

The Qur'an – Islam's Holy Book

A Special Class on March 29, 2010

Introduction:

- I. Although we noted some reasons for studying the religion of Islam in the first class, for the purpose of review and continuity, we will briefly repeat some of that information.
- II. A study of Islam is very timely in our day.
 - A. Islam is the third largest world religion.
 1. The number of Muslims in the world is estimated to be more than one billion.
 2. Although the act of converting from Islam to another religion is punishable by death under *sharia* law, Islam itself is evangelistic.
 - B. The religion of Islam is growing rapidly.
 1. Population demographics (specifically fertility rates and immigration) suggest that Europe will soon be a Muslim continent.
 2. Islam is rapidly becoming more popular among certain segments of the population of the United States.
 - C. It is difficult to understand many of the current events in the Middle East and even in the West without some knowledge of Islam.
 1. Illustration: The apocalyptic attitude of Iran toward the west is anchored in the history of Islam.
 2. Illustration: The attitude of Islamic nations toward Israel affects events in the Middle East.
 - D. It is good to understand the religion of our neighbors (and more of our neighbors are Muslims than in the past).
 1. We can be more efficient in evangelization if we understand the beliefs of those we are attempting to teach.
 2. We need to avoid “offensive” behavior if we want to continue to have the influence with Muslims necessary to teach them about the Bible (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).
- III. In the first class we observed that Islam should be evaluated by its book rather than its adherents even as Christianity should be evaluated by the Bible rather than by imperfect disciples.¹
- IV. In the final class of this series of studies, we will look at some of the specific teachings of Islam. In this second class, however, we will examine some fundamentals about the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, in order to evaluate its credibility.
 - A. The Qur'an manifests the influence of Jewish fables and traditions upon Muhammad.² The evidence for this claim is extensive and will be presented in the second half of the class.
 - B. We will also be answering such questions as:
 1. What was the origin of the Qur'an?

¹ The Hadith is also recognized as authoritative by most Muslims. A discussion of the Hadith is reserved for the third class.

² Also Mohammed, Muhammed or Mohammad. Different spellings in this document represent variations in the resources used.

2. What is the transmission history of the Qur'an?
3. How does the Qur'an measure up to criteria for an inspired book?

Body:

I. The Qur'an – Some Basic Facts³

- A. The Arabic word *Qur'an* means “reading” or “recitation.” The word *Koran* is a transliteration of that word.
 1. The Qur'an is also known as *Al-Kitab* (the book), *Al-Furqan* (the distinction) and *Al-dikhr* (the warning).
 2. Muslims call the Qur'an the “mother of books.” Muslims view the Qur'an as the final revelation of Allah.
- B. The organization of the Qur'an is different from that of the New Testament of the Bible.
 1. Slightly shorter in length than the New Testament, the Qur'an is not divided into books, but rather by revelations received by Muhammad.
 - a. Each revelation is called a *surah* (“revelation”) and there are 114 surahs (similar to chapters in the Bible).
 - b. The surahs each have titles although the titles are often cryptic.
 - c. Each surah is divided into verses or *ayahs* (“sign”).
 2. The traditional organization of the Qur'an is from the longest revelations to the shortest in length, rather than on a chronological or thematic basis. This is actually almost a reverse order from a chronological viewpoint, since many of the shortest surahs were also the earliest ones.
 3. Although some of the surahs contain materials from both the Mecca and Medina time periods in the life of Muhammad, Muslim scholars typically identify 86 surahs which were produced in Mecca and 28 surahs which were produced in Medina.
- C. The original language of the Qur'an was Arabic.
 1. Although the Qur'an has been translated into other languages, it is claimed by Muslims that the Qur'an can only be truly understood in the original Arabic.
 2. Some English translations of the Qur'an have been “sanitized” by the translator(s) to “soften” the impact of passages which advocate violence or aggression toward unbelievers or “people of the Book.”

II. The Origin of the Qur'an

- A. As suggested in the previous section, the development of the Qur'an is tied to the life of Muhammad.⁴
 1. Early revelations in Mecca (610-615)
 2. Later revelations in Mecca (616-622)
 3. Revelations in Medina (623-632)

³Andrew Roberts, *Night and Day* (Summitville, Indiana: Spiritbuilding Publishing, 2004), p. 23; Ergun Mehmet Caner & Emir Fethi Caner, *Unveiling Islam* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2009), p. 82

⁴ Caner & Caner, p. 84.

