

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE TORAH AND THE GOSPEL

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INTRODUCTION

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Thousands of years ago, God commanded the Jews through Moses, "Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). This commandment is repeated in the same book, "See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32).

Several centuries later Solomon testified, "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar" (Proverbs 30:5,6).

At the end of the Bible we find this stern warning, "I warn everyone who hear the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book" (Revelation 22:18,19).

After such stern warnings, would any believer in God, His books and His apostles dare to distort God's word, and thereby lose his part in all spiritual blessings which God has prepared for His devoted ones, and the promises of salvation and eternal life which God promised to mankind? As for unbelievers, it is not in their power to distort the divine books since they would not be able to obtain the thousands of manuscripts scattered all over the world, in order to forge them.

It is unfortunate that in the last days people should stand up and accuse the innocent apostles of Christ of distorting the gospel which was entrusted to them, thus contradicting not only the Holy Scriptures but also the Muslim Qur'an which testifies to the apostles, known for their integrity and honesty, and calls them "helpers" of God (Sura Al Imran 3:52).

There are many proofs of the authenticity of the Bible and its freedom from distortion, corruption and perversion. These we will explain in the following passages.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLE

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God has carefully watched over the unfolding of His Book with all wisdom and sagacity. Those who examine the Old Testament can see that the divine Scriptures themselves reveal that it took shape in three periods on history.

First period: Adam to Moses

The Sacred Scriptures, inspired by God, inform us that God gave a command to Adam, and that He brought animals and birds to him to see what he would call them (Genesis 2:15-19). But this passage does not say how God spoke to man in the beginning. Therefore most of us resort to conjecture and imagination when passing judgement on sacred history, forgetting that millions of years separate us from the events recorded in the first passages of the book of Genesis.

We are not sure when God began his revelations to mankind, but the contents of the Bible help us to come to a conclusion. Enoch, mentioned in the fifth chapter of Genesis, was, according to Jude the apostle, a prophet in the seventh generation after Adam. The Bible says that Enoch "walked with God". There is no doubt that this prophet and some information about the past and, according to the genealogy of the Bible, he knew Adam and spoke with him. Methuselah, Enoch's son survived till the time of Noah, and was righteous in his generation and walked with God.

Unquestionably Noah, who preached righteousness and truth, passed on the sacred news to the generations after the flood (2 Peter 2:5).

Shem, Noah's son, lived till the time of Abraham (Genesis 10:21 and 11:10,26). The Bible tells us that accounts of the sacred news were communicated to Abraham. In Galatians 3:8 we read the following, "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'" This verse assures us that Abraham had clear information about previous events and that he in his turn passed on what he knew to his sons. In Genesis 18:19 we read, "I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." It is evident from this text, that continuity of communication between Abraham and Moses was not hard to achieve.

Second period: The generations of Moses

Beginning with the book of Exodus, a chronicle of events was recorded in detail in the holy Books in agreement with God's command to Moses to do so. Therefore we read, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it'" (Exodus 17:14).

In fact we know that "He (Moses) took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people" (Exodus 24:7), and that "at the Lord's command Moses recorded the stages in their journey" (Numbers 33:1). We also read that, "After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, he gave the command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord: 'Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God. There it will remain as a witness against you'" (Deuteronomy 31:24-26).

Third period: Joshua to Malachi

God said to Joshua, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it" (Joshua 1:8). "And Joshua recorded these words in the Book of the Law of God" (Joshua 24:26).

"Samuel explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the Lord" (1 Samuel 10:25).

Towards the end of the era of kings, during the reign of Josiah the king, the reading of the Holy Scriptures by Shaphan the scribe at the command of Hilkiah the High Priest caused a revival (2 Kings 22:8-13).

Isaiah the prophet, called upon his people to go back to the Word of God and recite it, affirming its infallibility. He said, "Look in the scroll of the Lord and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together" (Isaiah 34:16).

The prophet Jeremiah was commanded by God to place his prophecies on record, saying, "Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations" (Jeremiah 36:2).

The prophet Daniel testified to the Holy Scriptures in his prophetic book, when he said, "I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years" (Daniel 9:2).

In the reign of Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, both Ezra and Nehemiah devoted themselves to the law of Moses that the Lord God gave to him. The Bible says, "For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord" (Ezra 7:10). In the book of Nehemiah we read, "All the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. So... Ezra brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. He read from it from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate" (Nehemiah 8:1-3).

"And the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah: `This is what the Lord Almighty says, `Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another...' But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets'" (Zechariah 7:8-12).

Malachi spoke of the Bible, which he called "a scroll of remembrance", in the following words: "Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honoured his name" (Malachi 3:16).

The foregoing make it obvious to us that the Lord God watched carefully over the development of His Holy Book throughout the generations, inspiring His holy men to write down their prophecies and teachings for the good of mankind. And such a living God, after inspiring His laws, would see to it that these laws are preserved in accordance with His will and promises.

THE TESTIMONY OF INSPIRATION

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A. God's Testimony to the Permanence of His Words

The Holy Bible contains a number of revelations and promises from God, that His word will never pass away or be changed. Some of these are cited below:

"I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered" (Psalms 89:33,34).

"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matthew 5:18).

"I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:34,35).

"The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

B. God's Testimony to His Prophets

God said to the prophet Jeremiah, "Do not be afraid of them... Now, I have put my words in your mouth" (Jeremiah 1:8,9).

He spoke to the prophet Hosea saying, "I spoke to the prophets, gave them many visions and told parables through them" (Hosea 12:10).

He spoke to the prophet Isaiah saying, "'As for me, this is my covenant with them,' says the Lord. 'My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouth of your children, or from the mouth of their descendants from this time on and forever,' says the Lord" (Isaiah 59:21).

