

Series 2 Prophets Summary

The first two series focused primarily on the Islamic testimony- attesting that there is no deity worthy of worship other than Allah (God) and that Muhammad is His last and final messenger. The first series dealt specifically with the concept of monotheism in Islam. The second discussed the belief in Prophet Muhammad and in all the previous Prophets that were sent before Muhammad. We discussed the need for Prophets, the nature of revelation, the characteristics of the Prophets, the relationship between Prophet-hood and prophecy, ingenuity, the miracles given to the Prophets, the number of Prophets, and lastly the finality of the Prophet-hood through the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

In the last three programs of the series on Prophet-hood, we singled out one of the great Prophets over whom there has been a great deal of controversy: Prophet Jesus may peace and blessings be upon him. We spent three sessions exploring what the Qur'an says about his lineage, his birth, his nature and his mission as a Prophet. The following series is somewhat connected with the last series on Prophet-hood because it deals with the Prophet-hood of another great Prophet and that's the final of all the great Prophets, Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

We will show that his (Prophet Muhammad's) coming was foretold both in the Old as well as the New Testament of the Bible itself.

3.1 Methodology

Host: Well this is an interesting point. Most people know that the Qur'an is the holy book of the Muslims. How is it that you'll be using the Bible as a reference?

Jamal Badawi

I think those who find it strange, find it so simply because of having two notions on the attitude of Muslims towards the Bible. The first is that Muslim's base their faith on the Bible- I've heard it asked before Do you take the Bible as one source of your faith? The other assumption is that Muslims reject the Bible in total because of the fact that it has been changed or has undergone changes throughout history. Both of these notions are erroneous.

Muslims do not base their faith on the Bible because the Qur'an is the last and only authentic scripture of God that has been recorded during the lifetime of it's Prophet and has come to us without any theological or philosophical mixing of human ideas- it's just pure divine words. So one cannot really say that we as Muslims base our faith on the Bible.

On the other hand, it is also just as erroneous to reject each and every word in the Bible because the Qur'an indicates that the Bible, both the Old and the New Testament, originally emanated from God. They came as a revelation to their Prophets. The fact that there have been changes and possibly inaccuracy in communicating these teachings (from the Bible) to us does not necessarily mean that each and every word or each and every passage is erroneous.

In fact, there are three basic reasons why Muslims cannot reject the Bible completely. First, one of the basic articles of faith in Islam is that Muslims should believe in all the Prophets of God prior to Muhammad and that also requires the belief in the holy books that were revealed to the Prophets in their original and pure form.

Second, we have indicated before that all Prophets actually taught Islam in the sense of the submission to the will of God, and it was only through the last Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings be upon him, that this mission of Islam has been completed and perfected. So how could Muslims reject earlier forms of Islam?

Finally, there are certain portions in the Bible, even in its present form, in which Muslims find no reasons to reject.

Host: What are the basis for accepting or not accepting portions of the Bible. Is it an arbitrary thing or is there an objective basis that you use to distinguish between the portions of the Bible in which Muslims will accept and those they wouldn't?

Jamal Badawi:

The Qur'an, itself, gives an answer to this question. The verse in the Qur'an says, ♦To thee (Muhammad) we sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scriptures that came before it, and guarding it in safety. ♦ (5:48) The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, confirming whatever truth remained intact in the previous revelations given to the previous Prophets and, the crucial point, guarding and protecting it from errors; that is correcting misconceptions and correcting philosophical ideas that were added to the pure revelation as given to the Prophets. ♦There is the foundation for that.

Indeed, you will find that there are so many points in both, the Old and the New Testament, that Muslims definitely accept as portions that remain intact. The Old Testament, for example, says, ♦Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord. ♦ (Deut. 6:4) And then in the New Testament, according to the Book of Mark, in chapter 12 verse 29, Prophet Jesus himself repeats the exact same thing. Then the Qur'an affirms the absolute oneness of God.

So what reason do Muslims have to say that they do not accept the Bible? It must be consistent with what the Qur'an, as the last revelation, has indicated. However, if there are certain passages that the Qur'an has definitely denied as being said by the Prophets; some alien ideas or philosophies, then in this case Muslims would say that it is possible that part did not remain intact. So there is an objective criteria and the Qur'an itself is the criterion.

One of the names of the Qur'an, in Arabic, is *Al-Furkahn*, which means the Criterion; the one that sifts or divides between truth and falsehood. That is one can examine any scripture, taking the Qur'an as the final truth and the final and ultimate reference.