- B. According to Muslim sources, through the angel Gabriel, Muhammad received the series of revelations which constitute the Qur'an.
1. "Muslims universally insist that Muhammad was illiterate, i.e., he could not read or write. They maintain that he received nonliterary (i.e., unwritten) revelation from the angel Gabriel from A.D. 610 to near his death in 632, which he then **repeated orally** to his contemporaries (Nasr, 2003, p. 39). He never wrote down any of his revelations himself – a fact confirmed by the Quran itself (*Surah* 6:7; 7:158; 17:93; 25:5; 29:48, 51). The text of the Quran therefore existed initially in a purely oral form as uttered by Muhammad."⁵
 2. Companions of Muhammad were said to have either memorized his revelations as repeated to them or written them down on whatever materials were available to them at the time, including date palm leaves, camel bones, skins, mats, parchments and stones.⁶
- C. Some Muslim scholars claim that all of the surahs were committed to writing prior to Muhammad's death; however, there are conflicting traditions on this point.

III. The Transmission of the Qur'an

- A. Muslims claim that the Qur'an has been preserved in its pure origin form (by the power of Allah), although the Bible has been corrupted by the "people of the Book"
- B. The collection process of the revelations can be briefly summarized as follows:
1. There was a collection of materials during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (632-634).
 - a. Abu Bakr designated Zaid ibn Thabit, Muhammad's amanuensis, as the person to collect the revelations of Muhammad.
 - b. The text collated by Zaid ibn Thabit was given to Hafsa, one of the widows of Muhammad and daughter of Omar, the second caliph.
 2. From the Hadith - the narrative of Zaid ibn Thabit (as related by Sahih Al-Bukhari, Muslim scholar of the 9th and 10th centuries): Abu Bakr As-Siddiq sent for me when the people of Yamama had been killed (i.e., a number of the Prophet's Companions who fought against Musailama). (I went to him) and found 'Umar bin Al-Khattab sitting with him. Abu Bakr then said (to me), "'Umar has come to me and said: 'Casualties were heavy among the Qurra' of the Qur'an (i.e., those who knew the Quran by heart) on the day of the Battle of Yamama, and I am afraid that more heavy casualties may take place among the Qurra' on other battlefields, whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost. Therefore I suggest, you (Abu Bakr) order that the Qur'an be collected.'...Abu Bakr kept on urging me to accept his idea until Allah opened my chest for what He had opened the chests of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. So I started looking for the Qur'an and collecting it from (what was written on) palmed stalks, thin white stones and also from the men who knew it by heart, till I found the last Verse of Surat At-Tauba (Repentance) with Abi Khuzaima Al-Ansari.'" (cited by Miller, p. 142)
- C. In the time of the caliph Uthman, there were a number of versions of the Qur'an. Uthman took the step of standardizing the text and destroyed all other versions.
1. From the Hadith – the narrative of Anas ibn Malik (as related by Sahih Al-Bukhari): Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman came to Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and

⁵ Miller, Dave. The Qur'an Unveiled. Apologetics Press. 2005. P. 138+

⁶ Miller, p. 139; Caner & Caner, p. 85; Roberts, p. 23.

the people of Iraq were waging war to conquer Armenia and Azerbaijan. Hudhayfah was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to Uthman, "O chief of the believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Qur'an) as Jews and the Christians did before." So Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you." Hafsa sent it to Uthman. Uthman then ordered Zayd ibn Thabit, Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, Sa'id ibn al-'As, and Abdur Rahman ibn Harith to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies... They did so, and when they had written many copies, Uthman returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa. Uthman sent to every Muslim province one set of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt." (cited by Miller, p. 143.)

