. It was divine inspiration and revelation by God to Muhammad (S) through the medium of the Holy Spirit, the Archangel Gabriel, about fourteen hundred years ago.

The Holy Qur'an consists of 114 Chapters written in classical Arabic language and it was revealed to Muhammad (S) over a period of twenty-three years.

The first Qur'anic revelation came to him when he was forty years old while he was engaged in his daily meditation somewhere in a cave known as "Hiraa", which is about three miles outside the city of Mecca.

Muhammad (S) was in the state between sleep and wakefulness when he saw a vision of the revelation. The Angel who came in the form of man spoke to him while in the state of vision and consciousness as prophesized and foretold by Isaiah the Prophet, saying: "...For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, read this, I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee, and he saith I am not learned.." Isaiah. 29: 10–12.

Dear reader, this book as foretold by Isaiah, was delivered to one who was unlearned and he was no other than Muhammad (S), the prophet of Islam. That revealed book according to Isaiah was sealed and the inability of the learned one to read that book was due to its strange origin. Isaiah here is that learned one who could not read the Qur'an as it was in the Arabic language while his own language was Hebrew.

The Unlearned in the prophecy of Isaiah was Muhammad (S) who had not attended any reading or writing course in his entire life; since he was unlettered, he also could not read "the Book", but the Lord taught him how to both read and preach that Book to the whole world.

Although, Muhammad (S) himself was unlettered and illiterate in the sense that he had no formal education, he did not lack intelligence that in world history there had been no one among the Prophets or secular leaders who was as successful in his mission as Muhammad (S).

The Holy Qur'an proclaims the oneness of God, denounces idolatry and lays down the basic tenets to guide mankind in their social, religious, economic and political lives. This book does not contain the utterance of Muhammad (S), as the whole Book is an inspiration from God whom Muslims call "Allah" which simply means, "The Creator".

Since Muslims traditionally hold the Arabic language as sacred, their prayers and other religious rituals are conducted and observed in Arabic. This religious tradition of the Muslims has caused delay in the translation of the Qur'an into various major languages spoken in the world.

Now, however, for the past 400 years, Muslims have translated the Qur'an into various languages. Thus, there have been translations of the Holy Qur'an in most of the major languages of the world, including English, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Malay, Portuguese, French and Latin.

The latest information we have is that, apart from the languages already mentioned, translations of the Holy Qur'an in several other languages of the world are soon to be released. This will facilitate Islamic propagation efforts throughout the four corners of the globe.

Authenticity of the Qur'an

Apart from the Holy Qur'an, there is no other book on the face of the earth that has always remained authentic for fourteen centuries, without being distorted or losing its original text and flavor. As Muslims, we can say without fear of contradictions that, there is no doubt about the authenticity of the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an contains nothing but the revelations received by Prophet Muhammad (S) from the creator of the universe.

These revelations came to him in fragments and from time to time. As soon as he received these revelations, he would communicate them to his companions and whom he requested not only to commit them to memory, but also to write them down. His companions wrote down these revelations, under the close supervision of the Prophet Muhammad (S) himself.

The complete Qur'an was committed to writing and memory and was thus preserved physically and in the hearts of hundreds of the Prophet's followers during the very lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (S). There are many famous followers of Prophet Muhammad (S) who wrote the Qur'an in the lifetime of the Prophet himself, among them Ali Bin Abi Talib (a.s), Zaid Bin Thabit (r.a) and Abdullah Bin Mas'oud (r.a). The companions of Prophet Muhammad (S) wrote the revelations that had come to the Prophet on parchments or pieces of leather.

Zaid Bin Thabit by the order of Abu Bakr (r.a) later collected all of these revelations, which were written

on parchments and leather. After comparing them all with what the followers of Prophet Muhammad (S) had learnt by heart, he compiled a copy of the Qur'an in the form of a book. The Qur'an had already been written and existed on different objects such as animal skins, clay jars, the bark of trees, wooden materials etc.

The copy which was compiled by Zaid was called "Mus'haf' (bound leaves). Mus'haf is a copy of the Holy Qur'an in which its genuineness and correctness are absolute; thus there is no doubt or error that can be attributed to this Book by anyone who knows the history and the accuracy of the Holy Qur'an in all its dimensions of life.

During the time of the third Caliph, Othman, the Muslim empire expanded and there was a need to have more copies of the Holy Qur'an, at least in every major city of the Muslim world. In this era, seven copies of the Qur'an – confirmed by those who memorized it and the Scribes – were prepared and sent to different parts of the vast Islamic world. Out of these seven copies one is still in existence in Tashkent, sent out in the first century of Islam nearly 1,400 years ago. Tashkent is a city in the former republic of the Soviet Union.

