

The Way of Holiness & The Sacred Hoop Book 1

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

While there are many people worthy of having this book dedicated to them, it doesn't feel like I have the right to do that. Because in truth, I am convinced the person who really deserves credit for this book is Creator. I feel more like a writing utensil that willingly served in putting this knowledge down on "paper". So, all credit, or "glory" goes to Creator. But that doesn't mean that I'm not grateful to many fine people, too.

VERIFICATION PROCEDURES for SCRIPTURE CITED IN TEXT

One issue associated with using multiple versions of the same sacred book is this: how do we know which one is right? There's no foolproof method to determine this. But, God meant for us to use this knowledge, so I've done the next best thing—wherever possible passages are cross-checked with multiple sources and used only if all agree, or else the difference is noted. All Bible passages in the book are from the NIV (New International version), unless noted otherwise. The NIV version was cross-checked with the King James (KJV) and "The New American Bible" (NAB) (Catholic) versions. Old Testament passages were also cross-checked with "The Septuagint With Apocrypha" ("SPT"), "The Jewish Study Bible" ("JSB"), and "The Torah: The Five Books of Moses".

Virtually all Old Testament versions come from one of two early translations. The Latin Vulgate (common Latin) is a Latin translation of Hebrew scriptures from Israel and Babylon. This version is used by the Roman Catholic Church and by all Protestant denominations (at least, all of which I am aware). The Septuagint is a Greek translation of Hebrew scriptures from Alexandria, Egypt. It is used by the Eastern Orthodox, Syrian/Maronite/Oriental, and Coptic branches of Christianity. The two translations have minor, but notable, differences, which raises the question, "Which version is correct?" The short answer is, "Both are correct." This issue is resolved in the Appendix, on pages 151-152. Wherever you see a red "*" following immediately after a verse number (like "Psalm 1:1*"), it indicates that a difference exists between the two translations. These differences are reconciled along with an explanation in the Appendix, beginning on page 153.

All quotes from the Qur'an (Koran) come from J.M. Rodwell's translation, unless noted otherwise. Because Rodwell's translation is less archaic than the Shakir and Pickthall versions, they are used to verify Rodwell. Verse numbering varies slightly with different versions, but the text itself is the same, even if numbering varies. So, when cross-referencing, you may have to look a few verses one way or the other to find your quote—but it will be there. However, Rodwell only numbered every tenth verse, so Pickthall's numbering is used instead.

There are many volumes of other sayings by Muhammad (S) called "hadiths". This book cites hadiths from four of six collections held as canon (sacred) by the Sunni branch of Islam;

Sahih Bukhari, translated by [tb] Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan,
 Sahih Muslim, [tb] 'Abdul Hamid Siddiqi,
 Sunan Abu Dawud, [tb] Prof. Ahmad Hasan,
 and Sunan Ibn Majah, [tb] Muhammad Tufail Ansari.

These were cross-checked with hadiths found in Huda Khattab's translation of Ibn Kathir's "The Signs Before The Day Of Judgement", Shayk Muhammad Hisham Kabbani's "The Approach of Armageddon?", and hadiths from Ahmad's Musnad and from al-Tirmidhi, as well.

Muslim writing traditionally places the honorific "sallallahu aleyhe wassalam" or "(saw)", which means "Peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him" after each occurrence of "the Prophet" and "Muhammad". It also places "Aleyhe salam" ("Peace be upon him") after each occurrence of "Jesus" (or "Isā", the Arabic name for "Jesus"). Other religions use different notation. Because scripture and speakers from more than one religion are presented here, for the sake of equality, readability, and minimizing confusion, honorifics are generally excluded in my commentary.

A note for non-Muslim readers:

In the Qur'an, the word "Sura" means "Chapter".

All quotes from the Bhagavad-Gita (Hinduism's principal holy book) are from the "Bhagavad-Gita As It Is" translated by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and verified by translations by Eknath Easwaran and Juan Mascaro.

A note for all readers:

All high-lighting of text by **boldface** type, *italics*, underlining, color, and font size, is *mine*, unless specifically noted otherwise.

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PREFACE

There's a lot of injustice and suffering on the planet these days. War, racism, global warming, pandemics, and more! People must unite in order to successfully navigate all these crises. Unfortunately, we find all too often religion is part of the problem, not the solution. It's used as pretext for war and oppression far too often by far too many people. But, must it always be this way? Shouldn't something that comes from God be a source of healing, instead of harm and division? Balance must be restored to an out of balance world, and spiritual healing is an essential part of that. Therefore, the purpose of this book is to heal religious division and strife, or as some may call it, "mending the Great Circle".

Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus;

13 Enter through the narrow gate.

**For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction,
and many enter through it.**

**14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life,
and only a few find it."**

We must find this "narrow gate". The broad road of traditional theologies has led to thousands of years of competition, division, and war—not peace. So now, humanity is heading toward a grim, awful, Doomsday Armageddon, whether it be by war or environmental collapse, or both. There are two paths. One leads to peace and life, the other to destruction.

Deuteronomy 30:19, Moses;

**This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you
that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.
Now choose life, so that you and your children may live"...**

According to the scriptures of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and others, each religion is a sacred piece of the larger Divine Message. Nicholas Black Elk, a Native American prophet a.k.a. "Hehaka Sapa", was given a vision of this unity... From "Black Elk Speaks", p.33, Black Elk;

**"...And while I stood there I saw more than I can understand
and I understood more than I saw;
for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit,
and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being.
And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people
was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight,
and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree
to shelter all the children of one mother and one father.
And I saw that it was holy."**

What was seen by a Native American prophet was also seen by an Israelite prophet named Isaiah, who used these words to describe it:

Isaiah 35:8;

**And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness.
The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way;
wicked fools will not go about on it."**

The "narrow gate" and "highway" is a path to interfaith harmony called the "Way of Holiness". It's a spiritual methodology which connects the holy books of all religions, viewing them as individual messages emanating from the same Source. It includes the four religions previously mentioned, along with Buddhism, Baha'i, Native American traditions, Earth-based religions, and more. It includes Science and common sense. The "Way of Holiness" is founded upon the belief that God, a.k.a. "Great Spirit", "Yahweh", "Creator", "Allāh", "Krishna", and other names, spoke to all peoples. God is present now, in the past—and everywhere.

Psalms 100:1, 3;

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

3 Know that the LORD is God.

**It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture."**

People following the "Way of Holiness and the Sacred Hoop" view sacred books and oral traditions of different religions as being different letters written by the same Person. When we read a letter from a friend, we interpret the message in a way that aligns with our friend's personality traits. God's personal characteristics are stated in scripture, so it makes sense to use them as a guide for understanding. A correct interpretation should be consistent with these characteristics. This is an invaluable tool for determining proper context and whether literal or figurative language is being used. Christians and Muslims who insist everything in scripture is meant literally are, ironically, literally denying their spiritual teacher.

John 16:25, Jesus;

**Though I have been speaking figuratively,
a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language
but will tell you plainly [in literal terms] about my Father."**

Sura 3:7, Muhammad;

**[Allah] it is who hath sent down to thee "the Book.[Qur'an]"
Some of its signs are of themselves perspicuous [literal];
...and others are figurative."**

Both Bible and Qur'an contain literal and figurative speech. We have to figure out which is which. To determine this, the most important factor is whether the literal or figurative interpretation aligns with God's personal character, and the spirit of what either Jesus or Muhammad were teaching. If your God is love, an accurate interpretation will reflect that, and include a healthy dose of mercy and forgiveness. On the other hand, if your version of God is really "hate", then your God will be vengeful, sadistic, and unjust—and probably be a liar, too.

When scripture is read using these guidelines, we discover that God left us a slender, yet clearly visible thread connecting all spiritualities. This connection opens the Narrow Gate, allowing the holy spirit to leap across illusionary religious divides. It brings peace and equality across race, religion, and gender. Those who choose to reject interconnection are free to do so. Refusal to accept this truth actually balances the Great Circle with its counterpart, the negative polarity of "All That Is". However, refusing to acknowledge these principles comes at a dear cost. Christians who do so and continue condemning other religions will discover, to their sorrow, they've missed out on the long anticipated "Rapture" of the Church. They'll never get to experience what the following words mean;
2 Peter 1:19;

**And we have the word of the prophets made more certain,
and you will do well to pay attention to it,
as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns
and the morning star rises in your hearts."**

God spoke to all His/Her children. In order to teach us unity, God put special treasures of knowledge in each sacred teaching. So, we must share this knowledge or we'll never reach our highest potential. Our survival as a race depends on it. Christians need Native American spirituality as well as the Bible. Native Americans need to forgive the misuse of the Bible and show respect to Great Spirit by respecting that sacred message, too. Both need Hinduism and Islam, and Hindus and Muslims need Native American spirituality and the Bible. But, no one needs a twisted theology that disrespects God as it divides, persecutes, and causes war.

God's sacred Messages make the most sense when read together like a continuing dialogue from the same "Person". A theology that interprets the sacred books of different religions in a way true to the character of Creator, and that reconciles with sacred books of other religions is needed. That's what we're going to do here, starting with the major religions that compete with and try to dominate other religions and are associated with a disproportionate amount of war and violence.

Remember the huge **"sacred hoop"** Black Elk saw on page 5? The one that was **"wide as daylight and as starlight"** and where the **"sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle..."**? Let's call the world-encircling Sacred Hoop linking the individual sacred hoops of each people the "Great Circle", and then start the healing by reconciling the Bible with the Great Circle's other religions. Afterwards, we'll cover Islam, Hinduism, and just enough indigenous spirituality to demonstrate a path to reconciliation exists if people choose to forgive each other and embrace it with open hearts and minds.

A second volume is planned for sacred paths not covered in depth in this book. No disrespect is intended towards any sacred path not covered in depth here. The reason for this is that Earth is in crisis and time is short. Since time is short, the book can't be too lengthy. Since Earth is in crisis, the focus must be on the major religions of nations most responsible for creating the crisis. Their religions are the ones most in need of reconciliation, and which together can have the greatest and most immediate impact in minimizing further damage to the planet.

A timely note for Christians: If you're concerned this is the prophesied ungodly "One World Religion" of "End Times" renown—it's not that at all! On the contrary, the Way of Holiness respects all religions and encourages them to be exactly who they are. Creator designs beauty through diversity. Honor God by respecting and admiring the diversity. The Way of Holiness isn't some soulless system that tries to extinguish the lights of God's myriad spiritual gems. People are simply taught to see their sacred message in the most true and sensible way—as coming from the same Deity who also spoke to all other peoples, too. As the sacred messages come from the same Source, we should read them in a way in which they reconcile with each other. Simple. Fair. And true.

And last, while this book is critical of much traditional theology, that is not at all to say that traditional theology is completely "bad" or that it wasn't useful and served God's purpose. If we can design things that take into account changes over time and situation, we can be assured Creator knows how to do this infinitely better than us. Traditional theology served God's purpose in the past. However, what may have served in the past, however useful it was then, is no longer what is needed today. Hopefully, spiritual teachers of flawed theology will take this to heart, repent, and serve Creator as they originally meant to do.

May God's spirit open their hearts and yours to this knowledge and bring you and all humanity blessings and peace.

Chapter 1

Creator

Spoke to Everyone

Creator Spoke to Everyone

As I grew up, I used to cringe when someone said we should "fear God". It still makes me feel uneasy, although now I understand what's meant by "fear" is really "deep respect". What puzzles me is how so many people who say other people should "fear God" are so fearless about God themselves. It's not only Christians who make this error. Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Mormons and Native Americans do the same thing, too. Each seems blind to a common-sense principle concerning our relationship with God. "Father", "Mother", "Uncle", "Grandfather", and "Grandmother" are names religions commonly give to their version of God. Now, if God gave us parental names to associate with Him/Her, then why do we act as though God is utterly different than a Parent?

Let's use a simple feature of human family interaction to help us understand scriptures God the Parent wrote for us the Children. Parents speak to all their children, not just one. Speaking to only one child creates jealousy, so they speak to all their children, and give guidance and gifts to all of them, too. Yet we humans oftentimes act as though God gave the "correct" religion to us alone—our people—and to no one else. We may be kind to people of other faiths, but inside we don't trust their sacred Message, and act like what God said to them is poison and has no value for us. This is illogical, and disrespectful to God, too, considering the message we're attacking and devaluing came from the God we ourselves worship.

Before condemning another sacred book, we have to read it with an open heart and mind, and as though it came from the God we know. Until we've done that, we risk committing blasphemy by condemning one of God's messages (and by extension, God, as well) based only on hearsay and preconceived notions. Doing that isn't showing respect or godly "fear" of the Almighty. Be very careful before attacking another sacred book!

Psalms 100:1,3;

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

**3 ...Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his;
we [all humanity] are his people, the sheep of his pasture."**

Let's be logical, show respect, and trust God. When we do this, we find the scriptures of multiple religions connect. We also find that God gave something unique and precious to each people, excluding none. It's crucial to humanity's survival and wellbeing that we give more than mere lip-service to this principle. To heal the planet, we all must share our special gifts, and be willing to receive them from others, too. To do this, we'll need a firm foundation in scripture that supports this principle.

So, let's treat Creator's Word everywhere as holy. Let's choose the path where each Message reconciles with the others, common sense, and science. Matthew 7:7-14, Jesus;

7 **"Ask** [*for spiritual knowledge*] **and it will be given to you;**
seek and you will find;
knock [*respectfully, with open heart and mind*]
and the door [*to understanding the Way of Holiness*]
will be opened to you.

8 **For everyone**
 [*be it Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Native American, or Christian*]
who asks [*for spiritual knowledge*] **receives;**
he who seeks finds;
and to him who knocks [*respectfully, with open heart and mind*],
the door [*to understanding the Way of Holiness*]
will be opened.

9 **"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?**

10 **Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?**

11 **If you, then, though you are evil"...**
 [*meaning, that none of us are perfect*],

11. cont. **..."know how to give good gifts to your children,**
how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts
to those [*of any race, location, or religion*] **who ask him!**

12 **So in everything** [*including how we treat other religions*],
do to others what you would have them do to you [*the Golden Rule*],
for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

13 **"Enter through the narrow gate."**...
 [*The "Way of Holiness", where all God's Messages intersect.*]

13 cont.: **..."For wide** [*mainstream*] **is the gate** [*theology*]
and broad is the road [*mainstream*] **that leads to destruction,**
and many [*mainstream traditionalist believers*] **enter through it.**

14 **But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life,**
and only a few find it."

The **"small...gate"** and **"narrow...road"** is a methodology called the "Way of Holiness".

Misuse of Christ's gospel by colonial powers had the greatest negative impact on other cultures of any major religion in terms of genocide, enslavement, and exploitation. So, we'll look first at Bible evidence that salvation for non-Christians is attainable via a route outside traditional Christian theology. After that, we'll look at scripture from other religions supporting the concept.

Traditional Christian theology teaches we must "accept" Jesus Christ (by that specific name) before we die in order to be "saved". This theology doesn't take into account the difficulty conversion presents for people from cultures whose ancestors were subjected to brutal acts committed by so-called "Christian" conquerors. Perhaps even worse, it portrays God as being unjust and cruel—in a sense turning God into the devil.

A Native American chief named Red Jacket, had the following to say about the morally impossible contradiction traditional theology presents to people they'd like to "convert" to their religion. Here's "Red Jacket's reply to the missionary Cram at Buffalo, N.Y., 1805, from "Gospel of the Redman":

" After the missionary had done speaking, the Indians conferred together about two hours by themselves, when they gave an answer by Red Jacket, which follows:

**"Friend and brother,
it was the will of the Great Spirit that we should meet together this day.
He orders all things, and He has given us a fine day for our council.**

**He has taken His garment from before the sun, and caused it to shine
with brightness upon us; our eyes are opened, that we see clearly;
our ears are unstopped, that we have been able to hear distinctly
the words that you have spoken;
for all these favours we thank the Great Spirit, and Him only.**

**"Brother, this council fire was kindled by you;
it was at your request that we came together at this time;
we have listened with attention to what you have said;
you requested us to speak our minds freely; this gives us great joy,
for now we consider that we stand upright before you,
and can speak what we think;
all have heard your voice, and all speak to you as one man;
our minds are agreed...**

"Red Jacket's reply", cont.:

You say that you are sent to instruct us how to worship the Great Spirit agreeably to His mind, and if we do not take hold of the religion which you White people teach, we shall be unhappy hereafter;

you say that you are right, and we are lost;
how do we know this to be true?

We understand that your religion is written in a book;

If it was intended for us as well as you,
why has not the Great Spirit given it to us,
and not only to us,

but why did he not give to our forefathers the knowledge of that book,
with the means of understanding it rightly?...

Brother, you say there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit;
if there is but one religion,
why do you White people differ so much about it?"

Brother, we do not understand these things;
we are told that your religion was given to your forefathers,
and has been handed down from father to son.

We also have a religion which was given to our forefathers,
and has been handed down to us, their children.
We worship that way.

It teaches us to be thankful for all the favours we receive;
to love each other; and to be united;
we never quarrel about religion...

Brother, we do not wish to destroy your religion,
or take it from you.
We want only to enjoy our own."

That sounds reasonable and fair, especially when you add the following two verses from the Bible to Red Jacket's argument...

Exodus 20:12;

"Honor your father and your mother [*and ancestors*],..."

Exodus 21:17*;

"Anyone who curses his father or mother [*by converting to a religion that teaches they may be "saved" in a manner that necessarily means their parents died unbelievers and went to hell*] must be put to death."

However, what's written about Jesus Christ in the Bible can't be denied. A path must be found that reconciles the Bible with the rest of the Great Circle. Traditional Christian theology teaching we must "accept" Jesus Christ as a prerequisite for salvation is based on the following scriptures...

John 14:6;

Jesus answered,

"I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me."

Acts 4:8, 10, 12;

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them:...

10...**It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,...**
...this man stands before you healed.

12 **Salvation is found in no one else,**
for there is no other name under heaven given to men
by which we must be saved."

John 3:16, 18, Jesus;

16 **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,**
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

18 **Whoever believes in him is not condemned,**
but whoever does not believe stands condemned already
because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

Ephesians 2:13-15, Paul;

13 **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away**
have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

14 **For he himself is our peace,**
who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier,
the dividing wall of hostility,

15 **by abolishing in his flesh**
the law with its commandments and regulations."

How can these passages be true without contradicting other sacred messages? They're true only if read in the proper context—consistent with the rest of the Bible and especially with God's character. The characteristics, or attributes, Jesus and the Father use to describe themselves are an invaluable guide in interpretation. If we read scripture in a manner consistent with their character, it's unlikely we'll stray far from the path. Over the next few pages we'll learn how the passages above can safely coexist with other religions. We'll begin on the next page with a list of four key attributes of the Father and Jesus Christ that set parameters for interpreting their words...

The Father and Christ's Four Divine Attributes;

GOD IS "TRUTH"

Isaiah 45:19; "I, the LORD, speak the truth;"
 Matthew 5:18, Jesus; "I tell you the truth,"

GOD IS IMPARTIAL

Deuteronomy 10:17; "...God...shows no partiality..."
 Romans 2:11; "...does not show favoritism."

GOD IS "LOVE"

1 John 4:16; "...God is love."

John 10:30, Jesus; "I and the Father are one."
 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Paul;

4 Love is patient, love is kind.

It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking,

it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

John 13:34-35, Jesus;

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another.

As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples,
 if you love one another."

GOD IS ALMIGHTY

Genesis 17:1*;

"...the LORD appeared to him [Abram] and said,

"I am God Almighty;..."

John 10:30, Jesus; "I and the Father are one."

God is truthful, loving, and doesn't show favoritism. God is also Almighty. This means God has the power and choice to intervene in human affairs, in a manner consistent with the three previous attributes. Jesus, who according to the Bible loves us so much he died for us, shares these attributes. So then, in the time before Jesus lived, the question concerning favoritism becomes...

How could God send people from Polynesia and other faraway places to hell when they never even heard of Jews, Judaism, or Jesus?

Some Christian theology teaches that during the three days following the Crucifixion that Jesus was "under-ground", he gave those who missed out previously their opportunity for salvation;

1 Peter 3:18-19;

18 For Christ ... was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison [supposedly including people of other religions]..."

Let's accept this interpretation for the moment. If God doesn't show favoritism, what about Polynesians and Native Americans after the Crucifixion, but before the first missionaries arrived? What kind of "god" throws people He loves into eternal hell when He never exposed them to Christ's gospel in the first place? What kind of "god" asks us to demonstrate allegiance by accepting a belief that curses our parents to hell, even if they followed the Golden Rule of doing unto others as we want done to us? Or because criminal acts by those professing to be Christian, like the Conquistadors, or Hitler, made them think Christianity is evil? How can salvation come from a God who asks us to break His own Fifth Commandment;

Exodus 20:12;

"Honor your father and your mother..."

and Exodus 21:17*;

"Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death."

A "god" who requires that, and saves people who received the news but not the ones who weren't told (or those deceived by false teachers), hasn't lived up to any of the four Divine attributes. This is totally out of character for the Jesus described in the Gospels. Traditional Christian theology turns the Christ and the Father into cold-hearted liars. Thankfully, it's only a misunderstanding of what "belief in Christ" means. Romans 2:12-16 (coming up) provides a loving and just solution for good people who aren't Christian, and demonstrates the care God took to be absolutely fair and true to the Four Divine Attributes. To understand what Paul wrote in Romans and elsewhere in the New Testament epistles, you need to know what the terms "Jew" and "Gentile" meant to him. So, let's check it out.

Jesus taught the people a form of messianic Judaism known as "the Way", which later was given the name "Christianity".

From "NIVNAVE'S TOPICAL BIBLE" (from Zondervan's Study Bible CD-ROM);

"CHRISTIANITY The word doesn't occur in the Bible.

It was first used by Ignatius, in the first half of the second century."

Acts 24:5,14, below, describes a moment in Paul's trial, which was presided over by the Roman governor, Felix. The lawyer Tertullus, who represented the high priest, speaks first (verse 24:5). Paul replies next in verse 24:14...

Acts 24:5, Tertullus;

**"We have found this man to be a troublemaker,
stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world.
He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect..."**

Acts 24:14, Paul;

**However,
I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way,
which they call a sect [of Judaism. Not a separate religion].
I believe everything that agrees with the Law
and that is written in the Prophets,..."**

* In the King James version "**sect**" is replaced by "heresy". Jesus and his followers must have been practicing Judaism. How else could the "Way" be called a heresy? So, early Christianity was Judaism, the Law and the Prophets, but now with Messianic prophecies fulfilled. Prophecies had been fulfilled for centuries, and each time they were, Judaism remained Judaism. Therefore, Christianity is really a form of Judaism. Much scripture addressed to "Jews" may also apply to the newer Jewish sect, "Christianity". Sometimes it's meant for them specifically. "Gentile" means a person not of the Jewish faith. Before Jesus, "Gentile" meant a person not under the Law of Moses. Paul believed Jesus was the Messiah. Therefore, he believed Jesus' Law was in addition to God's previous Law.

1 Corinthians 9:21, Paul;

**To those not having the law I became like one not having the law
(though I am not free from God's law
but am [also] under Christ's law),..."**

Romans 3:31, Paul;

**Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith?
Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law."**

Paul believed Jesus' teachings were the Law interpreted in the spirit God intended, i.e., the Law fulfilled correctly. When he wrote, "law", Paul meant both the Laws of Moses and Christ, and when he used the term "Gentile", it was meant as someone not Jewish or Christian. To Paul, the term "Jew" applied not only to those commonly known as Jews, but all who follow Christ, i.e., Christians. Now we have the definitions necessary to understand what the term "Jew" means in Romans 2:12-16 on the next page...

The Narrow Gate — Romans 2:12-16 (NIV)

Romans 2:12-16, Paul;

12 "All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law,
and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law."

*[Gentiles are judged fairly, taking into account what they're taught.
For Jews: the Law of Moses. For Christians; Jesus' Way and teachings.]*

13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight,
but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous."

*[It's not which religion that counts, it's if you obey the law that matters.
Jesus' law simplified is the Golden Rule: "Love one another as yourself."]*

14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law,
do by nature things required by the law,
THEY ARE A LAW FOR THEMSELVES [--my capitals],
even though they do not have the law,"

[When non-Christians or non-Jews are kind to other people and respect God and his creation, it doesn't matter if they knew beforehand who Jesus is, as the next two passages attest; Matthew 12:32 & Luke 12:10, Jesus (the Son of Man);

12:32; **Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven,..."**

12:10; **And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man
will be forgiven,..."]**

Romans 2:12-16, cont.; 15 since they show

that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts,
their consciences also bearing witness,
and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)"

[If we love our neighbors, by extension we love God, and God's law is written in our hearts. Our consciences, God and of Christ within us, will judge us...

John 10:35, Jesus; **...—and the Scripture cannot be broken—..."]**

Romans 2:12-16, cont.;

16 This will take place on the *[Judgment]* day
when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ,
as my gospel declares."

The way Romans 2:12-16 reconciles with John 14:6, where Jesus said, **"No one comes to the Father except through me..."** is that "Jesus" is only one of the many names Christ has used. His other names include; "Gabriel", "Brahma", "Elisha", "Deganawidah" (the "Peacemaker"), "Tunkashila", and more. Jesus has visited all peoples, so each already has a path through Christ. This is covered in far greater depth in the next chapter, "The Many Names of Christ".

Ephesians 2:13-14, 18, Paul;

**13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away
have been brought near through the blood of Christ.**

14 For he himself is our peace..."

18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

God is just and people of all faiths who practice the universal law of "love one another" are "saved". That's the *good* news of the gospel! Traditional Christian theology requires the Father and Christ to deny their Four Divine Attributes, contradicting Christ's words...

John 5:19, Jesus;

**"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself;
he can do only what he sees his Father doing,
because whatever the Father does the Son also does."**

John 5:22, Jesus; **"...the Father judges no one,..."**

As for people at the judgment: Jesus does only what the Father does. Since the Father doesn't judge, neither does the Son.

John 8:15, Jesus; **"You judge by human standards;
I pass judgment on no one."**

John 6:37-39, Jesus;

37 All that the Father gives me will come to me,..."

Romans 2:15, Paul;

**"...their consciences also bearing witness,
and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."**

John 6:37-39, cont.;

37 ... "and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

38 For I have come...to do the will of him who sent me.

**39 And this is the will of him who sent me,
that I shall lose none of all that he has given me,
but raise them up at the last day."**

Romans 12:16, where God judges us through Jesus Christ, reconciles with these passages only if it's meant as self-judgment by Christ's spirit that resides within each of us, because Jesus can't judge. The guilty, ego-centered consciences of the wicked, drive themselves away from the Light.

John 3:20, John;

**Everyone who does evil hates the light,
and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."**

Psalm 34:21; **Evil will slay the wicked;..."**

Romans 2, verses 15 & 16, show how those not exposed to the gospel, or those who rejected religion for one good reason or another are saved, even after the "dead"-line. These verses depict a truly loving, just, and merciful God.

Now, some will argue "Gentile" refers to non-Semitic Christians. But, if this were so, then why, if we're already saved, would our conscience need to accuse or defend us as Romans 2:15 states? In 1 Corinthians 9:21, Paul said;

"...though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law..."

As Christians are under Christ's Law, how can they be a "law for themselves", as it says in Romans 2:14? The term "Gentile" means exactly what Paul meant it to mean—anyone not Jewish or Christian. This sheds an entirely new light on... 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Paul;

**12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts;
and though all its parts are many, they form one body.
So it is with Christ.**

**13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—
whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—
and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."**

Now, we know different peoples and faiths together form the body of Christ. Next, we'll verify the NIV version of Romans 2 with four other versions...

CATHOLIC (NAB) VERSION

Romans 2:12-16;

**12 All who sin outside the Law, will also perish* without reference to it,
and all who sin under the Law, will be judged in accordance with it.**

**13 For it is not those who hear the Law who are just in the sight of God;
rather those who observe the Law will be justified.**

**14 For when the Gentiles who do not have the law
by nature observe the prescriptions of the law,
they are a law unto themselves, even though they do not have the law.**

**15 They show that the demands of the Law are written in their hearts,
while their conscience also bears witness
and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them.**

**16 on the day when, according to my gospel,
God will judge people's hidden works through Christ Jesus."**

* Interpret "perish" figuratively as meaning "extreme embarrassment" and "guilt", not literal "death".

KING JAMES VERSION

(Note: Italics in the King James version are not mine.)

Romans 2:12-16;

12 For as many as sinned without law shall also perish without law:
and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God,
but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when Gentiles, which have not the law,
do by nature the things contained in the law,
these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts,
Their consciences also bearing witness,
And *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;

16 In the day
when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ
according to my gospel."

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD

Romans 2:12-16;

12 For all who have sinned without the Law
will also perish without the Law;
and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law.

13 For not the hearers of the Law are just before God,
but the doers of the Law will be justified.

14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law,
do instinctively the things of the Law,
these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,

15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts,
their conscience bearing witness;

and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

16 on the day when, according to my gospel,
God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."

Romans 2:11, Paul;

"For God does not show favoritism."

Romans 2:12-16

DIRECT GREEK TO ENGLISH LITERAL TRANSLATION

(taken from The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament);

12 For-as many as without law sinned, without law also will perish,
and as many as in(under) law sinned, by law will be judged;

13 for-not the hearers of law [are] just with God,
but the doers of law will be justified.

14 For-when Gentiles -
not having~[the] law by nature the things of the law practise,
these a law not having to themselves are a law;

15 who demonstrate the work of the law
written in the hearts of them,
bearing joint-witness
their conscience and between one another
their thoughts accusing or even defending,

16 in a day when judges God the hidden things - of men,
according to the gospel of me, through Christ Jesus."

Next, examples of scripture supporting the principle salvation extends
to righteous people of different religions...

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37;

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

"Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 "What is written in the Law?" he [Jesus] replied. "How do you read it?"

27 He [the expert in the law] answered:

" 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' ;
and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

29 But he [the "expert in the law"] wanted to justify himself,
so he asked Jesus,

"And who is my neighbor?"

30 In reply Jesus said:

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

31 A priest happened to be going down the same road,
and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

32 So too, a Levite,
when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was;
and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.
Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.

