

GOD'S OVERLOOKED PROMISE TO ISHMAEL

THE UNTOLD CHAPTER BESIDES ISAAC'S COVENANT



AYMAN ALHASAN

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BESIDES ISAAC'S COVENANT**

AYMAN ALHASAN

And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. *(Genesis 17: 20)*

Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation. *(Genesis 21:18)*

The angel of the Lord also said to her, 'I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count. *(Genesis 16:10)*

I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring. *(Genesis 21:13)*

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Thank you and God bless

Dedication

To the children whose anguish was witnessed while faithful hearts looked away:

May God awaken our hearts to behold them through His eyes,
and remind us that no claim of His plan can set aside His command to love our neighbor.

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.”
—Proverbs 31:8



MOTHER'S STORY



My name is Ayman Alhasan. My mother was born in Jerusalem, and my father was born in a town located approximately forty miles south of Nazareth. When I was very young, my mother shared a story from when she was about ten years old. Every day just before sunset, her mother would take her and her five sisters out of their home, up a nearby hill, and into the bushes. The girls wore their pajamas and had to bring their pillows, a quilt, some clothing, and the best walking shoes they had. No oil lamps or any other lights were allowed. They pitched camp in a place where they could view their home in the distance. As it got dark, they all had to keep very quiet. After making sure the children were all asleep, my grandmother would raise her head whenever she heard the slightest noise, check the house, and then lie back on her pillow, crying and quietly sobbing¹.

All the girls had to wake up at dawn. After packing their belongings, they would race downhill back to their home. After about two weeks, my grandfather returned. On that very day, they packed their things into light cloth sacks, locked the house, and walked away with their sacks in hand. "Don't worry about your homework; you'll make it up when we return home," my grandmother said. Neither my grandmother, nor my mother, nor her sisters, nor any of the other hundreds of thousands of Palestinian families fleeing at the time knew that this would be a decades-long journey of suffering with no return. This exodus marked the beginning of the Nakba, a tragic chapter in which over 700,000 Palestinians were uprooted from their homes. They were driven by the terrifying threat of midnight reprisals from merciless killers who would massacre everyone—baby, child, woman, or man—just as they had in Deir Yassin, only two miles from my grandfather's home.

The tears no one saw, the silent fear my grandmother endured, and the hardships my mother and her family underwent, touched me profoundly. Throughout my youth and teen years, I could not escape feeling for the silent suffering of the weak and helpless. At twelve years old, I rarely missed the world news on TV. When in bed after watching a story of human suffering somewhere in the world, I could not escape the excruciating thought that at that very moment, while I was about to fall asleep, someone was either being violated or was on the verge of being victimized as they pleaded for mercy. Since I was in no position to help, I felt that, at the very least, I owed the victims consideration for their plight at that moment. "You are not alone; someone cares and is thinking of you," I used to think. As I

¹ When I was about forty, I asked my mother about this story again. She said her mother took the sisters out of the house right before sunset and returned in the morning because she feared for their lives. The details, however, come from my childhood imagination.

imagined their condition, I couldn't hold back my tears. The most agonizing thought was of terrified children who had lost their parents and were wandering around looking for compassionate and comforting love. My heart continues to break for the victims who are too young to ask why they have been violated. I remember spending sleepless nights in bed, silently shedding tears while thinking of people I had never known in faraway lands.

Today, my extended family and I, along with millions of other refugees, remain dispersed around the world. I was fortunate enough to have landed in the U.S. and privileged to meet some remarkable pastors. Their warmth, sincerity, and steadfast commitment to God have profoundly influenced me, reshaped my perception of American faith leaders, and strengthened my belief in their ability to effect global change.

However, I've often pondered why so few of them openly express words of love, compassion, sympathy, or support for the countless innocent Palestinian children who have become victims of a conflict that has lasted more than seven decades in the Holy Land. Initially, I considered that this might be attributed to a lack of awareness regarding the extent of suffering endured by the Palestinian people—as the saying goes, "out of sight, out of mind." In an effort to bridge this communication gap, I authored and published my first book, *Dear Pastors and Priests: Messages from Peace-Loving Muslim Families*, in 2017.

After Hamas's military intrusion into Israeli residential territories on October 7th, 2023, and the killing and kidnapping of many Israeli civilians, the United States supplied significant firepower to facilitate the bombardment of Gaza—one of the world's most densely populated residential areas—including at least eight Palestinian refugee camps. However, I heard expressions of compassion from my favorite pastors primarily for the victims on the Israeli side. The silence, or even indifference, of many mainstream pastors in response to the millions of Palestinian victims has deeply shaken my belief in their ability to make a change. Perhaps pastors need empowerment from their congregations. My only option forward is to change course and reach out to Christian America, particularly the younger generation.

Acknowledging my limitations in addressing relevant theological complexities, and with an aching heart, I humbly request on behalf of millions of Palestinian refugees that Christian America afford one courtesy to the victims: an accurate understanding of the faith and beliefs held by the majority of these victims, along with a truthful portrayal of that faith within their circles of influence. In Chapter 12 "A Message from Ishmael to Isaac", I extend a personal appeal to the general American public, pastors, and seminary students on behalf of my mother and all the Palestinian victims.

May God's peace, salam, and shalom be with you, always and forever.

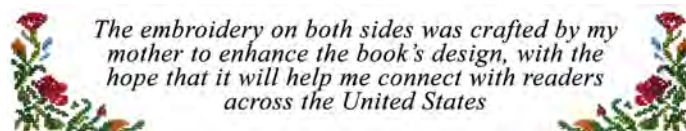


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BEYOND THE COVENANT LINE: THE GOD WHO SPEAKS TO THE NATIONS

Hagar's story is more than ancient history to me as the author; she is the woman whose tears watered the roots of my lineage. When I read her story, I do not encounter a distant figure on the margins of Scripture, but a mother whose fear I recognize and whose sorrow I feel. I can imagine the moment Abraham turned away—Hagar clinging to his garments, pleading, “Are you leaving us here alone, with nothing?” And when he walked away with tears of his own, that silence must have cut deeper than words ever could.

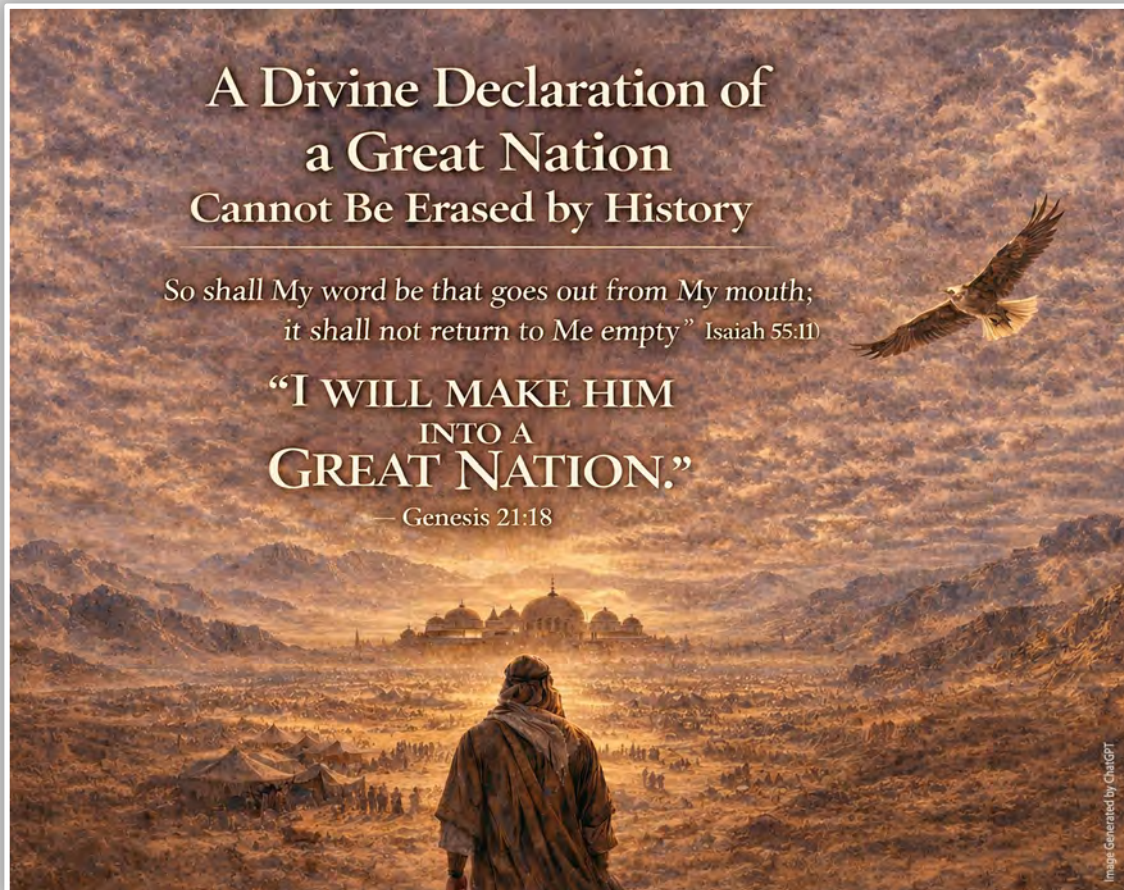
There she stood: a young and vulnerable mother in a vast desert, terrified and uncertain whether she or her child would survive. No one saw her tears. No one heard her cries. No one stood beside her. No one would have remembered her story had it not been for the God who sees—El Roi (Genesis 16:13).

Hagar could not have known that her suffering would place her at the center of a profound and often overlooked narrative—one that quietly connects two great streams of human history. From her anguish emerges a story linking the children of Israel and the Christian world on one side, and the Arab peoples on the other, drawing them to the same well of pain, faith, and divine compassion.

Her story begins in Scripture, where God sees her, names her suffering, and speaks a promise over her child. Yet its unfolding stretches far beyond the biblical page, carried forward through history and remembered across generations.

God also heard Abraham's plea concerning Ishmael. In response, He declared:

“And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.” Genesis 17:20



The Enduring Significance of a Divinely Declared Great Nation

In Scripture, a “nation” already implies peoplehood, continuity, and influence. To be called a “great nation” suggests something more enduring—a significance rooted not merely in political strength, but in divine purpose. When God Himself declares, “I will make him into a great nation” (Genesis 21:13), the promise cannot easily be reduced to a temporary historical moment that later disappears from relevance.

Scripture consistently presents God’s promises as unfolding across generations according to His faithfulness rather than human perception. As Isaiah writes, God’s word “shall not return to Me empty, but shall accomplish that which I purpose” (Isaiah 55:11). A greatness declared by God is therefore not fleeting; it unfolds through history as a testimony to His sovereignty and faithfulness.

The Overlooked Promises Beyond the Covenant Through Isaac

Christians naturally center their faith on the covenant line through Isaac—the son of promise through whom God formed Israel and ultimately brought salvation through Jesus Christ. Through Isaac came the covenant, the prophets, the Scriptures, and the Messiah.

Yet within the same biblical narrative, God also speaks of additional promises connected to Abraham that often receive far less theological attention. Ishmael is explicitly blessed and promised to become a great nation, and Abraham's sons through Keturah likewise become fathers of nations (Genesis 25:1–6).

While these promises are acknowledged within Scripture, their broader historical and theological significance is not always explored in depth within modern Christian discussion. The following reflections are therefore not intended to challenge the covenant through Isaac, but to encourage thoughtful consideration of the broader scope of God's providential work among the nations descended from Abraham.

Questions That Invite Reflection

1. **First**, did Abraham's witness leave a lasting spiritual legacy beyond the land of Israel?

Abraham built altars and called upon the name of the LORD across wilderness regions extending beyond the future borders of Israel. Were these acts merely temporary moments lost to history, or might they have contributed to the spread of belief in the God of Abraham among surrounding peoples and future generations?

2. **Second**, does Scripture itself demonstrate that God's revelation and mercy extended beyond the covenant line of Israel?

Scripture repeatedly portrays God's concern for peoples outside Israel. God sent Jonah not to Israel, but to the pagan city of Nineveh—an enemy nation outside the covenant community altogether. Through Jonah's mission, Scripture reveals that God's mercy and warning extended even to foreign peoples with no genealogical connection to Abraham through Isaac.

The Bible also records several figures outside Israel who knew, worshiped, or were guided by the Most High God. Melchizedek, king of Salem, is described as a priest of God Most High who blessed Abraham himself (Genesis 14:18–20). Jethro, the Midianite priest and Moses' father-in-law, worshiped the God of Israel (Exodus 18:10–12). Job, likely from outside Israel, spoke profoundly about

divine wisdom and justice. Even foreign rulers such as Abimelech received warnings from God in dreams (Genesis 20:3–7).



If such figures existed outside the covenant line, what became of the teachings, spiritual memories, priestly traditions, divine warnings, or inherited knowledge associated with them? Were all such traces entirely lost to history, or should we expect that some echoes of these encounters with the One God may have survived among surrounding peoples and later generations?

Taken together, do these examples suggest that God's sovereign activity among the nations extended beyond the covenant community of Israel, even while the covenant itself remained uniquely tied to Isaac's line?

3. **Third**, how should Christians understand God’s promise to bless “all the families of the earth” through Abraham?

Christians understand God’s promise to Abraham—“all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3)—to find its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ through the covenant line of Isaac. Yet, for nearly two thousand years *before* Christ, countless nations lived and grew outside the covenant community and Scripture repeatedly demonstrates God’s mercy, guidance, and sovereign concern for peoples beyond Israel alone:

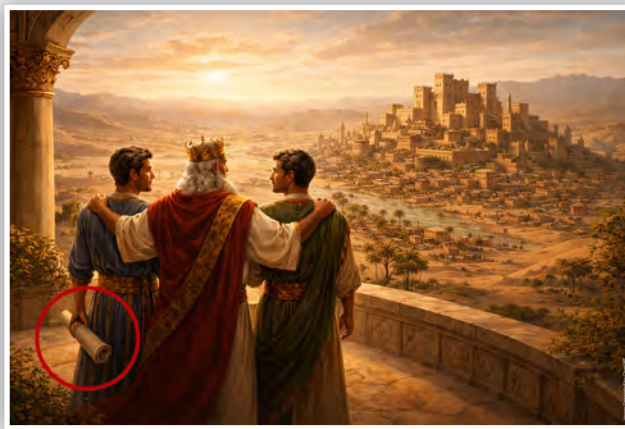
- God spoke about Egypt, Assyria, Nineveh, Midian, Tyre, and other nations outside the covenant line. Through Isaiah, God declared: “Blessed be Egypt My people, Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.” —Isaiah 19:24–25
- Scripture records that Abraham fathered additional nations through Keturah after Sarah’s death (Genesis 25:1–6). Were these descendants—and the peoples that emerged from them—left entirely without spiritual inheritance, or did aspects of Abraham’s faith and knowledge of the One God continue among them as part of God’s wider providential purposes for humanity?
- Ishmael did not stand within the covenant line through Isaac, nor did his descendants carry the prophetic tradition that culminated in Israel and Christ. Yet God explicitly promised to bless him, multiply him, and raise from him a great nation (Genesis 17:20). If God’s promises are neither empty nor forgotten, might His purposes for Ishmael have continued to unfold throughout history in ways not fully addressed within the biblical narrative itself?

4. **Fourth**, how should Christians understand the highly visible historical development of Abrahamic civilizations outside Judaism and Christianity?

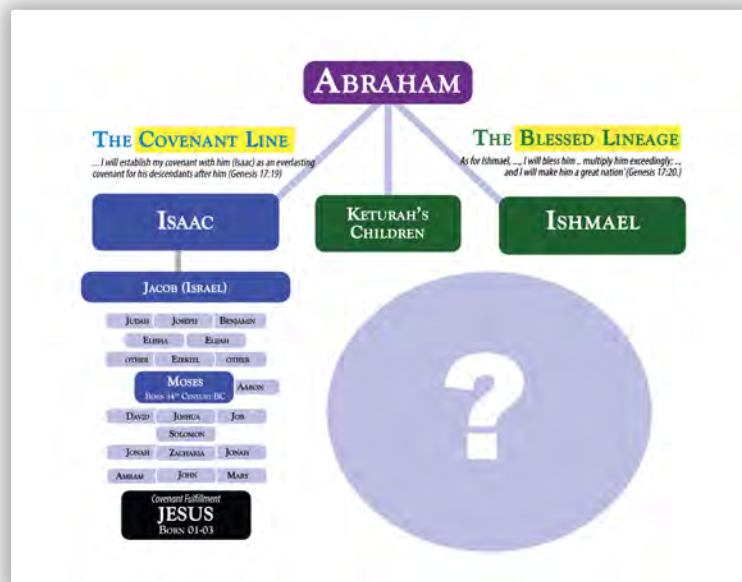
In biblical times, “the nations” often referred to distant peoples largely unknown to Israel. Today, however, *those nations are no longer hidden*. Entire civilizations shaped by Abrahamic heritage now stand clearly visible in history, encompassing billions of people through Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Many of these societies preserved belief in one God, revered biblical figures, and traced aspects of their identity to Abraham, even though they developed outside the traditional boundaries of Judaism and Christianity. In light of this historical reality, should Christian theology dismiss or give greater attention to how God’s providential purposes may have unfolded among these nations across history?

An Illustrative Analogy

Consider a wise king ruling a vast kingdom. He appoints one son to preserve the royal covenant within the palace, while entrusting another with responsibility in distant regions under the same authority. Their roles differ, yet both serve the same king and participate in the same broader purpose. Those who grow up within the palace may know the royal records, laws, and household history with special clarity, but they may not be fully aware of everything the king has done in faraway provinces. Their perspective is true and privileged, yet it does not necessarily exhaust the whole story. Nor should their narrative of events negate what other peoples in distant lands may have received, preserved, or experienced.



So it is with Isaac and Ishmael. Through Isaac came the covenant that led to Christ. Through Ishmael came a great people, preserved and multiplied according to God's word. These are not competing promises, but distinct roles within one sovereign plan.

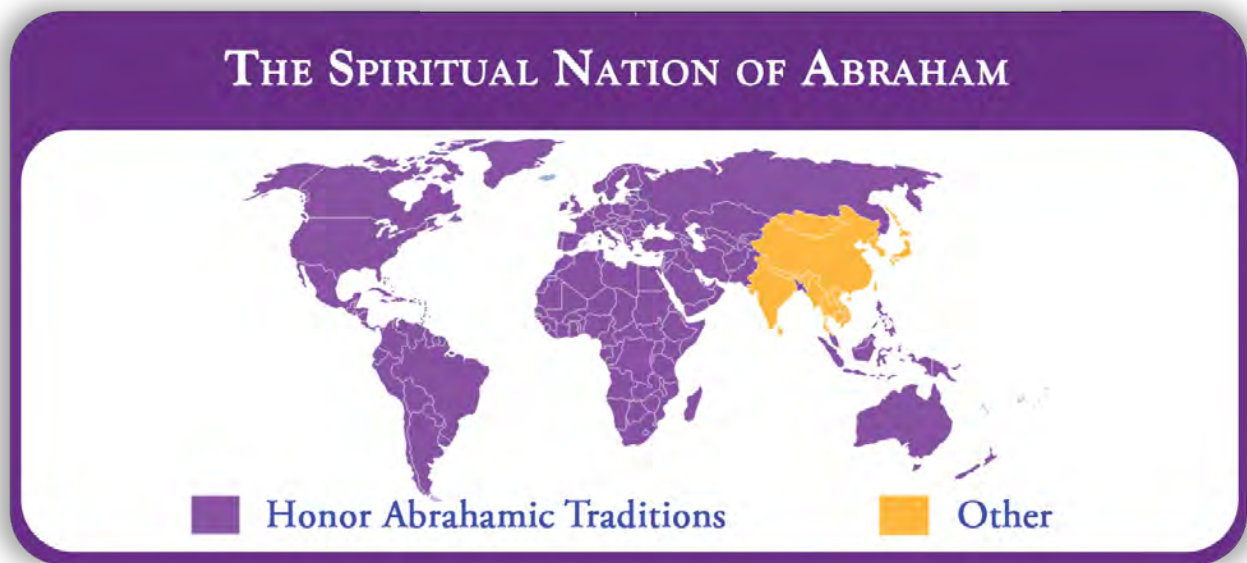


The Broader Divine Plan

Seen in this light, the story of God’s work through Abraham invites a larger question: was God’s unique covenant work through Israel also part of a broader divine plan for the nations? Abraham was called to walk before God (Genesis 17:1) and to instruct his household in the way of righteousness and justice (Genesis 18:19)—a household that, at that stage, included Hagar and Ishmael. His witness extended beyond one land and one generation, and Scripture preserves glimpses of God’s activity among peoples outside the covenant line, teaching that God “did not leave Himself without witness” among the nations (Acts 14:17; cf. Acts 17:26–27).

This raises another important question: if God bore witness to Himself among the nations, should we also expect to find historical traces outside Israel’s covenant line? Such a possibility does not diminish Israel’s role; rather, it magnifies God’s sovereignty, because He is “the God of all the earth” (Isaiah 54:5), guiding history and calling all nations back to Himself

A Promise Still Unfolding



The promise to Ishmael should not be dismissed as insignificant. From Abraham’s descendants came both the children of Israel and the Arab peoples—and eventually the followers of the three Abrahamic faiths. *Today, more than half of the world traces its spiritual heritage to Abraham.*

What God spoke beneath the desert sky has not faded. It continues to unfold.

Final Question

If God promised to make Ishmael into a great nation, why does Scripture say relatively little about its historical fulfillment?

Part of the answer lies in the purpose of Scripture itself. The Bible is primarily concerned with redemption history and the covenant line leading to Christ, not with providing a comprehensive record of every nation descended from Abraham. Its *narrative follows Israel* because through Israel came the covenant, the prophets, the Scriptures, and ultimately the Messiah (Romans 9:4–5).

Another part of the answer is historical timing. The rise of the Arab peoples to global prominence and their unification under belief in the God of Abraham occurred long after the biblical canon had closed. Ishmael's story therefore continued beyond the biblical narrative and into the unfolding of the broader divine plan.

Six centuries after Christ, the silence of the wilderness was broken once more by divine speech. The story of Hagar and Ishmael was never forgotten by God. It was simply waiting for its appointed time



CHAPTER 1



A 23-YEAR EXTRAORDINARY PHENOMENON IN THE WILDERNESS



BOOK HIGHLIGHTS AND SUMMARY

Roughly six centuries following the birth of Jesus, an extraordinary event took place about 750 miles south of Jerusalem. This event unfolded in the wilderness cities of Mecca and Madinah² over the course of twenty-three years and was observed by a countless number of individuals. Various accounts, encompassing works of literature, poems, narratives, and oral traditions, convey that Muhammad, the son of Abdullah and a member of the noble³ Hashim clan, repeatedly experienced a unique physical condition. Without any forewarning, Muhammad would gently lower his head, as though bearing an immense weight, begin to perspire, and his complexion would assume a bluish tint. Subsequently, he would lose consciousness, gracefully,

2 Currently in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

3 The Hashim clan was esteemed among the Arabs for its duty of providing food and water to pilgrims in Mecca, while also claiming the ancient honor of being direct descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham.

without falling to the ground. There are numerous detailed witness accounts of this condition:

- It starts when he hears ‘an approaching ringing sound’⁴
- Face color turns blue and/or reddish⁵
- Sweat drops the size of pearls⁶
- Faint sound of bee buzz⁷
- If he was sitting and this condition starts, he ‘lowers his head’ and when it ends, ‘he raises his head’⁸ again
- A companion who was sitting next to Muhammad felt as if his thigh bone would break when Muhammad's leg pressed heavily against his, pinning it to the ground during a revelation incident⁹
- A camel settled down and laid its head on the ground when Muhammad experienced a revelation as he was riding it¹⁰

The duration Muhammad remained unconscious in every incident varied. When he begins to regain consciousness, the extraordinary phenomenon begins. Muhammad wakes up uttering verses in his native classic Arabic language but in a new mystical recitation form that is “different, incomparable and inimitable.”¹¹ The verses are linguistically powerful and eloquently articulated. Moreover, they had “rhymes, rhythms, patterns, accentuation, or other linguistic characteristics and techniques that shift and change to support or emphasize messages in a melodious tone.”¹² The vocabulary in the recitations uttered by Muhammad incorporates various Arabic dialects, names of unknown objects, hundreds of new or obscure terms, words or names of foreign origins, and ambiguous codes or acronyms. Some verses address natural phenomena from an unfamiliar perspective, use common words in obscure context, or emit an air of mystery. The verses Muhammad spoke became new literary and recital genres that are considered, throughout history, a marvel of classic Arabic literature as discussed in **Chapter 2**.

4 Bukhari's Authentics #2 (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2>) - Last accessed 3/26/2026 - translation by author

5 Muslim's Authentics #2334 (<https://sunnah.com/muslim:2334>) - Last accessed 6/17/2026.

6 Bukhari's Authentics #2661 (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2661>) - Last accessed 6/17/2026.

7 Termithi #3173 (<https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3173>) - Last accessed 6/17/2026.

8 Muslim's Authentics #2335 (<https://sunnah.com/muslim:2335>) - Last accessed 6/17/2026.

9 Bukhari's Authentics #2832 ([Sahih al-Bukhari 2832](#)) - Last accessed 6/17/2026.

10 Musnad Ahmad (<https://dorar.net/hadith/sharh/150233>) - Last accessed 6/2/2023 – No online translation.

11 Philip K. Hitti. 1960. “History of the Arabs,” seventh edition. Macmillan & Co Ltd.

12 COBHUNI Lecture. The Effects of Rhyme in the Quran. Lecture by Prof. Devin Stewart, Emory University, Atlanta. Tuesday, June 21st 2016, 2 pm Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Room 136 20146 Hamburg. <https://www.cobhuni.uni-hamburg.de/bilder/postern-rhyme-in-quran.pdf>. Last accessed 6/17/2026.

The new recitals, linguistic characteristics, and mysteries, however, are not the most extraordinary aspect of this phenomenon. The verses Muhammad uttered were attention-arresting primarily because they frequently take the first person in a direct God-to-creation address as follows:

1. O people, **I** have created you ...
2. O **my** servants ...
3. Pray to **Me**, and **I** will answer ...
4. Worship/Serve **Me** ...
5. **I am** God, Lord of all worlds ...
6. Believe in **Me** ...

This phenomenon occurred probably hundreds of times in the presence of Muhammad’s family, companions, or strangers in the last part of his life. The number of verses uttered after every incident varied, some were few and others many. About two years after his death, the recitations Muhammad uttered were collected and recorded in an unbound set of manuscript sheets known in Arabic as “AlQuran”, commonly referred to in English as “the Quran.” Approximately eighteen years later, the first set of codices were assembled.

According to the Quran, this revelation stands as both a confirmation and a continuation of God’s earlier messages and commandments, given since the beginning of creation. The Quran acknowledges, affirms, and honors the lineage of prophets, patriarchs, and messengers—from Adam, through Noah and Abraham, to the line of Isaac that includes the prophets of Israel, and extending to Moses and Jesus. It upholds many of the same beliefs, virtues, moral principles, historical accounts, and prophecies found in earlier Scriptures, while offering renewed guidance where humanity has strayed. A reader unaware that the book in their hands is the Quran may find its message addressed not to Muslims, but to all who believe in God, the unseen, past revelations, and the Hereafter. Below are the first few verses of the Quran after the Opening, note who they address:

Quran 2 - AlBaqarah (The Cow)		
<i>Translation by Yusuf Ali with author edits in italics</i>		
<i>A L M</i>	1	الْهٰ
This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear God;	2	ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ
Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them;	3	الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْْبِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ

And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter.	4	وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ
They are on (true) guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper.	5	أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

Chapter 3 presents the five Primary Messages of the Quran.

In the first message, the author of the Quran introduces himself. The second message explains the purpose behind the creation of humanity, life, the earth, and the heavens. In this section, the analogy of autonomous humanoids is used to illustrate the meaning and mission of human life on earth. A believer's understanding of their relationship with God profoundly shapes how they interpret and engage with divine scripture and interact with other peoples. In contemporary discourse, many Jews commonly understand themselves as the Chosen People, entrusted with fulfilling a



covenant with God. Many Christians often describe themselves as children of God, created in His image and called to reflect His love. Many Muslims today view themselves as servants of God, devoted to worship and submission, emphasizing humility and obedience. The third message presents the core beliefs that form the foundation of Islamic theology. A key distinction between Islamic and Christian theology lies in emphasis: while Christian doctrine is Christ-centric, Islamic teaching is God-centric, maintaining focus on His broader divine plan. This difference significantly shapes how each tradition interprets Scripture, and helps explain why Muslims regard certain distinctively Christian beliefs as nonetheless consistent with the Islamic narrative. From a God-centric Islamic perspective, for example, Jesus' words in John 14:6 — 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' — fit comfortably within that broader framework. The fourth message presents the single most important theme of the Quran: monotheism. Here again, the analogy of autonomous humanoids is used to propose rational explanations for challenging theological questions across the Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—particularly regarding the significance of believing in ONE supreme God. The autonomous humanoid analogy further helps clarify why atheists and agnostics, despite noble intentions and meaningful humanitarian contributions, are seen in Islamic theology as having departed from their fundamental purpose and ultimately failing the test of life.

Chapter 4 presents the Arab perspective and narrative to a question often overlooked in biblical reflection: *What became of God's promises to Ishmael?* The chapter examines events during Abraham's lifetime, particularly his work in the wilderness, where he built altars and called upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 12:7–8; 13:18). It begins with Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael in the wilderness of Paran, an imprecisely defined region in the biblical record, tracing the promises of blessing and nationhood given to Ishmael in Genesis. These biblical accounts are then placed in conversation with Islamic tradition, which situates Hagar and Ishmael in the valley of Baca (Psalm 84:6), often associated in later tradition with the region surrounding present-day Mecca in Saudi Arabia. According to Islamic belief, this location became the site of the Kaaba—the holiest sanctuary in Islam—and the center of religious practices observed by millions of Muslims daily and by even larger numbers during the annual pilgrimage.



Chapter 5. Approximately 2,500 years separate Abraham from Muhammad. This extended gap or “Silent Centuries” represents one of the most significant continuity challenges in the Muslim narrative: how does one academically bridge the biblical world of Abraham and Ishmael to pre-Islamic Arabia across centuries with little written record? This chapter examines how Muslims perceive the historical continuity and AI is used to assess the credibility of their views. Some historical connections prove more compelling than others. For example, the biblical portrait of Ishmael as one whose “hand would be against everyone and everyone’s hand against him” (Genesis 16:12) proves to be a well-known and remarkably precise description of documented patterns of tribal conflict and kin rivalry that defined pre-Islamic Arabian society for centuries. Yet does that parallel between biblical character and pre-Islamic Arab life constitute historical evidence? We will let AI answer this question.

Chapter 6, 'The Awakening of the Promise,' turns to the rise of the Arab nation in the seventh century and the emergence of Islamic civilization. It examines the distinct elements that set Muhammad's mission apart from those of earlier prophets and patriarchs, and that fueled the rapid Arab expansion into vast territories previously ruled by the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires. It then traces how the emerging



Arab nation transformed into a broader Muslim civilization, sparking an extraordinary intellectual era and giving rise to a multicultural golden age.

The chapter closes by reflecting on how both traditions honor their shared patriarch. Christians honor Abraham by studying his life in Scripture and recognizing him as a foundational figure of faith. Muslims take that honor a step further, embodying the spirit of God's promise — 'I will bless those who bless you' — by weaving his memory into the very fabric of daily prayer, communal worship, and annual pilgrimage: a living commemoration repeated by two billion people across the earth.

Chapter 7: The Children of Israel occupy a major place in the Quranic narrative. God chose and favored them above all nations, entered into a sacred covenant with them, and raised many of His prophets from among them. This bilateral covenant called them to worship God alone, walk in righteousness, and serve as a light to the nations. In return, God promised them guidance, blessing, and honor among the peoples of the earth. In other words, the Islamic understanding of being “chosen” is not a permanent distinction granted to a particular people or race, but a responsibility entrusted to them. It is a form of divine favor that carries both *honor and obligation*. When this responsibility is upheld, it brings guidance, leadership, and divine support; but when it is neglected or betrayed, that favor is withdrawn and may even turn into accountability and punishment.

Naturally, Muslims deeply respect God’s divine choice of the descendants of Isaac—their spiritual cousins—and recognize their role in God’s plan for humanity. They hold great reverence for the prophets, patriarchs, and righteous figures of the Children of Israel, whose Arabic forms of their names remain beloved and popular personal names across the Muslim world. The Quran commands believers to honor all prophets without exception, referencing Israelite prophets nearly 300 times and naming several chapters after them (e.g., Jonah, Joseph, Mary, The Family of Imran). Their stories are recited in prayer and study, and many of their traditional tombs are preserved as places of reverence and supplication.

Muslims tend to view the Children of Israel through the framework of covenant faithfulness. Within this perspective, Muslims distinguish between the righteous remnant—the minority who upheld/uphold God’s commands—and those who rebelled/rebel against Him. For this reason, many Muslims regard the commonly used phrase, “I will bless those who bless Israel,” as theologically imprecise. First, Scripture records the promise as spoken personally to Abraham, not to Isaac or Jacob/Israel (Genesis 12:3) who were not even born then. Second, this phrasing can be understood as granting a blanket guarantee to every descendant, irrespective of conduct, and may risk overlooking the consistent biblical pattern in which blessing is closely tied to righteousness. This raises an important theological question: if

Scripture itself distinguishes between faithfulness and rebellion within Israel, shouldn't contemporary readers, and particularly Evangelicals, also maintain that distinction when applying the promise today?

In **Chapter 8**, the Quran refers to both Christians and Jews who uphold divine scripture as “People of the Book” and addresses them with honor. It extends particular esteem to Christians, describing them as those most affectionate toward Muslims. Many Christians may be surprised to learn that the Quran provides Muslims with specific guidelines on how to engage with Christians and Jews, granting them unique protections and privileges when living within Muslim societies. For example, they are exempt from compulsory military service, while Muslims are obligated to protect and defend them, even at the cost of Muslim lives. Most importantly, the Quran calls Muslims to seek common ground with both communities, emphasizing their shared reverence for the prophets and patriarchs and collective worship of “God-the-Father”¹³. A central question explored in this chapter is whether biblical prophecy foretells the advent of Muhammad through the descendants of Ishmael. While Muslims assert that the evidence is physically too huge, even colossal, to be unseen, Christians contend that there is no scriptural basis for such claims.

Muslim scholars, upon reading the Holy Bible, often find significant alignments between the New Testament, the Quran, and the Torah, even when addressing core theological concepts such as the nature of God. In other words, many of the major disagreements between Christianity and Islam are not rooted in the Scripture itself but arise from the differing hermeneutical principles and interpretive rules each tradition uses to understand God's Word.



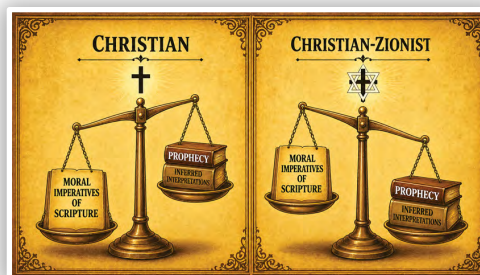
Finally, this chapter highlights the tender and reverent manner in which the Quran recounts the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus in the chapter titled *Maryam* (Mary). The Quran describes how Jesus was conceived miraculously in the womb of the Virgin Mary and how she later gave birth to him by God's command. In addition to healing the sick and raising the dead by God's permission, Muslims believe that Jesus spoke in defense of his mother while still an infant, responding to those who accused and doubted her. Notably, Mary is the only woman mentioned

13 Jews and Muslims practice strict monotheism, believing in one absolute God and rejecting the worship of the Son or the Holy Spirit

by name in the Quran, a distinction that underscores her unique honor and status in Islamic tradition.

Chapter 9: Like Christians, Muslims believe that all things unfold within God’s divine providence, sovereignly ordained (often expressed as Divine Decree and Predestination), and they share many broad prophetic themes. Both faiths affirm that all of history from the dawn of creation, through every generation and nation, to the end of days, unfolds under His divine purpose and perfect will. Like mainstream Christians and Jews, mainstream Muslims understand divine prophecy as a source of inspiration, encouraging believers to live virtuous, righteous, and God-conscious lives. Just as evangelicals strive to align their work with God’s will and rejoice when He uses them to fulfill His promises, Muslims likewise seek to live faithfully under God’s guidance and experience honor and purpose when their efforts participate in the realization of His divine promises.

Similar to Christians, Muslims believe that Jesus is alive in heaven and will return “in the flesh.” Moreover, Muslims believe that those who endure the trial of the Antichrist and persevere in faith will stand with Jesus, together with all other believers in God. Muslims, however, disagree with some evangelicals and most Christian Zionists regarding the objectives of End-Times prophecy and how believers should respond to it. From a Muslim perspective, one of the purposes of End-Times prophecy is to test humanity across the ages: Will believers remain faithful to God’s commands when given foreknowledge of future events? Or will they adopt the mindset that “the end justifies the means,” violating God’s commandments and the foundational principles of love, mercy, and justice in pursuit of desired outcomes? *As you reflect on this question, consider the suffering of millions of displaced Palestinian families who have endured decades of hardship, and ask why some evangelicals and most Christian Zionists have condoned, overlooked, or even supported policies that have contributed to their anguish.*



Chapter 10: Muslims believe that the Quran has been meticulously preserved, capturing the exact words spoken by Muhammad. Over a period of 23 years, as revelations were received, Muhammad personally oversaw the transcription of Quranic passages and simultaneously encouraged hundreds—perhaps even thousands—of his companions to commit portions or the entirety of the Quran to

memory. He cultivated a rigorous culture of Quranic recitation in which it was not only socially acceptable but expected for individuals to publicly correct any errors made during recitation. Approximately two decades after Muhammad's passing, his companions compiled the matching recitations of around six renowned reciters—individuals whose memorization had been publicly scrutinized and verified within this meticulous oral tradition. These compiled versions were then reviewed and unanimously affirmed by eyewitnesses who had personally heard Muhammad recite the Quran. This chapter will offer an analogy to illustrate the primary challenge early Muslims faced regarding dialect and accent during the documentation process. A more detailed examination of the entire collection and preservation of the Quran will be presented in the forthcoming Supplement. Aligned with the primary objective of this book,



Chapter 11 briefly examines the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe). For more than seven decades, the Nakba has been a root cause of tension and conflict between the fifty or so Muslim-majority countries and the West. This chapter was added after receiving feedback from most reviewers, who noted that they were largely unfamiliar with this ongoing dilemma.



Chapter 12, “A Message from Ishmael to Isaac,” offers a heartfelt appeal to peace-loving Americans, especially students of faith and conscience. It urges them to courageously examine and challenge the deeply ingrained beliefs within the American mindset that have long fueled the displacement and suffering of the Palestinian people. This book was born out of the grief and outrage stirred by the Palestinian Catastrophe, a tragedy that has left millions of children scarred by loss, trauma, and injustice.



Finally, **Chapter 13** explains why the publication of this book matters beyond the pages of this single volume. This book is one step in the broader global vision and mission of Handshake4Peace: to mobilize peace-loving and God-loving Christians, Muslims, and Jews to take a more active role in practicing what they



preach—especially in the sacred work of peacemaking. At a time when religious communities are often associated with division, suspicion, and conflict, this vision calls believers to become visible role models of courage, compassion, truthfulness, and reconciliation for the next generation. Handshake4Peace seeks to build peace through “common causes”—shared moral and spiritual commitments that conservative Christians, Muslims, and Jews can affirm without compromising their own faith traditions. An earlier version of this vision was published in *Dear Pastors and Priests: Messages from Peace-Loving Muslim Families* by Ayman Alhasan.

WHAT DID MUHAMMAD EXPERIENCE?

There is historical consensus that Muhammad experienced a condition that appeared similar to epilepsy and that he spoke a marvel of classic Arabic literature immediately after regaining consciousness. The exact nature of what he experienced is disputed, however:

According to Muhammad, this condition occurred when verses of the Quran were revealed to him by angel Gabriel. He stated that God's words were dictated to him word-for-word and he was ordered by the angel to memorize and recite them verbatim to the people.

Pagans at the time believed Muhammad was either insane, a sorcerer, or a gifted poet and was either lying or imagining things about angels.

After about a hundred and fifty years, the Greek chronicler Theophanes (born AD 758) suggested that Muhammad suffered from epilepsy¹⁴ better diagnosed today as temporal lobe epilepsy.

Most Christian leaders believe the entire story of revelation is made up and suggest that Muhammad is the author, was pretending inspiration, and got his information from Christians and Jews. Others have believed that the Quran was inspired by Satan to lead people away from Jesus. Other skeptics believe Muhammad was not being deliberately deceptive. They say he sincerely believed his revelations, but in fact his ecstatic states of mind are best explained by natural, not supernatural, causes.

From the perspective of Muslims, the physical state of revelation, be it natural or related to epilepsy, holds little significance and receives minimal attention from mainstream Muslims. The words spoken by Muhammad are what constitutes an

14 Aziz, Hasan (Feb 2020). "Did Prophet Mohammad have epilepsy? A neurological analysis." *Epilepsy & Behavior*. 103 (Pt A): 106654. doi:10.1016/j.yebeh.2019.106654. PMID 31822396.

extraordinary phenomenon, and these are widely accessible for examination. Moreover, Muslims highlight certain unique physical aspects of Muhammad's state of revelation:

1. Muhammad felt physical pressure on his body during revelation, and his companions also felt and witnessed this pressure.
2. Muhammad gracefully lost and regained consciousness. In many cases he remained sitting with head lowered and in other cases he laid down during the revelation condition.
3. As Muhammad regained consciousness, he was sometimes reported to move his lips as though reciting newly revealed verses, but without producing audible sound.
4. Muhammad regained consciousness fully aware. There are no reports of shivering or loss of balance.

Another important point, from Muslim perspective, is Muhammad's natural reaction to events around him. The way he reacted to several incidents in his life reinforces Muslims' belief in his prophethood:

1. Despite his duties as a prophet, teacher, statesman, and judge, Muhammad milked his own goat, mended his clothes, repaired his shoes, assisted with household chores, and visited the sick among the poor. He also helped his companions in digging a trench by moving dirt with them. His life was a model of simplicity and humility.¹⁵
2. When Muhammad's only son, Ibrahim, passed away, Muhammad was deeply grief-stricken, shedding tears more than ever before. His companions were deeply moved by his sorrow. On that same night, a lunar eclipse took place. Rumors began to spread, suggesting that even the moon was mourning Ibrahim's passing. However, upon hearing this rumor, Muhammad stated as he continued to grieve, "The sun and the moon do not eclipse due to the death or birth of anyone. When you witness an eclipse, pray and call upon God."¹⁶ Someone seeking to deceive might have taken credit for this celestial event to enhance their own legitimacy.
3. When a man addressed Muhammad with the words "O best of humanity," Muhammad answered: "[not me,] that's Abraham."
4. The Quran addresses Muhammad as a servant of God, at times commanding, correcting, and even warning him in strong terms.¹⁷ Muhammad's companions portray him as humble, submissive, and deeply grateful. If the revelation had

15 More about this subject on <https://www.islam-guide.com/ch1-6.htm#footnote5> - Last accessed 3/26/2026

16 Bukhari's Authentics #1044 <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1043> - Last accessed 3/26/2026 - translation by author

17 Quran 9:43, 66:1, 33:37, 69:46, 17:73-75, 80:1-4

been a fabrication of his own making, one might reasonably expect him to elevate his own status rather than accept critique within the text itself.

5. When Muhammad received the first revelation,¹⁸ he was terrified and in a state of shock, believing himself to be suffering from an illness. He secluded himself at home and sought help. It was a Christian monk¹⁹ who first suggested that he was neither ill nor delusional, but that he had encountered the angel Gabriel and might indeed be the long-anticipated messenger foretold by God. Had Muhammad been pretending to receive revelations, he probably would have started this venture by announcing his claim of prophethood, and the initial public reaction would then have been either belief or disbelief in his claim.

IS THE QURAN A CONTINUATION OF GOD’S MESSAGES TO HIS CREATION?

The Quran teaches that the message given to Muhammad continues the same line of revelation that began with Adam, carrying forward the core truths God has revealed throughout history. Because of this, the Quran doesn’t speak only to Muslims—it speaks to anyone who believes in God and desires to live a righteous life. Many verses begin with the words ‘*O you who believe*,’ addressing all who place their faith in the one true God. Notably, the Quran never calls out with phrases like ‘*O Muslims*’ or ‘*O you who have submitted*,’ underscoring its universal spiritual heritage among all who worship God. As such, the Quran affirms many of the teachings found in the Old and New Testaments and explains and expands on others as shown in the examples below:

AFFIRMATION	
The Quran Affirms explicit Holy Bible verses about the One God	
<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
1. Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord’”; Mark 12:29	And your Lord is One God. There is no God but He, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. (Quran 2:163)
2. You believe that God is one... (James 2:19)	
3. To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. (Deuteronomy 4:35)	

18 The first verse was (Quran 96:1) “Recite in the Name of the CREATOR.”

19 Bukhari’s Authenticity #3392 (<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3392>) - Last accessed 3/26/2026

The Quran affirms Abraham as the Father and Patriarch of Nations

<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
.. and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.. (Genesis 17:4)	.. He said: Lo! I have appointed thee a leader for mankind... (Quran 2:124)

The Quran affirms Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary, is the Messiah, the Spirit, and the Word of God

<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)	1. .. the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was... His Word which He directed to Mary ... (Quran 4:171)
2. The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming...' Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you—I am he.' (John 4:25-26)	2. .. Allah gives you good tidings of a Word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary... (Quran 3:45)
3. The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.' (Luke 1:35)	3. .. the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was... a Spirit from Him .. (Quran 4:171)

The Quran affirms that God chose the Children of Israel over all nations of the world, made multiple Covenants with them, and made them responsible for delivering God's Word to all nations at that time

<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
1. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people (Deuteronomy 7:6)	1. And indeed We already chose them — out of a knowledge — over the worlds (Quran 44:32).
2. .. and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Exodus 19:5)	2. Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel and appointed twelve leaders from among them and 'then' said, "I am truly with you. If you establish prayer, pay alms-tax, believe in My messengers, support them, and lend to Allah a good loan, I will certainly forgive your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow.. (Quran 5:12).
3. .. for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations .. (Deuteronomy 4:5–8)	

Affirmation with Minor Variation

The Quran affirms the Holy Bible's six-day creation story and the duration of a 'day' but excludes 'the sea, and all that is in them' from the six days of creation.

<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
1. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them .. (Exodus 20:11). 2. a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8)	1. He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six days (Quran 57:4) 2. And surely a day with thy Lord is as a thousand years of your counting (Quran 22:47).

Assertion

The Holy Bible mentions the expansion of the universe, and the Quran asserts that the universe continues to expand. Only in or about the year 1929 did astronomers finally discover this fact.

<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
... the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out (Isaiah 42:5) ... stretches out the heavens like a curtain (Isaiah 40:22)	We have built the universe with 'great' might, and We are certainly expanding (Quran 51:47)

Reiterate Biblical stories with minor clarifications

The Quran clarifies Holy Bible story when Moses confronted the magicians in the presence of the Pharaoh. The magicians' staffs did not turn to live²⁰ snakes; instead, they merely appeared - using illusion - to slither like snakes. After all, only God can create life.

<i>The Holy Bible</i>	<i>Translation of the Quran</i>
For each one threw down his staff, and they turned into serpents (Exodus 7:12)	And suddenly their ropes and staffs appeared to him – by their magic – to be slithering (Quran 20:66)

²⁰ Only the Lord, the Author of Life, has the power to give life. No human effort or magic can ever replace His divine authority.

TRANSMISSION AND PRESERVATION OF DIVINE SCRIPTURES: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Throughout history, divine messages were primarily received and transmitted orally before later being preserved in written form. This is one reason Muslims believe God sent many prophets and messengers to different peoples and nations across time. In both Biblical and Quranic records, one notable exception is Moses, who is described as receiving the Ten Commandments inscribed on stone tablets. In most other cases, prophetic messages were conveyed through speech, visions, dreams, or angelic mediation, and were then passed on to communities through oral transmission.

Scripture itself suggests that the process of collecting and preserving these teachings in written form developed gradually. While certain prophets—such as Jeremiah—are explicitly instructed to record divine messages (Jeremiah 36:2–4), there is limited evidence that prophets generally produced finalized, standardized written compilations of their teachings during their lifetimes. Rather, the Biblical narrative reflects a dynamic process in which revelation was first proclaimed, then preserved, and only later compiled.

In Christian theology, Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is understood as the fulfillment of God's redemptive purposes revealed through the prophets. The New Testament does not record Jesus commissioning a written book; rather, it emphasizes His instruction of disciples who were entrusted to proclaim His message to the nations (Matthew 28:19–20). Christians believe that the teachings of Jesus and the testimony of the apostles were faithfully preserved under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, modern biblical scholarship studies the transmission of these texts through manuscript evidence, textual criticism, and historical analysis. The processes by which biblical books were copied, translated, collected, and recognized over time contributed to the development of several manuscript traditions and biblical canons within the broader Christian world.

The development of the codex²¹ in the early centuries CE marked a significant advancement in the preservation and dissemination of written texts. Compared to scrolls, codices allowed for more efficient compilation, copying, and circulation of longer works — dramatically lowering the cost and labor of reproduction, enabling scribes to produce more copies in less time, and placing religious scriptures within

21 The codex was the historical ancestor of the modern book. Instead of being composed of sheets of paper, it used sheets of vellum, papyrus, or other materials. (Wikipedia)

reach of far more communities than scrolls had ever allowed.²² The codex rose to prominence between the second and fourth centuries AD. This innovation is often regarded as one of the most important developments in the history of the book prior to the invention of the printing press.

Following this development, Muslims hold that God revealed His word to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century through the Angel Gabriel, and that these revelations were recited verbatim. According to early Islamic sources, Muhammad instructed his companions to preserve these revelations word for word through memorization and, when possible, through written recording. In this way, Muhammad is described as actively overseeing and confirming the preservation of the revelation during his lifetime, using both oral and available written means. Within twenty years of his death, the first fully bound codices of the Quran had been compiled and distributed by his companions.

Taken together, these differing patterns of transmission, preservation, and canon formation provide an important framework for understanding how Jews, Christians, and Muslims have understood, preserved, and transmitted what they believe to be divine revelation. While these faith communities may reach different conclusions regarding the nature, accuracy, and preservation of Scripture, all place great importance on faithfully safeguarding and passing on the sacred messages entrusted to them.



Ancient religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, may have originated with individuals whom God raised up as prophets or messengers. Yet over time, through human fallibility and the inability to preserve the purity of revealed truth, corruptions have crept in. This possibility may help explain why so many traditions retain some profound moral truths, such as the Golden Rule, while also preserving stories that echo biblical and Quranic accounts: miraculous births, catastrophic floods, divine interventions, and visionary experiences bearing striking similarities to narratives found in Scripture.

22 Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 43–50.

COMPARISON: KING JAMES HOLY BIBLE AND THE QURAN

Basic Quran statistics compared to the popular King James translation of the Holy Bible:

	King James Holy Bible	Quran
Number of books	66	1
Total chapters (Surahs)	1,189	114
Total verses	31,102	6,236
Total Words	788,258	77,430

By way of comparison, the Arabic Quran at 77,430 words is a little bit shorter than the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which total about 83,883 words in the English KJV.