The Czarist government of Russia had made a facsimile reproduction of the Qur'an and despite the enormous time gap; it was found that this copy was completely identical with other texts in use all over the world.

On the contrary, what we see in Christianity is that out of the 24,000 different manuscripts and versions of the Bible, which the world of Christendom boasts of, no two among them are identical! This is a clear evidence to prove the existence of tampering with and corrupting of the Bible – a book believed by Christians to be inspired by God.

In his article entitled the "Ten Unique Features of Islam" which appeared in Mahjubah Islamic Magazine Vol. 16 No: 11, Mir Mahmoud Daawati, under the heading "The Unchanged Qur'an" made the following remarks: "Of all religious books, the Holy Qur'an has remained unaltered, unedited, unchanged. Whether non–Muslim scholars accept the Qur'an as the Word of God or as the work of the Prophet Muhammad (S) is immaterial (in this regard). What is important (here) is that, (all non–Muslims thinkers) are unanimous in the view that its language and its wording have remained in its original form, and this is unique to Islam; as all other declared divine books have been edited, rehashed and revised by their votaries with the passage of time".

The followers of the other respective religions do not deny this fact but they claim that these changes and alterations were made by saintly persons under divine inspiration. In this respect, the Western world has adopted a double standard; on the one hand, it prefers the original works of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to the interpretations and translations of Muslims and non–Muslims thinkers. On the other hand, when it comes to the Old and the New Testament of the Bible, it accepts all translations and tampering as "divinely inspired".

In addition to this, no scholar, Eastern or Western, Muslim or non–Muslim, has ever cast any doubt on the purity of the text of the Holy Qur'an in the manner that they have come, openly, to cast doubt on the authenticity of the Bible with scientific evidences. Even a hostile critic of Islam and the Holy Qur'an as Sir William Muir says about the Qur'an: "there is probably in the world no other book which has twelve centuries with so pure a text" (Now fourteen centuries).1

Muhammad is a Real Historical Figure

A brief comparison between Prophet Muhammad (S) and Jesus Christ will show that Muhammad (S) was a real historical figure, more so than Jesus Christ as regard to the existence of documented facts. Accounts of the Prophet's life have been recorded in many books and religious documents and there are no contradictions concerning either the genealogy or biography of Prophet Muhammad (S). As for Jesus, even the Gospel Writers have written strange things concerning him with regard to both his historical existence and his biography!

The man whom the Christians call "Jesus Christ" was born and lived 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem when Israel was under the occupation and colonization by the Roman Empire, at a time when that Empire was at its prime and had many eminent historians and writers who could recording every development within the occupied Israel.

In fact Jesus was born at a time when the Roman Empire was a force to be reckoned with and had full control of information within their territories. Despite such situation, none from among these writers and historians mentioned the birth of a man called Jesus Christ, his mission and life and his crucifixion or his being raised from the dead except one Jewish historian known as Josephus who made only a casual reference. In fact, this is considered to be a historian's addition, which was made many years after the birth and the mission of Christ!

As the birth of Jesus Christ was not recorded by any known historian in his lifetime, some modem western critics doubt the very existence of Jesus and think that Christianity is a revival of the Old Egyptian cult of Isis–Osiris on whom the names of their religious leaders and Prophets are nowhere to be found except in their own religious documents.

Contradictions Surrounding the Personality of Jesus Christ

We Muslims believe that a man whom the Christians call Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary miraculously, by the power of the Almighty God, without any sexual intervention. Thus he has no genealogy as he does not have an earthly human father. One of the greatest errors, which are found in the Bible, is the act of attributing different and contradictory genealogy of male ancestors to Jesus Christ – a man who did not have this human paternal ancestry.

We read in the Gospel according to Matthew 1:18, that Jesus was a son of David through his son

Solomon, but in the Gospel according to Luke. 3:23, Jesus is the son of David through his son Nathan. An interesting point is that if both Solomon and Nathan are two sons of David, then how could it be possible for Jesus to be born through two different ancestral lineages?

Another strange and confusing thing is that in both genealogies, Jesus Christ is described as being the son of Joseph! Again, a man who has no father has been assigned Joseph as his father! Also, the genealogy of Jesus Christ given in Matthew 1:18 contains 27 names of his supposed ancestors but the genealogy of the same Jesus Christ given by Luke. 3:23 contains 42 other different names of his supposed ancestors! Another anomaly can be found when we read that the father of Joseph in Mathew. 1:16–18 is Jacob while that in Luke. 3:23 is Heli. Was Joseph the son of Heli or son of Jacob?