35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper.
'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return,
I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36 "Which of these three do you think
was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Samaritans followed a religion similar to Judaism. Its roots were partially from Judaism, with elements adopted from the religions of people from Mesopotamia who the Assyrians transplanted in Samaria. This is documented in 2 Kings 17:24. This parable supports the Narrow Gate by pointing out that the good Samaritan from another religion (but with a good heart) is worthy of salvation, whereas the Levite and priest of the "correct" religion, apparently weren't. Jews, by the way, shunned Samaritans (John 4:9), much as many Christians shun Muslims, Hindus, "Pagans", and even members of other Christian denominations. By doing so, these people deny Christ by disobeying his commandments, like this one... Matthew 7:1-2, Jesus;

- 1 Do not judge, or you too will be judged.
- 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

People deny Christ by disobeying what he said in Luke 11, too... Luke 11:9, Jesus;

"So I say to you:
Ask and it will be given to you;
seek [truth and knowledge of God] and you will find;
knock [politely, reverently,]
and the door [of spiritual knowledge] will be opened to you."

THE "NARROW GATE" IN ISLAM

Sura 4:164;

"Of some apostles We have told thee before:
of other apostles We have not told thee..."

Sura 13:38-39;

38 To each age its book.
39 What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm:
for with Him is the source [and timing] of revelation."

Sura 5:69;

Verily, they who believe (Muslims),
and they who follow the Jewish religion,
and the Christians,
and the Sabeites—
whoever of these believeth in God and the last day,
and doeth that which is right,
shall have their reward with their Lord:..."
fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they be grieved."

Sura 57:29;

That the people of the Book may know that they have no control over aught of the favours of God, and that these gifts of grace are in the hands of God, and that He vouchsafe them to whom He will; for God is of immense bounty."

Sura 10:48; And every people hath had its apostle..."

Sura 22:34; And to every people have we appointed rites,
that they may commemorate the name of God..."

Sura 22:67; To every people
have we appointed observances which they observe."

Sura 30:22;

And among His signs are the creation of the heavens and of the earth,
and your varieties of tongues and color.
Herein truly are signs for all men."

Sura 29:46;

Dispute not, unless in kindly sort, with people of the Book;
And say ye,
"We believe in what hath been sent down to us [Qur'an]
and what hath been sent down to you. [Entire Old & New Testaments]
Our God and your God is one,..."

THE "NARROW GATE" ALL ACROSS MOTHER EARTH

Here is a portion of the vision given the Lakota Sioux prophet Black Elk, from "Black Elk Speaks" (p.33), demonstrating proper use of spirituality;

"And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people
was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight,
and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree
to shelter all the children of one mother and one father.
And I saw it was holy."

The key thing is, it must be done the right way.
The way shown by Baha'u'llah (Baha'i), in "The Book of Certitude" pp.103,104;

"These attributes of God are not and have never been
vouchsafed specially unto certain Prophets, and withheld from others.
Nay, all the Prophets of God,
His well-favored, His holy, and chosen Messengers, are, without exception,
the bearers of His names, and the embodiments of His attributes.
They only differ in the intensity of their revelation,
and the comparative potency of their light..."

The way shown by Malachi...
 Malachi 2:10; "Have we not all one Father?
 Did not one God create us?"

Paul; Romans 2:11;..."For God does not show favoritism."
 And Jesus;
 John 10:29;...no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand..."
 And Muhammad,
 Sura 22:34; And to every people have we appointed rites,
 that they may commemorate the name of God..."

And Joseph Smith;
 2 Nephi 29:6-10; 6 Thou fool, that shall say:
 A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible.
 Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews [*i.e., Someone else*]?

7 Know ye not that there are more [*spiritual*] nations than one?

Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men,
 and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea;
 and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath;
 and I bring forth my word unto the children of men,
 yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?

8 Wherefore murmur ye,
 because that ye shall receive more of my word?
 Know ye not that the testimony of two nations
 is a witness unto you that I am God,
 that I remember one nation like unto another?

Wherefore,
 I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another.
 And when the two nations shall run together,
 the testimony of the two nations shall run together also.

9 And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same
 yesterday, today, and forever;
 and that I speak forth my words according to my own pleasure."...
 [*Anytime, anywhere, no people excluded*]

9 cont.; ..."And because I have spoken one word
 ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another;
 for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man;
 neither from that time henceforth and forever."...

And the way shown by Sri Krishna (Hindu);
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Book 10, Chapter 4, pp. 181-183;

p. 181; [Brahma] looked about him
 and saw Krishna [Hindu name for God] in each form in the universe,
 Krishna in all beings and things.

He saw Krishna as the light of all lights, the revealer of the whole universe,
 and knew that everything [and all names for the One] was He..."

p. 182 Brahma; "Blessed are those
 Who art not concerned about philosophy, or doctrines,
 But who live and follow Thy life-giving words;...
 Those whose divine sight is clear Find Thee within themselves..."

p. 183 "Thou [Krishna] art Atman, the divine Self;
 Not without do the wise seek Thee, but within,
 For Thou art present in the hearts of all."

2 Nephi 29:6-10. cont.;

10 Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible
 ye need not suppose that it contains all my words;
 neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written."
 For I command all men,
 both in the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south,
 and in the islands of the sea,
 that they shall write the words which I speak unto them;
 for out of the books [plural] which shall be written
 I will judge the world, every man according to their works,
 according to that which is written."

Nephi lived around the time of Isaiah, and spoke of future books in the plural.
 He spoke before Jesus, Muhammad, and Baha'u'llah, too. And once more,
 the way shown by Black Elk;

"And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people
 was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight,
 and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree
 to shelter all the children of one mother and one father.
 And I saw it was holy."

Psalms 100:1,3;

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
 3 ...Know that the LORD is God.
 It is he who made us, and we are his;
 we [all the earth] are his people, the sheep of his pasture."

Many good-hearted Christian believers will have a hard time accepting that traditional theology is flawed, even though the Bible clearly states so...

2 Peter 2:1-3;

- 1 But there were also false prophets among the people,
just as there will be false teachers among you.
They will secretly introduce destructive heresies...
- 2 Many [mainstream religion] will follow their shameful ways
and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.
- 3 In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up."

The traditional Win/Lose theology provides religious leaders with spiritual power and control over their followers. Those who've been deceived have a choice...

Luke 12:47-48, Jesus;

- 47 "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready
or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.
- 48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment
will be beaten with few blows."

Anyone who blindly condemns other religions before thoroughly researching their holy books has disobeyed Christ.

The Parable of the Two Sons

Matthew 21:28-31, Jesus, speaking to self-righteous Pharisees;

- 28 "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons.
He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'
 - 29 " 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.
 - 30 "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing.
He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.
 - 31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?"
"The first," they answered.
- Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth,
the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God
ahead of you."

Jesus taught us not to judge other people. The tax collectors and prostitutes didn't judge other people like the Pharisees did. Jesus wasn't saying prostitution or racketeering are good. He was saying judging people and being self righteous is bad. He called people who did that "a brood of vipers". Christianity is a sect of Judaism, which means Christians can be "Pharisees", and "a brood of vipers" too.

Churchgoers who glory in their own "salvation" and "personal relationships" with God should remember that before acting like the Pharisees' spiritual heirs and condemning others. Non-judgment was a central theme of Jesus' ministry. Galatians 3:26-29, Paul;

- 26 **You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,**
 27 **for all of you who were baptized into Christ**
have clothed yourselves with Christ.
 28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female,**
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 29 **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's [spiritual] seed,**
and heirs according to the promise."

A Christian's genetics aren't altered by "faith in Christ Jesus". The phrase "**you are Abraham's seed**" is meant spiritually, not genetically. A true Christian is akin to Abraham *spiritually*. An example of Abraham's spirituality is found in Genesis 18:16-33, in which the Lord tells Abraham He's going to destroy the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 19:3-11 portrays Sodom's inhabitants as being very wicked.) Abraham wasn't satisfied that only he and his relatives would live. His compassion for his fellow-man compelled him to plead with God to spare the two cities on behalf of the righteous. Yet, he was also begging that the "unsaved" be spared along with the righteous. He asked God to spare Sodom for the sake of fifty righteous people. When God agreed to that, he bargained with God to save the city for fewer and fewer, from 45 down to 40, 30, 20, and finally, 10 righteous people. Abraham, who was already "saved", pleaded with God to spare those who weren't. How many Christians pray that Muslims may be saved as Muslims? Hindus as Hindus? Would we want others to pray for us if roles were reversed? In Matthew 5:44, Jesus said;

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..."

How many of us are content with our personal salvation while believing those of other faiths are lost? Such behavior isn't spiritually akin to Abraham's. John 8:39,41,44, Jesus;

- 39 **If you were Abraham's children...**
then you would do the things Abraham did.
 41 **You are doing the things your own father does.**
 44 **You belong to your father, the devil..."**

I sometimes wish Jesus' language was a bit gentler, but he had his reasons for speaking sternly. Traditional Christian win/lose theology denies Christ's gospel, again and again. As its followers condemn others, their words condemn themselves. Following are more examples supporting non-judgment of other religions...

The Greatest Commandment

Mark 12:28-34;

28 One of the teachers...asked,
"Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

29 **"The most important one,"** answered Jesus, **"is this:**
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

30 **Love the Lord your God with all your heart**
and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

31 **The second is this:**
'Love your neighbor as yourself.'
There is no commandment greater than these."

32 **"Well said, teacher,"** the man replied.
"You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him.

33 **To love him with all your heart,**
with all your understanding and with all your strength,
and to love your neighbor as yourself
is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

34 **When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him,**
"You are not far from the kingdom of God."

What Christian, were they to discover Hinduism was the only path to salvation, wouldn't want their parents to be saved, even though they'd died "unbelievers"? Wouldn't we pray to our new deity they'd somehow be saved? Wouldn't we ask fellow Hindus to pray for the souls of our families? Romans 2:12-16 spells it out. You've seen the preceding parables. A true Christian would act like Abraham and pray for salvation of those of other faiths.

Jesus and the apostles warned us theology would be tainted by false teaching. We shouldn't be surprised their prophecies have come to pass. We show true faith in Jesus by following through on that faith in both thoughts and deeds. Our hearts must be changed so that we, like Abraham, pray others are saved, just as they are. Then, we'll really be Abraham's spiritual heirs. If not, we're no better than the self-righteous religious fundamentalists Jesus constantly criticized, and to whom he directed the following words...

Matthew 12:7, Jesus;

If you had known what these words mean,
'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,'
you would not have condemned the innocent."

The Parable of the Merciless Servant

Matthew 23-35, Jesus;

23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. 26 "The servant fell on his knees before him.

'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'

27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go."

28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him.

'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him,

'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32 "Then the master called the servant in.

'You wicked servant,' he said,

'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'

34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

While this parable primarily concerns forgiveness, the lesson also applies to salvation. The merciless "servant of God" who once was doomed was redeemed by Christ. His debt was paid with Christ's life. Yet he won't plead to God people of other faiths be saved. Instead, he's willing to have the law applied harshly for other people, who by his belief must be thrown into hell (prison). He didn't stop to think what the situation might be like for other people. They're "sinners" getting their "just" punishment. He doesn't realize he just pronounced his own sentence at the Judgment. Woe unto him. He doesn't know Christ is the Good Shepherd, or that God loves all his children enough to command Paul to write the Narrow Gate into Romans 2:12-16.

Circumcision represents traditions or customs which appear to confer righteousness upon those who have these "signs", while indicating those who do not have such "signs" are spiritually lacking. It could just as well be any of various forms of baptism, recital of creeds, fasting, abstinence, or other traditional symbols of righteousness.

Romans 4:11, Paul;

And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision,
a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

So then,

he is the father of all who believe [in their hearts and acts],
but have not been circumcised [or baptized, or recited a particular creed],
in order that righteousness might be credited to them."

1 Corinthians 7:19, Paul;

19 Circumcision [as representing one religion] is nothing
and uncircumcision [as representing another religion] is nothing.
Keeping God's commands [to love one another] is what counts."

Abraham's faith was proved by loving his neighbors, not by being circumcised or any other ritual. Because God is in our neighbors, by acting as he did Abraham showed utmost respect to God, and God appreciated it.

Matthew 7:12, Jesus;

So in everything [including your theology, and what you say],
do to others [including members of other religions]
what you would have them do to you,
for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

James 2:8-9, 12-13;

8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture,
"Love your neighbor as yourself,"
you are doing right.

9 But if you show favoritism,
you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers."

12 Speak and act
as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,
13 because judgment without mercy
will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.

Mercy triumphs over judgment!"

If God teaches us to be this way, the Almighty must be that way, too.
Does it make sense God would teach us to be another way? If God is merciful,
why condemn ourselves by rejecting His grace for all good-hearted people.

1 Corinthians 7:19-20, 23-24, Paul;

**19 Circumcision [as representing one religion] is nothing
and uncircumcision [as representing another religion] is nothing.
Keeping God's commands [to love one another] is what counts.**

23 You were bought at a price;

do not become slaves of men [and wicked theology].

**24 Brothers, each man, as responsible to God,
should remain in the [spiritual] situation [i.e., religion] God called him to."**

1 Corinthians 7:24 raises an issue. It advises people to stay in their present religion, provided it meets the standard set by the Golden Rule. This may appear to threaten growth for churches. If people of other faiths are already "saved", what's the purpose of churches? Will people still come to church? Clergy needn't worry, provided they teach God's full gospel. Churches will continue to play a vital role in bettering humanity. However, prophecy says churches who continue to teach a satanic gospel of separateness and unfair judgment are destined to fail. We'll take a look at these prophecies in a later book, God willing. A sample of them are Christ's messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2:1-3:21. Christians must repent and teach the full gospel, including the Narrow Gate, Romans 2:12-16. We must not be proud, or Jesus will tell us...
Matthew 15:3-4, 6, Jesus;

**3 "And why do you break the command of God
for the sake of your [theology] tradition [that ignores Romans 2:12-16]?"**

4 For God said,..."

Matthew 22:37-39; 37 ..." **'Love the Lord your God**

with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 15:3-4, 6, cont.; [and]

4 "...Honor your father and mother'..."

[...and your neighbors' fathers and mothers, too]

4, cont.; "...and

**'Anyone who curses his father or mother [or their neighbors']
must be put to death.'**

6 ...Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition."

Matthew 23:15, Jesus;

"Woe to you,
[whichever "fundamentalist", "evangelical" "Christians" reject these words]
you hypocrites!

**You travel over land and sea to win a single convert,
 and when he becomes one,
 you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are."**

The world is in distress. God doesn't want religion turning Christians against Muslims, and vice-versa. Were this truly necessary for salvation, then I suppose it would be God's will and must be done. But disregarding God's grace and the gift of the Narrow Gate is the same as denying Christ and then choosing to serve Satan. This is what Jesus was saying to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:15. And it's what he's saying to those who tell others they must curse their parents to hell as a prerequisite to their salvation. Don't judge or condemn other faiths. If God designed the Narrow Gate to permit entry at the final moment for people of other faiths, perhaps other faiths also have something of value. Otherwise God would have shown favoritism, because non-Christians wouldn't have received fair preparation for spiritual growth before the Judgment.

At the Tower of Babel, God scattered humanity because we had become too powerful, yet weren't spiritually ready for such power. To reunite us after we learned what we needed to learn, God gave each group a unique aspect of spiritual knowledge, the sum total of which is necessary to rebuild the Tower, but this time the "right" way—Creator's way.

1 Peter 2:4-5;

**4 As you come to him, the living Stone [Christ]--
 rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--
 5 you also, like living stones,
 are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood,
 offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."**

To receive the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth we must accept Christ's gospel in its fullness, which includes people traveling different spiritual paths. We must live the gospel, love each other, and follow the Golden Rule. If we want others to understand our religion, then we must try to understand others' religions, too, without judging and condemning. By following Jesus' guidance, the Narrow Gate ("Way of Holiness") connecting all faiths through Christ is opened wide for us. All faiths have spiritual gifts we can all learn and benefit from. And Peace will finally prevail on earth.

John 12:32, Jesus;

**But I, when I am lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men to myself."**

Christians have assumed because others must come to Christ, that Christians have no need for other sacred sources and should avoid them. By assuming this, they've unwittingly implied that God didn't love all peoples enough to give each a valid path to salvation. In doing so, they've denied Christ and his words...

Mark 9:38-40;

**38 "Teacher," said John,
"we saw a man driving out demons in your name
and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."**

**39 "Do not stop him,"
Jesus said.
"No one who does a miracle in my name
can in the next moment say anything bad about me,
40 for whoever is not against us is for us."**

The Bible is a spiritual work, meant to be understood spiritually. Remember as you read the next passage that spiritual "slavery" is bondage of the heart and mind to sinful thought, such as harmful theology, not physical chains.

1 Corinthians 7:23-24, Paul;

**23 You were bought at a price;
do not become slaves of men [and their wicked theology].**

**24 Brothers, each man, as responsible to God,
should remain in the [spiritual] situation [i.e., religion] God called him to."**
Galatians 5:6, Paul;

**For in Christ Jesus
neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value.
The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."**
John 14:2, Jesus;

**In my Father's house are many rooms;
if it were not so, I would have told you."**

Revelation 3:19, Jesus;

**Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.
So be earnest, and repent."**

Focus on important things. Does the religion respect life? Every individual? The Earth? Since God is in each, this is a good measure. Christ is always the focal point, only in ways perhaps you hadn't considered previously. But all salvation comes through him in the many parts of his full Name.

One More Thing...

The previous pages prove valid paths to God exist outside traditional Christian theology. However, there's one important issue we haven't addressed yet. Even though we know Christ came to us many different times with many different names (see next chapter, "The Many Names of Christ"), the following passage still appears to say that the specific name, "Jesus Christ", is necessary for salvation... Acts 4:8, 10, 12;

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them:...

10...**It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,...**
...this man stands before you healed.

12 Salvation is found in no one else,
for there is no other name under heaven given to men
by which we must be saved."

Verse 12 states, "**Salvation is found in no one else**". Clearly, Jesus' name by itself doesn't save. If there had never been a Jesus, what power would the name by itself hold? It has power because it represents the person Jesus, or more accurately, the soul or spirit that inhabited his body. What is meant by "**there is no other name under heaven...by which we must be saved**" is that salvation rests in that one person.

Any part of the names Christ has used represents him, whether it be "Jesus", "Immanuel", "Gabriel", "Brahma", "Quetzlcoatl", "Deganawidah", Tunkashila, Baha'ullah, etc. Through whichever name, the name "Jesus" is always included, because it's another name for the same "person". It wasn't necessary for Peter to say Christ's full name, which includes all the names by which he's been known to different peoples over time. So, while Paul used the name Christ used for his appearance in Paul's time and place (i.e., "Jesus"), that doesn't mean his other names are irrelevant or disqualified, or anything like that.

Chapter 2

The Many Names of Christ

PREFACE

Jesus speaks with Black Elk

"Black Elk Speaks", p. 188;

"Twelve men [apostles] were coming towards me,
and they said,
"Our Father, the two-legged chief, you shall see!"

Then they led me to the center of the circle
where once more I saw the holy tree all full of leaves and blossoming.
But that was not all I saw.

Against the tree
there was a man standing with arms held wide in front of him."...
John 12:32, Jesus;

But I, when I am lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men to myself."

"Black Elk Speaks", p. 188, cont.:

I looked hard at him,
and I could not tell what people he came from.
He was not a Wasichu [white person]
and he was not an Indian...

*[He was darker-skinned than Caucasian and lighter-skinned than Native American,
i.e., Middle Eastern—Israelite]*

He was a very fine-looking man.
While I was staring hard at him, his body began to change
and became very beautiful with all colors of light,
and around him there was light.

He spoke like singing:
"My life is such that all earthly beings and growing things belong to me.
Your father, the Great Spirit, has said this.
You too must say this."

1 Timothy 2:5-6, Paul;

5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men
—the testimony given in its proper time."

John 14:6, Jesus;

6 ..."I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father [Great Spirit] except through me."

The Many Names of Christ

The quotes from "Black Elk Speaks" on the previous page are from an account of a mystical journey experienced by an Oglala Sioux prophet named Black Elk. Black Elk was taken up to heaven by two "warriors" (angels). He was greeted by twelve "grandfathers" (apostles) who took him to see the "two-legged chief" described on the previous page and who is quoted in the passage below; "Black Elk Speaks", p. 188, the "two-legged chief";

**"My life is such that all earthly beings and growing things belong to me.
Your father, the Great Spirit, has said this. You too must say this."**

From what's written above, the "two-legged chief" Black Elk saw must be Jesus Christ because he said essentially the same thing Paul said in...
1 Timothy 2:5-6, Paul;

**5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men
—the testimony given in its proper time."**

Before making a judgment about Black Elk's story, let's examine the effect the experience had upon him. When Black Elk was a teen-ager he fought at the Battle of Little Bighorn against the U.S. 7th Cavalry. He experienced seeing his tribe hounded and slaughtered and their land stolen by people who claimed to be Christians. There was no good reason for him to love anything related to Christ. Despite this, after being taken to heaven, Black Elk became a Christian. But, he never gave up his original Sioux religion. Here's why: Since Jesus Christ is the "two-legged chief" in Black Elk's vision, he links Christianity and Native American religions. Both come from the same divine Source. This adds a new perspective to the following New Testament passage...

Philippians 2:9-11, Paul;

**9 Therefore God [*the Father-Wakan Tanka-Great Spirit*]
exalted him [*Jesus*] to the highest place
and gave him the name [*Christ-Tunkashila**] that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus [*Christ-Tunkashila*] every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ[*-Tunkashila*]
is [*the same being, with a different name for their*] Lord [*two-legged chief*],
to the glory of God the Father [*Great Spirit-Wakan Tanka*]."**

* "Tunkashila" is the Lakota name for Christ.

(See "Fool's Crow: Wisdom and Power" by Thomas E. Mails, pp. 33-34)

This being true adds new meaning to another thing Paul wrote...
Ephesians 2:14-17, 18, Paul;

- 14 For he [*Jesus Christ-Tunkashila*] himself is our peace,
who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, ..."
15 ...His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two,
thus making peace,
16 and in this one body [*with multiple names*] to reconcile both of them to God...
17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away
and peace to those who were near.
18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

This poses a dilemma. If the "two-legged chief" is Jesus Christ, then a Christian who calls Native American spirituality the work of the devil is denying Jesus. The converse is true for a follower of traditional Native American religions who speaks against Jesus and the Bible. They speak against the Oglala Sioux prophet Black Elk and against Wakan Tanka (Great Spirit). People from one group might think twice before condemning the other. Maybe even respect each other more. When that happens, an opportunity for the holy spirit to heal us presents itself. If this principle is to have worldwide benefit, Christ must be a central figure in other religions, too. How does this revelation concerning Christ's multiple identities impact Islam? Here's the Muslim version of Christ's Second Coming...

Ibn-I-Majah Book of Fitān #4077 (p.385);

Abû Umāma Bahili said...

Allāh's Messenger (saw) said,

**"Then Isā b. Maryam (Jesus Christ, son of Maryam), peace be upon him,
will be a just Judge and a just ruler of my umma [*Muslim community*]."**

Jesus holds a starring role in Muslim prophecy, often overlooked by many Muslims. Instead, they eagerly await their other anointed messiah, known as the "Mahdi" or "Qa'im" or "divinely guided one". The respect Jesus receives is mostly lip-service. People don't go out of their way to learn his gospel. This is ironic for two reasons. First, Jesus played a central, though hidden (until now) role in the birth of Islam. He has another name, Gabriel, known to Muslims by the Arabic equivalent, "Jibreel". Jibreel is the divine Messenger Allāh sent to reveal the Qur'an to Muhammad. As it is written...

Sura 2:97;

Say:

Whoso is the enemy of Gabriel...shall have God as his enemy..."

For it is he [*Gabriel*]

**who by God's leave hath caused the Koran to descend on thy heart,
the confirmation of previous revelations..."**

Once it's proven Jesus Christ is the angel Jibreel/Gabriel, Muslims are posed with the same dilemma Christians and Native Americans have. The error most Muslims make of belittling Jesus' significance becomes apparent. In the past, Jesus as Gabriel *delivered* the Qur'an to Muhammad. In prophecy, Jesus *returns* as Allāh's chosen "just ruler" of the Muslim worldwide community Ummah) who is the one who delegates authority to the Mahdi. But, is it possible that Jesus, who according to John 1:32-34 is the "Son of God"* and "Lord"* according to Acts 1:6, 1:21 and Galatians 1:3, is also an angel? The answer is: "Absolutely yes".

* The idea of Jesus being "Son of God", "Lord", or "God" certainly appears to contradict the Qur'an. In chapter 5, "Reconciling the Bible and Qur'an", we'll see how the Qur'an and Bible are actually in full accord on this issue.

The word "angel" comes from the Greek "angelos", which means "messenger". "Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary" states: "an·gel...fr. Gk *angelos*, lit., messenger". People have the idea that angels must have wings, but that denies both the Bible and the Qur'an. Proof of this can be found on pages 53-55 in a section titled, "Angels and Humans". Here's one piece of scriptural evidence. Hebrews 13:2; **"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."**

You can add wings or take them off, but an angel is a messenger, and can come as a human. Gabriel's name testifies that. Gabriel's name means; from "Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary"; "Ga•bri•el...[Heb] man of God".

Gabriel is the highest divine messenger in Islam and Christianity. He gave the Qur'an to Muhammad. For Christians, Gabriel is the angel who announced to his soon-to-be mother, Mary, that he was coming into the world. Gabriel is also the one who sounds his horn on the "Day of the Lord". Muslims may balk at Gabriel being Jesus. Christians may balk at describing Jesus as an angel. However, all his words and acts are consistent with the definition of an angel, and Gabriel, in particular. By doing things this way, Jesus perfectly fulfills Paul's words by offering himself as a bridge of peace between cultures; Ephesians 2:14-16, 18, Paul;

- 14 For [Jesus Christ-Jibreel] himself is our peace,
 who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier,..."
 15 ...His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two,
 thus making peace,
 16 and in this one body [with multiple names]
 to reconcile both of them to God...
 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

Jesus Christ as Messenger, i.e., Angel

John 1:1,14;

1 In the beginning was the Word [*Christ-Gabriel*],
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

14 The Word became flesh [*Jesus Christ*] and made his dwelling among us."

Luke 4:43, Jesus;

"...I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God...,
because that is why I [*Jesus Christ-Gabriel*] was sent."

Jesus certainly qualifies as a Messenger Extraordinaire, just as Gabriel is the highest of the angels. Daniel, chapters 8-12, Matthew 24 and Revelation 1 connect both Jesus and Gabriel into one person. We begin with...

Daniel 8:15-16 (NIV);

15 While I, Daniel, was watching the vision...
there before me stood one who looked like a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai [*a canal in Susa, Persia*] calling,
"Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision."

The narrative of this vision ends, but later, in chapter 9, Daniel refers to the "man" named "Gabriel" as the one speaking to Daniel in chapters 9-12.

Daniel 9:21 (NIV);

...while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision..."

In Matthew 24:15, next, Jesus alerts us something hidden may be going on by saying, "*let the reader understand*". But, why? Everywhere else he simply referred to the name of the prophet he cited, if he mentioned him at all. In Matthew 24:15, Jesus indicated a mysterious connection between Gabriel and himself.

Matthew 24:15; "*So when you see standing in the holy place*

'the abomination that causes desolation,'
spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—"

Six verses later, in Matthew 24:21, Jesus quoted Gabriel nearly word for word in Daniel 12:1..., Gabriel;

"...There will be a time of distress
such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then."

Matthew 24:21, Jesus;

For then there will be great distress,
unequaled from the beginning of the world until now
--and never to be equaled again."

Jesus added the words "*never to be equaled again*" to set the prophecy for now. Any earlier distress has been equaled or surpassed by the distress of today.

In Daniel 11:2 (NIV), Gabriel says;

"Now then, I tell you the truth:..."

Daniel 11:2 is the only instance in the Old Testament in which anyone uses the phrase, **"I tell you the truth"** However, Jesus uses that phrase repeatedly in the Gospels (78 times). No one else in the Bible uses that specific phrase. These are subtle, yet deliberate clues. Jesus alerts the reader by saying, **"let the reader understand"**. Physical descriptions of both Jesus and Gabriel, next, are graphic evidence of Christ's multiple identities...
Revelation 1:10, 12-18;

10 On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit,
and I heard behind me a loud voice like a [Gabriel's] trumpet,"
12 I turned around...And...saw... 13 ...someone "like a son of man,"
dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet
and with a golden sash around his chest.
14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow,
and his eyes were like blazing fire.
15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace,
and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.
16 ...His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance."...

Daniel 10:5-6;

5 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen,
with a belt of the finest gold around his waist.
6 His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning,
his eyes like flaming torches,
his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze,
and his voice like the sound of a multitude."

Daniel 10:5-6 and Revelation 1:12-16 are the only places in the Bible where similar physical descriptions of anyone, not just this person, are found.

Revelation 1		Daniel 10	
13	"with a golden sash"	5	"a belt of the finest gold"
14	"eyes were like blazing fire"	6	"eyes like flaming torches"
15	"feet were like bronze glowing"	6	"legs like...gleam of burnished bronze"
16	"face...like...sun shining in all its brilliance"	6	"face like lightning[--bright, glowing]"
15	"voice...like...sound of rushing waters"	6	"voice like the sound of a multitude"

Why does the "sound of rushing waters" equal the "sound of a multitude"?
Revelation 14 and Ezekiel 1 give us the answer, next page...

Revelation 14:1-3;

- 1...there...was the Lamb...and with him 144,000 [*people*].
- 2...I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters...
The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps.
- 3 And they sang a new song before the throne..."

Ezekiel 1:24*;

**When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings,
like the roar of rushing waters...like the tumult of an army."**

God, the real Author of the Bible, wants everyone to know Jesus Christ and Gabriel/Jibreel are the same person. Gabriel and the person speaking to John in Revelation 1:17 link Islam and Christianity together through Jesus Christ, because the person speaking to John is Jesus...

