



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Examining the text & our hearts:

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

*"In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness & respect, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience..."* (1 Pet. 3:15-16a)

#### 1. "Textual Variants" are due to changes & errors made by scribes in the copying process.

- "A *'textual variant'* is *'a variation in wording that occurs when one compares [surviving] copies of a manuscript, representing different readings [versions] of the same passage [NT verse].'*" (Bruce M. Metzger, *Text of the NT*, p )
- "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 W. Comfort, *NT Text & Translation Commentary*).

#### 2. 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'* & that *'significant textual variants that alter core doctrines of the NT have not yet been produced'* (Daniel Wallace, "Gospel according to Bart')." [Dean Deppe, *All Roads Lead to the Text*, p. 39]
- "The vast majority of the [NT] Greek text is not affected by errors... in variant readings, i.e., portions of the text where different manuscripts disagree. Of the small amount of the text affected... *the vast majority of these are minor slips of the pen, misspelled words, etc., or intentional but quickly analyzed changes. We are certain of the original reading in these places.*" [Edward D. Andrews, *Original Text of the NT*, 248]
- 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' presence/absence of Gk. nu – equivalent to 'a apple' vs. 'an apple' in English
- Nonsense errors: "We were 'horses' [gentle] among you" (1 Thess. 2:7) Ask: is the variant reading viable? Is it significant
- How many differences affect the meaning of the text?
- How many of them are 'viable' –i.e., are found in manuscripts with sufficient pedigree that there's some likelihood of reflecting the original word-meaning?
- Word order, which in Greek is not important examples: 'Jesus loves Paul,' 'Paul loved (by) Jesus', etc
- Differences don't change meaning ? Differences don't affect doctrine

### 3. Did scribes change the Bible in order to bring it in line with emerging 'orthodox' teaching?

- *"Bart Ehrman's thesis is that orthodox scribes purposely changed (corrupted) the [NT] text to bring it in line with the beliefs of emerging orthodoxy...It's raised in his books: *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture (1993) & Misquoting Jesus (2005)*." (Joseph D. Fantin, "Revisiting the Corruption of the NT," Voice DTS, 2013)*
- *"Scribes were not simply machines copying texts word for word. They had their own ideas & their own agendas, and sometimes these affected the way they transcribed their texts." — Bart Ehrman Blog ? "Scribes... inserted [new] material into the NT." — Bart Ehrman*

### 4. Muslim apologists use this to further their claims that the Bible has been corrupted

- *"Bart Ehrman... has pointed out in his book *Misquoting Jesus* that changes were made to the NT to support later theological developments, such as the Trinity & the divine status of Jesus. These findings support the Islamic perspective that the original message of Jesus, which was purely monotheistic, was altered in subsequent centuries." (Shabir Ally, "Is the NT Reliable?" Debate with Jay Smith, 2004)*
- *"Bart Ehrman, in his book *Misquoting Jesus*, clearly shows how the NT was changed over time to support later theological ideas. These alterations give credence to the Islamic belief that the Bible, in its current form, does not represent the true teachings of Jesus but rather later innovations." (Zakir Naik, "Is the Bible God's Word?" Debate, 2006)*
- Daniel Wallace observes: *"Muslim apologists have taken Ehrman's conclusions in *Misquoting Jesus* & run with them, claiming that the Bible has been hopelessly corrupted to support doctrines like the Trinity & Jesus' divinity. But what they [Muslim apologists] ignore is that the overwhelming majority of textual variants are minor & do not affect core Christian beliefs. Ehrman's work... does not demonstrate that these doctrines were later inventions." (Daniel B. Wallace, "Revisiting the Corruption of the NT," 2011, p. 23)*