2. "The third caliph, Uthman, in 653, twenty years after Muhammad's death, succeeded in collecting a single Qur'an text with the help of the most knowledgeable experts. This included all texts recognized as being authentic. In particular they tried to distinguish the true revelations from Muhammad's other utterances, which did not originate in the 'heavenly source.' Through the process, in Uthman's time, an authoritative Qur'anic text was established... At that time the Arabic script was not yet fully developed, however. Some letters were easily confused; moreover, vowels were not yet indicated in writing. Those wanting to read the text correctly were dependent on those who had committed it to memory. Among those there was some disagreement as to the correct pronunciation of certain texts. They also differed on the numbering of the verses. Not until 1923 did the famous Islamic University Al-Azhar in Cairo publish a thoroughly examined text, which the leaders hoped would be recognized one day by all Muslims as the sole reading text."⁷

D. Compare this transmission history to that of the New Testament:

1. There were 5,366 manuscripts extant (according to Geisler and Nix, p. 385-7; published in 1986). We have the entire New Testament within 250 years, most of the New Testament within 150 years.
2. There are at least 10,000 copies in the form of versions (most of these are copies of the Latin Vulgate).
3. That makes a total of 15,000+ copies of the New Testament in part or whole.

E. The discipline of textual criticism really cannot be applied to the Qur'an.

IV. **Miracles and Prophecies**

- A. One of the clearest proofs of divine inspiration for the Bible is the verifiable prophecies within it. The ability to determine future events with accuracy is evidence of divine revelation. If Mohammed shows that he is able to foresee future events, he must then have the power of God!
- B. While the number of prophecies in the Qur'an varies depending on the scholar, most prophecies tend to be very similar in nature
- C. To be prophetic, a prophecy must:
 1. Not be self-fulfilling

⁷ Paul Martinson, ed., Islam: An Introduction for Christians, , pp. 25-6.
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- a. I can't make a prophecy stating that I'm going to go to the store tomorrow, then make sure that the prophecy comes to pass. Nor can I "prophecy" that Allen will log onto his computer tomorrow and send an email.
2. Must be written down or documented
 - a. To say, "I predicted that Kansas and Kentucky would be eliminated in the NCAA tournament in 2010" or "The Lord revealed to me that Alabama would win the national championship in 2009" is not prophecy, as it was not documented before the fact.
3. Must be Verified to Occur
 - a. This may seem basic, but did the prophecy really happen in its entirety?

D. Listing the Prophecies

1. **The vast majority of Qur'anic prophecies detail final judgment, telling of divine reward or punishment.**
 - a. Surah 2:23-24: "And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true. But if ye cannot – and of surety ye cannot – then **fear the Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones – which is prepared for those who reject Faith.**" (emphasis added)
 - b. The Bible actually contains a number of these predictions. Mark 16:16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."
 - c. We don't use Mark 16:16 as a proof of the Bible's inspiration; likewise, we cannot use "prophecies" in the Qur'an that tell of judgment at the end of time/life. Both fail the test of being verified to occur, since they tell of events that have not happened yet!
 - d. **These are not verified predictive prophecy.**
2. The most popular prophecy in the Qur'an is Surah 30:2-5. Almost without exception, every book, paper, and Islam apologist list this one when discussing prophecy: "{2} The Roman Empire has been defeated – {3} In a land close by; but they, (even) after (this) defeat of them, will soon be victorious – {4} Within a few years. With Allah is the Decision, in Past and in the Future: on that Day shall the Believers rejoice – {5} With the help of Allah. He helps whom He wills, and He is exalted in Might, Most Merciful."
 - a. Muslims believe that Mohammed gave this prophecy in 615 AD. They believe that the fulfillment occurred in 627 AD when the Byzantines defeated the Persians at Nineveh. Other sources place Rome's complete victory as late as 630 AD
 - b. There are many, many issues with this prophecy.
 - 1) Let's assume that Muslim assumptions are correct here; 627-615 yields a twelve-year gap. Does 12 qualify as "within a few years"?
 - a) No. According to the Al-Baizawi, Mohammed's followers debated over how long it would take for these events to happen; some placed bets. According to the commentary, "Abu-Bakr undertook a bet with Ubai-ibn-Khalaf that this prediction would be fulfilled within three years, but

he was corrected by Mohammed who stated that the 'small number' is between three and nine years.”