Host: The Qur'an mentions that the Bible, in its original form, contained prophecies of the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Can you comment on this point?

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</p> <p>Jamal Badawi</p> <p>Let♦s go over a few passages in the Qur'an that provide the foundation for Muslims regarding those prophecies and to show that this is not something that a recent scholar has found or come up with.</p> <p>
</p> <p>For starters, the Qur'an says, "Those who follow the apostle, the unlettered Prophet (Muhammad), whom they find mentioned in their own scriptures,- in the law (Torah) and the Gospel;- for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him,- it is they who will prosper." (7:157)</p> <p>
</p> <p>In the same vein, the claim is made very clear in the Qur'an that in the original older forms of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, there were clear references concerning the advent of Prophet Muhammad.</p> <p>
</p> <p>The Qur'an also says, ♦The people of the book (Jews & Christians) know this (the Prophet) as they know their own sons; but some of them conceal the truth which they themselves know.♦ (2:146-147) In other words, some of the learned and knowledgeable, those who had access, in the past, to scriptures concealed this advent even though the description and the profile of that Prophet to come has been indicated to them.</p> <p>
</p> <p>This passage, in the second chapter of the Qur'an, apply to the foundation in the Qur'an of what exists in the Old Testament. There is one passage, also, that talks of the New Testament. It quotes Prophet Jesus peace be upon him, ♦And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, "this is evident sorcery!" (61:6) As a side note, Ahmad is the same name as Muhammad; both mean ♦the praised one♦. The name Muhammad is derived from the root Ahmad.</p> <p>
</p> <p>These three passages from the Qur'an, it is found that both in the Old as well as the New Testament, the Qur'an claims that there were signs and prophecies about the advent of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.</p> <p>
</p> <p>Host: So coming to the Bible now, I♦ve read the Bible many times and was surprised myself to learn that the Bible does mention Muhammad (PBUH). Many people say that they♦ve read the Bible many times but never saw the name Muhammad. What would your response be to that?</p> <p>
</p> <p>Jamal Badawi</p> <p>The answer is very simple. Many Christian theologians claim that there are prophecies that very clearly foretell the advent of Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him. Where in the Old Testament does the name Jesus appear? The answer is nowhere.</p> <p>
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The issue isn't about having a name but rather having a profile with clear and collaborating evidence that, put together, shows that Prophet Jesus and Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon them, were foretold in the Old Testament. In the same vein, we'll find that there is a clear portrait concerning the advent of Prophet Muhammad; unmistakable prophecies to the point that historically speaking there were so many sincere Jews and Christians, at the time of Prophet Muhammad, who embraced Islam and followed Prophet Muhammad based on the fact that they have found that his description, his profile, and his history corresponded perfectly with the predictions and signs they had learned of through their own scriptures and traditions. Many converted to Islam because of this.

The challenge, which really faces all believers today, Muslims, Christians and Jews as well, -because those faiths have a common heritage at least in so far as their connection with the patriarch of monotheism that is Prophet Abraham peace be upon him- is to rise above the centuries of theological antagonism, to rise above dogmatism and to rediscover the truth and the connection that ties together these great faiths. Even in the present form of the Bible, with all the reservations that Muslims have about the accuracy of its recordings of the revelation, we would still be able to discover so many clear signs that rebuild the bridges that have been destroyed for too long between the faiths.

We all know that there are so many different traditional interpretations of the prophecies that appear in the Old Testament and the claim is made that none of which is applicable to Prophet Muhammad. I acknowledge that there are different interpretations. All I'm saying is that in my humble opinion, they are erroneous interpretations at least in so far as some of them are concerned. We will show that some of these prophecies, even in the present form, very clearly and specifically apply to the advent of Prophet Mohammad, may peace and blessings be upon him. That could go a long way in establishing those bridges.

Host: Are you saying that all of the prophecies that are contained in the Bible, which had been interpreted to apply to Prophet Jesus, actually apply to Prophet Muhammad instead?

Jamal Badawi

Muslims have no problem, whatsoever, in accepting the Prophet-hood of Jesus, peace be upon him, because the Qur'an itself mentions his story and says that he is a Prophet of God. On that ground alone, Muslims can not rule out that there are prophecies in the Old Testament that apply to Prophet Jesus.

All I am saying is that there are other prophecies, in addition to those foretelling the coming of Prophet Jesus may peace be upon him, that foretell the advent of Prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him. Some of those prophecies have been mistakenly interpreted as applying to Jesus when they actually apply to Prophet Muhammad. After all, both Jesus and Muhammad, may peace be upon them, came after the Old Testament was written.