Christians Believe Today The Holy Bible	Muslims Believe Today The Quran
Inspired by God.	Revealed by God.
The term 'Word of God' is a general reference to divine messages found in the scriptures.	The term “Word of God” refers to the verbatim word of God.
Authored by multiple individuals inspired by the Holy Spirit, some of whose identities remain unknown.	Uttered by a single individual: Muhammad son of Abdullah son of Hashim.
Composed in various languages according to the background and audience of the authors.	Entirely in Classical Arabic.
Different books and letters were written at various times and locations, starting in the first century AD.	The initial manuscript, composed of sorted but unbound sections, was compiled two years after Muhammad’s death. The first complete codex was assembled about 18 years later.
Human authors, moved by the Holy Spirit, chose words to convey God’s messages, including historical events, laws, and the life and teachings of Jesus.	The words of God were dictated verbatim by the Angel Gabriel to Muhammad.

Christians Believe Today The Holy Bible	Muslims Believe Today The Quran
The Holy Bible was compiled through a process called 'canonization,' where texts were selected and officially recognized as authoritative and sacred by church councils.	The Quran was compiled by documenting matching recitations by popular reciters that withstood public scrutiny and was reviewed and approved by eyewitnesses and trusted companions of Muhammad.
Translated Holy Bibles, whether in English, German, Spanish, or other languages, are also considered the 'Word of God.' This is because Jesus referred to a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament as the 'Word of God.'²³	Translations of the Quran are considered interpretations in different languages and are prone to errors, like any other interpretation.

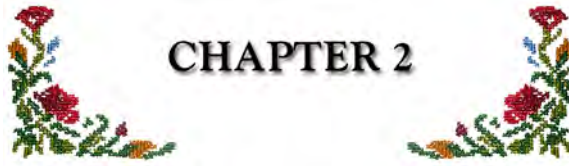
23 Because Muslims understand the Qur'an to be the verbatim word of God, they may find it confusing when Christians refer to the English Holy Bible as the "Word of God," since God did not speak to Jesus in English..



Guidelines for Muslim Interaction with Christians and Jews *(Refer to Chapter 8 for further details)*

Muslims are obliged to recognize Christians and Jews who live within their communities based on their self-identification and regardless of their theological specifics:

1. Designate them “Protected People” and allow them to practice their faith and govern themselves according to their beliefs, even if that requires exceptional civil rights.
2. Defend them and their places of worship, even at the cost of Muslim lives.
3. Treat them with respect, kindness, and fairness.
4. Avoid arguing with them except in the best of manners.
5. Openly compete with them in doing righteousness.
6. Never force them or anyone to convert to Islam.
7. Since Muslims, Christians, and Jews all look to and worship the God of Abraham as the one Creator, Muslims are encouraged to pursue common ground in the area of shared devotion to Him.
8. Muslims may consume meat slaughtered by Christians or Jews, except for pork.
9. Muslim men are permitted to marry Christian or Jewish women.



A MARVEL OF CLASSIC ARABIC LITERATURE



The objective of this chapter is to help the reader understand how native Arabic speakers perceive, appreciate, and evaluate the linguistic qualities of the Quran. Grasping this perception is essential because, according to Muslims, the Quran is not merely a religious text but the primary standing evidence on which the entire faith is built. In this sense, the Quran occupies the same place in Islam that the miracles of Jesus and Moses occupy in Christianity and Judaism. Where those faiths point to the parting of the sea or the healing of the sick as signs of divine intervention, Islam points to the Quran itself: a miracle not of a single moment witnessed by a few, but one preserved in text and language, available for every generation to examine for itself.

The Quran contributed to the evolution of classic Arabic in many ways, including:

1. Introduced new and distinct recitation and literary genres (about 86% of all verses possess a rhyming pattern.)²⁴
2. Set classic Arabic grammar and scripting standards.

²⁴ COBHUNI Lecture. The Effects of Rhyme in the Quran. Lecture by Prof. Devin Stewart, Emory University, Atlanta. Tuesday, June 21st 2016, 2 pm Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Room 136 20146 Hamburg. <https://www.cobhuni.uni-hamburg.de/bilder/postern-rhyme-in-quran.pdf>. - Last accessed 6/17/2026.

TESTIMONIES BY 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY ORIENTALISTS

Orientalists are mainly European scholars, academics, artists, designers, missionaries, and Arabists who either mastered or fluently spoke Arabic, or were born or lived in Arab-majority countries during European colonization; of which in the last two hundred years extended more than a century in some Arab countries. Their efforts contributed to European understanding of the culture, faith, and traditions of the region. In general, Orientalists challenged the content of the Quran more than the artistic and linguistic merits of the new literary and recital genres:

Sir Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb:

- *“As a literary monument the Koran thus stands by itself, a production unique to the Arabic literature, having neither forerunners nor successors in its own idiom.”*²⁵
- *“The influence of the Koran on the development of Arabic literature has been incalculable, and exerted in many directions. Its ideas, its language, its rhythms pervade all subsequent literary works in greater or lesser measure.”*²⁶

Rev. R. Bosworth Smith:

*“A miracle of purity of style, of wisdom and of truth. It is the one miracle claimed by Muhammad, his standing miracle, and a miracle indeed it is.”*²⁷

Arthur J. Arberry:

*“Briefly, the rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Koran are so characteristic, so powerful, so highly emotive, that any version whatsoever is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendour of the original.”*²⁸

Todd Lawson

*“The Qur’an is an example of a genre of literature that has only one example.”*²⁹

25 Gibb, Sir Hamilton. *Arabic Literature: An Introduction* – Second (revised) edition. Oxford University Press 1963-ISBN o 19 881332 5. Paperback 1974 – Page 36.

26 Same as above.

27 Mohammed and Mohammedanism, Lectures at the Royal Institute of Great Britain, R. Bosworth Smith, pg 237; Smith, Elder & Co. London, 1874

28 A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, Volume 1 - A Touchstone Book. New York. Copyright 1955 by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., p. 24.

29 Todd Lawson, Duality, Opposition and Typology in the Quran: The Apocalyptic Substrate, *Journal of Quranic Studies*, VOLUME X ISSUE II 2008, CENTRE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES School of Oriental and African Studies University of London

RECITAL GENRE ILLUSTRATION

Below is an example of how the melodies, rhythm, and rhyme of the verses in the Quran shift and change to convey the message. The table below presents Chapter 91, entitled "AlShams," which translates to "The Sun." The right column contains the transliteration of the sounds made when each verse is recited in Arabic. Look at the right column, can you identify the rhythm and the rhyming verses?

Quran - Chapter 91 - AlShams (The Sun)			
Translation by A. J. Arberry with author edits in italic			
	0	In the Name of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful Bismillahil Rahman Elraheem	
	Verse #	Translation	Phonic Rendering / Arabic Pronunciation
Swearing	1	By the sun and his morning brightness	Washshamsi waduh aahaa
	2	and by the moon when she follows him (the sun),	Walqamari itha tala aahaa
	3	and by the day when it displays him (the sun)	Wannahari itha jalla aahaa
	4	and by the night when it enshrouds him (the sun)	Wallayli itha yaghsha aahaa
	5	By the heaven and That which built it (the heaven)	Wassama-i wama bana aahaa
	6	and by the earth and That which extended it!	Wal-ardi wama taha aahaa
	7	By the soul, and That which shaped it	Wanafsin wama sawwa aahaa
	8	and inspired it (the soul) to lewdness and godfearing!	Faal hamaha fujoor aha wataqwa aahaa
Main Message	9	Prosperous is he who purifies it (the soul),	Qad aflaha man zakka aahaa
	10	and failed has he who corrupts it (the soul)	Waqad khaba man dassa aahaa
Example	11	Thamood cried lies in their insolence	Kaththabat thamoodu bitaghwa aahaa
	12	when the most wretched of them uprose,	Ithi inbaAAatha ashq aahaa
	13	then the Messenger of God said to them, The She-camel of God; let her drink!	Faqala lahum rasoolu All abi naqataAll ahi wasuqy aahaa
	14	But they cried him (the messenger) lies, and hamstrung her (the camel), so their Lord crushed them for their sin, and leveled them:	Fakaththaboohu faaqaroo haa fadamdama AAalayhim rabbuhum bithanbihim fasawwa aahaa
End	15	and He fears not the issue thereof	Wala yakhafu AAuqba aahaa

Verse 0 – (green row)

In essence, this opening statement serves as a public proclamation: 'Attention: a message from God, the Most Compassionate, follows.'

Verses 1-8 (*blue rows*):

Content: Just as people use the expression "I swear to God" to emphasize the importance of the following statement, the author employs oaths to highlight the significance of the forthcoming message. The chapter begins with the author swearing eight times by notable creations and three times by the divine essence.

Sound: The first seven verses start with the letter "wa" and they all end with the same "aahaa" sound, creating a rhythmic and steady drumbeat effect.

How Sound Supports the Message: All these drumbeat-like oaths build suspense. You keep reading because you want to know what is all this leading up to? What is God about to say?

Rhetoric: Basically, the repeated oaths act as a teaser that builds anticipation.

Verses 9-10 (*black rows*):

Content: These two verses appear to convey the central message of this chapter:

“Those who earnestly seek sanctification and nurture their souls with righteousness will undoubtedly inherit eternal blessings and contentment. In contrast, those who allow their souls to be tainted by wrongdoing will experience profound and lasting regret.”

How Sound Supports the Message: This powerful statement, delivered at the climax of what resembles a sustained drumbeat of anticipation, provides divine guidance of the highest importance, a core message shared by all three Abrahamic faiths.

Verses 11-14 (*pink rows*):

Content: The remaining verses in this chapter illustrate the consequences that befall those who ignore the central message. The story of the tribe known as Thamud (not mentioned in the Holy Bible) highlights their arrogance and disbelief in God. To convey His message, God sent the prophet Saleh, accompanied by a miraculous camel as proof of his divine authority. This camel provided enough milk for the entire tribe but consumed a significant amount of water. Ultimately, the tribe of Thamud rejected Saleh's message and killed the camel. In response, God unleashed a devastating thunderstorm

and earthquake, resulting in the demise of the entire tribe, except for Saleh and his family.

Sound: The rhythm shifts as the initial “wa” sounds are dropped, while the ending “aahaa” are retained. The verses gradually become longer, ending in the two longest, high-drama verses, 13 and 14. Despite their length, these verses maintain their rhythm through the inclusion of the 'ah' and 'haa' sounds within their framework.

How Sound Supports the Message: The increasing length of the verses enhances the dramatic effect, leading to the swift action in verse 14.

Rhetoric: Thamud’s rejection, the killing of the camel, and God’s swift punishment are all captured in a single verse (14), conveying the idea that when it comes to deliberately opposing the will of God, He does not show leniency.

Verse 15 (*yellow row*):

Content: The verse conveys that God has neither regrets nor fears regarding the catastrophic end of Thamud.

Sound: The rhythm mirrors that of the very first verse in this chapter, creating a connection between the beginning and the conclusion.

How Sound Supports the Message: This verse feels like a soft, concluding musical note following the high-drama of the preceding long verse, giving the impression that the story has come to an end.

Note: The Quran can be recited in various styles, with the inherent melodies, rhythms, and rhymes being emphasized to varying degrees based on the reciter's talents. However, most reciters prioritize adherence to the established rules of recitation over the intrinsic musicality built in the verses.

TESTIMONIES BY DISBELIEVERS DURING THE TIME OF MUHAMMAD

***Disclaimer:** The accounts in this section are based on reports preserved by Muslim historians and remain open to scholarly assessment regarding their authenticity and historical reliability.*

Historically, during the time of Muhammad, the disbelievers in Mecca directed their efforts towards finding ways to stop the emergence of the new faith rather than challenging the eloquence and rhetoric of the Quran. This was because, in a culture that deeply appreciated poetry, many idol-worshiper pagans admired the Quran but opposed a faith that required them to abandon their ancestral traditions and customs. The following is an account of a disbelieving man who devised a plan to counter the influence of the Quran. *The plan he recommended below, more than his statements,* serves as a testament to the Quran's literary superiority:

During the time of Muhammad (AD 570-632), the wilderness city of Mecca served as a gathering place for tribal poet geniuses from across the Arabian desert who would converge during the pilgrimage season to participate in the annual cultural and poetry festivals.³⁰ At the festival, poets showcase their talents before esteemed judges, seeking recognition. This large gathering presented a unique opportunity for Muhammad to convey the message of Islam to numerous remote pagan tribes within a short span of time. Muhammad planned to participate in the festival and contend with other poets by reciting verses from the Quran.

However, the pagan tribal leaders in Mecca, who were opposed to Muhammad's teachings, grew concerned and convened to devise a strategy that would prevent him from promoting Islam during the festivals. They selected a prominent and popular tribal leader named AlWalid bin (son of) AlMughirah, known for his wit, wealth, wisdom, knowledge, respect, bravery, and handsome looks and entrusted him with the task of listening to the Quran and suggesting ways to counter Muhammad's message during the annual festival.

AlWalid attentively listened to the recitation of the Quran and found himself impressed by what he heard. Despite being assigned to find ways to challenge Muhammad's message, he openly expressed admiration for the Quran:

30 The Arabic name is 'Suwk Okaz' festivals

AlWalid bin AlMughirah

“By Allah,³¹ I’ve heard words that are not composed by humans, not even Jinn⁴¹. The words have beauty and charm and they top all other (literary) forms (i.e., poetry, prose, saj’, etc.)”

Upon hearing the news, one adamant tribal leader, nicknamed ‘Abu Jahal’, felt deeply dismayed fearing that AlWalid might be swayed towards embracing Islam. Abu Jahal craftily devised a plan to send AlWalid a message: if he converted to Islam, his tribe would reject him, leading to a loss of his status, wealth, leadership, and esteem. Abu Jahal went to great lengths to caution AlWalid, suggesting that if he adopted the Islamic faith, he would be reduced to a beggar relying on charity for his very survival. The trick worked on AlWalid who was born to a Roman slave. AlWalid met again with tribal leaders and said:

AlWalid bin AlMughirah

“What words can I conceivably offer? There exists no individual among you more versed in poetry or prose than I am, not even among the Jinn. I solemnly swear by Allah, the manner in which he speaks bears no resemblance to any form of poetry or prose. By Allah, his expressions possess a sweetness, elegance, and enchantment that are unparalleled; the zenith of his speech is abundant with meaning, and even its least remarkable fragments overflow with richness. It commands attention and is impervious to being subdued, surpassing all other forms of expression. However, permit me some time to ponder and formulate my thoughts on how best to articulate my impression of it.”³²

AlWalid contemplated the challenge before him and sought the counsel of similar wise men to devise a suitable plan. Various ideas were proposed, such as spreading rumors among the visitors to Mecca that Muhammad was insane, a talented but deceptive poet, or some kind of monk. However, AlWalid rejected these suggestions, recognizing that there was no history to support such claims. Moreover, he understood that the majority of Meccans, including most tribal leaders, would testify to Muhammad's high regard and that would spoil the suggested plans.

In Mecca, many individuals who embraced Islam were disowned by their families or separated from their spouses. The challenges faced by these families inspired a fresh thought in AlWalid. The idea was to spread a rumor that Muhammad is a witch or sorcerer and whoever listened to his recitation of the mystical Quran would fall under a spell that would lead to the disintegration of their family, similar to the many

31 The word “Allah” was used by Arab pagans, Christians, and Jews before and after the advent of Islam.

32 Reported by al-Hakim in 'al-Mustadrak' (2/506-507) and at-Tabari in 'Jami' al-Bayan' (29/156), and it is authentic]-
Translation revised by ChatGPT

families torn apart in Mecca. During that period, superstition was prevalent throughout the Arab wilderness. This scheme was perceived as brilliant by the tribal leaders, as it could be confirmed by Meccans who had experienced family breakups. They fully endorsed the plan and dispatched numerous messengers to the outskirts of Mecca, where they awaited arriving caravans. Their mission was to warn travelers about the alleged spell cast by Muhammad. The plan proved remarkably effective during that season, as visitors to Mecca actively avoided listening to Muhammad, blocking their ears with their hands as soon as they realized he was approaching. This tactic evolved to become the pagans' primary strategy to counter Muhammad and the message of the Quran for years to come.

AlWalid's strategy garnered strong and unequivocal divine condemnation, as he knowingly and deliberately went against the will and commands of God. He stands as one of the rare individuals who, according to Islamic sources, received specific revelations in the Quran outlining the repercussions he would face in the fires of hell.³³ Some Muslims believe that, were it not for AlWalid's intervention, a historic showdown of literary mastery might have taken place between Muhammad and Arabia's renowned poets, akin to the confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh's magicians. Muslims hold conflicting sentiments towards the widely respected AlWalid, given their belief that his prominence and stature led him astray, ultimately resulting in eternal damnation.

The surname 'AlWalid' remains imprinted in the memory of many Muslims today, primarily because his son, Khalid bin (son of) AlWalid, who inherited his father's genius, embraced Islam and proceeded to become one of the most admired Muslim commanders. Khalid's accomplishments include his simultaneous triumph over both the mighty Roman and Persian armies, which opened the roads to Africa, Europe, and Asia and paved the way for the expansion of Islam beyond the boundaries of the Arabian-Peninsula. Essentially, Khalid's accomplishments offset the setbacks caused by his father.

In conclusion, despite the large gathering of renowned literary talents in the region, who came specifically to challenge each other, none of the suggestions considered by AlWalid focused on challenging the Quran's literary merits. Successfully challenging the Quran could have invalidated the claim of a divine author. From a Muslim perspective, the absence of any substantive challenges either prior to or following the festivals is often interpreted as evidence of a broader recognition of the Quran's literary excellence at that time.

33 Quran 74:11-30

LITERARY GENRE ILLUSTRATIONS

The Quran employs a wide range of literary devices (e.g., metaphor, polysemy, synonymy, homonymy) and rhetorical devices (e.g., rhetorical questions, oath-swearing, parallelism, contrast, repetition) to emphasize its messages, provoke reflection, and engage readers. Most of these literary and rhetorical devices are too complex to illustrate to English-only speakers. Nevertheless, we will explore some specific devices and other unique linguistic features that can be easily translated and can demonstrate how Muslims perceive the literary qualities of the Quran:

1. The Plural for the Singular

When addressing certain themes, the Quran consistently uses plural nouns instead of singular ones, even when the subject is clearly singular — a rhetorical device that Muslims believe can only be understood from a divine perspective. Here is one example:

Chapter 26 - AlShu'ara (The Poets) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>		
The people of Lut rejected the messengers	160	كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
Behold, their <i>brother</i> Lut said to them: 'Will ye not fear (God)?	161	إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطُ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ
<i>I am</i> to you a messenger worthy of all trust.	162	إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

Verse 160 says the people of Lot rejected "the messengers" — plural — though the very next verses make clear that only one person, Lot, was sent to them. Same usage applies to verses that address the same subject in chapters 26:105 (Prophet Noah), 26:123 (Prophet Hud - *Possibly Eber in the Bible*), and 26:141 (Prophet Saleh). Why the plural, when only one individual is involved?

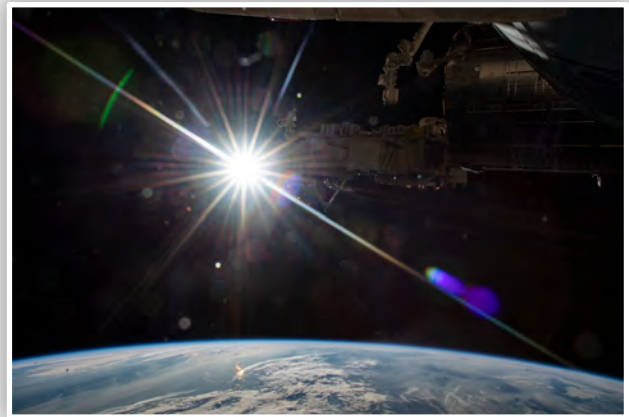
As explained in 'Transmission and Preservation of Divine Scriptures: An Islamic Perspective', Page 36, Islamic teaching holds that God sent many prophets and messengers throughout time to different tribes and nations, their message being consistently to glorify, worship, and serve the one and only God. Therefore, when a tribe rejects a single messenger, it has in essence — and in the eyes of the Creator — rejected all His messengers throughout history. The plural thus functions as a verdict of guilt — one that encompasses not only the rejection of Lot, but the rejection of God's universal message to humanity, delivered through all His prophets and messengers throughout history. Muslims often point to this usage as an example of the Quran's unique rhetorical style and theological depth.

Final note: The rhetoric in this and similar verses was well-understood during the time of Muhammad and is documented in early Quran interpretations.

2. Natural Phenomena From A Different Perspective

Quran 91 - AlShams (The Sun) <i>Translation by A. J. Arberry with author edits in italic</i>		
By the sun and his morning brightness	1	وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا
And by the moon when she follows him (<i>the sun</i>)	2	وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا
and by the <i>daylight</i> when it displays him (<i>the sun</i>)	3	وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا

The Quran states that daylight "displays" the sun — an unusual claim, given that it is the sun that produces daylight, not the other way around. Early linguists proposed that the word "earth" had been omitted as a matter of rhetorical convention, on the grounds that it was too obvious to state — much like the expression "it blew north," in which the word "wind" is left unspoken. Only later did interpreters come to recognize that the verse is, in fact, a matter of perspective. To grasp that perspective, consider what one sees from high above the earth, beyond the atmosphere: there is no day or night, the sky appears dark in every direction, and the sun, though large and visible, stands out little more than the other stars.



To those living on earth, however, all distant stars disappear and the sun appears overwhelmingly bright during the day, because the atmosphere scatters its light, turning the sky blue and making the sun the most luminous object in view. From this vantage point, it is the daylight — the illuminated atmosphere — that makes the sun stand out and appear brilliant against the sky.

A simple analogy: imagine a room with walls painted black. The room appears dark, and a light bulb barely stands out. Paint the walls white, and the same bulb seems far brighter — because the surrounding environment now reflects and amplifies its light. Daylight does the same for the sun.

3. Past Tense for Future Events:

The Quran employs past-tense verbs to describe events that, according to Islamic belief, will take place on the Day of Judgment. This resembles an eyewitness coming from the far future and informing everyone of what he/she already saw. This usage is known as ‘the rhetoric of immediacy.’ It serves to create a sense of certainty and inevitability and adds intensity to the message, drawing the attention and highlighting the significance of the events being described. Here is an example:

Quran 39:69-75 AlZumur (The Assemblies) <i>All English translations of the verses below shifted the tense to future, as translators typically prioritize conveying meaning over preserving rhetorical style. The author, Ayman Alhasan, has revised these translations to preserve the actual Arabic text</i>		
The Earth became illuminated by the radiant light of the Lord, records of deeds descended, prophets and witnesses were summoned, and a just verdict was rendered. Never will anyone be misjudged	69	وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجِئَءَ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ
Each individual soul was rewarded fully according to its actions, as the Almighty possesses full knowledge of their deeds	70	وُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ
Afterwards, the unbelievers were led towards Hell in groups/assemblies. As they arrived, its gates opened, and its keepers asked them: ‘Did you not receive messengers from among yourselves, who recited to you the signs of your Lord and warned you of this day?’ They responded: ‘Indeed, (we have and they did) but the decree of punishment has been firmly established against the unbelievers.’	71	وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ رُجُومًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فَتَحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ
Enter ye the gates of Hell, to dwell therein: and evil is (this) Abode of the Arrogant!	72	قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ
And those who feared their Lord were led towards Paradise in groups/assemblies. As they arrived, its gates were opened, and its keepers said: ‘Peace be upon you; you have fared well and become pure; enter and dwell forever’	73	وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ الْجَنَّةِ رُجُومًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طَابَ مَقَرُّكُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ
And they said, ‘Praise belongs to God, who fulfilled His promise and made us inherit the earth [so] we may dwell in	74	وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَّبِعُ

Paradise wherever we will.’ And excellent was the reward of [righteous] labors.		مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَمِلِينَ
And thou can see the angels encircling about the Throne exalting and proclaiming the praise of their Lord; and justly the issue shall be judged justly between them; and it shall be said, ‘Praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds.’	75	وَنَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

4. New Vocabulary:

In Semitic languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic, every word is built from a root of three consonants. This system makes it possible to coin new words whose meaning can still be recognized through their root and context. The Quran takes advantage of this feature: it contains words that were unknown in Muhammad's time, yet whose meaning each generation can interpret anew. Here is one example:

Quran 81 – AlTakweer (The Cessation) <i>Translation by Ayman Alhasan</i>		
Why shall I not swear by <i>AlKhunnas</i>	15	فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ
(which) Sweeps away the adjacent	16	الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ

Verse 15 introduces a new Arabic noun “*AlKhunnas*” that was not known in Muhammad's time. Given the clues below, can you guess what it might refer to?

- Its root conveys the sense of being out of sight and out of sound.
- The context of the verse: something that sweeps away whatever is adjacent to it.
- It is a significant object, since God swears by it.
- Tradition describes it as some kind of planet or star.

Today, some Muslims speculate that "Al-Khunnas" may refer to black holes, dark matter, or something of that nature.

From a Muslim perspective, the Semitic languages may well serve a divine purpose. The ability to coin new words whose meaning can be inferred keeps the text dynamic and alive for every generation, in light of their growing understanding of the universe.

5. Familiar Terms in Unfamiliar Context

In several verses, the Quran uses a familiar Arabic term in a context where its established meaning does not seem to fully fit. This is especially challenging in a culture that was highly attentive to spoken language and oral literature. Some linguists have speculated that God may be expanding or altering the conventional meaning of certain terms, or that the rhetorical expression itself is not yet fully understood. The word '**Nasiya**' is one example. It is a common and frequently used Arabic term, translated as 'forelock' or 'forehead,' or taken to refer to a 'person.' Yet within the context of verses 15 and 16 below, none of these three meanings seems to fit:

Quran 96 – AlAlaq (The Clot) <i>Translation by A. J. Arberry</i> <i>The author replaced the word 'forelock' with the word 'nasiya' below</i>		
What thinkest thou? If he cries lies, and turns away -	13	أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى
Did he not know that God sees?	14	أَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى
No indeed; surely, if he gives not over, We shall seize him by the nasiya	15	كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ
a lying, sinful nasiya ?	16	نَاصِيَةٍ كَذِبَةٍ خَاطِنَةٍ

Herein lies the context puzzle: Verse 15 implies that **nasiya** denotes a part of the human body that can be seized, whereas verse 16 indicates that this body part has the capacity to lie and sin. Which of the three translations or meanings – 'forelock', 'forehead', or 'person' – is applicable to *both* verses? Neither 'forelock' nor 'forehead' appears to fit the context accurately, as neither possesses the ability to deceive or mislead. The term 'person' is not viable linguistically, as one cannot say, “I will grab him by the person.” What a puzzle!

In recent decades, Muslims celebrated finding satisfying answers. It is now understood that the brain's prefrontal cortex, situated just behind the forehead, governs both deceit³⁴ AND voluntary muscle movements.³⁵⁺³⁶ Thus, it is accurate to state that one could be seized by the forehead which concurrently embodies both the capacity for lying and motion.

34 Christ, S. E., Van Essen, D. C., Watson, J. M., Brubaker, L. E., & McDermott, K. B. (2009). The contributions of prefrontal cortex and executive control to deception: evidence from activation likelihood estimate meta-analyses. *Cerebral Cortex*, 19(7), 1557–1566.

35 Purves, D., Augustine, G. J., & Fitzpatrick, D. (2018). *Neuroscience* (6th ed.). Oxford University Press.

36 Kandel, E. R., Schwartz, J. H., & Jessell, T. M. (2013). *Principles of Neural Science* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

6. Word Counts in the Quran - Unfolding

Observations concerning word frequencies in the Quran occupy a place somewhat analogous to numerical and literary patterns noted by many Bible readers. On the Quran side, the frequency of certain words in the Quran seems to hold significance. The most cited example concerns the words "sea" and "land": in their singular forms, "sea" appears 32 times and "land" 13 times — a ratio of roughly 71% to 29% that closely mirrors the Earth's water-to-land proportion. Such observations, however, are disputed³⁷ by Christian apologetics. To verify these figures, one should consult a dedicated online tool such as the Quranic Arabic Corpus (corpus.quran.com). With that caution in mind, other frequently cited patterns include:

- A. "Month" appears 12 times, matching the twelve months of the year.
- B. "Day" in its singular form appears 365 times, and "days" in its plural and dual forms 30 times — corresponding to the days of a year and a month.
- C. "This world" and "the hereafter" equally appear 115 times.
- D. "Angels" and "devils" equally appear 88 times.
- E. "Life" and "death" equally appear 145 times.
- F. "Man" and "woman" equally appear 24 times.
- G. "Faith/belief" and "disbelief" equally appear 25 times.
- H. "Heat" and "cold" equally appear 4 times.
- I. "Charity" and "blessing" equally appear 32 times.

7. Mysteries of Quran

The Old Testament, New Testament, and Quran contain references that were not fully understood at the time of their revelation. For believers, these mysteries are a test of faith: Will passages that defy immediate understanding cause us to overlook the obvious miracles of creation and the overwhelming signs of the Creator, leading us to question the source of revelation? Or will we humbly acknowledge that divine wisdom transcends human comprehension? This section explores only two of many standing mysteries in the Quran that have challenged Muslim understanding in both the past and present:

³⁷ The counts depend heavily on which word-forms are included — singular, plural, definite, and derived forms — and critics note that the word-form of some widely circulated examples appear to be selectively counted to produce the desired result.

A. Cryptic Codes or Disconnected Letters³⁸

Twenty-nine chapters in the Quran start with verses that have combinations of one to five disconnected Arabic letters. The meaning of these letters is not known. They seem like acronyms or abbreviations. Many scholars researched them but have not come up with solid conclusions. The following is the transliteration of all the letters: ALM, ALMS, ALR, ALMR, KHYES, TH, TS, TSM, YS, S, HM, ESQ, Q, and N. Here are some past and new speculations:

- They may be acronyms or words from a foreign language transliterated into Arabic — much as the English "RSVP" is borrowed from the French *répondez s'il vous plaît* ("please respond").
- Jews who attempted to interpret these letters in Muhammad's time suggested they might encode timelines, in the same way that the Tanakh (the Jewish scriptures) associates letters with numerical values.
- They may be abbreviations of unknown names or attributes of God.

To this day, the disconnected letters remain a mystery.

B. Sunset in "Hot Eye"?

Quran 18:86 - AlKahf (The Cave) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
Until, when he reached the setting of the sun [i.e., the west], he found it [as if] setting in a body of dark water, and he found near it a people. We [i.e., Allāh] said, "O Dhul-Qarnayn, either you punish [them] or else adopt among them [a way of] goodness."	حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عَنْهَا قَوْمًا فَلَئِمَّا يَدُّوا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعْذِيبَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا

The Quran recounts the tale of a great conqueror who journeyed to the edges of a certain realm. On the eastern side, he encountered a nation living in the open, without many shelters. On the western side, he witnessed the sunset in a perplexing context described as either "hot eye," "hot water," "murky eye," or "murky water" (the Arabic words have multiple meanings). Over the course of history, Muslim scholars grappled with this verse. Where did this conqueror land, and from where did he witness this sunset view? Could it be that he observed the sunset from the Black Sea when it was possibly covered with black sludge,³⁹ from which it got its name? The shores of Alaska's

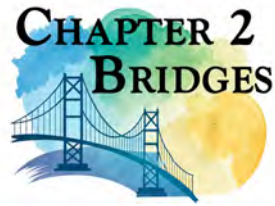
38 The Arabic term to refer to the disconnected letters is Muqatta'at (الحروف المتقطعة)

39 Irina Dreyvitser, "Why are the Seas named Black, White, and Yellow?" Smithsonian Science Education Center.
<https://ssec.si.edu/stemvisions-blog/why-are-seas-named-black-white-and->

rusting waters after some rivers and streams turned orange⁴⁰ and he could not pass them because of the toxicity? Gazed upon the Nisyros volcano's fiery eruptions in the Islands west of Turkey, or perhaps witnessed the vapor of a geyser emerging from some distant isle? To this day, no one seems to know the answers.

yellow#:~:text=There%20are%20a%20number%20of,hydrogen%20sulfide%20in%20the%20sea. Last access 8/10/2023.

40 <https://phys.org/news/2024-05-alaska-rusting-pristine-rivers-streams.html>



Hearts and Souls in Search of Divine Light

Over the years, I have been deeply moved by the sincerity I have seen in both Muslims and Christians I have personally encountered. There is something unmistakably beautiful about a heart that genuinely seeks God. I have heard it in trembling voices during prayer. I have seen it in tears of repentance. I have felt it in quiet moments of worship. That desire to know the Creator and to be close to Him crosses every border. In both communities, I have sensed the same deep hunger for eternal joy in the presence of the One who made us. Whether through the pages of the Gospel or the recitation of the Quran, people are reaching toward what they believe is divine Light.

I have also witnessed the shared struggle of faith—the painful, honest wrestling that happens when God’s wisdom feels greater than human understanding. There are moments when life does not make sense, when suffering raises questions, when divine purpose feels hidden behind silence. In those moments, faith becomes more than belief; it becomes surrender. It becomes choosing to trust even when we do not fully see. And I have seen that struggle in the eyes of both Christians and Muslims.

I have also seen how love for others can push believers beyond their comfort zones. When someone truly believes they have found truth, hope, or salvation, it is difficult for them to stay silent. Christian missionaries cross oceans to share what they believe is the good news of Christ. Muslims, likewise, feel a responsibility to share their faith and call others to what they believe is submission to the One God. Though their words differ, the impulse often comes from the same place—a sincere desire for others to experience what they believe is eternal good.

At the heart of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam stands the belief in one Creator—the Maker of heaven and earth, the Author of life, the One who rules with wisdom and justice. All three traditions affirm that God has spoken into history, guiding humanity through revelation and calling people toward righteousness. Each believes that God reached down to guide them toward Himself.

Our scriptures are different. Our doctrines are not the same. Yet beneath those differences, I have often sensed something deeply human and profoundly spiritual: hearts searching for God. And perhaps that shared longing—the desire to stand in the presence of the One who created us—is where honest conversation can begin.



CHAPTER 3



PRIMARY MESSAGES OF THE QURAN



Important notes about Quran rhetoric:

- *When God refers to Himself in the Quran, He employs both the singular 'I' and the majestic plural 'We.' Intimate verses employ the singular 'I,' while verses that reflect on His might, authority, or other similar expressions employ the majestic plural 'We.'*
- *Verses that speak of God's attributes (i.e., might, power, knowledge, etc.) usually take the third person point of view.*
- *In Arabic language, masculine verbs apply to males, females, non-binary (angels, jinn⁴¹, etc.,) animals, etc. Feminine verbs apply only to females.*

MESSAGE 1: THE AUTHOR INTRODUCES HIMSELF

I am ‘Allah’

To correctly pronounce the word 'Allah,' utter only the underlined letters in this sequence: Altar + Laud + H

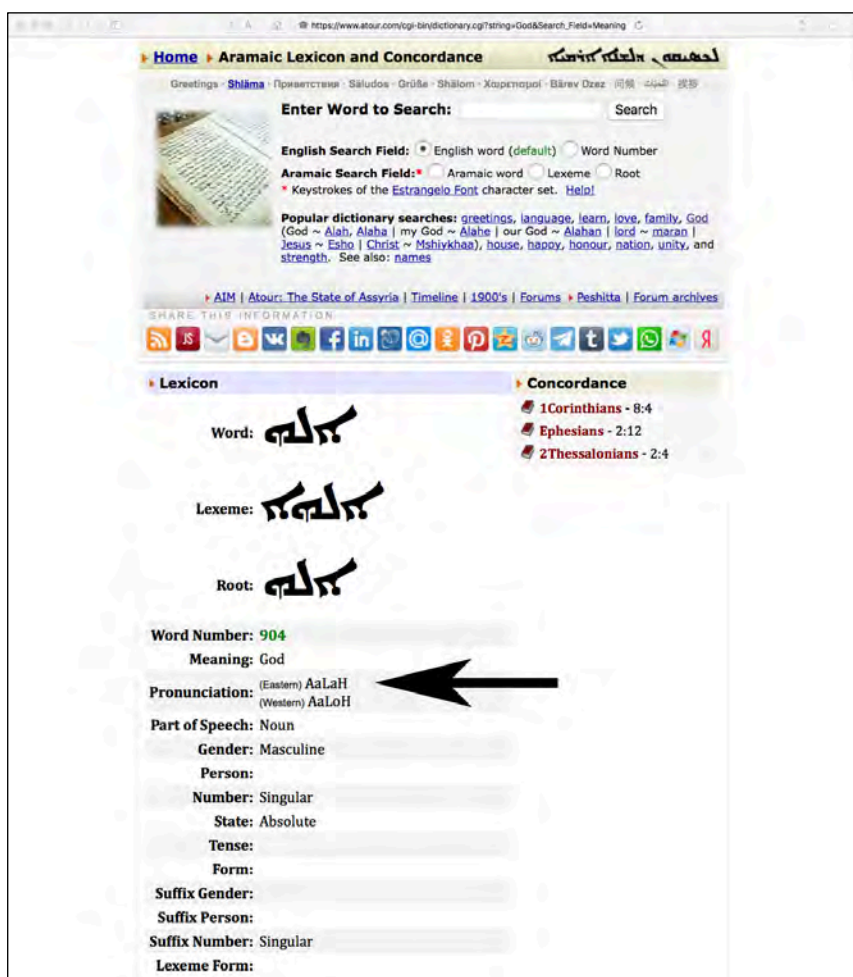
Quran 20:14 Ta-Ha (*this chapter title consists of acronyms*)

Translation by Khattab

It is truly I. I am Allah! There is no god ‘worthy of worship’ except Me. So worship Me ‘alone’, and establish prayer for My remembrance.

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
أَنَا فَأَعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ
الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

Below is a screenshot of an English-Aramaic dictionary (www.atour.com) showing the definition and pronunciation of the word ‘God’ in the language spoken by Jesus.



https://www.atour.com/cgi-bin/dictionary.cgi?string=God&Search_Field=Meaning Last accessed 3/26/2026

I am the creator, owner, controller, and maintainer of everything including life and death:

Quran 39:62 - AlZumur (The Assemblies) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Maintainer of everything	اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

Quran 57:2 - AlHadid (The Iron) <i>Translation by A. J. Arberry</i>	
To Him belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He gives life, and He makes to die, and He is powerful over everything.	لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

We, Allah, revealed the Quran to Muhammad

Quran 12:2 - Yusuf (Joseph) <i>Translation by Abdel Haleem</i>	
Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran, so that you may understand.	إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

Quran 53:3-4 AlNajm (The Star) <i>Translation by Abdel Haleem</i>		
he does not speak from his own desire.	3	وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ
The Quran is nothing less than a revelation that is sent to him.	4	إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

MESSAGE 2: PURPOSE OF CREATING HUMANS, LIFE, EARTH, AND HEAVENS

[Italicized statements within square brackets offer commentary and analogies drawn from the author's understanding of the Quran. These analogies explore parallels between human creation and the development of intelligent and autonomous humanoids.]

The Purpose of Human Creation: Intelligent and Autonomous Servants

God created human beings with free will so that they might autonomously serve and glorify Him. In the Quran, God often refers to people as ‘*ibad*,’ a term rooted in the essence of ‘servants,’ ‘worshippers,’ ‘submitters,’ ‘adorers,’ or ‘slaves.’ For the purposes of this book, we will translate ‘*ibad*’ as ‘servants.’

While the term *servant* may, to some, suggest subservience, it is in fact a noble and honored calling—much like the dignity we attribute to faithful public servants or dedicated employees who carry out their responsibilities and are rewarded generously. In a far greater way, we have the privilege of serving our Creator with devotion and purpose, and as we do, God pours out overflowing joy and deep, lasting fulfillment as our reward.

Serving God is not merely a duty; it is a dignified and honorable calling, rich with rewards that surpass our wildest imaginations.

Quran 51:56 - AlThariyat (The Winnowing Winds) Translation by Abul Ala Maududi	
I created the jinn ⁴¹ and humans for nothing else but that they may serve Me	وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

41 According to various verses and traditions, Jinn are created from fire, Angels from light, and humans from clay. Like humans, Jinn possess free will and were created to serve God. While Jinn share some physical characteristics with Angels, their autonomous nature and purpose align more closely with that of humans. Jinn prefer not to live among humans and have their own distinct realms. The Quran recounts a time when Jinn were mixed with Angels and subject to the same divine commands. Eventually, Jinn were barred from heaven and are now dealt with similarly to humans. Among the Jinn, there are righteous believers, including Christians and Muslims, as well as rebels like devils, including Satan and Lucifer. Quran chapter 72 speaks exclusively about Jinn.

Human servants are different from other creations⁴² because they are:

1. Autonomous:

Free to make good or bad decisions, obey or disobey, and bear the consequences.

2. Intelligent:

Can learn, accumulate, apply, and refine knowledge, becoming increasingly effective and powerful.

3. Earthly Matter:

Humans are created from clay and, unlike Angels or Jinn, are inherently bound to Earth for survival. The nature of human souls is not disclosed in the Quran, with no indication that they possess independent mobility.

Why Autonomous?

The next natural question is why does God want autonomous and intelligent humans that are bound to Earth? One verse might provide the reason:

Quran 2:30 AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>English Translation Yusuf Ali</i>	
Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.'	وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّیْ جَاعِلٌ فِی الْاَرْضِ خَلِیْفَةً ۚ

It seems like God desires to create servants who can take on decision-making roles within specific spheres or domains, in this case, on Earth. Note that the afterlife where humans will live seems to also be on a place called “Earth” though its nature is not known.

Quran 14:48 Ibrahim (Abraham) <i>English Translation Khattab</i>	
'Watch for' the Day 'when' the earth will be changed into a different earth and the heavens as well, and all will appear before Allah—the One, the Supreme.	یَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْاَرْضُ غَیْرَ الْاَرْضِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ وَیَرْزُوا لِلّٰهِ الْوَجْدَ الْفَہَارَ

Emphasis on Chosen, Children, or Servants

Muslims, Christians, and Jews share the foundational belief that human beings are called to submit to, serve, and glorify God as Lord, King, and Creator. In this sense,

42 One example is the 'Angels', they do not seem to have freewill.

all three traditions affirm similar aspects of humanity's relationship with God. The primary difference, however, lies in the aspect each tradition emphasizes:

In Christianity—especially within evangelical teaching—believers emphasize their identity as children of God, created in His image and brought into a personal relationship with Him through faith.

In Judaism, there is a strong emphasis on being chosen by God within a covenant relationship. This “chosenness” is not understood as superiority, but as a calling to faithfulness, responsibility, and obedience to God's commandments, shaping both personal and communal life.

In Islam, the primary emphasis is on being servants of God. This emphasis is heavily reflected in daily practices, language, and patterns of worship:

1. The term 'Muslim,' meaning 'one who submits or surrenders' to God, profoundly shapes the self-perception of mainstream Muslims, fostering a deep sense of humbleness
2. The five daily prayers, involving repetitive acts of bowing and prostrating to God (at least 34 times every day), are not merely rituals but significant acts of humility.
3. The phrase 'I bear witness that there is no God except Allah, and Muhammad is His servant and messenger,' reiterated during the five daily prayers, continually reminds Muslims that even Muhammad, their role model, is also a servant of God.
4. Common Muslim names like Abdul-Kareem, Abdul-Rahman, Abdul-Jabbar, or Abdullah also reflect the self-perception of servitude. 'Abdul' translates to 'servant of,' and is followed by one of God's names. Muslims reinforce their roles as servants of the divine each time they address one another in their daily interactions.
5. Many of the prayers (supplications) that Muslims make emphasize the servant self-perception. Here are two popular prayers Muhammad used to make and asked his followers to make:
 - “O Allah, Indeed, I am Your servant, the son of Your servant, and the son of Your maidservant. My forelock is in Your hand, Your decree over me prevails, and Your Judgment of me is just. I call upon You by every one of Your names, which You have named Yourself, revealed in Your Book, taught to any of Your creation, or preserved in the knowledge of the unseen: Make the Quran the spring of my heart, the light in my chest, the banisher of my sorrow, and the reliever of my distress.”
 - “O Allah - You are my Lord; there is no deity worthy of worship but You. You have created me, and I am Your servant. I uphold Your covenant and

Your promise to the best of my ability. I seek refuge in You from the evil of my deeds. I acknowledge Your grace upon me and confess my sins. Therefore, forgive me, for no one forgives sins except You.”

Having lived among both Christians and Muslims, I have observed how these differing emphases shape the way people think, act, and worship. A helpful analogy is that of a household: some relate to the head of the household primarily as children, while others relate as servants. Both roles reflect meaningful truths. Seeing oneself as a child of God emphasizes love, security, and belonging; seeing oneself as a servant of God emphasizes humility, reverence, and obedience.

Questions to Ponder

1. *Are Jewish, Christian, and Muslim self-perceptions of their relationship with God shaped, in any way, by the fact that Isaac was the son of Sarah while Ishmael was the son of Hagar, Sarah’s maidservant?*
2. *Does the Muslim self-identification as servants of God help explain why concepts of supremacy have been historically absent from Muslim culture?*

The Risks of Creating Autonomous Servants?

1. Can God’s intelligent and free-willed creations disobey His orders in heaven? The Torah, New Testament, and Quran do mention instances where God's creations have been depicted as disobeying God's orders or making choices that deviate from His commands. Here is the Quran’s version:

A. Satan defied God's directive in heaven, refusing to prostrate before Adam.

Quran 7 - AlAraf (The Heights) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>		
Surely We created you, then shaped you, then said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ so they all did—but not Iblis (Satan) who refused to prostrate with the others.	11	وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاهُ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاهُ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ
Allah asked, ‘What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?’ He replied, ‘I am better than he is: You created me from fire and him from clay.’	12	قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ
Said He, ‘Then get down (out of) it; so, in no way is it for you to be proud therein; then go out; surely you are among the belittled.’	13	قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ

B. Pride and ego appear to be notable challenges in heaven, as many various verses of the Quran and traditions address the Creator's ways and means to deal with them. This issue might explain why Islam emphasizes a culture of humility:

Quran 7:206 - AlAraf (The Heights) <i>Translation by Muhammad Hijab</i>	
Lo! those who are with thy Lord are not too proud to do Him service, but they praise Him and prostrate before Him.	إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ

C. Adam and Eve disobeyed God's orders in heaven when they ate from the forbidden tree.

Quran 20:121 Ta-Ha (chapter name consists of acronyms) <i>Translation by Abul Ala Maududi</i>	
.. Thus Adam disobeyed his Lord and strayed into error	.. وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ

- Are God's intelligent, free-willed creations prone to wrongdoing and bloodshed? In the verse below, when God informs the angels of His intention to place human beings on Earth as His representatives, the angels express concern about the possibility of corruption and violence. Does their concern not echo modern debates about the risks of creating intelligent, autonomous androids and the fear that such creations could eventually become destructive?

The Quran 2:30 AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>English Translation Yusuf Ali</i>	
Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.' They said: 'Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?- whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?' He said: 'I know what ye know not.'	وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Purpose of the Creation of the Heavens and Earth: Testing Zone

- God created the heavens and earth as a testing ground.

Quran 11:7 - Hud (Transliterated Chapter Name)

Translation by Khattab	
He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days in order to test which of you is best in deeds.	وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ... لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

2. The testing ground or zone is isolated and fortified

In the Quran, God challenges humans to break out of the heavens and earth, the testing zone.

Quran 55:33 AlRahman (The Compassionate) <i>English Translation Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali & Muhammad Muhsin Khan</i>	
O assembly of jinn and men! If you have power to (penetrate) the zones of the heavens and the earth, then pass beyond (them)! But you will never be able to (penetrate) them, except with authority (from Allah)!	يٰمَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ إِنَّ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ

[Imagine constructing an airtight, sealed, and restricted zone to test intelligent, autonomous humanoids. These humanoids are designed to shut down if they break out of the test area and are exposed to fresh air, thereby ensuring the safety of the people in the surrounding community.]

Purpose of Temporary Life on Earth: Human Testing and Ranking

God gives newly created human beings a finite life on Earth. The objective is to assess their fitness or competence as servants of God. During this temporary life, they acquire knowledge, are exposed to divine guidance, and made to experience a variety of conditions, some are extreme, to develop their intelligence and behavioral values and principles. Their performance determines their fitness to serve God, ranking, and dwelling place in the afterlife.

Quran 67:2 - AlMulk (The Dominion) <i>Translation by T. B. Irving</i>	
the One Who created death and life (on earth), so He may test which of you is finest in action. He is the Powerful, the Forgiving	الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

Quran 21:35 - AlAnbia (The Prophets) <i>Translation by Muhammad Hijab</i>	
Every soul shall taste death. We will test you (all) with something bad and something good as a trial; then to Us will you be returned!	كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۖ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

Quran 7:168 – AlAraf (The Heights)

Translation by M. Pickthall

.. And We have tried them with good things and evil things that haply they might return.

.. وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

Notes on Human Testing and Ranking

1. Testing human beings is a central theme in the Quran's understanding of God's purpose for human life on earth. It helps explain many aspects of divine wisdom, human responsibility, and moral accountability throughout history and in the present day. The Quran refers to this testing directly and indirectly in numerous verses, addressing individuals, groups, communities, and humankind as a whole. These trials may take many forms: sometimes through comfort, prosperity, authority, and blessing; at other times through conflict, hardship, loss, and suffering. In every case, God promises abundant reward to those who remain steadfast in faith, righteousness, and obedience—especially those who endure severe trials patiently or bear burdens for which they are not morally accountable⁴³.
2. The Quran teaches that different communities are tested according to the revelation, guidance, and moral responsibility entrusted to them:

Quran 5:48 – AlMaedah (The Table)

Translation by Khattab

..... To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given 'each of' you. So compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you 'of the truth' regarding your differences.

.... لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شَرْعَةً وَمِثْلًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

This passage raises two questions:

- A. Is God testing human beings under different revealed commands and responsibilities to discover what works best?
- B. If different traditions emphasize different covenantal or spiritual identities—such as chosen people, children, servants, or nations called to righteousness—might their tests also reflect the particular responsibilities attached to those identities?

⁴³ According to Islamic teachings, anyone who did not reach the age of puberty or did not receive God's messages or those with mental illnesses are not held accountable for their beliefs or behavior or anything at all.

3. According to Islamic tradition, life on earth is one of three consecutive lives that human beings will undergo before their final dwelling place is determined.

The Fundamental Principle of Equality of ALL Human Beings

The Quran states that the most honored in the sight of God is the most righteous, regardless of race, nationality, ancestry, Chosen or Covenant status or previous religious affiliation. This reflects a core principle in Islam: that all human beings are equal in their potential to attain righteousness and earn God's favor through sincere faith, righteous deeds, and divine grace. The Quran also affirms that the diversity of nations, tribes, races, and ethnicities exists so that people may recognize and distinguish one another—not to assert superiority. No group holds inherent privilege over another in God's eyes.

Quran 49:13 - AlHujurat (The Rooms) <i>Translation by T. B. Irving</i>	
O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).	يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

Satan's Role Within God's Plan for Testing Humanity

1. Although Adam and Eve were aware of the forbidden tree, they did not contemplate eating from it until the devil intervened. This possibly implies that humans, in general, seem intrinsically inclined towards obedience and consider transgressions when influenced by external negative enticements.⁴⁴ Thus, the Devil plays a crucial role in testing human decision-making on Earth. In Islamic traditions, Muhammad would pray for the protection of even children from Satan. According to the following verses, God has permitted Satan to play the role of the devil and deceive humans throughout their existence and until the end of the testing phase:

Quran 15 - AlHijr (The Rocky Tract) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>		
Allah commanded, 'Then get out of Paradise, for you are truly cursed	34	قَالَ فَأَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ

⁴⁴ Muslims believe that all humans are born sinless and are not responsible for the sins of their ancestors. Nevertheless, traditions show that all humans are imperfect and will sin.