- b) Giving every possible concession to the Muslims here, at a minimum, twelve years separate the prophecy from its “fulfillment,” and the “prophet” claimed that it would happen within nine years.
 - 2) This prophecy also fails because the earliest record of this verse being written down is when the Qur’an was finalized in 653 AD, after the prophecy occurred. Giving every concession to Muslims here, the verse may have been written down in 634 AD, in the Hafsah Codex. Still, this is after the event. Additionally, the Hafsah Codex was destroyed by Muslims in 667 AD.
 - 3) The Romans (or Byzantines) were the world power of Mohammed’s day. Everyone expected them to defeat the Persians.
3. Surah 15:9 and Surah 41:42 both refer to the incorruptible nature of the Qur’an.
- a. Surah 15:9 “We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).”
 - b. Surah 41:42 “No falsehood can approach it [the Message –jwh] from before or behind it; it is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise.”
 - c. These statements are not predictive prophecy; instead, they are assertions of what Muslims believe to be facts.
4. Not only does the Qur’an fail to provide fully predictive prophecy, but it fails in many of its predictions. For example, Surah 59:14.
- a. Surah 59:11-15 “Hast thou not observed the Hypocrites say to their misbelieving brethren among the People of the Book? - "If ye are expelled, we too will go out with you, and we will never hearken to any one in your affair; and if ye are attacked (in fight) we will help you". But Allah is witness that they are indeed liars. {12} If they are expelled, never will they go out with them; and if they are attacked (in fight), they will never help them; and if they do help them, they will turn their backs; so they will receive no help. {13} Of a truth ye are stronger (than they) because of the terror in their hearts, (sent) by Allah. This is because they are men devoid of understanding. {14} **They will not fight you (even) together, except in fortified townships, or from behind walls. Strong is their fighting (spirit) amongst themselves:** thou wouldst think they were united, but their hearts are divided: that is because they are a people devoid of wisdom. {15} Like those who lately preceded them, they have tasted the evil result of their conduct; and (in the Hereafter there is) for them a grievous Penalty;“
 - b. Note the definitive nature of this prophecy. “Never” would the Jews (I believe in this case, Mohammed is speaking of the Jews) war with the Muslims. “Never” would allies help them.
 - c. Mohammed must not have known about the 20th Century, when Jews would unite to defeat united Islamic nations!
- E. The Quran identifies Mohammed as a prophet of Allah, but actively rebukes those that ask for a sign.⁸ **Why are there so few miracles in the Qur’an?**
1. Mohammed is a warner, not a miracle worker.

⁸ <http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/Ask/proofs.html>

- a. Surah 13:7: “And the Unbelievers say: ‘Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?’ But thou art truly a warner, and to every people a guide.”
2. Mohammed is considered a “warner,” a special prophet. Signs are treated as perfunctory and outside of Mohammed's role.
 - a. Surah 2:118-119: “Say those without knowledge: ‘Why speaketh not Allah unto us? or why cometh not unto us a Sign?’ So said the people before them words of similar import. Their hearts are alike. We have indeed made clear the Signs unto any people who hold firmly to Faith (in their hearts). Verily We have sent thee in truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner: But of thee no question shall be asked of the Companions of the Blazing Fire.”
3. Non-believers would treat the signs as fake anyways.
 - a. Surah 17:58-59: “There is not a population but We shall destroy it before the Day of Judgment or punish it with a dreadful Penalty: that is written in the (eternal) Record. And We refrain from sending the signs, only because the men of former generations treated them as false: We sent the she-camel to the Thamud to open their eyes, but they treated her wrongfully: We only send the Signs by way of terror (and warning from evil).”
 - 1) The stories of the “she-camels” are scattered throughout the Quran and Hadiths. They seem to appear miraculously from time to time.⁹
 - 2) Ibn Kathir (2006) recounts the story of Thamud, who requested that a camel appear from a stone. The tribe did not respect the sign (there was a rich vs. poor class war going on), and the rich hamstrung the camel.¹⁰ They were killed in an earthquake for disrespecting the sign. (Surah 7:73-78)
 - b. Surah 6:37 “They say: 'Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?' Say: '(Allah) hath certainly power to send down a sign: but most of them understand not.’”
4. It's Allah's will.
 - a. Surah 6:124 “When there comes to them a sign (from Allah., They say: 'We shall not believe until we receive one (exactly) like those received by Allah's apostles.' Allah knoweth best where (and how) to carry out His mission. Soon will the wicked be overtaken by humiliation before Allah, and a severe punishment, for all their plots.”

