

# A Christian Defense of the Gospel to the Muslims

[Sam Shamoun](#)

---

Throughout the course of this study, the object will be to give a rational and loving defense of the Gospel (1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Acts 9:22, 29; 17:2-3, 19; 18:24-28; Philippians 1:7, 16; Titus 1:6-9). Apologetics is often a neglected aspect of Muslim evangelism, and yet it is perhaps one of the most important.

The general Muslim opinion about Christianity is that it is both irrational and indefensible. Doctrines such as the Trinity, the Deity of Jesus Christ, Original Sin, and Jesus' vicarious death are viewed as illogical and absurd. The idea that God would actually become a man to die for sinners who are under condemnation due mainly to Adam's sin, a sin which they had no part in, is logically inconceivable for Muslims.

This makes it binding on the Christian to first know what he believes and why he believes it, as well as being able to present the biblical evidence to support such beliefs.

We will break down the study in four parts and cover the arguments used by Muslims in relation to each of the four sections. From there we will give a concise reply to the major arguments used against Christianity. This must be done in prayer and sincere Christian love in order that God might grant repentance to those Muslims who are sincerely seeking for the truth. The four sections include:

- [The Nature Of God](#)
  - [The Plan Of Salvation](#)
  - [The Person Of Jesus](#)
  - [The Authority Of The Bible](#)
- 

## 1. THE NATURE OF GOD

### *Muslim Argument:*

Christians believe that God is a Trinity. Yet, nowhere do we find the Trinity taught in the Bible. The clear biblical witness is that God is absolutely one, having no plurality (Cf. Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 6:4; Psalm 86:10; Isaiah 43:10; 44:6, 8; 45:5-6, 18, 21-22; 46:9).

### **Christian Response:**

In fact, both Jesus and Paul taught that God is absolutely one (Cf. Mark 12:29-30; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6a; 1 Timothy 2:5).

The Trinity entails the belief in only one God. Christians do not worship three Gods. Therefore biblical references indicating that there is only one God affirms, rather than denying, the Trinitarian belief.

The Bible teaches that although there is only one God, there are three Persons addressed as God: The Father (1 Peter 1:2), the Son (Matthew 1:23; John 20:28; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4).

(Note: Jesus in John 17:3 refers to the Father as the only true God. This point needs further clarification since it seems to imply that Jesus is denying that he is truly God as well. It must be remembered that Christ at the Incarnation became a real human being without ceasing to be divine. As the God-man, the Father became his God. Therefore, we would expect Jesus to refer to his Father as the true God, since the Father cannot possibly be a false God.)

### **Muslim Argument:**

The New Testament contradicts the Old Testament, since in the Old no mention is made of a plurality of Persons who are God.

### **Christian Response:**

The Old Testament does in fact affirm the plurality of the Godhead in several places:

1. It addresses God with plural pronouns. (Cf. Gen.1:26-27, 3:22, 11:7; Isa. 6:8) This cannot simply be a plural of majesty, a majestic form of address, since biblical Hebrew did not have this linguistic feature.
2. It clearly refers to more than one Person in the Godhead (Cf. Gen. 19:24; Proverbs 30:4; Isa. 48:12-16; Zechariah 2:7-11, 3:1-2).
3. It refers to the Angel of Jehovah as being both distinct from God and fully God at the same time. (Cf. Gen. 31:10-13-cf.- 28:10-19; Exodus 3:1-4, 13-14; 23:20-22; Judges 2:1-5). (Note- The Bible denies the worship of angels and angels never refer to themselves as God [Cf. Col. 2:18; Revelation 19:9-10, 22:8-9]. This strongly supports the fact that this specific Angel was not just simply God's representative, but OT appearances of the preincarnate Christ)
4. It attributes the work of creation to the Spirit of God (Cf. Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13, 33:4; Psalm 104:30)
5. When referring to the unity of God in Deuteronomy 6:4, Moses used the Hebrew *echad*: *Shema Yisrael, Yahweh Elohenu Yahweh Echad- Hear O Israel, the LORD our God the LORD is One.*  
The term, *echad*, is used to show a plurality within unity as in Gen. 1:3, 2:24 and Jeremiah 32:38-39. Had Moses wanted to imply the absolute singularity of the Godhead he could have easily used the Hebrew *yachid* as in Gen. 22:2. There, Isaac is called Abraham's *only* Son.

### **Muslim Argument:**

If the Old Testament does teach the plurality of God, then how is it that the Jews who have studied it for all these centuries never came to the conclusion that God is a Trinity?

### **Christian Response:**

Whether the Jews have come to realize that the Old Testament teaches the fact of the Trinity is irrelevant. What is relevant is if whether the OT supports the Trinity, which we have proven that it does.

Furthermore, it is not entirely true that Jews have not embraced the teaching of the Trinity. Throughout the ages, thousands of Jews have embraced the reality that God is a tri-Personal Being, as opposed to being uni-Personal.

In fact, there are thousands of messianic Jews today, Jews who both believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that God is a Triune Being.

---

## **2. THE PERSON OF CHRIST**

### **Muslim Argument:**

There is no clear biblical reference from the lips of Jesus claiming to be God. In fact, nowhere in the Bible does Jesus teach anyone to worship him. Instead he commands that one should worship God (Cf. Mat. 4:10).

### **Christian Response:**

There is a very good reason why Jesus did not just come out right away and proclaim that he was God. Noted New Testament Scholar and Catholic Theologian, Raymond E. Brown states it best:

“The question concerns Jesus a Galilean Jew of the first third of the first century, for whom ‘God’ would have a meaning specified by his background and the theological language of the time. By way of simplification (and perhaps oversimplification) let me say that I think by a Jew of that period ‘God’ would have been thought of as One dwelling in the heavens- among many attributes. Therefore, a question posed to Jesus on earth, ‘Do you think you are God?’ would mean did he think he was the One dwelling in heaven. And you can see that would have been an inappropriate question, since Jesus was visibly on earth. As a matter of fact the question was never asked of him; at most he was asked about his relationship to God.” (Brown, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible* [Mahwah, N.J.; Paulist Press, 1990], p.98)

Therefore, for Jesus to say that he was God without qualification would have meant that Jesus was claiming to be the same person commonly referred to by both Jews and Christians as the

Father. Yet, Jesus was not the same person as the Father, but was distinct from him, sharing the same essence and nature equally. Brown notes:

“... I would say that by that time (i.e. the last decade of the first century), under the impact of their quest to understand Jesus, Christians had in a certain sense expanded the meaning of the word ‘God.’ It no longer for them simply covered the Father in heaven; it covered the Son on earth. They had come to realize that Jesus was so intimately related to God, so filled with God’s presence, that the term God was applicable to him as it was to the Father in heaven. May I emphasize that this does not involve a change in Jesus; it involves a change and growth in the Christian perception of who he was.” (Op. Cit.)

That Brown does not mean to say that it was Jesus’ followers, and not Jesus himself, who came to realize that he was God, is clear from his following statement:

“Did Jesus have an identity which his followers later came to understand in terms of his being God? If he was God (and most Christians do agree on that), did *he* know who he was? I think the simplest answer to that question is yes.” (Ibid., p. 99)

Hence, once Jesus had clearly affirmed the distinction between the Father and himself the term “God” came to be understood as a reference not just to a specific person, but to all the Persons of the Godhead. Once this qualification had been made clear, Jesus went on to make divine claims. Some claims include the following:

1. Jesus claims to be the Lord of the Sabbath, which to the Jews would have been a claim of being Yahweh God. (Cf. Mat. 12:8; Leviticus 23:3)
2. Jesus clearly refers to himself as God to the Gadarene demoniac (Cf. Luke 8:38-39)
3. Jesus claims to be Almighty in Revelation 1:7-8.
4. Jesus applies titles of God to himself, such as
  - a. First and the Last. (Cf. Isa. 48:12; Rev. 1:17-18, 22:12-13, 20)
  - b. I AM. (Cf. Isa. 48:12; John 8:58, 18:4-6)
5. Jesus forgives sins and heals, something which Yahweh does. (Cf. Mark 2:1-12; Psalm 103:3)
6. Jesus is the Source of Life and the Resurrection. (Cf. John 5:25, 28-29; 10:27; 11:25-26)
7. Jesus is to receive the same exact honor that the Father receives, which includes praying to him. In fact, to praise Jesus is to praise Yahweh. (Cf. Mat. 21:14-18-cf.- Ps. 8:2; John 5:22-23, 14:13-14)
8. Jesus is Omnipresent. (Cf. Mat. 18:20, 28:20; John 1:44-49; 14:21, 23; Ephesians 1:23, 4:10)
9. Jesus is Omniscient. (Cf. Mat. 11:27; John 16:30, 21:17; Rev. 2:23b- Jer. 17:10)

10. Jesus will judge all nations. (Cf. Mat. 25:31-33- Ezekiel 34:17; Rev.22:12- Isa. 40:10)

This list conclusively proves that Jesus both knew and claimed that he was God.

(Note: Muslims will often point to the fact that there is no place in the New Testament where Jesus says “I am God,” or “worship me.” When this point is brought out, indicate to the Muslim that by the same token nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus ever say “I am not God,” or “do not worship me”. Nor was Jesus ever commanded to say, much like Muhammad in the Quran, that he was only a human messenger [cf. S. 3:144; 17:93; 18:110]. Furthermore, neither does the Father in the New Testament ever say, “I am God,” and/or “worship me.” Using this logic we would be forced to conclude that the Father is not God as well. Point out to the Muslim that s/he is simply arguing from silence which is nothing more than a logical fallacy since absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, i.e. just because the NT doesn’t record Jesus saying that he is God in those exact words doesn’t mean that he never did say it.)

### **Muslim Argument:**

According to the Bible, Jesus cannot be the Messiah since Matthew’s genealogy lists him as a descendant of cursed Jehoiachin.(Mat. 1:11-16) In Jeremiah 22:24-30, God says of Jehoiachin:

“‘As surely as I live,’ declares the LORD, ‘even if you, Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off. I will hand you over to those who seek your life, those you fear- to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to the Babylonians. I will hurl you and the mother who gave you birth into another country, where neither of you was born, and there you both will die. You will never come back to the land you long to return to,’

“Is this man Jehoiachin a despised, broken pot, an object no one wants? Why will he and his children be hurled out, cast into a land they do not know? O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says: ‘Record this man as childless, *a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah.*’”

If Matthew’s genealogy is correct, then Jesus cannot be a legitimate King of Israel nor the Messiah of God.

### **Christian Response:**

It must be stated that the scriptures clearly teach that God’s decree of judgement is not always final since God often allows time for repentance to occur since his desire is for none to perish:

“Say to them, ‘As surely as I live declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?’” Ezekiel 33:11

In relation to God reversing a decision he has made due to man’s actions we read in Jeremiah 18:7-10:

“If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warn repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.

And if at another time I announce that a nation and kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to for it.”  
NIV

An example of God reversing his decision due to a nation or individual’s action after hearing the prophetic warning is Ninevah. According to Jonah 3:4 God had declared that the city would be destroyed forty days after the prophet’s warning. But according to Jonah 3:10 we are told that after “God saw what they (the Assyrians) did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.”