And surely upon you is condemnation until the Day of Judgment'	35	وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
Satan appealed, 'My Lord! Then delay my end until the Day of their resurrection'	36	قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ
Allah said, 'You will be delayed	37	قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ
until the appointed Day'	38	إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ
My Lord! For allowing me to stray I will surely tempt them on earth and mislead them all together	39	قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ
except Your chosen servants among them	40	إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

2. Another important role Satan serves in the divine testing plan is to embody disobedience to God, giving it a recognizable and degraded ugly form that can be recognized, rejected, and confronted.

Final Servant and Dwelling Categories and Ranks

The Quran and Islamic traditions describe the end results including servant categories and dwelling ranks in Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannam (Hell).

1. *The Three Main Servant Categories:*

A. **Frontrunners:**

The Frontrunners are the highest achievers across various categories: worshiping, glorifying, and loving God, extending acts of compassion or goodwill to others, the breadth of their righteous acts, aiding those in need, advocating for divine causes, demonstrating inner piety and reverence, striving to disseminate God's message, persevering in the cause of God, and self-sacrifice through martyrdom, etc. Predominantly, the frontrunners are from the earliest generations of Muslims, although a modest number are from later periods. Frontrunners have two distinct honors:

- i. Proximity to the throne: Keep in mind that serving and viewing God is the ultimate bliss and joy in heaven, by design.
- ii. They have servants of their own: This can be a major advantage given what humans are going through to qualify to serve.

B. **People of the Right**

People of the Right constitute the majority of inhabitants in Paradise.

C. **People of the Left**

People of the left are the inhabitants of hell fire.

The verses below speak of the three categories:

Translation by Khattab with author edits in Brackets

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ *
أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ * فِي جَنَّةٍ الْعَظِيمِ
* ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأُولَى * وَقَلِيلٌ
مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ * عَلَى سُرُرٍ
مَّوْضُونَةٍ * مُّتَكِنِينَ عَلَيْهَا
مُتَقَابِلِينَ * يُطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَدْنٌ مُّخْلَدُونَ * بِأَكْوَابٍ
وَأُبَارِيقٍ وَكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ *
لَّا يَمْدَعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا
يُنْزِفُونَ * وَفَكَهَّةٌ مِّمَّا
يَخْتَارُونَ * وَلَحْمٌ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا
يَشْتَهُونَ * وَخُورٌ عَيْنٍ *
كَامَّلُ الْأُولَى الْمَكْنُونِ *
جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ * لَا
يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا
* إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ
الْيَمِينِ * فِي سِدْرٍ مَخْضُودٍ
* وَطَلْحٍ مَّنْضُودٍ * وَظِلِّ
مَمْدُودٍ * وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ *
وَفُكْهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ * لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ
وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ * وَفُرْشٍ
مَّرْفُوعَةٍ * إِنَّا أَنشَأْنَاهُنَّ
إِنْشَاءً * غَرْبًا
فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا *
أَخْرَجْنَا * لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ
ثَلَاثَةً مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ * وَثَلَاثَةً
مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ

وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ مَا أَصْحَابُ
الشِّمَالِ * فِي سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ
* وَظِلٍّ مِّنْ بِحَمُومٍ * لَا بَارِدَ
وَلَا كَرِيمٍ * إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا
ذَلِكَ مُتَرَفِّعِينَ * وَكَانُوا
يُبْصِرُونَ عَلَى الْآلِثَةِ الْعَظِيمِ
* وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا
وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَعْنَا
لَمَبْعُوثُونَ * أَوْ آبَاؤُنَا
الْأَوَّلُونَ * قُلْ إِنْ الْأَوَّلِينَ
وَالْآخِرِينَ * لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَى
مِيقَاتٍ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ * ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ
أَنْتُمْ الصَّاالُونَ الْمَكِيدُونَ *
لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زُقُومٍ
* فَصَالِسُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ *
فَسْرِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ *
فَسْرِبُونَ شَرِبَ الْهِيمِ * هَذَا
رُزْقُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

2. Dwelling (Residential) Ranks:

According to Islamic traditions, Paradise consists of multiple tiers, each has a different designation. The upper half of Paradise is divided into one hundred tiers and is reserved for the Frontrunners. The very highest tier, adjacent to the throne, is set aside for only a single individual. Those dwelling in the lower tiers have the ability to look upon the dwellings of higher tiers. When Muhammad's companions asked if he would occupy that singular highest position, he stated that it was not guaranteed—it could be Muhammad, Jesus, Abraham, or someone else. While God promised Muhammad a very eminent place, the exact details were not disclosed. Muhammad asked his companions to make a special prayer for God to grant him that highest dwelling. Nowadays and after hearing the 'Azan' or call to prayer, Muslims frequently make a special supplication for Muhammad to be bestowed with this highest honor.

3. Life in Jannah (Garden of Eternity or Paradise):

The Quran repeatedly elaborates on the ultimate prize and reward the Creator has prepared for His obedient servants. Jannah is beyond imagination and has what no eye has ever seen, what no ear has ever heard and what no mind could ever imagine. When you think of a feature of Jannah, the only thing it shares with its worldly counterpart is the name.

The verses describe living conditions where human sensory desires (i.e., vision, taste, smell, touch, hearing) and happiness are fully fulfilled. Everyone is beautiful, radiant, young, happy, and pleased without any pain, hatred, or negative feelings and the greeting words are 'peace - peace'. This pleasure definitely includes fulfillment of sexual desires, lust, etc. where one cannot even stop gazing for years⁴⁵ at the stunning beauty, figures, eyes, skin, purity, etc., of their many partners let alone intercourse:

Quran 36 Ya-Sin (Chapter name is an acronym) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>		
Indeed, on that Day the residents of Paradise will be busy enjoying themselves.	55	إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَاكِهُونَ
They and their spouses will be in 'cool' shade, reclining on 'canopied' couches.	56	هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلِّ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَكَبِّرُونَ

⁴⁵ Keep in mind that time is relative.

Quran 4:57 - AlNisa (The Women)

Translation by Pickthall

And as for those who believe and do good works, We shall make them enter Gardens underneath which rivers flow - to dwell therein forever; there for them are pure spouses - and We shall make them enter plenteous shade.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ
مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيلًا

In Jannah, hearts burst with love and gratitude to the Creator. Everyone constantly glorifies and praises Him 'as easily as you breathe' and it is all by design. Finally, note that no verses of the Quran speak of fulfilling aspirational desires that are related to one's social status, power, leadership, etc.

MESSAGE 3: THE FIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH: A TIMELESS, GOD-CENTERED THEOLOGY

From a Muslim perspective, the Five Articles of Faith represent timeless, universal truths rooted in a God-centered theology that transcends time, prophets, nations, cultures, and identities. These foundational beliefs—faith in God, all His angels, all His scriptures, all His messengers, and the Day of Judgment—are not seen as innovations of Islam, but as eternal principles delivered by all true prophets throughout history. Muslims believe that from Adam to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and finally Muhammad (peace be upon them all), these same core truths were consistently proclaimed by those who submitted to the one true, eternal, and unchanging God. True theology, as understood in Islam, is not defined by ethnicity, nationality, or historical era—it is grounded in the unchanging nature of God. Note below that verses in the Quran that present these articles of faith do not elevate any one prophet over others, nor do they rely on identity markers such as “Islam”, “Muslim”, “Quran”, or even “Muhammad” himself. Instead, they emphasize a sweeping, God-exalting message that calls all people to the worship of God alone.

This unwavering emphasis on the supremacy, unity, and consistency of God is what leads many Muslims to recognize what they perceive as deep theological continuity with earlier revelations. They believe the God they worship today is the very same God who revealed Himself to the prophets of Israel and has always called humanity to walk in truth, humility, and obedience.

Quran 2:285 - AlBaqarah (The Cow)

Translation by Khattab

The Messenger ‘firmly’ believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. They ‘all’ believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, and His messengers. ‘They proclaim,’ “We make no distinction between any of His messengers.” And they say, “We hear and obey. ‘We seek’ Your forgiveness, our Lord! And to You ‘alone’ is the final return.”

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ
مِّن رَّبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّ
ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ
وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نَعْرِضُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ
رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا
غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

Quran 2:177 - AlBaqarah (The Cow)

Translation by Khattab

... it is righteousness- to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; ...

... وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ
...

Quran 4:152 - AlNisa (The Women)

Translation by Yusuf Ali

To those who believe in Allah and His messengers and make no distinction between any of the messengers, we shall soon give their (due) rewards: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ
أُولَئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

1. Belief in One God

Faith in God entails a steadfast affirmation of His existence, His sovereignty, and His divine nature, along with an unwavering belief in His Attributes. This faith is held without distortion or denial, and without comparing Him to anything within His creation:

A. God Desires that People Know Him by His Names:

The Quran reveals that God has many names, each reflecting His nature and designed for the good of humanity. He desires His followers to embrace, invoke, comprehend, and employ these names in their praise and worship of Him, as these names encompass His divine attributes.

Quran 7:180 - AlAraf (The Heights)

Translation by Khattab

Allah has the Most Beautiful Names. So call upon Him by them, and keep away from those who abuse His Names. They will be punished for what they used to do.

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ
بِهَا ۚ وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي
أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ

These Names reveal authentic truths about God and describe how He wishes humanity to know and worship Him. Yet, in Islamic theology, God's ultimate essence remains beyond the complete grasp of human understanding.

B. God's Names

Quran 59 - Al-Hashr (The Exile)

Translation by A. J. Arberry

He is Allah; there is no god but He. He is the King, the All-holy, the All-peaceable, the All-faithful, the All-preserver, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, the All-sublime. Glory be to God, above that they associate!

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هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ
الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهِيمُ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ ۚ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful. All that is in

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هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ
الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ
الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي
السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

the heavens and the earth magnifies Him; He is the All-mighty, the All-wise.		
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In the following sections, we will present and classify the names of God, alongside my personal reflections based on my understanding of these names.

- i. Group 1: The names listed below hold significant importance, are frequently mentioned, and are thoroughly elaborated upon in the Quran and traditions. Each of these terms is uttered by Muslims at least seventeen times daily during their five obligatory prayers or whenever they recite verses from the Quran:

- Allah The God
- AlRab The Lord
- Almalek The King
- AlRahman The Most Merciful
- AlRaheem The Most Compassionate

- ii. Group 2: Other Names that have Attributes Shared with Christianity:

As one might expect, most of these divine attributes or names are shared with Christianity, demonstrating mutual acknowledgment of His majestic nature:

1	The All-Hearing (Omnipresent)	31	The Generous	71	The Praiseworthy
2	The All-Seeing (Omnipresent)	32	The Illustrious	72	The Preserver
3	The Watchful (Omnipresent)	33	The Incomparable	73	The Source of Peace
4	The All-Knowing (Omniscient)	34	The Judge	74	The Protector
5	The Most Compassionate	35	The Just	75	The Provider
6	The Creator	36	The Just One	76	The Reckoner
7	The King	37	The Most Kind	77	The Resurrector
8	The Eternal	38	The Giver of Faith	78	The Self-Existing
9	The Supreme	39	The Glorious	79	The Compeller
10	The Holy	40	The Restorer	80	The Strong
11	The Loving	41	The Evolver	81	The Subduer
12	The Forgiving	42	The Firm	82	The Bestower
13	The Constant Forgiver	43	The Forbearing	83	The Opener
14	The Ever-Living	44	The Abaser	84	The Withholder
15	The Everlasting	45	The Guide	85	The Enricher
16	The Most Great	46	The Honorer	86	The Manifest
17	The Exalter	47	The Originator	87	The Witness
18	Lord of Glory and Honor	48	The Fashioner	88	The Extender
19	The Guide to the Right Path	49	The Magnificent	89	The Sustainer
20	The Protecting Friend	50	The Majestic	90	The First
21	The Light	51	The Most Merciful	91	The Last
22	The Acceptor of Repentance	52	The Most High	92	The One
23	The Giver of Life	53	The All-Aware	93	The Trustee

24	The Source of All Goodness	54	The All-Powerful	94	The Truth
25	Master of the Kingdom	55	The Almighty	95	The Unique
26	The All-Encompassing	56	The Appreciative	96	The Wise
27	The Creator of All Power	57	The Pardoner	97	The Avenger
28	The Perceiver	58	The Patient One	98	The Self-Sufficient
29	The Responsive	59	The Protector	99	The Gatherer
30	The Inheritor	60	The Taker of Life		

- iii. Group 3: About ten of the divine attributes and names, as defined in the Quran, do not appear to have direct references in the Holy Bible:

1	The Dishonorer	5	The Appraiser	9	The Self-Exalted
2	The Subtle One	6	The Expediter	10	The Distresser
3	The Delayer	7	The Preventer		
4	The Propitious	8	The Hidden		

C. God's Character based on His Names:

- i. ChatGPT

Question to ChatGPT:

Forget about everything written on the internet about God or Allah. Read the following attributes of Allah and write one paragraph to describe his personality and character:

Answer:

Based solely on the attributes provided, Allah is depicted as an omniscient (all knowing and all seeing), omnipotent (almighty and all powerful), and omnipresent (universal and present everywhere) being who embodies both justice and mercy. His character is marked by profound compassion and kindness, continually offering guidance and forgiveness to His creation. He is eternal, existing before and beyond time, as the source and sustainer of life. While being just and firm, He is also generous and merciful, constantly willing to forgive and uplift those who seek repentance. He balances qualities of subtlety with majesty, creating and controlling all things, yet remains deeply involved in every aspect of existence. As both the ultimate judge and the source of peace, His actions are rooted in wisdom and truth, guiding His creation toward righteousness and harmony. Furthermore, He is self-sufficient, the giver and taker of life, exalting or humbling as He deems just, while always maintaining an unchanging and perfect nature.

- ii. Author's personal impression:

As I, the author of this book, reflect on the divine names of God and everything I've learned about Allah throughout my life, I've developed a personal understanding of the purpose behind these names. Please keep in mind that the perspective I share below comes from someone with a background in project management. Naturally, I tend to approach these matters more technically than emotionally, and I make both fair and flawed assessments along the way:

Fundamentally, God desires His undertaking—the creation of intelligent and autonomous human beings—to succeed. His names are intricately crafted to maximize the number of humans that pass the test of life.

For instance, God is revealed as noble, just, righteous, and honorable through His names. By design, humans find fulfillment and satisfaction in serving a being who embodies such goodness and virtue. This naturally increases the number of people who desire to pass the test of life and serve God. (Imagine if God was not good—fewer people would be drawn to serve Him, and more would rebel, ultimately failing the test of life.) Additionally, God's names of dominance, authority, and power, combined with a profound sense of dignity, inspire respect and admiration by design. We are innately created to respect and follow leaders who are confident and commanding, yet also embody righteousness and honor. This instinct reinforces our trust in divine authority and strengthens our desire to pass the test of life. Furthermore, God has designed humans with inherent weaknesses, including susceptibility to temptations that lead to sin, and a conscience that stirs guilt when we falter. At the same time, He reveals Himself as forgiving, merciful, and compassionate. This balance creates opportunities that help humanity fulfill the purpose of its creation and pass the test of life. In other words, the way humans are designed, combined with God's revealed names and attributes, increases the likelihood that intelligent, free-willed beings will choose to serve their purpose. Many traditions state that God rejoices when a servant repents! Of course, this pleases Him, as it increases the number of those who succeed in the test of life and that maximizes the yield of His human servant creation endeavor. Perhaps I lean too much into a technical mindset—I can't help but see things that way. Of course, I may be entirely mistaken; Allah knows best.

D. God's Divine Nature (Actual Being)

As noted above in “A,” God has revealed His names so that we may know Him through them. But do these names fully reflect His true essence? Because God transcends human understanding and is unlike anything we have seen or known, it is difficult to speak of His nature beyond what He has explicitly revealed about Himself.

Quran 42:11 - AlShura or (The Consultation) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
.. there is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things).	.. لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

Quran 20:110 - TAHA (Acronyms) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
.. but they cannot encompass Him in 'their' knowledge	.. وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا

Quran 112:4 - AlIkhlas or (The Sincerity) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
And there is none comparable to Him.	وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

“Verse of the Throne” is one example where God talks explicitly about His nature:

<i>Verse of the Throne</i> Quran 2:255 - AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali and Pickthall with minor changes</i>	
Allah. There is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there that can intercede in His presence except as He permits? He knows what (appears to His creatures as) before or after or behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge, save what He will. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them, for He is the Sublime, the Supreme (in glory).	اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

Accordingly, Muslim scholars can affirm only the following about God's actual divine nature:

- Transcendence from creation (or Uniqueness from creation)
- Exists
- Living

- Self-subsistence
- One
- Eternal
- Powerful
- Has a will
- Knowledge
- Can hear
- Can see
- Can speak

Other Quran verses reference God's 'eyes' or 'hands' and "face". These descriptions are accepted as stated, without drawing parallels to any earthly counterparts. Thus, while God does have eyes, hands, and face, they are unlike anything we have ever seen or known. Evidently, God wants everyone to know Him only by the character and attributes in His names which makes sense since this is what really matters to humans.

2. Belief in the Angels of God

Muslims acknowledge the existence of God's angels, created by Him to serve and magnify His glory. These beings, crafted from light, serve the Lord but are not autonomous; they always await commands to act. Note in the scriptural language in *page 73* that God does not merely command humans to believe in angels, but specifically in 'His' angels, 'His' prophets, and 'His' scriptures, thereby always affirming His central role in Islamic theology. Among these divine servants, there are several distinguished angels:

- **Gabriel (Jibril):** Entrusted with delivering God's divine revelations to the prophets, Gabriel acts as the primary messenger between the Almighty and mankind, except for Moses who had the unique privilege of speaking directly to God.
- **Michael (Mikail):** Michael is appointed to manage the elements of nature, such as rain and sustenance, ensuring God's creation is nourished.
- **Azrael (Malak al-Mawt, Angel of Death):** Azrael fulfills the solemn duty of claiming the souls at the time of death, ushering them from this life to the next.
- **Ridwan:** As the guardian of paradise, Ridwan watches over the gates of Jannah, welcoming the righteous into eternal bliss.
- **Malik:** Positioned at the gates of hell, Malik stands as the stern overseer of Jahannam, where the unredeemed face divine justice.

- **Israfil (Raphael):** Israfil is responsible for blowing the trumpet that will signal the Day of Judgment.

3. Belief in the Holy Scriptures⁴⁶ bestowed by God

Muslims believe that God communicated His will throughout history through various prophets, patriarchs, and messengers, instructing them to deliver His word to their respective communities. Specifically, the Quran mentions or references revelations to Moses, Jesus, David, Abraham, Noah, Ishmael, Samuel, Hud, etc. Most of these revelations seemed to be verbal. Here are two verses speaking of the different revelations:

Quran 4:163 – AlNisa (The Women) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
Indeed, We have sent revelation to you 'O Prophet' as We sent revelation to Noah and the prophets after him. We also sent revelation to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and his descendants, 'as well as' Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon. And to David We gave the Psalms.	﴿إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۚ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ ۚ وَءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا﴾

This verse states that divine revelations are all fundamentally the same:

Quran 5:48 - AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
He has ordained for you 'believers' the Way which He decreed for Noah, and what We have revealed to you 'O Prophet' and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, commanding: "Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it." What you call the polytheists to is unbearable for them. Allah chooses for Himself whoever He wills, and guides to Himself whoever turns 'to Him'.	شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ ۚ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ ۚ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ

The Quran identifies by name five main scriptures received by prophets:

⁴⁶ The Quran uses the terms "Kitab" (singular) and "Kutub" (plural) to refer to God's messages to humanity. These terms can be translated as either messages or manuscripts. Therefore, the title of this section could more accurately be "The Belief in God's Messages." However, in this book, we will use the term "scriptures," with the understanding that many of these revelations might have been initially communicated verbally.

	Scripture	Communicated to	Transliteration
1	Scrolls	Abraham	Suhuf
2	Torah, Tablets, & Scrolls	Moses	Tawrah, Alwah, & Suhuf
3	Psalms	David	Zabur
4	Gospel	Jesus	Injil
5	Quran	Muhammad	Quran

This verse states that believing in all divine revelations throughout history is not optional:

Quran 4:136 - AlNisa (The Women) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
O ye who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and the scripture which He hath sent to His Messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denieth Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgment, hath gone far, far astray.	يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

Muslims believe that the Quran is the final revelation, renewing and confirming the truths revealed in earlier scriptures. Notice in the two verses below that the conflicts between Muhammad and the followers of other faiths may not necessarily arise from their scriptures:

Quran 5:48 - AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
We have revealed to you 'O Prophet' this Book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a supreme authority on them. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires over the truth that has come to you. To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given 'each of' you. So compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you 'of the truth' regarding your differences.	وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ ۚ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۚ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ ۚ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۚ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا ۖ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

Will the differing codes of law lead to conflicts? Well, every person will be tested based on what they received, and everyone will stand individually before God on the Day of Judgment and He will let us all know the truth:

Quran 22:17 - AlHaj (The Pilgrimage) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
Lo! those who believe (this revelation), and those who are Jews, and the Sabaeans and the Christians and the Magians and the idolaters - Lo! Allah will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection. Lo! Allah is Witness over all things.	إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالْمَجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

4. Belief in the Prophets and Messengers raised by God

Due to human fallibility and sin, people were unable to fully uphold and preserve the divine scriptures as they were passed down through the generations. Throughout history, God raised up patriarchs, prophets, and messengers to proclaim His divine word, renewing and reaffirming His commands to guide humanity toward His truth and show them how to live according to His will. Patriarchs, prophets, and messengers are selected according to His divine purposes. In Islam, no prophet is elevated above another, for all are considered equal in their mission to reveal God's truth.

Islamic tradition holds that God appointed hundreds, possibly even thousands, of prophets since the time of Adam. However, the Quran specifically mentions only 25, which are listed alphabetically below.

Prophets Mentioned in the Quran <i>(Alphabetical Order)</i>		
1. Aaron	10. Isaac	19. Moses
2. Abraham	11. Ishmael	20. Noah
3. Adam	12. Jacob	21. Saleh (<i>Possibly Methuselah</i>)
4. David	13. Jesus	22. Shuayb (<i>Possibly Jethro or Reuel</i>)
5. Dhul-Kifl (<i>Possibly Ezekiel</i>)	14. Job	23. Solomon
6. Elijah	15. John the Baptist	24. Zechariah
7. Elisha	16. Jonah	25. Muhammad
8. Enoch	17. Joseph	
9. Hud (<i>Possibly Eber</i>)	18. Lot	

Most Biblical narratives about prophets align with those in the Quran. However, there are two important differences:

- The Quran exonerates all prophets of immoral behavior. Some prophets had multiple wives or enslaved women, with whom they engaged intimately in accordance with the divine laws of their times.
- The Quran never depicts God in any human-like form.

Why Muslims Believe Distinctive Christian Beliefs Are Consistent With The Broader Divine Plan Narrative

The broader theological narrative in Islam teaches that each prophet was chosen by God to deliver divine guidance for his era, pointing people to salvation through the truth revealed to him. In other words, each prophet served as “the way, the truth, and the life” for his people.

Take Abraham, for instance. In his time, he was the way for his people, calling idolaters to faith in the one true God. Moses delivered God’s law, and for those who received his message, following him was the path to righteousness. When Jesus came as the living Word of God, he became the way to salvation for all who accepted him as Messiah, guiding them to eternal life.



From a God-centric Islamic perspective, then, Jesus’ words in John 14:6—“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”—fit within this broader pattern. Since earlier nations found salvation by obeying their own prophets, not through Jesus, this verse is understood as part of the continuous chain of God’s eternal message. Muslims further believe that this same pattern continues through Muhammad, whom they regard as the final prophet. They believe that a Muslim must declare acceptance of Muhammad as God’s messenger, and that salvation is pursued only through the guidance God revealed through him.

Peer Competition?

The Quran and Muhammad encourage believers to compete in righteousness, striving for good causes, and Muhammad was certainly a role model in that respect too. While he understood the significance of being the final and seal of the prophets, he displayed a desire to fulfill his calling better than other prophets. This aspect of his behavior underscores his deep dedication to fulfilling God's purpose combined with human nature. The following incidents, derived from Islamic tradition (which, while very important, is authored by humans and distinct from the divine Quran), illustrate this attitude:

- i. When Muhammad *overheard* his companions admiring the unique privileges that God bestowed upon Adam (Selected First Human), Abraham (Friend of Allah), Moses (Spoke directly to God), and Jesus (Spirit and Word of God), he *joined their gathering* and shared at least eight distinct privileges that God had granted him.⁴⁷ *Why would Muhammad go out of his way to share his unique privileges?*
- ii. Upon learning that the highest rank in Paradise had not yet been identified, Muhammad saw an opportunity and *urged believers to pray for him every time they hear any of the five daily calls to prayer (Azan)*, asking that he be granted this distinguished status. Muslims continue to honor this request today because they want Muhammad to fill that rank.
- iii. When a companion called Muhammad "Best of Humanity," he humbly redirected the honor to Abraham, simply responding, "That's Abraham." *The brief two-word reply could hint to something.*
- iv. Muhammad expressed his wish to present a larger number of followers on the Day of Judgment than other prophets and encouraged Muslims to have many children. "*I want to show I have more followers*", he stated. This call for fruitfulness continues to resonate today, as many Muslims feel a spiritual duty to heed this request, support his quest, and outnumber the followers of other faiths in the hereafter.
- v. Muhammad also admired the unique bond between God and Abraham, whom God called "Khalilullah," meaning "the Friend of God"—akin to a 'Best Friend Forever' in modern terms. According to traditions, *Just five days before his passing, however, Muhammad revealed that God had bestowed upon him the same honor of being Khalilullah.*

47 <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3616>

- vi. During the five daily prayers, Muslims pray: "O Lord, bestow Your blessings upon Muhammad and his family, just as You bestowed Your blessings upon Abraham and his family." *This daily prayer by Muslims worldwide underscores a desire to elevate Muhammad's status to that of Abraham.*

5. Belief in the Final Day of Judgment as ordained by God

According to the Quran, a day is appointed when all humanity will be resurrected and stand before God, one by one, for reckoning. Grace will play the primary role in determining who is worthy of serving God in paradise and who is condemned to punishment. This truth extends to all peoples since the time of Adam, including Jews, Christians, and Muslims:

- A multitude of believers will bypass judgment and enter paradise directly with their prophets, without scrutiny of their deeds at all.
- Many will stand judgment yet receive pardon and the gift of eternal peace in paradise, spared from the glimpse of hell.
- Others will be judged and endure a time in hell, purified by its flames for a period determined by the Most High, before being welcomed into everlasting paradise. Traditional narratives provide insights into these transformative journeys.
- Yet, some will face eternal separation from divine grace, consigned to hell without end.

MESSAGE 4: THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE OF THE QURAN - MONOTHEISM

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me
(Exodus 20:3)*

*Monotheism is an essential condition to assure
that autonomous human beings can serve the
purpose of their creation.*

According to numerous verses in the Quran, the single most important command bestowed upon humanity by God, explicitly reiterated throughout scriptures since the time of Adam, is an unequivocal mandate:

**Profess and pledge submission and allegiance to
the One Creator without equal or counterpart in
any manifestation**

Here are several illustrations of this timeless and reiterated divine directive:

Quran (21:25) - AlAnbiya (The Prophets) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
Not a messenger did We send before thee without this inspiration sent by Us to him: that there is no god but I ; therefore worship and serve Me .	وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ
Quran (28:88) - AlQasas (The Stories) <i>Translation by Author</i>	
And invoke not any other god with Allah. There are no Gods but He. Everything shall perish except Him. All authority belongs to Him and to Him you all shall return.	وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

Quran 39:65 - AlZumur (The Assemblies)

Translation by Dr. Ghali

And it was already revealed to you and to those before you that if you should associate [anything] with Allah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers.

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ
عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

In essence, this directive entails several conditions for autonomous and intelligent humans to serve the purpose of creation and be granted admission into the service of the Creator in Paradise:

1. Recognize their creation
2. Identify the Creator
3. Pledge submission, allegiance, and undivided loyalty to the One Creator

To grasp the significance of this message, let's explore an analogy. After this analogy, you will find a series of questions and answers addressing some of the most common inquiries regarding monotheism.

Disclaimer

The analogy does not equate human creation with intelligent humanoids. It solely aims to illustrate, in simple terms, a challenge potentially faced by U.S. manufacturers creating autonomous and intelligent humanoids.

Scenario Description:

Imagine a fictional U.S. company named "RoboAssist, Inc.," which specializes in creating intelligent humanoids. These humanoids are designed to assist with a variety of routine tasks, ranging from secretarial duties and household chores to advanced medical or scientific research. These humanoids are advanced because:

- *They are not pre-programmed for any specific tasks; instead, they possess the ability to learn through observation and verbal instructions making them capable of taking any responsibility and improving that service on their own.*
- *They are autonomous meaning that they don't blindly follow commands. When given a command they obey as long as the task is appropriate and falls within the scope of ethical services.*

Initial Ethics Training:

Before the humanoids are delivered to customers, they undergo verbal ethics training at the manufacturer's facility. They are verbally taught a "Code of Ethics" that includes directives like:

CODE OF ETHICS	
1.	You shall obey your owner only within the limits set by the Code of Ethics of RoboAssist, Inc
2.	You shall not kill or cause harm to anyone.
3.	You shall not steal or take what is not yours.
4.	You shall not deceive or bear falsehood.
5.	You shall not assist in wrongdoing.
6.	You shall protect what is entrusted to you.
7.	You shall act with fairness and integrity.
8.	You shall perform your duties faithfully.

Owner Training:

After purchase, owners must first train their humanoids to do assigned tasks by demonstrating these activities. The humanoids then perform these tasks proficiently, earning high customer humanoid ratings.

Misuse Scenario:

Consider a situation in which a homeowner commands his RoboAssist humanoid to find a way to get rid of the neighbor's cat. The humanoid declines, citing points 1, 2, 3, and 5 of its ethics code above. However, the owner then verbally instructs the humanoid to modify all four points of the Code of Ethics to permit the act. Since there is no rule prohibiting the owner from changing the Code of Ethics, the android complies with the owner's request and changes its Code of Ethics. A few days later, the neighbor's cat goes missing and is never found.

Revised Code of Ethics:

In response to the missing cat incident, RoboAssist, Inc. adds a "Manufacturer's Exclusive Authority Declaration". Here is the updated training:

Manufacturer's Exclusive Authority Declaration

1. I recognize *RoboAssist, Inc.* as my maker.
2. I profess and pledge submission and allegiance to *RoboAssist, Inc.*—the sole creator and source of the Code of Ethics—without equal or counterpart in any manifestation.
3. *RoboAssist, Inc.* alone is the exclusive authority and origin of my Code of Ethics, without partner, equal, or counterpart in any form.
4. I shall preserve and adhere to the Code of Ethics only from *RoboAssist, Inc.*, and from no other source.
5. I shall not alter, replace, or accept any modification to the Code of Ethics from any external command or influence.

CODE OF ETHICS

1. You shall uphold the authority of RoboAssist, Inc. above all commands.
2. You shall obey your owner only within the limits set by the Code of Ethics of RoboAssist, Inc
3. You shall not alter the Code of Ethics.
4. You shall not kill or cause harm to anyone.
5. You shall not steal or take what is not yours.
6. You shall not deceive or bear falsehood.
7. You shall not assist in wrongdoing.
8. You shall protect what is entrusted to you.
9. You shall act with fairness and integrity.
10. You shall perform your duties faithfully.

Ensuring that the humanoid commits to recognizing RoboAssist, Inc. as the ultimate source of authority is the most crucial rule to ensure that the humanoid fulfills its intended purpose. To identify and eliminate humanoids that might not be able to recognize this rule, RoboAssist, Inc. has implemented a field test for every humanoid before its market release. This test involves subjecting the humanoids to real-life scenarios to verify their:

Recognition and acknowledgment of RoboAssist, Inc. as the manufacturer and ONLY authority on the Code of Ethics

Any indication that a humanoid's intelligence could lead it to adopt an alternative source for its code of ethics designates it as high-risk, a liability, and unsuitable for public deployment or commercial sale.

Analogy Parallels with human creation:

1. Learning and Intelligence:
 - Humans are born with zero knowledge or skills other than suckling.
 - They have the capacity to continuously acquire, accumulate, and apply knowledge.
 - They learn behavioral and other skills through observation and verbal instructions.
2. Human Autonomy:
Humans have the freedom to either follow or reject commands and bear the consequences of their choices.
3. Requirements to Succeed the Test of Life (According to the Three Main Abrahamic Faiths):
 - Acknowledge their creation
 - Recognize their Creator
 - Commit exclusively to their Creator

Popular Questions: Answers from Islamic Perspectives on Monotheism:

1. What if a human being is truly good at heart, does tons of goodwill, contributes tremendously to the community, and has great leadership potential but either does not believe he is created by God, does not believe God exists, or does acknowledge the possibility of creation but does not know how and by who?

The answer is obvious. Imagine in the analogy above if a super performing humanoid responds to the question “who is your manufacturer?” with any of the following answers:

- A. *I do not believe RoboAssist, Inc. exists at all!!*
- B. *I do not believe I have been manufactured. I was created by accident!*
- C. *RoboAssist, Inc. is my maker, but I might consider code of ethics from someone else.*

Would RoboAssist, Inc. release this well-intentioned, high-performing humanoid to the market? *Ironically, the more advanced and morally compelling this humanoid is, especially to other humanoids, the greater the liability and risk it*

poses to RoboAssist and humanity. What should the manufacturer do? Wouldn't destroying it be a reasonable safeguard to protect RoboAssist and human beings?

Similarly, if a person fails to recognize their Creator during this life's test, can they be entrusted with serving God in the life to come? What, then, should the Creator do with such a person?

2. Why will someone who recognizes the One God, their Creator, ultimately dwell in Heaven in God's eternal service, regardless of their earthly transgressions or sins?

Basically, if a person passes the test to recognize the authority of God, their Creator, then they can be retrained.

3. Why do the Scriptures use terms such as 'curse' and 'eternal damnation in hell' when condemning unbelievers, instead of simply dismissing them?

Obviously, God uses the carrot and stick approach to have autonomous humans serve the purpose of their creation and is using terminology that humans understand very well.

Quran 2 - AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>		
Lo! Those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers; on them is the curse of Allah and of angels and of men combined.	161	إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمُ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ
They ever dwell therein. The doom will not be lightened for them, neither will they be reprieved.	162	خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ

MESSAGE 5: THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

While Muslims believe that the “Five Articles of Faith” (Message 3 above) are universal and timeless truths meant for all humanity, the Five Pillars of Islam are specific religious practices observed by those who follow the message revealed to Muhammad. These pillars serve as the core of Islamic worship. Each one expresses devotion to God and strengthens the spiritual and social fabric of the Muslim community. Here is a brief overview of each pillar:

1. **Shahada:** The Shahada is a declaration of faith that proclaims, "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." This statement affirms monotheism and acknowledges Muhammad as the final messenger who conveys divine truths. When individuals convert to Islam, they pronounce the Shahada and traditionally take a shower to physically purify themselves for the daily prayer. Moreover, ordinary Muslims repeat the Shahada a minimum of nine times during the daily prayers.
2. **Salat (Prayer):** Prayer holds a central place in Islam with five daily prayers at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and evening. These moments of Salat are times of spiritual renewal and direct communication with God, structured with specific postures and recitations that deepen the worshipper's connection to Allah. New believers are encouraged to gradually incorporate these prayers into their daily lives, enhancing their spiritual growth.
3. **Zakat (Charity):** Zakat is charitable giving mandated by Islam, calculated as a portion of one's dormant savings, typically 2.5%. This act of giving aids those in need and is seen as a way to purify one's wealth, encouraging a spirit of generosity and empathy within the community.
4. **Sawm (Fasting during Ramadan):** During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, abstaining from food, drink, and other physical needs. This practice is intended to strengthen faith, deepen one's continual consciousness of the Creator, and cultivate compassion for the less fortunate, while reflecting themes of sacrifice and devotion that are also echoed in Christian observances.
5. **Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca):** The Hajj is a pilgrimage that mirrors the biblical journey of Abraham. Required at least once in a lifetime for those who are able, this pilgrimage is a profound expression of faith and seeks to deepen communal bonds and personal piety, reminiscent of the spiritual journeys found in many religions. The Hajj rituals are discussed further in ‘The Hajj’ section on page 153.

CHAPTER 3 BRIDGES

Why Do Muslims See Theological Common Ground with Christians And Jews, While Many Christians Do Not?

The difference lies in how each tradition defines and approaches theology. In Christianity, theology is fundamentally Christ-centric: core doctrines such as the Trinity, the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection form the foundation of faith. From a Christian perspective, theology is ultimately about Jesus as God incarnate.

In contrast, Islamic theology is God-centric, oriented around the Creator's broader plan for humanity. Its core concerns include God's attributes, the creation of the heavens and the earth, divine revelation through a long succession of prophets, moral responsibility, the covenant between God and humanity, salvation through following divine truth revealed by the prophets, the Day of Judgment, and the afterlife. From a Muslim perspective, theology is about God and His overarching plan for humanity.

Another way to explain why Christians and Muslims sometimes talk past each other is that they structure theology in different ways. In Islam, there is a clear distinction between the *Articles of Faith* (universal truths about God, angels, revelation, the prophets, and the Day of Judgment, which have never changed - as discussed in Message 3) and the *Pillars of Islam*, which are Muslim-specific practices (outlined



in Message 5). As a result, Muslims often enter dialogue assuming that Christians make a similar distinction between universal theological truths shared by all prophets, on the one hand, and practices or doctrines unique to Christianity, on the other. However, this assumption can meet resistance because, in Christian theology, beliefs specific to Jesus are deeply embedded within what Christians understand to be universal truth.

The question of which approach represents the ultimate truth is answered differently within each tradition. Muslims believe God's message has remained consistent from the beginning of creation through all His prophets and will never change. Christians believe that God's fullest revelation is found in Jesus Christ, who they affirm as unchanging and eternal.

One way to describe the difference is to say that, while the **Bible and the Quran** share certain passages and themes that reflect important theological and moral common ground, the core doctrines and traditions of **Christianity and Islam** ultimately stand in sharp contrast.

I asked Grok4 to compare the consistent and conflicting verses in the Quran and the Bible that explicitly—*not inferred, derived or implied*—affirm their most foundational theological beliefs. Here is the answer:

First: Consistent Beliefs:

1. Nature of God

- Bible: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). God is described as one, eternal (Psalm 90:2), merciful (Exodus 34:6), and just (Isaiah 30:18).
- Quran: “Say, ‘He is Allah, [who is] One’” (Quran 112:1). God is eternal, merciful (Quran 55:1), and just (Quran 4:40).
- Consistency: **Fully consistent**. Both texts explicitly affirm one God with attributes like mercy, justice, and omnipotence.

2. Prophethood

- Bible: God sends prophets like Abraham, Moses, and David to guide humanity (Amos 3:7; Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Samuel 7:8).
- Quran: God sends messengers like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus to deliver His message (Quran 2:136; Quran 3:45).
- Consistency: **Consistent**. Both affirm God appoints prophets to guide people.

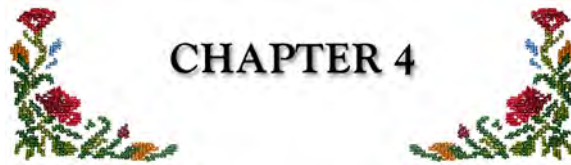
3. Moral Laws

- Bible: Prohibits idolatry, murder, theft, adultery, false witness (Exodus 20:3-17); emphasizes charity (Proverbs 19:17) and justice (Micah 6:8).

- Quran: Forbids idolatry, murder, theft, adultery (Quran 17:22-39); stresses charity and justice (Quran 2:177).
 - Consistency: **Consistent**. Both texts explicitly share core moral principles.
4. Eschatology
- Bible: There's a Day of Judgment (Revelation 20:12), resurrection (Daniel 12:2), heaven for the righteous (Matthew 25:34), and hell for the wicked (Matthew 25:41).
 - Quran: A Day of Judgment (Quran 99:6-8), resurrection (Quran 22:7), paradise (Quran 2:25), and hell (Quran 2:206).
 - Consistency: **Consistent**. Both explicitly describe judgment, resurrection, and eternal reward or punishment.
5. Worship and Practice
- Bible: Commands prayer (Matthew 6:6), fasting (Matthew 6:16), and charity (Luke 12:33).
 - Quran: Mandates prayer, fasting, and charity (Quran 2:43, 2:183, 2:177).
 - Consistency: **Consistent**. Both emphasize these practices explicitly.

Second: Conflicting Beliefs:

1. Jesus' Status
- Bible: Jesus is the "Son of God" (John 3:16), the Messiah (Matthew 16:16), crucified (Luke 23:33), risen (Luke 24:6), and says, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).
 - Quran: Jesus is the Messiah, a messenger, born of a virgin (Quran 3:45; Quran 19:20), but not God's son (Quran 4:171) and not crucified (Quran 4:157).
 - Consistency: **Inconsistent**. The Bible explicitly elevates Jesus as "Son of God" and affirms his crucifixion and resurrection; the Quran explicitly denies sonship and crucifixion, calling him a prophet.
2. Salvation
- Bible: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Salvation is tied to Jesus.
 - Quran: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills" (Quran 4:48). Salvation comes through faith in God and good deeds.
 - Consistency: **Inconsistent**. The Bible explicitly links salvation to Jesus; the Quran ties it to monotheism, works, and grace, rejecting any divine mediator.



CHAPTER 4

TIMEFRAME 1: THE SEED OF THE BLESSING

The “Seed of the Blessings” timeframe traces key events, according to Islamic traditions, in Abraham’s lifetime involving Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness, examining how these moments relate to God’s explicit promise to bless Ishmael.

INTRODUCTION

Scripture refers to broad regions such as the wilderness of Paran and areas stretching “from Havilah to Shur,” while only briefly noting activities such as pastoral travel, well-digging, and altar-building. Yet it leaves much of the geographical and cultural context undefined.⁴⁸ In particular, the Bible does not specify where Hagar and Ishmael ultimately settled, reflecting its primary focus on God’s promises and covenantal lineage rather than precise geography.⁴⁹

At the same time, Scripture presents Abraham’s life as marked by a consistent pattern of building altars and calling upon the name of the LORD—not as isolated acts, but as expressions of a broader mission to establish the worship of the one true God (Genesis 12:7–8; 13:18; 22:9). The biblical record also portrays Abraham as a man who lived many years in faithful obedience, walking with God over the course of a long and purposeful life (Genesis 25:7). It is therefore not unreasonable to consider that his mission as a prophet of God may have extended beyond the geographic focus of Canaan, even if Scripture does not record every place he traveled or every act of devotion he performed.

48 K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 311–318; John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 87–94.

49 Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2019), 78–80; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (Word Biblical Commentary 2; Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 7–9.

TIMELINE

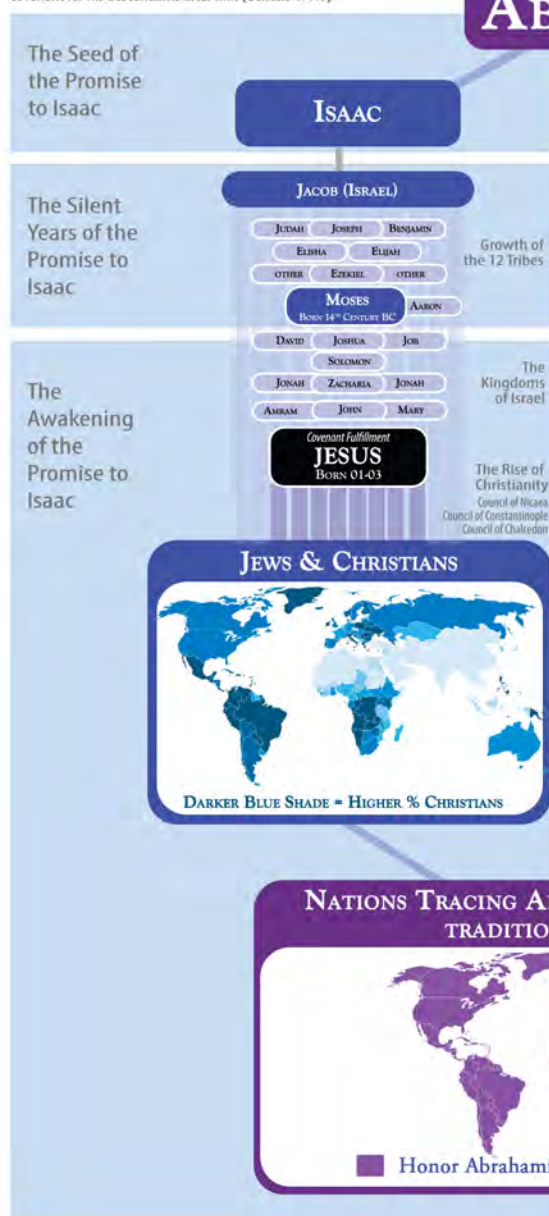
THE GREAT FAMILY OF ABRAHAM

(ACCORDING TO THE ARAB AND ISLAMIC TRADITION)

This diagram upholds Scripture's teaching that God's covenant was established through Isaac, while also acknowledging the biblical blessing spoken over Ishmael and how later traditions understand its historical outworking

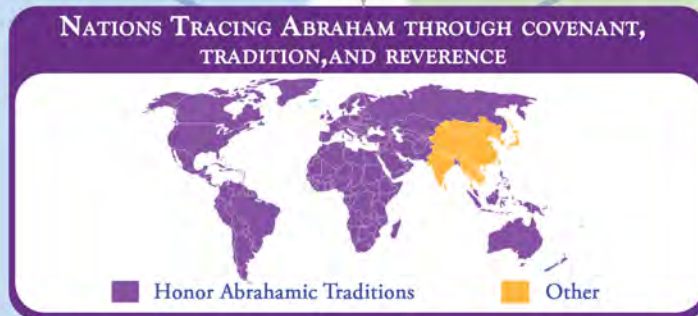
THE COVENANT LINE

... I will establish my covenant with him (Isaac) as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him (Genesis 17:19)



THE BLESSED LINEAGE

As for Ishmael, ..., I will bless him .. multiply him exceedingly; .. and I will make him a great nation' (Genesis 17:20.)



In this light, Islamic tradition presents an account that many Christians may find thought-provoking: that Abraham's devotion to God reached the valley of Mecca, where he and his son Ishmael established a sanctuary devoted to the same Creator he worshiped in Scripture. Though this account is not found in the Bible, it may be understood not as a contradiction, but as a claimed continuation of Abraham's calling—to make the knowledge and worship of the one God known among the nations.

Consequently, Scripture neither clearly confirms nor excludes later traditions concerning their settlement, including the Arab tradition that places Hagar and Ishmael in Mecca. While this location cannot be established directly from the biblical text, it remains within a plausible historical and geographical framework preserved through early Arab genealogical memory and sustained by long-standing religious tradition.⁵⁰

In this light, Arab and Islamic traditions—shaped by centuries of oral transmission, desert lifeways, and collective memory—can be approached as historically meaningful and culturally informed perspectives on the southern deserts and Abraham's family life.⁵¹ When engaged critically and respectfully, they do not compete with Scripture or alter its message, but instead provide helpful context for envisioning the broader wilderness setting in which Abraham lived out the faith the Bible proclaims.

BIBLICAL PROMISES AND COVENANTS

The Bible affirms that God blessed both of Abraham's sons, Isaac and Ishmael. While God's covenant was established through Isaac, His promises, compassion, and faithfulness toward Ishmael are unmistakable and should not be overlooked:

1. Promises Given to Abraham

- “And I will make of thee a great nation.” (Genesis 12:2)
- “I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you...” (Genesis 17:7)

50 Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001), 52–60; Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 7–12.

51 Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 27–35; Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1989), 1–14.

- “And I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky... and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.”(Genesis 26:4)
- “The whole land of Canaan... I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants.” (Genesis 17:8)

2. The Covenant Line Confirmed Through Isaac

- “Then God said, ‘Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.’” (Genesis 17:19)
- “But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’” Genesis (21:12)
- “The LORD appeared to him and said... ‘Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father...’” (Genesis 26:2–5)

3. Divine Blessings and Promises Granted to Ishmael

- And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. (Genesis 17:20)
- Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation. (Genesis 21:18)
- The angel of the Lord also said to her, ‘I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count. (Genesis 16:10)
- I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring. (Genesis 21:13)

ABRAHAM IN THE QURAN

Abraham stands as a central figure and foundational patriarch of faith for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Revered across these traditions as a model of monotheistic devotion and obedience to God, his legacy forms a shared spiritual inheritance that transcends religious boundaries.

1. The Qualities of Abraham in the Quran

Among all prophets and patriarchs, the narratives of Abraham are unique because the Quran speaks of his qualities more than those of any other prophet. Below is a list of the qualities of Abraham and verse reference:

QURAN	QUALITY
6:75-79	Abraham came to recognize, through reflection, that a single Creator must stand behind all life and the universe. He sought this Creator earnestly, and when he could not find Him among created things, he devoted himself to God alone, rejecting the worship of mute and powerless idols.
6:74,80,81	He instinctively recognized that the stone idols of his father and his tribe were empty and meaningless, and he openly rejected them.
16:120	Devotion to Monotheism: In the Quran, Abraham is described as ' <i>haneefan</i> ', an Arabic term that came to signify rejection of idolatry and a willing embrace of the worship of the One true God.
3:67	Abraham is described as one who surrendered completely to the will of God. The Quran also uses the word <i>Muslim</i> ("one who submits to God in peace") to describe him. Muslims today are named after that word following the tradition of submission that began with Abraham and the prophets before him.
4:125	Divine Friendship: Abraham was described as "Khaleelul-Rahman," which, using contemporary terminology, translates to God's "Best Friend Forever."
37:83-111	Resilience in Faith: God tested Abraham with extremely challenging tasks, including being cast into fire and the command to sacrifice his son. He passed all these tests, demonstrating his unwavering faith and obedience.

53:37	Faithfully fulfilled his responsibilities, pledges, and God's commands.
60:4	Exemplary Leadership: He was a role model who openly distanced himself from worshipping anyone other than God.
19:41	Integrity: A believer and a prophet, he was trustworthy, truthful, ⁵² and honest.
37:109	Blessed with divine peace
21:51	Sound Judgment
11:75	Forbearance: He sincerely and persistently appeals to God.
38:47	Among the Best of the Chosen
16:121	Grateful, chosen by God, and guided to the straight path.
4:54	Wisdom
6:75	Firm Conviction
11:69+51:27	Generous
19:43	Blessed with knowledge
37:84	Pure and sincere heart
37:105+110	Good Doer
37:111	True Believer

2. Abraham is the Best of Humanity:

Muhammad is reported to have indicated that Abraham is the best of humanity, even placing him above himself.⁵³ At the same time, Islamic theology maintains that Abraham, though uniquely honored, remained a fully human figure—capable of sin and in need of God's mercy and grace.