He spoke to the prophet Ezekiel as follows, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak with you. ...I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation... be not afraid of them or their words... Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house... Open your mouth and eat what I give you" (Ezekiel 2:1-8).

He spoke to the prophet Malachi saying, "And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue, says the Lord Almighty. My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips" (Malachi 2:4-6).

And He also spoke to the prophet, "But did not my words and decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your forefathers? Then they repented and said, 'The Lord Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do'" (Zechariah 1:6).

THE TESTIMONY OF THE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES

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God's prophets and apostles testified that God spoke to them and inspired them to write their prophecies and teachings to be an eternal law for mankind. We quote some of their testimonies below.

David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:2).

Isaiah said, "Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:7,8).

"Look in the scroll of the Lord and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together" (Isaiah 34:16).

Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord came to me: 'What do you see, Jeremiah?' 'I see the branch of an almond tree,' I replied. The Lord said to me, 'You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled'" (Jeremiah 1:11,12).

Ezekiel said, "At the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me'" (Ezekiel 3:16,17).

The Lord Jesus told His disciples, "For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:20).

The apostle Paul said, "We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truth in spiritual words" (1 Corinthians 2:12,13).

The apostle Peter said, "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, `All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever'" (1 Peter 1:23-25). "No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20,21).

THE TESTIMONY OF TRADITION OR APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

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History tells us that the religious scholars who were contemporaries of the apostles and those who succeeded them in ministering to the church, quoted from the Bible, especially from the Gospels, in their sermons and works because they were convinced that the books were divine and inspired by God, and therefore incorruptible. We mention some below.

Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, who died in the year 100 AD.

Hermas who wrote a book in three volumes containing many quotations from the New Testament.

Ignatius, appointed Bishop of Antioch 37 years after Christ's ascension.

Polycarp, the Martyr, disciple of the apostle John and Bishop of Smyrna. He was martyred in the year 166 AD. Only one of his writings survives, a letter full of citations from the four gospels.

In addition to the above, there are also church fathers of the second century AD who quoted from the Bible to support their teachings. These include:

Papias, Bishop of the church in Hierapolis in Phrygia, known as a gifted scholar about the year 110 AD. He met Polycarp and wrote a commentary of six volumes on the Bible. He said that the gospels in Greek were circulating in the churches, and testified that Mark, the writer of the gospel, was a companion of Peter and that his gospel was in circulation among the Christians.

Justin, the Martyr, born in 89 AD, was a heathen philosopher before his conversion, but his search after the truth led him to Christianity. This celebrated thinker wrote many books in defence of Christianity and based his defence on the four gospels. In one of his books he mentions that he visited the churches in Rome, Alexandria and Ephesus and noted that the Christians worshipped by reading aloud from the gospels in their churches.

Hegius, who became prominent 30 years after Justin. His testimony has great importance, as he travelled from Palestine to Rome and met many bishops. He relates that he saw Christians in every place teaching one doctrine, based on the law, the prophets and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Irenaeus, of Greek origin from Asia Minor, was born in the year 140 AD. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of the apostle John. The centre of his work was in Lyon where he was ordained bishop, succeeding Bonitus, who was martyred in 177 AD. He wrote an epistle full of quotations from the gospels. In one passage he says, "We have not received salvation from any other source than from those who communicated the gospel to us, which they preached and later wrote by the will of God to be the foundation and pillar of our faith. For after Christ's resurrection from the dead, God endowed the apostles with the power of the Holy Spirit, and they came to know everything about the gospel fully well. They went to the ends of the (then known) world, carrying to mankind the good news of the grace of heavenly peace. Everyone of them carried God's gospel."

"Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews when Paul and Peter were in Rome preaching the gospel of peace and founding the church here. After their departure, Mark, disciple and companion of Peter, wrote his gospel which is the substance of Peter's preaching. Luke the physician and companion of Paul, wrote his gospel in accordance with the teachings of Paul. After this, John, the disciple of Christ, who leaned upon Christ's breast, wrote his Gospel while in Ephesus."

This eminent scholar added, "The teachings which the apostles handed down spread throughout the world. All who seek after the truth find that every church guards these teachings and considers them holy."

He also said, "It is possible for us to remember those whom the apostles appointed as leaders of these churches, and those who succeeded them, up to the present day; and, thanks to this uninterrupted chain of authority, we have received the narratives found in the church and the teachings of the truth as preached by the gospels."

Clement, Bishop of Alexandria, lived 16 years after Irenaeus. He testified that all the churches believed in the four gospels. This meticulous scholar cited the gospels in his teachings and writings and said "the four gospels were authentic."

Tertullian was born in 160 AD and died about 220 AD. This scholar wrote of the apostles: "John and Matthew teach us faith, Luke and Mark, their companions, refresh and inspire us." After enumerating the churches which Paul founded in Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi and Thessalonica, and the churches which were founded by John, and the church of Rome founded by Peter and Paul, he said, "The four gospels have been used by the church from the beginning." He also said, "We Christians meet together to read the Holy Scriptures and nourish our faith, raise our hopes and affirm our trust through the holy word."

It follows from the foregoing that:

- a) The leaders of Christianity, be they contemporaries of the apostles or successors, all distinguished scholars, were citing the sparkling texts of the Holy Scriptures and quoting from them in their daily speech.
- b) Their reliance on the Holy Scriptures and their quotations from them illustrate their conviction that they were the final authority in all controversial matters.
- c) They were reading the Holy Scriptures in their public worship and explaining them.
- d) They wrote commentaries on the Holy Scriptures in several volumes affirming the harmony of the evangelists' records as inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- e) All Christians since the beginning believed in the Holy Scriptures irrespective of their nationality creed.