### 5. No Essential Christian Doctrine is dependent on Textual Variants

- *"Essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the [NT] manuscript tradition." Ehrman*
- *"I don't want people to get the wrong idea...I'm not saying that we can't trust the text of the NT altogether. I'm saying that there are places where we're not sure what the original text said. But, for the most part, we are relatively certain, & the textual variants that exist do not affect basic Christian doctrine." –Bart Ehrman, PBS.*
- *"Bart Ehrman's claim that the variations in our NT manuscripts create doubt about core Christian doctrines is simply not supported by the evidence. No cardinal Christian doctrine is affected by any viable textual variant." (Michael J. Kruger, *Question of Canon*, p. 110)*
- *"Significant textual variants that alter core doctrines of the NT have not yet been produced." – Dan. Wallace*
- *"Even Ehrman admits in more technical works that no essential Christian belief is compromised by textual His more popular works, however, obscure this fact." (M. J. Kruger, *Heresy of Orthodoxy*, p. 43)*

## 6. The way it was transmitted to us

- *"The Bible is the most accurately transmitted book from the ancient world. No other ancient book has as many, as early, or more accurately copied manuscripts."* –Norman Geisler

### a. The manuscripts

- a. There are no original copies.
- b. The number of portions of manuscripts of NT
  - Greek NT Manuscript total: 5,856
  - Earliest manuscript: AD 130 (John Rylands Papyrus: P52 fragment of gospel of John)
  - Non-Greek Manuscripts (Armenian, Coptic, Gothic, Syriac, etc.): 7974+
  - Latin manuscripts – 10,000+
  - Total Manuscripts: 23,830
- c. 400,000 text variants/differences between manuscripts

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

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

- a. "Prophet Muhammad, ... announced at the age of forty (around 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, and hence in its message about God.
- g. Islam contends that despite "all their differences, Jews & Christians can be deemed 'People of the Book' because these two communities, the Qur'an proclaims...originally receive[d] pure & essentially identical revelation that poured forth from [the] heavenly archetype of revelation, the 'Mother of the Book.' [But,] the Qur'an also insists that, over time, both the Jewish & Christian traditions have not only disobeyed but also intentionally misinterpreted & distorted their respective revelations. Both pure Torah & pure Gospel are no longer available...The Qur'an on the other hand, is believed by Muslims to be the perfect representation of the pure heavenly Book; hence, the Qur'an is 'the Manifest Book,' made 'an Arabic Qur'an' by God..." [Michael Lodahl, *Claiming Abraham*, p. 38]
  - a. Muslim belief
    - It is not even a remote possibility in most Muslims' minds that the Qur'an of today might be different from the Qur'an of Muhammad's day. Nabeel Qureshi, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus The Hadith A. What is Hadith?*
    - corpus of the sayings or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, revered by Muslims as a major source of religious law and moral guidance. It comprises many reports of varying length and authenticity. [Britannica.com]
  - b. The Bukhari hadith
    - a. Written 870 AD. (earliest manuscript 984 AD, oldest full copy 1154 AD)
    - b. 97 chapters on many subjects
    - c. Considered the most trustworthy document after the Qur'an.
    - d. Includes:
      - Words, action and silent approval of Muhammed
      - Gives the history of the Qur'an
      - Rules for daily life
  - h. There are other hadiths that contradict the Bukhari hadith.

### 2. The truth about the Qur'an

- a. Early in Islam history, there were different Qur'ans

- Early in Islam's history there were different Qur'ans. These Qur'ans were the collections of various companions of Muhammad. They were not simply for personal use but used to teach entire regions. They differed in the number of surahs, the surah order, and the wording of verses. These differences confirm that Muhammad never issued a final collection of the Qur'an.
- b. These early regional Qur'ans were not preserved because the differences between them led to arguments within the early Muslim community
- c. The third caliph, Uthman, solved this political problem by commissioning the production of a standard version for the entire Muslim community. He had the other collections destroyed. (around 655 AD or 25 years after death of Muhammad)
- d. Uthman's innovation was to make one Qur'an for the entire Muslim world. The other Qur'ans made by the companions of Muhammad were destroyed, even though Muhammad had commissioned these companions to teach the Qur'an. A simple comparison would be if the early Christians destroyed the Gospel according to Mark, Luke, and John, and just kept Matthew. This may have made things simpler, but Christianity is richer for having preserved all these different testimonies, and Islam is poorer for having destroyed these other testimonies to the Qur'an. The result is that today we have only one testimony to what Muhammad recited. The testimony of the other collections is almost totally lost.
- e. The two main Qur'ans today are the Qur'an according to Imam Hafs (the most common – 1924 Egypt) and the Qur'an according to Imam Warsh (North Africa).
- f. Today there are ten different Arabic Qur'ans (recitations) used around the world. There is nothing special about the preservation of the Qur'an.