F. The Splitting of the Moon

1. The Quran identifies the splitting of the moon as a sign in Surah 54:1-3. “The Hour (of Judgment) is nigh, and the moon is cleft asunder. But if they see a Sign, they turn away, and say, 'This is (but) transient magic.' They reject (the warning) and follow their (own) lusts but every matter has its appointed time.”
2. A number of Hadiths report that the moon was split in two, becoming two separate pieces, then came back together.
3. Islamic Proofs that the Moon Split In Two

⁹ http://www.readingislam.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1123996016718&pagename=IslamOnline-English-About_Islam%2FAskAboutIslamE%2FAskAboutIslamE

¹⁰ <http://www.theholybook.org/content/view/7163/2/>

- a. Muslims often point to fault lines in the moon as locations where the moon was split in two. Faults in the moon are believed to be caused by moonquakes (a discovery made by Apollo astronauts from seismometers placed between 1969 and 1974), or may simply be long ridges or drop offs in the surface. One such fault line is the “Straight Wall.”
- b. Another attempt to force this miracle is the belief that King Cheraman Perumal witnessed the event and converted to Islam; however, this story has its roots in 16th century folklore and tradition.
- c. Finally, some Muslims try to force this miracle by claiming that the astronauts who brought back moon rocks in 1969 “split the moon.” This is one of the most outlandish attempts to force what some Muslims believe to be prophecy. It’s the equivalent of saying that taking some sand from the beach is “splitting the beaches of the earth.”

V. Influence of the Jews¹¹

- A. Recall Mohammed’s work life. His merchant business was based in heavily Jewish and Pagan areas. Many of the stories he heard from Jewish merchants would stick with him.
- B. An inspired book will undoubtedly have many things in common with secular sources in history. Uninspired books often say things that are true, and there is no problem with them being quoted by an inspired book. The issue here isn’t whether or not the Qur’an was plagiarized; rather, the issue is whether or not the Qur’an’s reliance on Judaism can prove human (rather than divine) origins.
- C. Medina had a sizeable Jewish community prior to Mohammed’s revelations. In the sixth and seventh centuries, the Jews of the area relied on oral storytelling, and the brand of Judaism that Mohammed was exposed to in Medina was a corrupt one. At this time, the Jews incorporated stories known to be uninspired. These fables and folklore were popular in the area, and made great stories to pass the time in Medina.
- D. The theory here is that, since Mohammed did not have much contact with the Bible (and rather, had great amounts of contact with Jewish folklore), Mohammed would assume the stories he heard were Biblical.
- E. The Story of Abraham and the Idols
 1. Surah 21:51-71:
 We bestowed aforetime on Abraham his rectitude of conduct, and well were We acquainted with him. {52} Behold! he said to his father and his people, “What are these images, to which ye are (so assiduously) devoted?” {53} They said, “We found our fathers worshipping them.” {54} He said, “Indeed ye have been in manifest error - ye and your fathers.” {55} They said, “Have you brought us the Truth, or are you one of those who jest?” {56} He said, "Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He Who created them (from nothing): and I am a witness to this (Truth). 57. "And by Allah, I have a plan for your idols - after ye go away and turn your backs" {58} So he broke them to pieces, (all) but the biggest of them, that they might turn (and address themselves) to it. {59} They said, "Who has done this to our gods? He must indeed be some man of impiety!" {60} They said, "We heard a youth talk of them: He is called Abraham." {61} They said, "Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness." {62} They said, "Art thou the one that did this

¹¹ Miller, Dave. The Qur’an Unveiled. Apologetics Press. 2005. Pp 73+.
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with our gods, O Abraham?" {63} He said: "Nay, this was done by - this is their biggest one! ask them, if they can speak intelligently!" {64} So they turned to themselves and said, "Surely ye are the ones in the wrong!" {65} Then were they confounded with shame: (they said), "Thou knowest full well that these (idols) do not speak!" {66} (Abraham) said, "Do ye then worship, besides Allah, things that can neither be of any good to you nor do you harm? {67} "Fie upon you, and upon the things that ye worship besides Allah. Have ye no sense?" {68} They said, "Burn him and protect your gods, If ye do (anything at all)!" {69} We said, "O Fire! be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!" {70} Then they sought a stratagem against him: but We made them the ones that lost most! {71} But We delivered him and (his nephew) Lut (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for the nations.

