



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

The Bible, God's Word, & Islam's Qur'an [Comm. Groups]

SUMMARY:

Judaism, Christianity, & Islam are related religions. Each worships one God, the Creator, venerates the patriarch, Abraham, and holds a sacred text – the Torah (Old Testament), Bible (Old & New Testaments), and Qur'an respectively. Islam defines itself in relation to its predecessors. It claims all faith-adherents are equally "Peoples of the Book," yet the prior texts – Old & New Testaments – were hopelessly corrupted during scribal transmission. In contrast, it alleges the Qur'an has been perfectly preserved and is uniformly recited across the globe.

We examine these claims. Is the New Testament so corrupted that the original text is unrecoverable and essential biblical truths compromised? Is today's Qur'an identical to the original conveyed to Muhammad? Are Christians accurately described as "People of the Book"? Does the Christian Bible have the same role as Islam's Qur'an? Most significantly, for Christians, *God's ultimate self-revelation is not found in the Bible, but in Jesus Christ, the incarnate "Word of God."* In this contest, Jesus Christ, God's living 'Word,' is infinitely superior to the Qur'an.

Discussion Questions:

Part 1: Textual Variants (differences) in NT Manuscripts

- Facts: The Greek NT has 138,000 words. There are 300,000 to 400,000 NT textual variants (about 2.5 per Greek word)
- Bart Ehrman points out, "There are more variants [differences] among our manuscripts than there are words in the NT." "The impression is clear: the *original NT has been lost in a sea of variants.*" (E. Hixson)
- Q: Is this 'impression' accurate? Has the original Greek NT been 'lost'?

- Q: How does understanding the nature of NT manuscripts & variants help put these facts into perspective?
- Q: D. Wallace states 'only about 1% of the textual variants are both meaningful & viable' & 'significant textual variants that alter core doctrines of the NT have not yet been produced.' How can we reconcile this with the statements above? o

Part 2: The Qur'an: Islam's Claims Evaluated

- Q: Evaluate: "The Qur'an, the ultimate authority in Islam, is believed to be the accurate record of the God's speaking to Muhammad [via an angel], recorded & preserved free of error (inerrant) in its Arabic form."
- Q: Does the historical record of Muhammad, & the early transmission of the Qur'an support these claims?
- Q: Are all Arabic Qur'ans recited throughout the Islamic world today identical?

Part 3: The Bible, God's Word, & Islam's Qur'an

- Q: Evaluate this: "Judaism, Christianity, & Islam — the world's 3 Monotheistic Abrahamic Religions are fundamentally the same: each believes in one Creator God (Yahweh, Allah), venerates Abraham as forefather, & are 'People of the Book' (Torah, Qur'an, Bible)." Discuss
- Q: Are Christians "People of the Book (Bible)" in the same way that Muslim's are "People of the Book (Qur'an)"? Discuss.
- Q: Evaluate: "It is Christ himself, not the Bible, who is the true Word of God." – S. Lewis. Does this statement elevate Jesus Christ above Scripture? Is such 'elevation' justified?
- Q: Evaluate: "*What corresponds in the Christian scheme to the Qur'an is not the Bible but the person of Christ* – it is Christ who is for Christians the [ultimate] revelation of (from) God." – Wilfred C. Smith