

A Compendium on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ

A BELIEVER

Introduction

Thanks for your last response. I could see that it arose from a deep place within you and with very deliberate contemplation. It showed that you gave serious thought to the things I shared with my writings and with my heart. I do not take it lightly. Certainly, you are not far from the Kingdom.

At this juncture, I'd like to say that you should really take your time to examine this text closely and at your freedom, indulge in some investigative journalism, laden with the arsenals of brutal objectivity and clarity of thinking, to find out truths for yourself and arrive at your own conclusions, which you would be eternally responsible for. Because of our close friendship, I'd like you to know that I respect what you hold dear and most sacred. Nonetheless, because of the love we share, I am most concerned about your eternal destiny and cannot hold back an objective juxtaposition of the things we have believed with our lives. Peace!

I have shared a good volume of Scriptures here in context for you to see God's own heart, to see through the eyes of the Prophets of old and see through my own heart. The message of the Bible is so plain that you will need help to get confused. The Gospel is straightforward and astounding. It is simple but not simplistic, it is freely given however it came at the cost of the Ultimate Price.

In this document, the author has also tried to stay away from more analogies as much as possible and let the power of the *Holy Writ* to be unveiled, thereby making its clearly compelling case. Where necessary, explanations are provided.

My discourse with you is not about winning arguments but letting the light of Christ shine into hearts. Now that this light shines into your heart, you decide what to do with it. You decide!

So, let's begin.

Part I

On The Trinity

The Trinity of God is a Mystery. God fully understands the nature of humanity. Humanity cannot with its limited understanding comprehend the nature of Divinity. The mystery of The Trinity is One God in Three Persons. Three Persons in One God. We Christians serve One God.

I understand the Koran's stance on appropriating partners to God. However, in Christianity, we don't give God partners. On the contrary, God's voice as captured in the Bible affirms and reveals God in Three Persons. God simply reveals Himself that way to us.

We don't liken God to three forms as in steam, water and ice. That was only an example of a trinity in *nature*; water being the same compound and yet having three distinct 'manifestations'. Analogies are not definitions but mere comparisons, in fact, the second meaning of an analogy from a google search means a partial similarity.

The purpose of the analogy was only to connect you with the **rationality** of the concept of trinity in nature. On that note, I feel that in your response, it wasn't necessary to refer to the self-sufficiency of God when reference was being made to things that were natural. On the contrary, no man can *conquer* the Sun or go close to the Sun. If it were theoretically possible to do so, to conquer the Sun, then the trinity of the sun would be conquered, showing you the unity of the trinity even in *their* distinct diversities. That was the point I was trying to make.

However, the Almighty God, the Transcendent One cannot be captured within the limits of nature and science or understood with the human sized brain save for what He reveals. And here, I would tell you what He reveals in the Scriptures.

Here are verses from the Bible:

Psalm 110:1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

King David lived over a thousand years before Christ was born. In the above verse He prophesied what happened when Jesus ascended into Heaven after the Resurrection, as explained in the New Testament. This statement was what The Father told the Son after accomplishing His earthly mission. Here, God was communicating with God.

a. The Trinity at Creation: God, The Word and The Spirit of God

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea...

Gen 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Right from the first chapter in the Bible, in the book of Genesis, we see God refer to Himself in the plural pronoun. Only God is Creator, yet He refers to Himself as Us. This is a beautiful Mystery. In the preceding verses (feel free to read the first Chapter of Genesis), we see God, we see the Word and we see the Spirit of God. We dwell on what is revealed in the Scriptures, we stake our life on it, and the human heart has the capacity to believe it.

b. About the Lord Jesus being God.

Joh 1:18 No one has ever seen God. God's only Son, the one who is closest to the Father's heart, has made him known.

John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

John 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

In the above scriptures, Jesus is clearly called God and He never rebuked those who called Him so.

Mic 5:2 "As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah, even though you remain least among the clans of Judah, nevertheless, out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel. His existence has been from antiquity, even from eternity."

Prophet Micah lived 600 years before Christ. Yet by God's Spirit, he was able to foretell that the coming Saviour was One whose existence had been from eternity, and would be born in Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah. As you may know, described in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, some 600 years later, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as a son of King David of the tribe of Judah. How can you make this up or fault it?

c. Jesus Heals a Paralytic // Only God Forgives sins

Luke 5:17 One day as Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of the Law happened to be sitting nearby.... The power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Luke 5:18 Some men were bringing a paralyzed man on a stretcher. They were trying to take him into the house and place him in front of Jesus.

Luke 5:19 When they couldn't find a way to get him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down on his stretcher through the tiles into the middle of the room, right in front of Jesus.

Luke 5:20 When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Mister, your sins are forgiven."

Luke 5:21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to argue among themselves, saying, "Who is this man who is uttering blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Luke 5:22 Because Jesus knew that they were arguing, he asked them, "Why are you arguing about this among yourselves?"

Luke 5:23 Which is easier: to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say 'Get up and walk'?

Luke 5:24 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Then he told the paralyzed man, "I say to you: Get up, pick up your stretcher, and go home!"

Luke 5:25 So the man immediately stood up in front of them and picked up what he had been lying on. Then he went home, praising God.

Who can forgive sins except God? Clearly, Jesus was showing His authority as God to forgive sins.

d. A clip of His experience upon the Cross.

Luke 23:39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

Luke 23:40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

Luke 23:41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

Luke 23:42 And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Luke 23:43 And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Being in the midst of excruciating pain in public and impending death is not a favourable time to hold on to lies. Who can guarantee another man paradise if not God? Would a dying Man still be telling lies if He knew they were all lies? No ordinary man can guarantee even himself paradise, let alone another man. But here, we see Jesus (all glory to His Name), in a very inconveniencing moment offering another man, also in his dying moments, the promise of Redemption. This is a clear demonstration that Jesus was God.

The Koran says that all men are touched by satan after they are born. Hence, no one ever lived without sin. It is also generally accepted in Islamic writings that Jesus was without sin all His life. Not even Muhammad was without sin. So, was Jesus just another human being, or just a great prophet?

If He never sinned then He never lied as well, so everything He said about Himself was accurate and from God. This scripture is one of several thought-provoking Biblical evidences that Jesus is God.

Mat 27:54 The army officer and the soldiers guarding Jesus saw this earthquake and everything that happened. They were very afraid and said, "He really was the Son of God!"

I believe that as the men reported above, when you encounter Jesus with an open heart, you see Him for who He is. Perhaps, a good place to start, is for you to ask God to reveal who this Jesus truly is to you, but you must keep a heart that is open.

e. About the Father declaring that Jesus is His Son

This happened on two occasions:

i. The Baptism of Jesus

Mark 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Vs 10: Just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens split open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

Mark 1:11 Then a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with you!"

ii. The Transfiguration of Jesus as He prayed

Luke 9:28 Now about eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John, and James with him and went up on a mountain to pray. Vs 29: While he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes turned dazzling white. Vs 30: Suddenly, two men were talking with him. They were Moses and Elijah. Vs 31: They had a glorified appearance and were discussing with Jesus about the way in which he would soon fulfil God's purpose by dying in Jerusalem.

Luke 9:33 Just as Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter told Jesus, "Master, it's good that we're here! Let's set up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Peter didn't know what he was saying.)

Luke 9:34 But while he was saying this, a cloud appeared and surrounded them, and they became terrified as they were being overshadowed by the cloud.

Luke 9:35 Then a voice came out of the cloud and said, "This is my beloved Son. Keep listening to him!"

Luke 9:36 After the voice had spoken, Jesus was alone. The disciples kept silent and at that time told no one about what they had seen.