2. Midrash Breishit Rabbah 38:13:

And Haran died in front of Terach his father. R. Hiyya the grandson of R. Ada of Yafo [said]: Terach was an idolater. One day he went out somewhere, and put Avraham in charge of selling [the idols]. When a man would come who wanted to purchase, he would say to him: "How old are you"? [The customer] would answer: "Fifty or sixty years old". [Avraham] would say: "Woe to the man who is sixty years old And desires to worship something one day old." [The customer] would be ashamed and leave. One day a woman came, carrying in her hand a basket of fine flour. She said: "Here, offer it before them." Abraham siezed a stick, And smashed all the idols, And placed the stick in the hand of the biggest of them. When his father came, he said to him: "Who did this to them"? [Avraham] said:, "Would I hide anything from my father? a woman came, carrying in her hand a basket of fine flour. She said: "Here, offer it before them." When I offered it, one god said: "I will eat first," And another said, "No, I will eat first." Then the biggest of them rose up and smashed all the others. [His father] said:, "Are you making fun of me? Do they know anything?" [Avraham] answered: Shall your ears not hear what your mouth is saying? He took [Avraham] and handed him over to Nimrod. [Nimrod] said to him: "Let us worship the fire". [Avraham said to him: "If so, let us worship the water which extinguishes the fire." [Nimrod] said to him: "Let us worship the water". [Avraham said to him: "If so, let us worship the clouds which bear the water." [Nimrod] said to him: "Let us worship the clouds". [Avraham said to him: "If so, let us worship the wind which scatters the clouds." [Nimrod] said to him: "Let us worship the wind". [Avraham said to him: "If so, let us worship man who withstands the wind." [Nimrod] said to him: "You are speaking nonsense; I only bow to the fire. "I will throw you into it. "Let the G-d to Whom you bow come and save you from it." Haran was there. He said [to himself] Either way; If Avraham is successful, I will say that I am with Avraham; If Nimrod is successful, I will say that I am with Nimrod. Once Avraham went into the furnace and was saved, They asked [Haran]: "With which one are you [allied]"? He said to them: "I am with Avraham." They took him and threw him into the fire and his bowels were burned out. He came out and died in front of Terach his father. This is the meaning of the verse: And Haran died in front of Terach.

3. This story originated in the 2nd century, created by Rabbi Hiyya. There are many common themes not included in Jewish or Christian literature.

- a. Abraham's father once went away somewhere and left Abraham
- b. Abraham breaks all the idols except the biggest
- c. "When his father returned he demanded, 'What have you done to them?'"

- d. Abraham claims: "Thereupon the largest arose, took the stick, and broke them
 - e. Abraham is seized and delivered up for judgement.
 - f. Abraham is saved from the fire.
4. As with many fables, they base themselves on pieces of truth.
- a. Joshua 24:2 "And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: '**Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham** and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they **served other gods.**'"

F. The Life of Joseph

1. Was Joseph sent to check on his brothers, or requested by his brothers? What was the purpose of this trip away from home?
 - a. Genesis 37:14 "Then he [Israel/Jacob –jwh] said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.
 - b. Surah 12:11-12 "They said: 'O our father! why dost thou not trust us with Joseph,- seeing we are indeed his sincere well-wishers? Send him with us tomorrow to **enjoy himself and play**, and we shall take every care of him.'"
 - c. Midrash Breishit Rabbah 84:8-10; Mishle 26:99 "Once the brethren of Joseph led their father's flocks to the pasture of Shechem, and they intended to **take their ease and pleasure there**"
2. What wild beast did Joseph's brothers say devoured him?
 - a. Genesis 37:20 "Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!
 - b. Surah 12:13-17
(Jacob) said: "Really it saddens me that ye should take him away: I fear lest the **wolf** should devour him while ye attend not to him." {14} They said: "If the **wolf** were to devour him while we are (so large) a party, then should we indeed (first) have perished ourselves!" {15} So they did take him away, and they all agreed to throw him down to the bottom of the well: and We put into his heart (this Message): 'Of a surety thou shalt (one day) tell them the truth of this their affair while they know (thee) not' {16} Then they came to their father in the early part of the night, weeping. {17} They said: "O our father! We went racing with one another, and left Joseph with our things; and the **wolf** devoured him.... But thou wilt never believe us even though we tell the truth."
 - c. Yashar Wayesheb 85a-b
The sons of Jacob set out on the morrow to do the bidding of their father, while he remained at home and wept and lamented for Joseph. In the wilderness they found a **wolf**, which they caught and brought to Jacob alive, saying: "Here is the first wild beast we encountered, and we have brought it to thee. But of thy son's corpse we saw not a trace." Jacob seized the **wolf**, and amid loud weeping, he addressed these words to him: "Why didst thou devour my son Joseph....?" To grant consolation to Jacob, God opened the mouth of the beast, and he spake: "As the Lord liveth, who hath created me, and as thy soul liveth, my lord, I have not

seen thy son, and I did not rend him in pieces..." Astonished at the speech of the **wolf**, Jacob let him go, unhindered, whithersoever he would, but he mourned his son Joseph as before."