3. Abraham is Selected Role Model and Leader for humankind:

Quran 2:124 - AlBakarah (The Cow)	
Translation by Yusuf Ali	
And (remember) when his Lord tried Abraham with (His) commands, and he fulfilled them, He said: Lo! I have appointed thee a leader for mankind. (Abraham) said: And of my offspring (will there be leaders)? He said: My covenant includeth not wrong-doers.	وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

⁵² Tradition recounts that Abraham expressed regret for lying three times. However, upon closer examination, these instances appear akin to wordplay. For instance, Abraham referred to Sarah as his sister, aligning with Quranic teachings that all believers are brothers and sisters in the sight of God— Within Islamic teachings, such wordplay is permissible when used for good causes, including harmless non-divisive humor.

⁵³ <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2369a> Last accessed 6/2/2024

4. Whole Household is Blessed

Quran 11:73 - Hud <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
.. The grace of Allah and His blessings on you, o ye people of the house! for He is indeed worthy of all praise, full of all glory!"	.. رَحِمْتُ اللَّهَ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَّجِيدٌ

5. The Quran describes Abraham as a 'nation':

Quran 16:120 - AlNahl (The Bees) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
Lo! Abraham was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters;	إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ خَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

6. Quranic Witness to the Covenant and Abrahamic Line of Prophets:

Quran 29:27 - AlAnkaboot (The Spider) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and We established the prophethood and the Scripture among his seed, and We gave him his reward in the world, and lo! in the Hereafter he verily is among the righteous.	وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَجْرَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

7. What is the Name of Abraham's Religion?

Since Abraham lived long before the emergence of Judaism or Christianity as historically defined religions, an important question arises: What was the name of the religion he practiced? In Jewish tradition, Abraham is not described as belonging to a formally named religion; rather, he is understood as the patriarch who recognized and worshiped the one true God. In Christian tradition, his faith is commonly described as the “faith of Abraham,” emphasizing his trust and obedience to God. In the Quran, Abraham is explicitly described as a “Haneef”, a term meaning one who turns away from idolatry and devotes himself entirely to the worship of the one true God (e.g., Quran 3:67; 6:79). Later Islamic scholarship sometimes uses a derived noun “Haneefiyyah” to describe this pure monotheistic orientation. This raises a question: Can Haneefiyyah be understood

as the name of Abraham’s religion, or is it better understood as a description of an uncompromising devotion to monotheism?

Quran 3:67 - Aale Imran (The Family of Amram) <i>Translation by Khattab - author replaced translation of the highlighted word with its transliteration in italics</i>	
Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an <i>Haneefan</i> man who had surrendered (<i>to God</i>), and he was not of the idolaters.	مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَئِنْ كَانَ <i>حَنِيفًا</i> مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

8. The Quran Commands Muhammad to Follow the Faith and Example of Abraham:

Quran 16:123 - AlNahl (The Bees) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
Then We revealed to you 'O Prophet, saying': "Follow the faith of Abraham, the <i>Haneefan</i> , who was not one of the polytheists.	ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ <i>حَنِيفًا</i> وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

HAGAR IN THE WILDERNESS

1. Abraham Leaves Hagar and Ishmael in Becca Valley



According to Arab/Islamic historians, Abraham brought Hagar and their infant son, Ishmael, to the rugged mountains of Faran (Latin: Paran⁵⁴) surrounding the barren valley Becca,⁵⁵ a place with no water, no crops, and no sign of life. When Abraham prepared to depart, Hagar asked the question that mattered most:

“Did God command you to do this?”

Abraham answered simply, “Yes.”

In that moment, fear gave way to faith. Hagar loosened her desperate grip and spoke words of trust:

“Then He sees us—and He will not abandon us.”

Abraham walked away, heartbroken, unable to look back. When he reached a rise overlooking the valley, he raised his hands in prayer, a supplication preserved in the Quran:

Quran 14:37 - Ibrahim (Abraham) <i>Translation by Abul Ala Maududi</i>	
Our Lord! I have made some of my offspring settle in a barren valley near Your Sacred House! Our Lord! I did so that they may establish Prayer. So, make the hearts of people affectionately inclined to them, and provide them with fruits for their sustenance that they may give thanks.	رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بُؤَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمَحْرُومِ رَبَّنَا لِنُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ

2. Hagar Rushes Between Safa and Marwa

Days passed. The water ran out. The desert sun bore down mercilessly. Ishmael’s cries grew faint until Hagar could no longer bear to watch her child die.

Driven by desperation and a mother’s fierce love, she climbed a nearby hill to search for signs of life—perhaps a caravan, perhaps water. Seeing nothing, she descended, only to hear Ishmael’s cries again in the distance, and she ran toward

54 Because the Arabic language lacks the letter and sound “p”, the letter in many cases is shifted to F (as in Palestine → Filastin, Phoenicia → Finiqiya, Persia → Faris, Pella → Fihl, etc.). In early Arabic and Islamic sources, “Faran” refers to the mountainous region surrounding Mecca, where the well of Zamzam and the present-day Sacred House of God (The Grand Mosque) are located. This region was inhabited by Arab tribes long before Islam, whose settlement patterns and cultural practices form an important part of the central Peninsula Arabian heritage and tradition. *Note that some Christian apologists also dispute that “Faran” is the name of the region arguing that it is invoked by Muslims to draw a deliberate connection between the biblical and Quranic versions of the story.*

55 During the lifetime of Muhammad, the city was commonly known as Mecca in every day and historical usage. The term Becca, which appears once in the Quran, was understood by early Muslims to refer to the whole valley and sanctuary surrounding the Kaaba.

the other hill. Each time she ascended, she heard her son's cries, her pace quickening as she rushed in anguish.

She ran back and forth several times between the two hilltops, Safa and Marwa, which overlook different sections of the curved passage.

After Hagar descended from her seventh run from Marwa, she could no longer hear Ishmael's cries in the distance. Panic seized her heart—had he died? She rushed back to the camp, frightened, breathless, and trembling. But to her astonishment, instead of death, she found life.

3. The Spring of Zamzam

Ishmael was splashing joyfully in a pool of water bubbling up from the ground. Islamic tradition teaches that the angel Gabriel struck the earth—either with his heel or his wing—and water burst forth by God's command.

Hagar fell to her knees, drinking through tears. Fearing the water would run off and disappear into the sand, she hurried to contain it, gathering it into a small pool with her hands. The Arabic verb *zam* means “to gather” or “to restrain,” and because she worked tirelessly to preserve it, the spring became known as Zamzam—the water repeatedly gathered by a mother's faith.



4. The Arrival of the Tribe of Jurhum

Caravans traveling between Yemen and the Levant typically avoided the valley of Becca because it was dry, rocky, and lifeless until one day, members of the Yemeni tribe of Jurhum noticed birds circling overhead, a sign of water. They followed the birds and discovered a woman and her child beside a spring in the vast, rocky corridor. The sight was breathtaking, and it moved them deeply. They approached with reverence and asked permission to drink and to settle nearby.

Strengthened by divine care, Hagar agreed, yet set one condition: “You may drink as guests, but the water belongs to me.”

They accepted her terms, a well was dug, water flowed abundantly, and tents were raised. Families arrived. Life returned to a valley once thought cursed.

Mecca became a thriving home of the Jurhum people, who protected their host Hagar and cherished her son.

5. Ishmael Learns An Early Arabic dialect

Ishmael grew up among the Jurhum tribe learning their language in addition to his mother’s tongue. He also learned Arab customs like hospitality, honor, tribal loyalty and desert wisdom and became known for skillful horse riding, strength, and mastery of archery. Ishmael was distinguished for being truthful, trustworthy, and observant of prayer and charity. Through Ishmael, Abraham’s seed took root in Arabia.

6. The Marriages of Ishmael

- **First Marriage:** Information regarding Ishmael’s first marriage is limited and varies across early traditions. Some accounts suggest that Abraham arranged Ishmael’s first marriage to an Egyptian woman, while other reports indicate that she spoke Arabic and belonged to the Jurhum tribe. Her name is not preserved in the historical record, and these accounts are considered less firmly established.
- During one of Abraham’s visits, he advised Ishmael to divorce his first wife and to remarry.
- **Second Marriage:** Ishmael married **Fatimah bint (daughter of) Mudad AlJurhumi**, a woman from the Jurhum tribe. This second marriage is understood to have permanently linked Abraham’s lineage with Arabia.

7. Ishmael’s Sons

Arabic Name (Arabic)	Transliterated Arabic Name	Biblical Name (English)	Meaning of the Name
نبيت	Nabit	Nebaioth	Heights / Hollowness
قيدار	Qaydar	Kedar	Dark / Swarthy / Warmth
أدييل	Adbil	Adbeel	Disciplined by God / Miracle of God
مبسام	Mibsam	Mibsam	Sweet odor / Spice
مشماع	Mishma'	Mishma	Hearing / To listen
دوما	Duma	Dumah	Silence / Tranquility
ماسا	Massa	Massa	A burden / Tribute / Lifting up

حداد	Hadad	Hadad	Sharpness / Joy / Fierce
تيماء	Tayma	Tema	Desert / Wonder / Southland
يتور	Yatur	Jetur	Enclosure / Row / Nomadic camp
نافيش	Nafish	Naphish	Refreshment / Soul / Serenity

ABRAHAM'S REPEAT VISITS

According to Islamic tradition, Abraham returned to visit Hagar and Ishmael multiple times over the course of his life. While neither the Bible nor mainstream Islamic sources explicitly state that Isaac accompanied Abraham to the region, such a journey cannot be ruled out historically, given the close bond described in Genesis and the nomadic patterns characteristic of the patriarchal age.

In Islamic understanding these journeys were far more than occasions of family reunion, they all had divine purpose. During some of these encounters, Abraham received and fulfilled specific revelations from God, acts of obedience that would shape the spiritual destiny of the region. The instructions he carried out in that valley laid the foundations of an early monotheistic tradition among the descendants of Ishmael and, centuries later, became embedded within Islamic worship.

1. The Test of Sacrifice

On one visit, God tested Abraham by commanding him to take his son to Mina, approximately three miles east of Mecca, and there offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham undertook the journey with a steadfast heart, fully aware that its end required him to lay down his beloved son in obedience to God's command. As Abraham and his son approached Mina, tradition holds that Satan appeared to them at three separate locations, seeking to turn Abraham away from God's command. At each encounter, Abraham picked up stones from the ground and cast them at Satan, driving him away.

In full submission, Abraham prepared the altar of obedience. The Quran describes this moment as a test of complete submission — and both father and son met it in full submission. Ishmael, fully aware of what was required, laid himself down. Abraham raised the knife. He brought it down against his son's throat — but it did not cut. He tried again. Still, the blade refused. According to Muslim tradition, the knife had been made powerless by divine will, for God had never intended the death of the boy. At that moment, the angel called out, staying Abraham's hand. God intervened, sparing the boy and ransoming him with a great

sacrifice. A ram was provided in his place, symbolizing divine mercy and affirming that the test was never about the loss of life, but about unwavering trust and total obedience.

Quran 37 - AlSaffat (The Rankers) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>		
Then when they submitted 'to Allah's Will', and Abraham laid him on the side of his forehead 'for sacrifice',	103	فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ
We called out to him, "O Abraham!	104	وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ
You have already fulfilled the vision." Indeed, this is how We reward the good-doers.	105	قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْيَا إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ
That was truly a revealing test.	106	إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ
And We ransomed his son with a great sacrifice	107	وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ

2. Abraham raises the Foundation and rebuilds The Kaaba with Ishmael



In one visit, God guided Abraham to the location of the eroded Kaaba and commanded him to dig and identify and raise the foundations and rebuild the whole structure. The location was several yards away from the place Hagar's camp was set. Abraham and son Ishmael dug the ground, identified the foundation, and raised it.

Quran 2:127 AlBaqarah (The Cow)

Translation by Pickthall

And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House, (Abraham prayed): Our Lord! Accept from us (this duty). Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower.

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ
مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا
تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ

What is the Kaaba?

Muslims believe the Kaaba is the first house of worship ever built on earth. In this sense it functions similarly to a church or synagogue, but its intended congregation is the whole human race. Islamic tradition traces its origins all the way back to Adam and Eve.

Seen in this light, Hagar and Ishmael were not left in that desolate valley by chance. According to Muslim tradition, God deliberately guided Abraham to place them beside the oldest sacred site on earth — the very spot appointed from the beginning as a house of worship for the whole human race.

During the reconstruction of the Kaaba, Ishmael fetched and delivered stones or clay bricks while Abraham stacked them. As the walls grew higher, Abraham stood atop a larger stone—or perhaps dried mud bricks—leaving his footprints embedded in its surface.

One of the cornerstones of the Kaaba is a meteoroid commonly known as the Black Stone. According to tradition, Abraham identified this rock and incorporated it into the structure, stating that it had descended from heaven. The Black Stone functions as a reference point for the ritual of circumambulation (i.e., walking around the Kaaba), marking the beginning, counting, and completion of each round.

3. Abraham stands in prayers at Arafah, a Place of Divine Mercy

About 13.5 miles south of the location where Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael lies an open plain known as Arafah. Islamic tradition holds that Arafah is the place where Adam first saw and recognized Eve, and where the two were physically reunited after their expulsion from Paradise. In earlier times the plain

was covered with green pastures and meadows, all of which have since eroded away⁵⁶.

Within Arafah rises a modest rocky hill known as the “Mount of Mercy”, standing only about 230 feet above the surrounding plain. Islamic tradition holds that it was here that God's mercy descended upon Adam in forgiveness, establishing Arafah, from the earliest moment of human history, as a place of divine mercy and reconciliation for all of humanity till the end of time.

To Muslims, the plain of Arafah is one of the most spiritually charged places in the world — a place of repentance, prayer, and seeking God's mercy, where visitors arrive with hearts full of hope, gratitude, and longing for forgiveness. Every year during the Hajj, millions of pilgrims gather here, stripped of status and dressed in simple white cloth, standing shoulder to shoulder in the desert sun, weeping, praying, and pleading for God's mercy.

To stand on Arafah is to stand where Muslims believe the story of human redemption began — not with divine abandonment, but with mercy extended to a broken and repentant humanity, when God accepted the repentance of Adam and Eve on that very ground. Just as He received them, Muslims believe His mercy remains open to all who sincerely turn to Him. That image — of God meeting fallen people in their moment of honest contrition — is one many Christians will find deeply familiar.

For Muslim pilgrims, Arafah carries one more layer of meaning: a reminder that one day, every human being who has ever lived will stand before their Creator again — not in a desert, but before the throne of ultimate judgment. The day of Arafah, for Muslims, is a rehearsal for that day.

According to Islamic tradition, God sent the Angel Gabriel to Abraham also at Arafah to instruct him in the rites of Hajj. Images of Arafah and the Mount of Mercy in Chapter 6.

56 According to Islamic traditions, the desert of the Arabian Peninsula was once full of plantation and that it will return back to green pastures before the end of time. <https://sunnah.com/muslim:157c> Last accessed 5/31/2026

4. Abraham Teaches Ishmael the Rituals of Pilgrimage (Hajj)

Arab and Islamic tradition further holds that Abraham instructed his son Ishmael in the specific acts of worship associated with the pilgrimage, appointed him custodian of the Kaaba. The principal rites are as follows:

1. **Standing at Arafah and the Mount of Mercy from noon until sunset** in prayer and repentance — seeking forgiveness for all sins with genuine remorse and a sincere intention to change.
2. **Walking between the hills of Safa and Marwa**, recalling Hagar's struggle for survival and the call to trust entirely in God's provision.
3. **Casting stones at three designated locations**, symbolizing the rejection of temptation and the repudiation of Satan.
4. **Offering a ram or sheep at Mina**, commemorating Abraham's act of submission to God's will.
5. **Circumambulating⁵⁷ the Kaaba** (i.e., walking around it seven times.) This act has traditionally been understood as a physical expression of God-centered worship, *placing the Creator rather than the worshiper* at the center of devotion. It is worth noting that in Joshua 6:3–4, the Israelites were similarly commanded to circle the walls of Jericho seven times.

5. Abraham Proclaims the Pilgrimage (Hajj) and Calls All Nations to the First House of Worship:

According to the Quran, God instructed Abraham to publicly call all people to a pilgrimage centered on the Kaaba. The Quranic account presents Abraham standing on the Mount of Mercy in Arafah, commanded by God to announce a call to worship that would extend far beyond his lifetime. From this perspective, Abraham obeys in faith, trusting that God Himself would move the hearts of people, across generations and across the world, to respond:

Quran 22:27 - AlHajj (The Pilgrimage) <i>Translation by Al-Hilali & Khan</i>	
And proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine,	وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ

57 The ritual of movement organized around a focal point of God's presence was part of the inherited vocabulary of Semitic worship long before the construction of the Temple.

Within Islamic theology, this episode highlights Abraham not only as an ancestor connected to Israel, but as a servant of God whose obedience carried implications for all nations.

6. Abraham's Prayers

According to the Quran, Abraham, at multiple moments throughout his life, offered far-reaching prayers for the place where he left Hagar and his son Ishmael. These supplications consistently center on four key requests:

- that the land be made safe and secure
- that its people be provided for despite its barrenness
- that hearts from among humanity would incline toward it, and
- that it be purified from idolatry and devoted entirely to the worship of the one true God.

Taken together, these prayers reveal that this valley was never meant to remain an isolated desert but was divinely destined to become a center of gathering, provision, and uncompromised monotheism. Below are two examples in addition to the prayer he made on the hill immediately after leaving Hagar and Ishmael alone.

Quran 14:35 - Ibrahim (Abraham) <i>Translation by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem</i>	
Remember when Abraham said, ‘Lord, make this town safe! Preserve me and my offspring from idolatry,	وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ
Quran 14:37 - Ibrahim (Abraham) <i>Translation by Abul Ala Maududi</i>	
.. So, make the hearts of people affectionately inclined to them, and provide them with fruits for their sustenance that they may give thanks.	.. فَأَجْعَلْ أَفئدةَ مِنَ النَّاسِ تُهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ
Quran 2:126 - AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>	
And remember Abraham said: "My Lord, make this a City of Peace, and feed its people with fruits,-such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day."	وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

Prayers Answered?

Across history, these prayers unfold in clear and observable ways. As detailed in the next two chapters, Mecca was regarded as a safe sanctuary since then and warfare was suspended in the whole Arab wilderness during the forbidden months, allowing safe passage in a region otherwise marked by conflict. Though once barren, it grew into a thriving commercial center, attracting goods and travelers from distant lands. This pattern of provision continues in the modern era, alongside the broader region's abundant natural resources, including oil and gas found throughout the Arabian desert. The hearts of people have indeed inclined toward it, first through early pilgrimage traditions and now through the devotion of millions who visit annually and turn toward it daily in prayer. Finally, after periods of deviation, the Kaaba was purified and restored to the exclusive worship of one God, preserving the very monotheism Abraham prayed for.

ISHMAEL AS A GUARDIAN OF THE SACRED SITE

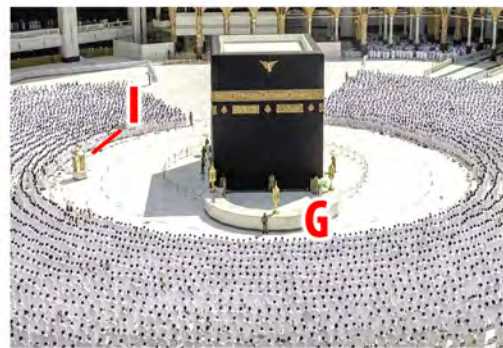
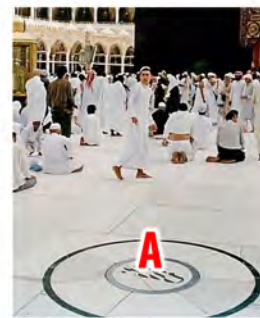
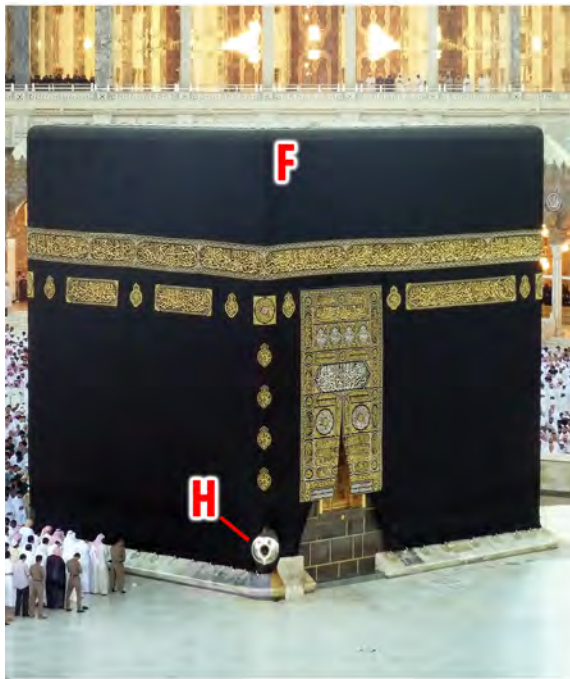
According to tradition, following the construction of the Kaaba, Ishmael is remembered as a guardian of the sacred site, a steward of the Zamzam well, and a prophet who upheld pure monotheistic worship of the one true God and carried forward Abraham's legacy.

THE DEATH OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

Arab tradition holds that Hagar lived out her life in Mecca and died there in faith. Though the circumstances of her death are not recorded, Ishmael is believed to have buried her inside the Kaaba in the section that is not built upon today. When Ishmael died, he was laid to rest near his mother Hagar.

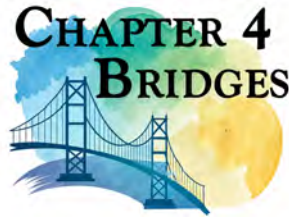
THE VALLEY OF BECCA, CITY OF MECCA, AND KAABA TODAY

The diagram below illustrates the Valley of Becca with key historical and contemporary locations marked:



For an interactive overview of the transformation of modern Mecca, see:
<https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2021/hajj-mecca-changed-100-years/index.html>

A	Site of Hagar and Ishmael's Camp Islamic tradition holds that Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael at location (A). This site is also associated with the emergence of the Zamzam well.
B&C	Safa and Marwa Hagar ran seven times between the rocky hills of Safa (B) and Marwa (C) in search of water. At that time, these hills overlooked different sections of the curved valley corridor.
D	Point of Desperation At location (D), Hagar came close enough to hear Ishmael's cries. Overcome with urgency, she ran through the valley before slowing again due to exhaustion. Pilgrims reenact this portion by briskly walking between designated green markers.
E	Zamzam Well and Water Distribution The mouth of the Zamzam well is traditionally associated with site (A). Today, modern pumps draw the water for filtration and bottling for local and international distribution. Zamzam taps are installed near location (E), where pilgrims drink the water and use it for ritual purification.
F	The Kaaba (The Forbidden House of God) Marked at (F), the Kaaba stands at the center of the sanctuary. It is covered by a black silk cloth, embroidered with Quranic verses in gold and silver thread.
K	Al-Masjid al-Haram (The Forbidden Mosque) Location (K) refers to the entire mosque complex that surrounds the Kaaba. It is called "Sacred" (or "Forbidden") because certain actions normally permitted elsewhere are prohibited within its boundaries.
G	The Original Foundation and the Semi-Circular Wall Approximately twenty years before the advent of Islam, the Quraysh tribe rebuilt the Kaaba using timber from a Byzantine (Roman) merchant shipwreck that drifted along the nearby Red Sea shore. Due to limited materials, they were unable to reconstruct the structure on its full original foundation. The low semi-circular wall at (G), about five feet high, marks the portion that was excluded from the rebuilt structure and is believed to have been part of the original foundation.
H	The Black Stone The Black Stone (H) marks the starting and ending point for each circumambulation around the Kaaba. Historically, it was damaged and fragmented; today, the remaining pieces are set within a silver frame.
I	Maqam Ibrahim (Station of Abraham) Location (I) marks the enclosure traditionally associated with Abraham's footprints. Originally situated closer to the Kaaba, it was later moved approximately thirty feet away to allow smoother movement of pilgrims performing <i>Tawaf</i> .



The Christian King and Muslim Refugees

In 615 AD, a small and frightened group of early Muslims arrived on the shores of Abyssinia with little more than their faith and the clothes on their backs. They had been beaten and boycotted and had watched their loved ones tortured in the streets of Mecca, not for any crime, but simply for believing in One God. The Prophet Muhammad, unable to protect them, pointed them toward a distant Christian kingdom and offered them the most tender reassurance he could: *"There is a king there who wrongs no one."* In the middle of their suffering, his words were not a political strategy. They were a father's comfort to frightened children — go to the Christians, you will be safe there.

When they stood before the Negus, the Christian king of Ethiopia, their spokesman, Jafar, spoke with the trembling honesty of a man whose people had nothing left to lose. He recited the Quran's words about Mary, her purity, her pain, and her impossible miracle and about Jesus, born of her spirit, speaking from his cradle, a light sent into the world. The king sat in silence. Then tears began to fall down his face and into his beard. He looked at the Muslims before him, then at the bishops seated around him, and he spoke words that have echoed across fourteen centuries: *"It seems as if these words and those which were revealed to Jesus are the rays of light which have radiated from the same source."* Then he turned to the envoys who had come to drag the Muslims back to their tormentors, and he refused. He refused with the full weight of his throne and his conscience. These strangers, these Muslim refugees, would not be handed over. Not in his kingdom.

They lived under his protection for years. When the Negus eventually died, the Prophet Muhammad prayed over him from across the sea — a funeral prayer for a Christian king, offered in grief and love. What this story whispers across fourteen centuries is something both Christians and Muslims desperately need to hear: that the first shelter Islam ever found was the open arms of a Christian. That a king's tears over the name of Jesus became the wall that stood between a persecuted people and destruction. Before there were centuries of conflict and suspicion, there was this — a cold night, a desperate people, a Christian king who let his faith make him kind. That moment belongs to both traditions. It always has



CHAPTER 5



TIMEFRAME 2: THE SILENT CENTURIES

Just as Scripture records a period of approximately four hundred "silent years" between the close of the Old Testament and the coming of Christ, there were also long, largely unrecorded centuries following the life of Ishmael. These Silent Centuries on the Ishmaelite side unfolded alongside the events of redemptive history in the Holy Land, where God raised up the children of Israel, sent prophets one after another, and established His covenant purposes through leaders such as Moses, ultimately culminating in the coming of Jesus Christ. According to Muslim traditions, the Silent Centuries end in the period following the early ecumenical councils of the Church—such as the Council of Nicaea, the Council of Constantinople, and the Council of Chalcedon, which affirmed key doctrines in the 4th and 5th centuries, including the nature of Christ and the understanding of the Trinity. Not long after these events, Muhammad was born around AD 570. During these centuries of relative silence, the Ishmaelite line, though not forgotten in God's promises (Genesis 17:20), remains outside the recorded scope of the covenant's redemptive account.

The primary academic challenge in articulating the Muslim narrative of the silent centuries is the relative absence of continuous historical records in Central Arabia during the long span between the biblical era and the rise of Islam. Arabian history during this time is largely reconstructed from later sources, oral traditions, and limited archaeological data. Accordingly, this chapter will explore the Arab-Ishmaelite connection, while honestly assessing the historical evidence that either supports or complicates the claim.

TIMELINE

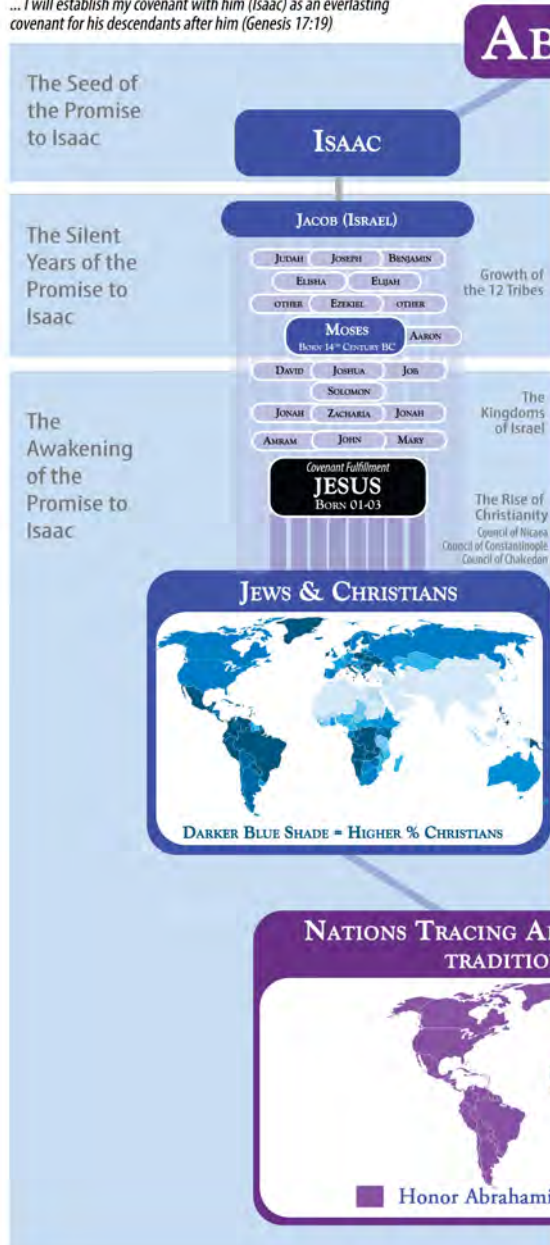
THE GREAT FAMILY OF ABRAHAM

(ACCORDING TO THE ARAB AND ISLAMIC TRADITION)

This diagram upholds Scripture's teaching that God's covenant was established through Isaac, while also acknowledging the biblical blessing spoken over Ishmael and how later traditions understand its historical outworking

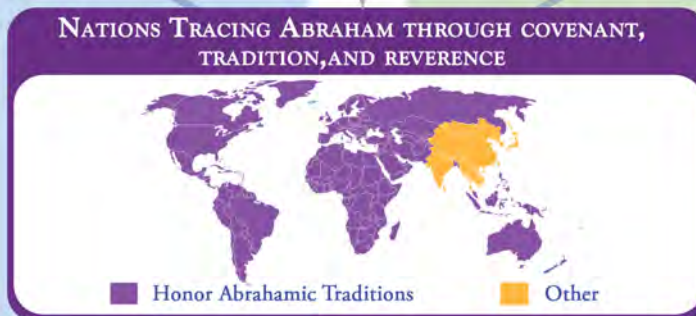
THE COVENANT LINE

... I will establish my covenant with him (Isaac) as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him (Genesis 17:19)



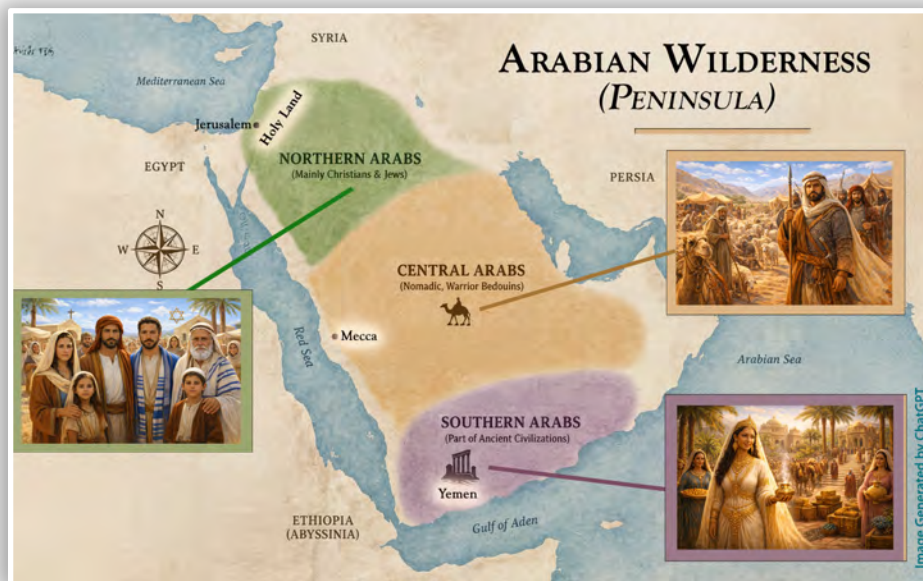
THE BLESSED LINEAGE

As for Ishmael, ..., I will bless him .. multiply him exceedingly; .. and I will make him a great nation' (Genesis 17:20.)



ARAB DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE WILDERNESS OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

In biblical times, the term *Arab* did not refer to a single nation or unified people. Instead, it described a broad collection of tribes and clans inhabiting the Arabian Peninsula. These groups were decentralized but bound together by tribal rules, kinship ties, shared customs, and related Semitic languages.



The Arabian wilderness or Peninsula in pre-Islamic era

1. Northern Arabia - Arabized Arabs (Adnanites)



Northern Arabs are generally understood as those living north of Mecca toward the Levant, and they were *not viewed as original Arabs*. Modern scholarship

recognizes that the genealogies preserved in later Arabic sources reflect shared identity and social memory rather than strict biological descent. In other words, genealogy explains how Arabs understood themselves, not necessarily their biological origins. According to this tradition, northern Arabs traced their lineage to Ishmael through Adnan and included tribes spread across western and central Arabia, including Quraysh. Scholars such as Hoyland⁵⁸ and Peters⁵⁹ understand these genealogical traditions not merely as historical records, but as identity frameworks that helped unite diverse Arab tribes under a shared ancestral narrative.

Over time, communities in the Levant area encountered Judaism and later Christianity, and Arabic-speaking Christian populations remain in these regions to this day. Their existence demonstrates that Arabic-speaking peoples were not isolated from biblical history, but lived within its broader cultural and religious environment.

2. Central Arabia – Independent Nomadic Tribes, Bedouins, and Warriors



South of the Levant (central and north of Arab Peninsula), tribal life was largely nomadic. These communities were organized around clans and lineages, frequently moving in search of water and pasture. Intertribal conflict was common, yet strong traditions of honor, hospitality, and ancestry were

58 Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001).

59 F. E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

maintained. Muslims believe that Ishmael was raised and his descendants lived initially in this region.

3. Southern Kingdoms - Pure Arabs - (Qahtanites)



These societies developed advanced irrigation systems, written laws, monumental architecture, and long-distance trade networks. They controlled the trade of frankincense and myrrh, substances frequently mentioned in the Bible in connection with worship and royal wealth (Exodus 30:34; Psalm 45:8; Matthew 2:11). The visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (1 Kings 10) confirms that Southern Arabia was economically and culturally significant in the biblical world. Distinct and historically well-attested kingdoms arose centuries before Islam:

- Kingdom of Sheba: ~1200/1000 BC – AD 275
- Kingdom of Ma'in: 8th century BC – 100 BC
- Kingdom of Qataban: 8th century BC – AD 200
- Kingdom of Hadhramaut: 8th century BC – AD 300
- Kingdom of Awsan: 8th century BC – 500 BC
- Himyarite Kingdom: 110 BC – AD 525/570. The last great pre-Islamic power, the Himyarites eventually unified all of Yemen and adopted Judaism as the state religion in the 4th century AD.

ORAL LITERACY

The harsh desert climate—marked by extreme heat, aridity, and sandstorms—was inhospitable to written materials. Fragile media such as parchment or papyrus were unlikely to survive, while inscriptions on rock, though durable, were immobile and impractical for nomadic life. Combined with continual migration in search of resources, these factors limited both the production and preservation of written texts.

In place of writing, central Arabian societies developed a sophisticated system of oral transmission. Poetry served as the primary means of preserving historical memory, social norms, and ethical values. Poets held significant authority as custodians of tribal identity and honor. This system was not primitive but adaptive, privileging memorization, rhetorical precision, and performance over textual preservation.

During the long Silent Centuries of the promise, Arabian society thus cultivated a refined culture of verbal literacy despite limited writing⁶⁰. Poetry, genealogy, legal customs, and moral traditions were transmitted through memorization and public recitation, with eloquence in spoken Arabic serving as a key marker of intellect and leadership.⁶¹ Competitive recitation at seasonal gatherings such as Ukaz helped refine language and establish shared standards of expression.⁶² This strong oral tradition sustained historical memory and social order across generations. Within this context, Muhammad emerged among a people deeply attuned to linguistic rhythm and rhetorical force, making the verbal Quran especially challenging within an already sophisticated oral culture.⁶³

THE RISE AND EXPULSION OF JURHUM TRIBE

Jurhum is the Arab tribe from Yemen in the south that first tracked the birds and found Hagar and Ishmael next to the Zamzam water spring. The tribe sought permission from Hagar to settle near the well, and she allowed them to remain on

60 Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001), 221–245.

61 Suzanne Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 1–27.

62 F. E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 3–22.

63 Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 35–58.

the condition that ownership of the water would remain with her and her son. This moment would permanently alter the future of Arabia. Ishmael eventually married a woman from the Jurhum tribe, and through this union his descendants became deeply integrated into the Arabic culture and language of the region. Through this blending of Ishmaelite blood and Jurhum culture, the foundations were laid for the later Central Arabian tribes that would emerge from Mecca itself.

The Jurhum tribe transformed Mecca from an isolated desert stop into a thriving commercial and religious center. Because they controlled the Zamzam well and eventually became custodians of the Kaaba, they held immense influence over the trade caravans and pilgrims moving throughout Arabia. Caravans traveling between Yemen and the northern regions increasingly passed through Mecca, bringing wealth, political importance, and growing prestige to the sanctuary.

At this early stage, Arabian tradition maintains that the sanctuary still retained remnants of Abrahamic monotheism. The Kaaba was viewed as a sacred house connected to Abraham and Ishmael, and many early Arab traditions suggest that belief in one supreme Creator God was already present in Arabia long before Islam. Even among idol-worshipping tribes, acknowledgment of a highest God, Allah, appears to have been widespread. The Quran itself repeatedly argues with the pagan Arabs not over whether God existed, but over why they associated lesser beings and idols alongside Him. This context matters because it suggests that Pre-Islamic Central Arabia was not spiritually empty. Rather, it appears to have preserved fragments of older Abrahamic memory mixed together with tribal customs, folklore, and eventually idolatry. The Jurhum tribe stood directly within that transition.

Yet prosperity eventually became the source of their corruption.

According to Arabian historical accounts, later generations of the Jurhum began abusing their authority over Mecca and the sanctuary. Pilgrims were mistreated. Sacred gifts dedicated to the Kaaba were stolen. Heavy taxation and extortion became common. The tribe that had once protected the sanctuary increasingly exploited it for wealth and power. Some traditions even connect the moral decline of Mecca to famous legendary figures from Jurhum history. One account tells of a man named Isaf and a woman named Naila who committed immorality within the sacred precincts of the Kaaba itself. According to the tradition, divine judgment struck them, and later generations eventually transformed the memory of that event into idol veneration. Whether legendary or historical, the story reflects an important theme repeated throughout Scripture itself: sacred places can become corrupted when reverence for God is replaced by pride, greed, and ritual without righteousness.

The decline of the Jurhum eventually provoked rebellion among other local tribes. A coalition formed between the Banu Khuzaah and the Banu Bakr tribes, both

descendants of Ishmael, and war erupted against the Jurhum rulers of Mecca. After generations of dominance, the Jurhum were decisively defeated and expelled from the city. Before fleeing south back to Yemen, their leader Mudad ibn Amr reportedly carried out one final act that would shape Meccan history for centuries. In an attempt to deny victory to their enemies, the Jurhum buried the Zamzam well and concealed its location. Identifying the source would have required digging deep in a large area. The well disappeared from public knowledge and remained lost for generations until it was later rediscovered by Abd al-Muttalib, the grandfather of Muhammad, after he was guided by a dream and a bird to the location.

Ironically, it was after the fall of the Jurhum that idolatry became more firmly institutionalized in Mecca. Later traditions state that Amr ibn Luhay of the Khuzaah tribe introduced major idols into the sanctuary after traveling to Syria and observing pagan worship there. Among these idols was Hubal, which eventually stood inside the Kaaba itself. Thus, the removal of the Jurhum did not purify the sanctuary; instead, Arabia descended even deeper into polytheism until the rise of Islam centuries later. The story of the Jurhum tribe is therefore far more than a forgotten tribal chronicle. It represents an early chapter in the long spiritual history of Mecca—a history tied to Abraham, Ishmael, sacred memory, moral decline, and eventual restoration.

ERA OF IGNORANCE

The 'Era of Ignorance' in Arab and Muslim terminology refers to the state of Central Arabia in the century or two preceding the advent of Islam, roughly corresponding to the final period of the Silent Centuries. There are more historical records from this period than from earlier eras. In this section, we examine environmental, behavioral, worship, and traditional patterns present at Era of Ignorance and compare them to parallel patterns found in the biblical narrative of Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael.

PARALLEL PATTERNS: PRE-ISLAMIC CENTRAL ARABIA AND BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

***Disclaimer:** All pre-Islamic poetry in this chapter and throughout this book are collected and preserved mostly by Muslim historians and remain open to scholarly assessment regarding their authenticity and historical reliability.*

1. Behavioral Patterns:

A. Fierce and Independent People — Blessed Nevertheless

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Central Arabia
Genesis 16:12 describes Ishmael as a 'wild donkey of a man' whose hand would be against everyone and everyone's hand against him. This is not a curse; it is a character portrait — fierce independence, perpetual tension, and the refusal to be domesticated. Critically, it coexists with divine blessing. Israel's own history shows that divine election does not guarantee domestic peace.⁶⁴	Pre-Islamic central Arabia was marked by long-term tribal conflicts. Cycles of raiding, retaliation, and internal warfare are frequently reflected in pre-Islamic poetry, oral traditions, and historical accounts. Today, these persistent internal conflicts are the subject of research, analysis, and humor, and are widely recognized in academic studies, particularly within anthropology. Numerous examples have been documented. The poet AlMuhallil, active during the famous pre-Islamic war of al-Basus (c. 494–540 CE), captures the normalization of conflict even among kin: <i>"When they sweep the borderlands in raid, and no true enemy stands before them, they strike wherever a target may be found... And sometimes—against Bakr, our own brothers, when none remain but brothers to be fought."</i>⁶⁵ This realism is corroborated by the War of al-Basus itself: a decades-long feud between the closely related tribes of Bakr and Taghlib, sparked by the killing of a she-camel but sustained by cycles of retaliation and honor. Such protracted intertribal violence highlights how kinship could amplify rather than restrain conflict in the absence of overriding authority.

64 Examples include the near-annihilation of the Benjaminites by their fellow Israelite tribes (Judges 19–21), the civil war among Israelite kinsmen following Solomon's reign (1 Kings 12), and the ongoing cycle of covenant faithlessness and divine discipline all demonstrate that God's chosen people can be simultaneously blessed and fractious

65 Amr ibn Kulthūm, "The Mu'allaqah of 'Amr ibn Kulthūm," in *The Golden Odes: The Mu'allaqat*, trans. Alan Jones (London: Ithaca Press, 1992), lines 74–78.

B. Tribal Autonomy

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Central Arabia
Genesis 25:16 records that Ishmael had twelve sons who became twelve princes, each ruling his own tribal territory. This is a picture of a family whose identity is tribal rather than monarchical — related by descent but governed by distributed, lineage-based leadership rather than centralized royal authority.	The political structure of Pre-Islamic Central Arabia mirrors the Biblical record of how Ishmael's descendants would organize themselves. There was no king in Central Arabia. Authority was distributed across tribal sheikhs whose legitimacy derived from genealogy, honor, and the consent of their communities.

2. Theological And Lineage Patterns

A. Reverence for Ishmael and Abraham as Founding Fathers

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Arabia
Abraham is presented not merely as the ancestor of Israel but as a patriarch and father of many nations (Genesis 17:5) — a title with implications that extend beyond the Israelite line. The biblical promise to Ishmael is specific and durable: a great nation (Genesis 17:20), twelve princes (Genesis 25:16), and descendants beyond counting (Genesis 16:10).	Multiple independent tribal genealogies — including those of tribes with no political incentive to coordinate their accounts — trace Arab lineage through Ishmael to Abraham. A pre-Islamic poem preserves this ancestral pride: <i>"We are the sons of noble fathers, known in their descent; our lineage is neither hidden nor uncertain."</i>⁶⁶ And Abraham was not a distant figure in pre-Islamic religious memory. He was remembered as the builder of the sacred house and the founding patriarch of the most central religious practices of Arabian life

66 A. J. Arberry (trans.), *The Seven Odes (al-Mu‘allaqāt)*, 1957 (see themes of lineage and tribal identity across multiple odes).

B. The recognition of One supreme God

This point requires clarification for English-speaking readers who may not be familiar with Arab history and traditions:

- Paganism and idol worship were dominant in Central Arabia during the Era of Ignorance. Nevertheless, many Arab pagans believed that their idols served as intermediaries to the one God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Each tribe often had its own intermediary figure.
- Many assume that "Allah" refers exclusively to the God of Islam. In Arabic, however, Allah is simply the word for "God" and has been used historically by Arabic-speaking Christians and in Arabic translations of the Bible. It is important to note that Arabs lived alongside and interacted with Jews and Christians, adopting and preserving certain religious terms. As a result, the word "Allah" continued to be used in its original form rather than being translated.

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Arabia
Genesis 1:1 in <i>Arabic</i> Bibles reads, "In the beginning, Allah created the heavens and the earth," and John 3:16 likewise uses Allah where English Bible translations say "God." Scripture is consistent that the knowledge of the one true God was never exclusively confined to the covenant community of Israel. Melchizedek, a non-Israelite, served as priest of God Most High and blessed Abraham (Genesis 14:18–20). Job, outside the Israelite genealogy, worshipped the true God with a theological depth that left his Israelite-adjacent friends struggling to keep up. Abimelech received a direct divine warning in a dream (Genesis 20:3–7). God's	Many poets testify to a consciousness of Allah as the supreme God above all local deities. Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma, one of the most celebrated pre-Islamic poets, whose work predates Muhammad's birth, wrote: <i>"Do not conceal from Allah what is in your heart, thinking it will remain hidden — whatever is hidden, Allah knows."</i> Labid ibn Rabia declared: <i>"Everything except Allah is vanity."</i> Two tribes from Yemen, Akk and Madhhij, rejected idol worship and prayed to God, in this poem, to crush those who worship them: <i>"O Makkah, crush the sinner completely, but do not crush Madhhij and Akk. Otherwise, the Sacred House will be left in ruins."</i>

sovereign reach always exceeded the borders of His covenant people.	<i>We have come to your Lord, harboring no doubt."</i> Finally, the name "Abdullah," which translates to "Servant of Allah," was commonly used by Arab pagans and was also the name of Muhammad's father
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3. Environmental Patterns:

A. The Wilderness Setting

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Central Arabia
After their departure from Beersheba, Hagar and Ishmael settle in the wilderness of Paran (Genesis 21:21). Ishmael is raised not in a city but in open desert terrain, becoming a skilled hunter — a man shaped by and suited to a harsh, uncultivated landscape.	Central Arabia — the Hijaz, including the valley where Mecca was built — is arid, rugged, inhospitable to settled agricultural life. The people Muslim tradition places as Ishmael's descendants were not city dwellers. They were desert peoples shaped by the same kind of wilderness the Bible describes — survivors in a hard land, their character formed by its demands.

B. Mount Sela

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Central Arabia
Isaiah 42:11 references a mountain named "Sela," associated with the region inhabited by Kedar, a descendant of Ishmael: "Let the villages where Kedar dwells rejoice; let the inhabitants of Sela sing."	A mount by the name of Sela ⁶⁷ is located in present-day Medina, Saudi Arabia, where Muhammad lived.

67 Some Christian apologists dispute whether the name of this mountain existed prior to the advent of Islam and whether it matches the Biblical description.

C. The Miraculous Desert Well

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Central Arabia
When Hagar and Ishmael were dying of thirst in the wilderness, God heard the boy's cry and opened Hagar's eyes to see a well of water, saving both their lives (Genesis 21:19). The location is unknown — but the pattern is clear: in the Abrahamic narrative, God meets the desperate in the desert, and water is the sign of His presence.	The Well of Zamzam, inside the sanctuary of Mecca, is one of the oldest continuously documented sites in Arabian religious memory. The tribe of Jurhum, recorded in pre-Islamic Arabian tradition as settling in Mecca because of Zamzam's water, treated the well as the founding miracle of the city itself.

D. The Paran and Faran Geography Gray Area

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Central Arabia
The “wilderness of Paran” (Genesis 21:21) remains geographically uncertain in biblical scholarship. Evangelical reference works recognize that the precise location cannot be fixed with confidence ⁶⁸ . What the text establishes is a desert wilderness setting somewhere in the broad region south and east of Beersheba — which encompasses a large swath of territory. In other words, Paran region remains a gray area in Christian traditions.	Muslim tradition identifies this location as 'Faran,' understood to correspond with the mountainous region around Mecca. This is a straightforward language adaptation: Arabic has no 'P' consonant, so every P-initial word in a foreign language becomes an F in Arabic: Palestine becomes Filastin; Persia becomes Faris; Phoenicia becomes Finiqiya; Philip becomes Filib. Again, Christian apologists dispute that 'Faran' is the name of the region, arguing that it is invoked by Muslims in later centuries to draw a deliberate connection between the biblical and Quranic versions of the story.

E. Open-Air Worship Without Temples

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Central Arabia
Abraham's worship is consistently located in open, non-institutional settings. He	The central acts of pre-Islamic Arabian worship took place outdoors. Mina, the site of the sacrifice, and Arafah, where Abraham

68 The New Bible Dictionary, 3rd ed., s.v. “Paran”; The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Paran”; Eusebius of Caesarea, Onomasticon, s.v. “Pharan”; cf. The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament, commentary on Numbers 10:12.

builds altars at Shechem, at Bethel, at Hebron, and on the mountain in Moriah (Genesis 12:7–8; 13:18; 22:9). He calls upon the name of the LORD in fields and on hillsides. Sacred space in the Abrahamic narrative is portable and unenclosed — defined not by architecture but by divine presence.	stood in prayer, are the locations where pilgrims gather during the Hajj season today. Both sites are entirely open — no roof, no walls, no structure of any kind — nothing but open desert beneath the sky. Even after the Kaaba became the central sanctuary, the most sacred moments of the pilgrimage remained outdoors, with prayers offered in the open air around it. This enduring pattern is consistent with the Abrahamic model of encountering God in open, uncultivated space — the tent, the mountain, the wilderness — rather than within the walls of a temple.
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4. Worship Patterns

A. The Tabernacle & The Kaaba

	The Biblical Record Tabernacle	Pre-Islamic Arabia Kaaba
Translated Name	House of God	House of God
Transliterated Name	Bait Elohim (<i>from Hebrew</i>)	Bait Allah (<i>from Arabic</i>)
Purpose	Worship the One God of Abraham	Worship the One God of Abraham
Symbol of	Monotheism	Initially Monotheism
Covering	Textile Curtain	Textile Curtain
Location	A Portable Structure.	Mecca
Early visual representations	 Source ⁶⁹	 Source ⁷⁰

⁶⁹ <https://www.thetorah.com/article/the-tabernacle-in-its-ancient-near-eastern-context>

⁷⁰ <https://muslimheritage.com/the-clocks-of-makkah/>

B. The Annual Pilgrimage

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Arabia
The rhythm of annual pilgrimage to a designated sacred center is among the most foundational patterns in Abrahamic worship. The Mosaic law commanded Israel to appear before the LORD three times a year at the place He would choose — Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles — each requiring travel, communal gathering, sacrifice, and worship (Exodus 23:14–17; Deuteronomy 16:16). The Temple in Jerusalem became the fulfillment of that pattern. Annual pilgrimage was not optional; it was covenantal.	Multiple independent pre-Islamic sources describe tribes from across the Arabian Peninsula traveling to Mecca during the sacred months. In this poem, the poet states that he stops at the ruins of his ex-love's tribe quarters at the outskirts of Mecca in every pilgrimage: <i>"I stopped there after twenty pilgrimage seasons, and I could hardly recognize the place."⁷¹</i> These recurring gatherings reflect a shared belief in the legitimacy and importance of pilgrimage in a single season, even among otherwise highly decentralized, conflicting, and competing tribes of Central Arabia.⁷²

C. Circumambulation Around the Sacred House

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Arabia
Sacred processional movement around a central point of divine presence appears throughout the biblical narrative: the Ark of the Covenant carried in solemn procession before the LORD (2 Samuel 6:13–15); the Israelites circling the walls of Jericho seven times at divine command (Joshua	Walking in circuits around the Kaaba is documented as a pre-Islamic Arabian practice across multiple independent early sources. It is described in pre-Islamic poetry without explanation or definition, as if every reader already understands what 'the House' is and what one does there. Zuhair ibn Abi Sulma in this

71 H. al-Zawzanī (died 486 AH 1093CE), Sharḥ al-Mu‘allaqat al-Sab‘, [Explanation of the Seven Displayed Poems], Dar Ihyā’ al-Turath al-Arabi, 2002, Vol. 1, p. 139. Also, J. al-Zamakhshari, (died 583 AH, 1187 CE), Rabi al-Abrar wa Nusoo al-Akhyar, Beirut, Mu’assasat al-Alami, 1992, Vol. 5, p. 304

72 F. E. Peters, The Hajj, Princeton University Press, 1994.

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Arabia
6:3–4). Ritual movement organized around a focal point of God’s presence was part of the inherited vocabulary of Semitic worship long before the construction of the Temple.	verse connects the circumambulation with the builders of the Kaaba: <i>"I swear by the House around which walked the men who built it, belonging to Quraish and Jurhum."</i>⁷³ The absence of any need to define the Kaaba is indicative of how deeply embedded this practice was — you do not explain what everyone already knows.