### 3. Are all Arabic Qur'ans used in the world today identical?

- a. The version of the Qur'an most widely used today was commissioned by King Fu'ad I of Egypt in 1924. This "Cairo Qur'an," as it is known, was created in response to variant readings found in Qur'ans that had been imported to be used in Egyptian schools. The Egyptian government corrected the text and then produced its own edition, gathering up as many existing copies as possible and disposing of them in the Nile River—a move reminiscent of Uthman's purge. Although other printed versions exist, none has achieved the global recognition of the Cairo Qur'an.
- b. Again no. The Arabic script used for the Uthmanic Qur'an did not include vowel markings or the dots to distinguish between certain letters. There was a degree of ambiguity in the script that allowed words to be formed or read in different ways, thus making different words. This led to many different recitations, and in time this became a problem. To solve this problem the Muslim governor, al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, canonized seven different recitations, but others were added later. Today there are ten different recitations based on the Uthmanic Qur'an.
- c. The Arabic word for recitation is Qur'an, therefore, there are ten different Qur'ans accepted today. The two main Qur'ans are the Qur'an according to Imam Hafs (the most common) and the Qur'an according to Imam Warsh (North Africa).
- d. Different translations are interpretations. Interpretations may differ: "The Qur'an has been translated into over 100 different languages, and each translation can be considered its own interpretation of the original Arabic text. It is important to note, however, that the Qur'an is the word of God and is therefore sacred and unchangeable. As such, translations of the Qur'an are intended to convey the meaning of the original Arabic text as accurately as possible, but they may differ in their interpretation of certain passages." Qur'an.com

### 4. Conclusion:

- a. Muslims and Christians are regularly told there is only one Qur'an, that all Qur'ans are absolutely identical, that it was memorised perfectly by Muhammad and his followers, it has never been changed or edited but simply passed down to us today, and because of this the Qur'an is superior to the Bible and its message. However, we have now considered the evidence and found that these claims are either false or exaggerations.
- b. Muhammad forgot verses of the Qur'an, changed and edited verses into their final form, allowed several [oral] versions of the Qur'an, and never made an authorised version himself. His companions made their own collections and these were different from each other. Uthman enforced one version and destroyed the other collections. Uthman's Qur'an developed multiple recitations and al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, canonized seven of these, but others were added later. Today there are ten different Arabic Qur'ans used around the world. There is nothing special about the preservation of the Qur'an.
- c. More details can be found in *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* by Nabeel Qureshi & [Answering-Islam.org]
  - <https://answering-islam.org/Green/uthman.htm>

- Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus by Nabeel Qureshi

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

### 1. 3 Monotheistic Abrahamic Religions – Judaism, Christianity, & Islam

#### a. Common 'Surface Elements': Islam, Christianity, & Judaism

- 'Abrahamic' faiths: "Each considers Abraham to be an important figure in the development of the faith." [Carla Mooney, *Comparative Religion*, 98]
- Monotheism: Shared belief in only one God (vs. polytheism -many gods) (One God who is triune)
- Are Judaism, Christianity, & Islam equally "*People of the Book*"?
  - Scripture "Sacred tests or scriptures is also common... Both Christians & Jews follow the Bible, though in different forms [Jews: OT; Christians OT & NT]. Muslims adhere to the...Qur'an. All 3 types of Scripture provide a set of guidelines ... to guide their behavior, with emphasis on ways to worship God & to treat one another." [Walter Hazen, *Islamic Celebrations & Religion Comparisons*, p. 328] Bible functions differently.