The significant mistakes and errors condoned by the Bible writers on the account of the genealogy and biography of Jesus Christ is clear evidence that the Bible is not an inspired Word of God. Had it been a divinely inspired Book, God would have removed all of these human errors and mistakes especially when these errors surround this very important personality of the New Testament. This will simply mean that the biography of Jesus was not even known to the so-called writers of his life account. Therefore, the Western critics of Christianity have all the reason to believe that Jesus was a fabricated personality and that there never existed such a man with that name and identity in Israel.

Apart from Jesus himself, his disciples also were not clearly known and there was much confusion among the Gospel writers concerning their correct names. I wonder where the Holy Spirit was at that moment, which these Gospel writers were not taught or reminded of the correct names of the said twelve Disciples of Christ.

In Matthew.I0:2 and Mark.3: 16, the twelve names of the disciples of Jesus are given as follows: (1) Simon the Canaanite (2) Simon called Peter (3) Andrew (4) James Son of Zebedee (5) John (6) Philip (7) Bartholomew (8) Matthew (9) Thomas (10) James son of Alpheus (11) Labaous called Thaddeus (12) Judas the Escariot.

However in the Gospel according to Luke 6:14, the names of the disciples of Jesus Christ are as follows: (1) Simon called Peter (2) Andrew his brother (3) James the son of Zebedee (4) John his brother (5) Philip (6) Bartholomew (7) Matthew the tax collector. (8) Thomas (9) James the son of Alpheus (10) Simon called Zelotes (11) Judas the brother of James (12) Judas Iscariot. Here we are given names of the disciples different from those given to us by Matthew 10:2 and by Mark 3:16.

Again, we as thinking humans must ask ourselves: "... were these disciples unknown to the Gospel writers or were they unknown to the Holy Ghost..." We cannot reply by saying that these disciples were unknown to the writers of the Gospel, as the Christians believe that these very writers of the Gospels were divinely inspired by God. If that were the fact, how would it be possible that we still see and read conflicting accounts on the same matter addressed in the Bible?

This is Not a Reality

- (1) Paul says: "Jesus appeared to the twelve when he arose from the dead" 1 Cor. 15:5; but Matthew says: "Jesus appeared to the eleven after he rose from the dead" Matt. 28:16.
- (2) According to John, Jesus said: "though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true" John 8:14, but in the same Gospel he contradicted what he had said earlier by saying: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." John. 5:31.
- (3) In another place, Jesus says: "those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition (Judas Iscariot)" John. 17:12, but in another statement Jesus is reported to have said: "that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, of them which thou gavest me have I lost none" John. 18: 9.

What are these contradictory statements from Jesus? Of course, this could not have been Jesus as he never contradicted himself, but it remains for Christians to tell us now why all these contradictions appear in the book believed to have come from God?

- (4) It seems again that Jesus had contradicted himself when he had included Judas Iscariot in that divine blessing saying: "... ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel " Matthew. 19:28. This would mean that Judas Iscariot is one among those twelve disciples who would be given the highest positions by the Almighty God on the Day of Judgment but the same Jesus contradicting his above statement by saying: "The Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe unto that man (Judas Iscariot) by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born". Matthew 26:24.
- (5) John reported Jesus to have said that: "God is with me; The Father has not left me alone" John. 8:29, but Matthew reported him to have said, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me" Matthew. 27:46.
- (6) In the Gospel according to John we read that Jesus started his mission of preaching even before John was put in prison. We read, "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the Land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized. For John (the Baptist) was not yet cast into the prison "John. 3:22–26.

But in the Gospel according to Matthew, we are told that; ". Now, when Jesus had heard that John was cast in the prison, he departed into Galilee, from that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand". Matthew. 4: 12–17. This would simply mean that Jesus had started his mission of preaching after John the Baptist had already been imprisoned, and this is contrary to what we have just read in the Gospel of John. Why do all these contradictions exist in the book believed to have been inspired by God?

(7) Now, where is the Native place of Jesus Christ? In John 4:3 and John 4:43–45, we are made to

understand that Jesus was a native of Judea, and so according to Jesus. "A Prophet is not to be honored in his native place". Thus we can assume here that, Jesus was not honored in Judea, but according to the Gospel of Matthew, (Matthew. 13:54–58) we understand that Jesus was a native of Galilee, and so, he was not honored in Galilee and not in Judea as in the Gospel of John.