Evidently, we find this to be the case with Jehoiachin who obviously had repented since we find certain aspects of the curse reversed. For instance, one stipulation of the curse was that neither he nor his offspring would prosper and yet we find him prospering at the hands of Evil-Merodach king of Babylon:

“In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month. He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king’s table. Day by day the king gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived, till the day of his death.” Jeremiah 52:31-34

Furthermore, we find his descendant Zerubbabel prospering in the hands of God, being commissioned by the Lord to rebuild his house:

“‘On that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,’ declares the LORD Almighty.” Haggai 2:23 NIV

These factors strongly support the fact that Jehoiachin had repented which moved God reversed the curse upon him. This is not simply a Christian view but one endorsed by orthodox rabbinic Judaism as well. **Sanhedrin 37b-38a** states:

“R. Johanan said: Exile atones for everything, for it is written, ‘Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling, anymore in Judah.’ Whereas after he[the king] was exiled, it is written, ‘And the sons of Jeconiah,’ - ‘the same is Asir, Shealtiel his son etc.’ (1) [He was called] Asir, because his mother conceived him in prison. Shealtiel, because God did not plant him in the way that others are planted. We know by tradition that a woman cannot conceive in a standing position, [yet she] did conceive standing. Another interpretation: Shealtiel, because God ordained [of the heavenly court] *absolution from his oath*.(2)”

The Soncino Talmud’s footnotes state:

(1) I Chr. III, 17 notwithstanding the curse that he should be childless, and not prosper, after being exiled *he was forgiven*.

(2) Which he had made (ed.-the oath), to punish Jeconiah with childlessness.

According to **Pesikta de-Rab Kahana**, God states “*I accepted the repentance of Jeconiah: Shall I not accept your repentance?...*”

Finally, the **Jewish Encyclopedia** records:

“Jehoiachin’s sad experiences changed his nature entirely, as he repented of the sins which he had committed as king *he was pardoned by God, who revoked the decree to the effect that none of his descendants should ever become king... he even became the ancestor of the Messiah* (Tan, Toledot, 20 [ed. Buber, I. 140] emphasis ours)

### **Muslim Argument:**

Jesus cannot be God since he made false predictions. In Matthew 10:23 Jesus says to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” The disciples went through the cities of Israel and Jesus still has not returned.

The second false prediction is found in Matthew 16:28 where Jesus states, “I tell you the truth some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” The disciples have all died and Jesus has not come into his kingdom.

Finally, Jesus states in Matthew 24:34 his generation would not pass away until the fulfillment of all the prophecies leading to his second coming had occurred.

### **Christian Response:**

There are no false predictions, but a misunderstanding of Jesus’ words. Firstly, Jesus’ saying “before the Son of Man comes” is not a reference to his second coming, but to his being reunited with his disciples after their evangelistic outreach. This becomes evident from Matthew 11:1 where it states that “after Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.”

Hence, Jesus had departed into Galilee while the disciples were traveling throughout the towns of Israel. Afterwards, Jesus met up with the disciples where “they reported to him all they had done and taught.” (Mark 6:30)

In regards to Matthew 16:28, Jesus was referring to the visible manifestation of his kingdom, where he would appear in glory and power. Jesus was promising his disciples that some of them would get a foretaste of how Jesus would appear at his return, where his second coming is to be accompanied by the proclamation of the two witnesses which scripture indicates must come before Christ. (Cf. Malachi 4:5; Rev. 11:1-12) This understanding becomes evident from Mark’s account:

“And he said to them, `I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God *come with power.*” Mark 9:1

The fulfillment of this promise took place shortly afterwards:

“After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.” Matthew 17:1-3

Hence, Jesus did appear in kingly power and glory alongside the two witnesses, fulfilling his promise to the disciples.

In relation to Matthew 24:34, there are two possible responses. First, the term “generation” is the Greek *geneous*, a synonym of *genes* which means race. Hence, the race of Jews whom Jesus was addressing would not pass away until the culmination of the age. Secondly, Jesus may not have been referring to his generation per se, but the generation that would witness the signs that Christ predicted would occur before his second coming. (Cf. Mat. 24:15-33)

### **Muslim Argument:**

According to Mark Jesus cursed a fig tree for not having figs on it, even though “it was not the season for figs” (Mark 11:12-14). If Jesus is God, did he not know that it wasn’t season for figs, and if so why would he curse it?

### **Christian Response:**

There are three responses. Firstly, Jesus in his divine consciousness knows all things (Cf. John 21:17), and because of this fact he would have known beforehand whether the tree would bare figs or not. Secondly, before fig season something called taqsh sprouts on the tree as an indication of whether it would bear figs or not. Most likely, Jesus saw that there were no taqsh on the tree which would have indicated to him that it was barren.

Finally, Jesus might have been trying to teach a spiritual lesson. Figs are used in the Old Testament as a symbol for Israel:

“I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers *as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season.*” Hosea 9:10 NKJV

Therefore, Christ could have been indicating to his disciples that Israel would suffer judgment before the culmination of the age. The following parable solidifies this point.

“Then he told this parable: `A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, “See here! *For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig and I still find none, Cut it down! Why should it be wasting soil?*” He replied, “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”`” Luke 13:6-9 NRSV.

For over three years Jesus ministered to Israel in order that they might come into repentance, but they were unwilling. Hence, God brought judgement upon the nation for their rejection of the

Messiah. This judgement was manifested in the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. (Cf. Mat. 23:37; Luke 19:41-44)

### **Muslim Argument:**

Jesus uses what seems to be derogatory language. In Matthew 7:6 Jesus calls unbelievers dogs and swine, and in Matthew 15:26 Jesus likens both the Canaanite woman and Gentiles to dogs.

### **Christian Response:**

Jesus was using common Jewish metaphors to illustrate an unbeliever's or pagan's total depravity. (Cf. Proverbs 26:1; 2 Peter 2:22; Rev. 22:14) The crowds would have understood that Jesus was obviously using metaphorical language, and was not literally calling someone a dog or swine.

In regards to Jesus' statement in Matthew 15:26, Christ was trying to illustrate a key point to his disciples. According to first century Jewish thought both Gentiles and women were held in low esteem. Jews regarded themselves as the children of God, whereas Gentiles were nothing more than house pets.

(Note: The Greek word used in this verse for dogs is *kynarion*, which properly translated means house pet or puppy [Strong's 2952]. Jesus' use of this term implies that just as a house pet has a place in the home of his master, so too do the Gentiles have a place prepared for them in God's kingdom)

Christ was trying to move his Jewish disciples, who had tried earlier to get rid of the Canaanite woman, to envy by the woman's persistence and display of great faith; a faith exemplified by someone who to them was nothing more than a house pet. In similar fashion, Jesus had used a Roman Centurion's faith in contrast to the Israelites' lack of faith:

*"Now when Jesus heard this, he marveled, and said to those who were following, 'Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. And I say to you, that many shall come from East and West, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the Kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" Cf. Matthew 8:5-12*

The Jews considered Romans as enemies which God would destroy when Messiah would appear. And yet here was Israel's Messiah commending the faith of such a one. Hence, Jesus was using Gentiles as examples for Israel to emulate, not look down upon.

(Note: The Quran also uses the phrases "dog", "apes", "swine", and "donkey" to refer to unbelievers. [Cf. 5:60; 7:175-177; 62:5])

### **Muslim Argument:**

God is all-knowing. But according to the Bible, Jesus did not even know the day or hour of his second coming. (Cf. Mark 13:32)

### **Christian Response:**

According to the Bible, Jesus was both God and Man at the same time. The one divine Person of Christ took on a real human nature without ceasing to be God. In Christ, both the nature of God and the nature of man were perfectly united in one Person. (Cf. Mat. 1:22-23; John 1:1, 14; Philip. 2:5b-7; Col. 2:9)

Hence, Jesus had both a divine and human consciousness. In his human consciousness, Jesus' knowledge was finite and limited. This is precisely why he had to grow in wisdom and knowledge. (Cf. Luke 2:40, 52)

Yet, Jesus in his divine consciousness was omniscient, having the same incomprehensible knowledge and wisdom that the Father has. (Cf. Mat. 11:27; John 21:17; Rev. 2:23b- cf.- Jer. 17:10)

### **Muslim Argument:**

God is able to do all that he pleases. But according to John 5:19 Jesus could do nothing of himself.

### **Christian Response:**

The biblical teaching on the Trinity is not that there are three independent gods each having his own will. Rather, the Bible teaches that there are three distinct, yet inseparable Persons of the Godhead who have one perfect will and who work in perfect harmony. They never work independently. When we read the verse in its entire context, we discover that this is precisely what Jesus was telling the Jews in John 5:19:

*“Jesus gave them this answer: `I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing *by himself*; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because **WHATEVER the Father does THE SON ALSO DOES.**”* NIV

In order for Christ to be able to do everything that his Father does implies that Jesus is God. Only God can do all that the Father does, since the Father does the things that God alone can do. This passage affirms the perfect unity and equality of the Father and Son, along with the Holy Spirit. (Cf. John 16:13)

(Note- It must be pointed out that at the Incarnation Christ took on both a real human nature and a human will. Therefore the one Person of Jesus had both a divine will alongside a human one while still remaining uni-Personal. [Cf. Matthew 26:42])

### **Muslim Argument:**

God cannot die. But according to Christians, Jesus died on the cross. If this is so, how can God die and who was running the universe when Jesus was dead?

### **Christian Response:**

This question commits several fallacies. First, the questioner assumes that when Christians say that Christ died this is intended to mean that Jesus ceased to exist for the three days he was in the tomb. This assumes “soul-sleep,” i.e. that after death there is no more conscious existence until the body is resurrected. This is not what the Bible teaches.

Biblical death means separation, not annihilation. In fact, Scripture indicates that there are two types of separation. The first is the soul separating from the body at death, with the other referring to eternal separation from God in hell. (Cf. Luke 16:19-31; Philippians 1:23; Revelation 6:9-11, 20:14-15)

Jesus did not cease to exist when he died but rather his divine nature along with his human soul departed from his body at the point of death. (Cf. Luke 23:46) The fact that Jesus was still consciously existing at the same time his body lay in the tomb becomes evident in that Christ claimed that he would personally resurrect himself from the grave on the third day:

“Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple *AND I WILL RAISE IT AGAIN IN THREE DAYS.*’ The Jews replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the temple he had spoken of *WAS HIS BODY.* After He was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said.” John 2:19-22 NIV

“The reason my Father loves me is that *I lay down my life-only to take it up again. NO ONE TAKES IT FROM ME, BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MY OWN ACCORD. I have authority to lay it down AND AUTHORITY TO TAKE IT UP AGAIN.* This command I received from my Father.” John 10:17-18 NIV

These passages affirm that Jesus is God since only God can raise the dead, and that Jesus was consciously existing since had he been asleep he could not have raised himself from the tomb.

The second fallacy relates to the questioner asking who was running the universe during the time that Jesus had died. This assumes the belief in *modalism*, i.e. that there are not three distinct Persons who are God, but one Person who assumes three different roles. Christians do not believe that Jesus is the only Person within the Godhead, since both the Father and the Holy Spirit are fully God as well. Hence, even if death meant that Jesus ceased to exist for the three days his body lay in the tomb, the Father and the Holy Spirit were still active at this point since it was the Son alone who became man and died.

### **Muslim Argument:**

If Jesus is God, who was praying to in the Garden and while on the cross (Cf. Mat. 26:39, 27:45-46)? Was he praying to himself? Besides, how can God pray?