Revelation 1:10-18, cont. from previous page;

**17 When I saw him [a person "like a son of man" (Rev.1:12)],
I fell at his feet as though dead.**

Then he placed his right hand on me and said:

**"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One;
I was dead [crucified], and behold I am alive [resurrected] for ever and ever!
And I hold the keys of death and Hades."**

...the next passage identifies the "Living One" as the "Son of God", i.e., Jesus;
Revelation 2:18, Jesus;

**"To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:
These are the words of the Son of God,
whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze."**

Many Muslims wonder why Allāh is sending Jesus at the Last Hour ("End of the Age" in the Bible) instead of Muhammad, as the next prophecy implies;

Ibn-I-Majah *Book of Fitān* #4077 (p.385);

Abû Umāma Bahili said...Allāh's Messenger (saw) said,
**"Then Isā b. Maryam (Jesus Christ, son of Maryam), peace be upon him,
will be a just Judge and a just ruler of my umma [Muslim community]."**

The riddle is partly solved. If not the Prophet come himself, then having the angel who delivered the Qur'an to Muhammad makes sense. This new knowledge will turn Islam upside down, exactly as Imam Ali prophesied...

Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 102; Imam Ali;

**O' people!
a time will come to you
when Islam would be capsized as a pot is capsized with all its contents."**

"The Signs Before The Day Of Judgement" p.12,
citing Ibn-I-Majah, #3988,

"Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud said: **"The Prophet said,
'Islam began as something strange,
and it will revert to being strange [corrected theology] as it was in the beginning,
so good tidings for the strangers.'**"

Someone asked, 'Who are the strangers?'

He said, **'The ones who break away from their people (literally, 'tribes')*
for the sake of Islam.'** "

* The descriptive phrase, "(literally, 'tribes')" was placed there by the translator.

That Allāh chose Jesus to lead the Muslim Umma ahead of Muhammad fulfills the previous two prophecies perfectly. The next prophecy raises a very interesting question...Sahih Muslim Ch. MCCVII #7015;

An-Nawwās b. Sam'ān reported

that Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) made mention...

at this very time...Allāh would send Christ, son of Mary,

...[he] will descend in the eastern side of Damascus...

**Then a people whom Allāh had protected would come to Jesus, son of Mary,
and he would wipe their faces³⁰⁵²..."**

"³⁰⁵² Wipe the dust of journey or the traces of hardships suffered by them."

Why would Muslims be coming to Jesus? Muslims already have the Prophet and the Qur'an. They'll do so because this is Allah's test to see whether they'll overcome prejudice and accept the Bible's messiah as theirs, too. This is powerful testimony Jesus' gospel is important for Muslims (and everyone else), as is this... Sura 4:159;

**There shall not be one of the people of the Book [which includes Muslims]
but shall believe in Him before his death,
and in the day of Resurrection, He will be a witness against them."**

Initially, many Muslims will disagree with this. They're generally taught to respect earlier revelations in lip-service only, then reject them as tainted and unreliable. This heresy is addressed in chapter 4, "Peace and Islam". It makes sense the angel through whom Allāh sent the Qur'an to Muslims would be given authority to lead the Ummah. That's why Sura 159 says what it does., indicating the importance of Jesus' gospel as a key component for a revival of Islam. Because Christians deny Muhammad, they deny Jesus, who gave the Qur'an to Muhammad. But, Muslims disregard Jibreel's (Jesus') gospel, too. Meanwhile, Jews deny both Jesus and Muhammad, denying their prophets, especially Elisha...

Ephesians 2:14-16, 18, Paul;

14 For [*Jesus Christ-Jibreel-Elisha*] himself is our peace,
who has made the two [*three*] one and has destroyed the barrier,..."

15 ...His purpose was to create in himself
one new man out of the two [*three*],
thus making peace,

16 and in this one body [*with multiple names*]
to reconcile both [*all*] of them to God...

18 For through him we both [*all*] have access to the Father by one Spirit."

In order to unite humanity through one person, God left a clearly recognizable trail in the scriptures and prophecies of each people. God provided plenty of evidence that Jesus visited many peoples using different names. If we accept this evidence, then we are at peace with mankind. If we reject God's testimony, then we lose our own peace and salvation. What could more fair? God is testing us.

Elisha and Jesus and Gabriel

Jews may not have accepted Jesus yet, but they accept Elisha as a cherished prophet. What we'll discover next is that "Elisha" is an earlier visitation to the Israelites by Christ. His name provides the first clue of his hidden identity. In "Nave's Topical Bible" we find "Elisha" defined as "(*God [El] is [my] salvation*)". Literally, it means, "God is salvation". A fitting name for the Messiah. The next clue comes in the form of an equation. An account in 2 Kings 2:1-15, proves Elisha had twice the spirit of Elijah. In Matthew 11:14, Jesus stated John the Baptist "**is the Elijah who was to come**". Three verses earlier, in verse 11:11, Jesus stated,

**"Among those born of women
there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist..."**

That includes Moses. So, Moses = Elijah = John the Baptist.

According to the account in 2 Kings, after Elijah was taken up in the whirlwind Elisha received twice the "spirit" Elijah possessed. The only man who could have twice the spirit of someone with spirit equal to the greatest of anyone "**born of women**" was the spirit that dwelt in Jesus Christ, who was born of a virgin.

So, Jesus and Elisha are at least 2x > Moses or Elijah or John the Baptist.

Here's the account in 2 Kings...

TWICE THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

2 Kings 2:1-15;

1 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind,
Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

2 Elijah said to Elisha,

"Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel."

But Elisha said,

"As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you."

So they went down to Bethel.

3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked,
"Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?"

"Yes, I know," Elisha replied, **"but do not speak of it."**

4 Then Elijah said to him,

"Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho."

And he [Elisha] replied,

"As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you."

So they went to Jericho.

5 The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him,
"Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?"

"Yes, I know," he replied, **"but do not speak of it."**

6 Then Elijah said to him,

"Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan."

And he [Elisha] replied,

"As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you."

So the two of them walked on.

7 Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance,
facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan.

8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it.

The water divided to the right and to the left,
and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha,

"Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?"

"Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied.

10 **"You have asked a difficult thing,"** Elijah said,

**"yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours
—otherwise not."**

2 Kings 2:1-15;

11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw this and cried out,

"My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!"

And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart. 13 He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it.

"Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" he asked.

When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left,
and he crossed over."

15 The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said,

"The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha."

And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him."

What's so extraordinary about a young man (Elisha) being able to keep up with an old man (Elijah)? Besides, fifty prophets also matched the pace, accompanying Elijah from a distance. Why was such power attributed to Elisha for performing such a minor feat? The answer; only extremely gifted individuals such as Christ can see into the spirit world at will, which is why he could see the "**chariots and horsemen of Israel**" and none of the other prophets could. Jesus and Elisha both had the "**chariots and horsemen of Israel**" at their disposal, which is also the next clue...Matthew 26:53-54, Jesus;

**53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father,
and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?**

**54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled
that say it must happen in this way?"**

2 Kings 6:15-17;

**15 When the servant of the man of God [Elisha] got up
and went out early the next morning,
an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city.**

"Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked.

16 "Don't be afraid," the prophet [Elisha] answered.

"Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

17 And Elisha prayed,

"O LORD, open his eyes so he may see."

**Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked
and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."**

Elisha performed miracles parallel to those of Jesus. From feeding crowds with impossibly small quantities of food (2 Kings 4:38-44 <-> Matthew 14:11-21), to raising people from the dead (2 Kings 4:11-36 <-> John 11:1-43). Clue after clue, all with the intent to unite humanity through Christ. Jews may deny Christ as "Jesus", but they accept him as "Elisha".

Next, we travel east from the Middle East to India, Hinduism, and Christ's visitation there as "Brahma". Brahma and Hinduism's connection with God's other Messages is discussed at length in chapter 6, "Created In God's Image". We'll examine Brahma as Christ briefly here, establishing only a basic connection now.

CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE

John 1:1-3; 1 **In the beginning was the Word** [*Christ-Brahma*],
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 2 [*Christ-Brahma*] **was with God in the beginning."**
 3 **Through him all things** [*"the universe"*] **were made** [*created*];
without him nothing was made that has been made."

Ramayana 1:3:34; **"...the self-born creator, Brahma."**

Ramayana Glossary; **"Brahma:** The first of all the gods and creator of the universe. He was directly manifested from Vishnu and is thus sometimes called "the unborn."

Philippians 2:9-11, Paul;

9 **Therefore God** [*the Father-Allāh-Yahweh-Krishna-Great Spirit*]
exalted him [*Jesus Christ*] **to the highest place**
and gave him the name [*Jesus Christ-Gabriel-Elisha-Brahma-Deganawidah*]
that is above every name,
 10 **that at the** [*full, complete*] **name of Jesus every knee should bow,**
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 11 **and every tongue confess**
that Jesus Christ [*-Prince of Peace-Peacemaker-Wanikiye*]
is [*the same being, but a different name, for their*] **Lord** [*two-legged chief*],
to the glory of God the Father [*Great Spirit*]."

This concentration of spiritual leadership in one person will prove key in bridging differences between cultures, and therefore, it's the way to peace. This was spelled out centuries ago by Paul in Ephesians 2:13-18, where he stated people of all groups may come together through the common denominator of Christ. People assumed Christ had just one short name, despite the fact he's called "Immanuel", "Son of Man" and "Son of God", too. This limitation was self-imposed by people, not the Bible. Next, we travel to the Americas...

The following quote comes from a prayer offered at the very first "keeping of a soul", a sacred rite of the Sioux performed for the deceased...

"The Sacred Pipe", p. 12, Chief High Hollow Horn;

"May this help us to remember that all the fruits [including sacred sources] of the wingeds, the two-leggeds [people], and the four-leggeds, are really the gifts of Wakan Tanka [God]. They are all wakan [sacred] and should be treated as such."

We've examined the connection between Christ and the "two-legged chief" of Black Elk's vision. Next, we'll travel to the eastern part of North America several centuries before Black Elk was born. The next identity of Christ we'll meet is the Peacemaker, Deganawidah. Deganawidah was co-founder of the Haudenosaunee, or "Longhouse", the Five Nations Confederacy of the Iroquois in what's today the northeastern United States. His story is found in the "White Roots of Peace", written by Paul Wallace and approved by Chief Leon Shenandoah, then spiritual leader (Tadodaho) of the Six Nations. Here is the account of Deganawidah;

p. 33: **"Deganawidah is said to have been born at a Huron settlement...**

Before his birth the name of the child was disclosed to his grandmother, as was the way among the Iroquois, in a dream. A messenger from the Great Spirit stood before the grandmother and said:

**"It is the will of the Master of Life, the Holder of the Heavens, that thy daughter, a virgin, shall bear a child.
He shall be called Deganawidah, the Master of Things, for he brings with him the Good News of Peace and Power.
Care for him well, thou and thy daughter, for he has a great office to perform in the world."**

"What is the child's office to be?" asked the grandmother.

"His office is to bring peace and life to the people on earth," replied the messenger."

Sounds just like Gabriel speaking to his future mother, Mary;
Luke 1:26-35;

26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,
27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said,

"Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be."

Luke 1:26-35, cont.:

- 30 But the angel said to her,
 "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.
 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son,
 and you are to give him the name Jesus.
 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.
 The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,
 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever;
 his kingdom will never end."
 34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered,
 "The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
 and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
 So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

Almost *exactly* the same. Creator uses patterns and synchronicities to communicate. In the Bible, Jesus walks on water. In "White Roots of Peace", Deganawidah navigated the waterways in a white stone canoe...
 p.34;

"When he [*Deganawidah*] had built his canoe and,
 with the help of his mother and grandmother, had brought it to the water,
 he bade them farewell...
 "But the canoe is made of stone," said his grandmother. "It will not float."

"It will float," replied Deganawidah.
 "This shall be a sign my words are true."

He entered the canoe, and it moved swiftly into the lake...
 p.38 "The hunters...said..."

"He came from the west and he goes toward the sunrise.
His canoe is made of white stone and it moves swiftly."

Revelation 2:17;

"...To him who overcomes,
 I will give some of the hidden manna [*spiritual knowledge*].
I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it,
 known only to him who receives it."

Revelation 2:17, paraphrased;

"...I will also give him a white stone [*canoe*]
with a new name [*for Christ, Deganawidah*] written on it,
 known only to him who receives it."

And finally, in order to prove himself to the people, Deganawidah had to offer himself as a sacrifice by climbing a tree, which was then pushed over a waterfall. The test being, that if he survived the deadly falls, then he must be for real. Similar to Christ being "hung on a tree" so he could come back to life to prove himself. Deganawidah went under the water and was lost from sight, symbolically dying, but was found alive and well the next day, sitting by the riverbank tending a fire. I'm certain he was eating fish, just like in the old days in Galilee. These parallels and other connections are ingenious means for Creator's word to unite all peoples.

Ephesians 2:13-22 (NIV),

13 But now in Christ Jesus [*Jibreel-Deganawidah-Brahma-Elisha*]
you [*Christians, Muslims, Native Americans, Hindus, and Jews*]
who once were far away [*in agreement on things spiritual*]
have been brought near through the blood of Christ [*Wanikiye-Peacemaker*].

14 For he himself is our peace [*Peacemaker-Prince of Peace*],
who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier,
the dividing wall of hostility,

15 by abolishing in his flesh [*both person & gospel*]
the law [*of any individual group*] with its commandments and regulations."

1 Timothy 2:5-6, Paul;

5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men..."

"Black Elk Speaks", p. 188, the two-legged chief;

"My life is such that all earthly beings and growing things belong to me.
Your father, the Great Spirit, has said this.
You too must say this."

"White Roots of Peace", p. 33;

A messenger from the Great Spirit...said:

"It is the will of the Master of Life, the Holder of the Heavens,
He [*Christ*] shall be called Deganawidah, the Master of Things..."

John 14:6-7, Jesus;

6 ..."I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

7 If you really knew me [*all my aspects*],
you would know my Father [*is truly Universal*] as well."

John 14:2, Jesus;

In my Father's house are many rooms;
if it were not so, I would have told you."

Angels and Humans

Let's examine scripture indicating human beings are divine creatures—*angels*. While claiming mankind's divinity may disturb some more traditionally-minded people, in the end God's word determines the outcome, not personal traditions.
Hebrews 13:2;

**Do not forget to entertain strangers,
for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."**

THE TWO VISITORS WHO "TRANSFORMED" INTO ANGELS

Genesis 18-19 (18:1-2, 16-17, 20-22, 33 19:1,12);

- 1 The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre...
- 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby...
- 16 When the [**three**] men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way.
- 17 Then the LORD [**one of the men**] said,
"Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"
- 20 ..."The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous 21 that I will go...see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me..."
- 22 The [**other two**] men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD.
- 33 When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home."

Genesis 18 ends here. The next verse is Genesis 19:1, following...
Genesis 19:1-2, 12;

- 1 The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city.
When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.
- 2 "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house..."
- 12 ...Then the two men said to Lot,..."

Genesis 19:1, 12 (NIV); 1 The two angels...12 Then the two men said to Lot,..."

Genesis 19:1, 12 (KJV); 1 ...two angels...12 And the men said unto Lot..."

Genesis 19:1, 12 (NAB); 1 The two angels...12 Then the angels said to Lot..."

Genesis 19:1, 12 (JSB); 1 The two angels...12 Then the men said to Lot..."

Genesis 19:1, 12 (SPT); 1...the two angels...12 And the men said to Lot..."

In Genesis, it's clear angels can be men. Now let's travel back to a time long before Adam and Eve, back to Job 38:1-7*, and the creation of the world...

Job 38:1,4,6-7 (NIV);

1 "Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm.

4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?

Tell me, if you understand.

6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—

7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angelsⁿ shouted for joy?"

The superscript "n" appears after "angels" in verse 7 in my Bible. It refers to a footnote at the bottom of the page which says, "ⁿ 7 Hebrew sons of God".

Job 38:7, (NIV): " while the morning stars sang together
and all the angelsⁿ shouted for joy?"

Job 38:7, (KJV): "When the morning stars sang together,
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Job 38:7, (NAB): "while the morning stars sang in chorus,
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Job 38:7 (JSB): "When the morning stars sang together
And all the divine beings shouted for joy?"

Job 38:7 (SPT): "When the stars were made,
all my angels praised me with a loud voice."

These "sons of God", "angels", or "divine beings" "shouted for joy" at the world's creation. Now we see the connection. The spirit within us is an angel, and is eternal. Then we have this...

1 Corinthians 6:3;

Do you not know that we will judge angels?"

How is it we would judge *higher* beings? Because the angels are us!

Here's what the Prophet had to say on the subject;

Sura 6:50, Muhammad;

**...neither do I say to you, 'Verily I am an angel:'
Only what is revealed to me do I follow."**

The Prophet didn't say he wasn't an angel, only that he wouldn't go beyond what had been revealed to him up to that time. Sura 6:50 must reconcile with the following passage...

Sura 6:9; **And if We had appointed an angel,**

**We should certainly have appointed one in the form of a man,
and We should have clothed him before them in garments like their own."**

And lastly, a special gift from the Mormon holy books...
 Doctrine and Covenants 129:1-9;

1 There are two kinds of beings in heaven, namely:

Angels, who are resurrected personages,
 having bodies of flesh and bones—

2 For instance, Jesus said :

Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

3 Secondly: the spirits of just men made perfect,
 they who are not resurrected, but inherit the same glory.

4 When a messenger comes saying he has a message from God,
 offer him your hand and request him to shake hands with you.

5 If he be an angel he will do so, and you will feel his hand.

6 If he be the spirit of a just man made perfect he will come in his glory;
 for that is the only way he can appear—

7 Ask him to shake hands with you,
 but he will not move, because it is contrary
 to the order of heaven for a just man to deceive;
 but he will still deliver his message.

9 These are ...keys
 whereby you may know whether any administration is from God."

According to verses 1, 4, and 5, virtually all people are angels of one kind or another. Being an "angel" is determined by our thoughts and actions. The other side of the coin is, that if our thoughts and actions are negative, we're what's called a "demon". But as beings living within God, made in God's image, sharing Christ's spirit, we all share a measure of divinity.

Chapter 3

THE MYTH OF INEVITABLE, LITERAL ARMAGEDDON

THE MYTH OF INEVITABLE, LITERAL ARMAGEDDON

2 Peter 2:1;

But there were also false prophets among the people,
just as there will be false teachers [in the future] among you.
They will secretly introduce destructive heresies,
even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them
—bringing swift destruction on themselves."

Peter's prophecy has come to pass. One of the most "destructive heresies" is about Doomsday, or "Armageddon". It says it's God's will that a horrible event in which three quarters of humanity dies and the Earth is rendered uninhabitable must occur because the Bible says so. It makes it appear God's will is to "judge" us with mass incineration by nuclear weaponry. Christians who believe this heresy have been convinced to support unholy things such as the war in Iraq, believing it's part of God's plan.

Worse yet, many are taught to expect a "Rapture" in which believers literally, physically, rise into the air to be with Jesus. Because they view Armageddon as an unfortunate but necessary prelude to their salvation, they're numbed to the grim reality of war. This belief denies Jesus' most basic gospel of love for all humanity. However, they're right about one thing—the "End Times", or more correctly, the "End of the Age" is upon us. The real questions are...

- 1.) Will Armageddon occur *figuratively* and peacefully through repentance, or *literally*, with mass destruction, death, and misery for billions?
- 2.) Will Christians obey God's command to love our neighbors and choose a peaceful solution? Or will they insist upon a cruel, satanic, "Win/Lose" scenario in which their "unsaved" neighbors must perish in flames?

In this chapter, scripture will teach us we have a choice of whether prophecy is fulfilled peacefully (Christ-like) or violently (satanically). We'll learn how to read the scriptures' spiritual language so we can discern which option is God's and which is Satan's. Using actual scripture in an easy to understand and logical format provides the reader with the perfect means to undermine the heresies of hate and doom. We'll begin with three passages indicating the perspective God prefers we use when reading prophecy in the Bible...

Deuteronomy 30:19, Moses;

**This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you
that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.
Now choose life, so that you and your children may live..."**

Hosea 6:6;

**For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."**

John 6:63, Jesus;

**The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.
The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."**

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus cited Hosea 6:6 in verses 9:13 and 12:7. Twice in one book. While most Christians are taught a bloody "Armageddon" is required to fulfill God's prophecies, as a general rule, prophecy is almost completely misunderstood. Prophecies of doom are warnings, presenting choices of equally valid paths. They *will* be fulfilled, but it's the manner in which they are fulfilled that really counts. When read figuratively using spiritual language, prophecies are fulfilled peacefully. When read literally, the destruction means worldwide death and devastation. Part of our individual test is which choice we wish God to manifest, and which outcome we work toward. How we respond determines the form of fulfillment—whether it be life, or death. This principle was explained by God to the prophet Jeremiah in what I call "Jeremiah's Law"...

Jeremiah's Law

Jeremiah 18:7-11 (NIV);

**7 If at any time [including Revelation]
I [God/Creator] announce [directly or through prophets]
that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed,
8 and if that nation I warned repents of its evil,
then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.**

**9 And if at another time
I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted,
10 and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me,
then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it."**

Verses 7-8 say if we heed God's prophecy of doom and repent (destroy our pride and change what we're doing wrong, as in our foreign policy) God will spare us, but verses 9-10 say if we ignore God, we'll be destroyed literally. Verse 11 sums up the situation: it's our choice...

Jeremiah 18:7-11, cont.:

**11 "Now therefore
say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem,
'This is what the LORD says:
Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you.
So turn from your evil ways, each one of you,
and reform your ways and your actions.'"**

God gave this Law to Jeremiah and ordered him to warn his people of impending doom if they didn't repent. Jeremiah lived about 600 B.C., at the time of the Second Babylonian Empire. Perhaps Jeremiah's Law was meant only for that time? No! The Book of Jonah carries the same message. Jonah was a prophet who lived a hundred years earlier, around 700 B.C., at the time of the Assyrian Empire (the most powerful empire in the Middle East). God sent Jonah to Nineveh, Assyria's capital city, to deliver a message to the Assyrian king. The message, or prophecy, was that God was going to destroy Nineveh in forty days because of the evil the king and his nation were committing.

Jonah 1:1-2;

- 1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai:**
- 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it,
because its wickedness has come up before me."**

Instead, Jonah tried to run away from his mission. He set sail on a boat, got thrown overboard, and was swallowed by a fish for three days and lived to tell about it, but that's another story. When he got back on dry land God spoke to him again;

Jonah 3:1-10*;

- 1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time:**
- 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh
and proclaim to it the message I give you."**
- 3 Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh.**
- Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days.**
- 4 On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed:
"Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned."**
- 5 The Ninevites believed God. ..."**

What follows next is very important. Not only did the Ninevites believe God, they took appropriate action. They repented of their evil, and God responded with mercy. Jesus referred us to this example twice, as you'll soon see. But first, the remainder of the passage from Jonah...

Jonah 3:1-10, cont.:

5 cont.: "...They [*the people of Nineveh*] declared a fast,
and all of them, from the greatest to the least,
put on sackcloth [*humbled themselves*].

6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh,
he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes,
covered himself with sackcloth [*like everyone else,*] and sat down in the dust.

7 Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:
Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything;
do not let them eat or drink.

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth.
Let everyone call urgently on God.
Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.

9 Who knows?

God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger
so that we will not perish."

10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways,
he had compassion
and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened."

This account of God's mercy is in full agreement with what God told the prophet Joel (about 830 B.C.), over a hundred years before Jonah, and more than two hundred years before Jeremiah. Please note in Jonah 3:9 above and Joel 2:14 below the use of the phrase "Who knows?" and the nearly identical wording of the accompanying message. God is showing us this message is an essential part of understanding how to read His prophecies.

Joel 2:13-14;

13 Rend your heart and not your garments.
Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.

14 Who knows?

He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—..."

Back to the lesson of Jonah and the Assyrians...

Jonah 4:1-2;

1 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.

2 He prayed to the LORD,

"O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home?

That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish.

I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God,

slow to anger and abounding in love,

a God who relents from sending calamity."

Jonah knew Assyria would later destroy Israel. And he knew of the principle of peaceful destruction via repentance because it was a part of the religion.. He didn't want to warn them and risk having them repent and be spared., so he tried running away to avoid warning the Ninevites. It seems Jeremiah's Law (and Joel's and Jonah's) was good for at least two hundred years and two empires. Does that prove we can apply it to Revelation and Armageddon? Good question. Let's ask Jesus.

Luke 11:29-30, 32, Jesus;

29 ..."This is a wicked generation.

It asks for a miraculous sign,

but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.

30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites,

so also will the Son of Man be to this generation."

[Jesus applied this rule to a generation 2000 years ago, but it still applies today.]

11:32 The men of Nineveh

will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it;

for they repented at the preaching of Jonah,

and now one greater than Jonah is here."

For emphasis, this saying was repeated in Matthew 12:41;

12:41 The men of Nineveh

will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it;

for they repented at the preaching of Jonah,

and now one greater than Jonah is here."

Jesus knew Jeremiah's Law still applied. He was referring to it when he cited Jonah. Jesus knew the Father's mercy is ever-present. That's why he pointed twice to Jonah as a sign regarding repentance for a nation not obeying the Law of Moses in the spirit God intended. Jesus verified Jeremiah's Law covered a period of at least 800 years. Not once did he say it was cancelled. So, it remains in effect for Christians today.

It's part of the Qur'an's teaching for Muslims, too, as Muhammad (S) also affirmed this principle;
Sura 10:96, 99;

96 Neither be those
who charge the signs [prophecies] of God with falsehood,
lest thou...perish...
99...any city [that's right, any city], had it believed,
might have found safety in its faith.
But it was so only with the people of JONAS [Jonah].
When they believed, We delivered them from...shame...
And provided for them for a time."

Believing, the Ninevites repented of their policies of violence and oppression, and were spared literal devastation.

Use of Figurative Language to Peacefully Fulfill Prophecy

The prophet Hosea (about 750 B.C.) provided a superb example of how figurative language can fulfill Doomsday destruction in prophecy;
Hosea 6:5-6*;

5 Therefore I [God] cut you in pieces with my prophets,
I killed you with the words of my mouth;
My judgments flashed like lightning upon you.

6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

The phrase "burnt offerings" is "holocausts" in the New American (Catholic) Bible. Jesus twice cited Hosea 6:6 in the two passages following, proving he knew and recommended usage of figurative forms of destruction in scripture. He was pointing to them:

Matthew 9:13; But go and learn what this means:
'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'..."

Matthew 12:7;
If you had known what these words mean,
'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,'
you would not have condemned the innocent. "

The verse to which he referred was Hosea 6:6;

6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

Just like the Father, repentance is Jesus' preferred manner for fulfilling prophecies of destruction. He highlighted the Old Testament's finest example of figurative destruction as he criticized a literalist, worldly theology that contradicted the spirit of God's Law. Let's take a further look at use of figurative language in scripture, beginning with this next passage by Jesus: John 16:25, Jesus;

**Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming
when I will no longer use this kind of language [figurative speech]
but will tell you plainly about my Father."**

Muhammad taught the same... Sura 3:7;

**[Allah] it is who hath sent down to thee "the Book.[Qur'an]"
Some of its signs are of themselves perspicuous [literal];
...and others are figurative."**

Paul taught the same thing, too...

1 Corinthians 2:13-14, Paul;

**13 This is what we [the Apostles] speak,
not in words taught us by human wisdom [conventional definitions]
but in words taught by the Spirit,
expressing spiritual truths in [figurative] spiritual words.**

**14 The [literalist] man without the Spirit
does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God,
for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them,
because they are spiritually discerned."**

Colossians 1:9, Paul;

**For this reason, since the day we heard about you,
we have not stopped praying for you
and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will [prophecy]
through all spiritual wisdom and understanding [figurative usage]."**

The "spiritual" words the "man without the Spirit does not accept" are figurative words. The "man without the Spirit" who rejects use of figurative language denies Jesus and the Bible when he insists on using a one-sided harsh "literal" interpretation. As Jesus said...

John 16:25, Jesus; **"...I have been speaking figuratively..."**

Mark 4:33-34; 33

**With many similar parables
Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand.**

34 He did not say anything to them without using a parable. ..."

John 6:63; **"...The words I have spoken to you are spirit
and they are life [not death—literal]."**

Here are two examples demonstrating how a literal interpretation seems to turn Christ into Satan and provide corrupt individuals a tool to use God's Word to promote war. We'll start by providing figurative, spiritual definitions for "fire", and then "killing".

Matthew 13:41-42, Jesus;

**41 The Son of Man [Jesus] will send out his angels...
they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin
and all who do evil.**

**42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace,
where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

[This sounds like human sacrifice!]

Luke 12:49, Jesus;

**"I have come to bring fire on the earth,
and how I wish it were already kindled!..."**

[God save us! Has Jesus gone mad? It sounds like he's talking about arson!]

Mark 9:49, Jesus; **"Everyone will be salted with fire."**

If literal, this is terrifying! Has Jesus forgotten how to forgive?

Thank God for Jeremiah and the figurative, "word of God" form of "fire";
Jeremiah 23:29, God;

"Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD..."

Jeremiah 5:14, God;

...the LORD God Almighty says:

**"Because the people have spoken these words,
I will make my words in your mouth a fire
and these people the wood it consumes."**

This matches Hosea 6:5-6 below. Jesus referred to this passage twice in Matthew, verses 9:13 and 12:7 (see bottom of page 62). Jesus was emphasizing that both he and the Father desired whatever killing take place be through fiery, figurative, spiritual language.

Hosea 6:5-6*;

5 Therefore I [God] cut you in pieces with my prophets,

I killed you with the words of my mouth;

My judgments flashed like lightning upon you.

**6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."**

Remember, Jesus said: John 16:25, Jesus;

"...I have been speaking figuratively,...",

But many Christians have been lead astray and taught to read scripture in literal terms only. Ironically, they ignore Jesus' literal words that he spoke figuratively. These people are the ones Paul referred to in the next verse...