THE TESTIMONY OF ANCIENT COPIES

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Among the treasures which the Christians preserve there exist ancient manuscripts, the history of which dates back many generations before the advent of Islam. These include the following:

The Alexandrian Codex , named after the city in which it was written. It holds first rank among the three manuscripts. It was presented to King Charles I of England by Cyril Lucar, patriarch of Constantinople in the year 1628 AD. Cyril had brought it with him from Alexandria, of which he had formerly been patriarch. It is written in Greek and contains all the books of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. On the first page, in the margin, a note indicates that the whole book was copied by the hand of a noble Egyptian lady named Taqla, about the year 325 AD. Patriarch Cyril commented on this marginal note with his own hand, that this date was correct in his opinion. The manuscript was written in plain standard writing on parchment, with each leaf divided into two columns, each column consisting of fifty lines. It is till on display in the British Museum in London.

The Codex Vaticanus , so named because it is kept in the Vatican library. It is written on a very beautiful parchment in small plain standard script. There are three columns in each page, each consisting of 42 lines. The codex includes all the books of the Bible in Greek language. Scholars believe it was written about the year 300 AD.

The Codex Sinaiticus , rivals the Vatican Codex in antiquity, and is possibly a little older. It is of great importance in comparing texts. It was named the Sinai Codex owing to its discovery on Mount Sinai, by the German scholar Tischendorf in the monastery of St. Catherine in the year 1844. It is written in a large plain standard script on vellum, with

four columns to each page, and shows evidence of great age. It was presented by the discoverer to Tsar Alexander of Russia, and remained in Russia until the Bolshevik revolution, when it was sold to the British Museum in London, where it is still kept.

The Ephraem Codex is kept in the National Library of Paris and contains all the books of the Bible in Greek language. It is written on parchment in fine script without spacing or signs. The first letter on each page is bigger than the rest. It was probably written about 450 AD.

All these ancient manuscripts give an answer to the claim of the Qur'an that the Holy Scriptures are corrupted and show that they are authentic, for they were written before the Qur'an. The copies in our hands today do not differ in any way from the ancient copies.

THE TESTIMONY OF ANCIENT SCROLLS

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a) The Qumran Scrolls

Among the treasures found in the Qumran caves in Palestine, in 1947, is a complete manuscript of the book of Isaiah the prophet, written in Hebrew on vellum as a scroll. This type of writing and vocabulary indicate that it was written in the second century BC. Scholars who have examined it say that its text is not different from what we use today.

A copy of the books Leviticus, Job, Psalms and Habakkuk was also found in the Qumran caves, the text of which are in accord with the same books we use today. Alongside these writings was found a list of the books of the Old Testament containing all the books we now have, except the book of Esther.

b) The Arsoinoe Scrolls

In the year 1877 there was found at Arsoinoe, located south of Cairo, a large number of documents written on papyrus, buried in the sand, among them a copy of the gospel of John which does not differ from that current among us today.

c) The Sinai Scrolls

Recently there was discovered a copy of the four gospels in the Syriac language in the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai. It dates back earlier than the fifth century AD. It is a copy of a translation made by Christians in the second century AD, and its text does not differ from our current version of the gospels.

Excavations and the discovery of ancient scrolls have therefore confirmed the authenticity of the Bible in a remarkable way. It is remarkable that the divine book could agree with history in such detail. We anticipate that other discoveries will still be made.

Scholars are working hard on excavations, and everything points to the fact that there is no ground left to stand on for the critic or the objector to the New Testament and its traditional dating. Undoubtedly such agreements between these discoveries and texts of the Bible present the strongest proof for the authenticity of divine inspiration and the integrity of those who recorded it.

The archaeologist Dr. Albright says, "By right of the discoveries at Qumran, we can be sure that the New Testament is the same today as when it was first written and contains the teachings of Christ and His disciples. The date of writing goes back to the period between the years 25 and 80 AD."

THE TESTIMONY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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From ancient times the Holy Scriptures have been subjected to the attacks of atheists and infidels, because God's word was incompatible with their thoughts. Many of them tried to find in the ancient remains and inscriptions something conflicting with the Holy Scriptures, but discoveries proved disappointing to them. Inscriptions discovered by archaeologists in Palestine and Mesopotamia confirmed what is recorded in the Bible to an extent that many atheists turned believers, because the ancient inscriptions which have been discovered, have testified to the genuineness of the biblical texts.

It was common belief among archaeologists that writing was not used in Palestine before the year 540 BC, which meant that Moses and other men of the Old Testament did not themselves write the books ascribed to them. Sceptics claimed that the writers of the Torah had grossly exaggerated in the events and extent of culture in the Near East, in view of discrepancies between their books and the findings of ancient historians.

However, modern discoveries have refuted these theories totally, as they have confirmed the authenticity of the divine books in their records of civilisation in Egypt, Babylon and Syria, and confirmed what is said about Sennacherib, Tiglath Pileser, Nebuchadnezzar and others.

We rejoice that these discoveries have offered us the opportunity of seeing tablets on which are inscribed the letters which were used by Moses and Joshua, Isaiah, Samuel and others, and that we are assured that writing was known at the time of Abraham, Moses, Job and Nehemiah as in our days.