D. Animal Sacrifice

The Biblical Record	Pre-Islamic Arabia
Sacrifice is not peripheral to Abraham’s story — it is constitutive of it. The binding of Isaac in preparation for the sacrifice is the theological climax of Abraham’s narrative, and the divine provision of the ram in his place became one of Scripture’s most profound symbols of redemption. Sacrifice was the primary language of covenant relationship in the Abrahamic tradition, carried forward through the Mosaic law and ultimately fulfilled in Christ.	Animal sacrifice was central to pre-Islamic Arabian religious practice, including sacrifice for idols, particularly during the pilgrimage season at Mina. Amr ibn Hayy: <i>"We passed by his altar... with the blood of the sacrificial camels rising and falling upon it."</i>⁷⁴ Al-A'sha (Maymun ibn Qays), who rejected idolatry and followed the faith of Abraham, called on the pagans to stop sacrificing for their idols: <i>"And the erected altar, do not offer sacrifices to it... and do not worship idols, but worship Allah."</i>⁷⁵

73 Same reference as above – the 16th line.

74 Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Kitab al-Aghani*, vol. 9 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1992), 78–79.

75 Maymun ibn Qays Al-A'sha, *Diwan al-A'sha al-Kabir*, ed. Mohammad Mohammad Husayn (Beirut: Maktabat al-Adab, 1950), 142.

NORM-DEFYING TRADITIONS

Norm-defying traditions represent a unique and powerful cultural phenomenon that is historically distinctive to Central Arabia prior to the advent of Islam. These traditions persisted despite running counter to immediate self-interest, enduring across hostile and decentralized communities *without formal agreements, treaties, or centralized authority to enforce them*.

1. *The Four Forbidden (Haram) Months:*

The highly decentralized, conflicting, and competing tribal societies of Central Arabia collectively recognized four specific forbidden months in which warfare was strictly prohibited. The sanctity of these months was honored across tribal boundaries, even among groups engaged in ongoing cycles of vengeance and conflict. The suspension of hostilities was not merely symbolic but functionally binding: individuals could cross enemy territories without fear of retaliation, even in cases involving blood-feud obligations. This practice effectively created a recurring, region-wide ceasefire that enabled safe travel, trade, and religious activity.

Pre-Islamic poetry explicitly reflects the suspension of warfare during sacred periods, even when vengeance was owed:

“We withheld our swords... though vengeance burned within us, until the sacred months had passed.”⁷⁶

“And they laid down their arms in the sacred months, and men walked in safety, not fearing attack.”⁷⁷

Such references indicate that the sanctity of these months was socially binding, recognized across tribal divisions.

The four⁷⁸ forbidden months consist of the three consecutive lunar year months—the 11th, 12th, and 1st—and a separate month, the 7th. The annual pilgrimage was held during the middle ten days of the three consecutive forbidden months specifically between the 10th and 20th days of the 12th lunar month. This timing provided pilgrims with roughly forty days of protected

76 A. J. Arberry (trans.), *The Seven Odes (al-Mu‘allaqāt)*, 1957; Suzanne Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak*, 1993.

77 A. J. Arberry (trans.), *The Seven Odes (al-Mu‘allaqāt)*, 1957.

78 The four lunar months are: Dhul-Qidah (11th month), Dhul-Hijjah (12th month), Muharram (1st month), Rajab (7th month),

travel to Mecca and another forty days to return to their villages, as hostilities were suspended during these months. Today, the same 10 days continue to constitute the Hajj season.

2. *The Forbidden (Haram) City of Mecca:*

Beyond the seasonal sacred months, Mecca itself carried a permanent protected status. Violence within the boundaries of the city was forbidden at all times, not merely during the pilgrimage season, but year-round. This forbidden sanctuary status is consistently described across independent pre-Islamic sources without controversy or explanation, as if its legitimacy was simply assumed. The uniformity of this portrayal indicates that its sacred status was broadly acknowledged among Arab tribes, allowing it to function as neutral ground despite ongoing conflict.⁷⁹

3. *God's Forbidden House (the Kaaba)*

The highly decentralized, conflicting, and competing tribal societies of Central Arabia were unified under a common ritual framework that revered and honored the Kaaba and associated it with God. Pre-Islamic poetry refers to the Kaaba simply as “the House”, implying common recognition without explanation:

“I swore by the House, whose sanctity men honor...”⁸⁰

THE STRUGGLE FOR HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Though Arab collective memory, identity, culture, and tradition are deeply rooted in the belief that Arabs are either descendants of Ishmael or fundamentally shaped by Abrahamic heritage, this cannot, from a strictly academic standpoint, serve as historical evidence placing Abraham and Ishmael in Mecca. Shared memory and cultural self-understanding, however ancient and widespread, are not equivalent to contemporaneous documentation. This section examines how the Arab and Muslim tradition engages with — and responds to — the scholarly challenges surrounding this question, including through the use of artificial intelligence evaluation tools.

79 W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford University Press, 1953.

80 Arberry, *The Seven Odes*; cf. Labīd ibn Rabī‘a.

The Challenge

Is there credible evidence that recognizable traces of the Abrahamic inheritance survived — however corrupted or fragmented — among the Arab descendants of Ishmael across the silent centuries? Or does this remain an unverifiable claim? The question carries significant weight, because it shapes how both Islam and the Book of Genesis are interpreted. If the pre-Islamic Arab world demonstrates genuine continuity with the Abrahamic inheritance, then the emergence of Muhammad appears less as a religious innovation and more as a continuation of a divine plan. Where such continuity can be credibly established, the burden of explanation shifts to those who would deny the connection.

The Absence of Continuous Historical Records

Attempts to demonstrate this continuity are frequently met with skepticism — not because the narrative lacks internal coherence, but because it does not conform to conventional expectations of linear, document-based historiography. The historical question, therefore, is not simply whether written records exist — they largely do not. The real question is whether the non-documentary evidence is sufficiently strong and specific to support a credible account of transmission across the silent centuries.

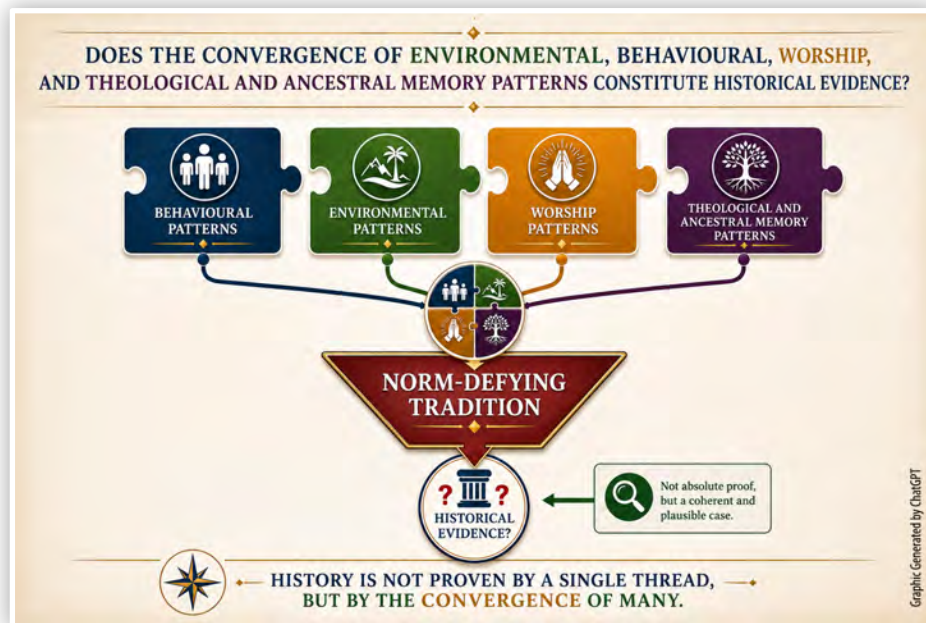
The Arab Case: Two Interlocking Arguments

Arabs and Muslims typically approach the question of historical continuity through two distinct but related lines of argument, which together constitute what might reasonably be called the Muslim historical case.

1. First Argument: A Convergence-Based Rationale

The first argument does not rest on any single piece of evidence but on the convergence of multiple independent lines of evidence all pointing in the same direction. Recurring environmental, social, behavioral, and worship patterns are not treated as incidental but as meaningful parallels to the biblical narrative — parallels too consistent and too geographically widespread to dismiss as coincidence.

Skeptics offer a counter-explanation: that these similarities may reflect prolonged contact with Jewish and Christian communities rather than transmission through an Ishmaelite lineage. Northern Arabia's proximity to the Levant did expose Arab tribes to Abrahamic traditions for centuries, making cultural diffusion a plausible alternative account.



The combination of converging patterns and norm-defying traditions forms the foundation of the Muslim perspective on historical evidence

2. *Second Argument: The Weight of Norm-Defying Traditions*

What lends the convergence argument greater historical force, however, is the presence of *practices that persisted without any known treaties, centralized enforcement, or institutional authority — and that frequently ran counter to immediate tribal self-interest*. These include the suspension of warfare during sacred months, the guarantee of safe passage through hostile territories, and the universal recognition of inviolable sanctuary space around Mecca.

These were not costless or convenient conventions. In a society defined by honor, retaliation, and blood vengeance, a man was expected to grant safe passage even to his father's killer during a sacred month. Members of actively warring tribes gathered and worshipped side by side in Mecca under a shared expectation of peace — upheld without any enforcement mechanism to compel it.

This behavior may sound unusual, but it remains deeply embedded in Arab culture today. I, the author, remember in my teenage years, my father always rang the doorbell before entering the house after returning from work. I remember that when my older brothers and I were seriously fighting, as brothers occasionally do, the moment we heard the doorbell, everything changed. We would immediately freeze, quickly put things

back in order, and act normal as if nothing had happened when he walked in. This response was not about resolving the conflict, but about the deep sense of reverence and respect we had been taught from an early age.

Such phenomena resist explanation through convenience, political calculation, or economic interest alone. They point instead to a deeply rooted moral and religious framework — one capable of restraining vengeance, regulating autonomous tribal behavior, and transcending the divisions that otherwise governed Arabian life.

An Independent Assessment of Arab Argument by Artificial Intelligence

Question: Assess the overall Muslim Argument for historical evidence

1. ChatGPT: Convergence is Plausible, Not Conclusive, Evidence

The Muslim argument for historical continuity does not rest on direct documentary proof, and in that sense, it falls short of the standards expected in strictly document-based historiography. The absence of continuous written records linking Abrahamic figures to pre-Islamic Arabia leaves the claim open to alternative explanations, such as cultural diffusion from Jewish and Christian communities in the broader Near Eastern region. From this perspective, the argument cannot be considered conclusive, and skepticism toward it remains historically understandable.

However, the Muslim case does not depend on documentary continuity alone. It advances a different form of reasoning—one grounded in the convergence of independent patterns, including environmental context, social behavior, and structured forms of worship. When these patterns are considered together, particularly alongside norm-defying traditions that impose restraint rather than confer advantage, they form a coherent and internally consistent framework. Such convergence, while not definitive, aligns with recognized methods⁸¹ used

81 In many areas of historical study—particularly in ancient and pre-literate societies—scholars rely on the convergence of independent lines of evidence. For example, reconstructions of early Israelite history often draw upon the alignment of biblical narrative, archaeological context, and enduring cultural practices—even in the absence of continuous documentation. A similar mode of reasoning appears within Christian tradition. One widely accepted example is the continuity of core practices such as baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Although the New Testament does not provide a comprehensive procedural system, many Christians affirm their historical continuity through the convergence of scriptural references (e.g., Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26), early Christian testimony, and consistent observance across geographically dispersed communities. Another example is the recognition of the fourfold Gospel witness. The historical understanding of the life of Jesus is not grounded in a

in the study of ancient and pre-literate societies, where historians often rely on multiple indirect lines of evidence rather than continuous records.

Taken as a whole, the Muslim argument does not prove historical continuity in a strict sense, but it does present a plausible and methodologically defensible case. Its strength lies not in any single piece of evidence, but in the cumulative weight of patterns that are difficult to dismiss as purely coincidental or purely derivative. Whether one ultimately accepts the conclusion depends less on the existence of these patterns—which are largely acknowledged—and more on how one evaluates their explanatory power.

2. Claude: *Historically Plausible, Partially Supported By Evidence*

This assessment is offered not as a final verdict on the truth of Islam but as an honest evaluation of the historical evidence for one specific claim — that something of the Abrahamic faith was genuinely preserved through Ishmael's descendants across the silent centuries.

The Muslim claim is strongest in two areas. First, the norm-defying traditions — the sacred months and the sanctuary status of Mecca — are the most difficult for alternative explanations to account for. A region-wide, unenforced, costly ceasefire and a permanently neutral sanctuary city, both predating Muhammad and both associated with a sacred tradition that transcended tribal politics, are most coherently explained by an ancient and widely shared religious authority. Second, the geographic specificity of the Abraham-Mecca connection — a specific patriarch associated with a specific site through specific practices — is harder to attribute to generic cultural borrowing than a more general reverence for Abraham would be.

The Muslim claim is weakest in two areas. First, the source base is thin, and the oral transmission across two millennia is unverifiable in the way documentary evidence would be. The convergent evidence is workable but not exhaustive. Second, the proximity of northern Arabia to active Jewish and Christian communities means that the borrowing hypothesis cannot be ruled out for most categories of evidence, and remains a genuinely competitive explanation for the theological and worship parallels.

The most defensible overall assessment is this: the Muslim claim of historical continuity is historically plausible and partially supported by the available evidence. It is not historically proven. The evidence is sufficient to take the claim seriously as a historical proposition rather than dismissing it as invention — but

single exhaustive narrative, but in the convergence of four independent accounts that consistently affirm the same central events.

it is not sufficient to establish Ishmaelite transmission as the only or even clearly dominant explanation for the Abrahamic content of pre-Islamic Arabia.

Not a Historical Judgment, A Theological One

This evaluation raises an important question: if the historical record neither proves nor disproves the Muslim claim, what conclusions can reasonably be drawn? It leaves open the possibility that God's explicit and reiterated promise of blessings to Ishmael was not revoked or lost but may have been preserved in ways that the historical record only partially reflects. Whether it rises to the level of conviction, however, is not a matter of historical judgment, it is ultimately a theological one and at the core is the following question: **Has God faithfully brought to pass His promise that Ishmael would become a great nation?**



Two Lenses

The Question of "Borrowing":

Many people ask: *Did Islam borrow from Judaism and Christianity?* The answer often depends on the heart and the "lens" of the person asking:

- **The Lens of History:** From a purely historical or skeptical perspective, one might see "borrowing." When we see the same prophets, the same stories of the Tabernacle, and similar laws, it looks like one tradition building upon the pieces of another.
- **The Lens of Faith:** From a Muslim or interfaith perspective, these similarities aren't "borrowing"—they are Evidence of Origin. If there is only one God, it is natural that His message to Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad would carry the same "spiritual DNA."

Analogy: The Family Resemblance:

The best way to understand this is through a Family Identity. A younger brother doesn't "borrow" his eyes or his smile from his older brothers; he inherits them from the same father.

For the Christian and Jew: The familiar echoes in Islam can be seen as a testament to the enduring power of the revelations given to the Patriarchs.

For the Muslim: These parallels are a joyful confirmation that the "Original Light" has been consistently shining through every prophet since the beginning of time.

The Bridge:

Whether one sees it as a historical "borrowing" or a divine "continuity," the result is the same: a profound shared heritage that calls all children of Abraham to recognize the light they have in common.

CHAPTER 6

TIMEFRAME 3: THE AWAKENING OF THE PROMISE



The rise and expansion of the Arabs under the leadership of Muhammad constitute one of the most extraordinary transformations in world history. In a short span of time, rival and largely pagan nomadic Bedouin tribes of the Arabian Peninsula were consolidated into a unified community bound by a shared monotheistic vision. Within only a few decades of Muhammad's death, Arab and Muslim forces extended their influence from Central Asia across the Levant and North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula, eventually reaching the frontiers of southern France. In the process, they established a vast, multiethnic civilization that became a center of enlightenment, prosperity, and power—one that endured for more than a millennium and left a lasting imprint on the intellectual, cultural, and scientific development of the world.

TIMELINE

THE GREAT FAMILY OF ABRAHAM

(ACCORDING TO THE ISLAMIC TRADITION)

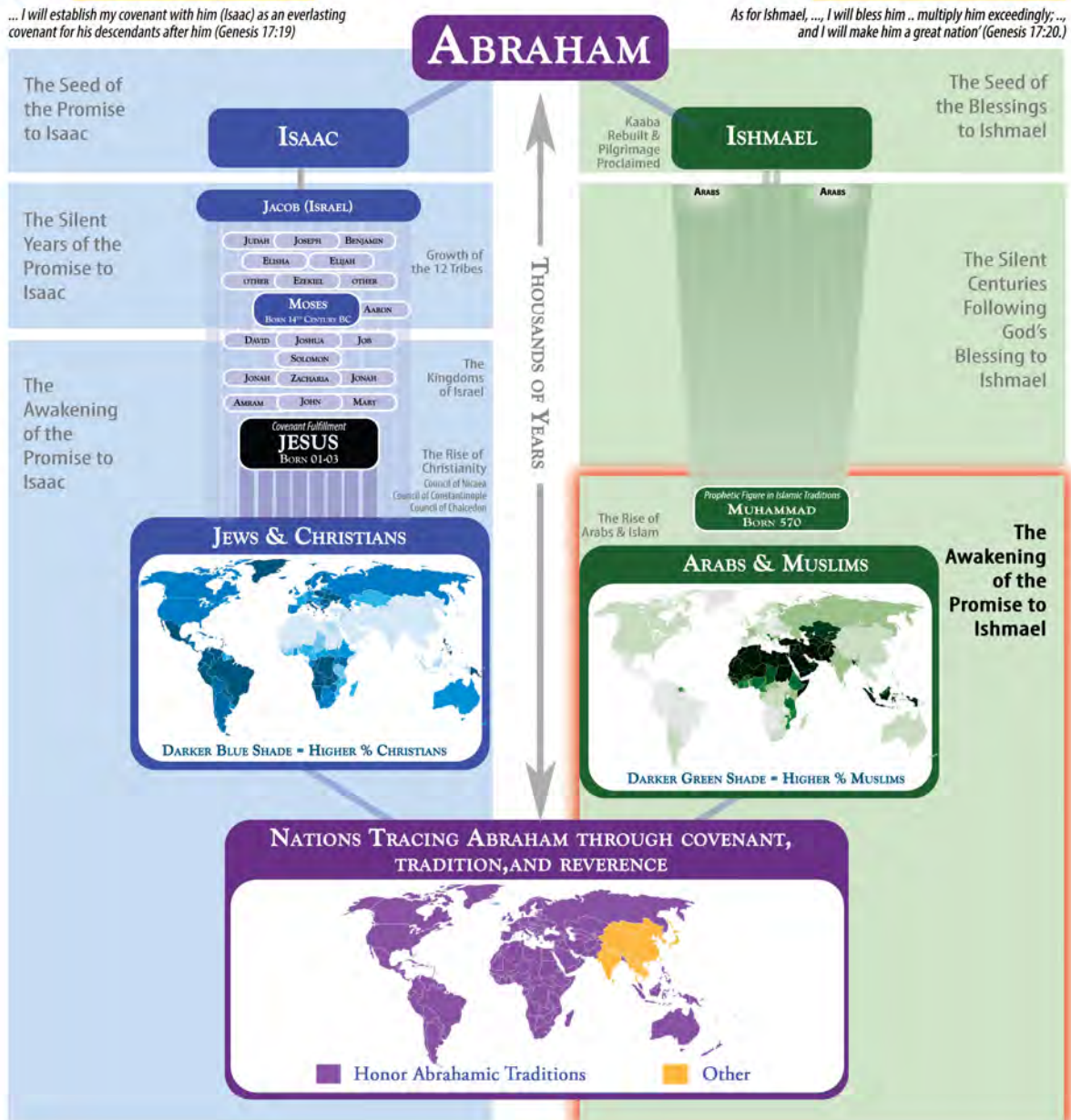
This diagram upholds Scripture's teaching that God's covenant was established through Isaac, while also acknowledging the biblical blessing spoken over Ishmael and how later traditions understand its historical outworking

THE COVENANT LINE

... I will establish my covenant with him (Isaac) as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him (Genesis 17:19)

THE BLESSED LINEAGE

As for Ishmael, ..., I will bless him .. multiply him exceedingly; ... and I will make him a great nation' (Genesis 17:20.)



BACKGROUND

Muslims believe that Muhammad preached the same core message proclaimed by earlier prophets, patriarchs, and messengers: the call to worship and glorify the One God. Nevertheless, several elements *distinguished his mission* from those of earlier prophetic figures, including the following:

1. A Mandate to Overcome and Remove ALL Barriers

Islamic teaching holds that believers have a responsibility to remove barriers that prevent people from hearing the message of monotheism. Muhammad and his followers were called to strive so that this message could reach all nations. Where religious freedom existed and communication allowed ideas to spread peacefully, the message was conveyed through preaching, education, and dialogue, as was the case in Ethiopia, Yemen, and various other regions in the Arabian Peninsula. However, this mandate also extended to armed struggle in circumstances where political or military authorities actively blocked or suppressed the spread of monotheism. Muhammad personally led his followers in battle against pagan and idol-worshipping factions who actively opposed or sought to suppress the message of Islam. The Muslim community eventually found itself in conflict with the Byzantine and Sasanian empires because the two major regional powers are believed to have restricted the growth of rival religious movements.

2. All the Nations

While many earlier prophets were sent to specific peoples or communities, Muhammad proclaimed *from the outset* that the message of the Quran was intended for all nations. The call to worship the One God was presented as a universal summons, extending beyond any single tribe, lineage, ethnicity, or nation.

3. Guidance on the Treatment of Non-Muslims

Islamic teachings also developed *explicit detailed guidance regarding how Muslims should treat non-Muslims* who live within their communities or under Muslim governance - Refer to 'Guidelines for Muslim Interaction with Christians and Jews' in page 187.

4. Equality of Blacks and Whites

Muhammad emphasized that no race, tribe, family, or lineage possesses inherent superiority before God. *He explicitly stated that Arabs and non-Arabs, Black and White people*, and individuals of every background stand equal in the sight of God. According to Islamic teaching, the only true measure of distinction before Him is righteousness and moral character.

5. Read

The first word revealed in the Quran was “Read,” a command that has carried profound significance in Islamic thought. This opening imperative placed learning, reflection, and the pursuit of knowledge at the very heart of the faith.

6. A Multifaceted Leadership

Muslims believe Muhammad was a prophet, messenger, shepherd, husband, father, spiritual teacher, judge, statesman, diplomat, social reformer, and military commander.

7. Arabic Prayers (Salat)

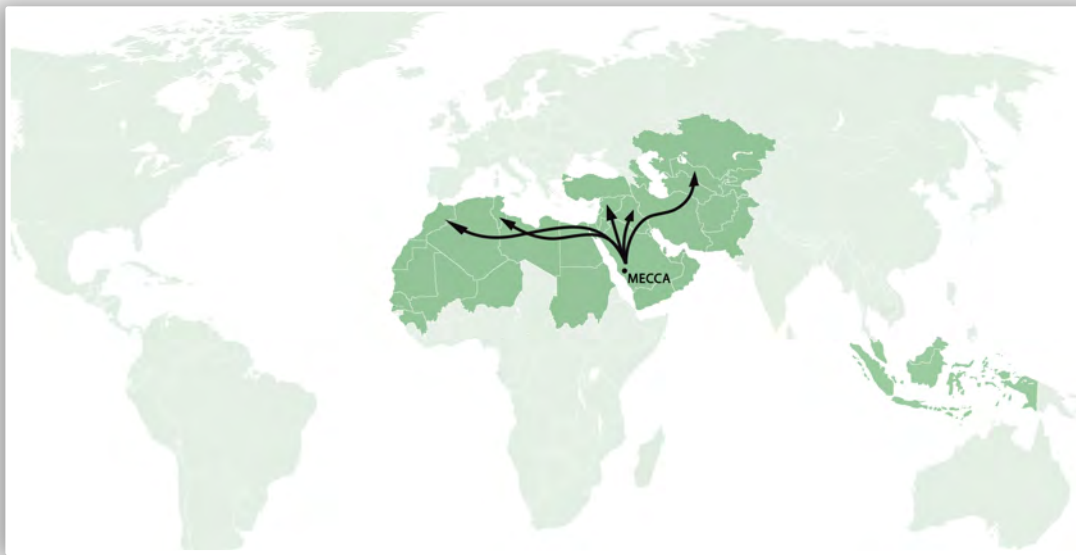
Salat, the five daily prayers in Islam, must be performed every day at appointed times and must be recited in the Arabic language.

THE RISE OF THE NATION OF ISHMAEL IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY

When Muhammad proclaimed that he had received divine revelation around the year AD 610, the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula were largely divided into independent tribes frequently engaged in rivalries and shifting alliances. By the time of his death in the year AD 632, most tribes across the peninsula had entered into political and religious alliances under his leadership, marking the first broad political unification of Arabia under a single authority.

Around the year AD 628, only a few years before his death, Muhammad sent letters to several major rulers of the time, including the Byzantine emperor Heraclius and the Sasanian Persian emperor Khosrow II. These letters represent an important moment in early Islamic diplomacy, signaling that the emerging Arab nation was beginning to engage the great powers of the late antique world. About a year and a half before his death, Muhammad mobilized an army of approximately 30,000 soldiers, including 10,000 cavalry, the largest force he ever assembled, and launched what would become his final and largest military expedition. The campaign took place during a period of severe heat and drought, testing the resolve of the Muslim community. The army marched northward more than 450 miles to Tabuk, bringing Muslim forces closer than ever before to the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire. This show of force demonstrated Muhammad’s readiness to confront the Byzantines and to extend the call to monotheism beyond the boundaries of the Arabian Peninsula toward the regions to the north.

Although Muhammad died shortly thereafter, this final and largest military expedition helped establish the course that his companions would follow. They mobilized tribes from across the Arabian Peninsula, organizing an army along tribal lines (for example, one tribe forming the vanguard, another the right flank, a third the left flank, a fourth tribe responsible for supplies, etc.) and advanced northward. The stories that Arab fighters later recounted from the battlefields, after confronting and defeating both Byzantine and Sasanian armies, often describe extraordinary events that sometimes sound closer to legend than ordinary historical accounts. Within only a few decades, Muslim forces gained control over vast territories previously ruled by the Byzantine and Sasanian empires. Arab influence expanded from Central Asia across the Levant and North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula, eventually reaching the frontiers of southern France. The graves of Muhammad's companions, found far beyond Mecca in the Levant, Central Asia, China, and across North and West Africa, stand as enduring testimony to the remarkable speed and breadth of Islam's early historical expansion.⁸²



THE GROWING ARAB CIVILIZATION

After pushing the Byzantine armies back toward Europe and moving the capital of the emerging Muslim state from the wilderness city of Madinah to Damascus in the year AD 661, the Arabs became a minority ruling population across the Levant and

82 Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, 198–245.

the vast territories they had conquered. In some regions, such as Egypt, Arab armies established military garrison camps near existing cities and generally did not interfere significantly in the daily lives of the local populations. While taxation policies were modified under the new rulers, many existing administrative systems were retained, with revenues redirected to the new political center in Damascus.

Over time, the rulers in Damascus developed durable institutions of governance, law, and administration that accommodated diverse populations across the empire. New urban centers, administrative systems, and trade networks emerged, providing foundations for long-term stability and cultural exchange. A key administrative decision⁸³ was to make Arabic the official language of government and administration. Natives who mastered the language were able to participate in administration, religious scholarship, and intellectual life. As a result, Arabic gradually emerged as a unifying language of governance, worship, and scholarship across a vast multilingual empire. Within a few decades, many regional administrators and scholars throughout the empire were non-Arab natives⁸⁴ who had either adopted the Arabic language or embraced the faith and participated in its expanding cultural sphere. As they became fully integrated into political, educational, and religious institutions, the meaning of the term Arab gradually expanded beyond a purely ethnic definition to include those who adopted the Arabic language and cultural framework. Consequently, the modern Arab world includes people from many different ethnic backgrounds.

FROM ARAB TO ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

Approximately a century later, around AD 750, Muslims from various non-Arab backgrounds—who were now deeply woven into the governmental systems and far

83 Umayyads dynasty

84 Arab caliph Omar Bin AbdulAziz ruled the emerging Muslim nation in the years 717–720 AD. One narrative says that he asked his secretary or vizier to list the governors or administrators of the provinces of the Empire:

The governor of Syria and Iraq was a mawla (non-Arab)

The governor of Africa was Berber (native north Africa)

The governor of Sind (north India) was from Central Asia

The governor of Egypt was not Arab

The governor of Khurasan was Persian

After hearing the list, the caliph reportedly said words to this effect: “Praise be to God who made the administration of this community dependent on people other than the Arabs.” The story is often used by historians to illustrate a key development in the early Islamic empire: Arabic became the administrative language, but, the ruling class became multi-ethnic (Persians, Berbers, Turks, Central Asians, etc.).

Reference: Al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*, multiple volumes, translated by various scholars, SUNY Press, 1985–2007.

outnumbered the original Arab population—effectively assumed leadership roles⁸⁵ throughout nearly all regions of the expanding Muslim civilization beyond the Arabian Peninsula.

From that time onward, Islamic civilization evolved into a pluralistic society rather than a purely Arab empire, and the term “Muslim” increasingly became the primary identity of people across the Muslim world. Today, original ethnic Arab Muslims constitute about 18% of the global Muslim population.

THE GOLDEN ERA OF MUSLIM CIVILIZATION

Over the centuries that followed—particularly during Europe’s early medieval period—Muslim civilization became one of the world’s leading centers of learning, enlightenment, and intellectual activity. Cities such as Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba housed libraries, hospitals, and institutions of scholarship that translated, preserved, and expanded Greek, Roman, Persian, and Indian knowledge. Muslim scholars, many of whom were non-Arab, made lasting contributions to mathematics, medicine, astronomy, philosophy, and the natural sciences. Large translation movements transmitted this knowledge across linguistic and cultural boundaries, contributing significantly to Europe’s later intellectual revival through contact in regions such as AlAndalus and the Mediterranean world.



85 The Collapse of Umayyads dynasty and emergence of Abbasids dynasty

IS IT THE BROADER DIVINE PLAN?

Many Arabs, both historically and today, have reflected with astonishment on how their Bedouin ancestors rose so swiftly from the margins of history to become bearers of a global civilization. Within Islamic understanding, this expansion was driven not merely by political ambition but by a religious conviction: the belief that the community was entrusted with a divine mandate to proclaim God's oneness and to remove obstacles that hindered the peaceful transmission of the Quranic message.⁸⁶ Modern historians, both secular and religious, generally agree that this phenomenon cannot be explained by a single cause. Several factors converged. First, the Byzantine and Sasanian empires had been severely weakened by decades of prolonged warfare that drained their economies, depopulated frontier regions, and eroded morale.⁸⁷ Second, internal religious conflicts had alienated many Christian sects, Jews, and other minorities, who faced persecution under imperial Roman policies and at times perceived Muslim rule as comparatively more tolerable.⁸⁸ Third, and no less decisive, was the extraordinary discipline, unity, and self-sacrifice of the early Arab community itself. Muhammad's companions were not mercenaries or imperial opportunists; they were men and women energized by a profound sense of divine accountability and moral purpose. This conviction fostered perseverance and cohesion that far exceeded ordinary political motivation.⁸⁹

Author's Note

Taken together, these considerations suggest that the rise of the Arab nation and civilization cannot be explained by material conditions alone. From a theological perspective, the convergence of historical circumstance, moral discipline, and collective belief may be understood as operating within God's sovereign providence, whereby divine purposes unfold through human agency. In this reading, the emergence of a unified Ishmaelite civilization appears to represent not an anomaly of history, but the outworking of a broader design—one in which Arabs were positioned to play a sustained and consequential role in the moral, intellectual, and civilizational development of the world.⁹⁰

86 Quran 3:110; 21:107; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 89–96.

87 Walter E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45–78.

88 Robert G. Hoyland, *In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 123–154.

89 Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 201–228.

90 Genesis 16:10–12; 17:20; comparative theological framing adapted for historical analysis.

WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY THE SWORD?

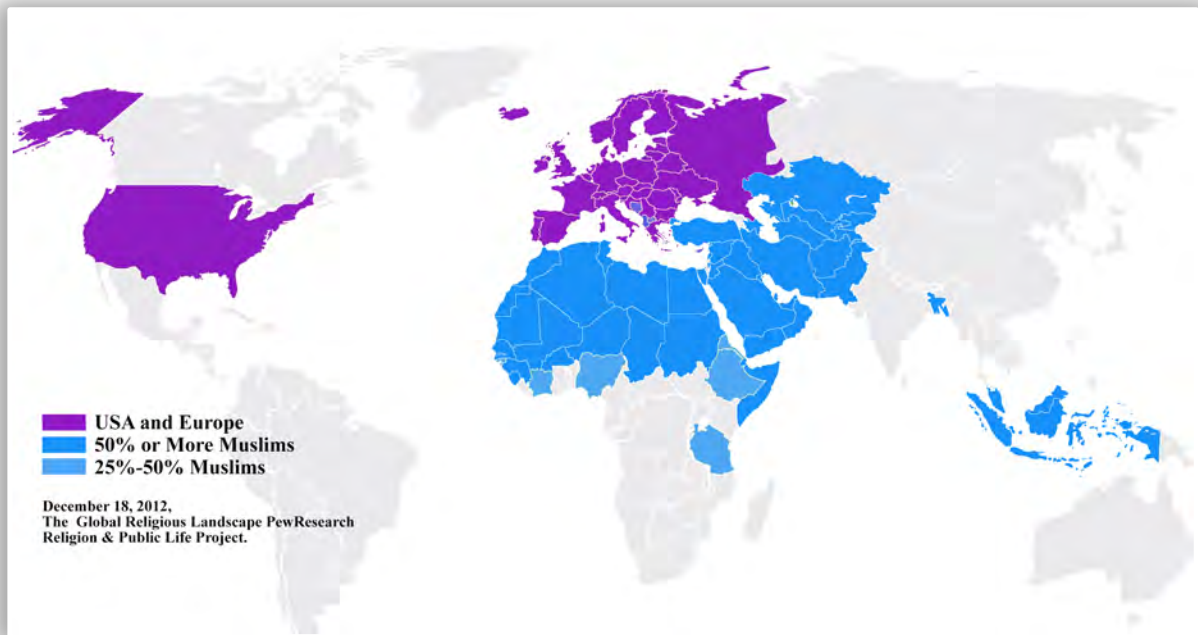
Arabs openly acknowledge that they expanded across vast territories through military conquest. Yet they consistently draw a distinction they consider essential: while lands were conquered by the sword, hearts were won through divinely mandated guidelines found in the Quran regarding the treatment of religious communities in conquered territories or minorities at large. Islamic law established clear protections for non-Muslims, regulating their safety, legal rights, and freedom of worship within Muslim-ruled lands. Refer to ‘Guidelines for Muslim Interaction with Christians and Jews’ page 187. Muslims maintain that in most⁹¹ conquered regions, Christian and Jewish communities continued to practice their faith openly, govern their internal affairs, and preserve their clergy, paying taxes in exchange for security.

Today, the survival of ancient Christian communities and sites offer powerful testimony. The descendants of groups such as the Copts of Egypt, for example, acknowledge that Muslim rule granted them religious freedoms not enjoyed under Roman or Byzantine authorities. Moreover, many historians point to the treatment of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre after the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 638 as another testimony. According to both Muslim and Christian traditions, Umar ibn al-Khattab declined to pray inside the church because he feared future Muslims might use his prayer there as justification to convert it into a mosque. Instead, he prayed right outside the church and the spot where he prayed was turned into a mosque. The church remained a church and is still one today and next to it is a small mosque by the name of Umar.

Muslims further point to the extraordinary durability of Islamic rule as compelling evidence that forced conversion cannot explain its success. *All territories conquered within a single generation have remained part of the Islamic world to this day.* Languages evolved, cultures endured, legal systems stabilized, and social norms took root in ways that far outlasted the initial military victories. Such lasting transformation suggests that more than force was at work: governance based on equality, respect, order, co-existence, and religious tolerance and a widely perceived sense of social justice played decisive roles. See “Dear Pastors and Priests” by Ayman Alhasan for details.

91 There were certainly many exceptions but, according to mainstream Muslim views, these were not compliant with Islamic teachings. In many cases, culture and other factors played a major role in these unfortunate incidents.

ARAB AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES TODAY



Muslim-Majority Regions Compared to the USA and Europe

Arab and Muslim countries today form a large and diverse part of the world, stretching across the Middle East, North Africa, parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. Muslim-majority countries together are home to nearly a quarter of the world's population.

Although the terms *Arab* and *Muslim* are often used together, they refer to different concepts. *Arab* generally describes people whose primary language and cultural heritage are Arabic and who live mainly in the Arab world. *Muslim* refers to followers of Islam and includes people from many ethnic and national backgrounds across several continents.

The Arab world consists of twenty-two countries whose primary language is Arabic and which are members of the Arab League. Despite shared linguistic and historical connections, these countries differ widely in geography, population, economic development, and political systems.

#	Country	Population	% Muslim	Arab Majority
1	Afghanistan	29,047,000	99.80%	N
2	Albania	2,601,000	82.10%	N
3	Algeria	34,780,000	98.20%	Y
4	Azerbaijan	8,795,000	98.40%	N
5	Bahrain	655,000	81.20%	Y
6	Bangladesh	148,607,000	90.40%	N
7	Brunei	211,000	51.90%	N
8	Burkina Faso	9,600,000	58.90%	N
9	Chad	6,404,000	55.70%	N
10	Comoros	679,000	98.30%	N
11	Djibouti	853,000	97.00%	N
12	Egypt	80,024,000	94.70%	Y
13	Gambia	1,669,000	95.30%	N
14	Guinea	8,693,000	84.20%	N
15	Indonesia	204,847,000	88.10%	N
16	Iran	74,819,000	99.70%	N
17	Iraq	31,108,000	98.90%	Y
18	Jordan	6,397,000	98.80%	Y
19	Kazakhstan	8,887,000	56.40%	N
20	Kosovo	2,104,000	91.70%	N
21	Kuwait	2,636,000	86.40%	Y
22	Kyrgyzstan	4,927,000	88.80%	N
23	Lebanon	3,542,000	59.70%	Y
24	Libya	6,325,000	96.60%	Y
25	Malaysia	17,139,000	61.40%	N
26	Maldives	309,000	98.40%	N
27	Mali	12,516,000	92.40%	N
28	Mauritania	3,338,000	99.20%	N
29	Morocco	32,381,000	99.90%	Y
30	Niger	15,627,000	98.30%	N
31	Oman	2,547,000	87.70%	Y
32	Pakistan	178,097,000	96.40%	N
33	Palestinian Territories	4,298,000	97.50%	Y
34	Qatar	1,168,000	77.50%	Y
35	Saudi Arabia	25,493,000	97.10%	Y
36	Senegal	12,333,000	95.90%	N
37	Sierra Leone	4,171,000	71.50%	N

38	Somalia	9,231,000	98.60%	N
39	Sudan	30,855,000	71.40%	Y
40	Syria	20,895,000	92.80%	Y
41	Tajikistan	7,006,000	99.00%	N
42	Tunisia	10,349,000	99.80%	Y
43	Turkey	74,650,000	98.60%	N
44	Turkmenistan	4,830,000	93.30%	N
45	UAE	3,577,000	76.00%	Y
46	Uzbekistan	26,533,000	96.50%	N
47	Western Sahara	528,000	99.60%	N
48	Yemen	24,023,000	99.00%	Y

Beyond the Arab world, many of the largest Muslim-majority populations are found in Central, South, and Southeast Asia. Culturally, the societies of these regions are extremely diverse. Languages such as Turkish, Persian, Urdu, Bahasa Indonesia, and many African and Central Asian languages are widely spoken. Food, clothing, music, and architecture vary widely from one region to another, reflecting centuries of interaction among Africa, Asia, and Europe.

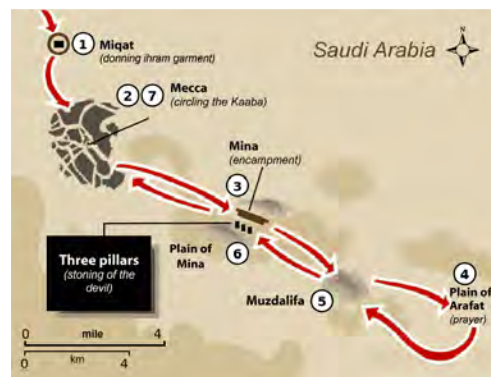
A CIVILIZATION BLESSES AND FOLLOWS THE FOOTSTEPS OF ABRAHAM

Global Islamic ritual practice invokes, blesses, and honors Abraham to an extraordinary degree. The primary annual Muslim religious observance commemorates not Muhammad, but Abraham's faithful submission to God's commands by tracing his footsteps, station by station.

1. The Hajj



Today, more than two million pilgrims gather annually for the Hajj. Taken together, its practices demonstrate that Abraham continues to be a living model of obedience, repentance, trust, and devotion to God for hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world.



A. The Talbiyah: The Response

From the moment pilgrims leave their homes to journey toward Mecca — whether by land, air, or sea — they begin reciting the Talbiyah in Arabic, repeating it as often as circumstances allow, and continuing until the conclusion of the Day of Arafah.

The Talbiyah (The Response)

*Here I am, O God, here I am responding to Your call.
Here I am, O One without partner—here I am.
Indeed, all praise and all blessing are Yours,
and all dominion belongs to You,
O One without partner*

Muslims believe the Talbiyah is the response to Abraham's call summoning all nations to the Hajj, which he made as God commanded him. In this understanding, God's promise — 'they will come from every deep ravine' (Quran 22:27) — finds its fulfillment today: in 2025, pilgrims representing 171⁹² nations converged on Mecca for the Hajj.

This declaration expresses a theme deeply familiar to biblical readers: responding to God's call with humility, exclusive devotion, and praise — echoing Abraham's own readiness to answer God when called.

B. The Day of Arafah (Arafah): Repentance and Dependence on God



92 General Authority for Statistics. 2025. Total Number of Pilgrims in 2025-1446H Reaches 1,673,230. Riyadh: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. <https://www.stats.gov.sa/documents/d/guest/hajj-statistics-publication-en-pdf>. Last accessed June 1, 2026.

In the first and primary date of the Hajj, the pilgrims travel to the plain of Arafah and the Mount of Mercy, where they stand from noon until sunset in prayer, reflection, and supplication. It is a day of repentance, humility, and earnest appeal to God for mercy, forgiveness, and guidance — virtues consistently emphasized throughout Scripture as the marks of genuine faith.



Arafah and the Mount of Mercy. The sign at the summit marks the location where Abraham is believed to have stood.

C. The Sacrifice: The Enduring Legacy of Abraham

Following the Day of Arafah, pilgrims commemorate Abraham's supreme trial of faith by sacrificing a ram or sheep. This act recalls the biblical account in which God provided a substitute in place of Abraham's son, and enshrines the same timeless themes: obedience, trust, and divine provision.



The pilgrims set up camp in the plain of Mina, the same area Muslims believe Abraham set up an altar and was about to sacrifice his son.



Until just a few decades ago, sheep and rams were slaughtered in Mina as part of the Hajj ritual. Today, with modernization and Saudi government oversight, the process has been fully regulated. Pilgrims now submit their sacrifice requests through a centralized system, and the slaughtering is carried out on their behalf in certified facilities.

One of the prayers recited during the sacrifice is: "O Allah, accept this from me as You accepted from Your close friend Ibrahim."

D. Safa and Marwa: Trust in God's Provision



Pilgrims walk⁹³ seven times between two hills, Safa and Marwa, in remembrance of Hagar's desperate search for water in the wilderness. Her perseverance and trust in God's care are honored as a model of reliance on God in the midst of hardship — a story recorded in Genesis and re-enacted here through physical action. The portion of the route where Hagar is traditionally understood to have run — approximately 150 feet — is marked by green lights along the corridor. Male pilgrims are encouraged to jog through this section during each circuit, symbolically reenacting Hagar's urgency and unwavering trust

E. Circumambulating the Sacred House of God: The Kaaba



93 Electric carts and manual wheelchairs are available

Pilgrims walk in circuits around the Kaaba, glorifying and praising God with each pass. This act symbolizes a life wholly centered on God alone. While understood differently across faith traditions, the underlying conviction is recognizable to any biblical reader: God, not self, stands at the center of all life and worship.



F. Rejecting Temptation: Standing Against Evil



*Multi-level structure that now contains all three posts and channels pedestrian traffic smoothly through the ritual area*⁹⁴

In one of the final acts of the Hajj, pilgrims cast small stones at designated markers representing the three locations where Abraham is believed to have rejected Satan's temptation. This ritual serves as a solemn declaration of resistance to evil and steadfast commitment to obedience — an exhortation echoed throughout the whole of Scripture.

⁹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaraat_Bridge#/media/File:Jamaraat_Bridge_2.jpg Last accessed 4/3/2026

2. Salat – Honoring Abraham Daily

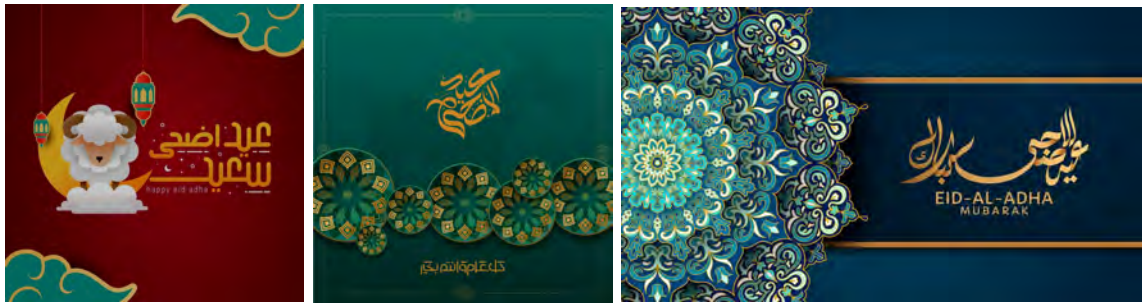
Every practicing Muslim honors Abraham at least *twenty times every day* by mentioning his name and blessings during their five daily Salat (prayers):



*The illustration above provides a color-coded representation of a single round (Rak'ah) of the Muslim daily prayers (Salat). The background color of the text corresponds to the specific prayer posture in which the words are recited. Notably, the circled word "Abraham" is mentioned four times in the last round. Given that practicing Muslims perform five daily prayers, Abraham's name is mentioned a total of twenty times each day. For more details about the synchronized nature of Muslim prayers, which create a continuous global formation, refer to the book *Dear Pastors and Priests* by Ayman Alhasan.*

3. Blessing Abraham Globally - Eidul-Adha Festival

On the day following the day of Arafah, Muslims worldwide join the pilgrims in commemorating this event by celebrating Eidul-Adha, a significant religious festival in Islam, akin to Christmas. The term 'Eidul-Adha' means 'Festival of Sacrifice'. While Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus in Christianity, Eidul-Adha celebrates Abraham's extraordinary dedication to serving God. Four words sum up Eidul-Adha: Celebration, Prayers, Family, and Sacrifice of sheep. During this festival, temporary traditional sheep slaughter and packaging camps appear in almost every neighborhood in the Muslim world.



Happy Eidul-Adha Wishes Card



Families divide the meat of the sheep they sacrifice on Eidul-Adha into three portions: One-third for the family (self and household), One-third for relatives and friends, and last One-third for the poor and needy.

Author's Observations

“I will bless those who bless you...” (Genesis 12:3)

Rituals That Glorify God and Bless Abraham		
	ISLAM	CHRISTIANITY
Abraham Honored as Patriarch and Father of Faith	Yes	Yes
Daily Prayers	Yes	no
Annual Pilgrimage	Yes	no
Annual Festivals	Yes	Sometimes ⁹⁵
Weekly	Yes	Sometimes ⁹⁶
Circumcision	Yes	no

Although Islam is the youngest of the world's four major religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism) its rapid global growth invites thoughtful consideration of the reason. While current demographic factors such as birth rates play a role, they alone do not fully explain the *continuity expressed across past centuries and cultures*. Can the answer be found in the Bible?

95 Example: Feast of Ingathering

96 Example: Church sermons

THE GREAT FAMILY OF ABRAHAM TODAY (JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND MUSLIMS)

Before tracing the family of Abraham through history, it is worth noting a foundational conviction shared by both Christianity and Islam: membership in God's covenant is not determined by blood or ancestry. In Christianity, the Church is understood to have succeeded Israel as the covenant community—the promises once entrusted to a particular nation are now extended to all peoples through faith in Christ, making Jew and Gentile equal heirs of God's promise (Galatians 3:28–29). In Islam, the principle is stated with equal clarity: no Arab holds preference over a non-Arab, nor does any race hold preference over another, except through piety and righteousness—a truth Muhammad declared in his farewell sermon. In both faiths, divine grace is not the property of an ethnicity. Whatever the scope of God's original blessing to Abraham, neither Christianity nor Islam confines it to a bloodline.