1 Corinthians 2:14, Paul;

**"The man without the Spirit
does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God,
for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them,
because they are spiritually discerned."**

The previous passages indicate much of Jesus' gospel (including in Revelation where he spoke with John) is likely meant figuratively, not literally. Note also in Matthew 13:42 on the previous page evil people thrown into the "fiery furnace" are still alive. They may be suffering, weeping, and gnashing their teeth, but they're not turned into charcoal. Why choose to read it literally if it doesn't make sense that way? Figurative, spiritual, logical reading of prophecy permits a much more gentle fulfillment of Armageddon through repentance. Christ's gospel requires Christians to support the merciful option, not the gory one.

In reality, this is a core test of salvation. It clearly exposes the desire of our hearts—whether it's Christ-like love and mercy for others, or satan's choice of death and condemnation for God's children. According to Jesus, Old Testament prophecy is also subject to this rule...John 5:19;

John 5:19, Jesus; ... **"I tell you the truth,
the Son [meaning himself]...can do only what he sees his Father doing,
because whatever the Father does the Son also does."**

If the Father didn't use figurative language, neither would Jesus. Note clearly—in spiritual, figurative, holy scripture God "kills" us with words—not bombs. Now, a word from Peter about repentance--figurative destruction. 2 Peter 3:8;

**8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends:
With the Lord a day is like a thousand years,
and a thousand years are like a day."**

**9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.
He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish,
but everyone to come to repentance."**

In verse 8 Peter reminds us of God's figurative use of time, and in verse 9, he tells us figurative, spiritual words are meant to guide us to repentance.

There are many forms of repentance needed in the world today. If we change our course to a godly path, we "destroy" the ungodly road to destruction we've been traveling. In this way we can fulfill Doomsday prophecies in the peaceful, figurative, manner God desires. Following are two more prophecies in figurative language which literalists distort into a savage spectacle of "death and gore", i.e., "Left Behind" theology where they're "saved" and everyone else dies...

Spiritual "Metal", "Elements", and "Grass"

2 Peter 3:10-13;

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

The heavens will disappear with a roar;

the elements will be destroyed by fire,

and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way,

what kind of people ought you to be?

You ought to live holy and godly lives

12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire,

and the elements will melt in the heat.

13 But in keeping with his promise

we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth,

the home of righteousness."

Here are spiritual, figurative definitions for "metal" and "elements".
Jeremiah 6:27-30, God;

27 "I have made you a tester of metals and my people the ore,
that you may observe and test their ways.

28 They are all hardened rebels, going about to slander.

They are bronze and iron; they all act corruptly.

29 The bellows blow fiercely to burn away the lead with fire,
but the refining goes on in vain; the wicked are not purged out.

30 They are called rejected silver, because the LORD has rejected them."

Rather than choosing to read the Bible in a way requiring death for others, let's choose life! Let's read the prophecies in a godly way that's compatible with Jesus' gospel of love, not as the murderous final act of Christ's ministry predicted by apostate literalist doomsayers. The following passage means the entire planet must be scorched if read literally, without the Spirit...

Revelation 8:7;

The first angel sounded his trumpet,
and there came hail and fire mixed with blood,
and it was hurled down upon the earth.

A third of the earth was burned up,
a third of the trees were burned up,
and all the green grass was burned up."

Now we'll supply figurative, spiritual definitions to "earth", "trees", and "grass", straight out of the Bible:

THE EARTH

Isaiah 11:4*, God;

but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked."

[Note how God's "breath" slays "the wicked". The "rod of his mouth", is God's words. It's the iron "sceptre" found elsewhere in the Bible.]

Isaiah 45:22, God;

"Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other."

Ezekiel 35:14, God;

This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
While the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate."

TREES

Jeremiah 5:14, God;

Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty says:

"Because the people have spoken these words,
I will make my words in your mouth a fire
and these people the wood it consumes."

Isaiah 11:10, God;

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples;
the nations will rally to him,
and his place of rest will be glorious."

Jeremiah 23:5, God;

"The days are coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."

GRASS

Psalm 90:5-6, Moses;

5 **You sweep men away in the sleep of death;
they are like the new grass of the morning—**
6 **though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered."**

Psalm 103:15-16, David;

15 **As for man, his days are like grass,
he flourishes like a flower of the field;**
16 **the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more."**

Isaiah 40:6-8;

6 **A voice says, "Cry out."**

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

**"All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.
7 The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the LORD blows on them.**

**Surely the people are grass.
8 The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God stands forever."**

"Surely the people are grass." In Revelation 8:7, on the previous page, in the phrase, "**all the green grass was burned up**" "grass" represents people, in this case Muslims. Muslims use the color "green" to represent Islam. Muslims have their own version of Armageddon, too. Muhammad prophesied: Sahih Muslim #6927;

**...Out of a family [indicating civilians] of one hundred,
only one man will survive,
so how could he enjoy the booty or divide any inheritance?..."**

If the destruction is meant literally, according to the Bible (Revelation 8 & 9), three quarters of humanity dies alongside Muslims. Looking at the Middle East today, it's easy to see how Revelation's and Muhammad's prophecies could come to pass literally. Thankfully, incinerating the whole planet doesn't please God. He desires mercy and provided us a positive spiritual interpretation. Muslim prophecies may be fulfilled by figuratively "killing" 99% of Muslims. They'll be *figuratively* "burned up" by learning Jesus is Jibreel and they must acknowledge he gave the Qur'an to Muhammad. That's not all. Muhammad also prophesied the Second Coming of Christ...

Sunan Ibn-I-Majah p.386 #4078

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported on the authority of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,
**"The (Last)* Hour will not come until 'Isā, son of Maryam ",
 descends (from heaven)* as a just judge and the just ruler."**

The prophecy declares that Allah's will at the Second Coming is for the entire Muslim community to obey Jesus. By and large, Muslims give lip-service to Jesus being a prophet., but do little or nothing to learn what he preached in the Bible. This, despite Muhammad telling them they must in the following verse. Jesus' expanded role in Islam won't set well with many Muslims, which is why they'll be **"all...burned up"**. Here's the verse that says Muslims must abide by the Bible; Sura 5:68;

SAY: "O people of the Book!

[Muhammad was addressing a crowd of Muslims at the time]

Ye have no ground [in your theology] to stand on,

Until ye observe the Law [Old Testament] and the Evangel,

["Evangel" is the Gospels, which Jesus extended to include the New Testament],

And that which hath been sent down to you [Muslims, Qur'an] from your Lord."

Muslims have a reluctance to employ the Bible, the very foundation of Islam. The Bible sets the context for understanding the Qur'an, This reluctance is only a modern-day manifestation of a condition present before Muhammad was born; Sura 41:2-3, 44;

2 A Book whose verses (signs) are made plain

—an Arabic Koran, for men of knowledge;

3 Announcer of glad tidings and charged with warnings!

But most of them withdraw and hearken not:

4 And they say,

"Our hearts are under shelter from thy teachings,

and in our ears is a deafness,

and between us and thee there is a veil.

Act as thou thinkest right: we verily shall act as we think right."

44 Had We made it a Koran in a foreign tongue,

they had surely said,

"Unless its signs be made clear...!

What! in a foreign tongue? and the people Arabian?"

*** Words within parentheses are the translator's, not Muhammad's.**

Sura 41 expresses peoples' reluctance to seriously listen to and heed sacred messages delivered to other people. Muslims aren't any different than people of other faiths in this regard. How many Christians have read the Qur'an? How many follow its teachings? So it is with Muslims. Muhammad told them what was coming... Sura 4:157;

**"There shall not be one of the people of the Book
but shall believe in Him [Jesus] before his death,
and in the Day of Resurrection, He will be a witness against them."**

Jesus will be a witness against them. For Muslims, this will be the "straw that broke the camel's back", which figuratively "kills" virtually all of them. In chapter 2, "The Many Names of Christ", it was revealed that Jesus Christ is the angel Jibreel (Gabriel). Jesus Christ, who is downplayed by Muslims, turns out to be the one chosen by Allāh to present the Qur'an to Muhammad. Sura 2:97;

**Say: "Whoso is the enemy of Gabriel--
For he it is who by God's leave
hath caused the Koran to descend on thy heart,
the confirmation of previous revelations, and guidance,
and good tidings to the faithful--"**

Muslims who ignore Sura 5:68 and reject the Bible will not pass this test, because evidence Jesus Christ is Jibreel (Gabriel) is found in the Bible in Daniel, Matthew, and Revelation, not the Qur'an. Unwittingly, by downplaying Jesus' significance, Muslims diminish the importance of the Qur'an itself! Allah swt knows how to make the finest tests! But, Christians make the same mistake. They claim to love Jesus, yet they say the Qur'an is the work of the devil. As we now know, Christ as Jibreel (Gabriel) gave the Qur'an to Muhammad. That means they're calling Jesus the devil. Oh my! That's a very bad thing for believers whose salvation rests upon this same person. When Christians accuse Muhammad of being Satan's servant, they tarnish Christ and his representative at the same time! Virtually everyone has failed the test. Psalm 14:2-3, David;

**2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men
to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.
3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt;
there is no one who does good, not even one."**

We're all in need of mercy. Praise God for arranging virtually all prophecies to be fulfilled peacefully through repentance and peaceful political action.

Chapter 4

Peace and Islam:

Clearing Up Misconceptions

Peace and Islam: Clearing Up Misconceptions

Many people in the West believe Islam is a violent religion. Reading newspapers or watching t-v, it's easy to see how people form this impression. While it's true reporters may be biased, according to Muhammad and Imam Ali (last of the four "Rashidun ("rightly guided" or "righteous" caliphs)" who followed Muhammad as leaders of the Muslim community), they're right—to a degree.

Many Muslims are following Islam improperly, and violence is the result. Both Muhammad and Imam Ali prophesied Islam would have to undergo significant change before becoming peaceful again. How can Islam return to being peaceful if peace isn't part of the original message? There's an abundance of scripture showing a peaceful path between Islam and other people. It is hoped education on this subject will spread outwards and assist in the prophesied transformation.

Before proceeding, there's a few things non-Muslim readers should know. First, the Qur'an is Muslims' principal holy book, sent from Allāh (the Father) via His Messenger, Jibreel (Gabriel) to Muhammad, who delivered it to humanity (Sura 2:97). Quotes from the Qur'an begin with the word "Sura", which means "Chapter". Muhammad's other sayings are found in collections called "hadiths". Most of Muhammad's prophecies are found there. Here, hadiths will not have the word "Sura" preceding them, but will have the name of the volume in which they are found.

In a world where so much violence, rightly or wrongly, is associated with Islam, people need to know it's a peaceful religion. We'll start with the word, "Islam". It comes from the root word for "Peace". The following description of jihad from "Introducing Islam" by Ziauddin Sardar and Zafar Abbas Malik is very useful;

page 60:

"The True Meaning of Jihad

Constant struggle for justice manifests itself as **jihad**. Jihad is one of the most abused and misused Islamic concepts. It means 'directed struggle' and can take a number of forms. A tradition of the Prophet declares that 'the supreme jihad is against oneself': that is, against one's ego, greed, and insatiable desires. Jihad could also, for example, be aimed at the social development of a community. It can also be intellectual -- directed against oppressive and totalitarian thought or towards the intellectual uplifting of a society. Lastly, jihad can also take the form of physical struggle against oppression and aggression."

THE BEST JIHAD

Sunan Abu Dawud Kitāb al-Malāhim, # 4330;
 Abû Sa'id al-Khudri reported
 the Apostle of Allāh (may peace be upon him) as saying:
 The best fighting (Jihad)* in the path of Allāh
 is (to speak)* a word of justice to an oppressive ruler."

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Sura 2:256;

Let there be no compulsion in religion.
 Now is the right way made distinct from error."

Sura 3:20;

SAY to those who have received the Book,
 and to the common folk,
 "Do ye surrender yourselves unto God?"

If they become Muslims, then they are guided aright:
 but if they turn away—thy duty is only preaching,
 and God's eye is on His servants."

How is it possible Al Qaeda and like groups dare claim to be Muslim? Those who oppress and murder people of other faiths and force them to follow laws specific to the Arabic revelation are violating true Sharia, the Law stated in the Qur'an. Have they no respect or fear of Allāh?

PEACE AND ISLAM

Sura 10:26;

And God calleth to the abode of peace;
 and He guideth whom He will into the right way."

Sura 25:63;

And the servants of the God of Mercy
 are they who walk upon the earth softly;
 and when the ignorant address them [Muslims],
 they [Muslims] reply, "Peace!" "

Sura 33:48;

...obey not the infidels and hypocrites—yet abstain from injuring them:

Sura 8:61;

And if they lean to peace, lean thou also to it;..."

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

STRICTLY DEFENSIVE WAR IS PERMITTED

Sura 2:190;

And fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you:
but commit not the injustice of attacking them first:
God loveth not such injustice:..."

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

Sura 41:34-35;

34 Moreover, good and evil are not to be treated as the same thing.
Turn away evil by what is better,
and lo! he between whom and thyself was enmity,
shall be as though he were a warm friend.
35 But none attain to this save men steadfast in patience,
and none attain to it except the most highly favoured."

Verse 35 says true Muslims turn the other cheek in pursuit of peace.

INTERFAITH PEACE BETWEEN ISLAM, JEWS, & CHRISTIANS FULLY SANCTIONED BY THE QUR'AN

Sura 5:69;

Verily, they who believe (Muslims)*,
and they who follow the Jewish religion, and the Christians, and the Sabeites—
whoever of these believeth in God and the last day,
and doeth that which is right,
shall have their reward with their Lord:..."

Sura 5:69 proves Islam recognizes members of other faiths as among the "faithful". It acknowledges that proper Judaism is acceptable. Therefore, no permanent enmity need exist between Muslims and either Jews or Christians. Let's apply the following passage to what's happening in Iraq and Israel...

Sura 49:9-10;

9 If two bodies of the faithful are at war,
then make ye peace between them;
and if one of them wrong the other,
fight against that party which doth the wrong,
until they come back to the precepts of God;
if they come back,
make peace between them with fairness, and act impartially;
God loveth those who act with impartiality."

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

Sura 49:9-10, cont.:

**10 Only the faithful are brethren;
wherefore make peace between your brethren;
and fear God, that ye may obtain mercy."**

Sura 5:69 (and others) says members of all three Abrahamic religions are included as "faithful" if these religions are followed correctly. Verse 49:10 includes Christians and Jews as "brethren". Verse 49:10 continues; "wherefore make peace between your brethren". These verses require Muslims to make peace with members of other faiths who obey God's precepts. The next verse may appear directed only at Jews, but it concerns Palestinians, too. And if at first glance it appears biased, remember that it must be read in context of the verses you've just read and others that speak of righteous Jews. It relates to a specific covenant regarding sharing the Holy Land...

Sura 5:13; **But for breaking their covenant
We have cursed them ["the children of Israel"],
and...hardened their hearts. ...
...Thou wilt not cease to discover deceit on their part, except in a few of them.
But forgive them, and pass it over:
verily, God loveth those who act generously!"**

The covenant was broken between the descendents of Jacob (the Israelites); the Jewish tribes that inhabited Judea and Galilee, and the descendents of Ephraim who had merged with other Middle Eastern peoples implanted by the Assyrians that became known as "Samaritans", and later still, "Palestinians". So, this passage doesn't apply to Jews in general. It applies to untrustworthy dealings between two Israelite factions which led to division of ancient Israel, eventually the Diaspora, and today's misery suffered by Ephraim's descendents.

The deceit was over sharing the land then, as it still is today. Had the tribes stayed united they would not have been cursed with dispossession of their land—first the Jewish tribes, and now, it's the turn of the Samaritans' descendents, the Palestinians. However, both halves of the bickering Israelites are to be forgiven! The curse is coming to an end! Verse 5:69 on the previous page that makes it clear Jews who obey the covenant are in fine condition. As for "Thou wilt not cease to discover deceit on the...part"? of all people, even Arabs. Sura 43:3,5;

**3 We have made it an Arabic Koran that ye may understand:
5 Shall We then turn aside this warning from you
because ye are a people who transgress?"**

We're all in need of forgiveness. Jesus, Muhammad, and Imam Ali all prophesied that religion would be twisted into apostate forms. The latter two specifically prophesied against how Islam would be practiced today. But because the established theology of Islam's main branches is distorted, the message of peace and forgiveness doesn't seem to make it's way into everyday reality.

TERRORISM IS NOT "JIHAD"

The next passage from Sura 9 is misunderstood by both outsiders and Muslims, so it bears careful examination.

Sura 9:5-6;

**5 And when the sacred months are passed,
kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them;
and seize them, besiege them,
and lay in wait for them with every kind of ambush:
but if they shall convert, and observe prayer, and pay the obligatory alms,
then let them go their way, for God is gracious, merciful."**...

The first part of verse 5 looks threatening, but it's part of the entire passage, not a separate clause. It must be read together with the rest of verse 5, and verse 6. For instance, "every kind of ambush" can't be construed as condoning suicide attacks. One can't give a person the opportunity to convert, observe prayer, pay the obligatory alms, and then allow them to go on their way after they've already been blown up. Interpreting this passage as condoning suicide attacks contradicts the rest of verse 5, too. The solution is common-sense. The historical context in which this verse was delivered was a time when warriors rode horses and carried swords, bows and arrows. This law permitted Muslims to surround invaders, but before fighting, required offering terms of surrender. Terrorists completely misuse it. Now, here's verse 6...

Sura 9:5-6, cont;

**6 If any one of those who join gods with God ask an asylum of thee,
grant him an asylum, that he may hear the word of God,
and then let him reach his place in safety.
This, for they are a people devoid of knowledge."**

This law actually makes terrorist attacks illegal! The latter part of verse 5 refers to Allāh's mercy. Mercy can't be applied after bombings or suicide attacks, so they're haram (illegal). Fighting sanctioned by the Qur'an does not cover these forms of murder. With verses 5 and 6 together we see the Qur'an requires the ambusher to go through four steps before killing his enemy...

The Law of Jihad states a Muslim must;

- 1) warn the other person, giving them time to consider religious conversion,
- 2) and if they decide to convert to Islam they must be freed,
- 3) and if they decide not to convert, but ask to be released, they must be freed,
- 4) and if they request asylum, they must be granted that as well,

because, "**they are a people devoid of knowledge**" and Allāh is Merciful.

Thus bomb attacks are haram (illegal), and forbidden by Allah swt's Law!
Sura 26:151;

**And obey not the bidding of [wicked "imams" like bin Laden]
those who commit excess..."**

[encouraging others to commit suicide and mass murder-terrorism]

Sura 7:28;

**And when the wicked [Al Qaeda, et. al.] commit some filthy deed,
they say,**

**"We found our fathers practising it [illegal "Jihad"]
and to us hath God commanded it." "**

—SAY:

**"God enjoineth not filthy deeds.
Will ye speak of God ye know not what?" "**

Sura 49:11;

**...Bad it is to be called wicked after having professed the faith;
and whoso repent not of this are doers of wrong."**

Romans 2:24, Paul;

As it is written:

**"[Allāh's] name is blasphemed among the gentiles [Western nations and India]
because of you."**

Sura 20:82;

**"Surely however
will I forgive him who turneth to God and believeth,
and worketh righteousness,
and then yieldeth to guidance."**

Muslims are Allāh's representatives. Misuse of Jihad turns people against Allāh and Islam, one of the worst possible sins. As for barbaric acts such as beheadings perpetrated by so-called "Muslims"...

BEHEADINGS and other BARBARISM

Sahih Al-Bukhari The Book of Al-Fitan Chapter 8 #7079

"Narrated Ibn 'Abbas; The Prophet (saw) said,

"Beware! Do not renegade as disbelievers (revert to disbelief)* after me by striking (cutting)* the necks of one another."

Sahih Al-Bukhari The Book of Al-Fitan Chapter 8 #7077

"Narrated Ibn 'Umar; I heard the Prophet (saw) saying;

"Do not renegade as disbelievers (revert to disbelief)* after me by striking (cutting)* the necks of one another."

Sahih Al-Bukhari The Book of Al-Fitan Chapter 8 #7076

"Narrated 'Abdullah (ra); The Prophet (saw) said,

"Abusing a Muslim is *Fusūq* (evil-doing) and killing him is *Kufr* (disbelief)*."

FIGHTING BETWEEN MUSLIMS

Sahih Al-Bukhari The Book of Al-Fitan Chapter 7 #7072

"Narrated Abū Hurairah (ra); The Prophet (saw) said,

"None of you should point a weapon towards [his] Muslim brother, for he does not know, Satan may tempt him to hit him and thus he would fall into a pit of fire (Hell)*."

Sahih Muslim Ch. MCXCIII, #6898

Ahnaḥ b. Qais reported...this person (Hadrat Ali)...said:...

I heard Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying:

"When two Muslims confront one another with swords (in hands)* both the slayer and the slain would be in Fire."

He (Ahnaḥ) said: I said, or it was said:

Allāh's Messenger, it may be the case of one who kills, but what about the slain (why he would be put in Hell-Fire)*?"

Thereupon he said:

He also intended to kill his companion."

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

There are many more helpful sayings like these in the Sunni canonical hadiths; Sahih Bukhari, Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, and Ibn-I-Majah. Shia have no valid excuse to reject them. So, there are very few (if any) true Muslims fighting in in the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia—they're mostly lawbreakers who claim to be Muslim, unfortunately.

Al-Harj : The Killing

Sahih Al-Bukhari The Book of Al-Fitan Chapter 6 # 7062, 7063;

"Narrated 'Abdullah and Abū Mūsā; The Prophet (saw) said,

"Near the establishment of the Hour there will be days during which general ignorance will spread, (religious)* knowledge will be taken away (vanish)* and there will be much *Al-Harj*, and *Al-Harj* means killing."

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

Sahih Muslim Ch. MCCV, #6947;

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying:

By Him, in Whose hand is my life, a time would come when the murderer would not know why he has committed murder, and the victim would not know why he had been killed."

Sahih Muslim Ch. MCCV, #6950;

Abū Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying:

By Him, in Whose hand is my life, the world would not come to an end until a day would come to the people on which the murderer would not know as to why he has killed, and the slain would not know as to why he had been murdered.

It would be said: Why would it happen?

To which he replied:

It would be because of general massacre and bloodshed.

And the slaughterers and the slain would be in Fire..."

Abductions & Murders of Foreign Aid Workers

Sahih Muslim, Vol 4, *Kitāb al-Fitan* Chapter MCXCIV p.1497 #6904;

"Thaubān reported that Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said,

"...but it would be from amongst them, viz. your Ummah [*Muslim Community*], that some people would kill others or imprison others."

Sunan Ibn-i-Majah Vol. 5, p.315 #3996;

" 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās (ra) reported...Allāh's Messenger (s) said,

"...[*Muslims*] will vie with one another, then nurse jealousy against one another, then turn back on one another [*un-civil war*].

Then you will go to the residences of emigrants and put the burden of some of them on the necks of others [*beheading*]."

This is a mere sampling of the myriad prophecies and guidance on these topics. The prophecies speak of today's tragic events with people suffering such misery that the awful prophecy on the next page has come to pass...

Sahih Muslim Ch. MCCV, #6947;

Abû Huraira reported Allāh's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying:

**The Last Hour would not come
until a person would pass by a grave of another person and he would say:
I wish it had been my abode."**

DARFUR & the apostate Janjaweed Militia

Sunan Ibn-i-Majah Vol. 5, #3948, p.281;

"Abû Huraira (ra) reported that Allāh's Messenger (s) said,

**"He who fights under the standard of blind calling towards tribal spirit
or agitates for tribal jealousy, his way of killing is (an act of) the Ignorance."**

Sunan Abû Dawud Vol. 3 #4288 Chapter 1594, p. 1197);

One of the companions of the Prophet (ra) reported the Prophet (s) as saying:

"Let the Abyssinians alone as long as they let you alone."

Sahih Al-Bukhari The Book of Al-Fitan Chapter 6 #7065

"Narrated Abû Mûsâ The Prophet (saw) said

"...And Al-Harj, in the Ethiopian language, means killing."

If Muslims are doing un-Muslim, violent, things in Syria, Gaza, Lebanon, Darfur, and elsewhere, it should come as no surprise. The Prophet and Imam Ali said this was exactly what would happen. Islam would stray off-course...

ISLAM ASTRAY

Bukhari 1:33, "Kitāb al-'ilm." Muslim #157, "Kitāb al-'ilm.";

"Among the Signs of [the] Last Days,

'Abd Allāh bin 'Amr Ibn al-'Ās related that the Prophet (saw) said:

**"Allah will not take knowledge from the hearts of the scholars
but he takes the scholars (they die)*.**

**There will be no more scholars to take their place so people will take extremely
ignorant leaders. They will be asked questions and will give fatwahs (legal rulings)*
without knowledge. They are misguided and they misguide others."**

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

This describes the violent doctrines of Al Qaeda's so-called "imams", and their look-alike relatives who blow up railroad cars in Bombay, Spain, and London in the name of Allāh. False imams tell suicide bombers they're martyrs destined for Paradise, but the reverse is true.

The following hadiths are from "The Approach of Armageddon?",
by Shayk Muhammad Hisham Kabbani;

Page 93; "Anas related that the Prophet (saw) said:

**There will come a time for people that to hold onto one's religion
would be like holding a hot coal in one's hand."**

(Ahmad, Musnad. Tirmidhi.)

Page 93; "Abu Hurayra (ra) related that the Prophet (saw) said:

**Woe to the Arabs for a great evil which is nearly upon them:
it will be like patches of dark night.**

A man will wake up as a believer, and be an unbeliever by nightfall.

People will sell their religion for a small amount of worldly goods.

**The one who clings to his religion on that day
will be as one who is grasping an ember or thorns."**

((sahih) Ahmad, Musnad.)

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"The Prophet (saw) said:

**The keeper of my Sunnah at the time my Community has lapsed into corruption
will receive the reward of one hundred martyrs."**⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Narrated from Ibn 'Abbās by al-Bayhaqi in *al-Zuhd* and cited thus by al-Mundhiri in *al-Tarhib*. "Man ahyā sunnati 'inda fasāda ummati fa lahu ajru mi'ata shahid."

Sadly, vindicating the Prophet's accuracy by fulfilling prophecies with violence brings shame to Islam. Ongoing violence and repression prove virtually all have gone astray. Muslims must mend their ways if the Fitnah (Tribulation) is to end. Here's what Muhammad is actually calling for jihadists to do...

"The Signs Before The Day Of Judgement", p.30,
citing *Sunan Abū Dawud* Vol. 3 *Kitāb al-Fitan* # 4246;

Abu Musa al-Ashari said, The Prophet said,

"Before the Hour comes,

there will be a tribulation like patches of dark night.

**A man will get up a believer and go to sleep a kafir [after waging haram Jihad],
or will go to sleep a believer and get up a kafir.**

**The one who sits will be better than one who stands,
and one who walks will be better than one who runs.**

Break your bows, cut their strings, and strike your swords against stones.

**If someone comes to kill any of you,
then be like the better of the two sons of Adam."**

"The Signs Before The Day Of Judgement",

p.26, citing Ahmad *Musnad* 5/149;

Abu Dharr said, The Prophet was riding a donkey and sat me behind him.

[The Prophet] said,

"O Abu Dharr,

if the people were suffering from such severe hunger [for revenge]
that you could not even get up from your bed to go to the mosque,
what would you do?"

I said,

"Allāh and His Messenger know best."

He said,

"Be decent and restrain yourself."

Then he said,

"O Abu Dharr,

if the people were suffering from severe death what would you do?

If the people were killing one another,

until Hajarat al-Zayt [an area of Madinah] were submerged in blood,
what would you do?"

I said,

"Allāh and His Messenger know best."

He said,

"Stay in your house and lock the door."

I asked,

"What if I am not left alone?"

He said,

"Then be one of [with] them." [Make peace with them]

I said,

"Should I take up my sword?"

He said,

"If you did that, you would be joining them in their activities.

No -

if you fear that the brightness of the shining sword will disturb you,
then cover your face with part of your clothing,
and let him carry his own sin and your sin."

"The Signs Before The Day Of Judgement",
p.30 citing Sunan Abū Dawud Vol. 3 #4243;

Abu Bakrah said,
The Prophet said,

"There will be a tribulation...

Someone asked,
"O Messenger of Allāh, what do you advise me to do?"

He said,

"Whoever has camels[, cars, trucks, or buses], let him stay with them,
and whoever has land [lives in one place], let him stay in his land."

Someone asked, 'What about someone who does not have anything like that?'

He said, "Then let him take his sword and strike its edge against a stone
[dulling the blade], then go as far away as possible [to avoid trouble]."

This means no Jihadists are permitted to fight in countries other than their own.

Following are portions of two sermons by Imam Ali. In the first, Imam Ali says Muslims will be doing Islam backwards, so much so they'll become pariahs. The second passage foretells Islam being turned upside down at that time so as to correct it. Hadiths on the next page support this, as well.

Nahjul Balagha (p. 304) Sermon 146,

Imam Ali;

Certainly, a time will come upon you after me
when nothing will be more concealed than rightfulness,
nothing more apparent than wrongfulness —
and nothing more current than untruth against Allah and His Prophet.

For the people of this period nothing will be more valueless
than the Qur'an being recited as it ought to be recited,
nor anything more valuable than the Qur'an being misplaced from its position.
And in the towns nothing will be more hated than virtue,
nor anything more acceptable than vice.

The holders of the book will throw it away and its memorizers would forget it.

In these days the Qur'an and its people will be exiled and expelled.

They will be companions keeping together on one path,
but no one will offer them asylum."

Nahjul Balagha (p. 304) Sermon 146, Imam Ali, cont.:

Consequently at this time the Qur'an and its people will be among the people but not among them, will be with them but not with them, because misguidance cannot accord with guidance even though they may be together.

The people will have united on division

[Imam Ali foresaw the Sunni-Shia split]

and will therefore have cut away from the community, as though they were the leaders of the Qur'an and not the Qur'an their leader.

Nothing of it will be left with them except its name,
and they will know nothing save its writings and its words.

Before that, they will inflict hardships on the virtuous,
naming the latter's truthful views about Allah false allegations,
and enforcing for virtues the punishment of the vice."