This speaks for itself. God the Father declared with power, twice, that Jesus was the Son of God.

f. About the Holy Spirit being God.

2 Corinthians 3:17 The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

John 14:16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

Joh 15:26 "The Helper will come—the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God and who comes from the Father. I will send him to you from the Father, and he will speak about me."

These verses refer to the Holy Spirit. He is the Third Person in the Godhead. He is God. Jesus promised that He was going to send the Holy Spirit to believers. This promise He fulfilled 40 days after He ascended to Heaven on a day known as the Day of Pentecost.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Rom 8:38-39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This is one of the most beautiful things to be experienced as a true Christian. It's a knowing deep within the recesses of the spirit. That you are a Child of God, not based on self-efforts or good works but on faith in the work of the Saviour on Calvary. Even when one sins, the Spirit reminds you, no son, you're not like that anymore, you just melt in repentance and live in your new identity as a son of God. How comforting to know that God has brought us into His family. No accumulation of good works or repetition of prayer or ablution or prolonged fasting could concoct or invent this. You're now a Child of God. This is not a result of teaching. It is something to be experienced. This, I believe, is Leah Shuaribu's testimony. No one can take it away.

Christians worship One God. [Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.]

The divide between Christianity and Islam goes beyond the concept of the Mystery of The Trinity. It is centred on The Cross and The Resurrection of Jesus Christ. That changes everything! Let's move on.

Part II

On His Birth and Purpose of Coming

During our first interfaith discussion, you mentioned that God can do as He wills just because He is Almighty. Islam agrees that Jesus was born of a virgin. But in taking any action (*the virgin birth in this regard*) and in letting you know of His action, is there not a purpose to what He does? The Almighty must be a God of purpose. In the Bible, He reveals the purpose behind the special birth of Jesus.

a. The Garden: God speaks to The Serpent

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall crush thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Right from the garden, God announced His plan for redeeming mankind. This was an assurance of victory but coming at a cost. This was fulfilled at the Cross.

b. Isaiah's prophecy about the Birth and Death of Jesus.

[Isaiah was a prophet that lived about 700 years before Christ was born.]

Birth

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, **The mighty God, The everlasting Father**, The Prince of Peace.

Isa 7:14 So the Lord himself will give you this sign: A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel [God Is With Us].

In both references above, Jesus, The Son is referred to as God: The Mighty God and Everlasting Father. Isaiah is revered in Islam, feel free to do investigative journalism about his writings. You would find that there still exists scrolls or manuscripts, if you wish, that precede the birth of Islam or the prophet of Islam with gaps of several centuries. It hasn't changed. This is miraculous.

Death

Isa 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isa 53:9 And he made his **grave with the wicked**, and with **the rich in his death**; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

[Jesus was crucified between two criminals {as seen in Luke 23 delineated in previous pages} and buried in a tomb of a rich man. In the old days, having a tomb was a status symbol for the rich.]

Isa 53:10 Yet it **pleased the LORD to bruise him**; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his **soul an offering for sin**, he shall see his seed, he shall **prolong his days**, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Isa 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; **for he shall bear their iniquities**.

Isa 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto **death**: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Zec 12:10 I will pour out on the house of David and on the residents of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and of supplications, and they will look to me—the one whom they pierced."

Prophet Zechariah lived about 500 years before Christ was born. He talks about a time when the Jews will finally believe in Jesus as the Messiah, during His Second Coming. They will finally look to Him. On the Cross, Jesus was pierced with a spear on His sides and blood and water gushed out.

The clear Scriptures above make it obvious that in the heart of God, from the garden (in Genesis 3), God planned for Jesus to die for the sins of man. This is the same record that all the Prophets gave of Jesus, talking about the different aspects of His Birth, Life and Death, Resurrection and return to rule the Earth.

c. John The Baptist's Testimony about Jesus

Joh 3:27 John answered, "People can't receive anything unless it has been given to them from heaven...

Joh 3:31 The one who comes from above is greater than all others. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth. He talks about things that are on the earth. But the one who comes from heaven is greater than all others.

Joh 3:32 and tells what he has seen and heard. Yet, no one accepts what he says.

Joh 3:33 But whoever accepts his message confirms by this that God is truthful...

Joh 3:35 The Father loves his Son and has put everything in his power.

Joh 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. But those who do not obey the Son will never have that life. They cannot get away from God's anger.

d. Jesus own words about His coming & purpose

Mat 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many [paying the price to set them free from the penalty of sin] ...

John 3:13 No one has gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from there.

John 3:14 And the Son of Man must be lifted up, just as that metal snake was lifted up by Moses in the desert.

John 3:15 Then everyone who has faith in the Son of Man will have eternal life.

John 3:16 God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:17 God did not send his Son into the world to condemn its people. He sent him to save them!

John 3:18 No one who has faith in God's Son will be condemned. But everyone who doesn't have faith in him has already been condemned for not having faith in God's only Son....

John 12:24 I am telling you the truth: a grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped into the ground and dies. If it does die, then it produces many grains.

John 12:25 Those who love their own life will lose it; those who hate their own life in this world will keep it for life eternal...

John 12:27 "Now my heart is troubled—and what shall I say? Shall I say, 'Father, do not let this hour come upon me'? **But that is why I came—so that I might go through this hour of suffering...**

Joh 15:13 No one has greater love than this, that one should lay down his life for his friends.

I can go on and on and show you the multiple instances where Jesus Himself talks about His death and Resurrection. If a Man, a miracle worker and life giver tells you He would die and rise again and He does, what does that make of the contradictory statements of another man born well over 500 years later, who had nothing less than 11 spouses in his lifetime, without the working of miracles, or the power to give life, and inability to rise from the grave?

If Jesus actually died and rose from the grave, what does that do to everything else you believe that contradicts the very words of One who conquered death? You be the judge. As shown, the Scriptures through the centuries made a case that Christ had to rise after death. On what superior and plural authority would any other record nullify this?

Part III

The Resurrection

Attacking the Resurrection is actually older than Islam. The Scriptures tell a story of how the religious leaders in the days of the Disciples offered bribes to the soldiers who guarded the tomb of Jesus before He rose from the grave in a great demonstration of power. They told the soldiers to lie by saying that the body was stolen by the Disciples.

Religious people whose idea of God wasn't matching the description that Jesus embodied, hated Him to the end. This hatred continues till this day as it is now poured against the followers of Christ.

The record is as follows:

Mat 27:62 The next day..., the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together and went to Pilate. Vs 63: They said, "Sir, we remember how that deceiver said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will be brought back to life.'

Mat 27:64 Therefore, give the order to make the tomb secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may steal him and say to the people, 'He has been brought back to life.' Then the last deception will be worse than the first."

Mat 27:65 Pilate told them, "You have the soldiers you want for guard duty. Go and make the tomb as secure as you know how." Vs 66 So they went to secure the tomb. They placed a seal on the stone and posted the soldiers on guard duty.

Next Chapter

Mat 28:1 After the day of worship, as the sun rose Sunday morning...

Mat 28:2 Suddenly, there was a powerful earthquake. An angel of the Lord had come down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and was sitting on it. Vs 3: He was as bright as lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow.

Mat 28:4 The guards were so deathly afraid of him that they shook.

Mat 28:5 The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you're looking for Jesus, who was crucified..."

Mat 28:8 They hurried away from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples.

Mat 28:11 While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city. They told the chief priests everything that had happened.

Mat 28:12-13 The chief priests gathered together with the leaders and agreed on a plan. They gave the soldiers a large amount of money and told them to say that Jesus' disciples had come at night and had stolen his body while they were sleeping.

