

~ISLAM--Does Islam teach the same way to God that Jesus did?~

Chapter of the women: *This is what Islam teaches about the Lord's crucifixion. They deny it!*

But for that they broke their compact, and for their misbelief in God's signs, and for their killing the prophets undeservedly, and for their saying, 'Our hearts are uncircumcised,'- nay, God hath stamped on them their misbelief, so that they cannot believe except a few,- and for their misbelief, and for their saying about Mary a mighty calumny, and for their saying, '*Verily, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of God, ...but they did not kill him, and they did not crucify him, but a similitude (substitute) was made for them.*' And verily, those who differ about him are in doubt concerning him; they have no knowledge concerning him, but only follow an opinion. *They did not kill him*, for sure! nay, God raised him up unto Himself; for God is mighty and wise!

Verses about Jesus from the Qur'an: "That they said (in boast), '*We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah'; but they killed him not, nor crucified him. Only a likeness of that was shown to them.*' And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge. But only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. Nay, Allah raised him up unto himself, and Allah is exalted in power, wise. And there is none of the people of the book but must believe in him before his death; and on the day of judgment he will be a witness against them." (*Surat Al-Nisa'a 4:157-159*)

Chapter of the Cave: *This is where the Koran teaches the sun sets!*

And they will ask thee about DHU 'I Qarnain, say, 'I will recite to you a mention of him; verily, we established for him in the earth, and we gave him a way to everything; and he followed a way until *when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a black muddy spring* and he found thereat a people.'

The Seven Deadly Questions of Islam

1. 'Your Bible has been corrupted.'

It is fruitless to try to share the Gospel with a Muslim who thinks that the Bible has been corrupted, since even if he was persuaded to reject the Qur'an, he would never accept the implications of the Bible until he was sure that it was authentic. Bear in mind that a Muslim believes every word of the Qur'an was written by God and brought to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel; it is no wonder that they see the Bible, written by over 40 men including a prime minister (Daniel), fishermen (Peter), a doctor (Luke) and prisoners (Jeremiah, Paul) over almost 1500 years as human and fallible in comparison. To compare the Bible with the Qur'an is therefore not to compare like with like. However, as we shall see, it is logically impossible for the Bible to have corrupted.

We begin with what the Qur'an says about the Bible; many verses actually confirm that it is God's Word and has not been changed. Here are only a few for example: *sura 5:43* 'How come they to you for judgment when they have the Torah, wherein are contained the commandments of God?'; *sura 5:44* 'We [God] did reveal the Torah, wherein is guidance and light...'; *sura 5:46* 'We sent Jesus...confirming that which was revealed before him in the Torah, and We bestowed on him the Gospel wherein is guidance

and light...'; **sura 5:68** '[Jews and Christians] have no guidance until you observe the Torah and the Injil [Gospel]'; **sura 4:136** 'Believe in God and His messenger [Muhammad], and the Scripture which He revealed to His messenger [the Qur'an] and the Scripture which He revealed aforetime [the Bible]'; **sura 10:91** 'If you [Muhammad] are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto you, then question those who read the Scripture (that was) before you'; **sura 15:9** 'We reveal the Reminder, and Lo! We truly are its Guardian [ie the Bible is guarded against corruption by God]'; **sura 6:34** 'There is none to alter the Words of Allah'; **sura 10:64** 'There is no changing of the Words of Allah.'

If the Bible was corrupted, was this before or after Muhammad? If before, why does God tell Muhammad to refer to a corrupted Scripture for guidance, and why does he say of the Torah and Gospel 'wherein is guidance and light' rather than 'wherein there used to be, before they were corrupted'? If after, why does the Muslim not accept the Bible, since current translations are all based upon manuscripts that predate Muhammad?

If it was corrupted, was this by Jews or Christians? Since neither were on speaking terms with each other (sura 2:113 'The Jews say the Christians follow nothing (true) and the Christians say the Jews follow nothing (true), yet both are readers of the Scripture', also see 5:82), how could they agree to change every single Bible identically? Why was there no record of this happening, and why did nobody try to stop it or hide authentic Bibles? The New Testament books were widely distributed as soon as they were written - the 'Jesus Papyrus' of Matthew 26, found in Magdalene College and recently dated to AD 68 was found in Egypt. Presumably Matthew was still alive when it was written - so why did he not try to correct it if it had been tampered with? Why did the Christians not remove embarrassing stories like Peter's denial of Christ (Matt 26:69-75) or Paul and Barnabas' disputation (Acts 15:39)?