Host: I'm sure people would be interested in looking at some of the specific prophecies in the Bible clarifying those which refer to Prophet Muhammad. There are many prophecies there. Where would you like to start?

</p> <p>Jamal Badawi:</p> <p>It would appear to me that the logical point to start from the very beginning of the Bible, the Torah, the Book of Genesis. I have a chart that might summarize our discussion on this.◆ This whole chart, except this corner, which I have covered (and I◆ will go to that later), is based exclusively on the Bible. We are not talking about the Qur'an now; we◆ are talking about the Bible itself. It all starts with Prophet Abraham, which I mentioned is regarded highly by Jews, Christians, and Muslims as the patriarch of Monotheism- the father of both the Arabs and the Israelites.</p> <p>
</p> <p>According to the Bible, particularly in the Book of Genesis, it says, ◆God addressed Abraham saying ◆I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.◆ (12: 2-3) This is extracted from the King James Version of the Bible.</p> <p>
</p> <p>A similar statement can be found in the same Book of Genesis in chapter 17, verse 4. Again it says basically the same thing and indicates God◆s promise to Abraham to bless all through him and through his descendants.</p> <p>
</p> <p>Now, because of the sincerity that was shown through Prophet Abraham, his struggles and his fight against idolatry and the deviation from truth, God rewarded him. First of all, he had his wife Sarah, and according to the Book of Genesis we are told that Sarah was barren (16:1). The Bible also tells us in the same chapter of Genesis that Sarah had an Egyptian bondwoman or handmaid by the name of Hagar (16:3). Because Sarah was barren, she asked Abraham to marry Hagar. In fact, the Bible is specific about this, she gave him Hagar as a wife to Abraham. The Bible, also, tells us that the first child born to Abraham was Ishmael from Hagar (16:11). We are told in the same chapter that this name, Ishmael, was actually chosen by God. The angels told Hagar that this would be the name of the child when he was conceived.</p> <p>
</p> <p>Shifting back to what happens later on to Sarah. Ishmael was born when Prophet Abraham was 86 years old according to the Bible. About 14 years later, Sarah, who was barren, miraculously gave birth to Isaac. The Bible says that when Isaac was born, Abraham was 100 years old.</p> <p>
</p> <p>From the second son, Isaac, came all the Israelite Prophets as you well know. This includes Moses and Jesus, the last of the Israelite Prophets. From the descendants of Ishmael, we find that the Bible, in several places, mentions the name Kedar. According to the Bible, Kedar is the second son of Ishmael. The Bible connects Kedar with the Arabs. Ishmael is considered the father of the Arabs. Kedar has some significance when mentioned in the Bible because it refers to the Arabs.</p> <p>
</p> <p>The only major Prophet that we know of, other than the Israelite Prophets, who came from the descendants of Ishmael is Prophet Muhammad may peace and blessings be upon him. How does this relate to the prophecies in the Bible?</p> <p>
</p> <p>Remember the previous passages where God promises to bless the

descendants of Prophet Abraham may peace and blessings be upon him. ♦We also find that there is specific evidence in the Bible that shows that that promise includes Prophet Ishmael. In other words, to quote ♦Arise (God addressing Hagar), lift up the lad and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.♦ (Gen. 21:18) That was a specific promise: from the descendants of Ishmael there would be a great nation. When God uses His own criteria, of course, and so greatness doesn't mean numbers. There have been so many oppressive and tyrannical empires with large numbers, but greatness also includes greatness from the spiritual heritage. This leads to the belief that there will be a Prophet among the descendants of Ishmael.

From these clear prophecies it is quite obvious that, according to the Bible, there will be some great blessing that will come to the families of the earth through both branches: the Israelites and the Ishmaelites.

The biggest historical evidence is that the only known major Prophet from the descendants of Ishmael was the last Prophet, Muhammad.

Host: Many people have completely disregarded this side of Abraham's family tree on the basis that the lady, Hagar, was a slave woman and that her son was illegitimate. There are other arguments that are put forward to nullify the branch of the family that eventually leads to Prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him. What additional response would you make to those who disregard Ishmael and his descendants?

Jamal Badawi:

You can refer to the Bible itself. In the Book of Genesis it says, ♦And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.♦ (21:13) I wonder how could God use the term ♦thy seed♦ to apply to Abraham if Ishmael was an illegitimate son.

The question here is this: Where in the entire Bible does it say that Ishmael was an illegitimate son of Abraham?