We are happy that the words of Christ, that "stones will speak", have been fulfilled in our generation. Indeed they have spoken through inscriptions engraved on them recording most of the important events mentioned in the Bible.

a) The Story of Creation

The Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions contain writings about the story of creation, and they agree with what is written in the Bible except for a few verbal discrepancies. The Bible says, "God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars" (Genesis 1:16). The Babylonian inscriptions say, "God made the nebulae and the stars." The Bible says God made animals and creeping things "according to their kinds" (Genesis 1:24), and the Babylonian inscriptions say, "the gods created these animals." The Bible says, "God formed man from dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7), while the Babylonian version reads, "The god Mardoch created man from flesh and bones."

b) Monotheism and Polytheism

The Bible says that people backslid, forsook the living God and worshipped many gods, and that the prophets sought to turn them back to worship the only God; whereas sceptical scholars claimed that man from the beginning was polytheistic. This theory prevailed amongst most people until Dr. Herbert, an archaeologist and professor of Assyrian studies at Oxford University, repudiated it. This scholar said that monotheism in the Semitic and Sumerian religions existed before polytheism.

Modern discoveries have refuted the belief, common in some circles of learning, which claims that monotheism in the Jewish religion was unknown before the prophets preached it in the 7th and 8th centuries BC. Many of the inspirations affirm that Moses taught the unity of God before the Hebrews entered the land of Canaan.

c) The Story of the Flood

Archaeology has given us a superb story of the flood from the Babylonian inscriptions, which agrees with what is written in the book of Genesis. Both records mention that the flood came according to divine plan, and both relate that the hero of the story warned of the coming of calamity upon the world; and that after giving due warning, he built an ark for himself and his family, then took animals with him into the ark, two of every kind, male and female, for the preservation of the species. When the flood subsided, the ark rested on the top of a mountain and the hero sent out birds to see if the flood had subsided. When the flood was over, he offered sacrifice to God who answered and promised him safety.

d) Ur of the Chaldees

Prior to excavations in Mesopotamia, biblical scholars had no knowledge of the extent of culture and civilisation that existed there. It was evident that this wilderness was once a paradise with flowing rivers and a metropolis of a remarkably civilised nation.

Excavations there confirmed that in the distant past there had come a company of Sumerians to that spot, who settled there and established a splendid civilisation. As for their religion, these Sumerians were polytheists. Each family had its own idol, which explains the behaviour of Rachel when she stole the gods of her father Laban before the flight with her husband Jacob (Genesis 31:27-35).

These excavations also confirm that Abraham was not a mere sheikh of a Bedouin tribe who dwelled in tents, but rather that he belonged to a nation with a magnificent civilisation, living in Haran. This agrees entirely with the text of the Bible in Genesis 11:28-31. When we consider Abraham's long journey, we find that the father of the faithful passed by Dothan, Bethel and Shechem, which are cities mentioned in the Bible. Moreover, ruins discovered in Palestine point to the authenticity of what the Bible has to say about the region lying to the south of the Dead Sea where Abraham spent a period of time; this had flourished and was thickly populated in Abraham's days.

e) The Story of Joseph

Joseph was the victim of a cruel trick on the part of his brothers. He was sold to an Egyptian caravan, but because he was innocent and upright, God worked all things together for good. He found acceptance in the eyes of the Pharaoh who raised him to the position of chief of the Egyptian treasury. This story has been confirmed by a tablet discovered in the tomb of a famous Egyptian who was a contemporary of Joseph's. Scholars infer from this inscription that a fearful famine took place in his days and the state distributed to the people food which had been stored by the treasurer in the years of plenty; and in turn the state confiscated private property. This account agrees with what is written in Genesis 47:18-22.

f) The Hebrew Captivity in Egypt

In Egypt a stone sculpture was found from the time of Thotmes III, which portrays the Hebrews building a temple for Pharaoh. A number of ruins were also found, the walls of which measure eight feet in thickness. They are made of straw and mud dried in the sun. This discovery supports the record in Exodus 5:7.

g) The Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt

A tablet was found in Tell-el-Amarna, in the year 1888, with inscriptions in the cuneiform writing, relating that the governors of Palestine had sent the tablets to Pharaoh asking for help against the invasion of a people called Hebrews.

h) Moses and the Law

There was a common belief prevalent among some scholars that the law came after the time of Moses. But excavations of ruins under the leadership of de Morgan in 1884, confirmed the Bible in its record that the law was given by Moses. This excavator discovered a treasury of manuscripts in the palace of Shushan, which is mentioned in the book of Esther. These manuscripts support the Bible's accounts of the law of Moses.

i) Bible Accounts of Some Ancient Races

In Ras Shamra, some ten miles north of Lataqiah in Syria, the remains of the city of Ugarit were discovered. It was founded in the year 2000 BC. Hundreds of tablets were

found there which agree with the Bible's accounts of the Hittites, the Hivites and the Perizzites.

k) Egyptian Tablets Establishing the Existence of the Hittites

Until recently historians doubted the existence of Hittites, from whom, the Bible says, Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah to be a burial place for his wife Sarah, in Genesis 23:20. This doubt persisted until their chronicles were discovered on ancient Egyptian tablets. One of these relates a battle between the Hittites and the armies of Ramses II near Qadesh in the year 1287 BC.

THE TESTIMONY OF ISLAM

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The Qur'an testifies to the authenticity of the divine Scriptures. Those who read it are astonished by its plain testimony, which is so clear that it does not need interpretation. This witness is repeated in a number of Suras including the following:

"Lo! We did reveal the Torah, wherein is guidance and light, by which the prophets who surrendered, pass judgment for the Jews, and the rabbis and the priests by such of Allah's Scriptures as was entrusted to them and thereunto they are witnesses" (Sura al-Ma'ida 3:44).

"And we caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, confirming that which was revealed before him in the Torah, and We bestowed on him the Gospel wherein is guidance and a light, confirming that which was revealed before it in the Torah a guidance and an admonition unto those who ward off evil" (Sura al-Ma'ida 5:46).