### **Christian Response:**

This question once again assumes *modalism*, the belief that Jesus is the only person within the Godhead. Yet, the fact is, Trinitarians do not believe that Jesus is the only Person within the

Being of God, but that the Father and Holy Spirit are God as well. Therefore, Jesus was not praying to himself but to the Father.

Furthermore, prayer is intimate communion and fellowship with God. Hence, the three Persons of the Godhead have always had intimate communion among themselves. This is precisely why God does not need anyone outside of his own Being in order to have fellowship.

Since God is tri-Personal, all three Persons become the object of interpersonal communion and love.

Additionally, Jesus is Man as God intended man to be. Therefore, Jesus came to show us by example how we should live in accordance to the will of God, he being the perfect role model:

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.” 1 Pet. 2:21 NIV

Hence, Jesus not only prayed in order to be in constant communion with the Father, but also to teach us how we should pray.

Finally, Jesus as the God-Man both prayed to the Father and commanded believers to pray directly to himself:

“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. *AND I WILL DO WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME*, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. *YOU MAY ASK ME FOR ANYTHING IN MY NAME, AND I WILL DO IT.*” John 14:12-14 NIV

In order for Jesus to be able to both hear and answer prayer he must be omnipotent (Almighty) since only an all-powerful Being can grant the requests of all who pray to him. He must also be both omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipresent (present everywhere) in order to know and hear the needs of all who call upon him. These qualities affirm that Jesus is God, since only God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient as well as the Hearer of prayer.

Therefore, the fact that Jesus both prays and hears prayer affirms that he is one Divine Person who is both God and Man at the same time.

(Note: According to Quran 33:56 Allah prays for Muhammad:

“Lo! Allah and his angels *pray* [Arabic - *yasalluuna*] for the Prophet. O ye that believe! *Pray for him* [*salluu alayhi*], and salute him with all respect [*sallimuu tasliimaa*].”

Most translations of the Quran mistranslate the words *yasalluuna* and *salluu* as blessings, when in fact it literally means prayers. In fact, a devout Muslim will always recite the following prayer when mentioning Muhammad’s name, *sallullahu alahyi wa salaam*- “*the prayers of Allah be for him and his peace.*” Another time where the Quran indicates that Allah prays is found in S. 33:43:

“He it is Who send *prayers upon you* [yusalliii `alaykum], as do His angels...”

A Trinitarian can understand and accept the fact that because there are three Persons within the unity of God, it becomes natural for them to have communion among themselves in prayer. But for a singular Deity, having no plurality, to pray for Muhammad is inconceivable since who would Allah be praying to when praying for Muhammad?)

***Muslim Argument:***

According to Matthew 28:18, all authority was given to Jesus. If authority had to be given to Christ, that means that there is One greater than him who is doing the giving.

Furthermore, this means that Jesus cannot be God since he did not always have authority.

***Christian Response:***

According to the Holy Bible Jesus relinquished his authority in order to become man:

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who *being* (Gr.- *huperchon*) in very nature (*morphe*) God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, *but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant*, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man - *he humbled himself* and became obedient to death-even death on a cross.”  
Philippians 2:5-8 NIV

This passage is instructive since it affirms that Jesus *willingly made himself nothing*. This was not something forced upon him, but something that both he and the Father decided together.

When Jesus became a slave of both God and man, Christ subjected all his authority to the Father without ceasing to be God. The fact that Jesus still remained fully divine is seen by Paul’s usage of the Greek *huperchon* (*being*) which is in the present participle tense. This Greek tense implies a continuous state of being or existence, implying that Jesus continued to exist in God’s form even while becoming man on earth.

Therefore, Jesus did not cease to be God but ceased from exercising his authority as God. At his resurrection, Christ received back the authority he had before the Incarnation. He regained an authority which had always been his in the first place; he did not receive an authority which he did not have to begin with.

***Muslim Argument:***

In Mark 10:35-40, James, John and their mother requested that Jesus would grant the two disciples to sit on his right and left. Yet, Jesus replied that he could not grant such a request, since it had already been determined. How could Jesus be God if he was unable to even grant a request by his disciples?

***Christian Response:***

As we have already noted, Jesus refused to exercise his divine authority since he allowed himself to be a slave. And because he was God's servant, he became completely subject to the Father's will in every aspect of his existence on earth. And as the Father's slave, he could make no decisions until he fulfilled the will of the One who had sent him. (See above)

***Muslim Argument:***

God cannot be tempted. (Cf. James 1:13) Yet, Jesus was tempted by the devil. (Cf. Mat. 4:1) Jesus, therefore, cannot be God.

***Christian Response:***

It must be remembered that although Jesus was tempted he was still without sin. (Cf. Heb. 4:15)

Furthermore, James' meaning is not that no one can try to tempt God since many have tried (Cf. Deut. 6:16; Mal. 3:15; Mt. 4:7; Acts 15:10), but that there is nothing within God that would lead him to act upon the temptations. Similarly, although Jesus was tempted there was nothing within Christ that would cause him to act upon it, since he was perfect God and perfect Man.

***Muslim Argument:***

According to the Bible when a young man came to Jesus calling him good, Jesus responded, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." (Mark 10:18) How can Jesus be God if he is not even as good as God?

***Christian Response:***

Jesus did not say that he was not good, but asked the rich man why does *he* call Jesus good. Jesus was trying to lead the man into questioning whether he really believed Jesus was absolutely good in the same sense that God is. If the rich man really believed Jesus was good, he should then give up everything for Christ. Being God, Jesus deserved unconditional love and self-sacrifice. This is precisely what Jesus demands the rich man to do:

"Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, `You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, *follow me.*'" Mark 10:21 NRSV

The rich man must give up everything for Jesus if he wants to be perfect before God. Only God can demand this kind of devotion, a devotion which Jesus arrogates to himself. This point is brought out more clearly in Matthew 10:37-39:

"Whoever loves father or mother *more than me is not worthy of me*; and whoever loves son or daughter *more than me is not worthy of me*; and whoever does not take up the cross *and follow me is not worthy of me*. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life *for my sake* will find it." NRSV

Again in Luke 14:26-27, 33:

“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, yes, even life itself, *cannot be my disciple*. Whoever does not carry the cross *and follow me cannot be my disciple*... So therefore, none of you can be my disciple *if you do not give up all your possessions*.” NRSV

No Israelite prophet ever pointed others to himself, but pointed men to God. For Jesus to demand this kind of devotion affirms that he is God; otherwise this would be blasphemous for Jesus to say if he were only a prophet.

To solidify the point that Jesus was not denying that he was absolutely good in the same sense that God is, we quote the following passages:

*“I am the GOOD Shepherd. The good shepherd lays his life down for the sheep... I am the GOOD Shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.”* John 10:11, 14 NRSV

Not only is Jesus affirming his absolute goodness, but also applies a title of Yahweh God to himself:

- “Yahweh is *my Shepherd*, I shall not want.” Psalm 23:1
- “Give ear, *O Shepherd of Israel*, you who lead Joseph like a flock!” Psalm 80:1 NRSV

Jesus also claims to be absolutely sinless, having no unrighteousness within him whatsoever:

“Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, *and there is nothing false in him*.” John 7:18 NRSV

“And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, *for I always do what is pleasing to him*.” John 8:29 NRSV

“Which of you convicts me of sin?...” John 8:46 NRSV

No one was able to point to even one sin which Jesus committed. For Jesus to be absolutely good strongly argues the case that he is God. Note the following syllogism:

- A. Only God is absolutely good
- B. Jesus is absolutely good
- C. Therefore, Jesus is God.

### ***Muslim Argument:***

Christians often use Jesus’ I AM statements in John, most notably John 8:58, as proof that Jesus identified himself as the I AM of Exodus 3:14. There, Yahweh tells Moses to tell Israel that his name is “I AM WHO I AM”. He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me to you”’.” NRSV

According to most biblical scholars the Hebrew phrase, *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, is more accurately translated as “I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE.” This is due to the verb from which the phrase stems, *hayah*, which means “to be.”

Therefore, Jesus’ words have no connection with this passage.

Furthermore, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (called the Septuagint) renders Exodus 3:14 as *Ego Eimi Ho On*- “I Am The Being.” Jesus in the Johanne gospel uses the term *Ego Eimi*, “I AM.” He is never called *HO ON*.

### ***Christian Response:***

In response to Christ never being addressed as *HO ON*, this is simply not true. We find this phrase used of Christ in Revelation 1:7-8:

“Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, *even those who pierced him*; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen.

“‘ I am the Alpha and Omega’, says the Lord God, ‘*The Being (Greek- HO ON) who is and who was and who is to come, the ALMIGHTY (pantokrator)*’.”

Jesus Christ, the coming pierced One, identifies himself as both *The Being (HO ON)* and as the Almighty. The phrase “who is and who was” refers to the eternal nature of God:

“And the angels of the waters say, ‘You are just, O Holy One, *who are and who were*, for you have judged these things; because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!’ And I heard the altar respond, ‘Yes, O Lord, *the ALMIGHTY (pantokrator)*, your judgements are true and just!’” Rev. 16:5-7 NRSV

Hence, Jesus in Revelation 1:8 is claiming to be the eternal God.

Secondly, Jesus’ I AM passages tie in with the Hebrew *ANI HU* references of Isaiah:

“Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called: *I AM HE (Ani Hu)*; *I am the First, and I am the Last*.” Isa. 48:12 NRSV

That the phrase I AM implies Deity is clearly seen in the following verses:

“Now then, listen, you wanton creature (i.e. Babylon), lounging in your security and saying to yourself, ‘I am (LXX- *Ego Eimi*), *and there is none besides me...*’ Isa. 47:8 NIV (Cf. Isa. 47:10)

God rebukes Babylon for claiming to be the I AM, believing herself to be a God like Yahweh. Hence, I AM is used to denote absolute Deity and sovereignty, being used as a synonym for Yahweh.

Compare Yahweh's words with Jesus:

"Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, 'Whom are you looking for?' They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus replied, '*I AM HE*'... When Jesus said to them, 'I am he,' *they stepped back and fell to ground.*" John 18:4-6 NRSV

The fact that the soldiers fell back when Jesus uttered the words "I AM" affirms that the phrase served to identify Christ as Yahweh. Otherwise, there would be no reason for the soldiers' falling down to the ground.

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; *I am the first and the last*, and the living one. *I WAS DEAD*, and see I am alive forever and ever, and I have the keys of Death and Hades'." Rev. 1:17-18 NRSV

No matter from what perspective we look at it, there is no escaping the fact that Jesus does identify himself as Yahweh God.

### ***Muslim Argument:***

Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Cf. Mat. 28:19) Yet, the disciples baptized in Jesus' name instead. (Cf. Acts 2:38)

### ***Christian Response:***

There is confusion between the *method* of baptism, with the *authority* given to baptize. Jesus is prescribing the method by which believers are to be baptized, whereas the disciples were pointing to the authority they received from Jesus to perform this method of baptism:

"And he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed *in his name* to all nations..." Luke 24:46-47 NRSV

"And a man lame from birth was being carried in... But Peter said, 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; *in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, stand up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong... 'The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. *And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong*, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you'." Acts 3:2, 6-7, 13-16 NRSV

### ***Muslim Argument:***

According to Christians, Jesus is the Father's Son. Yet, according to both Matthew 1:20 and Luke 1:35 Jesus was conceived supernaturally to the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. This makes the Holy Spirit Jesus' father.