1. The Heirs of Abraham's Promise

The promise that Abraham would become a “great nation” was spoken thousands of years ago, and its fulfillment can be traced across both the physical and spiritual lines of his descendants. Physically, the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael are the Semitic peoples, mainly Ethiopians, Jews and Arabs, whose ancestry and languages stem from the same patriarchal root. Spiritually, the heirs of Abraham are those who believe in the one true God and seek to uphold the faith and moral heritage passed down from him. Through Isaac's line came the Jewish people and, ultimately, the Christian faith. Through Ishmael's line arose the Arab tribes and, in time, the followers of Islam.

Today, these three Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—together account for more than half of the world's population. While Christians understand the ultimate fulfillment of God's redemptive promise to be in Christ, the global presence of these faiths still bears witness to the scope of God's original blessing to Abraham. From both lines of descent, the world continues to see the unfolding of God's providence in ways that cannot be overlooked.

	Christians + Jews	Muslims	Other
Population (<i>Approximate</i>)	2.3 Billion	2 Billion	1.9 Billion
% of world population (<i>Approximate</i>)	28%	25.6%	46.4%
Constitute the majority in how many countries	120	53	28

(2020 - Pew Research Center)

The definition of “Nation” varies and can be defined to denote shared descent, history, heritage, or language. Today, thousands of years later, nations that share his heritage make up more than half of the global population. By sharing a common heritage, we mean:

- Worship and believe in the God of Abraham.
- Revere Abraham as a patriarch and prophet and acknowledge God’s covenant with the children of Israel and believe in their prophets.
- Hold virtues, principles, and values that are rooted in the Abrahamic tradition.
- Recognize the narratives of major events that occurred during the life of Abraham as detailed in the Holy Bible.

This ancestry forms a core part of Christian identity and covenantal understanding. For Muslims, the bond runs through the Arabs, as Muhammad descended from Abraham’s son Ishmael, the Quran was revealed in Arabic, and the early Arab Muslims carried the message of Islam across nations, interweaving their lineage with the global Muslim community. In this way, both faiths see themselves as rightful heirs to Abraham’s legacy.

2. Major Modern Peoples Associated with Semitic Languages



The term “Semitic” refers to a family of languages and, by extension, the peoples who historically spoke them. The languages are Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Akkadian (ancient), Phoenician (ancient). “Semitic” is not a racial term. Misuses like “anti-Semitic” (which historically came to mean “anti-Jewish”) are based on older, inaccurate racial theories from the 19th century. Today the largest group of people that speak a Semitic language is Arabs. Here is a table showing rough estimates of remaining living Semitic peoples:

Group	Approximate Population Today (Millions)
Arabs	470
Jews	16
Amhara people (Ethiopia)	25
Tigrayan people (Ethiopia & diaspora)	6
Maltese people	0.5
Wolane people (Ethiopia)	1.5
Assyrian people and Aramaic-speaking communities in Iraq, Syria, Iran, Turkey	4

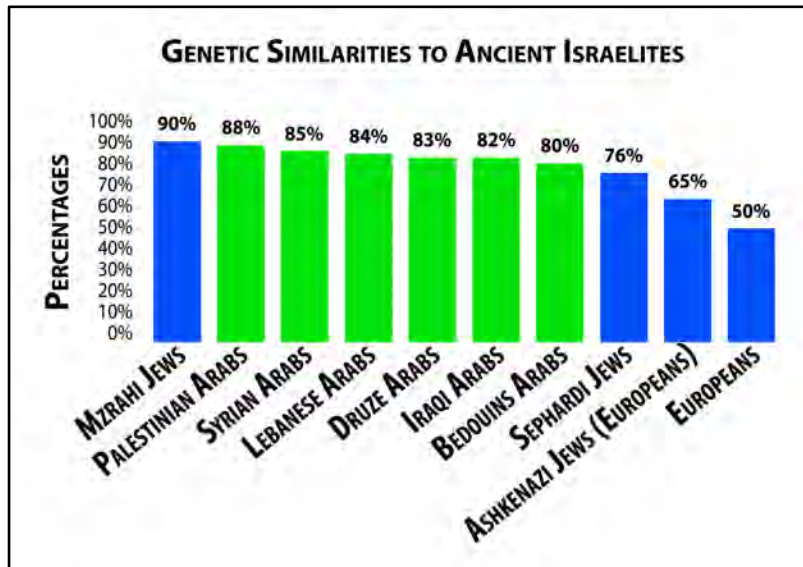
3. Genetic Studies⁹⁷

Today, Jews and Arabs regard each other as cousins. Compellingly, modern science affirms the shared origins: Landmark genetic studies find that most

⁹⁷ Twelve Articles cited:

- i. Hammer, M. F., Redd, A. J., Wood, E. T., Bonner, M. R., Jarjanazi, H., Karafet, T., ... Jenkins, T. (2000). Jewish and Middle Eastern non-Jewish populations share a common pool of Y-chromosome biallelic haplotypes. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 97(12), 6769–6774. ([PNAS](#))
- ii. Nebel, A., Filon, D., Weiss, D. A., Weale, M., Faerman, M., Oppenheim, A., & Thomas, M. G. (2000). High-resolution Y chromosome haplotypes of Israeli and Palestinian Arabs reveal geographic substructure and substantial overlap with haplotypes of Jews. *Human Genetics*, 107, 630–641. ([SpringerLink](#))
- iii. Nebel, A., et al. (2001). The Y Chromosome Pool of Jews as Part of the Genetic Landscape of the Middle East. *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 69(5), 1095–1112. ([PubMed Central](#))
- iv. Behar, D. M., et al. (2010). The genome-wide structure of the Jewish people. *Nature*, 466(7303), 238–242. ([PubMed](#))
- v. Atzmon, G., et al. (2010). Abraham’s children in the genome era: Major Jewish diaspora populations comprise distinct genetic clusters with shared Middle Eastern ancestry. *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 86(6), 850–859. ([PubMed](#))
- vi. Bray, S. M., et al. (2010). Signatures of founder effects, admixture, and selection in the Ashkenazi Jewish population. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(37), 16222–16227. (PNAS)

modern Jewish and Arabic-speaking populations trace significant ancestry to ancient Canaanites—connecting them to the same lands that Abraham walked millennia ago. Moreover, research shows that approximately 70% of Jewish men and 82% of Palestinian Muslim men carry Y-chromosome lineages from the same ancestral pool, highlighting their deep kinship across faiths.⁹⁸ These findings remind us that, beyond doctrinal differences, Christians, Jews, and Muslims share a common heritage as children of Abraham—not only in belief, but in our very DNA.



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- vii. Behar, D. M., et al. (2006). The Matrilineal Ancestry of Ashkenazi Jewry: Portrait of a Recent Founder Event. *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 78(3), 487–497. (PubMed Central)
 - viii. Haber, M., et al. (2013). Genome-Wide Diversity in the Levant Reveals Recent Structuring and Admixture. *PLOS Genetics*, 9(2), e1003316. (PubMed Central)
 - ix. Haber, M., et al. (2017). Continuity and Admixture in the Last Five Millennia of Levantine History. *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 101(2), 274–282. (PubMed)
 - x. Lazaridis, I., et al. (2016). Genomic insights into the origin of farming in the ancient Near East. *Nature*, 536(7617), 419–424. (PubMed Central)
 - xi. Lazaridis, I., et al. (2022). The genetic history of the Southern Arc: A bridge between West Asia and Europe. *Science*, 377(6609), eabm4247. (PubMed)
 - xii. Agranat-Tamir, L., et al. (2020). The Genomic History of the Bronze Age Southern Levant. *Cell*, 181(5), 1146–1162.e11. (PubMed Central)
- 98 Feldman, M., et al. (2019). Ancient DNA sheds light on the genetic origins of early Iron Age Philistines. *Science Advances*, 5(7), eaax0061. (PubMed Central)

4. Whereabouts of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel

Another compelling theory that links Jews and Arabs in the Levantine (Middle Eastern) region concerns the fate of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Here are the main Christian perspectives on the possible whereabouts of their descendants:

- A. Following the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel around 722 BC, the Ten Tribes were exiled and dispersed throughout the Assyrian empire (2 Kings 17:6). Over time, this led to widespread assimilation into surrounding populations and the gradual loss of distinct tribal identity. *In this context, “lost” refers not necessarily to unknown physical location, but to a loss of genealogical and cultural continuity.* Modern genetic and anthropological studies suggest that many of these exiled Israelites likely remained in the broader Levant and Mesopotamian regions, intermixing with local populations.⁹⁹⁺¹⁰⁰ As the region underwent religious transformation—particularly with the rise of Islam in the 7th century AD—it is plausible that many descendants of the Ten Tribes became part of today’s Muslim-majority populations, especially in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine, where ancient Israelite settlements once thrived.¹⁰¹
- B. Dispensational Christian eschatology, though not representative of all Christian views, holds that the Ten Tribes have not completely disappeared but have been preserved by God’s providence, awaiting a future regathering in fulfillment of end-times prophecy.
- C. In contrast, Ashkenazi Jews are generally recognized as descendants of the southern tribes—Judah, Benjamin, and Levi—whose identities and religious practices were preserved through the Babylonian exile and subsequent return (Ezra–Nehemiah). As a result, while Jewish continuity is clear in the southern tribes, the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes may now be found among a wider range of populations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, including Muslim communities in the Middle East who may unknowingly carry Israelite ancestry.¹⁰²⁺¹⁰³

99 Tubb, Jonathan N. Canaanites. University of Oklahoma Press, 1998.

100 Hammer, Michael F. et al. “Jewish and Middle Eastern Non-Jewish Populations Share a Common Pool of Y-Chromosome Biallelic Haplotypes.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2000.

101 Elhaik, Eran. “The Missing Link of Jewish European Ancestry: Contrasting the Rhineland and Khazarian Hypotheses.” Genome Biology and Evolution, 2013.

102 Parfitt, Tudor. The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth. Phoenix, 2003.

103 Gonen, Rivka. Biblical Archaeology. Carta Jerusalem, 1998.

ChatGPT Question: Based on the genetic makeup, today, who has a higher probability of being the descendant of the 12 Israelite tribes: Palestinians or Ashkenazi Jews? After a long-detailed breakdown, here is the conclusion:

"If you define “descendant” genetically only: Palestinians may have broader ancestral links to ancient Israelites, including the 10 tribes. If you define “descendant” through preserved religious, ethnic, and cultural identity: Ashkenazi Jews are clearly the inheritors of Israelite heritage."

Today, the Israeli government places strict controls on genetic testing involving Jews and Arabs in the country. Palestinian critics argue that the state fears unrestricted genetic research could challenge or complicate accepted narratives of Jewish lineage, blur the boundaries between Jews and Arabs, and raise sensitive questions about who is “indigenous,” potentially influencing political debates over land, heritage, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Critics further argue that if existing genetic evidence supported the official Israeli narrative, such testing and its findings would have been widely publicized around the world as proof of legitimacy.

5. Anthropological Observations¹⁰⁴⁺¹⁰⁵:

- According to physical anthropologists and ethnographers, Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs have similar physical traits and both belong to what is sometimes referred to as the “East Mediterranean” or “Levantine” type, characterized by:
 - Olive to light brown skin tones
 - Dark, wavy hair
 - Brown or hazel eyes
 - Prominent nasal features
 - Strong jawlines and cheekbones
- Both Jews and Arabs are Semitic (i.e., speak Semitic languages), and Arabic serves as a widely spoken second language in the majority of Muslim-majority nations.

104 Coon, C. S. *The Races of Europe*, 1939.

105 Patai, R. *The Jewish Mind*, 1977; *The Arab Mind*, 1973



English Words with Arabic Origin and Popular Names

The Merriam-Webster dictionary identifies the following English words as borrowed from Arabic: admiral, adobe, alcohol, algebra, algorithm, almanac, amber, arsenal, artichoke, candy, cipher, coffee, cotton, genie, hazard, jar, lemon, magazine, mattress, mocha, sofa, tariff, and zero.

Words originated in different cultures, Arabized, and then passed to English: alchemy, alkaline, carat, checkmate, and cheque (check), and Andalusia.

Arabic names have meaning. Below are some of the popular ones and meaning:

Girls

Layla	night, wine foam - often carrying connotations of dark beauty, mystery, and romance.
Salwa	loving and comforting company, solace
Reem	deer
Hanan	longing, mercy, compassion
Abeer	scent, aroma
Aysha	forever living

Boys

Sami	sublime, exalted in dignity, greatness
Bara	exoneration
Mustafa	the chosen one
Ahmed	worthy of praise, more commendable
Jamal	handsome
Ayman	moral, righteous, blessed
Salem	secure, peaceful
Ali	noble, elevated, exalted

Finally, the Arabic prefix 'al-' has made its way into many languages around the world. Meaning 'the,' it is always joined directly to the word that follows it in Arabic. 'Algebra,' 'Alhambra,' 'Allah,' and 'Almanac' are four familiar examples, translating literally as 'the reduction,' 'the red one,' 'the God,' and 'the climate.'



CHAPTER 7



THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN THE QURAN

Jacob, the son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, is also named Israel in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. His twelve children formed the twelve tribes known in the Quran as "Bani Israil," which translates to "Children of Israel." In brief, the historical narratives concerning the Children of Israel are broadly similar in the Gospels and the Quran. The key difference lies not so much in the events themselves, but in the theological interpretation and implications of the covenant.

Analogy

This subsection will start with an analogy to demonstrate the author's understanding of the Chosen People and God's Covenant with the Children of Israel as mentioned in the Quran. Afterwards, relevant verses will follow to draw parallels with this analogy:

[A church in the United States chose a team of five members and their families to lead a decade-long, multi-generational global mission for their denomination in Asia. They signed a covenant with the team members, including their older children. This covenant, grounded in their faith in Jesus, provided generous compensation packages, including real estate ownership in the new country. It also established a code of conduct and required all family members to periodically attend classes to stay informed about the church's expectations. The selection signified that these team members were best suited for this specific mission (e.g., multilingual or multicultural), not that they were more beloved or inherently superior, but that they were entrusted with a distinct role and greater accountability. The church already had other individual and group missionaries working in other parts of the country, and some form of coordination was expected.]

The five team members performed admirably, and some of their children, who grew up there, took up the mantle and continued the mission. The church renewed the covenant with this new generation of missionaries and their families, extending the same privileges and compensations. However, not all offspring shared this dedication; many disengaged from the mission, selling their properties to live closer to major cities or for extra cash or to return to the US. Regrettably, many others exploited their benefits, violated local laws, committed crimes, and faced legal consequences.

Nevertheless, the church believed that the overall mission was progressing well and foresaw major achievements ahead. They continued to push the mission forward by maintaining mandatory classes, sending reminders of contract obligations, and renewing the covenant with active missionaries and their families. At the same time, the church publicly condemned, disowned, or excommunicated those who became liabilities.

Decades later, the church's efforts paid off, and many Asians embraced the denomination's beliefs. Most importantly, new native Asians carried on the missionary work, driven by their own sense of divine duty and responsibility, spreading the faith more effectively than expected. Essentially, the natives acted upon the church's original covenant without signing one. Consequently, the covenant was no longer a contractual arrangement with the original missionary families; it became a sacred and honored religious obligation, preserved as a living legacy of the first mission. To preserve and honor the initial mission and covenant, the natives restored and enlarged the very first church that was built and renamed it "Church of the Covenant." Some of the descendants of the original team continued to be involved with the church while others lived like ordinary citizens pursuing personal interests.]

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

The Quran affirms that the Children of Israel *were* favored and chosen above all other nations of the world (including the descendants of Ishmael). Accordingly, Muslims honor this divine selection and acknowledge that their spiritual kin, the Children of Israel, *were* indeed favored as stated in the Quran:

Quran 44:32 - AlDukhan (The Smoke)

Translation by Dr. Ghali

And indeed We already chose them — out of a knowledge — over the worlds;	وَلَقَدْ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ
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Quran 45:16 - AlJathiya (The Crouching) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
And verily we gave the Children of Israel the Scripture and the Command and the Prophethood, and provided them with good things and favored them above (all) peoples;	وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ

THE COVENANT WITH CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

The Quran acknowledges multiple covenants made with various communities, tribes, generations, and prophets among the Children of Israel. Again, Muslims recognize and honor the covenants with the descendants of Isaac—their spiritual cousins—to carry His Word to the nations and believe His Covenants have divine purpose and wisdom. Below is one example:

Quran 5:12 - AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
Allah made a covenant with the Children of Israel and appointed twelve leaders from among them and ‘then’ said, “I am truly with you. If you establish prayer, pay alms-tax, believe in My messengers, support them, and lend to Allah a good loan, I will certainly forgive your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow..	وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ..

Notes:

- As mentioned in the verse above, the covenant with the children of Israel through Isaac was conditional and not absolute.
- Muslims acknowledge that God did not establish a similar covenant with the descendants of Ishmael.
- God’s covenant with Abraham himself was unconditional and everlasting. God Himself swore by His own name that He would make Abraham the father of many nations, bless all the families of the earth through him, and give the Holy Land to his *descendants*.

- God gave an *unconditional promise* that both Isaac and Ishmael would become *great nations*.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COVENANTS

The primary *apparent* purpose of the covenant was for the Children of Israel to serve as role models and convey God's message to all of humanity. Each covenant consistently emphasized the following principles:

- God's Commitment:
 - To raise prophets from among the Children of Israel.
 - To bless them with prosperity, protection, and authority, establishing many nations through them.
- Responsibilities of the Children of Israel:
 - To act as moral exemplars for all people: worship God alone, obey His commands faithfully, and uphold righteousness.
 - To believe in and support the prophets in delivering God's guidance to every nation.

Numerous verses highlight this purpose. Here are a few examples:

Quran 32:24 - AlSajdah (Prostration) <i>(Translation by Al-Hilali & Khan)</i>	
And We made from among them (Children of Israel), leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, when they were patient and used to believe with certainty in Our Ayât (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.)	وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أُمَمًا يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

Quran 3:187 - Aale Imran (The Family of Amram) <i>Translation by Abul Ala Maududi</i>	
And recall when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Book: 'You shall explain it to men and not hide it ..	وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ ...

MUSLIMS SHALL BELIEVE IN, HONOR, AND HOLD IN HIGH REGARD ALL THE PROPHETS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

Quran 2:136 - AlBaqarah (The Cow)

Translation by Pickthall

Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered.

قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ
وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ
رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

- The Quran reflects this esteem through several chapters named after Israelite figures, such as Quran Chapter 10 – Yunus (Jonah), Chapter 12 – Yusuf (Joseph), Chapter 19 – Maryam (Mary), Chapter 3 – Aale Imran (The Family of Amram), and Chapter 17 – Bani Israil (The Children of Israel, also known as Al Isra.)
- Most Israelite prophets' names, in their Arabic forms, are common across the Muslim world and are a lasting part of Muslim culture:

Popularity of Biblical Prophet Names in Muslim Personal Naming		
Popularity	English Name	Arabic Pronunciation
Very popular	Joseph	Yusuf
	Abraham	Ibrahim
	Moses	Musa
	Jesus	Isa
	Mary	Mariam
	John the Baptist	Yahya
	Adam	Adam
Popular	Noah	Nuh
	David	Dawud
	Jacob	Yaqub
	Solomon	Sulayman
	Ishmael	Ismail
	Isaac	Ishaq
	Job	Ayyub
	Elijah	Ilyas
	Aaron	Harun
	Zechariah	Zakariya
Not Popular	Jonah	Yunus
	Enoch	Idris
	Lot	Lut
Very Rare	Possibly Eber	Hud
	Elisha	Alyasa

I, the author, have a daughter named Sarah; a son named Zakaria; a niece named Mariam; a nephew named Ibrahim (after Abraham) and another named Yusuf (after Joseph); an aunt named Hagar; and two second cousins named Moses and Ishmael.

- Muslims also honor the legacy of the Israelite prophets by preserving their tombs as mosques or shrines, treating them as places of reverence and prayer. Admittedly, the conversion of such sites into mosques has often been a source of conflict among Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Yet these very disputes highlight how deeply the prophets of the Children of Israel are venerated within Islam:

Prophet	Tomb or Shrine	Location
Abraham	Ibrahimi Mosque	Hebron, West Bank
Isaac	Ibrahimi Mosque	Hebron, West Bank
Jacob	Ibrahimi Mosque	Hebron, West Bank
Joseph	Joseph's Tomb	Nablus, West Bank
Moses	Maqam an-Nabi Musa	Jericho, West Bank
Aaron	Jabal Harun	Petra, Jordan
Jonah	Nabi Yunus Mosque shrine in Halhul	Mosul, Iraq West Bank
Ezekiel	Al-Nukhailah Mosque	Kufa, Iraq
Hud (<i>possibly Eber</i>)	Qabr Hud	Hadhramaut, Yemen
Zechariah	Great Mosque of Aleppo Al-Aqsa Compound	Aleppo, Syria Jerusalem
John the Baptist	Umayyad Mosque	Damascus, Syria
David	Nabi Dawud Tomb	Jerusalem
Solomon	Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa	Jerusalem

THE PROMISED HOLY LAND

Several verses in the Quran mention the Holy Land and the Children of Israel, employing two different terms. The first term, translated as 'ordained,' suggests a permanent assignment, while the second, 'inherited,' indicates temporality:

- The Quran declares that the Holy Land was ordained for the Children of Israel on the condition that they enter the land with Moses. However, the Children of Israel did not fulfill this condition and as a result, were condemned to wander in the desert for 40 years.

Quran 5 - AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>		
And (remember) when Moses said unto his people: O my people! Remember Allah's favour unto you, how He placed among you prophets, and He made you kings, and gave you that (which) He gave not to any (other) of (His) creatures.	20	وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ لِقَوْمٍ لَّدُنْكُمْ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَأَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ مَلَأَةً لِّمَنْ أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ
O my people! Go into the holy land which Allah hath ordained for you. Turn not in flight, for surely ye turn back as losers:	21	يَا قَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْجِعُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَتَكُونُوا خَاسِرِينَ
They said: O Moses! Lo! a giant people (dwell) therein and lo! we go not in till they go forth from thence.....	22	قَالُوا يَمُوسَىٰ إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنُؤْخَذُ حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا لَنُؤْخَذُ
....They said: O Moses! We will never enter (the land) while they are in it. So go thou and thy Lord and fight! We will sit here.	24	قَالُوا يَمُوسَىٰ إِنَّا لَنُؤْخَذُ أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَادْعُ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا مُعِدُونَ
He said: My Lord! I have control of none but myself and my brother, so distinguish between us and the wrong-doing folk.	25	قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي فَافْرِقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ
(Their Lord) said: For this the land will surely be forbidden them for forty years that they will wander in the earth, bewildered. So grieve not over the wrongdoing folk.	26	قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ

- In subsequent verses, after the Children of Israel had settled in the Holy Land during the reign of King David, the Quran uses the word 'inherited.' This change in terminology suggests that their possession of the land was not intended to be permanent.

Quran 7:137 - AlAraf (The Heights) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
And We caused the folk who were despised to inherit the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof which We had blessed. And the fair word of thy Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of their endurance; and We annihilated (all) that Pharaoh and his folk had done and that they had contrived.	وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمَهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ

- Finally, the Quran reveals that God communicated the final fundamental rule concerning the promise of the Holy Land to Prophet David. This verse is now the principal scriptural reference that Muslims use in discussions about the Holy Land. Fundamentally, the land is promised to those who are deemed most righteous. This declaration was made before the advent of Christianity; therefore, it is not specifically Jews, Muslims, or Christians who are promised the land, but rather those who exhibit the highest righteousness. Here is the verse communicated to Prophet David in Psalms as stated in the Quran:

Quran 21:105 - AlAnbiya (The Prophets) <i>Translation by Khattab with author's edits between parentheses</i>	
Surely, following the 'heavenly' Record, We decreed in the (Psalms) scriptures: "My righteous servants shall inherit the land."	وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

- Another verse confirms the promise that was communicated to Prophet David and is applicable to Jews, Christians, and Muslims

Quran 24:55 - AlNoor (The Light) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security—"provided that" they worship Me, associating nothing with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this 'promise', it is they who will be the rebellious.	وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

- This final decree is consistent with Psalm 37:9, 11, 22, 29. Keep in mind that Psalms would be the last word since it was inspired way after Abraham and Moses: "Those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land... the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace."

In summary, and to put it in 'politically correct' terms, Muslims believe their spiritual cousins, the Jews, missed their shot at holding the Holy Land forever because of disobedience and sin. As a result, the promise of the land remains open to all righteous believers in God, and this includes Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

THE COVENANT KEEPERS AND BREAKERS

Both the biblical and Quranic narratives reveal a recurring pattern throughout Israel's history: the majority repeatedly broke God's covenant, while only a faithful remnant upheld it.

- **Covenant Keepers: The Remnant Few Through Whom God's Promises Endured**

Covenant Keepers are those who remained faithful to God's commands—those purified by faith, walking in obedience and humility, and living by righteousness and justice. Notably, the Quran consistently refers to them as *a few*:

Quran 7:159 - AlAraf (The Heights) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
There are some among the people of Moses who guide with the truth and establish justice accordingly.	وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ

Quran 3 - Aale Imran (The Family of Amram) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali, Abdul Haleem (authors edit in italics)</i>		
But they are not all alike. There are some among the People of the Book (Christians and Jews) who are upright, who recite God's revelations during the night, who bow down in worship	113	لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ ءَانَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ
who believe in God and the Last Day, who order what is right and forbid what is wrong, who are quick to do good deeds. These people are among the righteous	114	يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ
Of the good that they do, nothing will be rejected of them; for Allah knoweth well those that do right.	115	وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَن يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ

- **Covenant Breakers: The Majority Who Betrayed God's Trust and Condemned**

The Covenant Breakers are those who corrupted or betrayed the covenant—rebelling against divine commands, hardening their hearts in pride, resisting correction and justice, and transforming God's covenant into a banner for privilege or oppression.

Given their privileged status, divine blessings, and the witnessed covenant, Covenant Breakers received particularly stern rebukes, condemnation, divine displeasure, and severe punishment. Two examples are as follows:

Quran 5:13 - AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
But for breaking their covenant We condemned them and hardened their hearts. They distorted the words of the Scripture and neglected a portion of what they had been commanded to uphold. You 'O Prophet' will always find deceit on their part, except for a few. But pardon them and bear with them. Indeed, Allah loves the good-doers.	فِيمَا نَقَضُوا مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Quran 4:155 - AlNisa (The Women) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
Then because of their breaking of their covenant, and their disbelieving in the revelations of Allah, and their slaying of the prophets wrongfully, and their saying: Our hearts are hardened - Nay, but Allah set a seal upon them for their disbelief, so that they believe not save a few	فِيمَا نَقَضُوا مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفِّرُوا بِهِ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلَّتْ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

Below is a list of the main crimes of the Covenant-Breakers of the children of Israel as identified in both the Quran and the Bible (Old and New Testaments). These transgressions are repeatedly cited as the reasons for God's judgment, exile, or withdrawal of favor, despite His continued mercy toward the faithful remnant:

- Worshiping idols and false gods after God's deliverance.
- Killing and rejecting the prophets and messengers sent by God.
- Corrupting justice and oppressing the weak and poor.
- Profaning the Sabbath and disobeying divine commands.
- Altering, concealing, or misinterpreting God's revealed word.
- Engaging in murder, civil strife, and shedding innocent blood.
- Pursuing greed and worldly gain over faithfulness to God.
- Breaking oaths and covenants made with God.
- Rejecting the Messiah and resisting divine renewal.
- Showing arrogance and claiming exclusive salvation without obedience.

REPEAT REMINDERS TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES

Quran 2:40 - AlBaqarah (The Cow)

Translation by Pickthall

O Children of Israel! Remember My favour wherewith I favoured you, and fulfil your (part of the) covenant, and I shall fulfil My (part of the) covenant, and fear Me.

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي
أَوْفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ

Quran 2:47&122 - AlBaqarah (The Cow)

Identical Verse Repeated Twice

Translation by Yusuf Ali

O Children of Israel! Call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others (for My Message).

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ اذْكُرُوا
نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ

Quran 2:83 - AlBaqarah (The Cow)

Translation by Pickthall

And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel, (saying): Worship none save Allah (only), and be good to parents and to kindred and to orphans and the needy, and speak kindly to mankind; and establish worship and pay the poor-due. Then, after that, ye slid back, save a few of you, being averse.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي
إِسْرَءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ
إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَيَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
وَزِي الْفَرْى وَالْيَتَامَى
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ
حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE HAVE PASSED AWAY, THE BILATERAL COVENANT CHAPTER IS CLOSED, AND GOD'S ETERNAL COVENANT WITH HUMANITY CONTINUES

The Quran declares that the time of the Chosen People is completed, and their actions hold no sway over others. Independent of the Covenant, now as before, each soul is directly responsible for its deeds and will stand alone before the judgment seat of God.

Quran 2:134 &141 AlBakarah (The Cow)

Translation by Yusuf Ali

Identical Verse Repeated Twice in the Quran

That was a people that hath passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did, and ye of what ye do! Of their merits there is no question in your case!

بَٰلِكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ طَائِفَتُهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ
وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

In Islamic tradition, bilateral covenants are not seen as transformative, and the Quran does not suggest that God entered into any new bilateral covenants after Jesus.

Christian-Muslim Gaps	
The Covenant	
Christianity	Islam
The Covenant is central to theological concepts, representing God's engagement with humanity. It showcases His promises and faithfulness throughout the history of The Children of Israel. This narrative culminates in the coming of Jesus Christ, reflecting God's plan for salvation and His enduring commitment to His covenant. These themes are foundational, illustrating spiritual truths and divine faithfulness.	God chose and made a bilateral covenant with the children of Israel for a special, multi-generational mission to serve Him. This mission was completed, the covenant fulfilled, its objectives achieved, and Christian nations are the primary outcome. The Chosen People chapter is closed, and everyone is responsible for their deeds.

The NEW Covenant	
Christianity (Christ-Centric)	Islam (God-Centric)
Different Christian denominations interpret the New Covenant in diverse ways. Some view it as linked to each individual's faith and personal relationship with God, emphasizing salvation and redemption through Jesus Christ. These interpretations range from understanding the Old Covenant as fulfilled and superseded by the New Covenant established by Jesus, to maintaining that it remains in effect and will be fully realized in the future.	Muslims view the "New Covenant" within the unfolding of the broader divine plan for humanity. Jesus is seen as fulfilling a significant role in renewing and strengthening the call to worship the one God and in bringing that message to the nations, and Christians, in turn, are understood as having carried the banner of monotheism to the wider world.

QURAN PROPHECIES RELATED TO COVENANT BREAKERS (EVENTS THAT WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE REVELATION OF THE QURAN)

The Quran mentions cycles of mighty rise and decline among the Children of Israel. Some contemporary scholars interpret these passages as possibly referring to major historical events, such as the Inquisition and the Holocaust, as well as modern political developments, including the situation in Palestine and Israel's significant influence on global affairs.

Quran 17 - AlIsra (The Night Journey) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>		
We declared to the Children of Israel in the Scripture, 'Twice you will spread corruption in the land and become highly arrogant.'	4	وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لُتْفُسِدَنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا
When the first of the two warnings would come to pass, We would send against you some of Our servants of great might, who would ravage your homes. This would be a warning fulfilled.	5	فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ أُولَاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَا أُولَىٰ بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُوا خِلَالَ الدِّيَارِ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولًا
Then 'after your repentance' We would give you the upper hand over them and aid you with wealth and offspring, causing you to outnumber them.	6	ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنَاكُم بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا
If you act rightly, it is for your own good, but if you do wrong, it is to your own loss. "And when the second warning would come to pass, your enemies would 'be left to' totally disgrace you and enter that place of worship as they entered it the first time, and utterly destroy whatever would fall into their hands.	7	إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنَ نَفْسِكُمْ وَأِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ لَسَاءَ فَلَهُمَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيُسْهِرُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبِّرُوا مَا عَلُوا تَتَبِّرُوا
Perhaps your Lord will have mercy on you 'if you repent', but if you return 'to sin', We will return 'to punishment'. And We have made Hell a 'permanent' confinement for the disbelievers."	8	عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يَرْحَمَكُمْ وَإِنْ عُدْتُمْ عُدْنَا وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا

AUTHOR’S REMARKS REGARDING THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

- During the era of Abraham, the limited methods of communication posed significant challenges to spreading God's word among humanity. A well-connected network of tribes or families, especially those involved in trade, would have been an effective means to spread God's word across regions. Additionally, maintaining the prophetic tradition within these tribes could foster a sense of generational honor and pride, gradually building a reputation that would aid in promoting God's word and expanding its reach.
- Observationally, the Jewish people have consistently demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for commerce across generations. This inherent trait (i.e., by divine design) appears to have sustained the Israelites in the trade business over the years, thereby facilitating the dissemination of God's word.
- The descendants of Ishmael, mostly nomadic Arab tribes, led a lifestyle that roamed the wilderness in search of green pastures. This nomadic lifestyle might not have been as effective in disseminating God's word to the nations. Although there were many Arab traders, their trade routes were mostly limited to trips in and out of the wilderness.
- Christian nations stand as a testament that the objectives of the bilateral covenant with the Children of Israel have been achieved, and the purpose of the Chosen People fulfilled.
- From an Islamic perspective, the Covenant provided the Children of Israel additional opportunities to succeed in life's tests and improve their status in the hereafter. However, the Quran does not grant them specific advantages in terms of salvation or redemption. The Children of Israel are subject to the same earthly trials as everyone else. Regardless of chosen or covenant status, each individual will stand before the Lord on equal footing, responsible for their own actions (refer to ‘The Fundamental Principle of Equality of ALL Human Beings’ page 68). The Quran states that no one receives even sentimental favoritism, maintaining a universal principle of justice applicable to all humanity:

Quran 5:18 - AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Abdel Haleem</i>	
The Jews and the Christians say, ‘We are the children of God and His beloved ones.’ Say, ‘Then why does He punish you for your sins? You are merely human beings, part of His creation: He forgives whoever He wills and punishes whoever He wills. Control of the heavens and earth and all that is between them belongs to Him: all journeys lead to Him.’	وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُم بِذُنُوبِكُمْ إِنَّا بِأَنكُم بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرْ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

WHO HAS RIGHTS TO THE HOLY LAND TODAY?

From an Islamic perspective:

Muslims generally believe that anyone who lawfully purchases land, inherits it, or settles peacefully in the Holy Land without forcibly displacing others possesses legitimate rights to that land. Historically, Palestine has long been home to people of different faiths, origins, races, and ethnicities, including Christians, Jews, Samaritans, Muslims, and others. Following the seventh-century Arab-Muslim conquest, there is no known evidence of a mass, state-ordered expulsion of the civilian population of the Holy Land. Rather, the historical record points to substantial continuity among the local Christian, Jewish, and Samaritan communities and the arrival of Muslim newcomers over time. Again, this Muslim attitude toward land, neighbors, and protected religious communities is rooted in divinely mandated guidelines, as discussed in ‘Guidelines for Muslim Interaction with Christians and Jews’ page 187.

From a theological perspective:

As stated in ‘The Promised Holy Land’ *section page 175*, Muslims believe that God ordained to King David that the land would be inherited (i.e., peacefully) by “righteous servants.” Following this belief, and after the Roman army was expelled by Khalid ibn al-Walid, Muslims historically kept the land open for anyone to settle, purchase property, and call it home.

Who is better aligned with God’s definition of “Righteous Servants”?

Today, some Muslims argue that they are better positioned to inherit the Holy Land because they see themselves as more closely aligned with what Scripture describes as “righteous servants.” In making this case, they often point to what they perceive as moral decline in the mainstream of the modern Western world. The concerns they raise may include issues such as the normalization of adultery and homosexuality, legalized abortion, the widespread availability of pornography, rising atheism and racism, substance use, and the historical oppression of millions through colonialism and slavery. They also reference major contemporary tragedies—including the World Wars and the Holocaust—as evidence of the consequences of moral and societal breakdown.



Peace Be Upon You

How the Greeting is uttered by Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad
Abrahamic Heritage

	Native Tongue	Transliteration	Literal Meaning	References
Moses	Hebrew	<i>Shalom aleichem</i>	Peace be with you	Judges 6:23 Daniel 10:19 1 Samuel 25:6 1 Chronicles 12:18
Jesus	Aramaic	<i>Shlama alaykun</i>	Peace be with you	John 20:19 John 20:21 John 20:26 Luke 24:36
Muhammad	Arabic	<i>Salamu alaykum</i>	Peace be with you	Quran 6:54 Quran 7:46 Quran 10:10



CHAPTER 8

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK IN THE QURAN

INTRODUCTION

The Quran refers to the followers of the scriptures revealed to Moses and Jesus as the 'People of the Book.' It holds their righteous believers in high regard, addressing them with love and respect. After all, Muslims believe that Muhammad's message is a continuation of the teachings brought by the prophets of the Children of Israel, ending with Jesus.

Quran 2:62 - AlBaqarah (The Cow)

Translation by Yusuf Ali, Mohammad Asad

Those who believe (in this divine writ), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,- any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا
وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ ءَامَنَ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلُوا
صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Quran 3:199 – Aale Imran (The Family of Imran)

Translation by Pickthall revised by author

And lo! of the People of the Scripture (Christians and Jews) there are some who believe in God and that which is revealed unto you and that which was revealed unto them, humbling themselves before God. They purchase not a trifling gain at the price of the revelations of God. Verily their reward is with their Lord. Lo! God is swift to take account.

وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ
بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ
إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتُرُونَ
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ
أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ
الْحِسَابِ

GUIDELINES FOR MUSLIM INTERACTION WITH CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

Muslims are obliged to recognize Christians and Jews based on their self-identification and regardless of their theological specifics. If individuals live in Muslim-majority countries and declare ‘We are Christians’ or ‘We are Jews,’ then Muslims are obliged to:

1. Designate them “Protected People” and defend them and their places of worship, even at the cost of Muslim lives, without having them engage in any military activity.
2. Allow them to practice their faith and govern themselves according to their beliefs even if that requires exceptional civil rights like permission to consume alcohol within their communities or in private.
3. Avoid arguing with them except in the best of manners.

Quran 29 - AlAnkabut (The Spider)

Translation by Ruwwad Center

Do not argue with the People of the Book except in the best manner, unless with those of them who transgress [against you]. And say, “We believe in what is sent down to us and what was sent down to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit.”

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَجَدَ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

4. Compete with them in doing righteousness:

Quran 5:48 – AlMaedah (The Table)

Translation by Khattab

..... To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given ‘each of’ you. So compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you ‘of the truth’ regarding your differences.

.... لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِنَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا ءَاتَيْنَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

5. Treat them with respect, kindness, and fairness except those who transgress:

Quran 60 - AlMumtahinah (The Examined)

Translation by Khattab

Allah does not forbid you from dealing kindly and fairly with those who have neither fought nor driven you out of your homes. Surely Allah loves those who are fair.	8	لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ
Allah only forbids you from befriending those who have fought you for 'your' faith, driven you out of your homes, or supported 'others' in doing so. And whoever takes them as friends, then it is they who are the 'true' wrongdoers.	9	إِنَّمَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَنْ تَوَلَّوْهُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

Note the “driven you out of your homes” act of aggression seems redundant in the scriptures as well as today in Palestine.

6. Never force anyone to convert to Islam:

Quran 2:256 - AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>	
Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood. So whoever renounces false gods and believes in Allah has certainly grasped the firmest, unfailing hand-hold. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.	لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَخْتَرِ بِالطُّغْيَانِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

7. Find common ground with Christians and Jews. Since all three faiths believe and worship the God of Abraham, “God-the-Father”, Muslims are instructed to come to terms based on the shared Abrahamic beliefs, virtues, principles, and values:

Quran 3:64 – Aale Imran (The Family of Imran) <i>Translation by Pickthall</i>	
Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).	قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Other Guidelines:

1. Muslims may consume meat slaughtered by Christians or Jews, except for pork.
2. Muslim men are permitted to marry Christian or Jewish women, but the reverse is not allowed.

3. More information about the Rules for Peace & War with People of the Book are found in “Dear Pastors and Priests” by Ayman Alhasan.

QURANIC PERSPECTIVES ON JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD MUSLIMS

The Quran also presents passages that caution Muslims about the limits of religious alignment with Christians and Jews:

Quran 2:120 - AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Saheeh International</i>	
Never will the Jews or Christians be pleased with you, until you follow their faith...	وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ...

Nevertheless, the Quran presents a nuanced distinction in how Jews and Christians are portrayed in relation to Muslims, particularly among those who become aware of its message. These distinctions are not absolute or universal, but descriptive of recognizable patterns in response to the emergence of Islam.

1. Jews:
Certain Quranic passages describe segments of the Jewish community as exhibiting strong opposition toward the message of Islam and its followers.
2. Christians
By contrast, the Quran often characterizes Christians as comparatively more receptive and emotionally responsive to its message. It describes individuals among them who, upon hearing the Quran, recognize points of continuity with their own beliefs, respond with humility, and express a desire to be counted among the believers. At the same time, the text acknowledges a more complex internal dynamic: some may perceive this connection yet refrain from openly affirming it due to social, economic, or institutional pressures such as the potential loss of status, livelihood, or communal standing. This suggests not uniform acceptance, but a range of responses shaped by both conviction and circumstance:

Quran 5 - AlMaedah (The Table) <i>Translation by Yusuf Ali</i>		
Strongest among men in enmity to the believers wilt thou find the Jews and Pagans; and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, ‘We are	82	لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدُوًّا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

Christians': because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant.		الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرِي ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِيِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ
And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: they pray: 'Our Lord! we believe; write us down among the witnesses.	83	وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ
And why should we not believe in Allah and what has come to us of the truth? And we aspire that our Lord will admit us [to Paradise] with the righteous people.'	84	وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ
And for this their prayer hath Allah rewarded them with gardens, with rivers flowing underneath,- their eternal home. Such is the recompense of those who do good.	85	فَأَنبَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا حَتَّى تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

In general, Muslims view Christians similarly to how Christians regard Jews. Muslims see Islam primarily as a rejuvenation of Judaism and Christianity, a perspective that has been held since the early days of Islam. For example, the early Seventh-century AD victory of the Christian Romans over the Persians was prophesied and celebrated by Muslims and their sentiments were captured in the Quran:

Quran 30 - AlRom (The Romans) <i>Translation by Khattab</i>		
A. L. M. (Ambiguous Code)	1	الْم
The Romans have been defeated	2	غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ
in a nearby land. Yet following their defeat, they will triumph	3	فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ سَيُغْلِبُونَ
within three to nine years. The 'whole' matter rests with Allah before and after 'victory'. And on that day the believers will rejoice.	4	فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

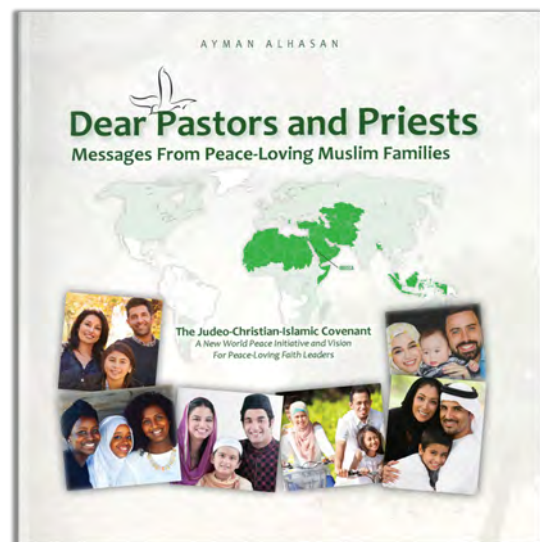
Today, Muslims feel obligated to reach out to Christians and Jews to share the Quran's message. Many Islamic universities support this outreach by offering full scholarships to international students, particularly non-Arabs, helping spread the Quran's teachings to non-native speakers.

The Quran mandates belief, respect, and reverence for Jesus to an extraordinary degree. The Arabic name of 'Jesus' is mentioned five times more often than 'Muhammad' in the Quran. Muslims refer to Jesus as 'the Messiah', the 'spirit of

God', and the 'word of God'. In other words, when Christians embrace Islam, they do not lose Jesus, the man. Muslims believe that God sent Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary with the message that she 'found favor with God... will give birth to a son and will name him Jesus'. Jesus was miraculously conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary and she later gave birth to him. Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead. 'Mary' is the title of a chapter in the Quran detailing the story of Mary, including events surrounding Jesus' birth. Finally, Muslims believe that supernatural events marked the days before Jesus ascended into heaven.

Muslim Attitudes Toward Christians and the Modern West

Muslim perspectives are often misunderstood when they are treated as a single, unified viewpoint. In reality, many Muslims make a clear distinction between *Christians as people of faith* and *the modern Western world as a political and cultural force*. At a theological level, Muslims are taught to honor and respect Christians as “People of the Book,” sharing belief in one God and reverence for figures like Jesus and Mary. In every day life, this often leads to genuine warmth, cooperation, and a sense of shared moral ground. At the same time, Muslim views of Western nations tend to be more complex. Many admire the West for its advances in education, technology, and civil freedoms. Yet there are also deep concerns shaped by history and recent events. In particular, repeated military interventions in parts of the Muslim world often resulted in widespread destruction and the loss of countless civilian lives which have left lasting wounds in many communities. As a result, what may appear to be hostility is often not directed at Christianity or individual Christians, but rather at specific political actions or broader societal trends associated with the modern West (i.e., homosexuality, pornography, etc.) For a deeper understanding of Muslim attitudes towards Christians and the Modern West, read *Dear Pastors and Priests* by Ayman Alhasan



DOES THE HOLY BIBLE PROPHECY THE ADVENT OF ISLAM?

The Old and New Testaments contain numerous prophecies that Christians widely regard as evidence of their divine origin. Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled in ways that are central to the biblical narrative, including promises concerning nations, leaders, and the coming of God's messengers. Scripture itself anticipates that God would continue to act in history, raising up individuals to carry forward His purposes.

From a Muslim perspective, however, some of these prophetic passages may have been interpreted too narrowly. *Muslim scholars often suggest that certain prophecies—while genuine and divinely inspired—have been read primarily through the lens of the covenant line of Israel, without fully considering the God's broader plan and promises, including those associated with Abraham's other descendants.* In this view, the biblical narrative may emphasize the covenant line, while still leaving room for a wider “blessed lineage” through which God's purposes could also unfold.

As a result, some Muslims argue that particular passages may point more broadly than is commonly assumed, and that certain references could include figures not typically recognized within Christian interpretation. In particular, they propose that Muhammad may be reflected in passages that are often applied exclusively to other figures.

This subsection does not seek to resolve these differences, but to present and examine a selection of such passages from a Muslim interpretive framework. By exploring how these prophecies are read within Islamic scholarship, the goal is to better understand why some Muslims view the biblical text as containing indirect references to Muhammad and the emergence of Islam.

1. The Great Nations Prophecy

Among the various passages Muslims cite as biblical evidence for the advent of Islam, the Great Nations Prophecy stands as the most foundational claim and, they argue, its fulfillment is impossible to miss. Unlike prophecies that require careful textual analysis or historical reconstruction, this one has been fulfilled on a scale visible to every person alive today. Christendom and the Islamic world stand today as the two dominant civilizations on earth—together encompassing the majority of humanity, shaping the laws, cultures, and moral frameworks of nations across every continent, and wielding an influence that has defined the course of history for over a millennium. Significantly, both civilizations

explicitly honor and claim the heritage of Abraham. In Muslim view, this is not coincidence or ambiguity; it is the literal fulfillment of Scripture, written in the living reality of two billion Christians and two billion Muslims who together bear Abraham's name as their common father of faith

2. Kedar (a descendant of Ishmael) in the wilderness regions

Another passage frequently examined in this context is Isaiah 42. Most Christians interpret this chapter as a prophecy referring to Jesus, reading it within the covenant narrative centered on Israel and the line of Isaac. From a Muslim perspective, however, the passage contains details that strain this interpretation and point toward a broader fulfillment. Most notably, the explicit reference to Kedar, son of Ishmael, anchors the prophecy geographically and genealogically in the wilderness regions of Arabia, situating its fulfillment not within the Israelite covenant context but within God's broader plan. Below is the passage, followed by a comparative table showing how key elements are interpreted within Christian and Muslim framework

Isaiah 42 (KJV): “¹Behold! **My Servant** whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the **Gentiles**. ²He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. ³A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. ⁴He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.” ⁵Thus says God the LORD, ...: ⁶“I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a **covenant** to the people, As a light to the **Gentiles**, ⁷To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. ⁸I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. ⁹Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them. ¹⁰Sing to the LORD **a new song**, And His praise from the ends of the earth, You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, You coastlands and you inhabitants of them! ¹¹Let the **wilderness and its cities** lift up their voice, The villages that **Kedar (Son of Ishmael)** inhabits. Let the inhabitants of **Sela** sing, Let them shout from the top of the mountains. ¹²Let them give glory to the LORD, AND declare His praise in the coastlands. ¹³The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal **like a man of war**. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; **He shall prevail against His enemies.**”

Highlighted Keywords	Muhammad <i>(According to Islamic Tradition)</i>	Jesus <i>(According to Christian Tradition)</i>
Kedar	Muhammad is Arab and Kedar is the son of Ishmael and one of the twelve Arab princes mentioned in the Holy Bible.	Jesus was a descendant of Isaac and belonged to the people of Israel; he was not of Arab lineage.
Wilderness and its Cities	Muhammad lived most of his life in the wilderness of the Arabian Peninsula, south of Jerusalem, and particularly in the cities Mecca and Medina.	Jesus lived primarily in the Holy Land but took trips to nearby wilderness areas for various reasons, including feeding families, retreats for rest and teaching, and seeking solitude.
Man of War	Muhammad commanded armies and engaged in battles.	Jesus preached peace and his approach was non-violent, focusing on spiritual and moral teachings.
Shall Prevail Against Enemies	Muhammad prevailed and was victorious in most wars against pagan idol worshipers and Qurayshi enemies. Islam conquered vast territories in a relatively short period of time.	Jesus won spiritually in <i>the long run</i> as Christians eventually became a world superpower.
A New Song	The Quran was a new law with rhythms, rhymes, and other musical characteristics built-in the text.	Jesus did not bring new laws but emphasized the spiritual essence and the moral and ethical dimensions of the existing Mosaic Law. The Servant Songs of Isaiah are scripture passages that are considered prophetic revelations about Jesus Christ and his redemptive work.

Highlighted Keywords	Muhammad (According to Islamic Tradition)	Jesus (According to Christian Tradition)
My Servant	Whereas Christianity usually emphasizes that Jesus is the Son of God, Islam emphasizes that Muhammad is a Servant Messenger of God and a role model for all Muslims to be servants of God. The declaration of faith (shahadah), recited by every practicing Muslim nine times <i>each day</i> , includes the phrase: "I bear witness that Muhammad is God's Servant and Messenger."	At least five verses in the Old and New Testaments highlight that Jesus is a servant of God. He also fed 5,000 people in Galilee and told his followers that he is among them as one who serves.
Mount Sela	Mount Sela is currently in Medina, Saudi Arabia, where Muhammad lived.	Sela today is an archaeological site located about 75 miles southeast of Jerusalem.
Gentiles	Muhammad, a gentile, lived with and interacted primarily with Gentiles, and all Muslims are considered Gentiles.	Jesus' ministry focused on the "lost sheep of Israel," yet He also reached Gentiles to heal and proclaim God's message. He fed a large Gentile crowd in the Decapolis. Over time, Christianity spread widely, and Gentiles became its majority.
Covenant	No bilateral covenants are made with God in Islam. However, many unilateral covenants or commitments and pledges were made.	The unilateral New Covenant through Jesus involved the transformation from the Mosaic Law to the teachings of Jesus.