Nahjul Balagha (p. 247) Sermon 102, Imam Ali;

"There would be a time wherein only a sleeping (inactive)* believer would be safe (such that)* if he is present he is not recognized but if he is absent he is not sought after. These are the lamps of guidance and banners of night journeys. They do not spread calumnies nor divulge secrets, nor slander. ...

O' people!

a time will come to you when Islam would be capsized
as a pot is capsized with all its contents."

The following hadiths were collected from "The Approach of Armageddon?", by Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani;

Page 147;" 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ud (ra) said the Prophet (saw) said:

Islam began as something strange,
and it will revert to being strange as it was in the beginning,
so good tidings to strangers."

"Sahih Muslim, "Kitāb al-Imān, Vol. 1 Number 90. Ibn Mājah "Kitāb al-Fitan."

In a parallel version found in Sahih Muslim narrated by Abu Hurayra
the Prophet is quoted as saying,
"bada al-islāmu ghariban wa saya'udu kamā badā"
—Islam began strange and will return as it began."

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

Page 148 from "The Approach of Armageddon?";

"In another narration 'Amr Ibn 'Awf (ra) related that the Prophet (saw) said:
Truly the religion shall retreat and take refuge in the Hijaz [a region of Arabia],...
...The religion started strange, and it will return as it started.
Glad tidings to the strangers. They are those who set right
what people have corrupted of my Sunnah [teachings] after me."¹⁴³
¹⁴³ Tirmidhi. *Mishkāt ul-masābih*, #170 "Kitāb ul-Qadr."

CORRUPT, VIOLENT "ISLAM" PREACHED BY SATAN'S IMAMS

"The Signs Before The Day of Judgement", pp. 1-2,
 citing *Sahih Bukhari* Vol 9. (pp. 136-7) Book of Al-Fitan #7084;

Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman said,

"People used to ask the Prophet (S) about good things, but I used to ask him
 about bad things because I was afraid that they might overtake me. I said,
 'O Messenger of Allāh, we were lost in ignorance (Jahiliyyah) and evil,
 then Allāh brought this good (i.e. Islam).
 Will some evil come after this good thing?'

[The Prophet] said, 'Yes'

[The threat of Islam to established powers meant Islam would be subject to attack.]

I asked, 'And will some good come after that evil?'

He said, 'Yes, but it will be tainted with some evil'...

I asked, 'How will it be tainted?'

He said,

'There will be some people who will lead others on a path different from mine.
 You will see good and bad in them.'...

[Hamas and Hezbollah, for example, are supposedly Muslim organizations providing
 good social programs like health and education, while promoting apostate violence.]

7084, cont.: [The Prophet] said,

'Some people will be standing and calling at the gates of Hell;
 whoever responds to their call,

they will [order him to] throw him[self] into the [suicide] Fire.'...

[The Prophet identified wicked Arab Muslims such as Osama Bin Laden and
 Mussab al-Zarqawi, etc. The apostates come from Muhammad's people.

I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, describe them for us.'

He said, 'They will be from our own people, and will speak our language.' "

The next prophecy supports what you've just read...

Sahih Bukhari, Book of Al-Fitan, #7058,

Narrated Abû Hurairah (ra):

I heard the truthful and trusted by Allāh (i.e. the Prophet (saw)) saying,

"The destruction of my followers will be through the hands of young men from Quraish."

Muhammad was a member of the "Quraish", an Arab tribe in what is Saudi Arabia today. While both hadiths warn of evil associated with a particularly violent version of Islam called "Wahhabi", its overly harsh and condemnatory theology is replicated to lesser degrees throughout the Muslim world. In the process, the intent of the Qur'an's sacred teachings are distorted into tools of Satan. Muhammad preached peace, just like Jesus did...

Sunan Abu Dawud Kitāb al-Malāhim, # 4330;

Abû Sa'id al-Khudri reported the Apostle of Allāh (may peace be upon him) as saying:

The best fighting (Jihad)* in the path of Allāh is (to speak)* a word of justice to an oppressive ruler."

From "The Approach of Armageddon?";

Page 147; " 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ud (ra) said the Prophet (saw) said:

**Islam began as something strange,
and it will revert to being strange as it was in the beginning,
so good tidings to strangers."**

"*Sahih Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Imān, Vol. 1 Number 90. *Ibn Mājah* "Kitāb al-Fitan." Page 148

"In another narration 'Amr Ibn 'Awf (ra) related that the Prophet (saw) said:

**...The religion started strange, and it will return as it started.
Glad tidings to the strangers. They are those who set right
what people have corrupted of my Sunnah [teachings] after me."**¹⁴³

¹⁴³ *Tirmidhi. Mishkāt ul-masābih, #170 "Kitāb ul-Qadr."*

O Muslims! Open your eyes! Obey the Prophet. Repent of the evil the shaitans (satans) entice you to commit in the name of Islam. Next, we'll take a frank look at "lesser Jihad". The Qur'an permits defensive warfare, which apparently contradicts Jesus' non-violence rule (Matthew 5:39). Jesus also affirmed the Old Testament, where at times God sanctioned war. Jesus used the issue of divorce (Matthew 19:8) as an example of how Moses "bent the rules" so they fit the Israelites. God saw their hearts were hard and flexibility was needed.

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

We'll look at the most graphic violence to get this out in the open and resolved. The Qur'an permits warfare, but only defensive, with the spirit of the law being that violence must be kept to a minimum and mercy shown to the vanquished. It was permissible only because of special circumstances of the time (rulers were sending armies to kill them) and because those to whom it was given lived in a society with a tradition of violence. First, the injunction against aggressive war;

Sura 17:33;

**Neither slay any one whom God hath forbidden you to slay,
unless it is for a just cause:..."**

Sura 2:190-194; 190

**...fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you:
but commit not the injustice of attacking them first:
God loveth not such injustice:..."**

[The only just cause for violence is in self or collective defense according to the Prophet. You can fight only against people who are first attacking you, and in a manner consistent with Sura 9:6--no bombs or suicide attacks.]

**191 And kill them [the ones attacking Muslims] wherever ye shall find them,
and eject them from whatever place they have ejected you;
for civil discord is worse than carnage:..."**

[Religious persecution (discord) leads to genocide and oppression. Mild civil discord doesn't warrant harsh measures, but it's clear from history and other passages in the Qur'an that violent persecution is one way religious intolerance was expressed at the time. That's why part two of verse 191 says;]

**191 (cont.)...yet attack them not at the Sacred Mosque,
unless they attack you therein;
but if they attack you, slay them. Such the reward of infidels."
[Infidels can't keep peace, even in holy sanctuaries]**

**192 But if they desist, then verily God is gracious, merciful."
[This verse is about people attacking Muslims as they worshipped.
Actually, it's repeating itself today in Iraq and Pakistan.]**

**193 Fight therefore against them until there be no more civil discord,
and the only worship be that of God:
but if they desist, then let there be no hostility,
save against the wicked."**

Sura 2:190-194, cont.:

**194 The sacred month and the sacred precincts
are under the safeguard of reprisals:
whoever offereth violence to you,
offer ye the like violence to him,..."**

Sura 8:61;

And if they lean to peace, lean thou also to it..."

Sura 22:39-40;

**39 A sanction [permission to make war] is given to those who,
because they have suffered outrages, have taken up arms;
and verily, God is well able to succour them:**

**40 Those who have been driven forth from their homes wrongfully,
only because they say "Our Lord is the God."**

**And if God had not repelled some men by others,
cloisters, and churches, and oratories, and mosques...,
would surely have been destroyed..."**

Muslims were being attacked as they worshiped, driven from their homes, and having their mosques destroyed. God allowed them to defend themselves. Jihad's early purpose was to help Islam counter the spread of an imperialistic form of "Christianity" trying to be a One World Religion under Caesar-popes. Next, a very difficult passage to understand without knowing the context...

Sura 47:4-5;

**4 When ye encounter the infidels, strike off their heads
till ye have made a great slaughter among them,
and of the rest make fast the fetters.**

**5 And afterwards let there be either free dismissals or ransomings,
till the war hath laid down its burdens. Thus do. ..."**

The graphic imagery of lopping heads off shocks any person of good heart. Verse 4 seems to sanction exactly what barbaric so-called "Muslim" terrorists do to foreign workers and Iraqis alike. But taking prisoners as it states in verse 5 means the beheading of verse 4 pertains only to actual battle, and in battle, cavalry are trained to lop off heads. It's what cavalry does. Today, soldiers are taught to "Blow other peoples' heads off." Warfare is lousy. Taking prisoners afterwards indicates he was speaking about cavalry tactics. Terrorist executions are a quite different matter. The former describes a feature of warfare, the latter is murder. Muslims were taught to take prisoners and afterwards free them, not murder them.

In other words, true Muslims are required to be merciful and just. Islam has a far more humane code of warfare than that with which most European conflicts have been conducted. It's even more impressive in light of the region's bloody history as the land of Babylonians and Assyrians. Thankfully, this is as violent as the Qur'an gets. Defensive violence, with mercy required. In the Old Testament, prophets stood up for their people, too. God bless them! Those were hard times for a people steeped in a history of violence. They were being attacked by pagans and a Christianity corrupted by ruthless, greedy men who proved infidelity to Christ by their barbaric actions. Muhammad's overall theme was peace wherever and whenever possible.

The material in the next section is crucial to peace, and ever so timely. As long as Hezbollah and Hamas believe Israel must be literally destroyed, as long as Muslim children are taught Jews must die, we won't have peace.

CAN JEWS LIVE IN PEACE WITH MUSLIMS?

That's the million-dollar question. That it is even be asked is a crying shame. Of course they can! They're supposed to! But there are sayings in the Qur'an and hadiths that can easily be taken out of context and twisted to create conflict. There are two things that need to be remembered;

- 1.) Some of Muhammad's sayings refer to events at the beginning of Islam's history. At that time some Jewish tribes assisted the Meccan army sent to destroy the fledgling Muslim community.
- 2.) Some of Muhammad's sayings refer to specific conditions that will exist at the Last Hour—that is, today. The point is, Muslims have lived in peace next to Jews, and vice versa, many times in many different places throughout history. There have been troubles, certainly, but also centuries of peaceful coexistence and cooperation. Peaceful times can be resurrected today if we choose to.

The problem is, some Muslim prophecies appear to say Jews must be killed. Not only are they meant figuratively, they can't possibly be meant literally. Here's an analogy: A comedian is clowning around and says, "You're *killing* me" (ala Rodney Dangerfield, if you remember him) to his audience. Since they're not causing his natural death, it's clearly meant figuratively. However, if the audience is made up of people who think in literal terms only and can't accept figurative language, there'd be misunderstanding. That's how it is for the "violent" hadiths. An superb example of figurative "killing" from Hosea in the Bible shows how figurative language can fulfill Doomsday destruction peacefully in prophecy...

Hosea 6:5-6* (NIV);

5 Therefore I [God] cut you in pieces with my prophets,
 I killed you with the words of my mouth;
 My judgments flashed like lightning upon you.
 6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
 and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

Jesus knew all about figurative destruction and Hosea 6, citing it twice in Matthew;

9:13 "But go and learn what this means:
 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' "

12:7 "If you had known what these words mean,
 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,'
 you would not have condemned the innocent."

John 16:25, Jesus; "...I have been speaking figuratively,..."

Jeremiah 23:29; "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD..."

This was discussed in chapter 3, "The Myth of Inevitable, Literal Armageddon".
 The point is, the Bible uses figurative speech and so does the Qur'an;

Sura 3:7; [Allah] it is who hath sent down to thee "the Book.[Qur'an]"
 Some of its signs are of themselves perspicuous [literal];
 ...and others are figurative."

The question is, should violent hadiths be read literally or figuratively?
 It's easily proven they're meant figuratively. In Israel's case, the hadiths in which Jews "die" occur after Jesus has returned in the "Second Coming" and he's in charge. This is fortunate, for in the Bible, Jesus says Moses will judge Jews (John 5:45), and Israelites are promised salvation, not slaughter. God doesn't want Jews killed literally, only "killed" spiritually, i.e., humbled and ready to make peace with Palestinians, Muslims, and other people.

Ibn-I-Majah Book of Fitān #4077 (p.385);

Abû Umāma Bahili said...Allāh's Messenger (saw) said,

"Then Isā b. Maryam (Jesus Christ, son of Maryam), peace be upon him,
 will be a just Judge and a just ruler of my umma [Muslim community]."

This is the part many Muslims keep missing, because in general, Muslims don't eagerly await Jesus' return. They prefer the Mahdi, instead. But, Muhammad and Imam Ali prophesied Islam would be turned upside down, and Jesus is why. Muhammad clearly stated (Sura 5:68, 70) that Muslims must learn and apply the first two Books (Old & New Testaments) of the Bible as the foundation to

understand the Qur'an. The Old Testament is the first floor of the building, the New Testament the second, and the Qur'an meant to be the third. Muslims using the Qur'an without the first two floors have a theology that's floating on air without support, as the Prophet said;

Sura 5:68; **SAY: "O people of the Book!**
 [While Muhammad was speaking to Muslims at the time]
 Ye have no [theological] ground to stand on,
 Until ye observe the Law [Old Testament]
 and the Evangel,
 [The Gospels, which Jesus extends to include the New Testament]
 And that which hath been sent down to you [Muslims, the Qur'an]
 from your Lord."

Sura 2:136; **Say ye: "We believe in God,**
 and that which hath been sent down to us [Holy Qur'an],
 and that which hath been sent down to Abraham
 and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes [Joshua],
 and in that was given to Moses, and to Jesus,
 and that which was given to the prophets, from their Lord.
 No difference do we make between any of them."

In general, Muslims haven't complied, which is why prophecies say Islam will be turned upside down. To attain Jannah (Heaven), Muslims must include the first two floors of Islam, the Old and New Testaments, even if they find it distasteful. There's additional guidance similar to the Bible's "Golden Rule"...

"The Signs Before The Day of Judgement", p.31;780
 "Abd Allah ibn Amr said, ...The Prophet was...saying:

O people,...
this Ummah [Islam] has its time of peace and security at the beginning;
at the end of its existence it will suffer trials and tribulations,
 one after the other [Look at Islam today]...
Whoever wishes to be rescued from Hell, and enter Paradise,
 let him die believing in Allāh and the Last Day,
 and treat the people as he himself wishes to be treated."

The hadith requires Muslims to choose the peaceful form of destruction when reading violent prophecy, because they wouldn't want that violence done to them. Violent scripture should be interpreted as figurative violence (i.e., "kill" = "shame", "fire" = "intensely painful words", etc.) rather than literal violence. With this in mind, let's see what the prophecies say...

Sunan Ibn-I-Majah p.384 #4077;

[This takes place after the Muslim version of Armageddon...]

Thus Allāh would defeat the Jews
and there would be left nothing that Allāh has created
with which a Jew would hide himself but Allāh would make that thing speak:
neither a stone, nor a tree, neither a wall nor a beast
but a *gharqad*) (a thorny tree)*.
So it is one of their (Jews' tree)*
-and would not pronounce (the presence of a Jew)*,
but it would pronounce:

'O Muslim servant of Allah, this is a Jew. Come and kill him."

Sahih Muslim Chapter MCCV p.1510m #6981-85;

[Again, Jesus defeats the Antichrist and army of Jews in the West Bank, and then...]

The Jews will be deflated with the help of Allah.
There will be no place for them to hide;
they will not be able to hide behind any stone, wall, animal or tree
- except the boxthorn (al-Gharqarah)* - without saying,
'O Muslim servant of Allah! here is a Jew, come and kill him!"

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

Keeping in mind a Muslim must want for his enemy what he wishes for himself,
let's paraphrase the last line of the above hadith...

'O Muslim servant of Allah! here is a Jew,
come and *[figuratively]* kill him *[with mercy and truth, as any Muslim should]!"*

If you think the peaceful interpretation is a "stretch", add the next hadith as
evidence for allegorical "killing"...

Sunan Ibn-I-Majah p.384 #3967;

'Abdullāh b. 'Amr (Allah be pleased with him) reported that
Allāh's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said,
"A turmoil *[Tribulation, Fitna]* will rise that will embrace the entire mankind.
They will be in *[figurative]* Hell-fire *[Humiliation and rage]*.
The tongue *[spoken words]* in it *[Fitna]* is more severe than the blow of a sword."

Hosea 6:5*: ...I killed you with the words of my mouth;
My judgments flashed like lightning upon you."

These passages refer to correcting theology and the power of God's word in
revealed prophecies of the Great Circle, which is subject matter for another
book. Muslims will be in figurative Hell-fire because now they'll have to give real

respect in word and deed to Jesus *and* let Jews live in peace. Christians and Jews will have to respect Muhammad, which won't be easy for them, either. Nations, such as the United States and Israel, will discover they've strayed from their sacred teachings and must change their policies, too. There's one last issue, "shunning" by Muslims of other faiths...

SHUNNING

Sura 5:51;

O believers! take not the Jews or Christians as friends.

They are but one another's friends.

If anyone of you taketh them for his friends, he surely is one of them!"

This verse may seem applicable today, especially as Christians have in general sided with Jews in the Holy Land, upholding the illegal dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven off their land by Israel's armed forces. However, this passage refers to events of Muhammad's time, and isn't meant eternally or globally. Otherwise, keeping in mind all scripture must reconcile, how does one make sense of the following passages?

Sura 5:69;

Verily, they who believe (Muslims),

and they who follow the Jewish religion, and the Christians, and the Sabeites

—whoever of these believeth in God and the last day,

and doeth that which is right, shall have their reward with their Lord:

fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they be grieved."

Sura 3:113-114;

113 Yet all are not alike:

**Among the people of the Book is an upright folk,
who recite the signs of God in the night-season, and adore:**

**114 They believe in God and the Latter Day,
and enjoin justice, and forbid evil, and speed on in good works.**

These are the righteous [whatever their religion]."

These passages reconcile when applied in proper time context. As Suras 3:113-114 and 5:69 attest, members of other faiths may be numbered among the righteous. The Qur'an doesn't require Muslims to shun other Faithful people. Muhammad was speaking of specific groups who were oppressing the Muslims of his time. Muslims have no good excuse for further hostility towards members of other faiths. According to Sura 2:193, when Jews and Christians stop calling Muhammad a pagan and acknowledge him as the Prophet, civil discord ends between them and Muslims. .

Next, we'll examine passages from the Qur'an indicating it's meant to be read as one volume of a sacred trilogy. The Qur'an was meant as Part 3 of the Message God delivered to Abraham's descendants. Part 1 is the Old Testament, Part 2 the New Testament, and Part 3 the Qur'an. The first two books set the foundation, and the Qur'an provides clarifications for how that is to be understood. Christians and Muslims should treat both the Bible and Qur'an as sacred and authoritative. This will reconcile members of both religions.

The Old & New Testaments and the Qur'an

Sura 29:46;

Dispute not...with people of the Book [Muslims/Christians/Jews];
And say ye, "We believe in what hath been sent down to us [Muslims—Qur'an]
and what hath been sent down to you. [Old & New Testaments]
Our God and your God is one,..."

Sura 2:62;

Verily, they who believe (Muslims),
and they who follow the Jewish religion, and the Christians,
and the Sabeites—
whoever of these believeth in God and the last day,
and doeth that which is right,
shall have their reward with their Lord: fear shall not come upon them,
neither shall they be grieved."

Sura 5:68;

SAY: "O people of the Book!"...
[This verse was originally part of a sermon delivered to a large crowd of Muslims.]

68 cont.: ..."Ye have no [theological] ground to stand on,
Until ye observe the Law [Old Testament]

and the Evangel,"... [The Gospels, which Jesus extended
to include the New Testament by delegating authority to the apostles]

68 cont.: ..."And that which hath been sent down to you [Muslims, the Qur'an]
from your Lord."

Since God shows no favoritism, the passage above applies to all three religions. After reading these examples, it's hard to believe animosity ever existed between Christianity and Islam. It's clear from Muhammad's teachings, the Bible is meant to be used alongside the Qur'an.

Sura 2:136;

Say ye:

"We believe in God, and that which hath been sent down to us [Qur'an],
and that which hath been sent down to Abraham
and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob
and the tribes [Joshua],
and in that was given to Moses,
and to Jesus,
and that which was given to the prophets, from their Lord.
No difference do we make between any of them."

For emphasis, Muhammad repeated this almost word for word in the next Sura;
Sura 3:84; SAY:

"We believe in God, and in what hath been sent down to us [Qur'an],
and what hath been sent down to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac,
and Jacob, and the tribes [Joshua], and in what was given to Moses,
and Jesus, and the prophets, from their Lord.
We make no difference between them."

Sura 5:48, God;

And to thee We have sent down the Book of the Koran with truth,
confirmatory of previous Scriptures, and their safe guard."

Then we have Sura 3:3-4;

3 In truth hath He sent down to thee "the Book,"
which confirmeth those which precede it.
For he hath sent down the Law, and the Evangel aforetime,
4 as man's guidance,
and now hath He sent down the "Illumination." [Qur'an] "

Sura 5:46;

And in the footsteps of the prophets
caused We Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow,
confirming the Law which was before him:
and We gave him the Evangel [Gospels] with its guidance and light,
confirmatory of the preceding Law,
a guidance and warning to those who fear God;—"

Sura 46:12;

But before the Koran was the Book of Moses, a rule and a mercy;
and this Book confirmeth it (the Pentateuch)—in the Arabic tongue—
that those who are guilty of that wrong may be warned,
and as glad tidings to the doers of good."

This is the short list, confirming that Muslims are responsible to follow not only the Qur'an, but also the five books of the Pentateuch [Moses], the book of Joshua [the tribes], the books of the prophets [Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi], and the Evangel [Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)]. When Muslims obey the Prophet, a gate opens wide for mutual respect between Muslims, Christians, and Jews for each others' sacred books. However, we haven't yet conclusively established this meant the entire Bible. What about books other than those listed from the Old Testament?

Sura 5:44;

Verily,

We have sent down the Law (Towrat) [Torah] wherein are guidance and light.

**By it did the prophets who professed Islam judge the Jews;
and the doctors and the teachers judged by that portion of the Book of God,
of which they were the keepers and witnesses."**

Sura 5:44 states the prophets followed Islam. The "doctors" and "teachers" who "judged" are confirmed. Thus, the Qur'an confirms the Old Testament books from Judges through Esther.

Sura 6:85;

**And we gave him Isaac and Jacob, and guided both aright;
and We had guided before Noah; and among the descendants of Abraham,
David and Solomon, And Job and Joseph, and Moses and Aaron:..."**

This makes the entire Old Testament sacred for Muslims. Now, the books of the apostles from the New Testament...

Sura 3:184;

**And if they treat thee [Muhammad] as a liar,
Then verily apostles have been treated as liars before thee,
though they came with clear proofs of their mission,
and with Scriptures, and with the light-giving Book."**

The Prophet made the importance of learning the Bible very clear. Because he is a valid apostle, Muhammad naturally acknowledged both the Old and New Testaments. To understand the Qur'an, one must proceed from this point. The Qur'an cannot (and does not) contradict the spirit, or underlying meaning, of the Bible, even if at first glance it appears to. When our perspective aligns with God's Message, the contradictions vanish. Apparent contradictions arise in areas where traditional theology is taught in a way that disconnects us from the rest of God's Message. Corrupted theology was often used as a means to exert control. That's why the Prophet said...

Sura 5:15;

People of the Scriptures! now is Our Apostle come to you
to clear up to you much that ye concealed of those Scriptures,
and to pass over many things.

Now hath a light and a clear Book come to you from God,..."

The Qur'an didn't need to repeat what Jesus taught, so the gospels are "passed over" there. But, that in no way means faithful Muslims are not responsible to know what the previous books say. Ignoring them is the act of a lazy infidel.

Sura 30:30;

Set thou thy face then, as a true convert,
towards the faith which God has made, and for which He hath made man.
No change is there in the creation of God.

This is the right faith, but the greater part of men know it not."

Matthew 12:25, Jesus,

Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined,..."

Sura 4:82;

Can they not consider the Koran?
Were it from any other than God,
they would surely have found in it many contradictions."

Abundant scripture links the Qur'an and Bible, which means Christians are responsible for knowing the Qur'an and accountable for blaspheming the Prophet the Father told humanity about in...

Deuteronomy 18:18-19;

18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you [Moses]
from among their brothers;
I will put my words in his mouth,
and he will tell them everything I command him.

19 If anyone does not listen to my words
that the prophet speaks in my name,
I myself will call him to account."

Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus;

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets;
I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

18 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."

Jesus says Deuteronomy 18:18-19 holds true for Christians, too.

Romans 3:31, Paul;

**Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith?
Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law."**

For Catholic or Protestant Christians to deny Muhammad as the Prophet goes against Jesus' commands, and is therefore antichrist. Jesus declared himself to be the Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, King of Israel, the "First and the Last, Alpha and the Omega, the "Root" and the "Offspring" of David, and the bright Morning Star." (Revelation 22) Yet, not once in the Bible did Jesus or any of his apostles claim Jesus was "the Prophet". There's an account in John 1 where the Jews of Jerusalem came to John the Baptist to ask him if he was the Prophet... John 1:20-22;

20 He [John] ...confessed freely "I am not the Christ."

21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

22 "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." "

Joshua and everyone else prior to this are disqualified. Else, why would Jewish priests from Jerusalem ask John if he was the Prophet? John readily acknowledged Jesus as "Son of God" and "Lamb of God". Why then, when priests and Levites asked him who he was, did he not announce to them that Jesus was the Prophet, too?

This question is somewhat misleading. There is an instance where Jesus said he's the Prophet of Deuteronomy, but it's not in the Bible. It's in the Book of Mormon, which many Christians reject. While Mormon appears to contradict Muhammad's claim of being the Prophet, it actually doesn't. While in one breath Mormon says Jesus is the Prophet, in the next, in the "Doctrine and Covenants" (another Mormon holy book), Muhammad is validated. Using only their version of the Bible, Catholics and Protestants have no basis to deny Muhammad is the "Prophet". Following is the passage from Mormon in which Jesus says he's the "Prophet"... 3 Nephi 20:23, Jesus;

Behold, I am he of whom Moses spake, saying:

**"A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren,
like unto me:**

him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say to you.

**And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear the prophet
shall be cut off from among the people."**

This would present an insurmountable barrier to reconciling the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon were it not for the fact that Jesus Christ is Gabriel, and the Qur'an teaches that Gabriel gave the Qur'an to Muhammad...

Sura 2:97;

**SAY: ...Gabriel...it is who by God's leave
hath caused the Koran to descend on thy [Muhammad's] heart..."**

Gabriel received the Qur'an from God and then passed it on to Muhammad, who Muslims recognize as the Prophet. When we realize Gabriel is Christ, Muslims can rightfully say Jesus is the Prophet, too, as he delivered Allah's swt Message to Muhammad. Jesus Christ as Gabriel was the angelic "Prophet" and Muhammad the human "Prophet". This agrees with Deuteronomy 18, John 13:19 and 14:20, and what's written in...

Doctrine and Covenants 1:38, God;

**What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken,
and I excuse not myself;
and though the heavens and the earth pass away,
my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled,
whether by mine own voice
or by the voice of my servants,
it is the same."**

As a sign Jews and Arabs are brothers, God's plan for salvation requires Muhammad be Moses' counterpart. As a sign Muslims and Christians are brothers, God's plan requires Muhammad and Jesus share the title of "the Prophet". Doctrine and Covenants 1:38 validates both Jibreel-Christ and Muhammad and reconciles perfectly with...

Zechariah 4:11,14 ;

**11 Then I asked the angel,
"What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?"
14 So he said,
"These are the two
who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth."**

In effect, both Muhammad and Jesus share the title of "the Prophet".

The final topic deals with Jesus' status in the Qur'an. Several passages in the Qur'an are commonly taken out of context, giving Jesus lesser status in Islam than Muhammad. This misperception creates a barrier between Muslims and Christians. We'll take a look at some of the issues and discover what the Qur'an says about them, issue by issue. We'll first present passages which appear to diminish Jesus' stature, followed by the many passages which qualify the meaning to something fully compatible with the Bible...

The Issues

Sura 6:86;

And Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias; all were just persons:..."

Sura 43:59; Jesus is no more than a servant whom We favoured,..."

Sura 4:171; O ye people of the Book!

overstep not bounds in your religion; and of God, speak only the truth.

The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God,..."

Now, about Jesus being only a person, an apostle, a servant of God...

Jesus merely a "person"

Sura 6:86;

And Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias; all were just persons:..."

First, being a person is no small affair...

Genesis 1:27,31;

27 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."

The Qur'an agrees with Genesis 1:31...

Sura 95:1-4;

1 I swear by the FIG and by the Olive, 2 By Mount Sinai,
3 And by this inviolate soil! 4 That of the goodliest fabric We created man,..."

We're created of the "goodliest fabric", which can only be divine.
What's better than that? While it's true Jesus was a man, he was also...

"The Messiah...", (← Sura 3:45, 4:171)

"...an apostle endowed more highly than others:
raised by God to the loftiest grade, given manifest signs of this by God
strengthened with the Holy Spirit...", (← Sura 2:253)

"His [God's] word [the Word incarnate] which He conveyed into Mary,
and a spirit proceeding from Himself." (← Sura 4:171)

"...a servant whom We favoured, and proposed
as an instance of divine power to the children of Israel. (← Sura 43:59)

"...illustrious in this world, and in the next,
one with near access to God;..." (← Sura 3:45)

"...a sign to mankind, and a mercy from Us." (← Sura 19:21)

"And he shall be a sign of the Last Hour;..." (← Sura 43:61)"

Jesus no more than a "servant"

Sura 43:59;

Jesus is no more than a servant whom We favoured,..."

This would appear to diminish Jesus' stature were he not to have said the same thing himself...

John 4:34;

"My food," said Jesus,

"is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

Luke 22:27, Jesus;

...I am among you as one who serves."

The Bible teaches us to honor our parents and to "serve" them. In essence, Jesus said that when he corrected the Pharisees in the next passage...

Matthew 15:4-6, Jesus;

**4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother'
and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'
5 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother,
'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me
is a gift devoted to God,' 6 he is not to 'honor his father' with it.
Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition."**

We find that service to our parents is along the same lines as Jesus' service to his Father. This might be a difficult point to prove regarding the Qur'an, were not the following statements added to provide context...

