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Lecture 1: The Bible in a Nutshell

The purpose of this lecture is to establish the fact that it is just as easy to prove Islam using a proof-text method of appeal to the Bible as it is to prove any of the forms of Christianity that use that method. It is not the intention to suggest that the proof-text method is sufficient or even valid. In a systematic review such as this, it is necessary to note all convolutions.

The desire to show to what extent the Bible is the common property of Middle Eastern religions, at least on some level, leads to the necessity of approaching the text from a proof-text point of view as well as from more sophisticated methods.

Before approaching the specifics, a pilot project that seeks to establish whether basic Islamic issues are to be found in the Bible is in order. If they cannot be found, then it is of no use to take the trouble of further examination. The specific issues chosen for this task are those fundamentals known in Shi'ite Islam as the roots of faith.

We have already examined the Sunnite pillars of faith in some detail. Rather than going into such detail at this point for the roots according to Shi'ite Islam, we shall merely make a brief mention of each one. However, some of them are amplified by related issues that appear important because of Christian doctrine.

These roots of faith are five. The first is the oneness of God. This is amplified here by texts relating to the belief that God does not incarnate, that there is no salvation in the son of man, and that God is changeless. The second root of faith is the justice of God. The third root of faith is prophethood. This has already been examined in general in the light of many texts above, but here the particular reference to Muhammad is mentioned. This will form the focus of latter discussion as well.

The principle of divine guidance is the fourth root. This is amplified by a Biblical reference to the word Ali. The final principle of faith is the Day of Judgment, which has also been dealt with in detail above, but is here amplified by its relationship to the gospel or message of Jesus (as).

I have given a transliteration of the proof-texts underlining the significant portions. This is especially necessary in the two or three cases in which I have radically disagreed with the commonly used translations.

There is only one God.

Psalms 86:10 (Hebrew) atta Elohim levaddekha. For you are great, and do wondrous things: you are God alone.

Isaiah 45:5 (Hebrew) ani YHWH we-en 'odh zulathi en elohim: a-azerkha welo yedha'tani. I am the LORD, and there is no other, there is no God beside me: I girded you, though you have not known me.

That one God is just, and the only Saviour.

Isaiah 45:21 (Hebrew) Haggidhu wehaggishu af yiwwa'atzu yakhdaw: mi hishmia' zoth miqqedhem me-az higgidhah halo ani YHWH we-en odh elohim mibbal'adhi el tzaddiq umoshia' ayin zohathi. Tell it, and bring them near; indeed, let them take counsel together: who has declared this from ancient time? who has told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no other God beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

God is not a man or the Son of man.

Numbers 23:19 (Hebrew) lo ish el wikhazzev uven adham weyithnetham: hahu amar welo ya'ase wedhibber welo yeqimenna. God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: has he said so, and shall he not do so? or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Notice that according to the text God is not a human being, not “the son of man,” not any “person” or “persons” at all, not one person nor three persons.

The Son of man cannot save you.

Psalms 146:3 (Hebrew) al tivtkhu vindhivim: beven adham she-en lo theshu'a. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

God does not change.

pasa dosiv agayh kai pan dwrhma teleion anwyen estin katabainon apo tou patrov tw n fwtwn par w ouk eni parallagh h trophv aposkiasma James 1:17 (Greek) pasa dosis agathe kai pan dorema teleion anouthen estin katabainon apo tou patros ton foton par o ouk eni parallage e tropes aposkiasma. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

If God does not change, as this Bible passage and several others maintain, then God does not incarnate, since incarnation requires change. God does not change into anything, not even a man.

God reveals His message to humankind through His servants the prophets.

Amos 3:7 (Hebrew) ki lo ya'ase adhonay YHWH davar ki im gala sodho el 'avdhaw hannevi-im. Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he will reveal his secret to his servants the prophets.

Many people will not believe the message of God through Muhammad (as).

Psalm 106:24 (Hebrew) wayyim-asu be-eretz Hamda: lo he-eminu lidhvaro. Indeed they despise the land of Muhammad, they do not believe his word.

The biased translator wishes to translate the name Muhammad, thus making “pleasant land” instead of “the land of Muhammad.” But this is not possible, because the sentence goes on to say “his word.” The possessive pronoun is masculine, showing Hamda to be a proper masculine name, rather than a feminine common noun as the ending might suggest. There are a number of such names in the Bible, feminine in form but masculine in meaning.

God made Abraham (as) a guide for all nations, in the following words spoken to him.

Genesis 12: 3 (Hebrew) wa-avarkha mevarakhekha umqallelkha a-or: wenivrekhu vekha kol mishpekhoth ha-adhama. And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Moses (as) prayed for a divinely appointed guide to come after him.