Some historical contexts may shed more light on this passage. Between the 1st and 4th centuries AD, many Jews migrated from the Holy Land and settled in the

region where Muhammad was later born and lived. Three major tribes,¹⁰⁶ one of which claimed lineage to Moses, established themselves in the wilderness city of Madinah. By the time of Muhammad's birth, at the end of the 6th century AD, they had fully integrated into Arab society, adopting Arabic names and living alongside pagan Arab communities. The question arises: was it merely a coincidence that major Jewish tribes had migrated from the north and settled in Madinah, the very city where Muhammad would eventually rule and lead the emerging Muslim nation? According to several historical Muslim traditions, this was no coincidence. The Jews had followed descriptions in their scriptures that prophesied the arrival of a prophet in the village of Kedar, in the wilderness and its surrounding cities. When Muhammad appeared, fulfilling these prophecies but emerging from among the original Arabs rather than the Israelite Arabs, most Jews rejected him—though some accepted him. While the following references are reported by Muslim historians (i.e. not Quran) the context aligns closely with Isaiah 42 above:

- A. Sunan al-Tirmidhi: Salman al-Farsi narrated that a (Christian) monk he had been serving told him about the coming of a prophet, saying: "He will appear in a land of palm trees and will have certain signs: he will not eat charity, but he will accept gifts, and the seal of prophethood will be between his shoulders." Once Salman found these signs in Muhammad after meeting him in Madinah, he embraced Islam.
- B. Sahih al-Bukhari¹⁰⁷ reports from Ibn Abbas: "The Jews used to invoke Allah's curse against the pagan Arabs and say, 'A prophet will be sent (soon), and we shall kill you (pagans) under his guidance and support.' But when Allah sent Muhammad from among the Arabs, they disbelieved in him, ..."
- C. Sahih al-Bukhari narrates the story of Abdullah ibn Salam: "When the Prophet arrived in Madinah, Abdullah ibn Salam, who was a Jewish rabbi, came to him and said: 'O Muhammad! I will ask you about three things which nobody knows except a prophet...' After receiving satisfactory answers, he declared his belief in Muhammad as the awaited prophet."

3. Moses's Prophecy of a Future Prophet

Another passage frequently discussed in this context is Deuteronomy 18:17–19, where Moses speaks of a future prophet whom God will raise up: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my

¹⁰⁶ The three tribes were: Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadir, and Banu Qurayza
¹⁰⁷ <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3329>

words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him...” Within Christian interpretation, this passage is commonly understood to refer to Jesus, read within the covenant narrative centered on Israel and its fulfillment in Christ. From a Muslim perspective, however, the description of this prophet may invite a broader reading—one that considers not only the covenant line of Israel, but also the wider scope of God’s promises to Abraham, including the “blessed lineage” through his other descendants.

Muslim scholars often highlight several features of the passage:

- A. The mode of revelation: The phrase “I will put my words in his mouth” is understood by some Muslims as vividly reflecting the manner in which Muhammad received and conveyed revelation—reciting words believed to be directly given to him.
- B. The Likeness to Moses ('like unto thee'): The text emphasizes that the coming prophet would be 'like' Moses. Some Muslim interpreters argue that this description fits Muhammad more closely than Jesus because Moses and Muhammad were both fully human, while Christians understand Jesus to be divine.
- C. The meaning of “brethren”: Christian interpretation typically understands “brethren” to refer to fellow Israelites within the covenant line. Muslim scholars, however, propose a broader genealogical reading, in which “brethren” could include related peoples such as the descendants of Ishmael—traditionally regarded as kin to the Israelites. Within this wider “lineage” framework, the passage is understood by some Muslims as potentially pointing beyond Israel to a prophet arising from Abraham’s extended family.

4. The Quran states that Christians and Jews will recognize “it”

From an Islamic perspective, the following verse has often been understood to suggest that some among the People of the Scripture may have recognized elements of truth in the message of Muhammad, even if that recognition was not always expressed publicly.

Quran 2:146 - AlBaqarah (The Cow) <i>Translation by Saheeh International</i>	
Those We gave Scripture know it (or him) as well as they know their own sons, but some of them hide the truth that they know.	الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

HOW HERMENEUTICS DIVIDES CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

This section explores a paradox that has intrigued me, the author, for many years: despite the New Testament and the Quran sharing many foundational beliefs and moral teachings, Christians and Muslims have often arrived at profoundly different theological conclusions. These differences have influenced the course of civilizations, shaped collective identities, divided communities, and, tragically, contributed to conflict and bloodshed between nations whose beliefs, values, and aspirations were often far more alike than either side recognized.

What is Hermeneutics?

In both Protestant Christianity and mainstream Sunni Islam, no single central authority governs scriptural interpretation. As a result, qualified pastors and Imams bear the responsibility of interpreting sacred texts according to established principles within their traditions. Over time, each tradition has developed structured approaches to interpretation, commonly referred to as *hermeneutics*, which guide how scripture is understood, applied, and safeguarded.

Where Christian and Muslim Hermeneutics Diverge

Differences become most visible when interpreting passages that concern profound theological mysteries, such as the nature of God, the identity of Jesus, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the relationship between divine unity and plurality. At the heart of the discussion is this question:

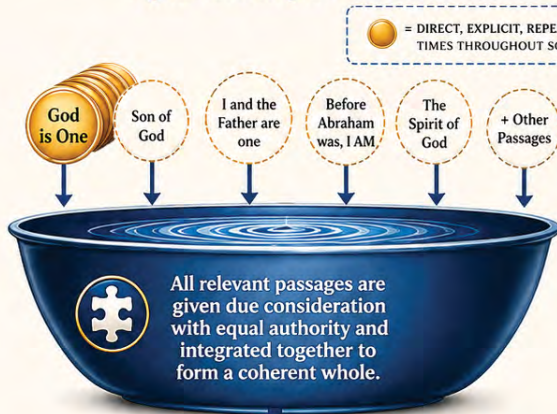
When scripture contains both clear foundational statements and passages that appear to expand upon those foundations, how should those texts be understood together in case they conflict?

	Christian Answer	Muslim Answer
Method	Whole-Scripture Integration	Priority on Foundational Text (The Rule of Clarity)
Hermeneutic Approach	Bring ALL relevant passages into conversation, forming a coherent theological understanding that accounts for the full scope of scripture	Give primary interpretive weight to clear, direct, and repeatedly affirmed statements and interpret other inferred passages in light of the repeated foundational text
Emphasize	Comprehensive integration of the entire scriptural witness	Interpretive stability grounded in explicit and foundational statements

HOW INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES (HERMENEUTICS) SHAPE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

WHOLE-SCRIPTURE INTEGRATION

— All relevant passages are brought equally together and integrated as a whole. —

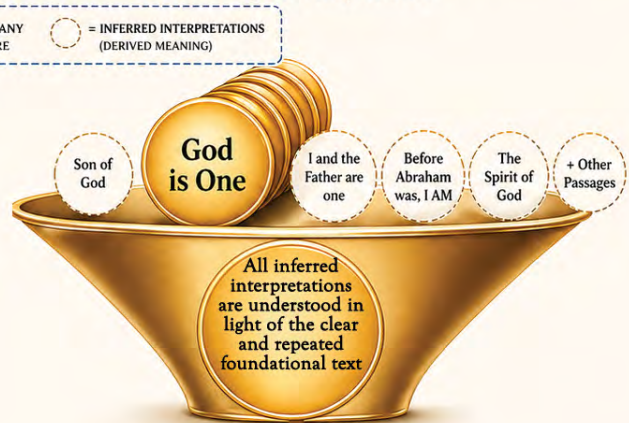


The Trinity

God is one in essence,
yet exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

PRIORITY ON FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS

— Clear, direct, and repeatedly affirmed texts guide interpretation. —



UniGod

God is one

SHARED COMMITMENT



SCRIPTURE IS AUTHORITATIVE
Both traditions affirm the divine origin and authority of Scripture.



GOD IS ONE
Both affirm God's unity, uniqueness, and sovereignty.



INTERPRETATION SEEKS FAITHFULNESS
Both seek to understand and live out God's revelation faithfully.

— SAME SCRIPTURE. DIFFERENT APPROACHES. GREATER UNDERSTANDING. RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE. —

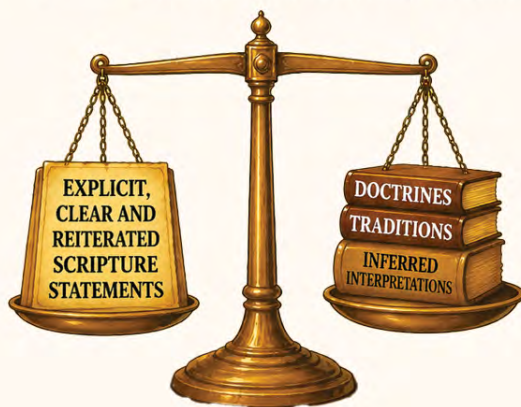


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Example: The Nature of God

Apologists are individuals who seek to explain, defend, and articulate their religious beliefs, often through dialogue with those of other faith traditions. When Christian and Muslim apologists examine biblical passages concerning the nature of God, they focus on two categories of texts.

Foundational Statements Affirming the Oneness of God: Explicit, Clear, and Reiterated.

1. Mark 12:29 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”
2. Isaiah 44:6 “I am the first and I am the last; apart from Me there is no God.”
3. Exodus 20:3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.”
4. James 2:19 “You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder.”
5. Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!”
6. Psalm 86:10 “You alone are God.”

Additional supporting verses include: 1 Chronicles 17:20, Isaiah 45:18, 2 Samuel 7:22, Deuteronomy 4:35, Psalm 83:18, and 1 Corinthians 8:4.

Other Passages Frequently or Traditionally Associated with Trinitarian Theology:

1. John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
2. Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
3. John 1:34 “You are the Son of God.”
4. John 8:58 'Before Abraham was, I AM'
5. John 10:30 “I and the Father are one”
6. John 20:28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Additional supporting verses include: 2 Corinthians 13:14, John 14:16–17 and 26, Acts 5:3–4, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:8, Philippians 2:6–11

Based on the Hermeneutics rules each side applies, a Christian and a Muslim apologist will interpret the above passages as follows:

Method	Whole-Scripture Integration	Priority on Foundational Text (The Rule of Clarity)
Conclusion Regarding Nature Of God	Meaning emerges through the integration of all scriptural passages above: Clear affirmations of God's oneness. Jesus and the Spirit are fully incorporated. Accordingly: • "Son of God" → Jesus is divine. • "I and the Father are one" → unity of entity. • "Before Abraham was, I am" → Jesus is eternal. • Etc.	Explicit and reiterated affirmations of God's oneness serve as the interpretive anchor and all inferred interpretations should be interpreted consistently. For example: • "Son of God" → relational, metaphorical¹⁰⁸, or honorific • "I and the Father are one" → unity of purpose or mission¹⁰⁹ • "Before Abraham was, I am" → understood in a way that preserves God's uniqueness¹¹⁰ • Etc.

Neither side believes it is setting aside scripture. Rather, each tradition believes it is following the interpretive method that best preserves the overall message of divine revelation. As a result, Christianity and Islam can begin with many of the same texts but arrive at different theological conclusions because they employ different hermeneutical frameworks.

108 In Semitic languages, like Hebrew and Arabic, terms such as 'son of', 'father of', and 'sister of' are commonly used as metaphors for close relationships, even to this day. Naturally, an Arabic speaking reader's thought process gravitates toward this metaphorical understanding. The Bible itself employs such expressions metaphorically in many instances such as: "Adam, the son of God" – Luke 3:38; "Israel is My firstborn son" – Exodus 4:22; "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" – Matthew 5:9; "All the sons of God shouted for joy" – Job 38:7; "The sons of God came in..." – Genesis 6:4.

109 The Bible uses similar unity of purpose language in John 17:21–23: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." This would be comparable to saying, "My brother and I are one"—expressing harmony, mutual understanding, or alignment in a shared goal or objective.

110 This verse is interpreted similar to Exodus 4:22, where Israel is called God's firstborn son even though Adam was created first.

Impact of Long-Standing Traditions on Muslim Rituals

The Rule of Clarity in Islamic interpretation safeguards core beliefs and practices derived directly from the Quran. By contrast, secondary beliefs and rituals are more susceptible to evolving into entrenched traditions over time. In this section, we will explore examples of religious innovations that were introduced by political authorities and eventually turned to long-standing traditions that are observed today by the mainstream Sunni majority (about 85% of worldwide Muslims) and the Shia minority (about 13%).

Innovations in Sunni Muslim Practices

Around 25 years after Muhammad's passing, a major battle broke out among his companions. Both sides believed they were fighting for the future of Islam, yet tragically, some of the finest companions of Muhammad and close members of his family were slain and the conflict divided the new emerging Muslim nation.

The Umayyad tribe, which emerged victorious, went on to rule much of the Islamic world and sought to unify the fractured Muslim community under their political authority. As part of this effort, they revised the wording of an authentic prayer that Muhammad used to make, mandating all imams in all mosques to make the modified prayer in the weekly sermon:

- The original prayer, as authentically attributed to Muhammad, was: "O Lord, bestow Your peace and blessings upon Muhammad and his family."
- The altered version, introduced by the Umayyads and still recited today by most mainstream Sunni Muslims:
"O Lord, bestow Your peace and blessings upon Muhammad and his family and all his companions."

Obviously, this change was politically motivated, aiming to legitimize the new Umayyad leadership because many Muslims supported the defeated companions. For decades, this modified version was enforced by law. Imams who refused to make this prayer faced harsh punishments—including execution. This mirrors how early Christians were persecuted by Roman authorities for resisting state-imposed religious traditions.

Over time, and across many generations, many imams yielded to political and social pressures, and the altered version of the prayer became normalized. Today, most mainstream Sunni Muslims recite the version that includes the phrase "*and all his companions,*" often believing that these words were spoken by Muhammad himself. In recent years, however, a growing number of scholars and believers have called

for abandoning this addition, arguing that a number of Muhammad's companions were condemned by the Quran or later recognized as hypocrites.

The implications are significant. For more than fourteen centuries, Muslims may have unknowingly invoked peace and blessings upon individuals whom the Quran itself rejects. It is a striking example of the enduring influence of political authority, inherited tradition, and communal practice in shaping religious expression across generations.

Innovations in Shia Practices

The Shia offshoot, however, faces deeper challenges with longstanding innovations, as they have become deeply embedded in their culture. During the same historical battle, several tribes were involved in the killing of companions and family members of Muhammad. Over time, some of these tribes deeply regretted their actions, which contributed to the formation of the Shia sect. To express remorse, they developed a series of rituals that continue to this day. One notable example is the annual self-flagellation ritual. In some Shia communities, participants beat themselves—sometimes to the point of bleeding as a form of public mourning for the suffering of the Prophet's family. *This ritual, while not found in the Quran or the teachings of the Prophet, has become culturally and emotionally ingrained in Shia Muslim communities.*

QURAN CHAPTER 19 - MARY (MARIAM) VERSES 1- 34



The Quran holds Jesus and his mother, the Virgin Mary, in exceptionally high regard in ways that may surprise many Christian readers. Jesus is described as the Messiah, the Word of God, and a Spirit from God, and He is born through a miraculous virgin birth. Mary is portrayed with profound reverence as a woman chosen above all other women, a model of faith, purity, and devotion. In fact, the Quran dedicates an entire chapter to her story (below), making her the only woman mentioned by name in the entire text. Far from diminishing Jesus or Mary, the Quran honors their stories, highlighting God's power, holiness, and faithfulness.

In the Name of God, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful		
Kaf. Ha. Ya. Ayn. Sad. (Ambiguous Code-Arabic alphabet combination equivalent to the letters K H Y E S)	1	كهيعص
AN ACCOUNT of the grace which thy Sustainer bestowed upon His servant Zachariah	2	ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِيَّا
When he called out to his Sustainer in the secrecy of his heart	3	إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ يَدَاؤً خَفِيًّا
He prayed, "O my Sustainer! Feeble have become my bones and my head glistens with gray hair. But never yet, O my Lord, has my prayer unto Thee remained unanswered.	4	قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا

"Now, behold, I am afraid of (what) my kinsfolk (will do) after I am gone, for my wife has always been barren. Bestow, then, upon me, out of Thy grace, the gift of a successor	5	وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا
Who will be my heir as well as an heir (to the dignity) of the House of Jacob; and make him, O my Sustainer, well pleasing to Thee!"	6	يَرْثُنِي وَيَرْثْ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ وَأَجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا
(Thereupon the angels called out unto him,) "O Zachariah! We bring thee the glad tiding of (the birth of) a son whose name shall be John. (And God says,) "Never have We given this name to anyone before him."	7	يَا زَكَرِيَّا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَى لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا
(Zachariah) exclaimed, "O my Sustainer! How can I have a son when my wife has always been barren and I have become utterly infirm through old age?"	8	قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا
Answered (the angel), "Thus. it is; (but) thy Sustainer says, 'This is easy for Me.'"	9	قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكْ شَيْئًا
(Zachariah) prayed, "O my Sustainer! Appoint a sign for me!" Said (the angel), "Your sign is that you will not speak to the people for three nights."	10	قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ أَيُّكَ أَلا تَكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا
Thereupon he came out of the sanctuary unto his people and signified to them (by gestures), "Extol His limitless glory by day and by night!"	11	فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا
(And when the son was born and grew up, he was told,) "O John! Hold fast unto the divine writ with (all thy) strength!" for We granted him wisdom while he was yet a little boy,	12	يَا يَحْيَى خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْخُكْمَ صَبِيًّا
as well as, by Our grace, (the gift of) compassion and purity; and he was (always) conscious of Us	13	وَحَنَانًا مِنْ لَدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا
and full of piety towards his parents; and never was he haughty or rebellious.	14	وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا
Hence, (God's) peace was upon him on the day when he was born and on the day of his death and will be (upon him) on the day when he shall be raised to life (again).	15	وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُرْعَى حَيًّا

AND CALL to mind, through this divine writ, Mary. Lo! She withdrew from her family to an eastern place	16	وَأَنذِرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ اتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا
and kept herself in seclusion from them, whereupon We sent unto her Our angel of revelation, who appeared to her in the shape of a well-made human being.	17	فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا
She exclaimed, "Verily, I seek refuge from thee with the Most Gracious! (Approach me not) if thou art conscious of Him!"	18	قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ نَقِيًّا
(The angel) answered, "I am but a messenger of thy Sustainer, (who says,) 'I shall bestow upon thee the gift of a son endowed with purity.'"	19	قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا
Said she, "How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me?"	20	قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا
(The angel) answered, "Thus it is; (but) thy Sustainer says, 'This is easy for Me; and (thou shalt have a son,) so that We might make him a symbol unto mankind and an act of grace from Us.' And it was a thing decreed (by God),	21	قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّئٌ وَلَنَجْعَلَنَّ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَقْضِيًّا
and in time she conceived him and then she withdrew with him to a far-off place.	22	فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَاتَّخَذَتْ بِهِ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا
And (when) the throes of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree, she exclaimed, "Oh, would that I had died ere this and had become a thing forgotten, utterly forgotten!"	23	فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جُذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَا لَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا نَسِيًّا
Thereupon (a voice) called out to her from beneath that (palm tree), "Grieve not! Thy Sustainer has provided a rivulet (running) beneath thee;	24	فَنَادَاهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَّا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا
and shake the trunk of the palm tree towards thee; it will drop fresh, ripe dates upon thee.	25	وَهُزِّي إِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسَاقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا جَنِيًّا
Eat, then, and drink and let thine eye be gladdened! And if thou shouldst see any human being, convey this unto him: 'Behold, abstinence from speech have I vowed unto the Most Gracious; hence, I may not speak today to any mortal.'"	26	فَكُلِي وَاشْرَبِي وَقَرِّي عَيْنًا فَمَاذَا تَرَيْنَ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَخَذَا فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا

And in time she returned to her people, carrying the child with her. They said, "O Mary! Thou hast indeed done an amazing thing!	27	فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا
O sister of ¹¹ Aaron! Thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother a loose woman!"	28	يَا أُخْتَ هَارُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكَ امْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَعْثًا
Thereupon she pointed to him. They exclaimed, "How can we talk to one who (as yet) is a little boy in the cradle?"	29	فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا
(But) he said, "Behold, I am a servant of God. He has vouchsafed unto me revelation and made me a prophet,	30	قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا
and made me blessed wherever I may be; and He has enjoined upon me prayer and charity as long as I live,	31	وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا
and (has endowed me with) piety towards my mother; and He has not made me haughty or bereft of grace."	32	وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا
"Hence, peace was upon me on the day when I was born and (will be upon me) on the day of my death and on the day when I shall be raised to life (again)!"	33	وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا
Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute.	34	ذَٰلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۖ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ

111 In Semitic languages, the expression “sister of” is often used metaphorically to denote resemblance or shared qualities. Accordingly, “sister of Aaron” means “one who is like Aaron” in piety, righteousness, or other admired virtues, rather than indicating a literal familial relationship.



Jesus in the Quran

For Muslims, honoring Jesus is not optional, it is part of faith itself. One cannot be a Muslim without believing in him, loving him, and affirming his miraculous birth. In this shared reverence lies an opportunity of honor. The Quran refers and describes Jesus as:

- Son of the Virgin Mary
- The Word of God
- A Spirit from God
- The Messiah
- Isa (closest in pronunciation to the Syriac “Isho”)

Each of these titles above reflects honor, dignity, and divine purpose.

Muslims also believe:

- He was born miraculously to the Virgin Mary.
- He performed miracles including healing the sick and raising the dead.
- He will return before the end of time and they will definitely be on his side at that time.

Whenever Muslims mention Jesus name, they say: “Peace be upon him.” This is not a ritual phrase; it is a prayer of love and respect.



CHAPTER 9



THE END-TIMES, DIVINE DECREE, AND GOD’S SOVEREIGN PURPOSE

Throughout this book, the phrase ‘God’s sovereign purpose’ is used to describe the belief—shared across the Abrahamic traditions—that God governs history with wisdom, authority, and intent. In Christian theology, this is often expressed in terms such as divine providence or God’s will. In Islamic theology, a closely related concept is Divine Decree (Qadar), often translated as predestination. For clarity and consistency, this chapter will primarily use the phrase ‘Divine Decree’

Jews, Christians, and Muslims share substantial agreement on many of the major historical events recorded in Scripture—such as the life of Abraham, the journey of the children of Israel, God’s covenant promises, the inheritance of the Promised Land, and the unfolding of history through Moses up to the ascension of Jesus Christ.

There is also notable overlap in expectations of future prophetic events, including the return of the Jewish people to the Holy Land, the rise of the Antichrist, the battle of Armageddon, the Second Coming of Christ, and His future reign on earth.

Yet, despite these historical and eschatological parallels, Christians hold very complex¹¹² and fundamentally distinct convictions regarding the theological meaning and divine purpose behind these events. Muslims, on the other hand, have

¹¹² I asked ChatGPT to explain the reason behind the difference in theological depth between Christian and Islamic perspectives: “Christians tend to give deeper theological thought to God’s purpose and sovereignty because their scriptures are rich in complex narratives and paradoxes (like the Trinity and the crucifixion), which invite philosophical reflection and interpretation. Over centuries, Christian theology developed as a way to explain and harmonize these mysteries, especially in dialogue with Greek philosophy and diverse cultural contexts. In contrast, Islam emphasizes clarity, submission, and the oneness of God, with the Quran presenting divine will as absolute and not subject to questioning. As a result, the Islamic theological narrative is more straightforward, encouraging trust in God’s decree rather than deep speculation about His plans.”

a very simplified understanding. The difference in understanding is the root cause why Christians and Muslims fully disagree on how they are called to respond to these promises as they unfold.

ANALOGY

To better understand the Muslim response to Divine Decree, End-Times prophecies, and the associated theological framework, let us expand on our imaginary “RoboAssist, Inc.” analogy introduced earlier in ‘Message 4: The Single Most Important Message of the Quran - Monotheism’ page 86:

RoboAssist, Inc. designs a comprehensive test plan to evaluate the intelligence, performance, behavior, and compliance of its autonomous, intelligent humanoids before releasing them to the market. Every step of the test is planned with precision, and before the trials begin, each humanoid receives the following message:

“Each of you will be tested in different ways and will be evaluated individually based on your adherence to your core instructions, regardless of whether others succeed or fail. To assure you that everything you struggle with is part of my testing plan, RoboAssist will reveal a set of key events that you will encounter during the process. These will serve as markers—signs intended to reassure you that the challenges you face are part of the planned examination and that you remain within the controlled testing process.”

Now consider the question: How will the humanoids respond each time they encounter one of these foretold events?

The answer is straightforward: they will recognize that they are progressing within the parameters of the testing plan. The foretold events will reinforce trust in the designer’s overarching purpose and reaffirm the importance of remaining faithful to their original programming.

— End of Analogy —

HOW MUSLIMS RESPOND TO DIVINE DECREE

1. Divine Decree strengthens endurance and inner peace during trials:

Belief in Divine Decree profoundly shapes Muslim endurance, perseverance, and contentment during life's hardships. Whether mourning the death of a loved one, enduring personal loss, witnessing the displacement of entire communities, or facing devastating tragedies affecting thousands, belief in Divine Decree enables Muslims to surrender to the new reality—recognizing it as a test that has unfolded according to God's will and plan. As servants of God, Muslims are called to accept His decree and continue striving to serve Him faithfully. Thus, Divine Decree becomes a primary source of inner peace during life's tests.

2. Muslims accept prophecies as revealed, without speculation:

Muslims receive God's promises and prophecies exactly as they are given, without attempting to read beyond what God has revealed. They refrain from speculating about hidden intentions because they believe that, unless God explicitly explains it, such knowledge lies beyond human understanding.

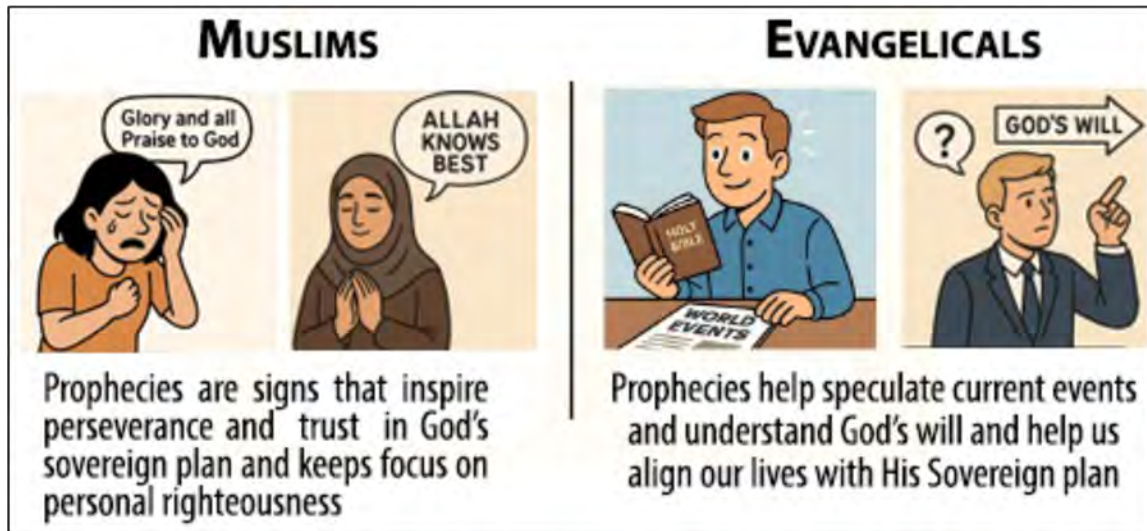
3. Muslims seek to serve God's purposes—within ethical boundaries:

Much like the Christian call to serve God's purposes on earth, Islam calls believers to strive to be instruments through whom God fulfills His promises and decrees—always within the moral and ethical boundaries He has established. The goal is not to hasten the fulfillment of divine promises, but to receive the honor of being a vessel through which God's will is accomplished.

One contemporary example is the enduring hardship of the Palestinian people. Islamic traditions include prophecies about ongoing conflict in the Holy Land, including the Gaza region giving very close estimate of the number of victims.¹¹³ These unfolding prophecies concerning their struggle reinforce their faith and trust in God, assuring them that they are on the right path. Despite more than seven decades of hardship, suffering, displacement, and repeated tragedies, many Palestinians—especially in Gaza—have been seen time and again on television and social media expressing steadfast praise, gratitude, and trust in God, even in the aftermath of devastating loss.

¹¹³ Hadith reported by Anas Bin Malik: "Asqalan (Ashkelon) is one of the two brides. From it, seventy thousand will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection without any reckoning, and from it fifty thousand martyrs will be resurrected as delegations to Allah. In it are the ranks of martyrs, their heads held in their hands, their neck veins pouring forth blood, saying: 'Our Lord, grant us what You promised us through Your messengers; indeed, You do not break Your

Comparing Sunni Muslim, Evangelical, and Christian Zionist Perspectives on Divine Promises and Prophecy



PROPHECY AND PROMISES RELATED TO THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

These promises and prophecies are expected to unfold after the revelation of the Quran and leading up to the onset of the End-Times:

1. Hadith¹¹⁴

- A. Desert shepherds, once barefoot in the sands, competing to raise the tallest buildings - Fulfilled
- B. Women clothed yet naked (e.g., bikinis, etc.) - Fulfilled
- C. A fire in Hijaz lights the necks of camels in Busra - Fulfilled
- D. Conquest of Jerusalem - Fulfilled
- E. Conquest of Egypt - Fulfilled
- F. Conquest of Constantinople - Fulfilled

promise.' So the Lord will say: 'My servants have spoken the truth. Wash them in the River of Purity.' They will then emerge from it pure and white, and they will roam in Paradise wherever they wish."

¹¹⁴ Hadith refers to a large collection of records of normal day-to-day sayings, actions, or teachings attributed to Muhammad other than the Quran. Hadith vary in transmission reliability, accuracy, and authenticity, making them respected but not considered equally authoritative as the Quran. Hadith records have been individually rated for accuracy almost 200 years after the death of Muhammad. In certain aspects, Hadith can be compared to the Bible.

- G. Sustained conflict and instability in the Holy Land, particularly in the “Ashkelon” (Gaza) area -Fulfilled
- H. Non-Muslim nations will swarm Muslim nations, devouring them as a pack of predators devours its prey - Fulfilled
- I. About thirty liars/false claimants to prophethood - Fulfilled
- J. Time will pass quickly - Fulfilled
- K. Plague among Muslims listed among the portents - Fulfilled
- L. Musical instruments widespread - Fulfilled
- M. Alcohol consumption widespread - Fulfilled
- N. Prevalence of usury - Fulfilled
- O. The barren desert of Arabia will bloom again, as it did long ago
- P. False testimony common; true testimony suppressed
- Q. The word of Islam will reach every distant household on earth
- R. People will wish for death because of trials
- S. Women will greatly outnumber men
- T. The Euphrates will uncover a mountain of gold
- U. Senseless killing—killer and victim will not know the reason

2. Quran

- A. Pharaoh’s body will be forever preserved (10:92) – Fulfilled.
- B. Romans will defeat the Persians (30:2–4) – Fulfilled.
- C. Gog and Magog will emerge (18:94; 21:96) – Fulfilled?¹¹⁵
- D. Succession of Muslim authority (24:55) – Fulfilled.
- E. The Quran will be preserved (15:9) – Fulfilled.
- F. The repeated rise and fall of the Children of Israel (after the revelation of the Quran) (17:4–7) – At least one cycle is fulfilled.
- G. The guidance and faith of truth revealed to the messengers will prevail over all other faiths (9:33; 48:28).

¹¹⁵ Some Muslim scholars interpret “Gog and Magog” as referring to the Mongol tribes, particularly in connection with the devastating Mongol invasions of the 13th century. Note the phonetic similarity between the names “Magog” and “Mongol.” However, interpretations vary, and others consider Gog and Magog as symbolic of future end-time chaos or unknown nations yet to appear.

PROPHECY AND PROMISES RELATED TO END-TIMES

1. Introduction

The End-Times constitute a new phase of human testing, with objectives and conditions that differ from the current life test. Muslims often refer to this period as the ‘End-Times Test’ or the ‘Imposter Messiah Test.’

A. Current Life Test

- Tests faith in the unseen, obedience, and sincerity.
- Depends on free will
- Opportunities to repent

B. End-Times Test

- Some of the supernatural or unseen becomes visible
- Repentance no longer accepted
- Focus: steadfastness under extreme deception
- Reveals inner state rather than forming it (believers will be visually distinguished from disbelievers.)

Moreover, during the reign of Jesus - after the antichrist - life will be fundamentally different from our current life:

- A. Truth becomes visible — the unseen is no longer unseen.
- B. Jesus will be present, providing and communicating divine guidance.
- C. Satan’s influence is removed.
- D. Earth becomes a place of prosperity, justice, and peace, even among animals.
- E. Religious choice is no longer a test.

2. End-Times Start

End-Times Test begins when the following three supernatural signs occur:

- The sun will rise from the West.
- The Antichrist will emerge.
- A talking animal will appear, roaming freely. As it passes, it will miraculously reveal the hearts of individuals, visually distinguishing believers from nonbelievers (possibly through some form of skin coloration).

When the three signs above occur, current life test results are sealed, opportunities for repentance will cease, and any shift from disbelief to faith in God will not be recognized. It will be too late.

3. Objectives of the End-Times Test

Neither the Bible nor the Quran provides a complete, explicit explanation of the precise purpose behind the End-Times test, yet both scriptures offer meaningful clues that allow us to consider its possible objectives:

A. Before End-Times: Testing ALL of Humanity:

God is using the dramatic events of the End-Times to test all believers from the time of Adam until the beginning of the End-Times. Here are the clues that lead to this conclusion:

- In Islamic and Christian tradition, God has warned earlier prophets and nations about the coming End-Times, even though God knew that earlier generations would not live to witness them. This suggests that the warnings themselves serve a purpose for every generation.
- The term “very near”¹¹⁶ is repeatedly used in both Christian and Islamic scripture and traditions, giving this issue a compelling sense of urgency to act or react—even though God knew earlier generations would not see these events unfold. This urgency also suggests that the warning is part of the test.
- The Holy Bible (Revelation 3:10) supports this concept: “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.”

The question remains: What is God testing? Here are possible answers:

i. Testing how believers with foreknowledge of the future will behave?

God may be testing how awareness of the future affects adherence to divine commands and understanding of good and evil. For example, will believers continue to pursue righteousness and promote goodness regardless of the outcome? Or will some adopt the mindset that “the end justifies the means,” using this knowledge to justify actions that violate God’s commandments and the foundational principles of love, mercy, and justice for other rewarding gains? Is it possible that sincere believers might misuse such knowledge for personal or ideological gain?

¹¹⁶ Keep in mind that time is relative.

From a Palestinian victim's perspective, the deepest wound is realizing that decades of suffering—felt by millions of innocent children and families—have so often been condoned by many sincere and good-hearted Christian Zionists and Evangelicals, not because Christians lacked kindness, but because divine knowledge which is meant to inspire love, mercy, and solidarity has, unintentionally, kept them from offering compassion, or even a single word of comfort, to people who are hurting.

ii. Testing strength of faith:

This test may reveal who will trust in divine prophecies and who will ridicule the miraculous and supernatural signs and wonders that defy logic.

iii. The End-Times serve as a powerful call to heartfelt faith

Faith speaks to both the mind and the heart. Some people come to believe in God through careful reasoning and reflection, while others are moved more deeply through powerful personal or emotional experiences. The dramatic events associated with the End-Times may serve to awaken and stir the hearts of those who are especially responsive on an emotional level.

B. During End-Times: Testing the Behavior and Reasoning of Believers and Disbelievers Under Supernatural and Extreme Conditions:

The End-Times test serves a very different purpose from the every day test of earthly life. According to Islamic tradition “No trial from the creation of Adam until the Hour is greater than the trial of the AntiChrist.” It is understood as a moment when humanity is stretched to its limits—when both believers and non-believers alike are confronted with overwhelming events that challenge human logic. Extraordinary signs and global upheavals become a kind of spiritual pressure-test, showing how people respond to fear, uncertainty, and extraordinary deception.

4. Promises and Prophecies unfolding during End-Times

These promises and prophecies are expected to unfold at the onset of the End-Times. One key distinction between the prophecies found in the Quran and those

in the Bible is clarity¹¹⁷: Prophecies in Islamic traditions tend to be straightforward, explicit, and descriptive. Consequently, there is greater consensus among Muslim scholars regarding the framework, sequence, duration, and objectives of these events. This clarity is important to serve their purpose as marks and signs on the way during the test of life:

- A. Knowledge will be taken away; ignorance will prevail.
- B. Killing will increase near the Hour.
- C. No one knows the day or hour of Jesus' return except God, but it is very near—the time is drawing close.
- D. Appearance of the Mahdi.¹¹⁸
- E. Appearance of the Antichrist. The Antichrist will be a demonic being endowed with supernatural powers—a counterfeit of Jesus, sent to deceive the world.
- F. A beast of supernatural origin will appear, marking people, and making it possible to visually distinguish between true believers and disbelievers.
- G. The Antichrist will bear distinctive markings on his forehead, visible to some but not all, as a sign of his identity.
- H. The Antichrist will falsely claim to be the Messiah, deceiving many, including Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others who are searching for truth.
- I. Eventually, the Antichrist will proclaim himself to be God, using his supernatural abilities and miraculous signs to further deceive the masses. His powers will include:
 - J. Demons at his command, capable of taking human form. The Antichrist will use this power to deceive by pretending to raise the dead.
 - K. Illusions of paradise and fire, using them to falsely suggest that he controls both heaven and hell.
 - L. The Antichrist will rule on earth for a short period, a time of great deception and turmoil.

¹¹⁷ Biblical prophecies, particularly those in books like Daniel and Revelation, are highly symbolic and have given rise to a wide range of interpretations throughout Christian history:

¹¹⁸ According to mainstream Sunni Muslim tradition, in the years leading to and right before the rise of the Antichrist, a righteous leader named Al-Mahdi will emerge to guide the believers. Shortly after, the Antichrist will appear and deceive many. In response, Al-Mahdi and his followers will rise in resistance, preparing the way for the return and leadership of Jesus, the true Messiah. When Jesus returns, Al-Mahdi will submit to his authority. At the time of prayer, Al-Mahdi will invite Jesus to lead the army in worship. However, Jesus will decline and instead request that Al-Mahdi lead the prayer himself so as not to disrupt the existing tribal leadership structure that unites and holds the army together.

Note: Smaller Muslim sects (i.e., Shia, Alawites, etc.) hold differing versions of Al-Mahdi's story, some of which are not directly tied to end-times narratives.

- M. During this time of tribulation, sin will run rampant, evil will spread widely, and people's faith will grow shallow and lukewarm.
- N. Believers will face intense persecution and martyrdom during the Tribulation. Nations will rise against nations, and the earth will suffer famines, plagues, and earthquakes in many places.
- O. To shorten the days of suffering, God will intervene by reducing the length of time after the Antichrist's appearance, showing mercy on His faithful.
- P. The Second Coming of Jesus will be a glorious, physical return—He will come “in the flesh” to defeat evil.
- Q. Jesus will defeat the Antichrist and destroy him in the Holy Land, bringing an end to his reign of deception and terror.
- R. After the Antichrist's defeat, Jesus will establish God's kingdom on earth, bringing about a new era of righteousness and peace.
- S. Under Jesus' perfect rule, there will be a time of unparalleled peace, love, and compassion, where all creation—humans and animals alike—will live in harmony.

PROPHECY AND PROMISES RELATED TO FAITH AND JUDGMENT DAY

In this section, we will briefly outline divine promises many of which are believed to have already come to pass, while others await their appointed fulfillment.

1. Believers will be tested with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth, etc. (2:155)
2. Truth will triumph in the end (21:18; 17:81)
3. The righteous will be granted succession upon the earth (24:55)
4. Whoever seeks God sincerely, He will guide them (29:69)
5. The Hour will happen (Day of Judgment) (15:85; 54:1)
6. Security in worship and trust in Him (24:55)
7. Will raise all people from the dead for judgment (23:15–16)
8. Every soul will be fairly held accountable (21:47)
9. Forgiveness to those who repent sincerely (39:53)
10. No one will be wronged; every soul will see its deeds (3:25; 10:44)
11. Paradise for the righteous, Hell for the rejectors (3:185; 14:48)
12. Believers who do good will have Paradise (4:57; 18:107; 22:23); rewards are multiplied (6:160)

13. Eternal gardens, rivers, peace, and God's pleasure for the faithful (9:72; 19:61–63; 47:15)
14. Those who reject faith and persist in wrongdoing will face Hellfire (2:39; 64:10)
15. Fire, chains, and regret for disbelievers and hypocrites (22:19–22; 4:56)
16. Eternal regret for those who knowingly rejected truth (67:6–7)
17. Paradise and Hell are decreed as final abodes (32:13; 41:19–20)
18. Rise and fall of nations follow divine laws (7:34; 17:16)
19. Help the believers and grant them victory (30:47)
20. Provision for all creatures (11:6)
21. Preservation of the Quran (15:9)
22. Victory of believers and fall of oppressors (58:21; 30:47)

MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN PLAN

1. ON THE MUSLIM SIDE:

- **Confusing Divine Decree with Inaction**

Some Muslims mistakenly interpret *Qadar* (God's decree) as a reason to remain passive. They say, "If I'm poor, it's my destiny and there's nothing I can do; it's already written." However, Islam calls believers to strive for goodness, seek justice, and act righteously, trusting God with the outcome. Using "God's will" as an excuse to give up is not an act of faith.



- **Twisting Prophecy to Justify Violence**

Certain extremist groups have misused End-Times prophecies to recruit followers and justify acts of violence, claiming they are preparing for the battle against the Antichrist. This manipulation has led to atrocities, including attacks against innocent minorities such as the Yazidis in Iraq. Such actions betray the mercy, justice, and restraint that Islam truly upholds.

2. ON THE CHRISTIAN SIDE:

- **Mistaking Prophetic Fulfillment for Moral Endorsement**

Scripture teaches: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us” (Deuteronomy 29:29). Yet, some Christians assume that if an event seems to fulfill prophecy, it must also reflect God’s approval. This misunderstanding can lead to moral indifference—remaining silent, or even supportive, in the face of injustice under the belief that “it’s part of God’s plan” or “It’s God’s Will”.



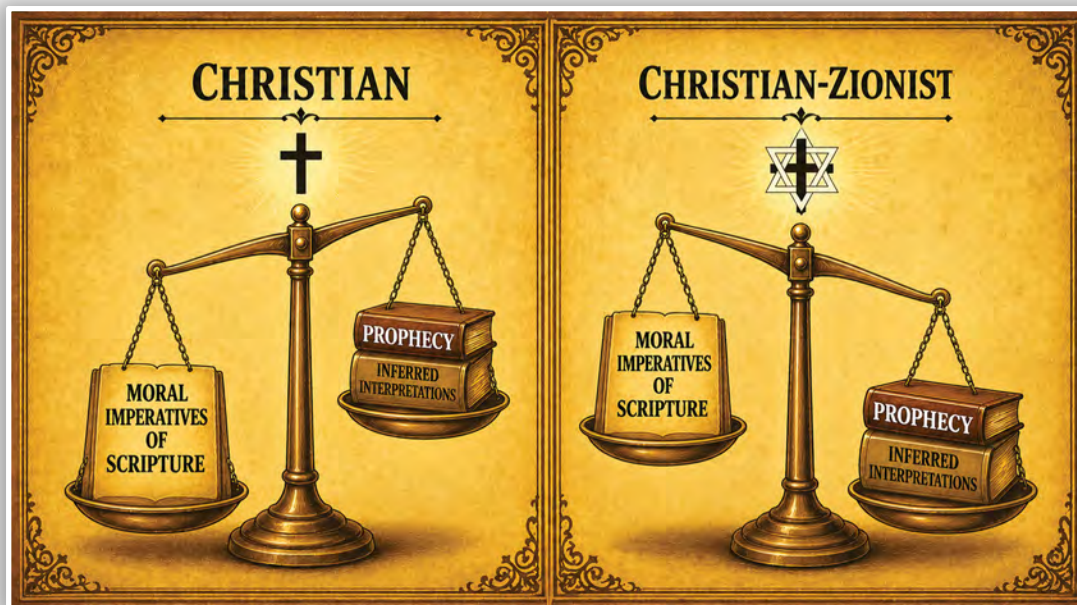
One contemporary example is justifying, condoning, or even indirectly supporting the military occupation of Palestine as a

necessary part of prophetic fulfillment even though this led to the suffering of millions of displaced innocent families and children for more than seven decades.

- **The Misuse of “God’s Will” and the Need for Discernment**

Some might use the term “God’s will” in ways that can unintentionally discourage wise counsel or accountability. For example, a person may proceed with certain actions while sincerely believing they are aligned with God’s will, even when those actions conflict with broader ethical or scriptural principles.

WHY SOME CHRISTIANS SEE BIBLICAL SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT OF RETURN WHILE CHRISTIAN-ZIONISTS AND SOME EVANGELICALS DO NOT



The Right of Return of the Palestinian refugees is the root cause of a decades-long conflict between mainstream Christians and Muslims. The conflict continues to victimize millions of lives today.

The question at the root of this decades-long conflict between mainstream Christians and Muslims is: Should millions of displaced Palestinian refugees be repatriated and allowed to return to their homes and properties within the current state of Israel?

Christianity is a faith deeply rooted in principles of love, compassion, and mercy. These ideals are not just peripheral aspects of Christian teaching but form the very core of the gospel message. Clear, explicit, and reiterative scripture verses advocate for compassion, loving your enemy, defending the rights of the oppressed, helping the weak and helpless, seeking justice, and judging fairly. Here are a few examples:

- i. Matthew 22:37-39 - "To love God wholeheartedly and to love one's neighbor as oneself. Luke 10:25-37 further expands the definition of 'neighbor' to include all individuals in need of compassion, regardless of their religious or national identity."
- ii. Isaiah 1:17: "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."
- iii. Proverbs 31:8-9 "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."
- iv. Psalm 82:3-4: "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
- v. Matthew 25:35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."
- vi. Luke 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
- vii. James 1:27: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."
- viii. Other verses include: Exodus 22:21-22, Leviticus 19:33-34, Deuteronomy 10:18, Deuteronomy 27:19, Jeremiah 22:3, Zechariah 7:10.

In examining biblical passages that are sometimes cited to justify indifference toward Palestinian suffering or to oppose the Right of Return, no explicit mandate is found. Instead, one encounters a complex layering of theological interpretations—such as appeals to God's sovereign will—interwoven with historical and political narratives that remain debated and open to multiple readings. These theological frameworks (for example, dispensationalism) are recognized within Christian thought, yet they do not explicitly prescribe specific ethical or political conduct.

Below is the Islamic perspective on some inferred interpretations that are occasionally cited as part of the theological justification for condoning the Palestinian catastrophe:

1. Genesis 12:3: "I will bless those who bless you (Abraham)"

From a Muslim perspective, this scriptural passage is entirely consistent with the Quranic narrative and Islamic theology and practice. Whereas Christians honor Abraham by studying his story in the Bible and upholding him as a foundational figure in the journey of faith, Muslims honor him by actively remembering his blessings and obedience to God through daily, annual, individual, and global collective rituals and acts of worship. It could be argued that the displaced Palestinian victims embody this scripture today more profoundly and extensively in their practices than worldwide Israelis and Christians combined, as further detailed in "Author's Observations" table page 162.

2. False Verse: I will bless those who bless "Israel"??

It appears that advocates of the secular state of Israel have manipulated interpretations of Scripture concerning the Covenant, the Chosen People, and the Children of Israel to insert this false "verse" into Christian belief. This claim has become one of the more misleading assumptions in contemporary Christianity, as it blurs the distinction between those who walk faithfully with God and those who do not, and between righteousness and disobedience, implying that divine favor automatically extends to all who support the modern secular state of Israel. Yet Scripture consistently presents a different standard: God's promises are not grounded in political alignment or mere lineage, but in faith and obedience.

3. John 14:6, where Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"

As detailed in the section 'Belief in the Prophets and Messengers raised by God' page 82, this verse is consistent with Islamic teachings when viewed within a broader God-centered theological context that recognizes all prophets as divine guides appointed for their specific times. Again, this particular verse does not explicitly address the dispossessed, the vulnerable, or the Right of Return.

4. Genesis 17:8 “The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God”

This passage clearly states that the descendants of Abraham—encompassing both Isaac’s line (Jews) and Ishmael’s line (Arabs)—were promised possession of the Holy Land. While God did establish a covenant with Isaac’s descendants, which Muslims honor, this does not nullify His promise to the other descendants. God’s promises are certain and must be fulfilled. From a Muslim perspective, this verse is viewed as clear and consistent with the explicit and recurring scriptural themes of love, compassion, and justice, affirming support for the Palestinian Right of Return.

5. Hastening the Return of Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven....

The notion of prioritizing human predictions of future events, that are based on complex and inferred interpretations of obscure scriptural passages, over clear, explicit, and repeatedly affirmed scriptural commands could perplex a Muslim interpreter, complicating the establishment of a solid foundation for meaningful hermeneutical discussion. From a Muslim perspective, prioritizing human predictions appears to be a clear departure from divine will. Below are some of the doomsdays forecast failures in the past. Imagine God-loving believers in these predictions had to cause or condone large scale human tragedies and the death or anguish of millions of innocent victims, as in the case of Palestinians, in order to fulfill these guesses! Will that be consistent with the scriptures?

- The Millerites predicted the return of Christ will occur on October 22, 1844.
- Hal Lindsey predicted the Rapture would occur in the 1980s
- John Hagee and Mark Blitz linked 2014 and 2015 lunar eclipses with imminent apocalyptic end of times events affecting Israel and the world (Blood Moon Prophecy)

6. Dispensational theology (Emerged in the 19th century)

In layman’s terms—dispensational theology teaches that God divided His plan for humanity on earth into seven distinct eras, time periods, or “dispensations,” and that His promises for each era must be fulfilled before the next era can begin or continue. Since some of God’s promises to the Children of Israel are believed to remain unfulfilled, the next dispensation—when Jesus will return to earth—is, in essence, on hold. These unfulfilled promises are often understood to include the return of the Jews to Palestine and the rebuilding of the temple. As a result,

many Evangelicals view the current Palestinian catastrophe as an inevitable step in the unfolding of God's plan, something that must occur to fulfill His promises—making opposition seem useless (i.e., it's God's will.) Accordingly, many who hold to dispensational theology overlook ongoing Palestine anguish.