- (8) In the Gospel according to Luke, (Luke. 24:50–51), we are told that, "Jesus was carried up into heaven at Bethany." but in the Acts. 1:12, we understand that, the "ascension of Jesus to Heaven took place at Mount Olivet..."
- (9) Jesus concealed his plan from his brothers, this concealment lead him to lie, and so broke the commandment "thou shalt not lie". According to the Gospel, he said to his brothers; "Go to the feast yourselves; I am not going up to the feast, and after his brothers were gone, he also went up, not publicly but in private..." John. 7:8–10.2

The History and the Origin of the Bible

(1) The name "Bible" came from the Greek word "Biblia" which means "the books". It is the sacred scripture of the Christian religion, comprising the Old and the New Testaments and Apocrypha. The term Apocrypha means "doubtful" and it refers to more than fourteen non-canonical books of the Old and the New Testament of the Bible that, having been found doubtful, were not canonized in the Bible by the Biblical Scholars.

These non-canonical books of the Old Testament were written in Greek in the first and second century (B.C.). They did not appear in the Hebrew Version of the Bible although they were found in the Septuagint and Vulgate. Some of these Biblical Apocrypha books are Tobit, The Wisdom of Solomon, Susana and Bel and the Uragon. But these Apocrypha were accepted by the Roman Church at the Council of Trend in 1546 as canonical, correct and sacred books.

(2) Although the Apocrypha are regarded by the Catholics as canonical, correct and sacred, in the Anglican Church, the Apocrypha are read only for instructions but not for the establishment of doctrines and dogmas. The term Apocrypha of the New Testament is also applied to the numerous unauthenticated writings of the early Christian era, e.g. the Epistle of Clement, the book of the "Shepherds of Hemas", the Gospel of Barnabas, and the Gospel of Thomas etc.

The Old Testament, nearly all of which was written in Hebrew and was compiled by many human hands between 850–300 BC and during its period of writing, incorporated many oral traditions and religious customs of the Jews and other neighboring nations of earlier date. Until the discovery of the "Dead Sea Scrolls" which is the earliest manuscript in Hebrew dated only from AD. 895, the earliest translation of the Old Testament was the Alexandrine Greek Septuagint (250–100 BC, and St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate of AD 342–420). The latter is the version accepted as authentic by the Roman Catholic Church, and was translated into English in the Rheims–Douay Version of 1582–1610. The first complete English Bible was

the one known as "The Coverdale Edition" of 1535.

(3) The Old Testament was divided by the Jews into the Law, the Prophets and the Sacred writings; it was then edited under the influence of the priestly tradition of the 5th century BC, with its emphasis on the Jewish idea that they were "chosen children of God" as in Genesis to Numbers. Many of the books of the Bible were written by different hands in different periods; e.g. there are two contradictory accounts of 'the creation' in Genesis and Isaiah indicating that these were authored by at least two or three persons probably of the 8th, 6th and 5th centuries BC, respectively.3

This is what has been said in the Holy Qur'an on the question of writing the books with the hands without any permission from God:

"... Woe unto those who write the book with their own hands and then say, this is from God, so that for that, they might gain a little benefit, and woe unto them for what their hands have written, and woe unto them for what they have unlawful earned ... " (Holy Qur'an, 2:79)

Roughly three quarters of the Bible is commonly known as the "Hebrew Scriptures" and the Bible itself can be divided into three groups; the first group comprises the 17 historical books from Genesis to Esther; the second group is made up of 5 poetic books from Job to the Song of Solomon and the third group is composed of the 17 Prophetic books that range from Isaiah to Malachi.

For about 1,500 years after the advent of Jesus Christ, there was not an English Bible in the world. The first translation of the Bible into English was done in 1525 AD by Tyndale, the second English translation by Coverdale in 1535 AD, the third translation – which was known as "The Great Bible" – was published in the year 1539 AD.

The fourth translation in the year was in 1540 AD. The fifth English translation known as 'the Geneva Bible' was translated in the year 1560 AD. The sixth English translation or what was commonly known as "The Bishop's Bible" was translated and published around 1575 AD by Bishop Parker.

When King James of England acceded to the throne in 1603 AD, the authenticity of the Bible was being questioned and many scholars doubted its originality. Hence the King appointed forty scholars to correct errors contained in The Bishop's Bible" version and in 1611 AD they published a new Bible which was named after as "The Authorized King James Version".