"And unto you we have revealed the Scriptures with the truth, confirming whatever Scripture was before it, and watcher over it. So judge between them by that which Allah has revealed therein" (Sura al-Ma'ida 5:48).

In the first verse the Qur'an testifies to the authenticity of the Torah; that it is the right guidance against error and a light to reveal matters by which the prophets shall judge, in accordance with such of God's Book as was entrusted to them, and to the trust of which they were witnesses. In the second verse is a statement that Christ confirmed the Torah to be true and that His gospel, which is guidance, light and admonition, confirmed that which preceded it in the Holy Books. In the third text, the Qur'an affirms that it was revealed to Muhammad, confirming whatever scripture came before it, and that he was a guardian of it, enjoined to judge by what God had revealed in it, in support of the Torah and the Gospel.

In endorsing the Torah and Gospel, the Qur'an goes on to exhort their adherents to carry out the teaching therein, and in this respect says, "Say: O People of the Scriptures; You

have no (guidance) till you observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed unto you from your Lord" (Sura al-Ma'ida 5:68).

The Qur'an also exhorts the believers of the Gospel to uphold the judgement contained in their book and described those who neglect this as iniquitous. It says, "Let the people of the Gospel judge by what God has revealed therein. Whoso judges not by that which God has revealed, such are licentious" (Sura al-Ma'ida 5:47).

"O you who believe: Believe in God and His messengers, and the Scripture which He revealed aforetime. Whoso disbelieves in God and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers and the Last Day, he verily has wandered far astray" (Sura al-Nisa' 4:136).

From the foregoing it has become clear that:

a) The Qur'an exhorts the People of the Book to carry out the commands of the Torah and the Gospel. This is an implicit admission of their authenticity and integrity as they both fortify the believer in salvation, which is in righteousness, and contain adequate instruction for conduct.

b) The Qur'an commands all believers, including Muslims, to believe in the Qur'an and the Book which was revealed prior to it, i.e. the Torah and Gospel. This is a clear call to Muslims to accept and believe in the Torah and Gospel, and is in keeping with the following Qur'anic verse: "Those are they unto whom We gave the Scripture and command and prophethood. But if these disbelieve therein, then indeed We shall entrust it to a people who will not be disbelievers therein. Those are they whom God guides, so follow their guidance" (Sura al-An'am 6:89,90).

The Qur'an recognises the competence of the Bible to rightly assess things in the spiritual realm, when it says to Muhammad: "How come they unto you for judgement when they have the Torah, wherein is contained the commandment of God? Yet even after that they turn away. Such (folk) are not believers" (Sura al-Ma'ida 5:43). This verse shows that those who uphold the commandments of the Bible have no need to resort to any other book to be judged by. Whereas those who turn away from the Divine Book, after knowing the truth contained therein, are described as unbelievers.

"Say (unto them, O Muhammad!) Then bring a scripture from Allah that gives clearer guidance than those two (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful" (Sura al-Qasas 28:49). This verse instructs Muhammad on what to say to those who reject his message as they rejected that of Moses before him, i.e. to bring a scripture from God giving clearer guidance than the Bible and Qur'an.

"And we sent not (as our messengers) before you other than men whom We inspired. Ask the followers of the Remembrance if you know not" Sura al-Nahl 6:43). The Jalalan commentary says that: "The followers of the Remembrance" are those learned in the Torah and Gospel. If you do not know that, they do and you are to believe them more than the believers of Muhammad" (Jalalan, page 357).

In fact this verse is a clear testimony that the apostles of God and his prophets who wrote "The Remembrance" did so by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Alongside other verses we cited, this verse affirms that the Qur'an considers our Bible as guidance, a light, a remembrance, the command of God and His inspiration. God commanded the Muslims to ask us about that which they do not know. Is this not a clear admission from the Qur'an that our holy books are authentic and therefore uncorrupted?

They agree with the testimony of the apostles of Christ as to the authenticity of the Bible and its inspiration. The devoted apostle Paul said, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

This is why Christians accept the Old Testament which was completed about the year 400 BC. The Jews divided it into three parts:

a) **The Torah** , consisting of five books written by Moses, i.e. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which from the beginning have been considered sacred, respected and revered because they contain the Ten Commandments of God, and His promises to man.

b) **The Prophets** , subdivided into two sections: The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi on the other.

c) **The Writings** , consisting of the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations of Jeremiah, Ecclesiastes and Esther.

With regard to the books of the New Testament, scholars are unanimous that they were written and compiled while many of Christ's followers, who had heard Him and seen Him, were still alive. The New Testament consists of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of Paul, the letters of Peter, the letters of James, John and Jude, and the book of Revelation.

This is a summary of the contents of the Bible inspired by God through His saints. God has guarded it with the greatest care. He chose faithful men to write down His revelations, and likewise to translate them into the languages of the world. There is no doubt that its circulation today, in approximately one thousand and four hundred languages and dialects, proves that God has been watchful over His word and guards it forever.

Indeed nations will come and go, languages will die out and the world will change, but the precious Bible will live forever, because it contains the message of God for every man and woman, boy and girl, at all times and in all places: I mean the message of salvation through Jesus Christ which is for all, be they black or white and of all races and languages. There is living power in God's Book, which gives power to all who accept Jesus Christ as saviour by faith, to become the children of God.

AN INEVITABLE QUESTION

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Having covered the foregoing points, we feel entitled to ask those who claim that the Bible has been corrupted for scientific and historical proof as to the period when such corruption took place.

