



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

The Bible, God's Word, & Islam's Qur'an

Part 1: *Textual Variants (differences) in NT Manuscripts*

“Textual Variants” due Scribal changes & errors in the copying process

- “A ‘textual variant’ is ‘a difference between manuscripts of the same [NT] text, whether in spelling, phrasing, or content, which has occurred during the transmission [copying] of the document.’ –Philip Comfort

Types of Textual Variants (Differences)

- “The overwhelming majority of [textual] variants are inconsequential, comprised mainly of spelling differences, the presence or absence of the article, changes in word order, & accidental omissions. Daniel Wallace contends that ‘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.’ –Dean Deppe ? Examples:

A. 400,000 text variants/differences between manuscripts

- Transcription errors e.g. spelling errors, variations in spelling (e.g. ‘color’ US vs. ‘colour’ UK)
- The presence/absence of the article e.g. ‘house’ vs. ‘*the* house’
- Nonsense errors: “We were ‘*horses*’ [gentle] among you” (1 Thess. 2:7) How many differences affect the meaning of the text?
- How many of them are ‘viable’ –i.e., likely to reflect the original word-meaning?
- Word order in Greek is not important e.g.: ‘Jesus loves Paul,’ ‘Paul loved (by) Jesus’, etc. ? Differences don’t change meaning or affect doctrin

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

The claims about the Qur'an A. Claims made by Islamic leaders

- A. "Prophet Muhammad ... announced at the age of 40 (~610 CE) that he was receiving revelation of these words from an angel sent by the One God." <https://quran.com/about-the-quran>
- B. The Qur'an was simply dictated by Muhammad to his followers with no change or editing.
- C. The Qur'an was memorized by Muhammad and passed on by memory perfectly to Muslims today.
- D. There has only ever been one version of the Qur'an.
- E. All Qur'ans are identical, with no variants.
- F. The Qur'an is superior to other scriptures in its preservation, & hence in its message about God.

The truth about the Qur'an

- A. Early in Islam history, there were different Qur'ans
- B. The 3rd caliph, Uthman...commissioned a standard version for the entire Muslim community. He had the other collections destroyed. (around 655 AD or 25 years after death of Muhammad)
- C. Today there are 10 different Arabic Qur'ans (recitations) used around the world. There is nothing special about the preservation of the Qur'an.

Are all Arabic Qur'ans used in the world today identical

Conclusions

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

3 Monotheistic Abrahamic Religions – Judaism, Christianity, & Islam

- A. Common 'Surface Elements': Islam, Christianity, & Judaism
- B. The Bible plays a Different Role in Christianity

The Word of God is a Person — Jesus Christ, Not a Text/Book (Jn. 1:1, 14; Heb. 1:2)

- A. Christ as the Ultimate Revelation, Not the Bible
 - "It is Christ himself, not the Bible, who is the true Word of God [Jn. 1:1, 14]." – C. S. Lewis
- B. The Bible & Gospel proclamation point to Jesus Christ

Appropriate Comparison — Jesus Christ, God's Word vs. Islam's Qur'an

Wrong Comparisons — the Bible vs. Qur'an & Jesus vs. Muhammad

- A. Major Mistake— direct comparison Bible vs. Qur'an
 - ? "The most usual *error is to suppose... the roles of Jesus Christ in Christianity & of Muhammad in Islam are comparable... 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 revelation of (from) God." –Wilfred C. Smith*