Numbers 27: 16 (Hebrew) Yifqodh YHWH Elohe harokhoth lekhol basar: ish 'al ha'edha. asher yetze lifnehem wa-asher yavo lifnehem wa-asher yotzi-em wa-asher yevi-em: welo thiheye 'adhath YHWH katz-tzon asher en lahem ro'e. Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

The principle of a divinely appointed leader goes back earlier than Moses (as), but here we see Moses

(as) praying on behalf of one such figure.

Moses (as) invoked the name of Ali (as) in speaking to the Pharaoh.

Exodus 8:5(9) (Hebrew) wayyomer Moshe lefar'o hithpa-er 'Ali lemathay a'tir lekha wela'avadhekha ul'ammekha lehakhrith hatzfarde'immimmekha umibbattekha raq baye-or tish-sha-arna. And Moses said to Pharaoh, Glorify Ali: when shall I intreat for you, and for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, that they may remain in the river only?

The translation which says "Glory over me" simply does not make sense.

The people of Israel sang about Ali (as) as they walked in the wilderness.

Numbers 21:17 (Hebrew) az yashir yisra-el eth hash-shira hazzoth 'Ali ve-er 'enu lah. Then Israel sang this song, Ali (the Exalted one) is a well (of water); sing to it.

The translation that says "Rise up, O well" only fits a surrealistic painting. In reality, wells do not fly.

David (as) prophesied the coming of Islam.

Psalms 29:11 YHWH 'oz le'ammo yitten: YHWH yevarekh eth 'ammo vash-shalom. The LORD will give strength to his people; the LORD will bless his people with Islam.

The word Islam is cognate with the Hebrew word for "peace." It is the proclamation of reconciliation and peace, not only between God and humankind, but between one nation and another, one family and another, one individual and another. It also reconciles the opposing "parts" into which humankind would divide the impartial God into the one true God without parts and without limitations.

Islam, meaning peace, is peace in every possible sense.

God will forgive those who pray towards His house, according to the petition of Solomon (as).

1 Kings 8:30 (Hebrew) weshama'ta el tekhinnath 'avdekha we'ammekha yisra-el asher yithfallu el hammaqom hazze: we-atta tishma' el meqom shivtekha el hash-shamayim weshama'ta wesalakheta. And listen to the supplication of your servant, and of your people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear in heaven your dwelling place: and when you hear, forgive.

Forgiveness depends on the grace of the one true God alone, with nothing added, no sacrifice human or otherwise. It is offered to those who turn in prostration toward Him, repenting and asking forgiveness.

God will take vengeance on the wicked and reward His worshippers on the day of judgement, as He promised Moses (as).

Deuteronomy 32:41–43 (Hebrew) im shannothi beraq kharbi wethokhez bemishpot yadhi: ashiv naqam letzaray we limsan–ay ashallem. ashkir khitz–tzay middam wekharbi tokhal basar: middam khalal weshivya merosh par’oth oyev. harninu ghoyim ‘ammo ki dham ‘avadhaw yiqqom: wenaqam yashiv le’atzaw wekhifer adhamatho ‘ammo.

41 If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. 42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.

Of nearly one hundred texts mentioning the Gospel, only one actually tells us what the message of the Gospel contains, the Gospel in a nutshell.

Revelation 14:6,7 kai eidon aggelon petomenon en mesouranhmati econta euaggelion aiwnion euaggelisai touv kayhmenouv epi thv ghv kai epi pan eynov kai fulhn kai glwssan kai laon. legwn en fwnh megalh fobhyhte ton yeon kai dote autw doxan oti hlyen h vra thv krisewv autou kai proskunhsate tw poihsanti ton ouranon kai thn ghn kai thn yalassan kai phgav udatwn.

Revelation 14:6–7 (Greek) kai eidon angelon petomenon en mesuranemati ekhonta evangelion aionion evangelisai tus kathemenus epi tes ges kai epi pan ethnos kai fylen kai glossan kai laon: legon en fone megale fobithete ton theon kai dote avto doksan oti elthen e ora tes kriseos avtu kai proskynesate to poiesanti ton uranon kai ten gen kai ten thalassan kai pegas ydaton.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The Gospel in a nutshell is three commands: Fear God (that is, do as God commands instead of

conforming to what the neighbor thinks), glorify God (that is, recognize God alone as the source of all good things and give thanks to Him), and pray to Him in prostration. The Gospel gives two explanations for these commands: everyone is going to be held accountable to God in the judgement, and God is deserving of worship and obedience because He is the Creator of all things.

Obviously it is necessary to go beyond a mere proof-text method. However, the experiment of proof-texting shows that Islam is clearly as capable of being established on the basis of proof texts as any tradition that has ever appealed to texts as evidence of its system of doctrine and practice.

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