If they say it happened before Christ, we put it to them that Christ had testified to the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, in the following instances:

a) By citing prophecies therein which speak of Him. One example is the prophecy of Isaiah, which Christ quoted in the synagogue at Nazareth and which says, "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:1,2). Luke the writer of the Gospel tells us that after Christ had read this prophecy concerning Himself, He told His listeners, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4: 21).

b) By exhorting the Jews to read the Holy Scriptures and increase their learning thereof when He said, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me" (John 5:39).

c) By reproving the Sadducees for their ignorance of the Holy Scriptures when he told them, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?" (Mark 12:24).

d) By using Holy Scriptures as a weapon against the temptations of the devil. We read that Christ warded off the devil's temptations in the wilderness of Jordan, by quoting Bible texts. To the first temptation He replied, "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3). To the second temptation he replied, "Do not test the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 6:16). And the third one He warded off by saying, "It is written, 'Fear the Lord your God, serve him only'" (Deuteronomy 6:13).

Christ's apostles, too, followed the example of their master by citing the Old Testament prophecies in support of their writings. When relating the death of Judas Iscariot for instance, they said, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it', and, 'May another take his place of leadership'" (Acts 1:20 and Psalms 109:8).

When they spoke of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost they explained, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your son and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your

old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:16-18 and Joel 2: 18,19).

It is possible that Christ and his inspired apostles should try and confirm their apostleship and teachings by quoting from corrupted Scriptures and then exhort people to read them and keep their commands? Who would dare say that Christ and His apostles had no knowledge of such corruption and therefore quoted from it in ignorance? If anyone, of any belief, ventures such a claim, he would be discrediting the authenticity of inspiration to the apostles and prophets and, consequently, attributing to God negligence in guarding His Scriptures. Moreover, such a discrediting claim would expose the Qur'an most, because it contains many texts testifying to the authenticity of Holy Scriptures.

But if those who claim the corruption of the Bible, say that it was the Jews who interfered with the text of the Old Testament after Christ's era, the answer would be that it is impossible. All Old Testament books were in the hands of Christians and if the Jews played with the idea of meddling with them, the Christians would have exposed them.

If those who claim "Corruption" say that the Christians corrupted the Bible, our reply is that such an attempt is unlikely; and, if perchance, they did corrupt it, could there not have been an outcry from the Jews against the Christians?

And if the believers in "corruption" claim that both Jews and Christians conspired and played into each other's hands to corrupt the Bible, they would find themselves ridiculed, because the Jews who have been opposed to Christianity from the beginning, and who denied the coming of Christ are not likely to come to terms with Christians.

Supposing such an impossibility should have taken place, would not the Jews have insisted on cutting out all references which glorify Christ or speak of his divinity, and all the prophecies which speak of Him and His incarnation and miraculous birth together with the other prophecies of his suffering, death and resurrection? Since all such texts which glorify Christ remain in the Bible, every claim in this context is null and void.

There is also another fact which those who claim "corruption" cannot dismiss: Since the dawn of Christianity the books of the Old Testament have existed amongst Jews and Christians in the same language in which holy men of God wrote. Scholars have carried out careful comparisons of copies preserved by both sides and found that they are in full agreement.

Moreover, we are entitled to ask those who claim "corruption": When did such corruption of the Gospel take place? Was it before or after the Qur'an? If they say, "before the Qur'an", then the Qur'an places them in a dilemma, because it commands Muhammad to seek help from those who read the Bible in order to eliminate any doubts, when it says, "And if you (Muhammad) are in doubt concerning that which we reveal unto you, then question those who read the Scripture (that was) before you" (Sura Yunus 10:94).

Since God is omniscient, it is not in keeping with His majesty to refer Muhammad to those who read a corrupted book, in order to eliminate any doubts.

In testifying to the authenticity of the Bible, the Qur'an goes on, "And unto you have We revealed the Scripture with the truth, confirming whatever Scripture was before it, and a watcher over it" (Sura al-Ma'ida 5:48). A "watcher" is a "guard", and a guard is one who protects the books of God and its divine laws and truths.

If the alleged "corruption" took place after the Qur'an, then anyone claiming "corruption" is saying that the Qur'an has failed in its function as a guard. In other words, if the Torah and Gospel have been corrupted after the Qur'an, such a claim is a clear indictment of the people of the Qur'an for the neglect of the most important duty which the Qur'an was given. They should have at least kept one or more copies of the Torah and Gospel before they were corrupted, because guardianship necessitates the existence of something to be guarded.

The Christians have done this. When they saw in the Torah prophecies about Christ, their Lord, they made themselves guardians thereof and did their utmost to propagate them in the world to an extent that translations are available in 1400 languages today. Why have the Muslims not done the same, seeing they believe that the Torah and Gospel contain prophecies and evidences about Muhammad?

The following are some verses on the incorruptibility of God's Word:

- "Lo! Even We, reveal the Reminder, and Lo! We truly are its Guardian" (Sura al-Hijr 15:9).
- "There is none to alter the Words of Allah" (Sura al-An'am 6:34).
- "There is no changing of the Word of Allah" (Sura Yunus 10:64).
- "It is the law of Allah which has taken course aforetime. You will not find any power to change the law of Allah" (Sura al-Fath 48:23).
- "Perfected is the Word of your Lord in truth and justice. There is nothing that can change His words, He is the Hearer, the Knower" (Sura al-An'am 6:115).
- "And recite that which has been revealed unto you of the Scripture of your Lord. There is none who can change His words, and you will find no refuge beside Him" (Sura al-Kahf 18:27).

The above collection of texts contains promises from God that no one can change his Word, for He revealed it and He guarded it.