Mat 28:14-15 They added, "If the governor hears about it, we'll take care of it, and you'll have nothing to worry about." The soldiers took the money and did as they were told...

Psalms 16:9-11: That is why my heart is glad and my soul rejoices. **My body rests securely because you do not abandon my soul to the grave or allow your Holy One to decay.** You make the path of life known to me. Complete joy is in your presence. Pleasures are by your side forever.

This was a Psalm written by King David, born a thousand years before Christ. But he died and his body saw decay. Clearly this was a prophecy about God's Holy One, Jesus Christ, who God raised from the grave.

On the Road to Emmaus: Jesus on Earth shortly after The Resurrection

Luk 24:13 That same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a town named Emmaus. It is about seven miles from Jerusalem... Vs15 While they were talking, discussing these things, Jesus himself came near and walked with them.

Luk 24:16 (But the two men were not allowed to recognize Jesus.)

Luk 24:17 He asked them, "What's this I hear you discussing with each other as you walk?" The two men stopped, their faces looking very sad.

Luk 24:18 The one named Cleopas said, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who doesn't know what has just happened there."

Luk 24:19 Jesus said, "What are you talking about?" They said, "It's about Jesus, the one from Nazareth. To God and to all the people he was a great prophet. He said and did many powerful things.

Luk 24:20 But our leaders and the leading priests handed him over to be judged and killed. They nailed him to a cross.

Luk 24:21 We were hoping that he would be the one to free Israel. But then all this happened. "And now something else: It has been three days since he was killed,

Luk 24:22 but today some of our women told us an amazing thing. Early this morning they went to the tomb where the body of Jesus was laid.

Luk 24:23 But they did not find his body there. They came and told us they had seen some angels in a vision. The angels told them Jesus was alive!

Luk 24:25 Then Jesus asked the two disciples, "Why can't you understand? How can you be so slow to realize what is true. **You should believe everything the prophets said.**

Luk 24:26 **The prophets said the Messiah must suffer these things before he begins his time of glory."**

Luk 24:27 Then he began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures. He started with the books of Moses and then he talked about what the prophets had said about him...

Luk 24:31 Just then the men were allowed to recognize him. But when they saw who he was, he disappeared.

Luk 24:32 They said to each other, "When he talked to us on the road, **it felt like a fire burning in us.** How exciting it was when he explained to us the **true meaning of the Scriptures!**"

Luk 24:33-34 So the two men got up then and went back to Jerusalem. There they found the followers of Jesus meeting together. The eleven apostles and the people with them said, "The Lord really has risen from death! He appeared to Simon."

Luk 24:35 Then the two men told what had happened on the road. They talked about how they recognized Jesus when he shared the bread with them.

I believe all the Scriptures shared with you at this point are very self-explanatory and very beautifully consistent. You must judge between the testimony of all the Prophets.

Part IV

Why I Think the Bible is the Word of God

The simple reason I have come to believe the Bible as the Word of God is that when it is read rightly with the power of God, one sees the Jesus Christ of history and experiences His grace.

Asides the Comfort and hope found in the Scriptures, there are various motivations that have helped me come to trust the Bible as God's Word to humanity.

1. Personal Experience: promises activated and fulfilled in my life that align with the Word
 - i. Healing
 - ii. Receiving the baptism and power of the Holy Ghost and praying for others who also came to experience the same.
 - iii. A witness to the Power in the Name of Jesus: vigils, childhood dreams, and observed healing.
 - iv. Receiving God's forgiveness
 - v. Changed character and outlook in life: I once had a really bad temperament. Even as a child, I had thrown a knife that injured my elder sibling when I was child. My mother kept wondering where I picked all that capacity to get angry from. This was before I came to surrender all my life to Christ as Lord and Saviour.
 - vi. Very long list of answered prayers and supernatural manifestations

2. Unity of Witnesses--Principle of Two/Three witnesses

Matthew 18:16: But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.

Deu 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

There is a principle that a matter is to be taken seriously, confirmed or established when it is told by two or three witnesses. Several prophets who lived several centuries apart gave to the testimony of the virgin birth, life, sacrifice and resurrection of the Son of God. As eyewitness, the Disciples wrote of it. Apostle Paul, though he didn't meet Jesus in person, during His time on Earth, spoke of His encounter on the way to Damascus where he sought to persecute more Christians. Almost all Disciples of Christ laid their lives as martyrs (~~not as warriors or terrorists~~) in defence of the Gospel.

Here are what some of the Eyewitnesses, two Apostles; John (Yahya) and Peter (Butrus) wrote of Jesus, The Living Word:

Jn 1:1 We want to tell you about the Word that gives life—the one who existed before the world began. This is **the one we have heard and have seen with our own eyes. We saw what he did, and our hands touched him.**

1Jn 1:2 Yes, the one who is life was shown to us. We saw him, and so we can tell others about him. We now tell you about him. He is the eternal life that was with God the Father and was shown to us.

1Jn 1:3 We are telling you about what we have seen and heard because we want you to have fellowship with us. The fellowship we share together is with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

1Jn 1:4 We write these things to you so that you can be full of joy with us.

2Pe 1:16 We have not depended on made-up stories in making known to you the mighty coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **With our own eyes we saw his greatness.**

2Pe 1:17 **We were there** when he was given honour and glory by God the Father, when the voice came to him from the Supreme Glory, saying, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased!"

2Pe 1:18 **We ourselves heard this voice coming from heaven**, when we were with him on the holy mountain.

You can't fake this or easily concoct this. It is a record that calls for deep examination and contemplation. These are eyewitness accounts of the men that followed Jesus in His time on earth.

3. Age and Miracle of Preservation

The discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls in 1947 confirmed that we still have the same Old Testament as they did at Jesus's day. The survival of thousands of New Testament manuscripts confirms that the New Testament writings were also providentially preserved.

4. Fulfilled prophecies

Prophecies about Jesus

- Psa 22:1 A Davidic Psalm. **My God! My God! Why have you abandoned me?** Why are you so far from delivering me—from my groaning words?
- Psa 22:7 All who see me make fun of me. Insults pour from their mouths. They shake their heads and say,
- Psa 22:8 "Put yourself in the LORD'S hands. Let the LORD save him! Let God rescue him since he is pleased with him!"
- Psa 22:16 Dogs have surrounded me. A mob has encircled me. **They have pierced my hands and feet.**

King David was born around 1000 BC. The Crucifixion was invented by the Persians around 600-300BC and developed, during Roman times, into a punishment for the most severe criminals where their hands and feet would be pierced. Apparently, there was no crucifixion in King David's lifetime and David was an undefeated king, no harm came to his legs and hands. But the spirit of Christ through David, foretold the methodology of how the Messiah would be crucified. As you can check, this was fulfilled in *Matt 27: 39-46*.

- Luke 24:4- Then he (*Jesus*) said to them, "These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the prophets, and the Psalms had to come true."

I have shown you many of these in the preceding text of this document. The birth, childhood, lifestyle, behaviour, death and resurrection of the Saviour were prophesied by prophets over

the ages. They were over a hundred fulfilled prophecies. Jesus is the centre of all the Scriptures. This is God's strategy. The ones yet to be fulfilled speak to His return to the Earth.

Prophecies about Israel:

In the old days, God promised Abraham that through his offspring, the whole world would be blessed. This was fulfilled in Jesus and being fulfilled today. Through Jesus, the whole has free access to eternal salvation. God also warned Israel that if they rebelled against Him, they would be scattered throughout the Earth.