***Christian Response:***

This question assumes that Christians believe that Jesus became God's Son at the virgin conception. This is not what Christians believe. Jesus is the eternal Son of God:

“... I am the bread *that came down from heaven.*” John 6:41 NIV

“*I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.*” John 16:28 NIV

“So now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had in your presence *before the world existed...* Father I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me *because you loved me before the foundation of the world.*” John 17:5, 24 NRSV

Therefore, the Holy Spirit conceived the human nature of Christ; he did not conceive the eternal Person of Christ.

---

### **3. THE PLAN OF SALVATION**

***Muslim Argument:***

Jesus' death is a violation of the clear OT commands prohibiting human sacrifices. Since Jesus was also under the Law (Cf. Gal. 4:4), his death would be an express violation of the commands of God which did not allow for humans to be put to death, only animals.

***Christian Response:***

Actually, there is no express command forbidding adult human sacrifices. What is forbidden is the sacrifice of children as a means of appeasing the pagan gods. (Cf. Lev. 18:21, 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31, 18:10; 2 Kings 16:3, 17:31, 21:6, 23:10; Jer. 7:31, 32:35; Ezek. 20:31) This is not to imply that the Bible allows for adult sacrifices, but rather to point out what is actually stated within inspired Scripture itself.

Secondly, the reason why these pagan rituals were abhorrent to God is because it not only entailed idol worship which was an abomination all by itself, but also included the death of innocent lives:

“They did not destroy the peoples as the Lord had commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs. They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. *They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood.*” Psalm 106:34-38

“... for they have committed adultery *and blood is on their hands*. They committed adultery with their idols; *they even sacrificed their children, whom they bore to me, as food for them.*” Ezek. 23:37

Again, the “blood on their hands” is linked with Israel sacrificing their children to idols.

“For they have forsaken me and made this place of foreign gods; *they have burned sacrifices in it to gods* that neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah ever knew, *and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. They have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as offerings to Baal- something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind.*” Jer. 19:4-5

Israel is accused of filling the land with innocent blood, i.e. the murder of innocent lives who had committed no transgressions. Hence, child sacrifices were not only wrong because they were done to appease the pagan deities, but because it was murder and this is expressly forbidden in the Bible (Cf. Ex. 23:7: *do not put an innocent or honest person to death*)

However, the Mosaic Law did allow for the guilty to be put to death if they intentionally broke an express command which carried with it the death sentence. (Cf. Ex. 31:14-17; Deut.19:11-13)

Since Jesus “became sin for us” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24) and since “the LORD laid upon him the iniquity of us all” (cf. Isa. 53:6) his death, judicially speaking, fell under the bounds of the Law since he was guilty after that point. Therefore, Jesus’ death from a legal standpoint was morally acceptable since his purpose in coming to this world was to take upon himself the punishment we deserved because of our sins.

To summarize, the Holy Bible prohibits the death of innocent children who committed no wrong. Since Jesus was neither a child nor innocent after taking our sins, his death did not violate an express command.

Thirdly, Jesus willingly died in order that others might live. (Cf. Mark 10:45; John 10:17-18) We often consider individuals who sacrifice their lives for others as heroes, i.e. a person who takes a bullet in order to save his friend or soldiers who die to protect their country etc. In the same manner, Jesus’ willingness to die on the cross was the greatest display of his unconditional love for others, sparing them from the eternal wrath of God in hell.

Finally, God willed for Jesus to be the final and perfect atoning sacrifice, being “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (Cf. John 1:29) God is sovereign and can make such decisions without anyone holding him accountable for it. Man answers to God, God answers to no one.

### ***Muslim Argument:***

Why was it necessary for God to send his eternal Son to die for sinners. Couldn’t God have simply forgiven sinners instead of having his Son murdered?

### ***Christian Response:***

We must first point out that God did not murder his Son. It was the will of The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit that the Son should lay his life down for sinners. This was to demonstrate both God's holiness and infinite love for man:

“For even the Son did not come to be served, but to serve, and lay his life down as a *RANSOM* for many.” Mark 10:45 NIV

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. *THIS BREAD IS MY FLESH WHICH I WILL GIVE FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.*” John 6:51 NIV

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me- just as the Father knows me and I know the Father- *AND I LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR THE SHEEP...* The reason my Father loves me is that *I LAY DOWN MY LIFE- ONLY TO TAKE IT UP AGAIN. NO ONE TAKES IT FROM ME, BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MY OWN ACCORD...*” John 10:14-15, 17-18a NIV

“God presented him (Jesus) as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. *He did this to demonstrate his justice*, because in his forbearance he had left sins unpunished- *he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*” Rom. 3:25-26 NIV

“*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” Rom.5:8 NIV

Christ willingly laid down his life in order that others might live. We often look up to and admire men who willingly give up their lives to defend either their families or country. Their deaths are considered heroic and a demonstration of unconditional love, not murder or suicide. Hence, Jesus' willingness to die for unworthy sinners is the greatest display of God's infinite and unconditional love for fallen humanity.

As Scripture indicates, Christ's death was necessary in order to satisfy God's infinite holiness and justice. For sin to be forgiven, a sacrifice needed to be made in order for God to maintain his holiness. Otherwise, God's justice and holiness would be severely compromised. The Bible indicates that God cannot dwell in the presence of sin without incurring his wrath:

“For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil will not sojourn with you. The boastful will not stand before your eyes; you hate evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful.” Psalm 5:4-6 NRSV

“Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing...” Habakkuk 1:13 NRSV

This is precisely why God cannot let sin go unpunished, since his holiness will not allow it to continue. He will not acquit the sinner without there being a payment for the crimes committed:

“Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and those in the right, *for I will not acquit the guilty.*” Exodus 23:7 NRSV

God also does not take pleasure in the death of any soul, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live. (Cf. Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9)

Therefore, in order for God to pardon repentant sinners while remaining holy and just, someone had to take the consequences of sin which entailed physical and spiritual death. By death is meant the soul separating from the body in the physical sense, with the body returning to the dust. And in the spiritual sense it refers to broken communion with God:

“And to the man he said, `Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, “You shall not eat of it,” cursed it is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat the bread *until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return*’.” Genesis 3:17-19 NRSV

“Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.” Isa. 59:2 NRSV

The sacrifice had to be made by one who had infinite value since man’s value is finite and cannot atone for all of mankind’s sin:

“Truly no ransom avails for one’s life, there is no price one can give to God for it. For the ransom of life is costly, and can never suffice that one should live on forever and never see the grave.” Psalm 49:7-9 NRSV

This is precisely why God had to come down and ransom man, since only God is infinite in value:

“But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol for he will receive me.” Psalm 49:15 NRSV

But in order for God to pay the price of sin fully and satisfy his infinite holiness he had to take on a human nature. As was noted, part of the consequence of sin is that the soul of man separates from his body as the flesh returns to the dust. God is Spirit (John 4:24), and must therefore take on a human nature in order to experience physical death.

This nature also had to be free from the stain of original sin, since all who are descended from the first man inherit a corrupt human nature. (Cf. Rom. 5:12-14; Gen. 8:21; Psalm 51:5, 58:3)

Therefore, the Savior had to be born of a virgin whose womb would be made holy in order for him to be without sin:

“And Mary said to the angel, `How can this be since I have no husband?’ And the angel said to her, `The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born *will be called holy*, the Son of God.’ “Luke 1:34-35 RSV

Had he not been born supernaturally by God’s Holy Spirit, he would have then needed a savior to free him from sin.

The cross becomes necessary for God to demonstrate both his love and holiness. If God were to simply forgive without demanding payment for sin, his holiness would have been less than his love. On the other hand, if God were to just punish without allowing the possibility of reconciliation and forgiveness than his love would have been severely compromised. Either way, God would be less than perfect since he would be greater in one of his qualities, and less than perfect in the other.

Hence, Jesus' death on the cross clearly demonstrates both God's perfect holiness and his infinite love for man. No other religion is able to claim this perfect balance for their deities.

### ***Muslim Argument:***

The Bible indicates that Christ was not the only sinless person. Oftentimes, scripture uses the term "righteous" to indicate one who is blameless:

"And they (Zachariah and Elizabeth) were *righteous* before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord *blameless*." Luke 1:6

"My little children, these things I write to you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ *the righteous*." 1 John 2:1

"I say unto you, that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, *more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance*." Luke 15:7

"I came not to call the *righteous*, but sinners into repentance." Luke 5:32

"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." 1 John 3:7

All these verses affirm that there were many who were sinless like Christ, and did not need Christ to die for them.

### ***Christian Response:***

We provide a verse by verse refutation of this erroneous understanding of Scripture. First, it should be pointed out that the word for "righteous" is the Greek *term dikaios*. The word, *dikaioo* and its various forms, is a legal term used judicially to declare one just, not guilty. It does not mean one who is sinless.

There are two ways one can be declared just before God. The first is to be completely perfect in every aspect of one's life, something which no one can ever attain. The only person to be absolutely perfect is Jesus Christ. The second manner is to be declared righteous solely by God's grace. This entails a blood sacrifice for the covering over of sins:

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life." Leviticus 17:11 NIV

“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” Hebrews. 9:22 NIV

The only problem with animal sacrifices is that in the eyes of God animals are not equal in value to man. Therefore, animal sacrifices could only cover sin temporarily. This is why the Israelites had to continuously offer sacrifices.

God sent Christ as the sacrificial Lamb who by his death on the cross, offered himself as a sacrifice of infinite value covering over the sins of the whole world. His blood not only covers sin, but it completely eradicates it; something which animal sacrifices could not do:

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, *who takes away the sin of the world!*” John 1:29 NIV

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, *and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*” 1 John 1:7

“For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Heb. 9:24-26 NIV

Keeping in mind that it is the blood that justifies one before God, we proceed to the verses in question.

In regards to Zachariah and Elizabeth being blameless, it must be remembered that Zachariah was a Levitical priest of the division of Adonijah (cf. Luke 1:5), and one of his main functions as a priest would have been to offer sacrifices. In fact, the high priest was commanded to enter the Most Holy Place once a year and offer sacrifices for atonement, first for his own sins and then for the people (cf. Lev.16:1-34). Thus, Zachariah was blameless before God only because of his observance of the commands which included animal sacrifices for his sins. In other words, his righteousness was not based on his actually being sinless, but on the basis of atonement which covered over his sins.

As far as 1 John 3:7 is concerned John is not implying that believers are sinless, since he also states:

“If we claim to be without sin, *we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us...* If we claim we have not sinned, *we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in us.*” 1 John 1:8, 10 NIV

John’s point is that we have been made righteous in Christ, since “the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.” (Cf. 1 John 1:7)

The part about the ninety-nine righteous who do not need to repent in Luke 15:7 was not due to the fact that they were sinless. Jesus was mentioning a parable about a Shepherd who would leave ninety-nine of his sheep in order to chase after that one who is lost. (Cf. Luke 15:1-6)

Christ was addressing the self-righteous Pharisees who were murmuring against him for sitting and eating with sinners. Jesus' point was not that there were sinless individuals, but rather that God rejoices over those persons who acknowledge their sins, humbling themselves before their Creator. This was the purpose for Christ coming into the world, to search after lost sinners and bring them back to the flock of God. Furthermore, God does not take pleasure in self-righteous hypocrisy, individuals who think they are more righteous and better than others. This is precisely what the Pharisees thought of themselves, Jews who were far more righteous than the sinners and tax collectors whom Jesus was dining.