3. There are many details of Joseph's life that are based on Jewish folklore. For brevity's sake, only one more will be listed. This one's a key detail, as the only way to understand the details of the Qur'an is to know the Jewish legend behind it! This is the story of Potiphar's wife:

- a. Surah 12:23-35

23. But she in whose house he was, sought to seduce him from his (true) self: she fastened the doors, and said: "Now come, thou (dear one)!" He said: "(Allah) forbid! truly (thy husband) is my lord! he made my sojourn agreeable! truly to no good come those who do wrong!"

24. And (with passion) did she desire him, **and he would have desired her, but that he saw the evidence of his Lord**: thus (did We order) that We might turn away from him (all) evil and shameful deeds: for he was one of Our servants, sincere and purified.

25. So they both raced each other to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back: they both found her lord near the door. She said: "What is the (fitting) punishment for one who formed an evil design against thy wife, but prison or a grievous chastisement?"

26. He said: "It was she that sought to seduce me - from my (true) self." And one of her household saw (this) and bore witness, (thus):- "If it be that his shirt is rent from the front, then is her tale true, and he is a liar!

27. "But if it be that his shirt is torn from the back, then is she the liar, and he is telling the truth!"

28. So when he saw his shirt,- that it was torn at the back,- (her husband) said: "Behold! It is a snare of you women! truly, mighty is your snare!

29. "O Joseph, pass this over! (O wife), ask forgiveness for thy sin, for truly thou hast been at fault!"

30. Ladies said in the City: "The wife of the (great) 'Aziz is seeking to seduce her slave from his (true) self: Truly hath he inspired her with violent love: we see she is evidently going astray."

31. When she heard of their malicious talk, she sent for them and prepared a banquet for them: **she gave each of them a knife**: and she said (to Joseph), "Come out before them." **When they saw him, they did extol him, and (in their amazement) cut their hands**: they said, "(Allah) preserve us! no mortal is this! this is none other than a noble angel!"

32. She said: "There before you is the man about whom ye did blame me! I did seek to seduce him from his (true) self but he did firmly save himself guiltless!....and now, if he doth not my bidding, he shall certainly be cast into prison, and (what is more) be of the company of the vilest!"

33. He said: "O my Lord! the prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me: Unless Thou turn away their snare from me, I should (in my youthful folly) feel inclined towards them and join the ranks of the ignorant."

34. So his Lord hearkened to him (in his prayer), and turned away from him their snare: Verily He heareth and knoweth (all things).

35. Then it occurred to the men, after they had seen the signs, (that it was best) to imprison him for a time.

- b. There are many details that coincide with the Rabbinical legends, but I've outlined two details above that are especially confusing to Muslim readers.
 - 1) Joseph nearly gave in to temptation, but saw "the evidence of his Lord."
 - a) The Rabbinical stories tell us that Joseph saw a vision of Raehel, Leah, and Jacob. This vision brought Joseph to his senses.
 - 2) Why would Potiphar's wife's friends be given knives, and what are they doing cutting themselves?!?!
 - a) The Rabbinical legends reveal that Zuleika (the name given to Potiphar's wife) presented a banquet to her guests, and gave them knives to peel oranges with. When Joseph appeared, the guests could not take their eyes off him, and cut themselves while peeling the oranges.