"Then woe to those who write the Book with their hands, and then say: 'This is from Allah', to traffic with it for a miserable price! Woes to them for what their hands write, and for the gain they make thereby ... " (Holy Qur'an, 2:79)

According to the Jehovah Witnesses, the same "Authorized King James Version" which had been checked through by forty scholars on the order of King James has about 50,000 errors and according to some Christian sources, the Authorized King James Version has about 20,000 errors. Although it

contains all of these errors, this very Bible was viewed and considered authentic for about two hundred and fifty nine years (259 years).

In 1870 AD, the Church appointed a special group of Christian Biblical Scholars of the highest eminence to remove those mistakes and errors that had remained in the Authorized King James Version. These Scholars did their job and as usual, they claimed that they had managed to remove all of those errors, which were in the English Bible.

In 1884, when the Europeans held their historical meeting which was aimed at dividing Africa and Asia among themselves as new colonies which would then give them the raw materials to develop Europe, these Christian scholars were also busy publishing a new version of the Bible suitable to be distributed and propagated in these new Europeans colonies especially those in Africa. This new Version that was published in the year 1884 AD was known as "The Revised Standard Version" of the Bible.

Coincidence

The Europeans began to aggressively raid and invade the African continent in search of slaves in about 1611 AD, the year King James authorized and released his version of the Bible to the world. Here, we have the year 1884 AD, in which an important conference was held in Berlin to determine who was going to colonize Africa and other parts of the world, whereas in the same year the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was ready to be dispatched to the new European colonies! Where else if not Africa!

In another booklet, I shall deal with subject of the European's barbarism and their manipulation of the Bible in achieving their economic, social and political goals in Africa, in particular, and in what is known by them as the 'third world' in general.

What about The New Testament?

The remaining 27 books of the New Testament are known as "The Christian Greek Scriptures" for they were originally written in Greek and not in Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus Christ. These 27 books are arranged basically according to their subject matter, and because of this, they are also divided into three parts:

- (a) The 5 historical books, which are the 4 Gospels and the book of the Acts.
- (b) The 21 letters and Epistles addressed to various nations and communities.
- (c) And the book of Revelation.
- (1) The New Testament was first written in Greek. It begins with the three synoptic Gospels, which record the acts and sayings of Christ; the earliest of these Gospels was written by Mark from the dictation of St. Peter in AD 60. The Gospels according to Matthew and Luke were written a little later and

were based partly on Mark. The fourth Gospel is that of John. Then follows the Acts of the Apostles, which recounts the mission and expansion of the Church through the work of Peter, Barnabas, Paul and Stephen, etc.

- (2) There are also various epistles to Churches, mostly written by Paul who claimed to be a Prophet of the Gentiles, and to be inspired by Jesus in his remarkable vision while on his way to Damascus as recounted in the book of Acts. Also in the New Testament, there is the book of Revelation which is believed to be written in accordance with the vision of John, but the earliest copies and texts of all of these books of the New Testament were first written on Greek papyri of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the codex Vaticanus and codex Sinaiticus of the 4th century and then the Vulgate.
- (3) The world has witnessed various attempts by the Church to produce different versions of the Bible in more modern language with the ancient errors and obscurities corrected! Among the versions produced for the sole purpose of correcting those ancient errors that existed in the Bible are; the Version of Moffat which was published in 1913 AD, the Version of Ronald Knox which was published in 1955 AD, the American Revised Version which was published in 1952 AD and the British New English Version of the Bible, published in 1961 AD.

The Nature and Composition of the Gospels

We come across many 'inspired words' of Jesus in the Gospels which were composed between 40 and 80 years after his departure, on the basis of some earlier documents, which are now lost! Biblical Scholars have identified these earlier lost documents as:

- (I) "Q" (German Quelle = Source) a lost document (originally) in Aramaic language, which reached the writers of the Gospels only in a Greek translation.
- (2) Urmarcus = Primitive Mark, which is an earlier draft of Mark's Gospel written on the basis of Peter's discourses about Jesus.
- (3) "L" which is a document that contains the collection of reports about Jesus Christ used only by Luke, the disciple of Paul.

We have said earlier that the first Gospel written was that of Mark. It is said to have been written in Rome at least forty years after the so-called crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Gospel as we have it today is considered to be an expanded version of Urmarcus, which is Mark's writings, and his own understanding of the life of Christ. However, Papias, an influential Christian writer of the early period said that: "The elder John used to say, Mark having become Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered".4

It was not in the exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ for he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him, but subsequently attached himself to Peter who used to frame his teachings to meet the needs of his hearer, sand not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses.5

The Gospel according to Matthew was written in Greek at Antioch about 90 CE (Christ Era). The author of this book made use of at least two lost documents –"Q" and "Urmarcus", and no independent scholar regards this Gospel as the work of Matthew, the Apostle of Jesus. Rather, they are of the view that if Matthew had composed anything, it must have been only the same "Q" document mentioned earlier.