Having covered this ground we feel we ought to ask this question: If a group of Muslims who observe the Qur'an in detail wanted to go the people of the Book to ask about some theological matters, and met on their way a group of those who claim "corruption" and said to them: "We are on our way to the People of the Book, as the Qur'an bids us, to ask about some matters", would those who claim "corruption" dare say to them, "Do not go, because their book is corrupted"? If, by chance, they dared to say so, what would be the

position of those believers? Would they believe those who claim "corruption" or would they believe the Qur'an which says, "Ask the People of the Book if you do not know"?

This first question leads us to another: How would those who believe in the "corruption"-theory fare, if sceptics who fed them with the idea of the "corruption" of the Torah and Gospel, hurled the same accusation against the Qur'an, and claimed it too was corrupted? What would they say and with what weapon would they face such sceptics after they have discarded the only weapon which God put into their hands, i.e. His promise that He upholds and guards His Holy Books from all distortion and corruption?

There is a third question: What attitude would the average Muslim who accepts the claim of the "corruptionists" take in the face of the following words of the Qur'an: "Alif. Lam. Mim. This is the Scripture of which there is no doubt, a guidance, unto those who ward off (evil), who believe the unseen, and establish worship, and spend of what We bestowed upon them; and who believe in that which is revealed unto you (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before you, and are certain of the Hereafter. These depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful" (Sura al-Baqara 2:1-5). "Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We makes no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered" (Sura al-Baqara 2:136).

How come that the Qur'an commands those who believed in what was revealed in it, that they should make no distinction between their Qur'an and Books which where before it, if the latter has been corrupted and changed? Would not such a claim of corruption be an indictment on the righteousness of God, His truth and integrity?

Take the truth from history: All who read history have learned that the Christians from the early apostolic era to the beginning of the fourth century AD suffered persecution and torture at the hands of the heathen and the Jews. They bore it with endurance, which astonished the whole world, especially their persecutors. This endurance sprang from their faith in the Holy Gospel and their devotion to its divine principles.

History tells us that they faced martyrdom with joy, out of love for Christ and in obedience to His command to them to "be faithful unto death". Many of them brought on themselves the worst forms of persecution because they refused to deny Christ or reject His Gospel, preferring any kind of death to temporary enjoyment of life.

Open the records of Christianity and you will find mention of masses of witnesses who were tortured and would not accept deliverance because they looked forward to a better resurrection. Can anyone believe that the Christians, who made such great sacrifices, and endured suffering for the principles of the Gospel would venture to corrupt their Gospel?

Would the Christians allow anyone, no matter what his position, to change a single word of the Gospel of God, when they had that apostolic command which says, "But even if

we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:8).

I would like to ask everyone who claims "corruption", what is the incentive of Christians to corrupt their Bible? Would such an incentive be more preferable to them than their eternal life? Their Lord and Redeemer, whom they worshipped with their spirit and blood and with everything they held precious, had sealed his covenant with them by a warning to them through His faithful apostle John which says, "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life in the holy city, which are described in this book" (Revelations 22:18,19).

If however the "corruptionists" claim that "corruption" took place after the Qur'an, their allegations are rendered untenable by the following facts:

a) Christianity had spread throughout many lands such as Anatolia, Arabia, North Africa, Persia, India, Italy, France, Spain, England and Germany. Is it logical to suppose that Christians in all these far off lands could one day meet in one place and agree on the alternation of their Gospel?

b) Those who had embraced Christianity in the above lands did not speak one language but many. The Bible was circulating in their different languages which makes any agreement to falsify Holy Scriptures an impossibility, especially as these people were ignorant of one another's language.

c) In the fourth century AD, Christians were divided according to their different dogmas. Everyone sought to support their ideas with texts from the Bible. There were many discussions about interpretation and councils met to discuss doctrinal differences. One of the most important of these was the Council of Nicaea which ended with the condemnation of the heresy of Arius and his followers.

Against this background, therefore, the claim that Christians conspired to alter the Gospel cannot stand. We are thus clearly entitled to pose a question to those who claim "corruption" and ask them to mention the time and place where such "corruption" took place, and the perpetrators thereof, and how it was that they reached agreement.

The world has never lacked honest historians who preserved writing chronicles of world events. Can anyone, therefore, mention the name of a historian, heathen, Jew or Muslim, who stated or even suggested that there ever was any conference between people of the world who embraced Judaism and Christianity, with differing beliefs and languages, where the act of perverting the Word of God was committed? Presuming this did take place would it not have occurred to anyone to preserve one or more (original) copies to stand witness to the collusion of the Jews and Christians?

Certainly, if such collusion did take place, it would have meant that the controversy between Jews and Christians had come to an end, at the cost of perverting the Law of God.

WHAT MUSLIM SCHOLARS HAVE TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT OF "CORRUPTION"

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It is clear from the foregoing that the Qur'an recognizes the Torah and the Gospel as the Word of God, and emphasizes that the Word of God cannot be changed. If this double testimony is true, the conclusion follows that the Torah and the Gospel have not been corrupted, either before the Qur'an or after.

As a matter of fact, Muslim scholars in India, having examined this matter in detail in the light of the contents of the Qur'an, were convinced that the book of the Holy Bible, both the Old and New Testament, have not been changed, substituted or corrupted as is generally taken for granted; but there are indications that some of the Jews acted wrongly in their interpretations

These faithful scholars have based their convictions on certain comments by Muslim scholars on some texts of the Qur'an, such as those of Al-Razi, Al-Jalalan and Abu Ja'far al-Tabari. We reproduce below some of these texts.

- "Some of those who are Jews change the words from their context and say, 'We hear and disobey', 'Hear as one who hears not' and 'Listen to us', distorting with their tongues and slandering religion" (Sura al-Nisa', 4:46).

The gist of Al-Tazi's explanation of this verse is that a party of Jews used to come to Muhammad with some questions which Muhammad answered. But, when they left him they distorted his replies.