What is the Bible's testimony of itself? 'All Scripture is God-breathed...' (**2 Tim 3:16**); Peter describes Paul's writings as Scripture since some people maliciously distort his teaching 'as they do the other Scriptures' (**2 Pet 3:16**). 'The Law was given through Moses' (**John 1:17**) and Jesus said 'Scripture cannot be broken' (**John 10:35**). His words are 'spirit and life' (**John 6:63**) and He has the words of eternal life (**John 6:68**). How could anybody dare to add or remove portions of Scripture when faced with the warning in **Rev 22:18-19** 'If anybody adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anybody takes words away from this book of prophecy God will take away his share in the tree of life and the holy city....'

Significantly the early Muslim commentators (*eg. Bukhari, al-Razi*) were all agreed that the Bible could not be changed since it was God's Word and several centuries passed before Muslims claimed that the Bible had been changed, when they carefully read the stories in the Qur'an and noted that they were different from those in the Bible. The verses used to support corruption in the Bible have been totally misused by Muslims. For example **sura 2:42** 'Confound truth with falsehood, nor knowingly conceal the truth' was said to have come to Muhammad after two Jews were brought to him for judgment, having committed adultery. The other Jews wanted to test him to see if he, as a prophet of God, knew what was in the Torah. So he asked for a Torah and got a boy to read the punishments for disobedience. When the boy reached Lev 20:10 ('if a man commits adultery with another man's wife....both must be put to death') the Jew accused of adultery slammed his hand over the verse so the boy could not read it (*source: Abu Dawood 4449 (Arabic) or 4432 (English)*). A far cry from corrupting the text of the Bible. Other verses say that a group of Jews used to listen to Scripture then change it - but (i) it was only a group, not all the Jewish people around the world let alone in Mecca; (ii) they must have had the original genuine copies in order to have been accused of changing it; and (iii) they did not change the written text, they simply told Muhammad that it said things which were not there, in order to mislead him.

2. 'What about the predictions of Muhammad in the Bible?'

This is a strange question for someone to ask if they believe that the Bible has been tampered with. It is said that there used to be many prophecies about the coming of Muhammad in the Bible but after he came, Jews and Christians deleted as many as possible. Since our translations are based on manuscripts copies centuries before Muhammad, this cannot be true but, the myth persists. What about the 'prophecies' which were not deleted?

sura 61:6 says 'Jesus, son of Mary said, "I am indeed the Messenger of God to you, confirming the Torah that is before me and giving good tidings of a messenger who shall come after me whose name shall be Ahmad.'" Before you reply, 'But nowhere in the Bible does Jesus talk about such a person!' you will be told to look at John 14:16 'I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you...' The Greek word for Counsellor is parakletos (literally, one who draws alongside, as in a defense barrister in a court of law). Muslims claim that John originally wrote periklytos which apparently is Greek for 'Praised One'. Not a single manuscript of John 14:16 or 14:26 (where parakletos is used again) has periklytos however and one wonders how such a downright lie ever came to be invented. In the context of John 14, the Parakletos is to be with the disciples for ever (v16); He is the Spirit of Truth (v17) who is neither seen nor known by the world, but who lives inside believers; and He is the Holy Spirit, who reminds the Christians of all that Jesus taught them (v26). ***Could any of these things relate to a physical human being, Muhammad?***

The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran with tens of thousands of holy ones' (Deut 33:2) and 'God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran' (Hab 3:3). Muslims claim that Moses came from Sinai, Jesus from Seir and Muhammad from Mount Paran, and the tens of thousands refers to one of his battles fought with ten thousand soldiers! Not only is the context clearly God and nobody else, but the interpretation is based upon a nineteenth-century geographer who apparently identified Paran with Mecca and Teman with Medina. That Paran is actually 1000km away from Mecca can be seen from the chronicles of the Israelites' wanderings, eg in Deut 1:1, also see Num 13 - how could the twelve spies leave Paran (v3), go straight into Canaan and explore the whole country (v21-22), cut some grapes (v23) and bring them back to Paran fresh (v27) in a mere 40 days if they were travelling a total of 2000km?

