

CHRISTMAS INTERLUDE

The Messages Of The Biblical Gabriel Versus Islam's "Gabriel"

Part III: The Biblical Gabriel's Revelation Of The TRUE Faith Versus Islam's "Gabriel's" Religion (Luke 1:5-25 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Ever since the 9/11 attacks on America, the Islamic faith has been an issue in world affairs: as a recent example, Jay Solomon's article, "Netanyahu Urges New, Tougher Iran Terms" in The Wall Street Journal, December 9, 2013, p. A13, reported Israel's "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu" expressed concern over "Tehran's . . . threats against the Jewish state," threats that grow out of Iran's Islamic religious beliefs.

Indeed, many chiefly Islamic Middle Eastern nations oppose Israel's very existence: Norman Podhoretz's op-ed, "Strike Iran Now to Avert Disaster Later," *Ibid.*, December 12, 2013, p. A19, noted "Israel" is "that 'cancer' which the mullahs . . . are solemnly pledged to wipe off the map," that even "the famous 'moderate' Hashemi Rafsanjani, in an Al-Quds Day sermon at Tehran University on Dec. 14, 2001" said: "'Application of an atomic bomb would not leave anything in Israel, but the same thing would just produce damages in the Muslim world'" in support of Iran's development and use of a nuclear bomb for use against Israel regardless of resulting retaliations against Muslim lands.

(2) However, Islam affects not only world affairs, but also society. Over the next 20 years, the world Muslim population will increase by 35%. (perforum.org, "The Future of the Global Muslim Population," January 27, 2011)

(3) Thus, we need to be able to answer Muslim questions about our faith (1 Peter 3:15), and a good place to start this Christmas is the contrast between the words of Islam's angel "Gabriel" and the words of the Bible's Gabriel:

(a) The Qur'an that Muslims hold is divinely inspired allegedly "was delivered piecemeal through Gabriel to Muhammad during his twenty-three-year prophetic career." (Robert Spencer, The Truth About Muhammad, 2006, p. 20) (b) Then, "Islam teaches that the Torah [the five books of Moses] was Allah's first revelation and the [New Testament] gospel was second. But both became corrupted, so Allah gave the Qur'an to Muhammad to put people back on the right path." (Richard Wendling and Daniel Shayesteh, "Reaching Muslims, Part 1," Answers, July-Sept. 2011, p. 38; brackets ours) (c) However, regarding Jews and Christians in particular, the Qur'an (3:64) claims that "'Unbelievers' identified as 'Jews and Christians' in Surah 5:51 God 'has prepared for them a Blazing Fire to dwell in forever. No protection will they find, nor savior.'" (letusreasonministries.org, "Quotes from the Qur'an and Haddith")

Need: So, we ask, "If Islam claims the Bible is corrupted and the Qur'an that the angel Gabriel allegedly spoke to Muhammad is divinely inspired, and if the Qur'an says Jews and Christians go to eternal hell, how do we reply?!"

- I. First, we note that Islam's claim that the Christian Bible is corrupt is incorrect via empirical evidence:**
- A. The Third Council of Carthage in A. D. 397 forbade the reading of any uninspired books of the Bible, so by then, the 66-book Bible canon was set. (Rene Pache, The Insp. And Auth. Of Scrip., 1971, p. 178-179)
 - B. On Islam's charge that the Bible was corrupted so that the Qur'an was later needed to restore the true divine revelation, (1) Gleason L. Archer wrote: "A careful study of the variants [different readings] of the various earliest manuscripts [of the Bible] reveals that none of them affects a single doctrine of Scripture." (Gleason L. Archer, A Survey of the O. T., 1964, p. 25, cited in J. McDowell, A Ready Defense, 1991, p. 46; brackets ours) and (2) Sir Frederic G. Kenyon wrote: "(T)he general result of all these discoveries [Dead Sea Scrolls, etc.] . . . [is] our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God." (Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, The Story of the Bible, 1967, p. 113, cited in McDowell, *op. cit.*, p. 47; brackets ours)
 - C. The alleged angel Gabriel of Islam began to give his messages to Muhammad in A. D. 611 ("The Man From Mecca," SIM NOW, July-Aug. 1989, p. 2) 214 years after the Bible's canon had been shown not only to have been universally set, but from the finding of ancient manuscripts, **not** to have been doctrinally corrupted.
 - D. So, it is the ***Qur'an's*** teachings that **differ** from the ***Bible's*** teachings that are the **real corruption** of the **truth!**
- II. Second, the Bible's Gabriel in Luke 1:5-25 foretold the birth and ministry of John the Baptizer, claiming he would be great before God and be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15), and this John revealed Biblical Christianity was the true faith that God was giving to man, John 1:29-34:**
- A. John the Baptizer announced that God was giving Jesus as the Savior from sin for the whole world, John 1:29:
 - 1. When John the Baptizer saw Jesus coming unto him, he said of Jesus, "Behold the **Lamb** of God, which taketh away the **sin** of the **world**," John 1:29 KJV; emphases ours.
 - 2. John did not here refer to the Day of Atonement when just Israel's sins were covered, for the animal used then was a **goat**, Lev. 16:1-34; B. K. C., N. T., p. 274. Rather, he reflected Isaiah 53:7 that teaches the

Messiah would be brought "as a **lamb** to the slaughter," and Isaiah 53:10 predicts His soul would be made an "offering for sin" that He might "bear their iniquities" and "justify many" according to Isaiah 53:11.