Deu 30:1 "I have now given you a choice between a blessing and a curse. When all these things have happened to you, and you are living among the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you, you will remember the choice I gave you.

Gen 12:1 The LORD told Abram....

Gen 12:2 I'll make a great nation of your descendants, I'll bless you, and I'll make your reputation great, so that you will be a blessing.

Gen 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Also, Jews today make up about 20% of all Nobel Laureates (over 800 individuals totally) when compared with their Arab counterparts who make up less than 20 individuals of this total. The contributions of the Jews are felt in every sphere of life including technology, communications, research, finance and medicine. *Somehow*, they are a blessing to the world.

- The rebirth of the nation of Israel.

God promised to bring His people back to their land.

Eze 11:17 "Therefore you are to say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says, "I'm going to gather you from among the nations, assembling you from the lands among which you have been dispersed. I'll give you the land of Israel.

Eze 37:21 Tell the people that this is what the Lord GOD says: 'I will gather the people of Israel from among the nations. I will gather them from all around and bring them back to their own land.

Isa 66:7 "My holy city is like a woman who suddenly gives birth to a child without ever going into labour.

Isa 66:8 Has anyone ever seen or heard of such a thing? Has a nation ever been born in a day? Zion will not have to suffer long, before the nation is born.

The prophets foreshadowed the re-birth of Israel, and, just like the Bible says - it happened "in one day." The woman giving birth before going into labour represents Israel. This accurately describes what happened on May 14, 1948 - when "the world" briefly felt sorry for the Jews and returned Israel to them and they were able to declare independence for Israel as a united and sovereign nation for the first time in 2,900 years.

During that same day, the United States issued a statement recognizing Israel's sovereignty. And, only hours beforehand, a United Nations mandate expired, ending British control of the land. During a 24-hour span of time, foreign control of the land of Israel had formally ceased, and Israel had declared its independence, and its independence was acknowledged by other nations. Modern Israel was literally was born in a single day.

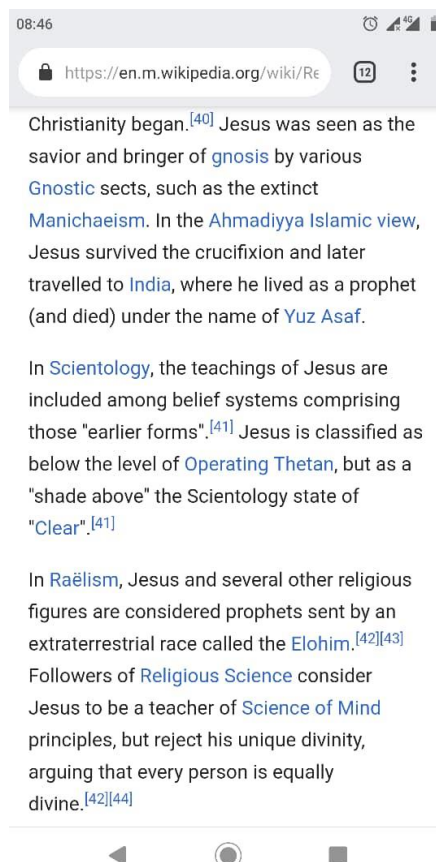
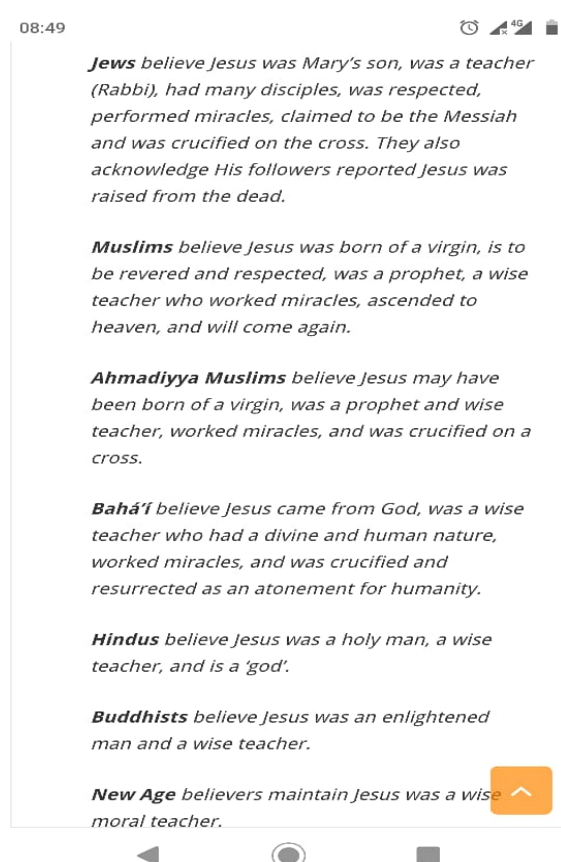
Part V

A Comparison of The Bible with other books, The Men of our Faiths and Persecution

1. The Books

A few other faiths make references and claims about the life and person of Jesus. To be frank, I noticed that in pages 2 and 3 of your response, 60% of the items in your list of arguments for the basis of the Quran's authenticity as the word of God are based on its connection or mention of Jesus. It must be that something deep in man cries "Truth" whenever Jesus comes to the fore and is being considered. It must be!

Here's a look at some of things other faiths say about Him:



There just seems to be something about this Jesus that every serious faith on the Earth wants to have their share or definition of who He was or what He came to do. But they can't all be right! While the world's religions account for Jesus tangentially and find themselves compelled to explain Him, only one faith system establishes the authentic, attested eyewitness accounts of Jesus life, teaching and ministry. In your search for the Truth as a seeker, the Bible ought to be a first stop for authenticity! For God is not confused and won't lead us into confusion.

However, just even making reference to Jesus and putting Him in a special place does not mean the faith is authentic or from God. Containing poetic truths and helpful moralities does not equate to giving the full picture of The Truth.

Even in Jesus' days on earth, demons knew who He was. This does not mean that they were authentic emissaries of truth. There are two of such instances of demon-possessed persons making speeches in the Bible in Matthew and the book of Acts.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. That's fine! The demons also believe that, and they tremble with fear.

This demonstrates that Satan's minions are more aware of God's reality than most people, yet the demons are not right with God. The demons may believe some things that are true about God, but they're certainly not saved. The point is that Satan is able to declare certain truths but cannot offer salvation.

Mat 8:28 When he (*Jesus*) arrived in the territory of the Gadarenes on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, two men met him. They were possessed by demons and had come out of the tombs. No one could travel along that road because the men were so dangerous.

Mat 8:29 They shouted, "Why are you bothering us now, Son of God? Did you come here to torture us before it is time?"

This shows that demons can be theologically astute! They know the identity of Jesus, acknowledge his deity, and are aware of the certainty of their judgment. However, knowledge alone, quite clearly, does not save! Their doom is sealed.

On one occasion, after Jesus had returned to Heaven, two disciples went out in a new location to preach the Good News. Here is the record of their encounter with a demon-possessed girl who was a fortune teller.

Act 16:16 One day we were going to the place for prayer, and a servant girl met us. She had a spirit in her that gave her the power to tell what would happen in the future. By doing this she earned a lot of money for the men who owned her.

Act 16:17 She started following Paul and the rest of us around. She kept shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God! They are telling you how you can be saved!"

Act 16:18 This went on for several days. Finally, Paul got so upset that he turned and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I order you to leave this girl alone!" At once the evil spirit left her.