[The Jews] asked [John], 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.'" Although Muslims reject the testimony of John that Jesus was divine (v1, 2, 14, 18, 34, 49) they hold that the Prophet referred to is Muhammad. The origins of this Prophet go back to Deut 18:15 ('The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your brethren') who is clearly identified to be Jesus in Acts 3:22. Of the differences between Moses and Muhammad, not the least is that Muhammad was not Jewish and yet the Prophet will be from their own brethren (this excludes descent through Ishmael, Isaac's half-brother, Gen 16:12 versus 17:19). Moses is far more comparable to Jesus than to Muhammad: both were born in poverty and there were plots to kill them in infancy (Ex 1:15-16, 22 v. Matt 2:13); yet both were rescued (Ex 2:2-10 v. Matt 2:13). Both were prepared for a period of forty units of time (forty being a biblical unit for preparation): Ex 7:7 v. Matt 4:1); both liberated their people from slavery (Exodus v. John 8:32-36); water was subject to them both (Red Sea Ex 14:21 v. Sea of Galilee Matt 8:26); both spoke to God face to face (Ex 33:11 v. Matt 17:3), both their faces shone (Ex 34:29 v. Matt 17:2); both died because of sin (Num 20:12 v. Is 53, John 1:29, 10:15).

3. 'Christians worship three gods' - and 'God has no son.'

The Trinity is almost invariably the Muslim's greatest stumbling-block to the Gospel and diverts numerous conversations away from more productive issues. At the start it must be said that there is only one being who can fully comprehend the nature of God, and that is Himself. However there are many

clues in the Bible to His triune character.

The Qur'an is mistaken in its portrayal of the Trinity as Mary and Jesus being two separate gods besides Allah: 'O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?' (*sura 5:116*); 'How can He [God] have a child, when there is for Him no wife?' (*sura 6:101*); 'They indeed have disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary' (*sura 5:17*); 'Far be it removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son' (*sura 4:171*).

This portrayal of Christians as believing that God took Mary as His wife and she and their baby Jesus became two separate gods is as offensive to Christians as it is to Muslims, although there is evidence that heretical sects banished to Arabia were teaching this at the time of Muhammad (known as the Maryamia or Cholordians).

Unfortunately when we say 'Jesus is the Son of God', although we mean 'He is the eternal uncreated Word of God, equal in every respect and fully divined', the Muslim hears in his mind 'God had sex with Mary and she gave birth to Jesus'. It is vital not to say that Jesus is the Son of God to a Muslim - this is not compromising the Gospel, since there are many ways of affirming His divinity without using the convenient but totally misunderstood phrase 'Son of God', as we shall see below.

Helpful pointers include *sura 2:177* in which the Arabic ibni-sabili literally means 'son of the road' but is translated 'wayfarer' - just as Jesus is not literally a physical son of God, so a wayfarer is not literally fathered by a road. *sura 85:22* is held by the majority of Muslims (Sunnis) to mean that the Qur'an is uncreated, existing with God since the very beginning. If God's word the Qur'an is eternal and uncreated, why is it a problem that Jesus, God's Word, should be eternal and uncreated? Indeed there cannot be a time when God's Word has never existed since it is intrinsically a part of God. Interestingly *sura 4:171* says Jesus is a Word from God and His Spirit, yet elsewhere the Spirit (Arabic ruhim minh) is identified as being the very essence of God Himself (*sura 2:253* 'We supported [Jesus] with the Holy Spirit', 12:87, 58:22).

In the Qur'an Jesus has attributes that no other human being has: He was born of a virgin (*sura 21:91* - who was Jesus' father according to the Qur'an?) and was sinless (*sura 19:19*). As a child He made birds out of clay and breathed life into them yet the gift of life is something that only God can give (*sura 3:49* - this story first appeared in the heretical Gospel of Thomas in the second century AD). He heals men who were born blind, cures the leper and raises the dead; He has knowledge of what is hidden in men's houses (*sura 3:49*). He has the power to intercede (*sura 3:45* - 'one of those brought near to Allah' yet only God can intercede (*sura 39:44*); He can forgive sins (*sura 61:12*), and He alone knows the hour of Judgment (*sura 43:61*)!

A Muslim will point out that in the Bible Jesus never explicitly says that He is God - ***but He does in John 8:58 where He states that: "before Abraham was, I am (ego eimi in Gk. which means the everlasting one--cf Exodus 3:14)***. However, evidence is presented and He allows people to make up their own minds. The Bible categorically denies that there is more than one God (Deut 6:4 'The LORD your God is One' - this verse is quoted by Jesus in Mark 12:29; see also Jam 2:19). Yet the Hebrew word etched for one implies a plurality, eg: it is used in Gen 2:24 ('the two shall become one flesh'). God speaks in the plural eg: 'Let Us make man in Our image' (Gen 1:26) yet there is no 'royal we' in Hebrew. In Gen 1:2-3 we see all three Persons of the Trinity in action, God, Word and Spirit, and in Matt 28:19 Jesus names these three Persons.