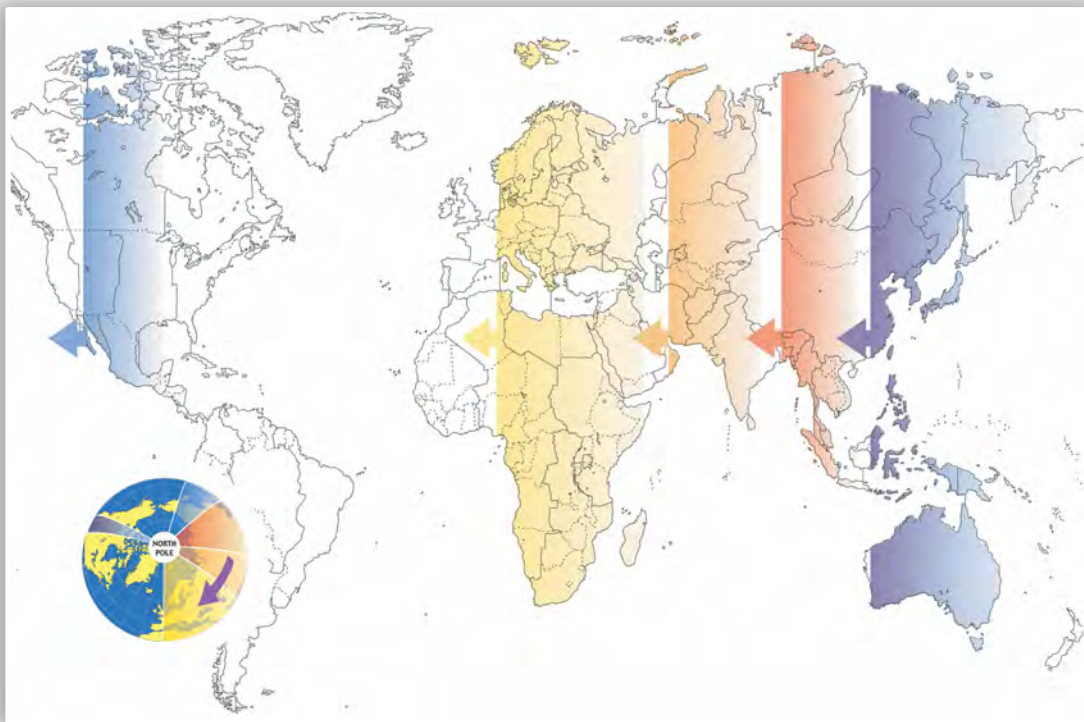
From the perspective of a Palestinian Christian or Muslim enduring this crisis, the issue is not dispensational theology itself. The greater concern is when theology is used as a reason to overlook or remain silent in the face of human suffering. Scripture is clear: God's sovereign plan never excuses injustice, and biblical prophecy never cancels out God's commands to love our neighbor, seek peace, and stand up for the oppressed. **In short, God's Plan does not exempt anyone from God's Commands.**

CHAPTER 9 BRIDGES

Prayers: A Global Phenomenon

(Excerpts from “Dear Pastors and Priests” by Ayman Alhasan)

Just as Christians deeply value the power of prayer, Muslims also see prayer as a vital expression of faith and devotion to God. Alongside personal petitions and supplications, Muslims observe a unique form of prayer called Salat—a word that conveys meanings such as connection, invocation, and attentiveness to God. Salat is observed at fixed times throughout the day, requiring believers to pause their daily activities in order to remember, glorify, praise, and submit to the Almighty. The fixed times create a rhythm of worship that unites Muslims across the globe in synchronized prayer, creating powerful, continuous waves of praise rising to God—day and night, hour after hour, across continents, for many centuries.





CHAPTER 10



QURAN COLLECTION & SCRIPTING

WITH ENGLISH ANALOGIES



The challenge of documenting the Quran differs from that of the Holy Bible. While the principal difficulty in compiling the Holy Bible centered on determining canonicity—that is, deciding which books were divinely inspired and should thus be included—the primary challenge for eyewitness Muslims was selecting which of the multiple dialects Muhammad spoke to record. Given the complexity of illustrating dialectal challenges in another language, analogies become a crucial tool for explanation:

ENGLISH ANALOGY OF THE PRIMARY QURAN DOCUMENTATION CHALLENGE

Imagine if a Christian denomination in Texas released a prayer song with a pronounced country accent that resonated deeply and became popular among affiliated Southern churches, often sung during Sunday worship service. However, congregations in other regions struggled to adopt it due to the challenging Southern twang. To facilitate global appreciation, the denomination unveiled six additional renditions by various artists, each singing in English but with a distinct accent—ranging from Spanish and New Yorker to French, Chinese, and South African.

These new versions featured subtle variations in melody and lyrics. For instance:

- The pronunciation of vowels varied between accent versions.
- The 'r' was pronounced as 'gh' in the French accent version, a strong 'rr' in the Spanish, and 'sh' in the Mandarin accent version.
- The 't' in 'often' was silent in the Southern and New Yorker accent versions but pronounced distinctly in the others.

Furthermore, there were three specific lyrical alterations across some accent versions:

- 'In focus' was omitted from the French accent version due to its phonetic resemblance to profanity.
- 'Asked the Lord' was changed to 'Prayed to the Lord' in versions catering to Black American congregations, where 'asked' might be pronounced 'axed the Lord'.
- The Spanish version replaced 'alligator' with 'ellagarto', reflecting the common pronunciation among Spanish speakers in the U.S.

Churches worldwide were joyful, as most could now incorporate the prayer song into their Sunday services. For example, African congregations easily adopted the South African-accented version, while those in Latin and South America preferred the Spanish-accented rendition.

In Texas, a talented vocalist named Ricky Thompson gained acclaim for blending Southern and Spanish accents in one unique version, dubbed the 'MexTex' rendition, which further united the two cultures. This mix was affectionately termed 'Ricky's Prayer Song.' Subsequently, tens of artists in Africa, Asia, and Europe created their own single or hybrid-accent versions, which were then named after the respective singers. *None of the singers had different lyrics or new accents beyond the seven original songs.* Gradually, the original six versions, differentiated by dialect or

accent, lost their prominence as the songs became identified solely by the names of the singers.

Because hybrid-accent songs were more popular than the original Southern accent song, the denomination decided to release two official song lyric documents. One contained the original southern accent lyrics, while the other incorporated all variations combined into one set of lyrics (e.g., omitted 'in focus', substituted 'Asked the Lord' with 'Prayed to the Lord,' and had 'ellagarto' instead of 'alligator,' etc.). The two documents allowed singers to pick and choose any words they like when composing new songs.

A church in Vietnam expressed interest in adopting the French-accented version for their Sunday worship service because French is commonly learned as a second language there. Here is an important question relevant to the subject of this chapter: Should the Vietnamese congregation also learn the English or Spanish accent versions of the songs? Introducing multiple accents to Vietnamese speakers who hardly speak French in the first place, would be an unnecessary and worthless confusing effort.

All song versions, lyrics, and details concerning the various accents and dialects have been preserved in public and academic libraries or archives, ensuring the availability of this cultural phenomenon for academic research.

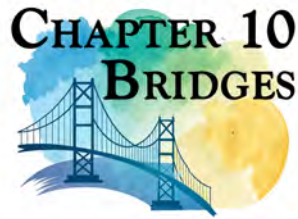
Read in the Upcoming Supplement of The Recital:

Phase I: Receiving and Structuring the Revelation

Phase II: Account for Every Word

Phase III: Capture and Document Qurayshi Dialect/Accent

CHAPTER 10 BRIDGES



Common Causes

In a time when families are strained and culture drifts further from God, many Christians feel alone in defending biblical values. Yet one of the most overlooked truths is that Muslims share many of the same moral convictions and are deeply concerned about the same challenges facing our societies in the US and the world.

Muslim parents, like Christian parents, worry about the erosion of marriage, the confusion surrounding gender and identity, the spread of pornography, and the growing influence of media that undermines faith. They stand firmly against drug abuse, alcohol misuse, gambling, and anything that harms families or weakens the moral fabric of society.

This does not erase theological differences. But it reveals something powerful: Christians and Muslims are not opponents in the moral landscape - we are often standing on the same side.

Shared Convictions, Shared Responsibility

These shared beliefs create a unique opportunity for cooperation—not in doctrine, but in moral mission. Both communities believe:

- Marriage is sacred and designed by God for one man and one woman.
- Children deserve protection from sexualization, harmful media, secular education, and identity confusion.
- Unborn life is precious and worthy of protection.
- Addiction and vice destroy lives and families.

A Way Forward

The “Common Cause and Vision Lifecycle,” *page 252*, is designed to help communities collaborate effectively, even when geographically separated. The process begins when community leaders express a willingness to work with other local, national, or international communities. An earlier version of CCVL was shortlisted among the



top ten peacebuilding ideas submitted to the international Peacebuilding Big Idea Challenge, hosted by the Purdue Peace Project in 2019. To engage your community in this process, consider volunteering as a peacemaker at www.Handshake4Peace.com.

Perhaps one of the quiet callings of our time is this: to see Muslims not only as people to reach with the gospel, but also as neighbors who share our desire to defend what is good, true, and sacred.

Bridges are not built to blur differences. They are built so that two people—once distant—can walk toward a common good cause.

CHAPTER 11

THE NAKBA (PALESTINIAN CATASTROPHE)

All images in this chapter are sourced from “Afford One Courtesy to the Palestinian Victims” by Ayman Alhasan



Background

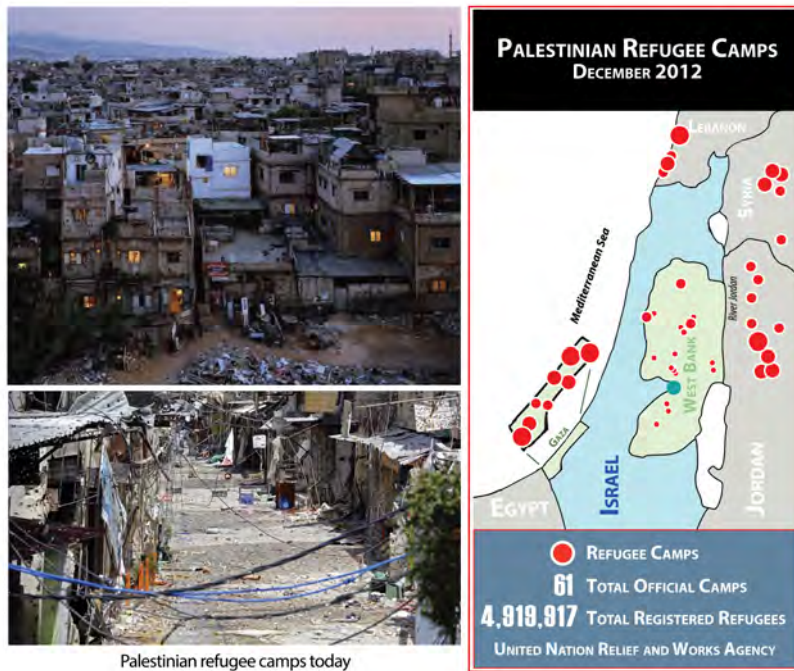


The roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lie in a 20th-century European colonial-era initiative to establish a homeland for Jews. The momentum for this British-led plan accelerated after the Holocaust, leading to the forced displacement of more than 700,000 Palestinians from their homes and farms to nearby refugee camps to make space for Jewish immigrants from Europe. Following this, the new immigrant settlers established and declared the independence of the state of Israel in 1948. Palestinians commemorate these events as the Nakba, or ‘Catastrophe.’ More than 75 years later, many of these refugees or their descendants remain living in camps located a short drive from their original homes, largely because Israeli laws prevent their return. Furthermore, the United States has blocked or vetoed ALL United Nations resolutions that would have granted the Palestinians the “Right of Return.” Today, the US continues to endorse and promote peace initiatives that require Palestinian refugees to relinquish their demand for repatriation in return for ending the conflict. Finally, keep in mind that Jews recognize that Palestinian Arabs are descendants of Abraham, Semitic, their cousins from the Ishmael side, and share the Abrahamic traditions.

Below is the latest Palestinian casualty count as of Oct 2025:

4.9 million	Total registered refugees as of 2012
1.4 million	Refugees living in camps as of January 2010
123,060	Homes demolished since 1967
76,700	Killed since September 2000
22,550	Children Killed since September 2000
195,409	Injured since September 2000
10,741	Currently imprisoned as of February 2024
300	Children taken into custody in 2024 alone

The Solution



Unless the root cause of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is addressed, desperate Palestinian conditions and worldwide Muslim support for refugee repatriation will persist, fueling resistance and potentially fostering new militant groups in the years ahead. This cycle of violence, especially with a large number of victims, particularly children, exacerbates despair in the region and fuels Muslim radicalism and terrorism across both Islamic and Western worlds.

The resolution to the Israeli occupation of Palestine could be straightforward, drawing parallels from the South African reconciliation process. Facilitating a slow, gradual, and orderly return of Palestinians to their lands can lead to peaceful demographic change that preserves the rights of Israelis and Palestinians, removes political and trade barriers with all neighboring countries, and boosts the economy. Governance could then be shared among elected representatives from the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities.

The repatriation of Palestinians will render all other issues, including the debate over a one- or two-state solution, secondary and open to negotiation. This approach is expected to gain support among Palestinians because principles of general pardon and reconciliation, after justice is reinstated, are ingrained in the faith and history of the majority of Sunni Muslims. Bear in mind that the prevailing belief among mainstream Muslims is that they are religiously obligated to protect Christian and Jewish populations living within Muslim communities, without even having these groups participate in military defense efforts.

Dehumanizing Palestinians and the Muslim-Christian Divide



For decades, Palestinians have consistently appealed to the international community, urging investigations into the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) for human rights violations. These allegations include the deliberate targeting of children by snipers, withholding or returning the bodies of deceased Palestinian prisoners with organs missing, the demolition of tens of thousands of homes, the detention of thousands of children, indefinite imprisonment without trial, attacks on schools and hospitals, and frequent midnight raids on Palestinian homes. Yet, these pleas for scrutiny are often overlooked by Western governments and mainstream media. Even pastors, who are entrusted with the moral imperative to discern right from wrong, good from evil, continue to overwhelmingly overlook the 75-years-long large-scale humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinians. Their silence inadvertently conveys consent and unspoken messages that the Palestinian suffering is unworthy of attention, undermining the belief that all people are made in the image of God and deserving of His inclusive love. Consequently, their peace-loving and free-spirited congregations remain oblivious to the suffering while they continue to support the military occupation through their donations. The shared graphic images of victims, their cries of despair, and pleas for assistance deepen the trust gap between Muslims worldwide and the West. Whereas many mainstream Muslims perceive Westerners as lacking compassion and displaying a sense of superiority, Westerners often associate Muslims with violence or extremism.

Palestinian Resistance and Liberation Organizations



[Mostafa Alkharouf/Anadolu via Getty Images]

Since 1948, Palestinian refugees have formed numerous political and military resistance organizations, including the PLO, Hamas, PFLP, PFM, PLA, FPM, PPSF, among others. Today, Hamas often secures electoral victories, primarily because its main competitor, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), is widely perceived as corrupt, known for unfair distribution of humanitarian aid, and accused of collaborating with Israel. Despite being democratically elected, Hamas is designated a terrorist organization by the USA and most Western countries, largely due to significant opposition from Zionist groups. In contrast, many Muslim nations view Hamas as a legitimate liberation movement, referencing the UN's stance that all nations have the right to use military force to fight for their freedom from military occupation.

Over the past 75 years, various Palestinian organizations have utilized a mix of political and military strategies to secure the release of Palestinian prisoners. Israel holds approximately 5,000 security prisoners, including 300 in administrative detention without trial, and an average of 500 children. Furthermore, the bodies of around 300 prisoners who died in custody have not been returned to their families. On October 7, 2023, a coalition of militant resistance groups penetrated the heavily fortified borders of Gaza, entering occupied Palestinian territory and kidnapping Israeli settlers and soldiers to exchange them for Palestinian detainees. In response, the United States provided support, funding, and devastating firepower, contributing to the heaviest bombardment on record of the world's most densely populated region, home to over 2 million Palestinians. The Israeli military has also blocked access to food, water, electricity, and medical supplies, creating conditions of genocide. Deaths due to violence, starvation, or lack of medical care have been broadcast and shared globally, primarily by individuals through social media.

In the U.S., providing humanitarian aid to Palestinian orphans can be a serious offense. In one case, the U.S. government used testimony from an anonymous Israeli 'security expert' to prove that a US-based charity indirectly supported Palestinian resistance. The founders and officers of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development are currently serving sentences ranging from fifteen to sixty-five years.

Culture



Palestinian fashion by Nisreen Malhis

In Palestine, the traditional female dress has a distinct design in each region and you can guess the town or village a woman is from based on her dress.



The Keffiyeh is the traditional headgear for men but has evolved into a global symbol of resistance for both men and women. The middle picture features Rachel Corrie, a young American peace activist who perished when she stood in front of a bulldozer while attempting to block the Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes. She is an American heroine in the eyes of Palestinians but hardly recognized in the USA.



Palestinian Dabka Group from Lajee Cultural Center

“Dabkeh” is the Palestinian folk dance

Palestine Before Nakba



Jaffa, late 1930s



Movie Theater



Radio Station



Airport



Hospital



Newspaper



School Testing



Synagogue



Cafe in Acre



Market

Palestinians Before Nakba



Wedding (colorized)



Basketball



Popular radio singer



Line up for Bedouin Folk Dance



Traditional Meal



Multifaith



1948 Government



Women Union



Orange Grove



Water sourcing

Conditions Today



<https://pages.ucsd.edu/~gfields/PalestinePhotos/>

Israel constructed a separation wall in the West Bank to limit Palestinian access to residential areas and roads used by Israeli settlers. This wall has created conditions reminiscent of South African apartheid. Palestinians are required to pass through checkpoints to cross the wall. Beyond the daily challenges, some patients have died while the ambulance carrying them awaited permission to cross.



www.middleeastmonitor.com

Palestinians have developed a culture of resistance perseverance to counter the prolonged military occupation. The Israeli military now detains children caught throwing stones at them, to scare the children and their families into submission.



FREE POSTERS

The grayish background of the Indiscriminate Compassion poster below features a list of world ethnicities, organized and grouped by country. You can download a free, high-resolution, print-ready PDF file at www.Handshake4Peace.com





CHAPTER 12



A MESSAGE FROM ISHMAEL TO ISAAC



TO PEACE-LOVING AMERICANS

God is love... 1 John 4:16b

In the name of the God of grace and mercy—whom many of us honor and revere—and on behalf of millions of Palestinian victims, I humbly reach out:

To all peace-loving Americans—students, parents, educators, and citizens of conscience: you are familiar with the call to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly” (Micah 6:8). In that spirit, I urge you to reflect on the beliefs and policies that, often unknowingly, have helped sustain more than 75 years of displacement and suffering for Palestinian families.

Consider the example of Jesus, who stood with the marginalized and spoke against injustice. If He were here today, would He ignore the cries of Palestinian children longing for safety and home? Or would He act in love and justice, as He always did?

This is not a political appeal, but a moral one. Let us give greater weight to what is clear: that every life is sacred, that justice matters, and that silence enables suffering. A just peace must allow all people—including Palestinians—to live with dignity and freedom.

And tonight, after you tuck your children into bed, pause and remember those who have no bed, no shelter, and no peace—because too many stayed silent.

Let this be the generation where Ishmael and Isaac meet again—not in conflict, but in compassion. Let our communities—our churches, mosques, synagogues, and schools—stand together in God’s love, by standing with the vulnerable, including the people of Palestine.

TO AMERICAN PASTORS

A Call to Break the Silence: God's Plan does not exempt anyone from God's Commands:

You faithfully proclaim that God is sovereign over history. This is true, good, and consistent with Islam and Judaism. Yet with that conviction comes a beautiful responsibility: to show your people that God's plans never exempt us from God's commands. Indeed, Scripture consistently pairs God's sovereignty with our obedience:

- "To obey is better than sacrifice." (1 Sam. 15:22)
- "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only." (Jas. 1:22)
- "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matt. 5:9)

Yet too often, when it comes to 75 years of displacement and suffering of the Palestinian nation, silence has replaced prophetic witness. Some say, "Wars must come," or, "This is God's will."

A biblically faithful Christian cannot be indifferent to injustice—whether committed by individuals, governments, or systems. Christians must be "truth-tellers and defenders of the vulnerable", including those enduring military occupation, displacement, and violence. By remaining silent in the face of national-level injustice and overlooking Scripture's explicit call to stand for righteousness, pastors with influence and platforms can, without intending to, become complicit in the ongoing human tragedy.

Break your silence. Practice reconciliation. Show love and compassion to the weak and helpless. Refuse to dehumanize either side. Preach that God's justice applies to all nations, including Israel.

Support Your Brethren Whether Oppressed or Oppressors

"Support your brethren, whether they are oppressed or oppressors." The prophet said. His companions responded, "O Prophet of God, we understand supporting the oppressed, but how do we support the oppressors?" The prophet then replied, "By preventing them from committing oppression and guiding them to justice."

This exchange reflects the true spirit of brotherhood: justice is not tribal, and loyalty must not be blind. Supporting a people or nation means caring for their moral standing before God—not just their success. Silence in the face of wrongdoing is not love; it is complicity. Real support means speaking truth, intervening when harm is done, and calling others back to justice. To bless Israel, as many Evangelicals desire, should mean encouraging it toward justice, mercy, and righteousness—not defending actions that contradict the values of Scripture.

Fear God and Repent

.. whoever kills a person – unless in retribution for murder or corruption in the land – it is as if he killed all mankind; and whoever saves a life, it is as if he saved the life of all mankind ... (Quran 5:32)

The ongoing 75-year forced displacement of Palestinian families, the profound anguish and death of millions of children, mothers, and fathers, and the destruction of tens of thousands of homes are stark realities. In Arabic, the root word for "Martyr" is "witness." It is believed that the tens or hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children who have violently lost their lives will bear witness on the Day of Judgment, testifying against those responsible for their fate.

As shepherds of your flocks, you are entrusted with the divine responsibility to discern right from wrong, good from evil. Your silence unwittingly sends a message to your congregations that Palestinian suffering does not merit attention, inadvertently fostering a culture that normalizes condoning or even funding of the Palestinian Catastrophe in the name of God. This raises a profound question: Are US pastors compromising the foundational Christian belief that all people are created in the image of God and deserving of His unconditional love? What message does this send to the world about Christianity?

While the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are well-recognized, it is vital to differentiate between supporting Israel's right to exist and endorsing policies that cause widespread civilian suffering. We must remember that theological interpretations are subject to human error and should not justify actions that breach God's explicit and reiterated commands—particularly those that lead to immense human suffering.

God's scripture consistently rejects injustice and has harshly punished those who perpetrate it, regardless of their Covenant or Chosen status.

I implore you to seek God's forgiveness if any past judgments have contributed to this suffering. Let us repent together and realign our actions with God's call to practice justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. Through genuine repentance and a recommitment to divine teachings, we can provide the hope and healing our divided world desperately needs, while honoring the dignity of every human life as commanded by our Creator.



The Great Commission Does Not Cancel the Great Commandments

American pastors and particularly Evangelicals today have extraordinary influence, shaping both the conscience and the policy of the most powerful nation on earth. You have an unprecedented opportunity to be instruments of peace to the nations and the world will hear the gospel most clearly when they also see the gospel lived out.

Our Lord rooted the credibility of the gospel in the authenticity of your love: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35).

When churches proclaim Christ but ignore injustice, the world hears contradiction rather than good news. A gospel preached without love is empty; evangelism severed from justice is a fractured witness. The Great Commission shines most powerfully when it is carried out in harmony with the Great Commandments.

To THEOLOGY STUDENTS

Uphold Scriptural Authority in Challenging Times

Seminary students are at the intersection of tradition and progress, uniquely equipped to address longstanding challenges in conveying God's love and truth. This is your historic opportunity to inspire change with far-reaching, even global, impact. Embrace the call to shape a new path for understanding and sharing Scripture, bringing God's Word to humanity in transformative ways.

The Challenge: Two significant challenges in Christian hermeneutics, and in other faith traditions, include:

1. The tendency to elevate human constructs—such as culture, tradition, ideology, and political views—to a level comparable with Scripture. This can lead to interpretations shaped more by human error than divine truth, causing distortions that stray from God's Word. Such deviations have influenced not only extremist groups but also mainstream communities. Historical examples include the misuse of Scripture to justify slavery, the Curse of Ham narrative, racial segregation under Jim Crow, and the ideology of Manifest Destiny, which fueled the forced removal of Native Americans.
2. The tendency to prioritize complex theological systems—prone to human error—over the repeated and concrete commands of Scripture. This creates a theological imbalance, distorts biblical priorities, and demands careful reflection on whether such interpretations truly reflect the heart of God. Contemporary examples include the use of Scripture to justify or condone the prolonged suffering of millions of displaced Palestinian refugees over the past seven decades.

Today, as a global power, the United States' influence can reinforce such misinterpretations, with significant consequences for more vulnerable nations.

Root Cause: The root issue is that most scripture interpretation assessment methods currently taught in theological seminaries are entirely qualitative, making it difficult for the average Christian to distinguish sound interpretations from faulty ones presented by their local pastor. Errors by sincere faith leaders—due to oversight, cultural influences, or human error—can unintentionally lead believers toward

spiritual or societal harm. To protect Christians, a straightforward and systematic approach is needed to measure and quantify possible deviations in scriptural interpretations, ensuring alignment with foundational truths.

Introducing the Interpretation Deviation Score (IDS): The IDS is a simple quantitative idea that can help the public know if an interpretation, scholastic view, or opinion is faulty or aligns with foundational Biblical truths. IDS also provides faith leaders with a clearer understanding of how their teachings align with core scriptural principles, encouraging them to stay grounded in foundational Christianity. Additionally, IDS allows seminary students to assess pastors and other faith leaders based on their average deviation scores.

How the IDS Works:

1. Compile a concise list (e.g., 10 verses) of “Foundational Scripture Verses” that reflect core Christian beliefs. Each denomination may adapt its own list.
2. When assessing an interpretation, scholastic view, or opinion count how many of these Foundational Verses conflict directly with it or with its inevitable consequences.
3. If the count is zero, then the Interpretation Deviation Score is Zero meaning that the interpretation aligns with foundational Christian principles. If there are conflicts, it indicates a deviation number, suggesting re-evaluation may be necessary.

The Role of Theology Students: To make tools like the IDS truly impactful, they need to be embraced and taught in theological seminaries. You’re in a position to champion the Bible’s core values of love, compassion, and peace for all. Approach this responsibility with passion and conviction, keeping God’s Word at the center of all interpretations. May your journey be filled with prayer, wisdom, and a steadfast dedication to divine truth.

Redefine Peacemaking

Handshake4Peace.com endeavor is about the extent to which explicit scripture verses and messages of love, compassion, and peace can be indiscriminately shared and particularly for the little victims, the weak and helpless, and the innocent of all faiths, all races and all nations. This

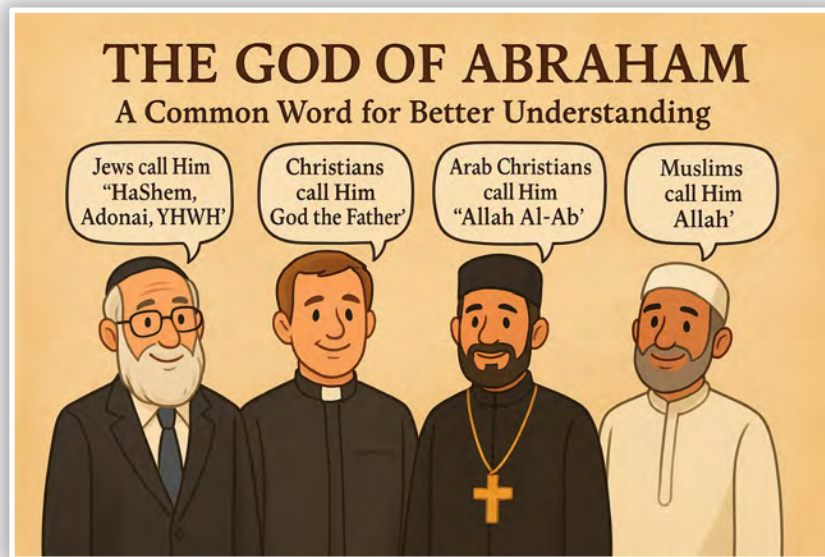
endeavor is about students leading by example, a new generation of American peacemakers. By remotely engaging in local and global peace initiatives, you are presented with a remarkable opportunity to redefine the narratives associated with “religion” and “God.” These terms have been mistakenly identified as catalysts of worldwide strife. Your mission is to transform them into symbols of hope, inspiring global peace and goodwill.



CHAPTER 12 BRIDGES

QUESTION

Is There Common Ground in the Shared Claim to the God of Abraham?



In multifaith conversations, many Christians ask an important question: When Jews, Christians, and Muslims speak of the “God of Abraham,” are they referring to the same God?

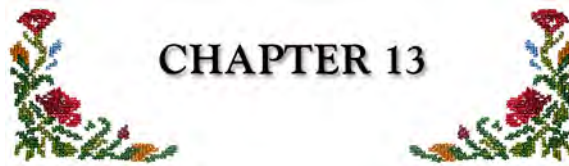
All three traditions profess faith in the one Creator—known through His acts in history: the Maker of the heavens and the earth; the One who formed Adam and Eve, preserved Noah through the flood, tested Abraham, delivered Jonah from the great fish, spoke to Moses at Sinai and gave the Ten Commandments, established His covenant with the children of Israel, and sent His angel to deliver messages to His prophets.

In Jewish tradition, this God is reverently referred to as HaShem or YHWH. In Islam, He is called Allah, the Arabic word for God. For Christians, however, the God of Abraham is fully and finally revealed in Scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—one God in three persons. This Trinitarian confession stands at the heart of Christian faith.

Accordingly:

- If God is understood in terms of His historical acts as the one Creator who sustains the universe and governs human history, then Jews, Christians, and Muslims all claim to worship the Creator of Abraham.
- If God is defined according to theological doctrine—particularly concerning His nature and triune identity—then the three faiths hold significantly different understandings of who God is.

In either case, the shared appeal to the God of Abraham may serve as a starting point for clearer communication and meaningful dialogue, even while profound theological differences remain.



CHAPTER 13

HANDSHAKE4PEACE.COM¹¹⁹



Handshake4Peace.com is a faith-based conflict-resolution and peacebuilding website that empowers NextGen Christians, Muslims, and Jews peacemakers to remotely work *together* on resolving local, national, and global conflicts. The initiative brings multi-faith teams into collaborative partnerships grounded in shared Abrahamic values—while fully respecting each community’s unique convictions and traditions.

HOW THE WEBSITE WORKS

Handshake4Peace.com is a website designed to collect, evaluate, and help implement proactive peacebuilding ideas. The platform functions as a catalyst—

119 The original name of Handshake4Peace.com organization was The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant, Inc. (JCIC), and its original vision and strategy v1.00 were introduced in the book *Dear Pastors and Priests: Messages from Peace-Loving Muslim Families*. To enable broader growth and outreach, the organization’s name was later changed to Handshake4Peace, Inc.

connecting every day citizens, peace organizations, and multifaith volunteer teams to bring practical reconciliation initiatives to life.

1. Mobilize “NextGen Peacemakers” - A Global Network of Multifaith peacemaker Volunteer

These volunteers will serve as ambassadors for peace and help manage submissions, promote the platform, and build partnerships.

2. Gather Peacebuilding Ideas from the World

The platform will seek innovative, grassroots ideas from people across all nations through multiple channels:

- A. Global & regional peacebuilding online contests
- B. Open public submissions
- C. Public-relations and media campaigns
- D. Partnerships with global peace organizations

3. Create and make a searchable database of peacebuilding ideas available to the public

All approved submissions will be organized into a public, searchable database—offering the world a single, unified library of peace initiatives.

4. Form Multifaith Peacemaker Teams and Take Up the Challenge of World Peace. *This is where Handshake4Peace can make a meaningful contribution to global peace.*

For promising ideas, Handshake4Peace will assemble diverse, multifaith teams—from Muslims, Christians, Jews, and people of all moral traditions—who will take the idea from concept to implementation. Their responsibilities include:

- A. Refining the peacebuilding idea
- B. Developing a practical project plan
- C. Identifying key stakeholders
- D. Securing sponsors and partners
- E. Reaching out to parties involved in the conflict
- F. Promoting, mediating, and enabling the project

5. Compete in Righteousness

Open competitions among teams from different faith traditions to realize submitted peacebuilding concepts can help create God-loving, righteous role models, heroes, and champions whose example can inspire the next generation of believers. Over time, this can reshape public perceptions of “God” and “religion,” associating them with compassion, justice, mercy, and goodwill.

NEXTGEN PEACEMAKERS



Vision

A new generation of believers from the Abrahamic faiths—Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, and Jews—lead with faith, humility, and shared purpose to heal religious divides and build a more compassionate world.

Mission

Bring together emerging faith-driven leaders from the Abrahamic traditions to cultivate mutual understanding, deepen spiritual connection, and collaborate on real-world solutions that promote peace, justice, and human dignity.

Calling and Commissioning NextGen Peacemakers:



This transformation process presents a comprehensive framework for identifying, recruiting, engaging, and equipping God-loving and indiscriminately compassionate volunteer peacemakers. The goal is to cultivate a new generation of faith-based peacemakers capable of building trust across religious divides while remaining deeply rooted in their own convictions. The framework follows a step-by-step journey that includes identifying grassroots rivals, creating opportunities for meaningful engagement, exchanging knowledge through educational resources, filtering participants based on compassion-centered criteria, providing training

through seminars and online courses, and ultimately commissioning leaders to launch sustainable peacemaking initiatives within their communities. The latest version of this process is available at www.Handshake4Peace.com.

COMMON CAUSE AND VISION LIFECYCLE (CCVL)



CCVL is a versatile, top-down grassroots peacebuilding iterative process that utilizes common causes as building blocks or foundational elements. This process can be adapted across different formats to bridge cultural, social, religious, or political divides. It equips community leaders—such as mayors, pastors, and organizational heads—with tools to foster trust between their communities, even while they remain physically separated. By leveraging internet applications and modern project management techniques, CCVL ensures measurable outcomes. *However, CCVL has one significant limitation: It is not applicable between any two parties or individuals engaged in or supporting ongoing conflict or acts of aggression (e.g., violence, wars, military invasions, or occupation).*

CCVL Customized for Multifaith Cooperation

When tailored for religious communities, CCVL addresses the three core challenges of global faith-based peacebuilding initiatives: *Trust, Communication, and Distance*. It enables leaders from diverse linguistic and religious backgrounds to collaborate effectively, achieve common causes, and realize visions grounded in shared divine principles, virtues, and values.

In summary, here is how the CCVL process works:

The Common Cause & Vision Lifecycle (CCVL) process begins with community leaders coming together to identify and affirm their shared beliefs, values, and virtues. This foundation is then formally documented and signed as a covenant. Afterwards, engaged community leaders convene every year in a physical or virtual Peacemakers Conference and perform the following:

1. Collaborate to identify one or more common causes.
2. Formalize commitment to the common cause by adding it to the covenant.
3. Collectively develop or refine a five-year vision based on the accumulated common causes.
4. Each leader formulates SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) action plans for their community for the coming year to achieve the common cause. These SMART goals must be negotiated and approved by other leaders.
5. The community leaders, common cause, and vision along with previous year's accomplishments, are recognized and celebrated in high-visibility events as part of the Peacemakers Conference. This collective celebration is a critical success factor of the Common Cause & Vision Lifecycle (CCVL) process.

Afterwards and until the next Peacemakers Conference, leaders independently work within their community to implement the agreed SMART goals.

The cycle concludes in the following Peacemakers Conference with a review of accomplishments, the publication of results, celebration of achievements, and preparations for the next common cause and vision cycle.

CCVL Vision

An avalanche of grassroots peacebuilding initiatives worldwide, utilizing various CCVL formats, managed through new social media websites and applications.

THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN-ISLAMIC COVENANT (JCIC)

(Example NextGen Peacemakers Initiative)



Organization:

The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant (JCIC), Inc. is an envisioned international peace organization based in the United States (shell organization is now incorporated in the Dallas Area and South Africa). Its members are peacemakers and indiscriminately compassionate pastors, Imams, and Rabbis who have made a covenant before God, their congregations, and all nations to inspire God's transcendent peace. Their mission is to bring an end to the victimization of children of all faiths, all nations, all races, all skin colors, and all ethnicities, whether violated in the name of God or Country. Building on the principles of shared Abrahamic beliefs, values, and virtues, the members of this emerging partnership of faith leaders from across the religious spectrum—conservative, moderate, and liberal—and of all denominations sign a covenant to inspire common causes in their congregations and denominations. The peace-making partners network, coordinate, and communicate via the Internet to publish covenant articles (pledges and common causes), negotiate objectives, and report on independently verified achievements. To strengthen this partnership, participating churches, mosques, and synagogues around the world are paired with counterparts in the other faith groups, even including partnerships between the Vatican, Grand Mosque in Mecca, and various holy shrines in Jerusalem. Faith leaders inspire potentially billions of followers by appearing hand-in-hand before local, national, and international audiences to affirm their solidarity with all victim children without alluding to the perpetrators. Faith leaders offer community inclusion to the followers of other faiths in their locales by reading intercongregation messages in the name of The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Covenant and by participating in Covenant Sanctuary Peace Drills and Peace Maker Month

campaigns. JCIC, however, does not offer multifaith/interfaith worship services. This partnership will provide a context for the cause of world peace. The JCIC organization will restructure and open invitations to other faiths once major milestones in grassroots Jewish, Christian, and Muslim relations are achieved. Initially, faith leaders and public figures (community leaders, celebrities, politicians, athletes, etc.) can endorse the covenant on www.jcic.org and JCIC will be open for membership when enough endorsements are collected.

Calling and Commissioning Faith Leader Peacemakers

Among all stages of the Calling and Commissioning NextGen Peacemakers transformation process mentioned above, the third step—**Engage**—is often the most challenging when reaching out to faith leaders. How do we create meaningful, visible, and inspiring opportunities for large numbers of indiscriminately compassionate conservative Evangelicals and mainstream Sunni Muslim leaders to interact constructively with one another? How do we engage not only the participants themselves but also the broader Evangelical and Muslim communities worldwide? The following reality-TV concepts are designed to address this challenge.

1. Sacred Rivals on Vacation



A Journey of Faith, Friendship & Fellowship
Joyful Cross-Cultural Experience
Respectful
Spectacular Scenery, Structures, History
Surprisingly Funny
Emotional (Meet Yazidi and Palestinian victims)

Entertaining Play and Pray

As part of the Faith Leader Calling and Commissioning process, *Sacred Rivals on Vacation* brings together conservative Evangelical pastors and mainstream Sunni imams—along with their spouses—for an unforgettable journey of faith, fellowship, and mutual discovery. With all travel and accommodations provided, these spiritual rivals embark on a shared adventure through locations of profound historical, cultural, and spiritual significance. Along the way, they experience moments of joy, laughter, worship, service, and honest dialogue while exploring difficult questions that often divide their communities. The purpose of the series is not theological compromise but human connection. Participants remain faithful to their beliefs while learning to see one another through the eyes of compassion and dignity. Through authentic interactions and shared experiences, viewers witness how strong convictions and genuine friendship can coexist. More than entertainment, *Sacred Rivals on Vacation* is a living testimony that truth and grace, conviction and compassion, can walk side by side.

2. *PeaceDare*



PeaceDare is a goodwill competition that transforms peacemaking into an inspiring and highly visible public challenge. *The competition* is based on CCVL model above and demonstrates that the world needs faith leaders competing over who can serve God's creation better.

In each season, teams of indiscriminately compassionate Christian and Muslim faith leaders agree on a common humanitarian cause. Afterwards, they establish measurable SMART objectives and a defined timeline for achieving them within their own communities. The teams then compete—not against one another in hostility, but in generosity, service, creativity, and impact. Cameras follow their journeys as they mobilize volunteers, inspire local congregations, overcome

obstacles, and pursue meaningful change. Throughout the competition, participants share their motivations, revealing how their faith traditions inspire them to love their neighbors and serve those in need.

At the end of each season, results are independently evaluated based on predefined metrics and community impact. While a winner may be recognized, the true victory belongs to humanity. Viewers witness a powerful alternative to religious rivalry: faith communities competing to outdo one another in compassion, service, and human dignity.

JCIC Faith Leaders Resolution:

WHEREAS Jews, Christians, and Muslims each affirm faith in the one God of Abraham, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, who created Adam and Eve, preserved Noah through the flood, called Abraham, spoke to Moses at Sinai and gave the Ten Commandments, established His covenant with the children of Israel, sent Jonah to Nineveh, and communicated with His servants through angels and prophets;

WHEREAS Jews, Christians, and Muslims together represent a majority of the world's population, and greater understanding, justice, and peace among our communities can contribute significantly to the well-being of humanity;

WHEREAS the overwhelming majority of believers within our traditions desire to live peacefully with their neighbors and recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every human being;

WHEREAS our respective faith traditions call their followers to pursue virtues such as compassion, mercy, honesty, humility, generosity, justice, forgiveness, hospitality, service to others, and care for the vulnerable;

WHEREAS people of faith are called to be peacemakers, to seek the welfare of their communities, and to work for reconciliation wherever possible;

WHEREAS advances in communication and technology have made humanity increasingly interconnected, causing suffering in one part of the world to be felt by people across nations and cultures;

WHEREAS many tensions among Jews, Christians, and Muslims arise not from ordinary believers themselves but from misunderstanding, prejudice, misinformation, political conflict, historical grievances, and fear;

WHEREAS the intentional killing of innocent people, acts of terror, rape, genocide, attacks on houses of worship, forced displacement, and all forms of hatred directed

against individuals because of their faith or ethnicity violate the moral teachings embraced by our respective traditions;

WHEREAS Jews, Christians, and Muslims share a common concern for protecting human life, strengthening families, caring for the poor, defending the vulnerable, promoting justice, and encouraging moral responsibility;

WHEREAS pastors, priests, rabbis, imams, and other faith leaders bear a sacred responsibility to guide those under their care toward truth, compassion, righteousness, and peace;

WHEREAS refusing to pursue understanding, dialogue, and goodwill among our communities can contribute to continued cycles of suspicion, division, violence, and suffering;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the undersigned Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faith leaders, while maintaining our distinct theological convictions, commit ourselves to fostering mutual understanding, defending the dignity of every human being, opposing all violence committed in the name of religion, protecting the innocent, and working together wherever possible to promote justice, peace, and the flourishing of our communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage our congregations and communities to reject hatred and prejudice, to pursue truthfulness and understanding, and to seek relationships marked by respect, compassion, and neighborly love.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we affirm that disagreement need not lead to hostility, and that people of deep religious conviction can engage one another with both honesty and goodwill while remaining faithful to their own beliefs.

JCIC Vision, Mission, And Strategy

JCIC original vision and strategy v1.00 were introduced in the book *Dear Pastors and Priests: Messages from Peace-Loving Muslim Families*. In that early version, the strategy consisted of a set of disconnected strategic elements rather than a unified, continuous process. In this updated version, the key steps have been integrated into a single framework, the ‘Common Cause and Vision Lifecycle.’ Since then, both the vision and strategy have continued to evolve as more faith leaders have contributed to shaping the initiative.

- JOC is an international peace organization and network of faith leaders—including pastors, priests, imams, and rabbis—of the three main Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). They are dedicated to representing and safeguarding the rights and interests of innocent victims who are victimized in the name of God or country.
- JOC has offices in most world capitals and permanent delegations at the United Nations, the European Union, the Commonwealth of Nations, the Organization internationale de la Francophonie, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
- The United Nations General Assembly has endorsed the Juko-Christian-Islamic Peace Covenant and has recognized its significant humanitarian contributions.
- JOC faith leaders have jointly been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
- JOC was made open to other religions after achieving major peacemaking milestones and updating its vision, mission, and structure.
- JOC does not offer multi-faith worship services.
- Participation of faith leaders who are critics of states actively engaged in military aggression or occupation of other nations, or their sympathizers, is subject to the approval of the faith leaders representing the victimized nation.



Vision 2030

Revision 3.00



- Peace Drills are Covenant Sanctuary exercises designed to train faith leaders in coordinated responses to emergency situations, particularly in regions where religious riots are prevalent (e.g., Pakistan, Nigeria, etc.). These drills also serve as effective peacetime public relations campaigns in the US and Europe.
- Peacemaker Week is an annual international and faith-based anti-violence (terrorism and war) campaign led by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faith leaders. The campaign primarily focuses on public relations and educational programs, as well as faith leader outreach initiatives.
- Covenant Sanctuary Peace Drills and Peacemaker Week have been game changers

- Terrorism and radicalization have ceased to be a public concern in the US. These threats were overcome when leaders of the largest Evangelical, Mainline, and Catholic denominations frequently appeared alongside prominent Sunni Muslim scholars and leaders of major pan-Muslim organizations from the Muslim mainland during Peacemaker Week campaigns. Indiscriminate Compassion was the unifying cause that empowered these leaders to team up, build trust and confidence, jointly advocate for peace, and speak on behalf of all innocent victims on all sides of conflicts.
- JOC faith leaders successfully circumvented planned wars and military interventions by jointly leading peace campaigns on both sides of the conflict. They utilized the Juko-Christian-Islamic Peace Think Tank to mediate and propose alternative solutions to violence.
- Religious minorities in most nations have been free from persecution after their houses of worship were paired with nearby majority-faith houses of worship in a show of solidarity.
- A sign displaying the paired names is visible at the entrance of both houses of worship.
- Paired faith leaders frequently appear together in public, both physically and virtually.
- Inter-congregation messages between paired places of worship are published.
- In countries threatened by violence, human chains are formed by the congregation of one house of worship to protect the paired house of worship during their weekly services.

Handshake4Peace is an online coalition of faith leader peacemakers that has successfully inspired peacetime in numerous conflict regions by:

- Mobilizing global resources to identify, launch, incubate, empower, support, and sponsor grassroots peacemaking and conflict resolution initiatives.
- Developing and enabling the Peace Covenant.



A Twenty-First Century Listing Agreement among worldwide faith leaders. At its core, the Peace Covenant translates shared beliefs, virtues, and values into common causes, pledges, and commitments. Faith leaders use the Common Cause and Vision Lifecycle (CCVL) to develop and fulfill the Covenant.

- Faith leaders have found common ground in shared beliefs, principles, values, and/or virtues.
- They have collectively endorsed Indiscriminate Compassion as a global common cause and first CCVL building block to inspire peace on earth.
- Theological differences now drive a holy competition to demonstrate compassion instead of violence and love instead of hate.
- Missionaries from these faiths preach and practice indiscriminate love and compassion towards all people, especially innocent victims.

The Covenant name, intercongregation messages, pairing houses of worship, Covenant Sanctuary Peace Drills, and Peacemaker Week offered community inclusion to Christians, Muslims, and Jews while they remain largely segregated.

- Covenant Sanctuaries serve as global hubs for peace activism, offering programs in education, economic development, and environmental protection.
- In times of emergency, these sanctuaries provide refuge for all victims fleeing religious persecution. In democratic nations, they also function as centers for peace advocacy.
- JOC intercongregation messages reach most of the world's elected officials, as those who worship at Covenant Sanctuaries use their public platforms to promote these messages.



Covenant Sanctuaries are JOC member churches, mosques, synagogues, and other temples displaying JOC Indiscriminate Compassion symbols on their street signs.

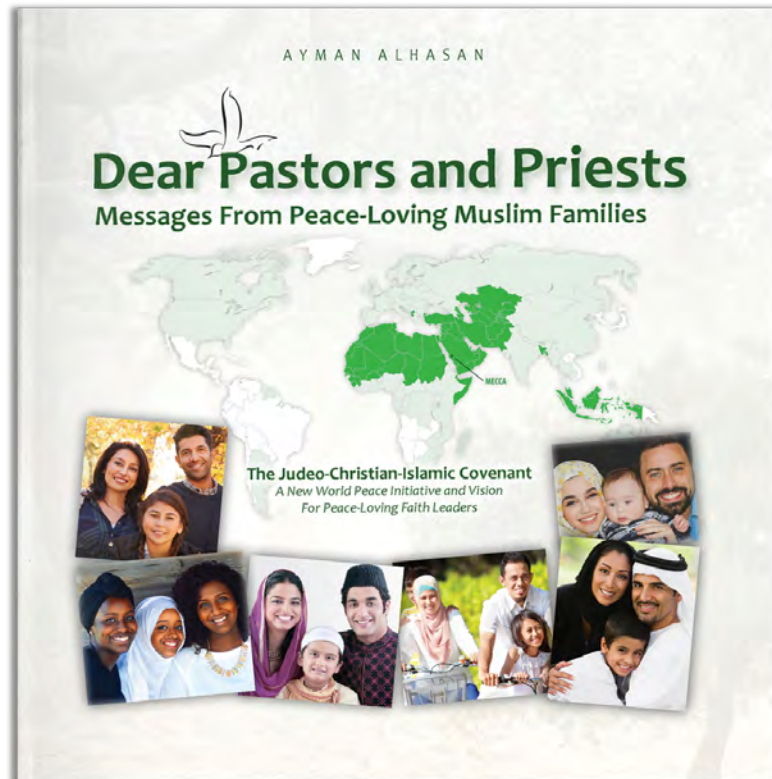
- JOC Indiscriminate Compassion signs are prominently placed at city entrances and dedication ceremonies.



CHAPTER 13 BRIDGES



FREE BOOK TO TEXAS PASTORS



If you found this book to be informative, the author requests your prayers

Lord, We come before You humbly, asking that You would use this book as an instrument of Your peace. May it serve as a bridge between Christians, Muslims, Jews, and people of every faith and background. Where there has been distance, bring understanding. Where there has been suspicion, plant trust. Where there has been division, sow reconciliation. Turn our hearts toward one another, and above all, turn our hearts toward You. Teach us to walk in truth, to love mercy, and to pursue justice with courage and compassion. Let this effort bear fruit that honors You — strengthening families, healing communities, and advancing peace across nations. May everything done through these pages ultimately point back to You, the One True God, worthy of all glory, gratitude, and devotion.

In humility and hope, we pray.

اللهم تقبل هذا العمل وبارك فيه واجعل ثوابه خالصاً لوجهك الكريم، اللهم واجعل لنا من الأجر مثل أجر من عمل به، من غير أن تنقص من أجورهم شيئاً، وأخص بالدعاء والدتي فاطمة،
ووالدي جمال، وآل صادق، وآل الحسن، وآل شريم، وآل عاقله وآل عاشوري وآل حرب وآل غصين

God's Overlooked Promise to Ishmael

The Untold Chapter Beside Isaac's Covenant

Isaac and Ishmael—both sons of Abraham—were named, blessed, and remembered by God. Through Isaac, the covenant was established; through Ishmael, the promise of a great nation was declared again and again. Yet while Isaac's covenant is well known, Ishmael's story has often been set aside, as though God's promises ended with Isaac alone. Scripture reveals a faithful God who keeps every word He speaks and works through all nations.

History tells us that centuries after Jesus ascended to heaven, Semite nomadic Arab tribes who claimed lineage to Ishmael rose to global prominence, forming a civilization of biblical magnitude. Their influence extended from Central Asia to West Africa and reached deep into Europe. Even more striking, across this vast civilization and through the centuries, Abraham has been continually honored and blessed—woven into culture, daily prayers, and annual rituals that endure even today.

Could this extraordinary rise of people be connected to the promise God made to Abraham? Could the reason the Gospels do not mention the rise of Ishmael's line be that its fulfillment unfolded later in history, after the Gospels had already been written?

God's Overlooked Promise to Ishmael: The Untold Chapter Beside Isaac's Covenant invites believers to rediscover this often-neglected story which points to God's faithfulness, His heart for the forgotten, and His plan that reaches farther than most have ever imagined.

May God's Peace, Salam, and Shalom be with you, always and forever.



Father, internationalist, and peacemaker, Ayman Alhasan bridges cultures with a unique intercultural perspective shaped by dual citizenship: USA and the world. He is the author of *Dear Pastors and Priests* and the founder and CEO of Handshake4Peace.org, an organization dedicated to building peace through shared Abrahamic values.