G. So, what's the point?

- 1. Mohammed's stories here are indicative of someone who heard folklore, fables, and other oral stories. These stories are not the type that would be revealed by divine revelation.
- 2. If you decide to read Surah 12 in its entirety, you're going to notice something very serious – a lack of detail. Only the major characters are named. Joseph's brothers are merely "his brothers." The butler and baker become "young men." The Midianites and Ishmaelites are merely a "caravan." Benjamin becomes, "a brother from of yours from your father." Potiphar's wife is, "the ruler's wife." The only location mentioned is Egypt. Contrast this to the striking detail of the Biblical account, giving the names (with the exception of Potiphar's wife), locations, and amazing details. Even alternate names (Zaphnath-Paaneah) are given!
- 3. **Mohammed's stories are exactly what you would expect from someone who borrowed from oral folklore: omitting names and details when attempting to recall them from memory.**

VI. Qur'anic Contradictions

A. The Qur'an and Science

- 1. Surah 86:6-7 describe semen as coming from "between the backbone and the ribs" when we now know that the testicles are the site of semen production. "He is created from a drop emitted- Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs"
- 2. Surah 51:49 says that all living things come in pairs: "And of every thing We have created pairs: That ye may receive instruction." This seems to ignore organisms that reproduce without genetic exchange.

B. The Qur'an and History

- 1. Dirhams (type of coinage) did not exist in the time of Joseph; they were popular in Arabic countries during the time of Mohammed. Surah 12:20: "The (Brethren) sold him for a miserable price, for a few dirhams counted out: in such low estimation did they hold him!"

2. The Samaritans date as far back as 722 BC¹², but in Surah 20, it is a Samaritan that makes the golden calf the Israelites worship.
3. Surah 5:20 “Remember Moses said to his people: ‘O my people! Call in remembrance the favour of Allah unto you, when He produced prophets among you, **made you kings**, and gave you what He had not given to any other among the peoples.’” Israel’s first king, Saul, was appointed hundreds of years after Moses.

C. The Qur’an and The Qur’an

1. Recall from the first lesson the command to make peace with... er... cancel all treaties with unbelievers. Most Muslims believe that the latest revelation is the one to go by. This is called naskh.
2. However, the principle of naskh is difficult to use when a surah contradicts itself! Surah 4:11-12,176 detail inheritance laws.
 11. Allah (thus) directs you as regards your Children's (Inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is a half. For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; if no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased Left brothers (or sisters) the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all cases ('s) after the payment of legacies and debts. Ye know not whether your parents or your children are nearest to you in benefit. These are settled portions ordained by Allah. and Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.
 12. In what your wives leave, your share is a half, if they leave no child; but if they leave a child, ye get a fourth; after payment of legacies and debts. In what ye leave, their share is a fourth, if ye leave no child; but if ye leave a child, they get an eighth; after payment of legacies and debts. If the man or woman whose inheritance is in question, has left neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left a brother or a sister, each one of the two gets a sixth; but if more than two, they share in a third; after payment of legacies and debts; so that no loss is caused (to any one). Thus is it ordained by Allah. and Allah is All-knowing, Most Forbearing.

...

176. They ask thee for a legal decision. Say: Allah directs (thus) about those who leave no descendants or ascendants as heirs. If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child, she shall have half the inheritance: If (such a deceased was) a woman, who left no child, Her brother takes her inheritance: If there are two sisters, they shall have two-thirds of the inheritance (between them): if there are brothers and sisters, (they share), the male having twice the share of the female. Thus doth Allah make clear to you (His law), lest ye err. And Allah hath knowledge of all things.

 - a. Suppose a man dies leaving behind at least two daughters, his parents, and a wife. According to verse 11, the daughters receive 2/3 of the inheritance. Verse 11 also states that each parent receives a 1/6 share of the inheritance (i.e.: together they receive 1/3 of the inheritance). Verse 12 then states that the wife receives a 1/8 inheritance after payment of legacies and debts.
 Uh oh – 2/3 (daughters) + 1/6 (mother) + 1/6 (father) + 1/8 (wife) exceeds 100%!
 - b. There are many, many possibilities where more than 100% of the deceased’s wealth must be divided up.

¹² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaritan>
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VII. **Conclusion**

- A. The transmission history of the Qur'an doesn't permit an objective analysis of the accuracy of its transmission.
- B. Mohammed's lack of fulfilled prophecy, combined with evidence for unfulfilled prophecies, indicate that he is not divinely inspired.
- C. Mohammed's reliance on Jewish folklore indicates a misunderstanding of stories we have in the Bible.
- D. The contradictions in the Qur'an are numerous. Naskh, or the concept that the latest prophecy trumps all previous ones, cannot account for all the internal contradictions.
- E. Therefore, Mohammed and the Qur'an are not from God.

This outline is a collaborative effort of Jonathan Hood and Allen Dvorak (March, 2010).