- B. John also taught God was giving Jesus *not only* as the **world's** Savior, *but also* as **Israel's** Savior, John 1:31.
- C. He also said Jesus was God Incarnate, the Son of God, a key doctrine of Biblical Christianity (1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 4:1-3), making Biblical Christianity the faith God was giving to all mankind, John 1:30, 33-34:
1. In John 1:30, John the Baptizer said that Jesus was the "adult male man" (*aner*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 324; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 65-66) of Whom He had said back in John 1:15 that He Who came after him was "preferred before me: for he was before me," John 1:30 KJV.
 2. In John 1:15, John had said this Jesus "had once-for-all [perfect tense] existed" (*gegonen*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 321) "higher in rank" (*emprosthen*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 256; Thayer's Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1963, p. 208-209) than John, for Jesus (John 1:17) "was existing" (*en*, third person singular *imperfect* tense, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; The Anal. Grk. Lex. (Zondervan), 1972, p. 187) "first" (*protos*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 732-733; Ibid., Thayer, p. 554-555), that is, before John the Baptizer existed!
 3. John the Baptizer was born six months before Jesus according to Luke 1:13, 30-31, 36-44, so John the Baptizer claimed Jesus existed in eternity before he did and so that Jesus was higher in rank than he was.
 4. John then called Jesus "the Son of God" (John 1:29-34), a title that made Jesus equal with God the Father as God (John 5:18), so John called Jesus Messiah and God come-in-the-flesh as a man (*aner*, John 1:15), that is, God "Incarnate," a key belief in Biblical Christianity, 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 4:1-3.
 5. Thus, **John the Baptizer, the man the Bible's angel Gabriel said would be a great, godly man of God, claimed that the faith God was giving to all men, Jew and Gentile alike, was Biblical Christianity!**
- D. Then, opposite the words of Islam's "Gabriel," John the Baptizer said Jesus would save those who trusted in Him, but cast those who did not trust in Jesus into the unquenchable fire of eternal hell, Matthew 3:11-12:
1. Referring to Jesus Who would come after him, John the Baptizer in Matthew 3:11 proclaimed that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The baptism of the Holy Spirit refers to God's giving of the Spirit to believers (cf. Acts 2:1-4; Joel 2:29) and the baptism of "fire" refers to the final judgment.
 2. John added that Jesus would "gather his wheat" of believers "into the barn" in salvation, but "burn up the chaff" of unbelievers with "unquenchable fire" in eternal hell, Matt. 3:12; Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 25.
 3. Thus, **opposite Islam's** alleged angel "**Gabriel's**" claim in the *Qur'an* that **Jews and Christians** go to **eternal hell**, the *Bible's* angel **Gabriel** claims **believers in Jesus as Messiah and God Incarnate** will have **eternal life** and those who do **not** thus **trust in Jesus** will *go to eternal hell!* (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

Lesson: *Though Islam claims the Bible is corrupted and needs to be corrected by Islam's Qur'an, which Qur'an is allegedly the words of Islam's "Gabriel", and though that Qur'an claims Jews and Christians go to eternal hell, (1) manuscript evidence shows the Bible is fully doctrinally credible, and (2) Luke 1:5-25 with John 1:29-34 show the angel Gabriel foretold the birth of John the Baptizer as a great man of God filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb, and John presented Biblical Christianity as the true faith in gaining salvation and escaping eternal hell.*

Application: *May we (1) trust in Christ as Savior for eternal life, John 3:16. (2) May we then answer Muslims who ask us a reason for our hope on the issues mentioned in this sermon, and lead them to trust in Christ, 1 Peter 3:15.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In witnessing to Muslims, a key issue to address is Islam's contradiction regarding Allah as a deity of love. "Islam calls Allah just (Quran 4:40), and to be perfectly just, Allah must punish all sin. Yet the Quran also teaches that Allah is merciful, forgiving those whom he chooses to forgive (Quran 4:110; 73:20). This creates a logical contradiction . . . If he is truly merciful, why isn't he saving people during their lifetime on earth rather than leaving their destiny uncertain until the afterlife, as the Quran teaches? . . . (H)e is uninterested in establishing heavenly justice while his followers live on earth, thus liberating them from Satan's present dominion.

Unlike Islam, Christianity offers an answer to the apparent dilemma of a just but merciful God: the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ satisfied God's justice while enabling Him to show mercy. Unlike Allah, the God of the Bible extends His justice to people while they live here on earth, allowing them to trust Him and be saved now (Matthew 12:18-21; Isaiah 42:1-4). So God's approach to people, as revealed in the Bible, is both just and merciful." (Ibid., Wendling and Shayesteh, p. 38)

May we thus heed the Bible as God's Word and trust in Christ as it directs. May we then answer Muslims, giving them the reasons for our faith in meekness and respect that they might be saved! (1 Peter 3:15)