Finally, Jesus elsewhere likens himself to a Shepherd:

“I am the good Shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me- just as the Father knows me and I know the Father- and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. *I must bring them also*. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” John 10:14-16 NIV

It is Jesus, as the Shepherd, who searches after the lost sheep, leaving behind the ninety-nine. This indicates that the ninety-nine were not righteous because they were sinless, but because they belonged to Jesus. Therefore, the point of the parable is to show that it is Jesus who both brings the sheep into the flock and who also justifies them; it has absolutely nothing to do with one being sinless.

(Note: For the answer to Luke 5:32, see the above point on Luke 15:6.)

### ***Muslim Argument:***

According to Jesus in Matthew 18:6, children are sinless:

“But whoever causes one of these little ones *who believe in me* to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Jesus is basically indicating that children are without sin since someone must cause them to sin.

### ***Christian Response:***

Again, Jesus is not saying that children in and of themselves are sinless. Rather, Jesus is affirming that those children WHO BELIEVE IN HIM are declared righteous, since they have been justified through Christ. This is reiterated in the verse before it:

“And whoever welcomes a little child like this *IN MY NAME* welcomes me.” Mat. 18:5

Again, in Matthew 19:13-14 we are told:

“Then little children were brought *to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them*. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, ‘Let the little children *COME TO ME*, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ “

Hence, a person must come and wholeheartedly embrace Christ like the children did. This is the kind of devotion Christ demands, total dependency upon him in all aspects of one's life.

This again affirms that justification comes solely through Christ.

### ***Muslim Argument:***

Salvation according to Jesus comes from observing the commandments:

“And behold, one came up to him, saying, ‘Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?’ And he said unto him, ‘Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, *keep the commandments.*’” Mat. 19:16-17

“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus said, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read?’ And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have answered right; *DO THIS*, and you will live.’” Luke 10:25-28

“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Mat 5:20 NASB

### ***Christian Response:***

Jesus is actually teaching the exact opposite. His point is to show the impossibility of achieving salvation by works of the Law. This point is clearly brought out by Christ throughout his sermon in Matthew:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully *has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*” Mat 5:27-28 NIV

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: *Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.* He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? *Be PERFECT, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*” Mat. 5:43-48 NIV

These are just some examples of the righteousness which Jesus demands that surpasses the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes. This righteousness is impossible to attain by human efforts since it must perfectly duplicate God's righteousness. This demand for perfection is reiterated by Christ to the rich man:

“Jesus answered, ‘*If you want to be PERFECT*, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, *follow me.*’” Mat. 19:21 NIV

The perfection that God demands comes from surrendering one's life to Christ. It is Jesus who justifies believers by the righteousness he attained through his perfect obedience to the Law.

When someone surrenders his life to Jesus, God imputes Christ's righteousness to his account. From there, God empowers the individual by the Holy Spirit to fulfill God's righteous requirements. This righteousness is not to achieve salvation, but is a sign that one has been saved:

*"But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."* Rom. 3:21-22 NIV

As the apostle Paul states, the righteousness that comes through faith in the Messiah had been foretold beforehand in the Old Testament:

*"After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities."* Isa. 53:11 NIV

*"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."* Jer. 23:5-6 NIV

*"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy... after the sixty 'sevens,' the Anointed One (Messiah) will be cut off and have nothing."* Daniel 9:24, 26

According to these passages, Messiah's death would usher in the righteousness of God and would also atone for sin.

*"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit."* Rom. 8:1-4 NIV

*"God made him sin who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* 2 Cor. 5:21 NIV

*"For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; it is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, and not of works lest anyone should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* Ephesians 2:8-10

Hence, it is the unanimous testimony of Scripture that man is justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ, since one can never achieve the perfect righteousness of God apart from him.

As far as Jesus' statement to the lawyer in Luke 10:25-28 is concerned, again Christ's point is that if the lawyer is able to do all that is required in the Law he will obtain salvation. But the problem is that no one can attain the perfection which God demands, "for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Cf. Rom. 3:23)

Because "there is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins," since "all have turned aside," and "have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one," each individual needs Christ's imputed righteousness. Otherwise, no one can stand justified before God. (Cf. Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalms 14:3)

### ***Muslim Argument:***

Jesus taught, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink." John 6:54-55 NIV

According to Matthew 26:27-28, Jesus gave the disciples the cup of wine and said, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, *which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*" NIV

If this is meant to be taken literally, why do we not find anyone preserving the blood of Jesus as it flowed from his body while on the cross? Furthermore, this would be teaching cannibalism, something forbidden in scripture.

### ***Christian Response:***

Jesus' point is not that we are to partake of his flesh in a literal sense, but in a spiritual manner. This partaking of Christ comes from embracing his words in our lives:

*"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe."* John 6:63-64 NIV

Jesus was indicating that he was going to lay his life down that the world might live through him:

*"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* John 6:51 NIV

Blood symbolizes the life of the creature as it is written, "For the life of the creature is in the blood..." (Cf. Lev. 17:11) Therefore, the cup was symbolic of Jesus' life being laid down for sinners:

*"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* Mat. 20:28 NIV

It does not mean that one literally drinks Jesus' blood. Furthermore, as was indicated, Jesus' blood being shed was necessary to appease God's holiness so that sinners could stand justified before him. There is no hint of cannibalism whatsoever.

### ***Muslim Argument:***

According to Christians, Adam's sin brought condemnation on all flesh. This necessitated a divine Redeemer to come down from heaven to save man. But according to Ezekiel 18:1-24 a person will not be held accountable for someone else's sins.

### ***Christian Response:***

This is a gross misunderstanding of what Ezekiel meant. The prophet wasn't denying that a person's sins could severely affect others since he himself went into exile as a result of the people's wickedness:

“In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, ***while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River***, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin- the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the LORD was upon him.” Ezekiel 1:1-3

Moreover, the Lord himself said that his judgment would fall on both the righteous and the wicked:

“The word of the LORD came to me: ‘Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries. Prophecy against the land of Israel and say to the land of Israel, Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am against you and will draw my sword from its sheath and will cut off from you ***both righteous and wicked***. Because I will cut off from you ***both righteous and wicked***, therefore my sword shall be drawn from its sheath against all flesh from south to north. And all flesh shall know that I am the LORD. I have drawn my sword from its sheath; it shall not be sheathed again.’” Ezekiel 21:1-5

Ezekiel was correcting the assertion of some of the Israelites that the reason why they went into exile is because of the sins of their fathers, as if they were sinless and didn't deserve the punishment that God had brought upon them.

Thus, the prophet was explaining to the people the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions and acknowledging that their own faults brought this disaster upon them. The Israelites had to come to grips with this fact and stop blaming others for the trials that the nation was experiencing.

As such, Ezekiel is not even addressing, let alone refuting, the clear Biblical teaching that as our federal head, the first man brought condemnation upon all his descendants due to his rebellion against God.

In fact, this perfectly ties in with the doctrine of Original Sin. According to the Holy Scriptures every individual inherits a corrupt sinful nature as a result of Adam's transgression, and it is therefore inevitable that all shall sin and come under God's condemnation.(Cf. Psalm 51:5, 53:8; Rom. 7:15-24; Ephesians 2:3)

And it is only through the Lord Jesus that a person can be set free from the bondage of sin and death:

“Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, *everyone who sins is a slave to sin*. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. *So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*” John 8:34-36 NIV

***Muslim Argument:***

According to Hosea 6:6, God does not desire sacrifices. He rather desires one to be merciful and obedient to him. This point is reiterated by Jesus in Matthew 9:13.

***Christian Response:***

It is not either/or, but rather God desires both. The point in Hosea is that sacrifices in and of themselves are insufficient. Sacrifices must follow sincere repentance and obedience to God’s commandments, something Israel did not do:

“Like Adam, they have broken the covenant- they were unfaithful to me there. Gilead is a city of wicked men, stained with footprints of blood. As marauders lie in ambush for a man, so do bands of priests; they murder on the road to Shechem, committing shameful crimes. I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel. There Ephraim is given to prostitution and Israel is defiled.” Hos. 6:7-10 NIV

Hence, Israel’s sacrifices were abominable to God since they were being offered by unrepentant sinners. God does not except such acts.

Sacrifices must be offered with a sincere, repentant heart. David brings out this point clearly in the Psalms:

“You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you did not take pleasure in burnt offerings. *The sacrifices of God are broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise*. In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. *Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar.*” Psalm 51:16-19

It is precisely the same with Christ’s sacrifice. Jesus died for the sins of the world, yet not all shall be saved. The reason being is that not all shall repent and embrace Christ as their Savior. Therefore, it is necessary for a person to come into sincere repentance before offering up his sacrifice, since without repentance the sacrifice becomes void.

***Muslim Argument:***

In order to refute the idea that Jesus died for sinners, Muslims often point to verses where Jesus is pictured as committing sins.

### ***Christian Response:***

If it can be shown that Christ did sin, then he is disqualified from being a perfect sacrifice. We will present the verses in question and offer our responses.

1. According to Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus taught that getting angry was a sin. Yet, Jesus often got angry with others as documented in the Bible. (Cf. Mat. 11:22-24, 12:22-31, 21:12-15, 19; Mark 3:5, 20-30; 11:12-19; Luke 10:13-15, 19:45-47; John 2:13-17)

### ***Response:***

Jesus did not say anger in and of itself was wrong, but that unjustified anger especially towards a fellow believer, i.e. a “*brother*,” was wrong. Jesus tells us who his brethren are:

“He replied to him, ‘Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?’ *Pointing to his disciples*, he said, ‘*Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*’” Mat. 12:48-50 NIV

And what is the will of God according to Jesus?

“Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: *to believe in the one he has sent*’ ... ‘*For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*’” John 6:29, 40 NIV

Therefore, all who reject God’s Messiah are not Jesus’ brethren. In all the passages cited above, Jesus’ anger is directed towards those who have rejected both God’s commands and him. (Cf. Mark 7:6-8) Hence, his anger was not sinful but a demonstration of God’s holy and just indignation against persistent sinners and unbelievers.

2. According to the Gospels, believers are commanded to be honest. (Cf. Mat. 15:19; Mark 7:22; John 8:44) Yet, according to John 7:2-10 Jesus lied to his brothers about not going up to Jerusalem, when he actually did in fact go.

### ***Response:***

Jesus was not denying that he would go to Jerusalem, but rather that he would not go as a public participant of the Feast as his brothers were suggesting. That is why the text says, “that he stayed in Galilee,” and that “after his brothers left for the Feast, he went also, *not publicly, but in secret.*” (Cf. John 7:9-10)

Accordingly, John states that “not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the courts and begin to teach.” (Cf. John 7:14) Hence, there was no sin on Jesus’ part but a misunderstanding of the text on the part of the questioner.

3. During the trial before the high priest, Jesus stated: “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together; I never spoke secretly.” John 18:20

But according to Mark 4:11-12, Jesus taught his disciples “the secret of the kingdom of God,” whereas “to those on the outside everything is in parables; so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn about and be forgiven.” Furthermore, Christ also taught on the mount (Mat. 5:1-7, 28), by the sea (Mat. 13:1), on the plain (Luke 6:17-49), and in other places.