It is believed that someone unknown (and not Matthew) had undertaken the liberty to author the present Gospel, which is attributed to Matthew with the help of the original material of this Gospel found in document Q.

In this regard, another Christian Bible scholar, C. J. Cadoux says about the Gospel of Matthew:

"But a close examination of the treatment he gives to his borrowings from Mark shows that he allowed himself great freedom in editing... his material in the interest of what he regarded as the rightful honoring of the great Master.

The same tendency is often visible elsewhere when he is producing "Q" or providing matter peculiar to himself. Anything, therefore, strictly peculiar to "Matthew" can be accepted as historical only with great caution ... ". 6

According to scholastic research, the New Testament in general, and the four famous Gospels in particular are not the inspired words of the Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and earth. Some of these Gospels were written just for the purpose of achieving the desires of the flesh as some of them were written for the kings and the Roman governors of that time. This fact can be easily verified from the testimony of Luke himself.

Luke, while explaining the reasons for writing his gospel, has astonished the whole world by admitting the fact that he was not inspired by God, as assumed by Christians. But according to Luke himself, he was only persuaded to write his gospel after seeing many people doing so and that he had wanted badly to write this gospel for His Excellency Theophilus and not for the Jews or the Gentiles.

Luke has clearly confessed, saying: "For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" Luke I:I- 4.

Thus, the Gospel according to Luke was put in writing in about 80 AD and this gospel was actually written for His Excellency Theophilus, a Roman Emperor, as we have seen and not for poor Indians, poor Chinese, poor Africans and many others who live in the so-called "third world countries".

However, today it is not strange to see a poor black man from Africa or a poor Asian man crying for divine salvation while putting his trust in the very gospel of Luke, which was written neither for his salvation nor for his prosperity!

Luke – who was a friend and a travel companion of Paul – was not inspired by God when writing his gospel. He instead used and copied from at least three documents believed to have been lost; two of those documents were identical to those used by Matthew in his Gospel while the third document was only peculiar to himself.

As Luke wanted to align his Gospel with the Pauline doctrines, he was more liberal with his sources compared to the author of the Gospel according to Matthew. All of this simply signifies the fact that these writers were not inspired by God. Rather, they copied one another or used those documents, which were lost as has been described earlier.

After all these it is difficult to explain how both the Old and the New Testament were put in writing as the Bible. According to many authentic sources available today it is the works of many writers and scribes who had different human perspectives.7

Fortunately enough, the Bible itself bears ample testimonies on its own corruption and bears witness on its distortion by the pens of the scribes and those authors who wrote it. The Bible, witnessing its own corrupted texts says: "How can you say we are wise and the law of the Lord is with us behold, the false pen of the scribes turned it into a lie." Jeremiah. 8:8.

As for their using of their tongues to forge lies and make them a part of the scripture, the Bible confessed saying: "Behold, I am against the Prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith". Jeremiah.23:31, and this is similar to what the Holy Quran had foretold 1,400 years ago about the habit of the Christian scribes saying:

"There is among them a group who distort the Book with their tongues: (As they read) you would think it is a part of the Book, but it is not a part of the Book, and they say, 'that is from Allah', but it is not from Allah: it is they who tell a lie against Allah, and (well) they know it! (Holy Qur'an, 3:78)

The Scripture Has Been Contaminated

The Bible is not a perfect book; history proves that many people have tampered with the Biblical verses to suit their own desires and this is what has been foreseen by Jeremiah the Prophet many years before the coming of the Christ. We read: "for you have perverted the words of the living God" Jeremiah. 23:36.

This is why 'Muslims believe that both the Old and the New Testaments were temporary and did not last in their purity. Allah, the Almighty God, would ultimately reveal the Final Testament, which will eventually replace the Bible.

This Final Testament is the Holy Qur'an that was revealed nearly 600 years after Paul had proclaimed this reality in his own words, for this reality was not hidden to Jesus Christ and all of his disciples. Paul and John have mentioned this fact in their books saying: "for we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" 1 Corinth. 13:9.8

The meaning of "which is perfect" here is the same book which was foretold by Prophet Isaiah and also seen through vision by John as explained in the book of Isaiah and in the book of Revelation respectively which say:

- "...And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned..." Isaiah. 29:11–12.
- ...And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong Angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worth to open the Book, and to lose the seals thereof?..." Rev. 5:1–2.*
- "... And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he sat his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth..." Rev 10:1–2.9

It is not strange that in the Bible there are books found in today's versions of the Bible, which have been declared as Apocrypha. Since Apocrypha means doubtful, we do not know how these doubtful books entered the Holy Bible, which is said to be an inspired Book of God! There are many books that have been declared as Apocrypha by the Protestants and finally expunged from the King James Version of the Bible without the permission of God. These books are: 1. Tobit 2. Judith 3. Esther 4. The Wisdom of Solomon 5. Baruch 6. 1st Maccabees 7, 2nd Maccabees etc.