Please consider that the source of a testimony can be just as important as the testimony itself. If someone who has a very poor reputation speaks very highly of you, it might not help your own reputation very much. Certainly, for an evil spirit to speak well of you would not help any decent person think well of you. Though this testimony in and of itself may sound good and contain truths, considering the source, it doubtlessly was not helpful to Paul and his company at all, so they cast out the evil spirit. Also, the method of the demon can never fit with the pattern of God or capture His complete big picture.

Now if someone captured the tales of demons and the speeches they influenced men and women to make, would these pass as the very Words of God simply because of the truth elements they contained? You be the judge!

2. The Men of Our Faiths

I wasn't there when Prophet Mohammed received his revelation. It would not be fair to stand aloof and judge it, in itself, as fallacious or devilish. However, my worry is that the Koran is a single man's revelation with a being he claims to be angel Gabriel. It's as though he is judge and jury. One man with the angel he says he sees, declares himself to be God's Messenger and have the final revelation from God. There is no other spiritual backup from a prophetic authority outside of himself.

This is **absolutely** not the case with Christ whose mode of entry (*through the virgin womb*), purpose, influence, miracles, death and resurrection had been written and spoken of multiple centuries before His arrival (*as shown in the Scriptures aforementioned in the self-same document you're reading*). Put yourself in the shoes of the God of the Bible who had with precision, over thousands of years designed the Bible and salvation of mankind. Then you might see the utter hopelessness of eternity for any man outside the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

Apart from the written prophecies that confirmed the Authority and Deity of Christ Jesus before His coming on the scene, during His life on earth, the two occasions where Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with the voice of The Father from Heaven, there were eyewitnesses.

Here's a clip from one of the eyewitnesses, *Peter (as shown in Luke 9:28, also in the last paragraph on page 4)*.

2Pe 1:16 We have not depended on made-up stories in making known to you the mighty coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. With our own eyes we saw his greatness.

2Pe 1:17 We were there when he was given honour and glory by God the Father, when the voice came to him from the Supreme Glory, saying, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am pleased!"

2Pe 1:18 We ourselves heard this voice coming from heaven, when we were with him on the holy mountain.

2Pe 1:19 **So we are even more confident of the message proclaimed by the prophets. You will do well to pay attention to it, because it is like a lamp shining in a dark place until the Day dawns and the light of the morning star shines in your hearts.** (*My prayer for Nazifi*)

2Pe 1:20 Above all else, however, remember that none of us can explain by ourselves a prophecy in the Scriptures.

2Pe 1:21 For no prophetic message ever came just from the human will, but people were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God.

Apart from this, we can look at the character of prophet Mohammed and compare with Jesus, putting miracles aside, and try to see who models forgiveness, love for enemies, and holiness better. Given this, based on your assessment, you might be able to reassess, whose Word, and explanation of God you should trust and give the stake of your eternity to?

E.g. Not trying to put women down, but holy men were not given to women, the prophet of Islam had a spouse count of at least eleven from any Google search.

Consider that the prophet of Islam said, "I have fabricated things against Allah and have imputed to him words which he has not spoken." (*Al Tabari, The History of Al-Tabari, vol. 6, p.111*) - who even admitted to having mistaken the words of "Satan" (*Ibn Ishaq, Sirat Rasul*

Allah, pp.165-166) as Allah's. Can one tell where this might have started and where it stopped?

3. Persecution

The following text shows us the heart of Jesus towards the way we treat those around us, and even our enemies. We can also call it His perspective towards violence.

Mat 5:9 Great blessings belong to those who work to bring peace. God will call them his sons and daughters.

Mat 5:10 Great blessings belong to those who suffer persecution for doing what is right. God's kingdom belongs to them.

Mat 5:11 "People will insult you and hurt you. They will lie and say all kinds of evil things about you because you follow me. But when they do that, know that great blessings belong to you.

Mat 5:12 Be happy about it. Be very glad because you have a great reward waiting for you in heaven. People did these same bad things to the prophets who lived before you.

Mat 5:22 But I promise you that if you are angry with someone, you will have to stand trial. If you call someone a fool, you will be taken to court. And if you say that someone is worthless, you will be in danger of the fires of hell.

Mat 5:39 But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too.

Mat 5:40 And if someone takes you to court to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well.

Mat 5:41 If a soldier forces you to walk with him one mile, go with him two.

Love Your Enemies

Mat 5:44 But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Mat 5:45 So that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil.

Mat 5:46 Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that!

The Hatred of the World

Joh 15:18 "If the world hates you, remember that they hated me first.

Joh 15:19 If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as it loves its own people. But I have chosen you to be different from those in the world. So, you don't belong to the world, and that is why the world hates you.

Joh 15:21 They will do to you whatever they did to me, because you belong to me. They don't know the one who sent me.

Joh 15:22 If I had not come and spoken to the people of the world, they would not be guilty of sin. But now I have spoken to them. So they have no excuse for their sin.

Joh 15:23 "Whoever hates me also hates my Father.

Joh 15:24 I did things among the people of the world that no one else has ever done. If I had not done those things, they would not be guilty of sin. But they have seen what I did, and still they hate me and my Father.

Joh 16:1 "I have told you all this so that you won't lose your faith when you face troubles.

Joh 16:2 People will tell you to leave their synagogues and never come back. **In fact, the time will come when they will think that killing you would be doing service for God.**

Joh 16:3 They will do this because they have not known the Father, and they have not known me.

Joh 10:10 **The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.**

Joh 10:11 "I am the good shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep.

You spoke of the devil appearing and leading people to find Jesus, to Christianity, to trust in the God of the Bible, but would even the Quran agree with that. How come these people find hope and change in their character. Does satan provide good character like forgiveness, love for enemies or dangerous attitudes like unforgiveness, suppression of women, forcing men to choose religion (which ought to be a thing of the heart), many forms of violent expressions and honour killings? Do you even need verses of any book to point you to the force behind the works of evil? You be the judge!

Why are most Muslim governments, and other non-democratic regimes like China and North Korea so hard and sore pressed against items that reflect the Gospel, the Church and against the Bible, which is given even a special place in the Koran? Is it because there is a power that's released when people believe the gospel? Is there a freedom or liberation or reawakening of the people that they seem to worry could happen if they're freely exposed to the Gospel?

I choose to reserve personal views on the historically valid expeditions led by the prophet of Islam and his followers and how Islamic conquests by the sword and other means, spread the religion around the world. However, I will share some material from the Quran and some Hadiths as well as other cross examinations that stand in stark contrast with the views of the Lord Jesus as afore mentioned, on the matter of violence, **either in self-defence or being on the offensive.**

The Cow 2:191 Sahih International: And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and fitnah is worse than killing. And do not fight them at al-Masjid al-îrâm until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.

Women 4:89 Take not to yourselves friends of them, until they emigrate in the way of God: then if they turn away seize them and kill them wherever you find them and take no friend or helper from among them

Spoils 8:39 Pickthall: And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is all for Allah. But if they cease, then lo! Allah is Seer of what they do.

Repentance 9:5 Then, when the sacred months are drawn away, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent, and perform the prayer, and pay the alms, then let them go their way; God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.

Sahih al-Bukhari Book 83 Hadith 17: Allah's Apostle said, "The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In Qisas for murder, a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims."

Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah, p. 547 [Muhammad] said: "Woe to you, Abu Sufyan, isn't it time that you recognize that I am God's apostle?" He answered, "As to that I still have some doubt." I said to him, "Submit and testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the apostle of God before you lose your head," so he did so.[12]

As a result, greed soon became one of the primary factors in people's rapid conversion to Islam. Indeed, Muhammad deliberately used the spoils of war to lure people to Islam. When he was criticized for the way he distributed his newfound wealth, he replied, "Are you disturbed in mind because of the good things of this life by which I win over a people that they may become Muslims while I entrust you to your Islam?"^{iv}

Although Muhammad patiently endured persecution in Mecca, his attitude quickly changed when his numbers grew in Medina. Soon he would tolerate no criticism whatsoever. According to our earliest biographical source, a man named Abu Afak—who was more than a hundred years old—wrote a poem criticizing people for converting to Islam. Muhammad demanded he be killed, and Abu Afak was murdered in his sleep. When a woman named Asma heard that Muslims had killed such an elderly man, she wrote a poem calling for people to take a stand against Islam. Ibn Ishaq relates what happened next:

When the apostle heard what she had said he said, "Who will rid me of Marwan's daughter?" Umayr bin Adiy al-Khatmi who was with him heard him, and that very night he went to her house and killed her. In the morning he came to the apostle and told him what he had done and he said, "You have helped God and His apostle, O Umayr!"

But things get worse. As the Muslim armies raided town after town, they captured many women, who would often be sold or traded. Yet, since the Muslim men were a long way from their wives, they needed wisdom from Allah to guide them in their treatment of their female captives. It wasn't long before Muhammad received a revelation allowing the soldiers to sleep with the women:

Allah's Messenger sent an army to Autas and encountered the enemy and fought with them. Having overcome them and taken them captives, the Companions of Allah's Messenger seemed to refrain from having intercourse with captive women because of their husbands being polytheists. Then Allah, Most High, sent down regarding that: "And women already married, except those whom your right hands possess (iv. 24)" (i.e. they were lawful for them when their 'Idda period came to an end).^{viii}

This verse of the Qur'an (4:24), along with others (23:1-6; 33:50; 70:22-30), granted Muslims the right to have sex with their female captives and slave girls, even those who were still married or who were going to be sold or traded.

Reference: The earliest biography of prophet Muhammad, by ibn Ishaq.

Part VI

Perspectives on the Koran

On Sonship

Surah 6:101, "To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: How can He have a son when He hath no **consort**? He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things."

Islam's view of sonship seems to be restricted to biology. A consort, in the context quoted above, is a wife or spouse. So, the Quran implies that the idea of Jesus being the son of God means that Allah had sex with a woman. This is why it deems it offensive for God to have a Son. But this, of course, has never been anything that Christianity has taught. Being a Son can be a title, in fact, consider what the Merriam-Webster's third interpretation of a son is. Why can't God have a Son?

SON noun

\ 'sən  \

Definition of *son* (Entry 1 of 2)

- 1 **a** : a human male offspring especially of human beings
 - b** : a male adopted child
 - c** : a human male descendant
- 2 *capitalized* : the second person of the Trinity
- 3 : a person closely associated with or deriving from a formative agent (such as a nation, school, or race)

Some inconsistencies

Furthermore, the Quran has some other striking inconsistencies. For example, it muddles and conflates the person of Mary, the mother of Jesus with Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses. Their names might sound similar in Arabic, but they were very different people who lived over 4000 years apart. I am yet to see such melding in the Bible. (See *Quran 19:27-28*, *Quran 66:12*)

Abrogation

The God of the Bible doesn't change His mind. His principles are eternal. It is written in Num 23:19 "God is not like people, who lie; He is not a human who changes his mind...."

Proverbs 30:5 "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him"
Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.
Psa 119:89 Your word, O LORD, will last forever; it is eternal in heaven.

I might be wrong but based on records, while prophet Muhammad was still alive, he would give recitations that cancelled previous ones. In other words, he would tell his followers that certain portions of the Quran he had relayed before were no longer to be recited as part of the Quran. This was met with resistance, as people asked him how the Word of God could be

cancelled. The response is recorded in 2:106 of the Quran, which asserts that Allah can substitute verses in his divine scripture because “he has power over all things.”

The concept of "abrogation" in the Quran is that Allah chose to reveal ayat (singular ayah – means a sign or miracle, commonly a verse in the Quran) that supersede earlier ayat in the same Quran. The central ayat that deals with abrogation is Surah 2:106: None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: Knowest thou not that Allah Hath power over all things?

Naskh (نسخ) is an Arabic word usually translated as "abrogation". In Islamic legal exegesis (or *tafsir*), *Naskh* is a theory developed to resolve seemingly contradictory rulings of Islamic revelation by superseding or canceling the earlier revelation. In the widely recognized^[1] and "classic" form of naskh,^{[2][3]} an Islamic regulation/ruling (*hukm*) is abrogated in favor of another, but the text the *hukm* is based on is not eliminated.^[4]

Some examples of Islamic rulings based on *naskh* include a gradual ban on consumption of alcohol (originally Muslims were not banned but told the bad outweighed the good in drinking), and a change in the direction (the *qibla*) that should be faced when praying *salat* (originally Muslims faced Jerusalem, but this was changed to face the Kaaba in Mecca).^[5] A text or ruling which has been abrogated is called '*mansukh*'; a text or ruling which abrogates is known as the '*nasikh*'.^{[6][7][8]}

Several Qur'anic verses state that some revelations have been abrogated and superseded by later revelations,^[citation needed] and narrations from Muhammad's companions mention abrogated verses or rulings of the religion. The principle of abrogation of an older verse by a new verse in the Quran, or within the *Hadith* (records of the words, actions, and the silent approval, of the Islamic prophet Muhammad) is an accepted principle of all four Sunni *madāhib* or schools of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence),^[9] and was an established principle in *Sharia* by at least the 9th century.^{[10][11][12]} However, with few exceptions, Islamic revelations do not state which Quranic verses or hadith have been abrogated, and Muslim exegetes and jurists have disagreed over which and how many hadith and verses of the Quran are recognized as abrogated,^{[13][14]} with estimates varying from less than ten to over 500.^{[15][16]} Since the 19th century, modern scholars and Islamicist scholars, tend to refuse the concept of Naskh, to defend the absolute validity of the Quran, and trend also followed by Dyianet.^[17]

Does this not seem to be at odds with the nature of the all-knowing, all-wise, creator and Sustainer of the universe; the eternal, self-existent one?

For the theory of abrogation to stand, God would have had to be an inconsistent person who makes mistakes in His decisions and changes His mind. Would that really be true about God? Can you picture God making such statements in the scriptures about Jesus, and one day several centuries later, begin to change His mind the way human beings change their minds when someone offends them? An interesting way to also look at this is, prophet Muhammad came way more than 500 years after Jesus. Men who lived and ate with Jesus bore testimony about Him. Luke did a thorough investigation as well. Will I find the testimony of a man who lived 500 years after this time more reliable than those of people who lived in His own time?

I believe in the stability of God's person. God's will for mankind has never changed from Day 1. I hereby make no conclusive statements but leave you to judge this matter afresh for yourself.

Part VII

Eternal Life & Salvation

This penultimate segment would be split into 4 sub-sections. The first explains from the perspective of the Bible, the concept of being born again, as well as what salvation and eternal life really mean. In the second section, we see how good works are not good enough to please God. The third subsection describes what we can learn from the example of our father, Abraham in seeking God while the fourth portion emphasises the futility of our good works and examines the rest we have in Christ. Finally, the fifth sub-section is a potpourri of links to articles and videos that can inform you about the influence of our faiths on families and individuals.

To start with, you must know that there is nothing or hidden complicated in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I bless God that it is no longer hidden from you. The salvation of man means so much to God that He has made it devoid of all complications. This is the character and behaviour of a loving God for God is love (1John 4:8).