Jesus has the power not only to heal but to forgive sins, and since we sin against God alone, who has the

authority to forgive sins except God (Mark 2:7)? Who, other than God, can demand that our love for Him must be so exclusive that all our other relationships seem like hate in comparison (Luke 14:26)? Since God instigated the Sabbath, only God can be the Lord of the Sabbath, yet Jesus uses this title for himself (Mark 2:28). Jesus passes judgment on our eternal destiny (Matt 25:32, John 5:22) and is with us forever (Matt 28:20). He said that He was the good shepherd (John 10:11) yet God is our shepherd (Ps 23:1). He is the light of the world (John 8:12) yet God is our light and our salvation (Ps 27:1) He applied the holy name 'I AM' of God (Ex 3:14) to Himself (John 8:58) - and was stoned for blasphemy. At His trial, when asked by the High Priest if He was the Son of God (a Messianic title, but not automatically one that claimed divinity, as Jesus pointed out in John 10:34-36), Jesus replied, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.' (Mark 14:62). ***This was a direct reference to Dan 7:13-14, in which the Son of Man is given all authority and all peoples worshipped Him.*** It was this unambiguous claim to divinity that was deemed sufficient grounds for sentencing Jesus to death. Although Muslims have a problem accepting that Jesus really did die (see Deadly Question 5) there can be no denying that Jesus was, at the very least, sentenced to die. When a Muslim says that there can be no Trinity, he is limiting God, since God is able to do all things (*sura 5:17, 19*). In fact in *sura 27:8* we read that God appeared to Moses in a burning bush (cf. Ex 3:2). If God can lower Himself to the extent of appearing as a fire, surely He can humble Himself to appear as a man (Phil 2:7) - after all, a human is much greater than a fire. The question then becomes not, How could God become a man, but why did He?

4. 'Why the atonement? - God forgives me if I confess my mistakes.'

In Islam, sins are mistakes which you do, and by saying sorry to God, He will forgive you. In addition, our good deeds take away our bad deeds (*sura 11:114*) - but if a man rapes a woman then builds a mosque in penitence, how can this restore honor to the woman? It is little incentive to do good. If I am convicted of driving over the speed limit, I cannot escape punishment simply because I have never had a parking ticket.

Sin dishonors the King of Kings and, since we are God's slaves, (*sura 19:30*) we must respect Him and accept punishment for dishonoring Him. It does not matter whether we have committed many or few sins - a small stone is just as likely to sink in the sea as a big one because they both share a stony nature. In the operating theatre it does not matter whether the scalpel has been contaminated by one germ or millions--it is no longer sterile. The penalty for sin is death (Ezk 18:4, Rom 6:23) and God cannot lie (Num 23:19, Rom 3:4). Everything on earth must perish, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (I Cor 15:50); only God lasts for ever (*sura 55:26-27*). Atonement is therefore necessary because we are not good enough to earn a place in Heaven by our own merits.

God has decreed that the life of an animal is in its blood (Lev 17:10) and the institution of animal sacrifices is a visual aid to understand atonement - without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22). The question remains, how can the blood of a perishable lamb redeem a human, who is also perishable (Heb 9:9, 10:1,10:3) - perishable cannot inherit the imperishable. The only blood which truly has power to take away sins is imperishable blood, and, if God appeared in human flesh, He would have imperishable blood, which alone, is sufficient to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). There are two important clues in the Qur'an to this. In *sura 5:27* we learn that Abel's sacrifice (of blood, Gen 4:4) was accepted by God whereas Cain's sacrifice (vegetables, Gen 4:3) was not sufficient. Secondly in *37:107* we read that Abraham's son was 'ransomed by a momentous sacrifice', referring to the substitution by God of a ram instead of the boy in Gen 22:13-14. Why was it necessary for God to provide a substitute to save the boy's life? More importantly, why was the ram described as momentous (Arabic al-Azzim - this is one of the ninety-nine Names of God in the Qur'an). How could a ram be greater than a human being, unless it was a representation of an altogether greater sacrifice to come, that of Jesus

Christ? (*Note: the Qur'an maintains that it was Ishmael, not Isaac who was to be sacrificed.* When discussing this story with a Muslim do not get sidetracked onto the issue of which of Abraham's sons was involved since this is a red herring. It is far more important to ask why the sacrifice was needed, and why a ram is described by a word that is a title of God Himself.)

5. 'Jesus was never crucified.'