#### b. Judaism's Torah is equivalent to Islam's Qur'an

- ? In Judaism & Islam: God's will is revealed in Scripture (Law)
- "For *traditional Judaism, the experience of God is dependent upon the Torah, the revealed Word of God in written form which has implications for daily life for the Jew.*" [TL. Burden, *Return of the Believer*, p. 27]
- "Both Judaism & Islam believe that God governs... through revealed law... [which defines] God's will for humanity... Framed within the same logic of revelation, the sources of law in Judaism & Islam are similar. Each has two central components: [1.] written Scripture directly revealed by God... through the prophet, & [2.] an oral tradition (now also recorded in written documents) which [also has] binding status..." [J. Neusner, T. Sonn, *Comparing Religions Through Law: Judaism & Islam*, p. 59] The Talmud: "To [the Torah] were added discussions... [about] interpreting the commandments and prohibitions." [Remi Brague "*Concept of the Abrahamic Religions*," AJ. Silverstein (ed.) *Oxford Handbook... Abrahamic Religions*, p. 102]

#### c. The Bible plays a Different Role in Christianity

### 2. "The Word of God" in the NT (Basic Data)

- "In the NT the largest number of usages of the terms [the phrase] 'the word (*logos*) of God,' '...of the Lord' & 'the word (*rhema*) of God' apply to the 'word of God' in the sense of *the gospel or the preached message concerning Jesus...*" [e.g. 1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 3:1; Acts 13:44]
  - Paul & Barnabas "proclaimed the *word of God* in the Jewish synagogues..." (Acts 13:5)
- "The 2nd largest number refer to *Jesus Christ himself as 'the Word of God'* & the..." [Jn. 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13]
  - "He wore a robe dipped in blood, & his *name is called the Word of God.*" (Rev. 19:13)
- "2 passages...possibly refer to *the OT Scriptures* as 'the word of God' are not indisputably clear." [Heb. 4:12]
  - "The *word of God* is living & effective & sharper than any double-edged sword..." (Heb. 4:12 cf. 2 Tim. 3:16)
  - "Hence there are 3 types of uses of... 'word of God' in the NT: [1.] the evangelical [gospel], [2.] Christological [i.e., Christ], & [3.] possibly the Scriptural [Bible]." [James L. Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 180]
  - Note: There's "an important distinction between '*the Bible*' as *one form that God's word* took (the written form) & the 'word of God,' which is... a much broader category. The 'word of God' in the first instance [above #1] refers to inspired & powerful *spoken* words...[the] Christian proclamation." [B. Witherington, *Op. cit.*, 7-8]
  - Christ, "the incarnate Word is the most crucial revelation of God... [There's a] symbiotic relationship... between the word written, the word proclaimed, & the Word Incarnate." [Ben Witherington, *Living Word of God*, 12]

### 3. 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

- C.S. "Lewis makes a distinction between the Word of God (the universal Christ of all eternity, incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth) & the word of God (Scripture)... *The Word of God became flesh, it did not*

*become a book— Christ is the Word of God, not the Bible.*" [PH. Brazier, C.S. Lewis — *Work of Christ Revealed*, p. 53]

- "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

- Jesus: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for *he* [Moses] *wrote of me* [Jesus]." (John 5:46)
- Jesus: "You search *the Scriptures* because you think that in them you have eternal life; & it is *they that bear witness about me.*" (John 5:39 ESV)
- "Long ago *God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets* at different times & in different ways. <sup>2</sup> In these last days, *he* [God] *has spoken to us by his Son.*" (Heb. 1:1-2)
- "Jesus Christ is the final & ultimate revelation of God & the focus of revelation. The Word of God appears in 3 related forms: [1.] in the person of Christ; [2.] in the written Word, Scripture; & [3.] in the Word preached ... *The Bible is a witness: it points beyond itself to another, to Jesus Christ...* In the process of revelation, Jesus Christ reveals himself, not information about himself." [Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ... *Theology of Religions*, p. 176]