2Cor 4:2 But we have turned away from secret and shameful ways. We don't use trickery, and we don't change the teaching of God. We teach the truth plainly. This is how we show people who we are. And this is how they can know in their hearts what kind of people we are before God.

2Cor 4:3 The Good News that we tell people may be hidden, but it is hidden only to those who are lost.

2Cor 4:4 The ruler of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They cannot see the light of the Good News—the message about the divine greatness of Christ. Christ is the one who is exactly like God.

2Cor 4:5 We don't tell people about ourselves. But we tell people that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we tell them that we are your servants for Jesus.

1. Being Born Again

John Chapter 3

1 Now there was a certain man among the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler (a leader, an authority) among the Jews,

2 Who came to Jesus at night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know and are certain that You have come from God [as] a Teacher; for no one can do these signs (these wonderworks, these miracles—and produce the proofs) that You do unless God is with him.

3 Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see (know, be acquainted with, and experience) the kingdom of God.

6 The only life people get from their human parents is physical. But the new life that the Spirit gives a person is spiritual.

7 Don't be surprised that I told you, '**You must be born again.**'

13 No one has gone up into heaven, but there is One who came down from heaven, the Son of Man [Himself—whose home is in heaven].

14 "Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. It is the same with the Son of Man. **He must be lifted up** too. *(Cross reference Numbers 21:7-9)*

15 Then everyone who believes in him can have eternal life." *(By now, you might be familiar with these verses of Scripture, so please read up vs 16)*

These are the very Words from the lips of the Master. Once again, He tells us that He came from Heaven, but more imminently, that man needs a spiritual rebirth in order to experience the Kingdom of God. Jesus minces no words and tells no lies. He tells us how to be born again, by believing in Him. But believing in what exactly about Him you might ask. Two things made clear here. First is that He is the One from Heaven, God's very Son, not an angel or prophet or messenger. Second is that you believe He was lifted up, a reference to the Crucifixion. You believe that He died for you.

Acts 10 -11—Peter and Cornelius

Act 10:1 Now in Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He was a **devout man who feared God**, as did everyone in his home. He **gave many gifts to the poor** among the people and **always prayed to God**.

Act 10:3 One day about three in the afternoon **he had a vision** and clearly saw an angel of God coming to him and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

Act 10:4-5 He stared at the angel in terror and asked, "What is it *sir*?" The angel answered him, "Your prayers and your gifts to the poor have arisen as a *memorial* to God. Send men now to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter..."

Act 11:11 At that very moment three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where I was staying.

Act 11:12 The Spirit told me to go with them without hesitation. These six fellow believers from Joppa accompanied me to Caesarea, and we all went into the house of Cornelius.

Act 11:13 He told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send someone to Joppa for a man whose full name is Simon Peter.

Act 11:14 **He will speak words to you by which you and all your family will be saved.'**

Act 11:15 And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them just as on us at the beginning.

Cornelius was a Roman centurion who was devout and prayerful. On a certain day, an angel appeared to him, instructing him to send for Peter who shall tell him words, whereby he and all his house would be saved.

Cornelius was a very "godly" man. In fact, the Bible says he was a "devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2). What an amazing description! The angel specifically said to him, "...Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4). Yet, the man still needed to send for the Apostle Peter, who would lead him and his household to utter the words of salvation.

He was benevolent, liberal and "god-fearing"; consistent and persistent in his prayer life. He was a just man (Acts 10:22). And he even saw visions: "He saw in a vision evidently about 3pm

during the day with an angel of God coming in to him..." (Acts 10:3). Yet, he wasn't saved; he wasn't born again. This shows that works can't purge sins or make man right with God. Being godly or god-fearing isn't the same as being born again. In other words, IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO BE "GOD-FEARING"!

In the preceding verses, Jesus didn't mince words when He spoke to Nicodemus. He said, "Ye must be born again." He didn't say if you're "god-fearing," it's okay. He used the term, "born again" to express the necessity for man's spiritual rebirth. Sometimes we encounter such people as Cornelius. They have a good reputation and moral character; but being well-spoken of by others doesn't merit God's salvation. Therefore, Jesus explicitly said...You must be born again (John 3:7).

This is why we preach the Gospel. The Gospel is about Jesus Christ; it's not about what you have done, or what you haven't done. It's about Christ and what He's done for you, which if you'd accept was enough, then salvation is yours. The Bible says, "And by him (Jesus) all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

Like Cornelius, today reading this, you need to receive words by which you can be saved. Those words are in Romans 10:9. It says, "...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." This is the Bible way to receive salvation.

Joh 3:16 Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him would not be lost but have eternal life.

According to the Bible, that is God's idea and fervid reality for all of humanity. Jesus died for all of humanity not just Jews or Arabs or the rich or educated. He took the punishment and paid the price for all. Those who truly believe and follow the Master are now Citizens of Heaven.

Php 3:20-21 We, however, are citizens of heaven. We look forward to the Lord Jesus Christ coming from heaven as our Saviour. Through his power to bring everything under his authority, he will change our humble bodies and make them like his glorified body.

In the world today, as with most cases, before you leave your originating country for a destination overseas, you must be granted a visa to be guaranteed entry into the foreign nation. You don't just land in a distant country and begin to plead for access. Before you take off from your originating location, you can be very confident of access on arrival. If man with all his imperfections and wickedness, can make such a straightforward model, should not the One who is Boundless in Mercy and Wisdom give a clear, nonconflicting, and precise pattern for confidence in knowing one's eternal destination before setting out, not shrouded in some Supreme Mercy but to be anticipated with joyful expectation? Thank God the Bible shows us how and gives us this rhapsodic assurance of our eternal destiny in Christ.

One more scripture makes this clear.

Luke 10:17 When the 72 followers came back from their trip, they were very happy. They said, "Lord, even the demons obeyed us when we used your name!"

18 Jesus said to them, "I saw Satan falling like lightning from the sky.

19 He is the enemy, but know that I have given you more power than he has. I have given you power to crush his snakes and scorpions under your feet. Nothing will hurt you.

20 Yes, even the spirits obey you. And you can be happy, not because you have this power, but because your names are written in heaven."

As recounted above, in the book of Luke we see an occasion where Jesus sent 72 followers to go minister to people. They returned vibrating with excitement about the miracles they accomplished in the Name of Jesus (by the way, I know this feeling too well). But Jesus wanted them to be more excited about their assurance of going to Heaven. This simply, is the God of the Bible.

Act 4:12 Only Jesus has the power to save! His name is the only one in all the world that can save anyone.

The offer stays open to all those who are alive.

2Co 6:2 Hear what God says: "When the time came for me to show you favor, I heard you; when the day arrived for me to save you, I helped you." Listen! This is the hour to receive God's favour; today is the day to be saved!

The Bible also has this warning for those who reject the sacrifice of Jesus:

Heb 2:3 How, then, shall we escape if we pay no attention to such a great salvation? The Lord himself first announced this salvation, and those who heard him proved to us that it is true.

2. The End of Good works

Rom 1:16-17 I am proud of the Good News, because it is **the** power God uses to save everyone who believes—to save the Jews first, and now to save those who are not Jews. The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself. **God's way of making people right begins and ends with faith.** As the Scriptures say, "The one who is right with God by faith will live forever."

Rom 3:28 I mean we are made right with God through faith, not through what we have done to follow the law. This is what we believe.

Eph 2:8-9 I mean that you have been saved by grace because you believed. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God. You are not saved by the things you have done, so there is nothing to boast about.