In denying the Crucifixion Islam denies the very reason that Christ came to earth! This belief depends entirely on one infamous verse, *sura 4:157*: [The Jews said] "We slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, Allah's messenger' - they slew him not, nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain". However, it begs several crucial questions, not least is how Muhammad could claim that a historical event did not happen six centuries after it was recorded by many eyewitnesses. That Jesus died on a cross and rose from the dead is beyond question from the Gospels ('When they had crucified Him' (Matt 27:35); 'With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last' (Mark 15:37); 'When they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs' (John 19:33); 'The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you were looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here....He has risen from the dead' (Matt 28:5- 7)) The last passage is especially important for Muslims, who pay particular attention to things that angels say to humans.

Extra-biblical evidence, for the reality of the Crucifixion, includes the pagan writers: *Tacitus* ('Christus suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius') and *Lucian* the Greek ('Christians worship the crucified sage'), the Christian apologist *Justin Martyr* referred to the 'Acts of Pontius Pilate' (now lost, but must have chronicled the death of Jesus to have been referred to) and Jewish writers *Josephus* ('Pilate condemned Him to be crucified and to die....') and *Babylonian Talmud* ('He was crucified on the eve of the Passover'). Early Christians used the Lord's Supper and the Cross as symbols of their Master's sacrifice (I Cor 11:23) and were never in doubt about the reality of the Crucifixion.

Conventionally, Muslims have maintained that a substitute man was crucified, but this opens a can of worms. Usually it was said to be Judas Iscariot (impossible since he committed suicide, Matt 27:5; Acts 1:18) or Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21, impossible since he came from Libya and would have looked very different from Jesus). Why was it even necessary to involve an innocent substitute? Why did the crucified man not cry out that a mistake had been made? Why did Mary recognise him as her Son (John 19:26)? Why would God deceive the disciples, who, the Qur'an tells us, were inspired by God and believed in Jesus (*sura 5:111*), into thinking that Jesus had died and risen again, since this made them realise that Jesus truly was divine ('declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord' (Romans 1:4-5)). If Jesus was not God, this deception would have caused the disciples to worship another god, which is the greatest sin (shirk) known to Islam. How could God deceive godly men into committing the most ghastly sin imaginable - He is not a deceiver! A further problem is that if the man only appeared like Jesus, perhaps the Qur'an was not even given to Muhammad but to a man who looked like him. Finally, if the substitution theory was correct, if I committed adultery, I could escape judgment by claiming that I was actually sleeping with my wife, but she merely looked like another man's wife, and appeal to the Qur'an for a divine precedent.

The important thing about these criticisms and others is that they have been made by Muslims - particularly the medieval scholar Al-Razi, who wrote the 'definitive' commentary to the Qur'an and is perhaps to Islam what Luther is to Christianity. Since even senior Muslims have problems with *sura 4:157*, what can we say? The Qur'an talks about Jesus' death in other places as a historical event, e.g. *sura 3:55* 'Allah said, 'O Jesus! I am taking thee and causing thee to ascend unto Me' and *sura 5:117* 'I [Jesus] was a witness of them while I dwelt among them, and when Thou took me Thou was watcher over me'.

The Arabic word for 'take' (ta-waffa) in these verses means 'death' in every other place in the Qur'an where it occurs, e.g. referring to the death of Muhammad in *sura 10:46* ('...or whether We cause thee to die...'). In *sura 19:15* God says to John the Baptist 'Peace on him the day he was born and the day he dies, and the day he shall be raised alive' and in *sura 19:33* Jesus says, 'Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised to life'. Since we know that John the Baptist has died (Mk 6:14-29), surely Jesus must have done so to speak in this way.

Sura 3:169 says 'Think not of those who are slain in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are living', meaning that the intended effect of those who killed people in God's way was not achieved, as martyrs were remembered more as a result of their death than for their life. *Sura 8:17* says that 'it was not you Muslims who slew them, but Allah did it' referring to a battle the Muslims fought and reminding them that God was sovereignly in control of the victory. Finally, even the Qur'an admits that it is not impossible for Christ to have died - 'Who can do anything against Allah, if He had willed to destroy the Messiah son of Mary?' (*sura 5:17*). The most consistent explanation of *sura 4:157* in the light of all these other verses is that the Jews were unable to boast that they had killed Jesus because God was supremely in control in allowing His Son to die on a cross!

6. 'The Qur'an contains scientific statements which prove that it was inspired by God.'