"The Messiah...", (← Sura 3:45, 4:171)

**"...an apostle endowed more highly than others:
raised by God to the loftiest grade, given manifest signs of this by God
strengthened with the Holy Spirit...", (← Sura 2:253)**

**"His [God's] word [the Word incarnate] which He conveyed into Mary,
and a spirit proceeding from Himself." (← Sura 4:171)**

**"...a servant whom We favoured, and proposed
as an instance of divine power to the children of Israel. (← Sura 43:59)**

**"...illustrious in this world, and in the next,
one with near access to God;..." (← Sura 3:45)**

"...a sign to mankind, and a mercy from Us." (← Sura 19:21)

"And he shall be a sign of the Last Hour;..." (← Sura 43:61)"

That's not so shabby...

Sura 4:172;

**The Messiah disdaineth not to be a servant of God,
nor do the angels who are nigh unto Him."**

Jesus "only an apostle"

Sura 4:171;

O ye people of the Book!
 overstep not bounds in your religion; and of God,
 speak only the truth.
 The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God,..."

To understand what this verse means we must understand the context, which includes what Muhammad said next regarding Jesus...

"The Messiah...", (← Sura 3:45, 4:171)
 "...an apostle endowed more highly than others:
 raised by God to the loftiest grade, given manifest signs of this by God
 strengthened with the Holy Spirit...", (← Sura 2:253)
 "His [God's] word [the Word incarnate] which He conveyed into Mary,
 and a spirit proceeding from Himself." (← Sura 4:171)
 "...a servant whom We favoured, and proposed
 as an instance of divine power to the children of Israel. (← Sura 43:59)
 "...illustrious in this world, and in the next,
 one with near access to God;..." (← Sura 3:45)
 "...a sign to mankind, and a mercy from Us." (← Sura 19:21)
 "And he shall be a sign of the Last Hour;..." (← Sura 43:61)"

Muhammad said Jesus was everything wonderful, great, and holy except, exactly as Jesus said, he was not an almighty, omnipresent God on par with the Father.
 John 10:29, Jesus;

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all;..."

And finally, Muhammad's statement regarding his own personal stature...
 Sura 3:144;

Muhammad is no more than an apostle;..."

Many Muslims mistakenly claim Muhammad is superior to Jesus. The Prophet, however, acknowledged Jesus as the "Messiah", meaning "the Anointed One" of God. Muhammad never claimed superiority to Jesus in any way. He said they were on the same team, separated by a few centuries, that's all. Muhammad wouldn't cross over the line and preach a spiritually imperialistic theology based on an edict by a Roman emperor. Constantine, the Roman emperor at the time of the Council of Nicaea, ordered the execution of heretics, i.e., those who disagreed with his theology. Muhammad wouldn't submit to Rome, nor would he disobey Jesus by idolizing him and worshipping him on par with the Father.

Muhammad showed great respect and reverence for Jesus' mother, Mary, confirming the virgin birth.

Sura 19:16-21; 16

And make mention in the Book, of Mary,
when she went apart from her family, eastward.
17 And took a veil to shroud herself from them:
and We sent Our spirit to her, and he took before her the form of a perfect man.

18 She said: "I fly for refuge from thee to the God of Mercy!
If thou fearest Him, begone from me."

19 He said, "I am only a messenger of thy Lord,
that I may bestow upon thee a holy son."

20 She said: "How shall I have a son, when man hath never touched me?
and I am not unchaste."

21 He said: "So shall it be. Thy Lord hath said: 'Easy is this with me'
and: "We will make him a sign to mankind, and a mercy from Us.
For it is a thing decreed."

Muhammad showed Jesus respect from "a" to "z".

Mark 9:38-40;

38 "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name
and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."

39 "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name
can in the next moment say anything bad about me,
40 for whoever is not against us is for us."

Sura 4:170-171;

170 The Messiah disdaineth not to be a servant of God,..."
171 ...The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is...an apostle of God,..."

"Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary";

"mes·si·ah ... n. [Heb *mashiah* & Aram *meshiha*, lit. anointed]
1 cap a : the expected king and deliverer of the Jews b : JESUS"

The Prophet acknowledged Jesus as Messiah, the Anointed One of Israel.
Muhammad said; "The most excellent Jihad is that for the conquest of self."
Jesus said, Matthew 5:9;

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

It's time for Christians and Muslims to hear and obey their prophets.

Chapter 5

Reconciling the Bible and Qur'an

Reconciling the Bible and Qur'an

The previous chapter gave testimony through scripture that Islam agrees with the Bible on the issue of peace. To remove enmity and promote healing between peoples, this chapter resolves thorny theology issues separating Christianity and Islam. Reconciling the Bible and Qur'an necessarily challenges traditional theology of both religions. The Way of Holiness differs from standard Christian theology regarding Islam in two ways: the Way of Holiness acknowledges the Qur'an came from God. It also acknowledges Muhammad is the Prophet Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:18-19 and who John the Baptist alluded to in John 1:21. The Way of Holiness doesn't try to make Muhammad superior to Jesus, or even his equal. It simply accepts Muhammad's word as true; Sura 3:144; **Muhammad is no more than an apostle;..."**

An apostle carries the Message of God. As Jesus said;
John 13:20; I [Jesus Christ-Jibreel-Gabriel] tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send [including Muhammad] accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one [the Father-Allāh] who sent me."

Jibreel (Jesus Christ-Gabriel) sent Muhammad the Qur'an, so John 13:20 requires all believers in Christ to accept Muhammad as the Prophet. Muhammad never competed with Jesus or claimed to be the Messiah. Muhammad corrected wayward Christian and polytheistic theology of his time. The Way of Holiness views both the Bible and Qur'an as integral parts of God's sacred Message to mankind. Parts of the Message are meant for specific peoples and other parts globally, other parts are meant for specific times and yet others eternally. We start with a foundation of faith that God loves all His children. Accordingly, we interpret both Messages in a way in which they reconcile with each other, as though they come from the same impartial, loving Source. Along the Narrow Road where they meet, we find God, peace and Jesus Christ-Jibreel-Gabriel.

Like Islam, the Way of Holiness acknowledges the Bible's sacred origin. Unlike standard Islamic theology, The Way of Holiness believes Almighty God (Allāh-Father) protected the sanctity of the Bible, just as He did with the Qur'an, so all peoples are tested fairly in this life. Each group got valid parts of a continuing sacred Message. The Bible sets the context for subsequent interpretation of the Qur'an. The Qur'an clarifies the meaning and intent of the earlier part of God's Message (i.e., the Bible), just like we clarify earlier things we've said with what we say later. We build upon the earlier Message, just as the New Testament is built upon the Old Testament. As Jesus said...

Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus;

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets;
I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

18 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."

And as Muhammad said...

Sura 5:68;

SAY: "O people of the Book!

Ye have no [theological] ground to stand on,

Until ye observe the Law [Old Testament]

and the Evangel,"... [The Gospels, which Jesus extended

to include the New Testament, delegating authority to the apostles]

68 cont.; ..."And that which hath been sent down to you [the Qur'an]
from your Lord."

It's important the reader understand the prophecies of both religions state that mainstream forms of both religions will go astray. Spiritual teachers are fallible, even those we learned from. Sometimes false teaching is deliberate and meant to advance the agenda of an evil group of people. As it is written;

CHRISTIAN HERESY PROPHESED

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul;

13 For such men [like millionaire televangelists] are false apostles,
deceitful workmen [who misquote the Qur'an],

masquerading as apostles of Christ [while stirring up hatred and war].

14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

15 It is not surprising, then, if his [Religious "Right"] servants
masquerade as servants of righteousness.

Their end will be what their actions deserve."

2 Peter 2:1-2;

1 But there were also false prophets among the people,
just as there will be false teachers among you.

They will secretly introduce destructive heresies [against other religions],
even denying [the words of]

the sovereign Lord [Gabriel-Jesus Christ] who bought them
—bringing swift destruction on themselves.

2 Many [mainstream Christian denominations]

will follow their shameful ways [condemning God's other Messages]
and will bring the way of truth [through the sacred books] into disrepute."

The Bible says Christians should expect heresies. Once a heresy takes root it can persist for centuries as dogma, causing incalculable harm. Muhammad and Imam Ali both prophesied Islam would have heresies. Here's a sampling;

MUSLIM HERESY PROPHESED

"The Approach of Armageddon?" Foreword, Page XIX
Bukhari 1:33, "Kitāb al-'ilm." Muslim #157, "Kitāb al-'ilm.";

"Among the Signs of [the] Last Days,
'Abd Allāh bin 'Amr Ibn al-'Ās related that the Prophet (saw) said:

**"Allah will not take knowledge from the hearts of the scholars
but he takes the scholars (they die)*.**

There will be no more scholars to take their place so people will take extremely ignorant leaders. They will be asked questions and will give fatwahs (legal rulings)* without knowledge. They are misguided and they misguide others."

Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 146 (page 304),
Imam Ali;

Certainly, a time will come upon you after me when nothing will be more concealed than rightfulness, nothing more apparent than wrongfulness — and nothing more current than untruth against Allah and His Prophet..."

**"...The holders of the book will throw it away
and its memorizers would forget it."...**

*[The violence associated with virtually all Muslim sects is un-Muslim,
The Wahhabi sect of "Islam" is especially noteworthy in this regard.]*

**..."In these days the Qur'an and its people will be exiled and expelled.
They will be companions keeping together on one path,
but no one will offer them asylum..."**

[Un-Muslim terrorism advocated by so-called "Muslim" imams leads to expulsions.]

**"...The people will have united on division
and will therefore have cut away from the community,
as though they were the leaders of the Qur'an
and not the Qur'an their leader."...**

[Sunni and Shia and Kurd have united on division in Iraq, against the Qur'an.]

**..."Nothing of it will be left with them except its name,
and they will know nothing save its writings and its words."**

* The translator added descriptions in parentheses.

From "The Signs Before The Day Of Judgement" p.14,
 citing Ibn-I-Majah, #3991,
 Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman said, "The Prophet said,
 'Islam will become worn out like clothes are,
 until there will be no-one who knows what [true] fasting, [true] prayer,
 [true] charity, and [true] rituals are.
 The Qur'an['s full message] will disappear
 in one [long, 1400 year] night [of spiritual darkness],
 and no [understanding of] Ayah [scripture] will be left on earth.
 Some groups of old people will be left who will say,
 We heard our fathers saying La ilaha illa Allah, so we repeated it.' "

"La ilaha illa Allah" means "there is no God but Allah" (a.k.a. G-d & Father).
 So this hadith indicates Islam is practiced ritually without true understanding.
 That "one night" may be fairly interpreted to be a time span of 1400 years
 is proven by the example of another variable "day" in the Qur'an;
 Sura 70:4; ...the angels and the Spirit ascend to him in a day,
 whose length is fifty thousand years."

Hudhayfah's hadith (and many more) indicates Islam has gone astray, just as
 Bible prophecies say Christianity would go astray. The Way of Holiness corrects
 that by respecting all God's sacred Messages and reading scripture in the spirit
 God gave us these Messages—love.

Matthew 7:9-11, 13-14, Jesus-Jibreel;

9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

11 If you, then, though you are evil,

know how to give good gifts to your children,

how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts

to those [people of all races, cultures, and places] who ask him!

13 "Enter through the narrow gate [the Way of Holiness].

For wide is the gate and broad is the road [of traditional theology
 that condemns God's word in other sacred Messages] that leads to destruction,
 and many [mainstream religion believers] enter through it.

14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life,
 and only a few find it."

If we trust God's word and have faith He loves us all, previously "unsolvable"
 issues melt away into nothing. Next, are three knotty theology issues that
 need to be resolved between Christianity and Islam...

Issue of Jesus as "Son of God"

John 1:32, 34; 32 Then John gave this testimony:

34 I have seen and I testify that [Jesus Christ] is the Son of God."

Sura 25:2; His the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth!

No son hath He begotten! No partner hath He in his empire!"

Issue of Jesus as "Lord"

1 Corinthians 15:56-57, Paul;

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Sura 3:64; SAY: "O people of the Book!

come ye to a just judgment between us and you—

That we worship aught but God, and that we join no other god with Him,

and that the one of us take not the other for lords, beside God."

Issue of Trinity (Joining Gods with God)

Matthew 28:18-19, Jesus;

18 "...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,..."

Sura 4:171; O ye people of the Book!

overstep not bounds in your religion; and of God,

speaking only the truth

...Believe...in God and His apostles, and say not, "Three:"(there is a Trinity)—

Forbear—it will be better for you. God is only one God!..."

Sura 5:72; Infidels now are they who say,

"God is Messiah, son of Mary;" for the Messiah said,

"O children of Israel! worship God, my Lord and your Lord."

Whoever shall join other gods with God, God shall forbid him the Garden..."

While it appears that these passages are irreconcilable, remember, Jesus said, **"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."** (Matthew 19:26) Resolving the issues of Jesus being "Son of God", "Lord", and the "Trinity" between the Bible and Qur'an requires a step-by-step approach. We'll start by making a list of four parameters, taking us back to the beginning of time (if one can have a beginning of forever). Call it the precursor of the dimensions of Time and Space, call it pure consciousness...

CONSCIOUSNESS—THE PRECURSOR

From the Apochrypha, Sirach 1:4,

1 All wisdom comes from the LORD and with him it remains forever.

**4 Before all things else wisdom was created;
and prudent understanding, from eternity."**

GOD IS SPIRIT

John 4:24, Jesus:

God is spirit,..."

"Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary"; "spir•it...n.

1 : an animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms "

3 cap : HOLY SPIRIT 6 : the immaterial intelligent or sentient part of a person

15 cap, Christian Science : ²GOD "

GOD IS LOVE

1 John 4:16; **...God is love."** Sura 85:14; **...He is the Indulgent, the Loving;"**

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT

Ephesians 4:4,6;

**4 There is one body and one Spirit...6...one God and Father of all,
who is over all and through all and in all."**

Jeremiah 23:24, God; **"Do I not fill heaven and earth?"**

Sura 4:126; **"...and God encompasseth all things!"**

Wisdom 1:7; **For the spirit of the LORD fills the world, is all-embracing..."**

Bhagavad-Gita 7:7 (Easwaran) Krishna;

...The entire universe is suspended from me as my necklace of jewels."

God [the Father/Allāh] is conscious and omnipresent (spans all creation). "Spirit" is the "animating or vital principle held to give life,...immaterial,...²GOD ". God is Holy. God spans all, so He is present in his "spirit" which fills the Void (Space). The **Father** is a central, yet universal Mind, and the **Holy Spirit** is a vibration or energy we call "Love", in which God is present. We have separate names for two aspects that describe the same Being.

In the Qur'an, Allāh is described as having multiple divine characteristics, or names, such as, "the seen and the hidden" (Sura 57:3) and "the Almighty, the All-knowing," (Sura 40:2). Any of these "names" refers to Allāh Himself. Therefore, the Way of Holiness complies with the Qur'an's law not to "join other gods with God" (Sura 5:72). We have two thirds of the Trinity complete and the Bible and Qur'an are in harmony. Where is the "Son"?

The Son

The disagreement between Islam and Christianity about Jesus Christ being the "Son of God" is rooted in misunderstanding what the term "Son" means. Many Christians are taught Jesus is "God" and "Lord" in a manner virtually indistinguishable from the Father, based at least partly on the following two passages from John...

John 10:30 Jesus;

I and the Father are one."

John 14:7,9, Jesus;

7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well.

From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

9 Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

If this belief were expressed mathematically, it would look like this;

Jesus Christ = Lord = God = the Father

Islam requires this; Jesus Christ < the Father-Allāh

and

the Father-Allāh > Jesus Christ

Jesus said; **"the Father is greater than I."** (John 14:28) In John 10:35, Jesus said, **"the Scripture cannot be broken..."** This means all Bible passages must agree with one another. When we find the path where they agree, we've found the meaning God intended. In this instance, John 10:30 and 14:7,9, which say **"[Jesus] and the Father are one"**, must be read in a way that agrees with John 14:28, where Jesus said **"the Father is greater than I."** Here's how they reconcile; Christ was the first localized point of consciousness within the vastness of the universal God [Father-Allāh] and accompanying Holy Spirit. John 1:1-2;

1 In the beginning was the Word [Christ],

and the Word was with God [the Father-Allāh],

and the Word was [a unique, inseparable, yet individual part of] God.

2 He was with God [the Father-Allāh] in the beginning."

Christ, an intelligence, was the point of origin of the "Big Bang". From and through that point of origin, the rest of the universe was created.

As it is written... John 1:2-3;

2 [Christ] was with God [the Father-Allāh] in the beginning."

3 Through him [Christ] all things were made;

without him [Christ] nothing was made that has been made."

Trinity

"Christ" is the first localized consciousness existing within the Father, a consciousness so vast it spans the void and is in all things. In the beginning a point of consciousness popped into being (i.e., was "born", "begotten") through which all things, including the physical universe, proceeded. The Big Bang also starts at a single point from which all else ensues. Hinduism has a Christ figure, too—"...**the self-born creator, Brahma.**" (Ramayana 1:3:34) At the moment an individualized, initial spirit was "born", or "created", there were three holy "personages"; the Father-Allāh, the Holy Spirit, and now, Christ. That's the "Trinity". Christ is not equal to the Father-Allāh, he was an image of the Father projected into the physical universe...

2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul;

...Christ, who is the *[first localized spirit]* image of God."

John 14:28,10,11, Jesus;

28 ...the Father is greater than I."

10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?

The words I say to you are not just my own.

Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves."

Christ was never separate from the Father. He always physically resided within the Father. We all do. Paul described our situation well...

Acts 17:24-25,28, Paul;

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.

25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'

As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' "

John 14:20, Jesus;

On that day you will realize that I [Jesus] am [with]in my Father,"...

[Christ, the first localized, spirit image of God, exists within the Father, so "the Father is greater than I [Christ]". Yet, "I [Christ] and the Father are one."

They are one and inseparable, a man and his right arm are one and inseparable...]

John 14:20, cont;

..."and you are in me"...

[We exist within the expanded body of Christ—the physical Universe.]

John 14:20, cont;

..."and I am in you."

Ramayana 1:6:68; **"...the indwelling Lord in everyone's heart..."**

John 1:1-2,14,18;

- 1 In the beginning was the Word *[Christ]*,
and the Word was with God *[the Father-Allāh]*,
and the Word was *[a unique, inseparable, part of]* God.
2 He was with God *[the Father-Allāh]* in the beginning.
14 The Word became flesh *[Jesus Christ]* and made his dwelling among us.
We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
18 No one has ever seen *[all of the limitless]* God,
but *[the part of]* God *[which is called Jesus Christ]*
the One and Only *[first localized spirit through which all else was created]*,
who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

"Son of God"

The issue is really about whether Christianity will continue to teach a theology created by the Roman emperor Constantine in 325 A.D. or teach a gospel fully in accordance with the Bible. Constantine distorted Christ's gospel and exploited it for political gain. There's a more detailed account on Appendix, pp. 140-144. Constantine converted to Christianity on his deathbed, not before. At the time he convened the Council of Nicaea he wasn't even a Christian. He transformed the Father, Jesus, and Mary into members of a neo-Roman pantheon of lesser gods, in which the Father had a "wife", Mary, and a "son", Jesus. He exploited the religion, and what John the Baptist said next for political reasons...

John 1:32,34; 32 Then John *[the Baptist]* gave this testimony:...

34 "I have seen and I testify that *[Jesus]* is the Son of God."

John didn't mean a lesser "superman" god descended from heaven and mated with a virgin mother goddess to have a baby son god. By making Jesus co-equal to the Father, Constantine transformed God into a limited "superman" and robbed the Almighty of His/Her omnipresence, and stripped the Creation of sacredness. Constantine's theology divided God and His People. That was the heresy Muhammad was trying to correct when he said...

Sura 25:2; ...**No son hath He begotten! No partner hath He in his empire!**"

Sura 6:102; ...**how when He hath no consort, should he have a son?"**

Yet, in John 10:36 Jesus said:

...Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son' ?"

While Muhammad appears to contradict Jesus, he doesn't. Jesus' statement must be read in context with the rest of John 10. Two verses preceding verse 36 indicate the rest of humanity are "**gods**" and God's children, too...

John 10:34-36,;

34 Jesus answered them,
 "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods' ?
 35 If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came
 —and the Scripture cannot be broken—
 36 what about the one whom the Father
 set apart as his very own [at the beginning of Creation]
 and [later] sent into the world [as Jesus Christ]?"

Since we humans are born of human parents, the only way for us to be "gods" is through the process described on the preceding pages. Just as Christ was made in the image of God, so too, were we...

Genesis 1:27;

So God created man in his own image,
 in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Acts 17:28, Paul;

... As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' "

Romans 8: 16-17, Paul;

16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs
 —heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,..."

The difference between us and Christ is that he was the first part of God to take on a localized, individual self. After that, we were made in God's image through Christ. John 1:2-3;

2 [Christ] was with God [the Father-Allāh] in the beginning."

3 Through him [Christ] all things were made;
 without him [Christ] nothing was made that has been made."

While we're on the subject of God's "children", let's resolve an apparent difference between the Bible and the Qur'an regarding that topic...

Sura 10:69; They say, "God hath begotten children."

No! by His glory! He is self sufficient.

All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth is His!"

Sura 23:91; God hath not begotten offspring;

neither is there any other God with him:..."

As in the earlier example concerning the "Son of God", the question is whether "offspring" means "godlets" separate from a bigger, Big God, or whether God is "over all and through all and in all" as Paul stated in Ephesians 4:6. The Qur'an agrees with Paul. Next, the issue of Jesus being "Lord"...

Who is "Lord" ?

1 Corinthians 15:56-57, Paul;

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God!

He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Sura 3:64;

SAY: "O people of the Book!

come ye to a just judgment between us and you—

**That we worship aught but God, and that we join no other god with Him,
and that the one of us take not the other for lords, beside God."**

This issue of whether or not Jesus is "Lord" can be resolved like the earlier issues were, with a little detective work and getting our definitions straight.

From "Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary"; **lord** ...

1 : one having power and authority over others **a** : a ruler by hereditary right...

d obs : the male head of a household **2 cap a: GOD "**

When the Prophet said, "take not the other for lords, beside God", he meant that no God exists outside of God. He objected to the use of "Lord" as indicating a deity on a par with God, not "Lord" as one may address the head of a household. Because Christ was the first "person" and because all else was created through him, he qualifies as being "Lord" in that sense. He doesn't qualify as a "Lord" equal to the Father-Allāh. One last piece of evidence... From Introducing Islam, page 28, a passage describing the Prophet's farewell sermon.

Muhammad;

" 'Be my witness, O Allāh,

that I have conveyed your message to your people.'

'My lord, you surely have,' resounded the valley [full of people]. "

The Muslims gathered together to hear Muhammad's final sermon weren't being disobedient. "**Lord**" was a term of respect for the earthly head of the Muslim community. Used in that sense or any way that doesn't compete with God, it is permissible for Muslims to use the word "Lord" in conjunction with another person. As eldest of individual spirits Christ is head of the household, or "lord", of all Creation, second only to the Father. For his spiritual leadership and his sacrifice through the Crucifixion (see next page), Jesus also earned the respectful title of "lord". However, the Father-Allāh is "Lord" over all.

There are several lesser issues between Christianity and Islam remaining that will be addressed in future books, God willing. The most critical issues are now resolved, with one exception; the crucifixion of Jesus...

The Crucifixion

Virtually all Muslims deny Jesus was crucified. Yet, the crucifixion is mentioned in the Bible and is a central aspect of Christianity. Can this apparent difference be reconciled? Perhaps so. Let's see.

Sura 4:156;

"And for their [*the Pharisees*] saying,
 "Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, an apostle of God."
Yet they slew him not, and crucified him not,
But they had only his likeness.

And they who differed about him were in doubt concerning him:
 No sure knowledge had they about him, but followed only an opinion,
 and they did not really slay him, but God took him up to Himself.
 And God is mighty, wise!"

Acts 2:22-24, Peter;

22 "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth...
 23...was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge;
 and you, with the help of wicked men,
 put him to death by nailing him to the cross."
 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death,
 because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."

At first glance, it appears reconciling the Bible and Qur'an is impossible. But again, in Matthew 19:26, Jesus said,

"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

According to the Way of Holiness, for an interpretation of a passage in the Qur'an to be correct, it must agree with the Bible.

Sura 4:82;

Can they not consider the Koran? Were it from any other than God,
 they would surely have found in it many contradictions."

A correct interpretation must also agree with the rest of the Qur'an. This being so, Sura 4:156 must reconcile with this next verse...

Sura 3:48;

"...[*Allāh*] said, "O Jesus! verily I will cause thee to die,..."

Other translations don't use the specific word "die", but the context and words are consistent with that use. For the solution to this issue, let's turn to an eminent modern Sufi (a sect of Islam) scholar named Martin Lings. Before doing so, I'd like to say I agree with what he wrote, and will add commentary at the end of his explanation. Here's Sura 4:156, again...

Sura 4:156;

"And for their saying,
 "Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, an apostle of God."
 Yet they slew him not, and crucified him not, But they had only his likeness.
 And they who differed about him were in doubt concerning him:
 No sure knowledge had they about him, but followed only an opinion,
 and they did not really slay him, but God took him up to Himself."

"Do the Religions Contradict One Another?" - Chapter Two
 of "A Return to the Spirit: Questions and Answers by Martin Lings";

" Let us now pass on to an apparent contradiction which cannot be dismissed so easily. If the religion of Islam depended on the beliefs of the average Muslim, then there would indeed be a contradiction; but Islam depends on the Qur'ân, not on human opinion that is based on Quranic verses taken out of their context.

It is a fact that most Muslims believe that Christ was not crucified, whereas Christians consider the Crucifixion to be as it were the foundation stone of their religion. Many aspects of their religion have been questioned and rejected by certain Christians: already in very early Christianity a number of differing schools of thought were hurling anathema at each other; but I have never heard of any Christian that denies the Crucifixion and rejects the sign of the Cross. The Muslim denial of the Crucifixion is based on a Quranic statement isolated from its setting, combined perhaps with a natural readiness to accept what appears to be good news. The idea that God would allow one of His Messengers to be crucified is hard to accept, nor is the Christian doctrine of the Redemption easy to understand. I have heard it asked: "Are we not all included in God's redemption of Adam?"

As to the whole of the Quranic passage in question (II, 37-8), having been blamed for their calumny of Mary and their denial of the Virgin birth of Christ, the Jews are then blamed for having said: "Verily we have slain the Messiah Jesus the Son of Mary, the Messenger of God" (IV, 156-7). The Qur'ân then adds the words: "And they did not slay him and they did not crucify him, but it seemed to them that they had done so."

Now we must bear in mind that when the Prophet Muhammad was once asked: "When [*did*] you become a Prophet?" he answered: "I was a Prophet when Adam was between water and clay." In other words, Prophethood is not of this world, but transcends time and space. As we have seen, every Messenger has two natures, one which is transcendent and one which is human. There is never any question in Christianity of the Divine Nature of Christ having been crucified. As for the Jews, they looked on him as a man who falsely claimed to be the Messiah. ...

But instead of saying "We have slain this usurper," they said, with...sarcasm: "We have slain the Messiah." The Qur'ân denies this possibility, and then adds what are, in our context, the all important words: "But it seemed to them that they had done so." Why did it seem to them that they had done so? Precisely because they had seen the dead body of Christ's human nature before them on the Cross. There is therefore no mutual contradiction here between Christianity and Islam."

There is another powerful argument that the Crucifixion belongs in Islam. Jesus said, **"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing."** (John 6:63) He also said a form of martyrdom is righteous...John 15:13, Jesus:

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Muhammad took Jesus' teaching to heart in the following hadith...

Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol 4, page 52, #2797;

Abu Hureira: I heard Allāh's Messenger saying,

"By Him in Whose Hands my soul is!

**I would love to be martyred in Allāh's cause and then come back to life
and then get martyred, and then come back to life again
and then get martyred and then come back to life and then get martyred."**

Jesus said sacrificing one's life for others is the highest form of love. He knew someone else would have to die in his place if he chose the path of the non-martyr. This would make him a hypocrite. Since Muhammad said he was willing to be martyred over and over, Jesus can appear cowardly when viewed from the perspective of traditional Muslim theology. Such a view is totally absurd when one considers Muhammad's prophecies state Allāh will send Jesus to rule the Muslim Ummah at the Last Hour. Allāh would never send a cowardly hypocrite to lead the Ummah!

The Way of Holiness uses the "narrow path" where the Bible and Qur'an reconcile with several divisive theology issues. The "narrow path" is compatible with "scientific" theories regarding the origin of the universe (i.e., the "Big Bang"). The major difference between the "Big Bang" theory and the Way of Holiness is "Intelligence", i.e., which came first, intelligence or physical matter? It may be impossible to provide physical evidence for something that preceded the physical universe. What proof is available is logic and the law of probability. The presence of a central Source, i.e., God, is evidenced by the "astounding" precision with which the Bible, Qur'an, and Bhagavad-Gita fit together as one ongoing Message. The Way of Holiness is compatible with logic and scientific evidence and theory. This being so, since the sacred sources indicate God and consciousness existed prior to the physical universe, the odds strongly favor this possibility.

Chapter 6

Created in God's Image

Created in God's Image

It's time to reconcile Hinduism to the Bible and Qur'an. It may have seemed impossible to reconcile Christianity and Islam, but the two religions at least share monotheism, worship of a single, universal, supreme God. Hinduism appears to be polytheistic, worshipping many gods. However, on closer inspection, Hinduism transforms into a monotheism in accord with the Bible and Qur'an. If religions as diverse as Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam reconcile through the Way of Holiness, a "narrow path" to peace opens wide. We already know Christ connects everyone (Ephesians 2:14-18) and that everyone must come to him (John 14:6). Let's return to John 1:3, and the Big Bang expanding from the first point of consciousness. Let's compare that with a passage from the Ramayana, a Hindu sacred book...