Remember the promise of Jesus to the criminal hanged on a cross, beside Him (*See page 4*). To those who trust in Christ, God gives the certainty of assurance of Paradise in the afterlife, irrespective of their history or track records. The thief crucified beside Jesus confessed he (the thief) deserved such a punishment but also testified to the innocence of Jesus. This thief had no record of a good life, of being devout or pious, of giving alms or fasting. But his testimony is that he believed in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. He saw beyond the frail and bloody figure of Jesus and saw a God who saves. God saves men as devout as Cornelius and His love chases the worst of us, even hardened criminals if only, we believe and receive the One He sent.

About 80% of the five pillars of Islam rest on the foundation of man's efforts including the Salat, Zakat, Sawm (Fasting), and the Hajj. In the Bible, man's best efforts do not meet God's standards, but are described as filthy rags. To think that God accepts us based either on solely

our good works or even on a combination of our good works and His mercy is to minimise the Holiness of God and exaggerate the depth or import of what men can offer God. Only Jesus could please God and live a full life without blemish, this made Him the perfect atoning sacrifice.

Here are some Islamic thoughts on works:

S/N	Statements	Source
1.	Uthman ibn Affan reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Whoever performs ablution in an excellent manner, his sins will depart from his body even from under his fingernails."	Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 245 (A hadith)
2	"Whoever performs Hajj for God's pleasure and does not have sexual relations with his wife, and does not do evil or sins then he will return (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born anew"	al-Bukhaari (1521)
3	"Whoever fasted the month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith (i.e. belief) hoping for a reward from God, then all his past sins will be forgiven	Hadith 3:231
4	"...Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (small sins). This is a reminder for the mindful (those who accept advice)."	Quran 11:114
5	... if he performs ablution completely and then goes to the mosque with the sole intention of performing the prayer, and nothing urges him to proceed to the mosque except the prayer, then, on every step which he takes towards the mosque, he will be raised one degree or one of his sins will be forgiven...	Saheeh Bukhari
6.	Then, he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy, Will be in a life of good pleasure and satisfaction. But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light - Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit. And what will explain to thee what this is? (It is) a Fire Blazing fiercely!	Surah 101:6-11

You can try to resolve the message of Islam and Christ for yourself. But let God speak to your heart. I am praying for you to see the light.

3. Considering Father Abraham

We might both look to Abraham as our father of faith. Abraham had a life, culture and by extension, religion that he was accustomed to, probably passed on to him from a long line of many generations. But God called out to him, to come out of what he was familiar with, and journey into a path of destiny shaped specifically for him. It was a radical and absolute departure. It was to separate him from the crowd. It was no easy step to take, it was certainly a painful decision, and there was no going back.

Gen 12:1 The LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country and your people. Leave your father's family and go to the country that I will show you.

Isa 51:1 Listen to me, you people who pursue what is right and seek the LORD. Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were dug.

Isa 51:2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: **for I called him alone**, and blessed him, and increased him.

What if through this text, God is calling your heart to a radical departure in the direction of the Light of Christ. Would you be a son of Abraham and say yes to Christ?

Act 17:30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

Act 17:31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Interesting verses from the Quran on Jesus

Maryam 19:33 Peace be upon me the day I was born and the day I will die, and the day I will be raised up alive."

House of Imran 3:55 Sahih International: [Mention] when Allah said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify you from those who disbelieve and **make those who follow you** [in submission to Allah alone] **superior** to those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me is your return, and I will judge between you concerning that in which you used to differ.

4. Wrapping up this section

Job 14:4 Nothing clean can ever come from anything as unclean as human beings.

Job 9:30 No soap can wash away my sins.

Isa 64:6 All of us have been sinful; even our best actions are filthy through and through. Because of our sins we are like leaves that wither and are blown away by the wind.

John 17:2 You gave the Son power over all people so that he could give eternal life to all those you have given to him.

3 And this is eternal life: **that people can know you, the only true God, and that they can know Jesus Christ, the one you sent.**

Mat 11:27 My Father has given me everything, and he is the only one who knows the Son. The only one who truly knows the Father is the Son. But the Son wants to tell others about the Father, so that they can know him too.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and **ye shall find rest unto your souls.**

30 My yoke is easy to bear, and My burden is light.

2Co 5:21 Christ had no sin, but God made him become sin so that in Christ we could be right with God.

In Christ, our search for God comes to rest. This God that man's heart has yearned for through all the ages. This craving for God that man has tried to satisfy through idols and many other things men have created. In Jesus we find rest for our souls, a confident

assurance that we are going to Heaven and more importantly, we find fellowship and oneness with God here on earth.

A call to pray: Jer 29:12-13 Then you will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will search for me, and when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me.

5. Links

I invite you to objectively indulge in engaging the materials exhibited in the following links. For security reasons (yours and mine), please engage this material only in your privacy.

- a. <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/stories/saudi-arabia-180619/>
- b. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMPtcEH6t0g>
- c. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/24/world/middleeast/the-jihadi-who-turned-to-jesus.html>
- d. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnO_YlzwOFk
- e. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/22/world/asia/afghanistan-a-christian-convert-on-the-run.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article®ion=Footer>
- f. <https://www.crosswalk.com/1331609/>
- g. <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/04/19/europe/saudi-arabia-sisters-asylum-georgia-intl/index.html>
- h. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dLiSFn71_Q
- i. <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/02/20/asia/saudi-arabia-sisters-flee-hong-kong-intl/index.html>
- j. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjHuTMGr5II>

1John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.

THE CONCLUSION

Finally,

To refuse to admit that Jesus was the Son of God or Saviour or to reduce Him from Who He says He was and What He came to accomplish, means that one:

- Disregards the Very Words of Jesus.
- Disregards the words of the angels who spoke of His birth and the purpose of His life.
- Dismisses the unity of all the prophecies of the Prophets who spoke from ancient times about the Deity, Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Pays no attention to the Authority of the Bible.
- Disregards the sacrifice and real suffering of Jesus on the Cross for your sins and the sins of the world.
- Means that you trust in your efforts, your good works, for salvation and you choose to have no assurance for Heaven while on Earth because you rely on something else other than the very words and very sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.
- Places his/her faith in the revelation of a prophet who said he had no certainty of his own eternal destiny as juxtaposed with the revelation of One who is still alive and offers the only assurance of eternal life and a vital relationship with God on Earth.

Just looking at the text below, the speaker's identities can be revealed. Only One gives hope, conviction and confident assertion. I invite you to place all your hope in Him.

XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX
John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.	"Then, he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy , Will be in a life of good pleasure and satisfaction. But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light, - Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit. And what will explain to thee what this is? (It is) a Fire Blazing fiercely!" (Qur'an 101:6-11).
John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.	"Say, I am not something original among the messengers, nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me , and I am not but a clear warner." (Qur'an 46:9).
John 6:14 I am the Way, The Truth and The Life. No one comes to the Father unless by me.	By Allah, though I am the Apostle of Allah, yet I do not know what Allah will do to me , By Allah, I will never assert the piety of anyone after him. That made me sad, and when I slept I saw in a dream a flowing stream for 'Uthman bin Maz'un. I went to Allah's Apostle and told him of it. He remarked, "That symbolizes his (good) deeds." (<i>Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 266 Source</i>)
John 11:25 "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies"	
John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.	

The story of Jesus is that God, the unknowable, reveals Himself in a knowable way as the Son of God. This God loves you so much that He came to earth in the person of the Son of God to die for you, rise from the dead, to forgive your sins, to give you the Holy Spirit, to give you the promise of everlasting life in His presence. To discard this is to insist on insulting God's love. The only way that we can know about God is for God to reveal Himself. If you want to know what God is like, read the story of Jesus. This is what the Gospel is about. Amen.