***Response:***

Jesus’ usage of “always” does not mean that he did not teach elsewhere, rather it has to do with the claims that Christ made about himself. Jesus was indicating that there was nothing in relation to himself which he had not proclaimed before eyewitnesses in synagogues and the Temple. The argument centered on who Jesus claimed to be, something which Jesus had stated both privately to his disciples, and publicly to others. Hence, if the high priest wanted to know what Jesus’ personal claims were, he would have no difficulty finding eyewitnesses who could testify. This is precisely what Jesus goes on to say:

“Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.” John 18:21 NIV

That the trial centered around Jesus’ identity is clarified in the following passages:

“At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. *‘If you are the Christ,’* they said, *‘tell us.’* Jesus answered, *‘If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.’* They asked, *‘Are you then the Son of God?’* He replied, *‘You are right in saying I am.’* Then they said, *‘Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.’*” Luke 22:66-71 NIV

“Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, *‘We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king.’*” Luke 23:1-2 NIV

“Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, *‘Are you the king of the Jews?’* *‘Is this your own idea,’* Jesus asked, *‘or did others talk to you about me?’* *‘Am I a Jew?’* Pilate replied. *‘It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?’*” John 19:33-35 NIV

“The Jews insisted, *‘We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.’*” John 19:35 NIV

Hence, Jesus had committed no sin since the trial centered on what Christ claimed about himself, not on what he had taught. Jesus claimed that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, a fact which he affirmed both privately and publicly. (Cf. Mat. 16:16-17; John 10:36-38)

4. John's baptism was for repentance of sins. (Cf. Acts 19:4) Jesus was baptized. (Cf. Mark 1:4)

***Response:***

Jesus came to fulfil the Law and to serve as God's priest. (Cf. Mat. 3:13-15, 5:17; Heb. 4:14-15) Priests were required to be at least 30 years old, and had to be washed in water and anointed with oil. (Cf. Exod. 29:4, 7; Num. 4:3, 43) The anointing with oil symbolizes being anointed with God's Spirit. (Cf. 1 John 2:27- John 14:26)

Therefore, in order for Christ to serve as priest he had to be at least 30 years of age, washed in water and anointed. This is precisely what we find, that Jesus began his ministry at the age of 30, was washed in water, and was anointed by the Spirit. (Cf. Luke 3:21-23)

Furthermore, the baptism was necessary in order for John to know and identify who the Messiah was. God had promised John that when he saw the Spirit descend on the One this would be the Messiah. (Cf. John 1:29-34)

Jesus' baptism had nothing to do with him being a sinner, but everything to do with fulfilling God's set purpose.

5. In John 7:53-8:11, we are told that an adulteress was caught in the act of sin. The Jews brought her before Jesus and wanted to stone her. Jesus replied, "He who is without sin cast the first stone." No one could stone her, since all had sinned. Yet, Jesus himself did not cast a stone upon her, proving that he also was a sinner. Had Jesus been sinless, he would have been the first to cast a stone.

***Response:***

Jesus did not stone her because he wanted to save her from sin:

"Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now *and leave your life of sin.*'" John 8:10-11 NIV

The point in Jesus coming to this world was "to save his people from their sin." (Cf. Mat. 1:21) Christ had "not come to call the righteous, *but sinners to repentance.*" (Cf. Luke 5:32)

Hence, Jesus did not stone her because he wanted her to be saved, not because he was a sinner.

***Muslim Argument:***

Christians believe that Isaiah 53 is an eighth century B.C. prophecy foretelling the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. In attempt to refute the prophetic significance of the passage, Muslim apologists present the following arguments:

1. The prophecy actually begins at Isaiah 52:13 and ends at 53:12. It begins with God addressing his “servant” and promises that his “servant” will prosper and be highly exalted. The term “servant” is consistently used to refer to the nation of Israel. (Cf. Isa. 41:8-9; 44:1-2; 45:4; 48:20) This proves that Isaiah 53 is speaking about national Israel, not the Messiah.

***Response:***

This erroneously assumes that every single usage of the term “servant” must be referring to Israel, when in fact the term is used for others as well. For instance, in Isaiah 42:1 God states that his Spirit will rest upon his servant. In Isaiah 11:1-2 the one whom the Spirit shall come to rest upon is identified as the one who comes out of the stem of Jesse. The fact that Jesse is also king David’s father (Cf. Ruth 4:22) affirms that the servant is the messianic descendant of David.

This is solidified by the fact that Isaiah 11:1 also identifies the stump of Jesse as the Branch. Elsewhere, Branch is used as a title for the Davidic King Messiah:

“The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David *a* righteous *BRANCH*, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’” Jer. 23:5-6 NRSV

In Isaiah 61:1-2 we read: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has *anointed me*; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor...”

In Luke 4:16-21, Jesus claims that this prophecy finds its fulfillment in him:

“When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

“And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘*Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*’” NRSV

Finally, there are places where the servant is identified as being distinct from national Israel. In Isaiah 49:1-7, the servant is identified as one who restores national Israel to God:

“And he said to me, ‘You are my servant, *Israel*, in whom I will be glorified.’ But I said, ‘I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my cause is with the LORD and my reward with my God.’ And now the LORD says, who formed me in the womb *to be his servant*, to bring Jacob back to him, *and that Israel might be gathered to him*, for I am

honored in the sight of the LORD, and my God has become my strength - he says, *‘It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach the end of the earth.’*” (Cf. 49:3-6)

This passage indicates that God’s servant is a specific individual whose name happens to be Israel, and yet is distinct from the nation of Israel whom he will eventually restore. God will also use this servant to bring his salvation to the ends of the earth.

These factors affirm that certain servant passages, specifically 42:1-9 and 49:1-7, do not refer to national Israel. Rather, they must be referring to the Messiah.

There are three lines of evidence to support that Isaiah 53 is a prophecy of Christ. First, both Jesus and the apostles affirm that portions of Isaiah 53 are messianic in nature. In Luke 22:37, Jesus states: “For I tell you, *this scripture must be fulfilled in me, ‘And he was counted among the transgressors’*; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.” Christ is quoting Isaiah 53:11 and affirms that it is prophecy about him.

In Acts 8:26-35, the apostle Philip discovers an Ethiopian eunuch reading Isaiah 53:7-8. The eunuch then asks, “‘About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’ Then Philip began to speak, *and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.*”

The apostle Peter writes:

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

*‘He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.’*

“*When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*” 1 Pet. 2:21-25 NIV

Peter alludes to Isaiah 53:4-7, 9 and 11 and indicates that they were literally fulfilled in Jesus’ crucifixion and justification of believers.

Secondly, according to Isaiah 53:9 the servant “had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.” It also states that the servant is to be a guilt offering, an *asham*. (Cf. Isa. 53:10) According to Leviticus 5:15 a guilt offering had to be perfect. Yet, according to Isaiah, Israel was anything but perfect:

“And I said: *‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’*” Isa. 6:5 NRSV

“See, the Lord’s hand is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. Rather, *your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness... For our transgressions before you are many, and our sins testify against us. Our transgressions indeed are with us, and we know our iniquities.*” Isa. 59:1-3, 12 NRSV

Thirdly, Isaiah declares that the servant is stricken “for the transgression of *my people*.” (Cf. 53:8) The phrase “my people” is used elsewhere by Isaiah to identify the nation of Israel. (Cf. 22:4; 26:20; 32:13) It makes absolutely no sense to say that Israel was dying for Isaiah’s people, who happened to be Israel! It only makes sense if the servant is a specific individual who is distinct from corporate Israel.

2. In Isaiah 53:5 the Hebrew term *min* is more correctly translated as “from.” Therefore, Isaiah was not saying that the servant was wounded *for* transgressions, but *from* transgressions.

**Response:**

This assumes that the preposition *min* has only one meaning, which it does not. The word must be translated in accordance with the way it is being used in a given context. One way the word is used is in a causal sense such as we find in the following citations:

“*Because of* the multitude of your iniquities... you have profaned your shrines.” Ezek. 28:18

“It was not (*because of*) the king’s will...” 2 Sam. 3:37

“All flesh shall not again be cut off *by* the flood waters.” Gen. 9:11

This is the way Isaiah uses the term, that *because of* or *for* the sins of his people the servant was being wounded and crushed. This is how even non-Christian scholars understand it:

“He was pained *because of* our rebellious sins and oppressed *through* our iniquities...” (Rabbi Nosson Scherman / Rabbi Meir Ziotowitz, *The Stone Edition Tanach- ArtScroll Series*, Published by Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1998)

(Note: For a more thorough study on the different usages of *min* consult Bruce K. Waltke & M. O. Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Eisenbrauns; Winona Lake, Indiana, 1990], pp. 212-214)

3. In 53:8b Isaiah states, “for the transgression of my people *he* was stricken.” The phrase Isaiah uses is *lamoh* and is plural, i.e. “*they* were stricken.” This identifies the servant as national Israel since the term cannot be used in the singular.

**Response:**

The Muslim contention that “*lamoh*” cannot be used in the singular case is erroneous. Dr P.J. Williams, affiliated lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic Faculty of Oriental Studies, University

of Cambridge, responds to one Muslim writer's contention that the Hebrew term always refers to the plural:

"... The author claims that 'anyone familiar with Biblical Hebrew' will recognize his point that 'lamoh' is always plural. **In fact one of the latest Hebrew grammars, and a great number of older ones disagree at precisely this point.** P. Jouon, ed. by T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Rome, 1991, section 103 f, records that 'lamoh' **may be used as a pausal form of 'lo' "to him"**. This phenomenon is illustrated well in Genesis 9:26 and 27, and Isaiah 44:15. **The suffix -mo is indisputably singular in Psalm 11:7.** The phrase may satisfactorily be translated **'from the transgression of my people the blow was his'**, i.e. he was wounded for the transgression of my people, where 'my people' is distinct from the one who suffers." (bold emphasis ours)

4. The term for death in Isaiah 53:9 is plural in Hebrew and should be "deaths." This indicates that Isaiah had national Israel in mind.

***Response:***

The term is understood to refer to the intensity of the servant's sufferings, not to a plural number of actual deaths. This becomes evident when reading the term in its intended context:

"They made his *grave* with the wicked and his *death* with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth."

The term *grave*, *qeber*, is singular and is used synonymously with death. John N. Oswalt notes, "The last members of each colon in Hebrew, *his grave* and *his death*, are synonymous." (*The New International Commentary on the Old Testament - The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66* [Grand Rapids; Eerdmans's Publishing Company, 1998], p.397)

According to Edward J. Young, "The two words *grave* and *death* are to be taken together; in his death and burial the servant was with the rich and with the wicked." (*The Book of Isaiah, A Commentary*, vol. 3 Chapters 40-66 [Eerdmans's, rpt. 1996], p. 353)

This argues the fact that the plural "deaths" refers to the servant's intense suffering. In fact, *The Stone Edition Tanach* identifies the plural usage as referring to the servant's executions:

"He submitted himself to his grave like wicked men; and the wealthy [submitted] to *his executions*."

In fact, certain rabbis understood the plural to refer to the intensity of the Messiah's death:

"The sense of the whole is, And he made in His deaths His grave with the wicked, and the rich: the plural 'deaths' is used because piercing Him as cruel men do, through and through, they would, so to speak, be putting Him to death again and again."

5. Isaiah 53:10 speaks of the servant seeing “his seed.” The term “seed” is always used to refer to physical offspring. (Cf. Gen. 12:7, 15:13, 46:6; Ex. 28:43) But Jesus had no children since he was never married.