John 1:3; **Through him [Christ] all things were made;
without him nothing was made that has been made."**

Ramayana 1:3:34; **"...the self-born creator, Brahma."**

Ramayana Glossary; **"Brahma:** The first of all the gods and creator of the universe. He was directly manifested from Vishnu and is thus sometimes called "the unborn."

The Ramayana and the Bible agree on the presence of a localized spirit form at the beginning through which all was created. That spirit is an **"image of God"**. **2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul; ...Christ...is the [first localized spirit] image of God."** Hinduism, like the Bible and Qur'an, has a larger, undefinable "Something" behind that first localized consciousness, too. The Hindu name for the Father-Allāh is "Krishna". As the "Big Bang" proceeds from and through the single point of consciousness (Christ-Jibreel-Brahma), the "body of Christ" expands in multiple images of Christ. This is where our individual spirits enter Creation.

Job 38:4-7 (KJV), the Father-Allāh-Krishna-God;

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

What we call our "soul" is a "son [or daughter] of God". The book of Job states our souls were present at earth's creation. Thus, we're all Christ's "children" in a sense. Since creation proceeds from this one point, the "body of Christ-Jibreel-Brahma" expands to embrace the entire physical universe. Since Christ is made in God's image (2 Corinthians 4:4) and all things were created through Christ, if we're made in God's image (Genesis 1:27), we must be made in the image of God through Christ. As it is written...

John 14:20, Jesus;

On that day you will realize that...I am in you."

Ramayana 1:6:63; **"...the indwelling Lord in everyone's heart..."**

The "gods"

Reconciling Hinduism with the Bible and Qur'an necessarily involves examining the nature of divinity in relation to human beings.

Psalm 82:6-7, Asaph;

⁶ "I [God] said, 'You are "gods";
you are all sons of the Most High.' "

⁷ But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler."

John 10:34-35, Jesus;

³⁴ "Is it not written in your Law,
'I have said you are gods' ?"

³⁵ If he [God] called them [people] 'gods' to whom the word of God came
—and the Scripture cannot be broken—..."

Jesus knew this would be a hard lesson. Mainstream Christian theology teaches that man is "fallen" and sinful by nature. It's true that we're "fallen" and have a "sinful nature". But what these terms mean makes all the difference. We're not born "bad", we're born *egocentric*. The "sinful nature" is ego. Self-centered, selfish Me, Me, Me thought. We "fall from grace" spiritually when we forget God is in all things (Ephesians 4:6) and that there's a degree of divinity in each of us. This challenges traditional theology, which was why Jesus added the words, "**and the Scripture cannot be broken**" to verse 35. Jesus meant what he said and it still applies today.

Following are two key elements needed for reconciling Hinduism with the Bible and Qur'an. First, Hinduism's gods (except Krishna) are mortal, not immortal...
Ramayana Prologue:11;

"Even the gods would eventually succumb to death..."

Hindu "gods" have divinity in them, but they die, just like people and just like the "**sons of the Most High**" who "**die like mere men**" in Psalm 82:6-7. The second cornerstone is that in the Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna Himself doesn't actively encourage worship of the lesser gods...

Bhagavad-Gita 7:19-20 (Easwaran), Krishna;

¹⁹ After many births* the wise seek refuge in me;
Seeing me everywhere and in every-²⁰ thing.

...There are others whose discrimination is misled by many desires.

Following their own [*egocentric*] nature,
they worship lower gods, practicing various rites."

* Reincarnation is discussed on page 124.

While Hinduism permits worship of "**lower gods**", Krishna doesn't encourage it because it creates confusion. What it boils down to is this; because God is in all things, there is also divinity in all things. The universe has countless aspects and features. When we name any of them, we're naming a part of God, so to speak. As long as we remember God is in all things, we're ok. If we forget this and treat anything as a separate God in its own right, we divide God against Him/Her-self and ourselves. Again, God is in all things, so there's divinity in all things, including people...Ramayana 1:7:81, Rama;

**What wretched man would not devotedly serve his father,
a veritable god to him on earth."**

Ramayana 1:9:94, Rama;

My worshipable father has ordered me to enter the forest..."

It's time for definitions of "gods", "God", and "worship".
From "Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary";
god ...1 : a being or object believed to have more than natural attributes
and power and to require man's worship;
specif : one controlling a particular aspect or part of reality
2 : a person or thing of supreme value..."

"God *n* : the supreme or ultimate reality
: the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness
whom men worship as creator and ruler of the universe"

¹**wor • ship**... *n* [ME *worshipe* worthiness, repute, respect,
reverence paid to a divine being...]
...2 : to regard with extravagant respect or devotion....syn see REVERE"
"re • vere ...: to show devotion and honor to..."

God placed part of His Spirit in each of us. Jesus sacrificed himself for us. That makes us persons of "supreme value". We each control one "part of reality", ourselves. By the Bible's, Ramayana's, and Webster's definitions, you're a "god" and so am I--lower case, small "g" "gods". Big "G" God is the Father-Allāh-Krishna.

Some lesser Hindu "deities" are descriptions of aspects of the One God. For instance, Krishna creates and destroys. As "Creator", He's called "Vishnu". As "Destroyer", He's called "Shiva". Worship of Vishnu is comparable to praising the Father for creating something. As it is written...

Ramayana 1:1:22;

**Although they controlled the universe,
the other gods were but agents of Vishnu [Yahweh-Allāh-Krishna]."**

Lesser "deities" are permissible to "worship" in an appropriate manner. Lesser Hindu "deities" may be people, too, as evidenced by the two passages from the Ramayana on the previous page. After all, God said, "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12). "Honor" is a form of worship; "Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary"; "¹hon•or ... syn... REVERENCE..." On the previous page, we learned "reverence" is a form of "worship". Both the Qur'an and Bible teach us to respect other people. "Worship", meaning the reverence and respect we should accord fellow human beings, agrees with the Qur'an and Bible. We're not joining gods to God when we acknowledge that part of Him within each of us as being divine. In a sense, people are "godlets" with bits of God in each. As it is written...

"gods" and God

Deuteronomy 10:17 (NIV);

17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords,
the great God, mighty and awesome,..."

Deuteronomy 10:17, ("The Torah");

For the LORD your God is ^d-God supreme and Lord supreme, ^{-d}..."
^{d--d}Lit "the God of gods and the Lord of lords". "

1 Corinthians 8:4-5, Paul;

4...We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world
and that there is no God but one [*the Father-Krishna-Allāh*].

5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth
(as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),"

Psalms 82:1-2,5-7, Asaph;

1 God presides in the great assembly;

he gives judgment among the "gods" [*That's us.*]

2 "How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked?
Selah

5 "They [*people not recognizing our divinity*] know nothing,
they understand nothing.

They walk about in darkness;

all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 "I said, 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High.' "

7 But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler."

What is this? "**Sons of the Most High**" dying "**like mere men**"? Don't "**sons of God**" inherit eternal life? It's time we discuss reincarnation...

Reincarnation

Traditional Christian theology rejects reincarnation, and because it's part of Hinduism, it appears to be an unbridgeable gulf separating the two religions. Ironically, in a way reincarnation isn't in Hindu sacred books, either. That's because if you read the Bhagavad-Gita or the Srimad Bhagavatam, you won't find the word "reincarnation" in scripture, only in the commentary. But, while Hindu sacred books don't use the specific word "reincarnation", they clearly describe the process.

The same thing can be said for the Bible; the word "reincarnation" isn't in it, but descriptions and/or instances of the process are. However, the references are generally unclear to the extent that room is left for debate over exactly what they mean. That's just not good enough to make the concrete statement to the readers of this book that reincarnation is in the Bible—or in the Gnostic books that are not included in the Bible. (You can easily do an online computer search of the topic, "reincarnation in the Bible" and find plenty of sites and sources discussing the topic.)

This book approaches the subject from a different direction. We'll proceed with the hypothesis reincarnation *isn't* in the Bible, and see what impact it has on the sacred book's integrity and our picture of the Deity it purports to represent. We'll address that question momentarily, after making a couple of points.

First, perhaps the principal purpose of this book is teaching people that Creator spoke to all peoples, and gave special gifts to each people that are meant to be shared with the others. This is one way in which God demonstrates to humanity that all peoples are equally important in the Almighty's view. Had early Christian clergy included all the Gnostic books and scrolls in the "Bible", and taught people a theology that included reincarnation, the gift from Hinduism (and other sacred sources) would be somewhat diminished in value. Because what happened did indeed happen, the Bible has a fundamental question left unanswered, where the satisfactory answer can only be obtained by respecting and sharing what God said in another sacred message.

Second, it's important to say that whether one believes in reincarnation or not has no direct effect on whether a person is "saved". But, indirectly, it does for the following reason: if our belief transforms God into an untrustworthy Being who isn't fully honest, can we trust the Bible and have faith in a fickle deity? Verse 9 of chapter 1 in the Book of Enoch states God will, "...execute judgment on ...the ungodly [for] ... all the hard things [they] ... have spoken against Him."

According to the Book of Enoch, if our theology transforms God into a liar, we already have "one strike against us" for which we will be held accountable. Thank God for creating mitigating circumstances (like ignorance of the crime)!

See, here's the thing: In the Bible, God tells us "He" is all-wise, almighty, and loves all of us equally. How could such a Being give us one single life in which to pass a test determining our afterlife, but give some people easier tests, and others more difficult ones? Either the tests must be equal, or God isn't telling the truth. This was discussed in chapter 1 in the part with Romans 2:12-16 on pages 16-19. Romans 2:12-16 shows how the test is fair because God is concerned with what is in our hearts, not whether we know a specific fact. True, but does that mean God intends to discard people who go through life's refinement process one time only, but fail? Would you do that to your children? Are you more loving than God? Isaiah 48 and Jeremiah 6 provide precedent for God's position on this issue... Isaiah 48:10*;

**"See, I have refined you, though not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction."**

Jeremiah 6:29-30;

**29 The bellows blow fiercely to burn away the lead with fire,
but the refining goes on [over and over again] in vain;
the wicked are not purged out.**

30 They are called rejected silver, because the LORD has rejected them."

Silver is precious, as human beings are to God. "**Rejected silver**" is refined over again. Now, it may be true these two passages relate to Israelites as a people, but if God gives groups of people multiple opportunities to overcome their failings, it stands to reason a Deity who loves us equally will also treat individuals this way.

A fundamental misunderstanding many people have regarding reincarnation is that with multiple lives, we can "get away with" behaving terribly because we'll always get a second chance. But we don't "get away with" anything! It's more like getting a second prison sentence on top of the first. Reincarnation means we have to face the music for our failings in this life in our next one. There's nothing easy about that! It just means God is willing to let us suffer until we get it right.

Given that the Bible and Qur'an say God is Love, merciful, truthful, impartial, and Almighty, we can reconcile these five attributes with the differing conditions humans face in life with reincarnation, in which we have eternal souls growing over lifetimes, balancing past actions, or Karma, with what we must go through in this and future lives. We'll start with...

The Eternal Nature of Souls

HINDU

Bhagavad-Gita 2:12, Krishna;

**Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings
nor in the future shall any of us cease to be."**[*Eternal Life*]

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 38:4,7, God (KJV);

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?..."

7 "When...all the sons of God [*us*] shouted for joy?"

MORMON

Doctrine & Covenants 93:29,33, Jesus;

29 Man was also in the beginning with God. 33 For man is spirit.

**The elements are eternal,
and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy [*love*]."**

CATHOLIC APOCHRYPHA

Wisdom 2:23; **For God formed man to be imperishable;
the image of his own [*eternal*] nature he made him."**

ISLAM

Sura 2:154;

**And say not of those who are slain on God's path that they are dead;
nay, they are living! But ye understand not."**

The Old Testament, Doctrine and Covenants, and Qur'an support reincarnation. By confirming the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17-18), Jesus also confirmed the book of Job, which places us at the world's creation. This raises a pertinent question; What were we doing all the time since? *Maybe reincarnating?*

BHAGAVAD-GITA

Bhagavad-Gita 2:13, 17, 19;

**13 As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body,
from boyhood to youth, and then to old age,
the soul similarly passes into another body at death. ...**

**17 That which pervades the entire body is indestructible.
No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul.**

**19 He who thinks that the living entity is the slayer,
or that the entity is slain, does not understand.**

One who is in knowledge knows that the self slays not nor is slain."

Purport Bhagavad-Gita 2:19, Swami Prabhupada;

"When an embodied being is hurt by fatal weapons, it is to be known that the living entity within the body is not killed. The spirit soul is so small that it is impossible to kill him by any material weapon. Nor is the living entity killable in any case because of his spiritual constitution. What is killed or is supposed to be killed is the body only. This, however, does not at all encourage killing of the body. The Vedic injunction is *Ma himsyat sarva-bhutani*, never commit violence to anyone. The understanding that a living entity is not killed does not encourage animal slaughter. Killing the body of anyone without authority is abominable and is punishable by the law of the state as well as the law of the Lord. "

QUR'AN

Sura 2:28;

...Ye were dead and He gave you life; next He will cause you to die;
next He will restore you to life; next shall ye return to Him!"

John 6:63, Jesus;

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing."

Romans 4:17; ...the God who gives life to the dead..."

Psalms 82:6-7;

6 ...you are all sons of the Most High.' "

7 But you will die like mere men [*incarnations*]; you will fall like every other ruler."

Isaiah 57:1-2;

1 The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart;
devout men are taken away, and no one understands
that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil.

2 Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death."
[*The righteous go to "Paradise", "Heaven", or "Nirvana".*]

Another concern about reincarnation is the possibility we won't be fully motivated to get things right in this life if we get more than one opportunity. That concern has increasing merit over time. As evolved souls go to "Nirvana", or "Heaven", leaving the cycle of reincarnation, they leave behind those with personality types who would lack motivation if they knew reincarnation was a universal principle. The prophecies predict exactly this dilemma. Here are three of these prophecies...

2 Timothy 3:1-5, Paul;

1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.

2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud,
abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ..."

[*hedonistic, materialistic, and spiritually they'll be judgmental and self-righteous*],

2 Timothy 3:1-5, cont.:

³ without love, unforgiving,
 slanderous, without self-control, brutal,
 not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited,
 lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—
⁵ having a form of godliness [mainstream judgmental theology]
 but denying its [God's] power [to save people of other religions].
 Have nothing to do with them."

"The Signs Before The Day Of Judgement", p. 96,
 citing Ahmad, *Musnad*, 6/81;

'A'ishah...said... 'How will people be [at the last Hour?]'
 He [Muhammad] said,

'Like locusts: the strong will devour the weak, until the Hour comes.' "

"The Signs Before The Day Of Judgement", p. 95,
 citing Ahmad, *Musnad*, 1/454;

It was reported from 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr that the Prophet (S) said,
 "The Hour will not come until Allāh takes away the best people on earth;
 only the worst people will be left;
 they will not know any good or forbid any evil."

Why will only the worst people be left? Reincarnation. The process is like taking a bottle of milk and skimming the cream off the top. The cream is the souls who attain Christ Consciousness. They don't come back—usually. What's left are those who didn't, and who must reincarnate. The process is repeated until eventually, at the end of an age, what is left are skim milk and people stuck in egocentricity who need to be rescued from the calamity their collective egocentric behavior created. Next, samples of scripture from the Qur'an supporting reincarnation... Sura 29:19-20;

19 See they not how God bringeth forth creation?
 and then causeth it to return again?
 This is truly easy for God.

20 SAY: "Go through the earth,
 and see how He hath brought forth created beings.

Hereafter, with a second birth will God will cause them to be born again..."
 Sura 30:19;

He bringeth forth the living out of the dead,
 and He bringeth forth the dead out of the living;
 and He quickeneth [brings back to life] the earth [over and over] when dead.
 Thus it is that ye too shall be brought forth."

Sura 2:28;

...Ye were dead and He gave you life; next He will cause you to die;
next He will restore you to life; next shall ye return to Him!"

Sura 2:28, scripture

...Ye were dead and He gave you life; [=
next He will cause you to die; [=
next He will restore you to life; [=
next shall ye return to Him!"

Sura 2:28, explained

You are born.
You die. That's one life.
You're reborn. Reincarnation.

"next shall ye return to Him!" means that if one is a good Muslim, one earns the right to Paradise (Nirvana) until the end of the 1000 years, if one so chooses. The passage says nothing of the process ending before completion of the 1000 year kingdom.

Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol 4, Hadith#54;

Abu Hureira said, I heard Allāh's Messenger saying,

"By Him in Whose Hands my life is!

I would love to be martyred in Allāh's cause and then come back to life
and then be martyred and then come back to life again
and then be martyred and then come back to life and then be martyred."

Al-Imam al-Mahdi *The Just Leader of Humanity*

at <http://al-islam.org/mahdi/nontl/>

Bihar al-anwar, Vol. 51, p. 73.;

"The Qá'im [*Mahdi*] will be among my [*spiritual*] descendants.

His name will be my name and his patronymic will be my patronymic.

His character will be like my own...

Anyone who obeys him would be obeying me,

and any one who turns away from him would be turning away from me.

Anyone who denies his existence during his concealment would have denied me,
and anyone who falsifies him would have falsified me.

Anyone who confirms his existence would have confirmed my existence."

This opens the door to reconciliation between Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and resolves a contradiction of traditional Christian and Muslim theology—What of people who never heard of Jesus or Muhammad? Because we come back, all eventually hear the Gospels, even those who previously missed out. The preceding passages show Man's mortal form "dies". However, the soul is a "son of the Most High" and remains. Traditional Christian theology rejects reincarnation on the basis of one passage taken out of context...

Hebrews 9:27;

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment..."

Our mortal form dies once, but the "Spirit gives life"—"the flesh counts for nothing." Our spirits live on. The body dies. We face judgment between each life. Evolved souls are separated out and go to Nirvana/Paradise/Heaven over time. The remaining souls left are the most ego-centric, so hedonism, violence, and loveless sexuality abounds. Eventually, the preponderance of "me-first" thought leads to all sorts of calamities and an Earth out of balance—just like it is now. And that's when God stages an "End of the Age" "Last Hour" rescue operation. This book is a part of the rescue operation.

Isaiah 11:9; **They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea."**

The next step for connecting Hindu scripture with the Bible and Qur'an is to compare the characteristics, or identity profiles, of the Father, Allāh, and Krishna to see if they describe the same Person.

KRISHNA

Ramayana Prologue:4; **That inconceivable Lord..."**

THE FATHER

Matthew 6:6, Jesus; **...pray to your Father, who is unseen."**

ALLAH

Sura 57:3; **...the seen and the hidden;**

THE FATHER

Genesis 17:1*; **...the LORD...said, "I am God Almighty;..."**

ALLAH

Sura 40:2; **...the Almighty, the All-knowing,"**

KRISHNA

Ramayana Prologue:4; **...all powerful...all seeing..."**

ALLAH

Sura 32:2; **"Lord of the Worlds"** Sura 59:1; **"the Most High!"**

KRISHNA

Ramayana Prologue:4; **"Lord of all the worlds...supreme deity
...universal authority...Lord of all the gods."**

Deuteronomy 10:17 (NIV) **THE FATHER**

**17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords,
the great God, mighty and awesome,..."**

Sura 17:110; **SAY:**

**"Call upon God (Allāh), or call upon the God of Mercy
...by whichsoever ye will invoke Him: He hath most excellent names."**

Hinduism's One God; Krishna (a.k.a. Vishnu)

"Bhagavad-Gita As It Is", pp. 75-76

(Note; "Krsna" is another spelling of "Krishna")

Purport Bhagavad-Gita 2:2;

The Sanskrit word *bhagavan* is explained by the great authority Parasara Muni, the father of Vyasadeva. The Supreme Personality who possesses all riches, entire strength, entire fame, entire beauty, entire knowledge, and entire renunciation is called Bhagavan. There are many persons who are very rich, very powerful, very beautiful, very famous, very learned, and very much detached, but no one may claim that he is possessor of all these opulences entirely. Such a claim is applicable to Krsna only, and as such He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No living entity, including Brahma, Lord Siva [Shiva], or even Narayana, can possess opulences as fully as Krsna. Therefore it is concluded in the *Brahma-samhita* by Lord Brahma [Christ] himself that Lord Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one is equal to or above him. He is the primeval Lord, of Bhagavan, known as Govinda, and He is the supreme cause of all causes...

In the *Bhagavatam*...there is a list of many incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead...Krsna is described as the original Personality of Godhead from whom many, many incarnations and Personalities of Godhead expand.

"All the lists of the incarnations of Godhead submitted herewith are either plenary expansions or parts of the plenary expansions of the Supreme Godhead, but Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself." (Bhagavatam 1.3.28)

...Krsna is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, the source of both Supersoul and the impersonal Brahman."

Purport Bhagavad-Gita 2:7, page 83;

There is no difference between Krsna's within and without. And one who has no sense of this understanding is the greatest fool in trying to understand Bhagavad-Gita."

Ramayana 1:1:25; Seated in meditation,
Brahma thought of the Lord within his heart."

Ramayana 1:6:63;
"...the indwelling Lord in everyone's heart."

When Brahma (Christ) turned his thoughts within, he found God. When we do the same, our spiritual eyes open. And like children, we see God all around us. We see God—"Yahweh-Krishna-Allāh-the Father-WakanTanka" everywhere.

Sura 4:126; ...and God encompasseth all things!"

We'll see him in our neighbor...

Revelation 22:4; They will see his [God's] face,
and his name will be on their foreheads."

We'll see God in outer space, the stars, and the earth,...

Jeremiah 23:24; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?"

Bhagavad-Gita 7:7 (Easwaran), Krishna;

...The entire universe is suspended from me as my necklace of jewels."

...and we'll see God in Nature, in the clouds, and the blueness of the sky....

Ramayana 1:1:25;

"Seated in meditation,

Brahma [Christ] thought of the Lord within his heart.

At that moment Vishnu[and all names of the Most High] appeared in the sky.

Only the gods saw him

as he descended upon the back of his eagle carrier, Garuda.

His beautiful body was blackish and he shone with brilliant luster.

He was dressed in yellow silk with a garland of blue lotuses.

A necklace of bright celestial gems hung around his neck.

Adorned with numerous gold ornaments and jewels,

he held in his four hands a conch shell, a mace, a discus weapon,
and a lotus flower.

Gracefully descending, he sat amid the gods
as they worshipped him with hymns and prayers."

Vishnu's body, the blackness of space, shines with the brilliant luster of stars. He wears the yellow silk of the sun, and a garland of blue lotuses, clouds. From his neck hangs the Milky Way, a necklace of bright celestial gems. As God is inconceivable, his four hands are figurative, like God the Father's, and represent the four directions; North, South, East, and West, to show he is everywhere and in all things. Only the gods saw Vishnu because only the gods recognize God in all things. Remember, Vishnu is "inconceivable", so what we have here is a beautifully written stylized picture of the universe personified. As we exist within the universe, Krishna-Allāh-the Father sits amid us at all times.]

John 14:20, Brahma [Jesus];

On that day you will realize that I am in my Father,
and you are in me, and I am in you."

Brahma-Christ-Jibreel

Ramayana 1:3:34; "...the self-born creator, Brahma."

Ramayana Prologue:4; Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe..."

Ramayana Prologue:15; "chief of the gods" [lower case "g" gods]

Glossary page 457 "Brahma: The first of all the gods and creator of the universe. He was directly manifested from Vishnu and is thus sometimes called "the unborn."

John 10:36, Brahma (Jesus):...I said, 'I am God's Son'..."

John 14:28, Jesus; ...the Father [-Krishna-Vishnu] is greater than I."

Satan took Jesus (the incarnated Brahma) to a mountaintop and offered him all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would worship him. Jesus said;

Matthew 4:10; "Away from me, Satan! For it is written:

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' "

Matthew 6:9, Jesus-Brahma;

"This, then, is how you should pray:

Our Father[-Krishna-Allāh] in heaven, hallowed be your name...' "

Ramayana 1:1:25;

Brahma, Vishnu's [Krishna-the Father-Allāh] devoted servant...
addressed Vishnu in a reverential tone..."

We've merely scratched the surface of the depths of wisdom contained in the Hindu sacred books, and God willing, there will be much more to write about in future books. This book's goal is overcoming the principal barriers of theology separating Hinduism from the Bible and Qur'an. As it is written;

Isaiah 40:3-5; 3 A voice of one calling:

"In the desert prepare the way for the LORD;

make straight in the wilderness a highway [Way of Holiness] for our God."

Isaiah 35:8,

And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness.

The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way;
wicked fools will not go about on it."

Isaiah 40:3-5, cont.;

4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground [of theology] shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

5 And the glory of the LORD['s love of all mankind] will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it.

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Chapter 7

The Sacred Hoop

"Black Elk Speaks" p. 33;

"...And while I stood there I saw more than I can understand
and I understood more than I saw;
for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit,
and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being.
And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people
was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight,
and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree
to shelter all the children of one mother and one father.
And I saw that it was holy."

Recognizing the Feminine Aspect of the Godhead

The recognition of the feminine aspect of Godhead is an integral part of the spiritual healing needed today. In Black Elk's vision the "mother" represents the Earth, and the "father" represents Wakan Tanka or Great Spirit, the Bible's "Father" and the Qur'an's "Allāh". This view doesn't make the "mother" equal to the "father" and it doesn't require them to be entirely separate entities. The prophecy makes known Female energy is present alongside Male energy in the Godhead. Hinduism has a similar male/female couple in the Hindu Godhead of Vishnu and Lakshmi. Lakshmi is referred to as the "mother of India".

Because God is in all things and roughly half of living things are female, God has a feminine aspect as well as a masculine aspect. If a person loves God with heart, soul, and mind as Jesus suggested (Matthew 22:37), the "mother" feminine side of God must be recognized along with the "father" masculine side. As it is written: Genesis 1:27, Moses;

**So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."**

As people see God in all things, they recognize Him and Her in all people. When that occurs, the following prophecy is fulfilled...

Revelation 22:3-4; **3 No longer will there be any curse...**

**4 They will see his[/her-- God's total] face,
and his[/her] name will be on their foreheads."**

The Relationship between Women and Men at the End of the Age

Sacred books and religion are seen by many people as tools used to impose servitude and oppression on women. This perception must change if we're to enjoy heaven on Earth. God's nature is called into question when a Deity who is supposed to be fair, loving, truthful, and almighty puts unequal laws in the sacred books. The following is an example of a passage that appears unequal:

Sura 4:34 (Pickthall);

**Men are in charge of women,
because Allāh hath made the one of them to excel the other
[in physical strength],
and because they spend of their property (for the support of women)."**

Sura 4:34 appears to contradict Galatians 3:26-28 (at bottom of the page) where equality of the sexes becomes the law. There is no contradiction, however, because scripture is added onto other scripture over time, as God clarifies and updates His Message to fit those receiving it. The "spirit" of the "law" is what remains constant.

Scripture is Adapted to the People Receiving It

Sura 13:38-39; **38 To each age its book.
39 What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm:
for with Him is the source of revelation."**

Mark 2:27, Jesus;

**..."The Sabbath [law] was made for man,
not man for the Sabbath [the law]."**

Sura 4:34 (at top of page) reflects primitive conditions in early times. Men's superior physical strength and womens' limited mobility when pregnant validated the verse when originally given. Today, the Way of Holiness has access to Hinduism's concepts of reincarnation and evolving souls and uses these to resolve apparent inequality. When balancing actions from past lives ("karma") is considered, "unjust" situations transform into perfect learning experiences. Today, Mankind is ready for equality...

Equality Between Women and Men at the End of the Age

Galatians 3:26-28 Paul;

**26 You are all sons [and daughters] of God
through faith in Christ[-Jibreel-Brahma-]Jesus,
27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ[-Jibreel-Brahma]
have clothed yourselves with Christ[-Jibreel-Brahma].
[By fully accepting and following Christ's gospel, we "wear" Christ.]
28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free,
male nor female,
for you are all one [the same-equal]
in [the 1000 year kingdom of] Christ[-Jibreel-Brahma] Jesus."**

Isaiah 42:16;

**I will lead the blind by ways they have not known,
along unfamiliar paths [including equality of the sexes] I will guide them..."**

THE TREE OF LIFE

by Robert Leon Mendelson

I want you to picture a lovely blue sky.

God created this sky, and the sky...is a part of God.
The air is very thin, and God is present in this thinness.

Beneath the sky lies a grassy field.

The soil is rich, moist, full of minerals, nutrients, and water;
all the things necessary to nourish life.

God created this soil, and the soil...is a part of God.
God is present in its richness. The soil...is the sacred Earth.

In the center of this field is a very special place,
a place where the God essence has gathered very densely.

This special place is a tall and magnificent tree.

Its stout trunk is filled with a pulsing vitality.

The sap flows up from the roots, through the trunk,
up through the limbs to the slender branches, and outward to the twigs.

At the tips of the twigs are the buds,
and we are the buds.

The sap is the essence of God; pure love and life.

If the buds could look back from where they came
they would see they are all interconnected, directly connected to God,
and that in each of them there is divinity.

God's purpose for the bud is to drink of this essence,
open outward to the sun,
and perform the dance of photosynthesis.
Photosynthesis is creation, freedom of expression, loving and living.

When the bud does this it nourishes itself,
and invigorates the entire tree.

(cont.)

THE TREE OF LIFE

(cont.)

As your eyes drink in the beauty of the tree, the field, and the sky,
you notice a subtle change.

A soft golden glow radiates from within all that lies around you.

You see this because your spiritual eyes have opened,
and it is with spiritual eyes that this light is most visible.

Waves of rippling light, in all the colors of the rainbow,
and of rainbows you've never imagined,
wash down over your head, upon your shoulders and body,
filling you with the most delightful warmth you've ever felt,
the warmth of unconditional love,
because you...are in the presence of God.

Your soul is in rapture,...bliss.

And as you gaze out upon creation, you are filled with love.

You love the blue of the sky, the velvet green of the grass
and the glorious beauty of the tree—
and now you see mankind through God's eyes.

Welcome Home.

God willing, in future books the connection of Buddhism, Earth-based religions, and others to the Sacred Hoop will be further demonstrated through the Way of Holiness methodology. We'll examine how this new understanding applies to issues such as Men and Women, Science and Religion, religion laws, and more.