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

#### a. Christ, God's pre-existent Son (the Logos) vs. an 'Eternal Book' (Judaism, Islam)

- "Christianity has no...notion of a pre-existent or Eternal Book...because that is the role... of the eternal Son, the *Logos*, the pre-existent Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity. While *the pre-existent Word for Jews* ('Torah') & *for Muslims* ('Mother of the Book,' or 'heavenly Qur'an') *became text*, for *Christians the preexistent Word 'became flesh & lived among us.'* (Jn. 1:14)... [For Muslims] the Heavenly Book became an earthly Book, the Qur'an...[Therefore] *the functional equivalent to the Qur'an, for Christians is not...the Bible*, as it *is Jesus Christ* [the incarnate Word]." [Michael Lodahl, *Claiming Abraham*, p. 67]

#### b. 'Revelation' has different meanings in Christianity, Judaism, & Islam

- ? "Revelation' does not have the same meaning in the 3 religions [Christianity, Judaism, & Islam]

##### a. What has been revealed?

- "For Christianity, *the revealed object is not the New Testament, but the person of Christ himself*; the book [Bible, OT & NT] only recounts the history, reports the teaching of this person." [Remi Brague, "Concept of the Abrahamic Religions," in AJ. Silverstein (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions*, p. 102]
- "In *Islam*, *the revealed object is truly the book*; the person of Muhammad...had little importance. This is why one can consider *Islam* to be *the sole 'religion of the book' in the strict sense*. For Islam, the Qur'an had for its author not Muhammad but God who dictated it to him..." [Remi Brague, *cit.*, p. 102]

##### b. What's the Content of the Revelation?

- "The revealed *content*...differs as well. For Judaism & *Christianity*, *revelation is a self-manifestation of God* by himself... For *Islam*, *God does not manifest himself as he is in himself*, but only expresses his will in *uttering commands*... There is no question of Him entering into human history by contracting an alliance with man." [Remi Brague, *Op. cit.*, p. 102]

#### c. For Christians, God's Self-revealing 'Word' is Jesus Christ

- "What people believe about God is directly related to what they understand to be revelation. In Christianity & Islam, *God's self-revealing word* is the form and substance of revelation. *For Muslims, that word is the Qur'an; for Christians, Jesus Christ.*" [Ken. Cragg, BL. Haines, (ed.) *Christians & Muslims Together*, p. 102]
- "It might be clearer to consider [*the Bible*] as a *revelatory expression of something else* that is the primary revelation... *Jesus Christ* — the ultimate interaction of God with man, & therefore *the ultimate revelation, of God & his relationship with man.*" [Ida J. Glaser, "...*concepts of revelation*," Themelios, V. 7/3 (1982), p. 18]
- The revealed God, "*God in revelation is God in Christ. Revelation is not simply recorded in a book; it is embodied in a person.* Is it not more fully, more appropriately, more effectively, revelation for that reason? The question may not be readily appreciated by the Muslim accustomed to the idea of a Book as the point of revelatory impact." [Kenneth Cragg, *Call of the Minaret*, (1956) p. 290]
- "*It is Jesus, and not the Bible, that is viewed in the NT as God's eternal Word. At the centre of a Christian understanding of revelation is not a Book, but the Word-made-flesh.*" [Ida Glaser, "*Biblical Interpretation in Islamic Context*," in DJ. Crowther (ed.) *Reading the Bible in Islamic Context*, p. 21]