There are also Apocryphal books in today's English version of the Bible and I wonder how these books could find their way into the Book that its writers (according to Jimmy Swaggart) believe to have gained special support from the Holy Ghost? The following are also the Apocryphal books which Christian scholars are ashamed to declare as authentic or attribute them with the Bible: 1. Sirach 2. The Letter Of Jeremiah 3. The Prayer of Azariah and the song of the three Young men 4. Susana 5. Bell of the Dragon 6. 1st. Esdras 7. 2nd Esdras and 8. The Prayer Of Manasseh.

The term "Apocrypha" refers to the doubtful Catholic seven books that were rejected by the Protestants who removed them from their King James Version of the Bible. Even though this is the reality, the Christians still continue to claim that John. 14:25, predicts the coming of the Holy Spirit after Jesus Christ who will teach them all things.

We see that the Apocryphal books remained in the very Bible for about sixteen hundred years. Yet we

see that the same Holy Spirit did not warn the Christians during that long period of time that their Bible contained Apocryphal books.

As the King James Version of the Bible was authorized in 1611 AD, this would simply mean that the Christians have been kept in deception without the intervention of the Holy Spirit for all those long years. Who then, shall we believe now? The Catholics whose Bible contains 73 books or the Protestants whose Bible contains 66 books?

It is written in the Scripture that, ".. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book..." Rev. 22:18–19.10

Testimonies of Christian Scholars

The following testimonies from Great Biblical scholars show that there are serious defects in the Bible and that it is beyond doubt that the Bible that we have today has been tampered with by many human hands and hence is now a distorted form. It is therefore a wrongful to regard the Bible as the Word of God.

Here are several testimonies by some Biblical scholars. We read in the commentary of the Bible by Hom published in 1882 that: "... the facts relating to the composition of the Gospels which have reached us from the ancient historians of the Church, are so uncertain and so slender that no definite conclusion can be drawn from them. Even the best authorities seem to accept as Gospel truth the speculation current in their time, and, out of sheer reference, those who come after accept their authority. The narratives, partly false and partly true, pass from one writer to another and after a time begin to be treated as though they were above criticism...".11

Eusebius wrote that; "... the first Epistle of Peter is genuine. His second Epistle has never been part of the Holy Book, but has been current in reading ..., the Epistle of James and the Epistle of Jude, and the second Epistle of Peter, and the second and third Epistle of John have ALL been held in great doubt. It is not known whether these were composed by the writers of the Gospels or by others with their names ..." 12

The Bible scholars continue to say that; "what is certain is that, by the middle of the fourth century, Latin Biblica, MSS exhibited a most confusing variety of text, caused at least in part by revision from later Greek MSS as well as by modifications of the Latin phraseology. This confusion lasted until all the Old Latin texts were supplanted by the revised Version of Jerome (383–400 AD) which was undertaken at the request of Pope Damascus and ultimately became the Vulgate of the Western Church ...".13

Now, the testimony from Encyclopedia Britannica says: "... Yet, as a matter of fact, every book in the New Testament with the exception of the four great Epistles of St. Paul is at present more or less the subject of controversy, and interpolations are asserted even in these...".14

All of these doubts and controversies and speculations are the result of the Bible being a manmade book. Men, throughout history have written these small books that have been compiled together and are now known as "The Holy Bible" by its sympathizers worldwide.

The practice of publishing and revising the Bible by adding and omitting other texts from its original texts has cost Christianity too much. This practice had also resulted in the Christian world having several Bibles, which have different contradicting texts. The Holy Qur'an foretold this situation among the people of the Book, Jews and Christians by saying:

"... And woe to those who write the book with their own hands and then say; this is from Allah, to traffic with it for a miserable price, so woe to them for what their hands do write, and woe to them for what they earn thereby ..." (Holy Qur'an, 2:79)

Christian Leaders Can Change the Bible

In Christianity, the leaders of the Church have the authority to change the Bible. This has been happening throughout the history of the Christian World. The changing of the words in the Bible by the Church leaders is clear evidence that proves the corruptions and interpolations in the Bible, the book believed by many to have been inspired by God.