Al-Jalalan's explanations of the above verse is given in the following manner: A party of the Jews changed words contained in the Torah from their original wording, especially those attributed to Muhammad. They tell Muhammad if he commands something, "We hear your saying but we disobey your command." They also tell him, "Listen without hearing", meaning, "You never heard anything." Finally they say to him "Ra'ina", which in Arabic means "Listen to us", but is used as a curse in their own language. Thus they distort (i.e. misquote) with their tongue and slander Islam (Jalalan 112).

In al-Tabari's commentary we read that the Jews were cursing and offending Muhammad with the worst utterings, saying "Hear from us as one who has no hearing"; as one would insultingly address another, "Listen! May God make you

not hear!" As for the word "Ra'ina", he interpreted it (quoting Ibn Wahb) as meaning "To Listen to wrong speech!"

According to the above interpretation the Jews have not in any way omitted anything from the text of the Book or added to it; all they did was to alter the meaning of the words by twisting their tongues (Al-Tabari, Vol.8, p.433).

- "O People of the Scripture, now Our messenger has come to you, expounding for you much of what you used to hide in the Scripture, and forgiving much" (Sura al-Ma'ida 5:15).

Al-Razi states in his explanations of this verse, that it concerns Jews, who while reading the Torah (Deuteronomy 22:23,24) twisted their tongues and changed the meaning of "stoning" to "lashing".

Al-Tabari explains the text by saying that the Jews came to Muhammad to question him about "stoning". And they came together in a house and Muhammad asked them, "Who of you is the most learned?" They pointed to Ibn Suria. Muhammad asked him, "Are you the most learned among these?" Ibn Suria bid Muhammad to put any question to him. Muhammad repeated his question and asked, "Are you the most learned among these?" Ibn Suria replied, "They say so". Muhammad adjured him by the One who gave the Torah to Moses and lifted Mount Tur. He adjured him by the covenants taken by them, until Ibn Suria was shaken and said, "Our women are beautiful, thus stoning increased among us. So to save life, we cut (the commandment) short and applied one hundred lashes and the shaving of the head." Then Muhammad ordered them to be stoned (Al-Tabari, Vol.11, p.611).

- "They do not measure the power of Allah with its true measure, when they say. 'Allah has not revealed anything to a human being.' Say (to the Jews who speak thus), 'Who revealed the Book which Moses brought, a light and guidance for mankind? You put it on parchments which you show, but you hide much (of it).'" (Sura al-An'am 6:91).

Al Baidawi, Al-Razi and Al-Tabari all agree that what is intended here by distortion is a misrepresentation of facts by withholding some of the texts of the Torah, meaning that they proudly show the Jews that they wrote the Torah on scrolls of parchment, and also opened up much of what they had written down, to the people. But they also hid much of what was in the scrolls, thus they withheld the information from the people.

We agree this is a disgraceful and despicable thing to do. But "hiding" parchments is something totally different from "substituting texts".

- "Have you any hope that they will believe you when a party of them used to listen to the Word of Allah, then used to change it, after they had understood it, knowingly?" (Sura al-Baqara 2:75).

Al-Tabari's commentary has the following explanation: "Some men of learning addressed Moses, 'It is impossible for us to see God (glory and honor to Him), so let us hear His words when He speaks to you.' Moses sought God's approval and was told, 'Yes, let them be purified, and let them purify their clothes and observe a fast.' They did so and Moses took them to Mount Tur. When the mist covered them, Moses commanded and they fell prostrate. God then spoke to Moses and they heard his words of command and prohibition and understood what they heard. Moses then returned with the party to the Israelites. When they came to them, a group of them distorted what they were commanded (by God)."

We see from the foregoing that some of the Jewish men of learning twisted the meaning of the words they heard after they had understood them, but the others stood to what they heard. (Al-Tabari, Vol.1, p.334)

- "And of the Jews: Listeners for the sake of falsehood, listeners on behalf of other folk who come to you, changing words from their context" (Sura al-Ma'ida 5:41).

Al Jalalan's commentary explains this verse as follows, "This verse was said about a party of the Khaibar Jews who did not want to impose the "stoning" sentence for adultery on two of their married folk. They sent a delegation from Quraidha to question Muhammad about the judgment concerning the two as contained in the Torah, such as the verse on "stoning". The distortion of which they were accused is that the Khaibar Jews told the delegation they sent out, 'If Muhammad gives a verdict of "lashing", accept it, but if he gives a verdict of "stoning", beware of accepting it'" (Jalalan, 150).

The following question may be appropriate here: "Who was it among the Jews who 'corrupted' the Torah and in what era?" Al-Razi says it was particularly the contemporaries of Muhammad who did so. But he observes, in volume three of his commentary to the Qur'an that 'corruption' meant casting vain doubts, reading into the text and misrepresenting the true meaning of words by false renderings, and resorting to verbal tricks, as was done by heretics throughout the ages with texts which conflicted with their particular views.

We are by no means defending the integrity of the Jews. But we do wish to make it known that the Jews did not dare to alter the text of the Torah, and this was not implied in the accusations of the Qur'an. Then there is something else we must point to here, and that is that the Qur'an never accuses Christians of distorting the Gospel.

In any case we put it to anyone who claims "corruption" of the Bible in its text or alleges that the true text of the Book is not available, that such an allegation is contradictory to

the plain contents of the Qur'an, which testifies that the Bible is authentic and beyond falsehood. We have established that it is one of the Qur'an's main objectives to confirm the Bible.

Indeed, no one who believes in God and His Books and Messengers, dares to attribute to God, glory be to His name, the fact that He sent the Qur'an to authenticate a forged and distorted Book as for as the doctrines contained in it are concerned.