#### d. In what sense is the Bible 'the word of God'?

- "In Islam, the revelation of God takes the form of a sacred book [the Qur'an]. This is not the case with Christianity. *Christians often speak of the Bible as 'the word of God,' but this is misleading* [in dialogue with Muslims], & certainly *should not be understood in the same way the Qur'an is the word of Allah*. The words of the Christian Bible, written by human beings do not constitute revelation as such, but *rather bear witness to the revelation of God*. Thus, the ...[NT] constitutes 'testimony' to the revelation of God within human history... In Christian tradition, *revelation in the fullest sense* of the word has been given in the form of a *persona* [Latin] –*the person of Jesus Christ*... The revelation of the living God as a transcendent *persona* reaches its summit in the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth." [Bernhard Nitsche (ed.) *God or the Divine?* p. ]

### 5. 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, *Islam...*, pp 17-18]
- "Christians need to understand that *the Qur'an is to Muslims what Jesus is to Christians*. *It is a mistake to make a direct comparison between the role of Jesus in Christianity & the role of Muhammad in Islam, or between the place of the Bible in Christianity & the place of the Qur'an in Islam.*" [Colin Chapman, *Cross & the Crescent*, 84]

#### b. For Jews God's Word is the Torah; for Christians it is Jesus Christ

- ? "The Word of God is incarnate in human life as Jesus of Nazareth... Incarnation for John is the experience of the divine [i.e., of God] in the person of Jesus Christ... For traditional Judaism, the experience of God is dependent upon the Torah [OT], the revealed Word of God in written form which has implications for daily life for the Jew. For John, the encounter with God is made possible in the person of Jesus Christ who is the **Word (Logos) of God in human-divine form as incarnation.**" [Terry L. Burden, *Return of the Believer*, p. 27]

#### c. For Muslims God's Word is the Qur'an; for Christians it is Jesus Christ

- ? "The Qur'an is, for Muslims, the literal & timeless divine Word which entered our time. It became a book which Muslims write down, memorize, recite, & live by. The Qur'an is therefore analogous to Christ in Christianity, who is the eternal Logos that was made flesh & dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14)." [Mahmoud A. Ayoub, *Islam, Faith & Practice*, p. 72] Yet Christians don't "write down, memorize, & recite" Jesus Christ!

#### d. Christians are not 'People of the Book;' Christianity is not a 'Religion of the Book'...

- "*Christianity*, unlike Islam, *never was* and never came to be *the 'Religion of a Book'* in the strict sense..."
- "Christianity is no longer a 'Religion of a Book,' in the strict sense of that phrase, since Christians believe in the lordship of the living Christ & in the present reality of the Spirit." [Hans von Campenhausen, *Formation of the Bible*, p. ] Note: The NT never calls Jesus' believers "People of the Book," but rather, "people of God."

### 6. The Bible points to Christ, God's living Word

- "The Qur'an has a quite different thesis about what its language achieves than *the NT*, where *the ultimate 'Word' is the incarnate Lord* [Jesus] & the [NT] *text derivative* in being 'sufficiently' descriptive of Him." [Kenneth Cragg, *Qur'an & the West*, p. 80]
- "Since 'the Word was made flesh' the book-text [the Bible] that presents this 'Word' *is itself 'the Word of God' only in a derivative sense... as the ultimate revelation is...* [through] the personhood of *Jesus as the Christ* of whom it [the Bible] adequately tells, without being 'infallible; of itself.'" [Ken. Cragg, *Op. cit.*, p. 148]

### 7. How Does Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word, reveal God? Examples:

- Jesus born in a manger – the scene 'speaks' of vulnerability
- Jesus fasting in the wilderness – undergoing hardship, isolation
- Jesus heals the sick & lame, etc. – empathy, sympathy

- d. Jesus forgives sinners –compassionate Go
- e. Jesus welcomes & blesses children –stoops to care for powerless
- f. Jesus weeps at Lazarus' tomb – he shares our sorrows, sadness, loss
- g. Jesus prays in Gethsemane – enters a 'dark place with/for us'
- h. Jesus dies on cross in agony – suffers/dies for us
- i. Jesus 'My God why have you forsaken me' – he knows abandonment 10. Jesus resurrects from tomb – rises to heal, help, save, enliven, etc.