For instance, the Revised Standard Version of the Bible has thrown out the main texts of the last twelve verses of the Gospel according to St. Mark, which deals with the ascension of Jesus Christ. By reading the Revised Standard Version of the Bible published by the Christian leaders in 1952, you will be shocked to see that, Mark 16 ends at verse 8 instead of verse 20 as it was in the Authorized King James Version. Here in the Revised Version, twelve verses have been thrown out of the Bible. But let us ask ourselves this question. Did God permit all these tampering with the Biblical texts?

In the King James Version, we read that, "....though he slay me yet I trust him..." Job. 13:15, but in the Revised Standard Version, we read, "...he will slay me, I have no hope..." Job. 13:15 and in the Good News Bible, it is written, "...I have lost all hope, so what if God kills me..." Job. 13:15.

We have seen how Biblical scholars and Church Leaders have changed the Bible and the texts of the Bible without any permission from God. This itself is one of the greatest defects of the Bible which both the Church and Christians worldwide must be aware of. This is why we Muslims cannot accept the Bible to be the Word of Almighty God. 15

- 1. Ref: "The life of Mohamet", Introduction, by Sir William Muir; page 18.
- 2. Perhaps, the modern Western critics of the Bible have the right to deny the existence or mission of a man named Jesus

since his whole life, according to the Bible, is full of contradictory accounts, with regards to his personality, his mission, his words and statements, biography and his ancestry and geographical position as given in the Bible.

- 3. Ref: "The new Illustrated Encyclopedia of Knowledge", published by "Spring books", London in 1966, page 68.
- 4. The above remarks by Papias about the character of Peter on framing his teachings to meet the wants and pleasure of the people and his listeners is a well–established fact of his nature. Jeus detected this nature of Peter and he rebuked Pete's character by saying: "... Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men " Matthew. 16 23.

Was Peter a Satan? Was he seeking the favor of men rather than that of his God? If he was such, how could it then be possible for the New Testament which carries some words and thoughts of a person with such qualities, be an inspired book of God?

- 5. Ref: "The Ante-Nicene Fathers", Edited by Roberts and Donaldson, Vol. I page: 154-155.
- 6. Ref: "The Life of Jesus" by C. J. Cadoux page: 14- 15, published by Penguin Books.
- 7. Ref: "The New Illustrated Encyclopedia of Knowledge", Published in 1966 by Spring Books; page 67-68.
- 8. The coming of the perfect book here does not mean does not mean the Bible since the Bible was already in existence when Paul forteld about the next coming of a perfect book; the perfect book referred to here is the Holy Quran which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) about 600 years after Jesus Christ.
- 9. The book foretold by John and Paul cannot be the gospel of Jesus Christ as the gospel was already with them at that time. This the book foretold by Isaiah, John and Paul is none other than the Holy Qur'an which was revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad (S) peace be upon him and his family members.

As the Bible had been corrupted by many hands, we find that there are many books in it which are not regarded as authentic; this is why it was necessary for God to reveal another book after the Bible to be the final perfect and absolute testament for mankind. This book is the Holy Qur'an which has remain, throughout history unchanged and undistorted by human hands.

There is only one version of the Holy Qur'an. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an is not like the Bible which has many different and conflicting versions; for example, the Catholic version of the Bible has 73 books while the Protestant version of the Bible has only 66 books.

- 10. If it is blasphemy to take out even a little from the Bible, then who is blaspheming? Those who added seven more books to the Bible from the very beginning, or those who expunged them out of the Bible afterwards?
- 11. Ref: "Commentary of the Bible" by Hom, Vol. 4, Part 2, Chapter 2.
- 12. Ref: "History Of the Church" by Eusebius; Vol. 4, Chapter 3 &25.
- 13. Ref: "Encyclopaedia Biblica", Vol. 4 page, 4993. What is important here is to note the absolute certainty that in the middle of the fourth century, the Latin copy of the Bible was in a most confused state. This confusion was the result of a comparison with the Greek copy and of a change in Latin terminology. These confusions remained until Jerome's revised version was prepared under the order of the Pope between 383 and 400 AD the version which came to take the place of the old Latin version among the Christians.
- 14. Ref: "Encyclopaedia Britannica", Vol. 3, 12th Edition, page, 643.
- 15. The distortion of the biblical text and interpolation carried out by Church leaders is clear evidence which proves that the bible is not the original word of God. Had it been the absolute word of God, the Church leaders would have never thought of revising its texts save to corrupt or take from it.

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