***Response:***

The term “seed,” *zera*, does not always refer to physical offspring. The word is also used metaphorically:

“And the LORD God said to the serpent... `And I will put enmity Between *you* and the woman, And between *your seed* and her *seed*. He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.” Gen.3:14, 15 NASV

Seed cannot possibly mean that the serpent, who is actually the Devil (Cf. Rev. 12:9), will have literal, biological offspring who will fight with the woman’s seed. Rather, it is referring to individuals who carry out the Devil’s will. (Cf. John 8:44)

*Zera* can also mean race or generation:

“For they have taken some of their daughters *as wives* for themselves and their sons, so that the holy *race* has intermingled with the peoples of the lands...” Ezra 9:2 NASV

“And a mongrel *race* will dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.” Zech. 9:6 NASV

Therefore, seed does not necessarily imply that the servant shall have biological offspring. It can be referring to the children God has given the Messiah to justify and redeem:

“And again, `BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME.” Hebrews 2:13 NASV

“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, *that all that He has given Me* I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” John 6:39-40 NASV

Finally, the text does not say that the servant shall see *his* seed, but rather that he shall see seed. The seed he shall see can be referring to the posterity that will come to serve God through the servant as stated in Psalm 22:30-31:

“*Posterity (zera)* will serve him; *future generations* will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn - for he has done it.”

In conclusion, the evidence supports the messianic understanding of Isaiah 53. The evidence presented against it does not stand under careful analysis and exegesis.

***Muslim Argument:***

According to the Old Testament, the Mosaic Law is something good and holy. Believers are commanded to delight in the Law and meditate upon it. (Cf. Deut. 5:29; 2 Kings 17:37; Psalm 1:2; 119)

But according to the apostle Paul, the Law is a curse since Jesus came to redeem man from “the Curse of the Law.” (Cf. Gal. 3:13)

***Christian Response:***

Paul was not calling the Law a curse, but was speaking about the curse the Law puts on all who fail to follow it wholeheartedly:

“All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.’” Galatians 3:10 NIV (quoting from Deut. 27:26)

Jesus did not save us from the Law, but from the judgement which falls upon all since none is able to perfectly fulfill all that the Law demands.

Elsewhere, Paul calls the Law holy and good:

“What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? *Certainly not!* Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law... So then, *the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.* Did that which is good, then, become death to me? *By no means!* But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me, through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate to do. And if I do what I do not want to do, *I agree that the law is good.*” Rom. 7:7, 12-16 NIV

Those who have been freed from sin through faith in Christ are now empowered to fulfill the moral aspect of the law. The ceremonial aspect such as sacrifices and holy days are fulfilled in Jesus, making only the moral aspects binding on Christians:

“Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, *we uphold the law.*” Rom. 3:31 (Cf. Rom. 8:1-4)

***Muslim Argument:***

According to Paul the resurrection body is spiritual. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:44) Yet, in Luke 24:39 Jesus did not have a spiritual body, but a body of “flesh and bones.” Furthermore, Paul indicates that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:50) This proves that Jesus did not die and rise from the dead since he did not have a spiritual body.

### ***Christian Response:***

First, Jesus did not say that his body was “flesh and blood” but rather “flesh and *bones*.” Jesus was emphasizing the material aspect of his glorified body, that it was not merely immaterial. Paul’s use of the term “flesh and blood” refers to the corrupt, perishable body we inherit from Adam. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:49) This body cannot inherit God’s kingdom since it is prone to sin and disobedience, and sin cannot dwell in God’s presence. (Cf. Psalm 5:4)

Secondly, Paul does not say that at the resurrection believers will no longer have material bodies, since he specifically calls it a *spiritual body*. Paul is contrasting the body conceived in corruption with the body conceived by the Spirit of God:

“What is sown is *perishable*, what is raised is *imperishable*. It is sown in *dishonor*, it is raised in *glory*. It is sown in *weakness*, it is raised in *power*. It is sown a *physical body*, it is raised a *spiritual body*. If there is a physical body, *there is also a spiritual BODY*.” 1 Cor. 15:42b-44 NRSV

Hence, it is a body that is no longer subject to sin and destruction, but one that is empowered by God’s Spirit. That Paul’s use of the term *spiritual* refers to one empowered by the Holy Spirit is evident from the following verses:

“The *spiritual man* makes judgement about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgement.” 1 Cor. 2:15 NIV

“Brothers I could not address you as *spiritual* but as worldly-mere infants in Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:1 NIV

“Brothers, if someone is caught in sin, you who are *spiritual* should restore him gently.” Galatians 6:1 NIV

Therefore, the spiritual body is a body made alive by the Spirit of God:

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies *through his Spirit*, who lives in you.” Romans 8:11 NIV

Finally, Jesus was not denying his resurrection in Luke 24:39, but denying that he was just a spirit as the disciples thought. In fact, continuing further into the text Jesus affirms his death and resurrection:

“Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, `Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer *and rise from the dead on the third day*.” Luke 24:45-46 NRSV

---

## **4. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE**

Most Muslim attacks on the Bible center around the issue of contradictions. Muslims assert that the Bible is full of contradictions, and therefore cannot be trusted. Because of the magnitude of

the writings in circulation in support of alleged Bible contradictions, we will not be able to thoroughly address them in this study.

What we will do is give list of books and web sites that specifically deal with the issue of Bible contradictions. We seriously suggest that the reader invest both the time and money into getting a hold of these resources since they will prove to be invaluable in effectively witnessing to Muslims. Some suggested material include the following:

## BOOKS

### **When Critics Ask - A Popular Handbook On Bible Difficulties**

*Norman Geisler & Thomas Howe*

Victor Books, 1992 by SP Publications, Inc.

ISBN: 0-89693-698-8

### **Hard Sayings Of The Bible**

*Walter C. Kaiser Jr. & Peter H. Davids & F.F. Bruce & Manfred T. Brauch*

InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, ILL.

ISBN: 0-8308-1423-X

### **Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties**

*Dr. Gleason L. Archer*

Zondervan Corporation, 1982, Grand Rapids

### **True Guidance - 5 Part Series**

Light of Life - P.O. BOX 13

A-9503 Villach, Austria

(Note - These series of books were written to refute two Islamic writings against the Bible. One is titled *Izhar ul-haqq [The Revelation of the Truth]*, a book that was written to refute C. C. Pfander's *Mizan ul-Haqq*. And the other being titled *al-Sayf al-Hamidi al-Saqil [The Furbished Hamidi Sword]*. Highly recommended.)

## WEB SITES

### **[Answering Islam](http://www.answering-islam.org)**

**(<http://www.answering-islam.org>)**

The most comprehensive web site dealing with Muslim issues. Do a web search for Bible contradictions and you will find some great answers and links to alleged biblical contradictions.

### **[Debate Site - 101 Cleared Up Contradictions](http://debate.org.uk/topics/apolog/contrads.htm)**

**(<http://debate.org.uk/topics/apolog/contrads.htm>)**

A paper responding to Muslim Apologist Shabir Ally's **101 Clear Contradictions of the Bible**. Excellent and scholarly.

### [A Christian Think Tank](http://christian-thinktank.com)

(<http://christian-thinktank.com>)

A site respected even by atheists. Perhaps the most comprehensive answers ever compiled on Bible difficulties. The answers are based primarily on a superb exegetical understanding of scripture, as well as an amazing knowledge of archaeology. Fantastic.

**These are just some of the many resources available for Christians, thoroughly equipping them for the task at hand.**

In this next section, we will briefly address some of the more common allegations made against the Bible by Muslims.

#### ***Muslim Argument:***

There are 66 books within the canon of the Protestant Bible. Yet the Catholic Bible contains 73. Either one has added or omitted 7 books from the Bible.

#### ***Christian Response:***

The 7 books which are included in the Catholic Bible are called the Jewish Apocrypha, literature compiled after the last O.T. book Malachi. These books are not inspired nor are they part of the Hebrew Bible. The Protestants reject these books for the following reasons:

1. They were never recognized by the Jews as being part of the canon of scripture since they were not written by inspired men of God. The Talmud states:

Our Rabbis taught: Since the death of the last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and *Malachi*, the Holy Spirit [*of prophetic inspiration*] departed from Israel. (*Sanhedrin* 11a)

This clearly demonstrates that the Jews viewed all the literature written after Malachi as being uninspired. It also affirms that the New Testament picks up where the Old leaves off, since the authors affirmed inspiration for their writings. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 5:18- Luke 10:7; 2 Pet. 1:20-21, 3:15-16; Rev. 1:1-3)

In fact, certain books of the Apocrypha flat out deny inspiration. (Cf. 1 Maccabees 9:27) This fact alone is enough to convince someone of the uninspired status of these writings.

2. At the Council of Jamnia, A.D. 90, Rabbis headed by Yohannan ben Zakkai acknowledged the 39 books which comprise the present Hebrew and Protestant OT canon as the official Word of God. Everything else was discarded. It should be pointed that this Council did not make the books canonical, but arrived at the conclusion that only these particular books were received throughout the generations as being that which God inspired.
3. The Lord Jesus personally affirms the Protestant OT canon. During the time of Christ, the Old Testament was classified into three sections: "The Law," containing the five books of Moses. "The Prophets" which included two subdivisions. The first called "the Former Prophets" and included the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel and Kings. The second is

called “the Latter Prophets” which included the books beginning with Isaiah to Ezekiel with the exception of Lamentations; and from Hosea to Malachi. These books were also subsumed into smaller lists such as combining the books from Hosea to Malachi together into one scroll called “the minor Prophets.”

The third is “the Writings” or “Psalms.” This section consisted first of Psalms, Proverbs and Job; then the “Scrolls” of Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther and finally Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles. This gives us a total of 39 OT books, the precise canon of books alluded to by Christ:

“And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, *which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms*, concerning me.” Luke 24:44 KJV

Jesus affirms the OT division of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms/Writings as being those books which prophesied his coming. No mention of the Apocrypha at all.

4. The 7 books were not officially declared to be part of the Catholic OT canon until the Council of Trent, A.D. 1546. This was primarily in response to the Protestant Reformers such as Martin Luther and their attacks on doctrines such as indulgences. In one of these books, 2 Maccabees 12:46 (Douay), praying for the dead that they may be loosed from sins is commended. Hence, it is not hard to imagine why Catholics would want to include such a book since it supports their doctrine of praying for souls caught in purgatory, something rejected by the Reformers.

Yet, amazingly, a book which was not included as part of the canon, despite the fact that it also formed part of the Apocrypha literature, is 2 Esdras (4 Esdra by Roman Catholics). This book rejects prayers for the dead. (Cf. 2 Esdra 7:105) The acceptance of 2 Maccabees and the rejection of 2 Esdras affirms the total arbitrariness of the decision behind the choosing of books which supported Catholic doctrine, while rejecting those that did not.

5. The Quran acknowledges the canon of the Bible which existed at the time of Muhammad as being the Word of God. (Cf. S. 2:113; 3:79; 10:94) The canon which was in existence at that time were the 39 books of the OT and the 27 N.T. books. These are the books that form the present day canon of the Protestant Bible.

As was indicated, the canon of the OT had been finalized in the latter half of the first century. Whereas the New Testament canon was officially decided upon in the fourth century at the Council of Hippo (A.D. 393) and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397).