Until that time, I'd like to thank God for making this knowledge available and I'd like to thank you for reading this book. Please put it to good use. Share.

God bless you.
And may God bless us all.

All glory goes to God.

APPENDIX

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CONSTANTINE

Traditional Christian theology contains glaring contradictions. Since Jesus preached the true Gospel, these heresies must have come from somewhere else. To better understand how Christianity went awry, it's time we examine the man who authorized basic Christian theology at the Council of Nicaea. The following text comes from the Academic American Encyclopedia:

"Constantine I, Roman Emperor...the son of Constantius I... In 305, Constantius became senior emperor (augustus) in the West. However, when he died at York in 306 and the British troops proclaimed Constantine augustus in his place, the Eastern emperor GALERIUS refused to recognize the claim, offering Constantine the lesser rank of caesar. Constantine survived the civil war that disrupted the western half of the empire during the next 5 years... Constantine's defeat (Oct.28,312) of Maxentius...the self-appointed Caesar who controlled Italy and Africa. ...at the Milvian Bridge outside Rome not only removed a dangerous rival but secured his share in the new government formed by LICINIUS, whom Galerius had appointed augustus of the West in 308.

The nature of Constantine's conversion to Christianity has long been a matter of dispute—primarily because the sources, all of them Christian, offer conflicting testimony. The outlines of his religious development, however, are clear enough. Before 312, Constantine seems to have been a tolerant pagan, willing to accumulate heavenly patrons but not committed to any one deity. Between 312 and 324, however, he gradually adopted the Christian God as his protector and on several occasions granted special privileges to individual churches and bishops. His alliance with Christianity was strengthened by the political quarrel with Licinius. The death of Galerius in 311, and that of his successor in the East, Maximinus Daia, in 313, left Constantine and Licinius in control of both halves of the empire. The two rulers were soon at odds. In the ensuing civil war, politics and religion became so entangled that contemporaries described Constantine's conflict with Licinius (a pagan) as a crusade against paganism."

"Soon after his victory over Licinius [*at the battle of Chrysopolis, fought on September 18, 324.*]...Constantine openly embraced Christianity. The following year, Constantine assembled the bishops in a council at Nicaea...to debate the doctrines of Arius, ..., who argued that Christ was a created being and therefore not divine. Although this was not Constantine's first attempt to reconcile orthodox and heretical factions in Christianity, it was the first time he had used the imperial office to impose a settlement."

The following excerpts from "The Age Of Constantine The Great" by Jacob Burckhardt add insight into Constantine's character;

pp. 261-262 "...a calculating politician who shrewdly employed all available physical resources and spiritual powers to the one end of maintaining himself and his rule without surrendering himself wholly to any party."

p. 263 "...Constantine succeeded. It may be too much to spring to the defense of the wonderfully contrived Diocletianic [*Roman law written by the Emperor Diocletian*] ordinances for the succession; but by their strict letter Constantine was a usurper. He was born to Constantius of his concubine Helena at Nissa in Serbia in 274, and thus, strictly speaking, was ineligible even according to the laws of inheritance."

p. 279 "These were the decisive years during which Constantine attentively observed how Christianity might contribute and be useful to a clever ruler. When he became convinced by the significant growth of the community, by the clearly developed character of its hierarchy, by the peculiar form of its synodic organization, and by the entire character of contemporary Christianity that a support for the throne might be contrived out of this enormous power—and that he must assure himself of it betimes because this power had already begun to assure itself of the Emperor—he realized that he had found an infallible lever against Licinius."

p. 283 "To pass for a Christian would, indeed, have been a great presumption on his part. Not long after the Council of Nicaea he suddenly had Crispus, his excellent son by his first marriage and a pupil of Lactantius, put to death at Pola in Istria (326), and soon thereafter he had his wife Fausta, daughter of Maximian, drowned in her bath, The eleven-year-old Licinianus was also murdered, apparently at the same time as Crispus."

This is a great source book. Other people think so, too;

"This is a book no thoughtful person can afford to miss...not only does it clarify the deeds and misdeeds of great men and the mystical impulses which spurred them...to incomparable acts of piety and dreadfulness, it is a touchstone to an art and literature which transmitted classical antiquity to Christian Europe." — Saturday Review

"Here is something for one's bookcase that invites being taken down year after year and reread." —Christian Science Monitor

And there's more. The following passages from ARIUS Heresy and Tradition, written by Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Wales, reinforce Jacob Burckhardt's assertion Constantine was exploiting God, Christ, religion, and the people, using Christianity as means of political control—totalitarianism in the name of Christ. An explanatory word; "Arius" was the name of a man with differing views, and "Arianism" was his theology. From the introduction—"Images of a Heresy" (See page 144 for references)...

pp.14-15 "Samual Laeuchli in 1968 attacked Barth's trinitarian theology for its loyalty to the Nicene confession, because that confession not only springs from but actually articulates and legitimizes a totalitarian and monolithic social schema..."

"Edmund Leach, in a paper on 'Melchisedech and the emperor' (...published in 1983), has argued that Arianism represents an egalitarian and anti-authoritarian strand in early Christianity. The *identification* of the saviour with the substance of God serves to remove him from the human realm, so that salvation needs to be mediated by an authorized social and ecclesiastical hierarchy [*Constantine's stance*]. The *separation* of the saviour from God implies the possibility of divine power being communicated directly to creatures in past and present alike, and this has revolutionary implications: Christ may be unique in degree, but he is sanctified by the same Holy Spirit as inspires all the elect (pp. 75-7)."

"But here again, a significant question is raised: does the subordination of the Son to the Father belong naturally with radical sectarian styles of Christianity, and is Nicene orthodoxy thus a betrayal of the millenarian detachment of the first believers?"

What he's saying is Christ's gospel was hijacked by Constantine's "theology".

p.70 "Constantine defended the decisive word against just the doubts raised by... authors of the protesting memorandum; and, judging by the final vote, most... remaining dissidents were persuaded...In its letter to...Egyptian and Libyan churches,¹⁵⁷ the council recorded its condemnation of Arius' views and...person: he was excommunicated and probably degraded from the presbyterate; and Secundus and Theonas shared his fate.¹⁵⁸ All three, together with...one of Arius' Alexandrian colleagues, the deacon Euzoius,¹⁵⁹ were exiled by Constantine at the conclusion of the council. This dual punishment, ecclesiastical and civil, was... an ominous precedent..."

p.74 "...when Constantine's...mother visited the East...in 326, Eustathius made some tactless or critical remark about her...Eustathius was deposed by an Antiochene synod and exiled by Constantine, [about] 327.¹⁹² A number of bishops who shared Eustathius' theological preferences¹⁹³ were also ejected at the same synod, on a variety of charges."

p.77 "...The emperor wrote, probably in 333,²²⁰ an open letter to [Arius] and his supporters which is extraordinary in its venom and abusiveness, dubbing Arius an "Ares", a god of war,²²¹ who seeks to create strife and violence, and quoting the Sibylline Oracles²²² on the divine judgment threatened for Libya on account of...Libyans' sins against heaven.²²³ Arius' creed is dissected and found to be incompatible with Nicaea;²²⁴ ...Clerics and laity who break the peace of the Catholic church by continuing adherence to Arius are assured of legal retribution.²²⁶"

p.78 "Constantine's concern was dramatically shown in the edict [accompanying] his reply to Arius,²²⁸ associating Arius' supporters with Porphyry, the great pagan critic of the Church, and ordering that Arius' works be treated like those of Porphyry: they are to be burnt, and anyone who does not surrender copies in his possession is to be executed. This edict—apart from its depressing foretaste of varieties of intellectual fascism through the centuries down to our own day explains, to some extent, why Arius' written works survive in such fragmentary form, why they are not available for quotation even by later Arians (or perhaps especially by later Arians: it would be far easier for quotations to survive — as they have done — in works dedicated to their refutation)."

p.88 "...As the visionary caught up in contemplation of the Logos,³³ the emperor has the right like any authoritarian teacher, to examine and criticize and, where necessary, discipline or expel his pupils — language and ideas clearly visible in, for example, Constantine's correspondence with Arius.³⁴"

pp.90-91 "...From Nicaea onwards the Church decided and communicated its decisions, through the official network of the empire; it had become visible to *itself*, as well as to the world, in a new way...to those...enforcing...decisions, whether for...sake of the empire's unity like Constantine or...the sake of theological integrity like Athanasius..., the independent and actually or potential recalcitrant 'school' group was inevitably redefined not merely as a sect, but as a body outside the framework of civilized society. The Church's new 'visibility' meant that the wrong sort of Christian group was regarded pretty much as the Church itself had been regarded by the pagan empire, as something subversive of the sacred character of social life."

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p.70

¹⁵⁷ Opitz, U.23, 47-51

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 48.8-9

¹⁵⁹ Not explicitly mentioned in the synodical letter;
but he writes later alongside Arius, as if sharing his exile."

p.74

¹⁹² Chadwick (1948), Barnes (1978).

¹⁹³ Asclepius of Gaza (Chadwick, 1948, pp. 31-2), and perhaps Euphratius of Balanaeae, Cyrus of Beroea and others at the same time (Barnes (1981), p. 228)."

p.77

²²⁰ [Opitz] refers to Paterius as prefect of Egypt (ibid. 75.6); the only other reference to Paterius is in the heading for Athanasius Festal Letter for 333 (PG 26, 1379C), where the name is written 'Paternus'.

²²¹ Ibid. 69.26. Sibylline Oracles

²²² III.323ff; the quotation seems to derive from a Latin version older than the one we are familiar with."

²²³ Ibid. 71.23-8. ²²⁴ Ibid. 71.4-6 ²²⁶ Ibid. 74.16ff.

p.78

²²⁸ Opitz, U.33....

p.88

³³ Laus Const. 2-5, passim, esp. 204.18-20, 26-205.9

³⁴ Opitz, U.34

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THE MEAN GOD HERESIES:

You've read earlier in the book that traditional Christian theology turns God into Satan. It depicts God as being a two-faced liar who says that He's "Love", supremely fair, merciful, and honest, too. Then, it has God turn around and give sentences for petty crimes that are so lengthy they can never be fully served, and worse yet, orders punishments outlawed by even our flawed human standards, like burning people alive. This discrepancy between words and deeds has driven countless good-hearted, sensible people away and caused the sacred books to be viewed with scorn. So, in order to re-establish trust in and respect for the sacred books, we'll untangle the convoluted logic of three of these heresies, beginning with the one that makes Satan out to be an omnipresent being on a par with God.

SATAN

Some people insist that Satan doesn't exist at all, but a few people actually legally have that name, so that belief is at least technically untrue. What people really mean when they say Satan doesn't exist is that there aren't two separate, co-equal Gods, where one is pure good and the other pure evil. When people sensationalize Satan and act like he's everywhere, they are implying that he is omnipresent and almost all-powerful—in other words, he's on a par with God. However, just because many of these same people profess to be Christians or Muslims doesn't mean the Bible's "Satan" or the Qur'an's "Shaitan" don't exist, only that a different, more sensible and accurate definition is needed.

People are all unique. If you lined up all humanity based on each person's level of spirituality, you might have Christ and Muhammad at one extreme. Let's call that "the right hand of God". At the the other extreme, the "left hand of God", is pure selfishness and narcissism, the antithesis of what Christ and Muhammad taught. The person at the extreme "left" is known as "Satan". All the rest of humanity fit somewhere in between. All of us have a level of selfishness, and all of us have a level of good. Satan just happens to be the most egocentric and selfish one of us. Nothing more than that. Someone has to be the one who resides at either extremity of the spectrum. That's inevitable and unavoidable, not unbelievable. At either extremity, that doesn't put us on a par with God, it puts us at the far end of a spiritual polarity.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

In most human judicial systems, people are punished on a level corresponding to the size or degree of the crimes they commit. God is supposed to be Love, and more wise, just, merciful, and forgiving than us imperfect human beings. So, why then does God pass out such cruel sentences with ridiculously lengthy terms? Hasn't God heard about mitigating circumstances, or rehabilitation?

Let's answer these questions from a Christian perspective. How could the Father sentence any His beloved creations to an agonizing physical torment for a gazillion years because for whatever reason—no matter how understandable—we failed to say the words, "I accept Jesus Christ as my lord" before we died? The Muslim version of God, Allah, is made out by most Muslim theology to be equally unfair as the Christian Father.

No matter how earnestly believers try to justify this grotesquely imbalanced "justice", their rationale ends up making their God out to be Satan and usually less godly than any regular human-being. The real reason for the confusion is that we see things from *our* limited, ego-based perspective, when we need to see it from *God's* perspective for it to make any sense. Which reminds me of Isaiah 55:

55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts.

**Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.**

**8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,"
declares the LORD.**

**9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."**

We're going to examine this issue a bit further over the next few pages, but before we do, I'd like to make the following suggestion:

When reading scripture that has to do with judgment, if what you're reading sounds harsher and more imbalanced than how you'd treat your loved ones, or how you'd react under similar circumstances, then chances are that you're misunderstanding something. I suggest that you try your best to see things from God's perspective, where linear time is a thing for humans, while for You past, present, and future are always sitting right there before Your eyes.

Hell is a place we're told is associated with crime and punishment, where a lot of these imbalanced and unfair punishments are applied to unfortunates who weren't able to avoid God's wrath. So, we'll take a look at that place.

WHAT THE HELL?

The following is adapted from an article titled "REVISITING THE "ETERNAL HELL" DEBATE" that I posted on a group about Near Death Experiences (NDEs):

" Over the years at [NDE group name], the debate over whether there is an eternal Hell or not has proved to be a most divisive and emotionally-charged issue. The issue isn't frivolous or meaningless. If our viewpoint requires God to be unjust and unmerciful, that in turn permits us to interpret the rest of scripture in a manner consistent with an unjust and unmerciful God. Taken to extremes, interpreting scripture in a way that depicts an unmerciful and unjust God leads to unjust and unmerciful acts by believers like terror and beheadings.

Furthermore, this issue divides groups who would otherwise be united. I will hazard a guess that the vast majority of members here do not wish death and suffering to billions of other people. They may believe those billions of other people will die or suffer, but they don't wish that upon them—they just feel like it's out of their hands, and God's higher wisdom must be the explanation for it. Then, there are people who view a sentence of eternal Hell as disproportionate punishment for the "crime". Because of this, many such persons are driven away from the Bible or other sacred books.

For as long as I've observed the argument, it's appeared to be one or the other. A classic example of a Win/Lose relationship, where one side must win and the other lose. We've come to a point in time where people are going to have to change our win/lose way of approaching disputes if we're going to have a world left to live in at all. For these three reasons, I felt it worthwhile to write this article.

Let's begin with this: Many NDE experiencers did not encounter an eternal Hell, or a Hell of any type at all. Other NDE experiencers report they encountered Hell, some seeing it with people burning in red flames for all eternity. Can these two apparently mutually-exclusive views be reconciled? Must one group or the other be viewed as liars?

The answer to those two questions is this: Both groups may be correct and honest simultaneously, much the same way two people standing on opposite sides of the same tree on a sunny day will report different descriptions of that same tree. The person viewing the tree from the sunny side might say the tree is a bright, vivid green. The person standing on the shady side might describe the tree as being a deep, dark green. Both accounts are true, although incomplete, descriptions based upon our perspective. If our perspective is limited, then our description will be limited, too.

Let's deconstruct the description of eternal Hell:
 One, there's actually a place called "Hell".
 Two, it's eternal.
 Three, there are red flames.
 Four, multitudes of people are in anguish there.

1 - Is there a place we can call "Hell"? Reply: If Creator created the universe through speaking a word, the word was first a thought in Creator's mind. God creates through divine thought. Hell is created through the divine thought, and perhaps also through the collective thoughts of individual people, as God is in all things, including us. Consequently, Hell is a state of mind. Without having a mind, how would we suffer? So, there may be a place in Iowa that is "Hell", or perhaps there's a "Hell" on Pluto, or an alternate universe, or wherever. If Hell is a state of mind, it can be anywhere at the same time, including here.

So, wherever our mind experiences a state of Hell, that place is "Hell" for that person. Another person may be in the same physical location and not notice a single unpleasant thing.

THE "ETERNAL" ASPECT OF HELL

Now, one may argue whether a God who says He/She is "Love" could place anyone in Hell for even a second, but let's discuss that issue another time. Here and now, we'll address the issue of the eternal aspect of Hell. We see things through our ego-oriented selves, modified to fit our 3D physical awareness. For us, time is an unending progression of passing seconds, minutes, hours, days, and years. From our perspective, eternity is way longer than a billion years. It's an unending infinity of years—from our limited perspective. However, Creator transcends the dimension of Time as we know it, observing past, present, and future simultaneously. From God's perspective, every moment of time is eternally present.

What if the sacred books sometimes speak from the Almighty's perspective, and at other times from ours? If that is so, we'll come up with very different understandings of the same set of words. I'd guess that whenever I come across something in the Bible that makes appears inconsistent with God's character, perhaps it isn't the words that are wrong, but my perspective when reading them. Perhaps the scripture reconciles with a just God who is Love when viewed from a higher perspective. Since Jesus is said to have the same character as Creator, Christ's words and behavior throughout the Gospels can serve as a guide for determining which interpretation works best—one from an ego-based perspective, or one from God's perspective.

People who have a NDE often describe an expansion of their minds during the experience. They say that it felt like they had access to infinite knowledge. Perhaps during the NDE our ego-consciousness starts to drift away as we begin to merge with Creator and start to see things through God's eyes. If this is so, then a NDE experiencer who sees Hell might see souls experiencing a hellish state of mind, and wherever they were, that place is a part of Hell at that moment. Because the NDE experiencer's mind is merging with God Consciousness, they'll experience that single moment as being ETERNAL. When the NDE is over, the experiencer returns to ego-consciousness, where eternity means endless linear time. And they apply that human perspective to describe what they experienced as "eternal" while seeing it through God's eyes.

Now, our NDE experiencer is viewing an "eternal Hell" that need not threaten people with the image of an unjust, unmerciful, all-punishing God. The NDE experiencer is describing exactly what they saw, to the best of their ability.

Next, we need to add flames to the scene. We'll begin with the Pentecost... Acts 2:1-4;

- 1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.**
- 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.**
- 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.**
- 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit..."**

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit"; All of them were having an intense spiritual experience. So intense, that the spiritual energy was becoming visible on the physical plane. Then, we have the countless pictures of saints with halos. Again, someone having an intense spiritual experience where the spiritual energy is so powerful it becomes visible to our limited field of vision. There's a name for spiritual energy emanating from people; "auras".

With auras, the color red is associated with the emotions of anger, extreme anxiety, aggression, and hate. Apparently, when in a negative context—which a state of Hell would surely be—the color red is associated with negative psychic energy. This reminds me of Matthew 13:41-42, where Jesus prophesies,

- 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.**
- 42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

Imagine for a moment how die-hard, literalist "fundamentalists" may feel after reading their theology being ripped to shreds over the course of this book. Their auras are a bright, angry red, and they've been "thrown" into a very bad mood—"hell on earth" for some. Now, let's say someone else (we'll call him "Ted") has a NDE and is taken by Creator to view this group of angry fundamentalist readers. As Ted is merging with God-consciousness, he can now see the spiritual energy field we call auras around each person. Because these people are angry, they have corresponding red auras that ripple like flames. And, since Ted is merging with God-consciousness, he is viewing that moment through the lens of God's eternal perspective.

When Ted returns home from his NDE, he also returns to his normal ego-based human perspective. Since he doesn't know anything about auras, he calls them what they looked like to him—rippling red "flames". And because he's back to the human linear time perspective, he transforms what he experienced as "eternity" from God's perspective into the human form, which is an unending billions upon billions of eons in linear time. A very honest mistake. Ted is being honest to the best of his ability—from his limited ego perspective. But, he's inadvertantly totally distorted the real truth of the situation.

This alternative leaves Ted as being honest, and God and the holy scriptures as honorable and true, too. It makes division over this issue a matter of choice, not necessity. So, for the record, God isn't sentencing anyone to burn in literal flames for twenty billion trillion years because they didn't accept someone else's flawed understanding of what the scriptures mean. Be real, people! You wouldn't treat your children that way. So, why would you expect God to be that heartless and unreasonable to His (or Her) kids? Or are you saying you're better than God?

In Matthew 22:36, a Pharisee who was an expert in the Law asked Jesus,
"36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" "

Then, in verses 37-39, **"37 Jesus replied:**

" `Love the Lord your God

with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. '

38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

39 And the second is like it: `Love your neighbor as yourself. '"

Why bring up Matthew 22 here? Because if you really love God **"...with all your heart and...soul and...mind. '"**, you cannot possibly want to put God through the Hell of having to gaze on your miserable, fleeting moment of experiencing Hell, but in God's case, for all eternity. Knowing you've done that to your Beloved—now that would be eternal Hell! Be good out of love for God, not fear for your own sake.

THE SEPTUAGINT & THE LATIN VULGATE

Significant differences between the Vulgate and Septuagint versions of scripture cited in this document are reconciled on page 153 and subsequent pages. Now, we'll get to the issue...

Which One is Right?

Before answering the question, there's a little bit more background information you should know. As you read in the Author's Note on page 2, virtually all versions of the Bible can trace the origin of their Old Testament section back to either the Latin Vulgate or Septuagint (Greek) translations. You also learned the Vulgate version is used by both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. It should be noted here that several of the books in the Catholic version (together, they are called the "Apocrypha") were removed from the Protestant Bible. It should also be noted the Hebrew version used for the Vulgate translation is called the "Masoretic text". The name comes from the Hebrew "masoreth" or "tradition". So, it is the version traditionally used by Jews today, and is what was used in making the "The Jewish Study Bible" and "The Torah - The Five Books Of Moses" Hebrew to English translations that were used for writing this document.

The Latin Vulgate translation comes directly from the Hebrew Masoretic text. It was written by St. Jerome, after Pope Damasus (in 382 C.E.) asked him to do so. St. Jerome's translation became the standard Latin version of the Bible which in turn became the basis for translations into other languages of the Protestant and Roman Catholic versions of the Bible.

The Septuagint is the earliest known translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, and was the version used by the earliest Christian churches. As stated on page 2, there are minor differences between the two translations. Because they are not absolutely identical, it's perfectly sensible to wonder whether one is right and the other wrong. However, making such a determination raises a dilemma, which must be resolved.

No matter which version we use, we'll find it says God gave us the Bible to use as guidance. We're told God is testing us, and that following this guidance wisely plays a crucial part in whether we have a positive or negative future awaiting us when we die. Further, we're told God loves humanity and treats all of us as equals. On top of that, we are also told God is honest, fair and just, and all-knowing and wise beyond our comprehension. And one last thing—that God is Almighty, too.

If this is so, how can God fairly judge people based on how well they follow the guidance—especially since an all-knowing God would know in advance if some versions are flawed? An almighty God could have ensured there weren't any flaws. Let's say the Latin translation is correct and the Septuagint is wrong. That would mean God let all Slavic, Middle Eastern, Asian, and African Christians who use the Septuagint prepare for their test with a flawed book, while those with the Latin translation had a reliable one. That isn't fair. Nor would it be fair the other way around. God would only be honest and fair if both versions are equally valid.

But, what about the differences? If we trust God, we know both versions must be reliable, in order for all people to be treated equally and receive a fair test. But, that doesn't mean special nuggets of information can't be divided up and placed in one book or the other. This is possible for three reasons.

First, part of our curriculum on Earth is learning to "love one another". By placing unique nuggets of information among different groups of people and sacred books, God demonstrates each group is loved, and each has unique gifts to share with the others.

The second reason is that we are being tested, and this is a test of our faith. Do we have faith that God is honest and the Bible is true? If so, then God must treat all humanity fairly, as that is what the Almighty says in the Bible.

The third and final reason is that the prophecies are "sealed" and aren't meant to be fully understood before God's appointed time.

Daniel 12:4, archangel Gabriel, speaking to Daniel;

...close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. ..."

One way to seal prophecies is placing pieces of the prophecy picture in different locations, or sources. The more versions we read, the more complete our prophecy picture becomes. Doing this is not unlike what two people might do if they each separately received instructions from the same person. They might compare both sets of instructions to have a more accurate understanding of what they personally received. Or, we can make the choice to tacitly accuse God of dishonestly playing favorites as our excuse for rejecting other versions.

So, in the end, it doesn't matter that the two translations differ in minor ways. Both can still be correct in the same way that a red car and a blue car of the same model are still the same basic car. They're just different colors. One is red and the other is blue. Sometimes one version doesn't have to be right and the other wrong. Sometimes both can be right. This is one of those times.

Reconciling differing Latin Vulgate & Septuagint passages

There are two ways in which scripture in both versions may differ. The first way is different or confusing text. The second way they differ is simpler—they just have different names or numbering, while the text is the same. All differences of this type are addressed on page 155. Those of the first type are addressed below...

Different or confusing text

TORAH

Genesis 17:1 (p.153)

Exodus 21:17 (p.153)

MAJOR PROPHETS

Isaiah 11:4 (p.154)

Isaiah 48:10 (p.154)

Ezekiel 1:24 (p.154)

MINOR PROPHETS

Hosea 6:5-6 (p.155)

Jonah 3:1-5 (p.155)

We'll reconcile these in the order in which they are listed above, starting below and continuing over the next two pages.

Genesis 17:1

Vulgate

1 "...the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty;..."

Septuagint

1 "...the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am thy God..."

Both versions say the same thing, with the exception that the Vulgate version adds the qualifier of "Almighty" to the description. This doesn't contradict the Septuagint. In the context, this Deity is the "Most High God", who is by most definitions, "Almighty".

Exodus 21:17

Vulgate

17 "Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death."

Septuagint

16 He that reviles his father or his mother shall surely die."

Whenever we do negative things, our conscience causes us to die inside. We don't necessarily need other people deciding to "help" us by killing us literally. Consider the spirit of the Law. Consider how many Israelites would have survived long enough to have offspring if this law was literally and strictly enforced.

Isaiah 11:4**Vulgate**

4...but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked."

Septuagint

4 but he shall judge the cause of the lowly,
and shall reprove the lowly of the earth:
and he shall smite the earth with the word of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips shall he destroy the ungodly one."

There are two kinds of "low": spiritually "low", i.e., "bad", and socio-economic "low", i.e., low economic status. Using the Vulgate version and Christ's love and support for the struggling masses, we can conclude that the first "lowly" in the Septuagint refers to the poor, and the second "lowly", the one being reprovved or rebuked, is meant spiritually lacking. Both versions depict God's power to destroy through the power of the Almighty's word.

Isaiah 48:10**Vulgate**

10 "See, I have refined you, though not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction."

Septuagint

10 Behold, I have sold thee, not for silver;
but I have rescued thee from the furnace of affliction."

In the Vulgate version, the "you" is "refined" through "testing" in the "furnace of affliction", but being refined, must be "rescued", too. The Septuagint version states the same principle, but with different wording. "Sold" means something is given or handed over in exchange for something—usually money. But, here it isn't for "silver", i.e., money. People are allowed (handed over) to enter the "furnace of affliction" to become spiritually refined, after which they are "rescued".

Ezekiel 1:24**Vulgate**

24 When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings,
like the roar of rushing waters,
like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army.
When they stood still, they lowered their wings."

Septuagint

24 And I heard the sound of their wings when they went,
as the sound of much water:
and when they stood, their wings were let down."

Both versions describe the same thing. The Vulgate version adds a bit more allegorical detail, but doesn't contradict the Septuagint.

Hosea 6:5-6**Vulgate**

5 Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets, I killed you with the words of my mouth;
My judgments flashed like lightning upon you.

6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

Septuagint

6 Therefore have I mown down your prophets; I have slain them with the word of my mouth:
and my judgment shall go forth as the light.

7 For I will mercy rather than sacrifice,
and the knowledge of God rather than whole-burnt-offerings."

Both versions depict God's preference that prophetic destruction be fulfilled by the power of the Almighty's word, not bombs, and through allegorical, spiritual destruction, i.e., repentance, rather than literal annihilation.

Jonah 3:1-10**Verses 1-5****Vulgate**

4 On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed:

"Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned."

Septuagint

4 And Jonas began to enter into the city about a day's journey, and he proclaimed,
and said, Yet three days, and Nineve shall be overthrown."

Both versions depict the same story and message, with the literal exception of one version calling for three days, and the other forty days. As both versions are valid in God's eyes, we must conclude specific numbers aren't of importance here. Both numbers are used throughout scripture to signify an important point is being made. They are letting us know that a very important point is being made.

Different chapter names and numbers

2 Kings 2:1-15 Vulgate transforms into **4 Kings 2:1-15** in the Septuagint.

2 Kings 6:15-17 Vulgate transforms into **4 Kings 6:15-17** in the Septuagint.

Psalms 82:6-7 Vulgate transforms into **Psalms 81:6-7** in the Septuagint.

Psalms 100:1,3 Vulgate transforms into **Psalms 99:1,3** in the Septuagint.

The difference in the two Psalms versions is that they break up the text into chapters and verses a little bit differently. The text itself is virtually the same. The Septuagint has four books of "Kings". The Vulgate has "Samuel" "1" & "2", (which correspond with the Septuagint's 1 & 2 Kings). "1" and "2" Kings" in the Vulgate is "3" & "4" "Kings" in the Septuagint.

Since this document uses the Vulgate version for Bible quotes, substitute "4 Kings" for "2 Kings", "Psalms 81" for "Psalms 82", and "Psalms 99" for "Psalms 100" to find the appropriate verse(s) in a Septuagint translation.

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One Last Thing

Matthew 10:8, Jesus;

...Freely you have received, freely give."

Sura 6:91, Muhammad;

...No pay do I ask of you for this.

Verily it is no other than the teaching for all creatures."

Frank Fools Crow;

The power and the ways are given to us to be passed on to others.

To think anything else is pure selfishness.

We get more by giving them away,

and if we do not give them away, we lose them."

As this is a service for God and humanity, it's free of charge.

All credit and glory for this book and whatever good comes from it goes to Creator through Christ—in all his names, whether it be "Jesus", "Yeshua", "Jibreel", "Peacemaker", and more.

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