It is maintained that there are certain scientific processes described in the Qur'an which were not known at the time of Muhammad and their presence proves that the Qur'an was divinely inspired. Verses have been taken out of context and the translations twisted to try to prove these points. In addition standard textbooks written by Western scientists have been republished in Saudi Arabia with passages from the Qur'an inserted into the text at certain points to give the impression that the Qur'an is accurately describing something which was not discovered until fairly recently. The result is that most people take these claims at face value, since they do not know enough either about the true meaning of the Arabic or about possible sources of the scientific 'facts' in Muhammad's day.

Examples of these claims include verses which talk about rain falling, and others which say that there is water underground - conclusion - the Qur'an is describing the water cycle. A comparison of verses in the Bible shows that the same ideas were around long before Muhammad. Another is a verse which claims that mountains are like tent-pegs and prevent the earth from moving. Geologists are quoted as saying that mountains have 'roots' below the ground that hold the earth in place, when in reality far from preventing earthquakes, mountains are actually built up as a result of seismic activity.

Perhaps the greatest amount written by Muslims in this field concerns the development of the human embryo. Many verses describe how we originate from a drop of semen which gushes forth (*sura 53:46*) from 'between the backbone and the ribs' (*sura 86:7*). Muslims claim that the totally false idea that sperm is produced somewhere in the region of the backbone refers to the site of embryological development of the testes which is close to the kidneys - although there is no possibility of this interpretation in the context. In fact the Greek physician Hippocrates taught 1000 years before Muhammad that semen passes through the region of the kidneys and spine. Other verses say that we develop in four stages - a drop of semen, a blood-clot, a piece of chewed flesh and a stage in which bones are clothed with flesh (*sura 22:5*, *sura 23:13*). In trying to identify precise points in human development that these stages relate to, Muslim scientists have totally overlooked the fact that Galen, writing at Pergamun in Turkey (Rev 2:12) in AD 150 claimed that humans go through these four stages of development. Other examples could be given from the Qur'an and the *Hadith (sayings of Muhammad)* which have been twisted to try to show them saying things which have only recently been discovered. In every single case it has been conclusively demonstrated that not only were these things originally taught by the ancient Greeks, but that they were actually well known to the people in Arabia at the time of Muhammad. ***Far from proving that the Qur'an is divinely inspired, they provide further evidence that it had human origins.***

7. 'Look at all the depravity in Christian society - Islam is pure.'

In fact, the depravity is largely due to large numbers of people rejecting Christ, but many Muslims think that all Westerners are Christians, just as we are tempted to say that all Arabs are Muslims when there are many who are only culturally Muslim.

But why stop at Western society? One could argue (sensitively) that there are as many problems in Islamic societies as there are in Christian societies, except that these are often overlooked or hidden. For example, of the countries at war or undergoing civil unrest, almost all of them are Muslim. Corruption in Islamic countries is rife. The position of women is far more restricted than in Britain. Under Islamic law if a woman is raped she must bring four witnesses to testify to the crime in order to bring a case. If she claims she was raped but cannot produce four eyewitnesses not only is the case thrown out, but she could be flogged or even stoned to death for having effectively admitted in public to committing adultery. When statistics of violent crimes in the West are compared with those in Muslim countries and found to be much higher, is it because they do not occur in Muslim countries or that they do but people cannot produce the necessary witnesses? One could argue that polygamy was never part of God's sovereign plan and it is impossible to fully take care of more than one wife (Gen 1:27; 2:24; Deut 17:17; I Cor 7:2; I Tim 3:2). Yet the Qur'an allows up to four wives (*sura 4:3*) and not only did **Muhammad have at least nine wives, he used to sleep with all of them in one night (Bukhari vol 7, Hadith 142)**. Christians are commanded to love our wives as Christ loved the Church and gave His life for her (Eph 5:25,33) whereas the Qur'an commands men to beat their wives if they do not submit to them (*sura 4:34 - Arabic word literally means scourge or beat hard*). One of Muhammad's wives, **Aisha was only seven when he married her**, and another, Zainab was originally the wife of his adopted son but was forced to marry Muhammad when he fell in love with her.

Many more examples could be given but these can have the effect of building barriers rather than bridges. It is more productive to show the teaching of Jesus, to live it out in front of your Muslim friend and to ask him what would happen to society if everybody followed His priorities. When answering any of these questions try to avoid being distracted on issues of minor importance and keep looking towards the Cross, upon which our salvation depends. A genuine Muslim enquirer will have many questions but most of these are red herrings and prevent him from hearing about the good news of salvation through Jesus' atoning sacrifice.

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