Hence, any books which were added to the Bible after these Councils cannot be accepted as the Word of God. God has given the Church the 66 books of the Protestant Bible to form his infallible rule of Christian faith. This is a fact which the Quran affirms.

### ***Muslim Argument:***

There is no reference in the Bible itself where it indicates that the book canonized by the Jews and Christians would be called the Bible. The word “Bible” never appears in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. This is a man-made title.

### ***Christian Response:***

The term Bible is derived through Latin from the Greek term *biblia* (books). The earliest extra-biblical usage of the term is found in 2 Clement 14:2 (A.D. 150): “*the books (ta biblia)* and the apostles declare that the church ... has existed from the beginning.”

*Biblia* is the plural form of the Greek *biblion*, which is itself a diminutive of *biblos*. These terms are used in Scripture as designations for inspired writings:

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written *in this book (en to biblio touto)*.” John 20:30 NKJV

“For it is written *in the Book (biblo) of Psalms...*” Acts 1:20 NKJV

“Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written *in the book of the Prophets (en biblo ton propheton)*...” Acts 7:42 NKJV

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under curse; for it is written, *‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law (en to biblio tou nomou), to do them’* Gal. 3:10 NKJV

“When you come, bring the cloak I left at Troas with Carpus, *and the books (kai ta biblia)*, especially the parchments (*malista tas membranas*).” 2 Tim. 4:13

Paul identifies the inspired writings as the *biblia*, the books, which at that time included both the Old Testament scrolls as well as the Gospel of Luke. (Cf. 1 Tim. 5:18-Luke 10:7 see below)

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, “What you see, *write in a book (graphon eis biblion)* and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia...” Rev. 1:10-11

“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of *the prophecy of this book (tes propheteias tou bibliou)*: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written *in this book (en tou biblio)*; and if anyone takes away words of *the book of this prophecy (tou bibliou tes propheteias)*, God shall take away his part from the Tree of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written *in this book (en to biblio touto)*.” Rev. 22:18-19

These verses indicate that the term from which the word “Bible” is derived is indeed found within sacred scripture itself. Hence, the word used for the Judeo-Christian Scripture is not something which was arbitrarily decided upon, but something derived from the inspired writings.

(Note - This same phenomena is also true of the Quran. Although the word “Quran” appears in the Islamic scripture, nowhere will one find a verse indicating how many chapters make up the Quran or whether the book itself should be thus named.

In fact, some Muslims such as Ubayy b. Kabb, called the Master of the Quranic reciters, had 116 chapters in his text of the Quran; while others such as Abdallah Ibn Masud included only 111 out of the present 114 chapters of the Islamic text.

Furthermore, early Islamic sources indicate that there was even disagreement among the companions of Muhammad as to what name should be given to the codified recitation:

“Once the Quran had been compiled, people wondered what to call it. Some suggested calling it *Sifir* (‘the Book’), but Ali refused, because that is a Hebrew word. Later, Ali said: ‘I saw one like it in Abyssinia called *Al-Mushaf*’; so this is what it was called.” [True Guidance, pt. 4, p. 51; citing Muhammad Izzat Darwaza’s *al-Quran al-Majid*, p. 53]

### ***Muslim Argument:***

Ezekiel 23:20-21 uses what seems to be pornographic language. God speaks of Judah and Samaria lusting for Egypt whose genitals is likened to donkeys, and whose emission is like horses. How can the Bible attribute such words to God?

### ***Christian Response:***

God is likening Judah’s and Samaria’s devotion to foreign gods to sexual perversion. God addresses the two as sisters who commit adultery by pursuing foreign nations, abandoning their Husband. Hence, idolatry is viewed as committing spiritual adultery in the eyes of God. This is obviously metaphorical language, and is not meant to be taken literally.

(Note - The Quran uses similar language in describing the pleasures of Paradise. For instance, Muslims will be given virgin maidens with “swelling breasts” [Arabic - *kawaa-iba*] to enjoy for all eternity. [S. 78:33 Rodwell and Arberry translation])

### ***Muslim Argument:***

The Bible degrades women, blaming Eve for the fall. Furthermore, it commands women to remain silent in the churches and not to usurp authority over the man.

Women are also to have their hair covered as a sign of submission to their husbands. (Cf. 1 Timothy 2:11-14; 1 Cor. 11:5-10, 13; 14:34)

### ***Christian Response:***

Although the Bible does blame Eve, it also blames Adam. In fact, God blames both Adam and Eve and curses them accordingly. (Cf. Gen. 3:16-20)

Secondly, just as Eve is singled out for the fall, elsewhere in the Bible Adam is held personally accountable. (Cf. Hos. 6:7; Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49)

Thirdly, Paul's command that women should have their heads covered was not a sign of humiliation, but of respect. A woman who either had her head shaved or uncovered was considered to be immoral and rebellious, especially if she had a husband. In order to protect both the reputation of the believing women and the Church, Paul commanded head coverings. In this way, no unbeliever could ever bring an accusation that believing women were immoral and rebellious.

Fourthly, although women are told not to usurp authority over men in the church, they still were allowed to prophecy as noted in 1 Cor. 11:5. Paul's point in women remaining silent must be understood to mean that they are not to speak authoritatively over men, since this was culturally unacceptable.

Fifthly, the Bible states that both women and men are created in God's image. (Cf. Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1) Woman is called "the mother of all the living." (Cf. Gen. 3:20) In fact, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28)

Sixthly, men are commanded to view their wives as their own bodies, caring for them as Christ cared enough for the Church to die for her. Husbands must be also willing to do likewise. (Cf. Eph. 5:25-33) In fact, Paul demands that husbands view their bodies as not belonging to themselves but to their wives and vice-versa, and must not deny the others' needs. (Cf. 1 Cor. 7:1-5)

Furthermore, the Bible mentions women who were used by God as prophets and leaders such as Miriam (Exodus 15:20; Micah 6:4), Deborah (Judges 4-5), Anna (Luke 2:36), the four daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:9), and a number of others. (Cf. Judges 4:4; Isaiah 8:3)

All these factors demonstrate that whereas there is a positional subjection on the part of women in the structure of the Church, this in no way assumes that they are inferior. In fact, they are given an honor lacking in any other religion.

(Note - The Quran states that women are inferior to men, since God made man superior. [Cf. 2:28; 4:34] In fact, the Quran encourages men to deny disobedient wives sex as a form of punishment, and beat them if they persist in disobedience. [Cf. 4:34])

### ***Muslim Argument:***

Christians presume inspiration of all the books of the Bible. Yet, there are places where inspiration is seemingly denied. For instance, Luke affirms in Luke 1:1-4 that it "seemed good also to me to write an orderly account that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught." No mention of inspiration!

In 1 Corinthians 7:12 Paul writes, “To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord)...” Again in 1 Corinthians 7:25 Paul states, “Now about virgins: *I have no command from the Lord...*” Paul denies inspiration.

Another place where Paul denies inspiration is at Romans 3:7 where he affirms that he is speaking falsehood.

### ***Christian Response:***

In regards to Luke 1:1-4, nowhere does Luke deny inspiration, and hence this is an argument from silence. Inspiration does not preclude careful investigation of historical material. Rather, inspiration entails the Holy Spirit guiding the authors to record God’s words without error. Therefore, Luke was guided to carefully investigate and include material that was without error and which the Holy Spirit wanted to be written.

Furthermore, Paul writes that “All Scripture is God-breathed (*theopneustos*).” (Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16.) Paul includes Luke’s writings as part of those Scriptures which are God-breathed:

*“For the Scripture says, ‘Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain’, and ‘The worker deserves his wages.’”* 1 Tim. 5:18 NIV

Paul’s first citation is from Deuteronomy 25:4. The second is from Luke 10:7:

*“Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.”* NIV

Not only is Luke’s writing inspired Scripture, but it is also placed on the same level of authority as Moses’ writings.

Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians 7:12 and 25 are not a denial of inspiration. Rather, they constitute an acknowledgment that the Lord, while on earth, has given no commands to the disciples in regards to these particular issues. Therefore, Paul gave “judgment as one *who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy.*” 1 Cor. 7:25

Being guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul could speak authoritatively and infallibly on matters not addressed by Christ while on earth. This is precisely what Paul goes on to say at the conclusion of his discussion:

*“In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is - and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.”* 1 Cor. 7:40 NIV

Hence, Paul knows that what he says is true since it is the Spirit who is speaking through him.

The apostle Peter says of Paul:

*“Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which*

ignorant and unstable people distort *as they do the other Scriptures*, to their own destruction.” 2 Peter 3:15-16 NIV

Peter affirms that Paul wrote with the wisdom which God gave him, placing his writings on the same level of authority as other inspired writings.

Paul himself affirms that it is by the wisdom given to him by God’s Holy Spirit which enables him to both proclaim and write infallibly:

“This is what we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom *but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.*” 1 Cor. 2:13 NIV

In Romans 3:7, Paul is not claiming to be speaking falsely. That is a gross misquotation of what Paul was actually saying. Paul was speaking of God’s justice and how man’s unrighteousness affirms that God’s judgment upon sinners is righteous. Hence, Paul is speaking hypothetically of one who might ask if by a person’s falsehood God is proven righteous, why then does God condemn the person? This becomes crystal clear from the text itself:

“But if our righteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? *Someone might argue, ‘If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?’ Why not say - as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say - ‘Let us do evil that good may result?’ Their condemnation is deserved.*” Romans 3:5-8

### ***Muslim Argument:***

According to 2 Samuel 24:1. God moved David to number the fighting men of Israel, whereas according to 1 Chronicles 21:1 it was Satan who moved David to do so.

### ***Christian Response:***

There is no difficulty at all with these passages, since God allowed Satan to incite David to number Israel, something which displeased the Lord.

The reason why this angered the Lord is that rather than trusting God, David was evidently placing his trust in the number of his people. Even David’s commander-in-chief, Joab, was not totally pleased with the king’s decision:

“But Joab said to the king, ‘May the LORD your God increase the number of the people a hundred fold, while the eyes of my lord king can still see it! *But why does my lord the king want to do this? But the king’s word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army...*” 2 Sam. 24:3-4a NRSV

Evidently, David had purposed within his heart to number Israel, something which the Lord was aware of. Realizing this, the Lord in his anger moved David through the agency of the Devil to act upon his heart’s desire.

Hence, although Satan was the direct cause, God was also indirectly responsible since the Devil can only do that which God allows him to do.

(Note - This is a teaching which the Quran wholeheartedly agrees with, that the devils can only do what Allah allows them to do:

“Likewise did We make for every Messenger an enemy - Satans among men and Jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception. If thy Lord had so willed they would not have done it: so leave them and what they forge.” S. 6:112 A.Y. Ali

“Seest thou not that We have set Satans on against the unbelievers, to incite them to fury?” S. 19:83 A.Y. Ali

Muslim commentator al-Zamakhshari’s note on S. 2:7 is noteworthy:

“It is now in reality Satan or the unbeliever who has sealed the heart. However, since it is God who has granted him the ability and possibility to do it, the sealing is ascribed to him in the same sense as an act which he has caused. [John Gilchrist, *The Textual History of the Qur`an and the Bible*, p.37, Light of Life, P.O. Box 13 A - 9503 VILLACH, AUATRIA])

This finishes our defense of the Gospel. We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will bless everyone who studies and applies the information to win others to glory.

**AMEN**

Source: <http://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/defense.htm>