

Does the Bible Speak of Muhammad? (Part 1 – the Injeel)

According to the Qur'an, Jesus announced that another messenger would come after him. This other messenger would be called Ahmad, which means "Praised One."

"And when Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Children of Israel, surely I am the messenger of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad. But when he came to them with clear arguments, they said: This is clear enchantment." (Surah 61:6 – *As-Saff*)

According to the hadiths (Sahih Muslim, Vol. 4, No. 5810), Muhammad said that his name was also Ahmad.

In another passage of the Qur'an, Allah promises His mercy to those who would follow "the illiterate Prophet" (Muhammad) who had been mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel:

"But My mercy encompasses all things. I shall prescribe it for those who do their duty, pay the zakat and who believe in Our signs. Also for those who follow the Messenger—the unlettered prophet they find described in the Torah that is with them, and in the Gospel." (Surah 7:16,157 – *Al A'raf*)

Considering these facts, Muslims expect to find references to Muhammad in the Bible.

THE INJEEL

Regarding the New Testament, many Muslims think that the passages where Jesus speaks of the Comforter who was to come are predictions of their prophet, Muhammad (John 14:16,17; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-13).

The most common argument is based on the Greek word, *paraklétos*, which has been translated Comforter (but which many recent translations render Helper). Muslim teachers claim that the Bible texts have been changed and that originally they did not contain the word *parakletos*, but rather the word *periklutos*, which means, as it happens, "praised one," just like Ahmad in Arabic. Thus, when Jesus says in John 14:6, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper (*paraklet*), that He may abide with you forever" (NKJV), and in John 16:13, "But when he comes, he will guide you into all the truth," he would be speaking of Muhammad, the last of the prophets.

Let us examine these passages to determine if this explanation is correct. It should be emphasized out that those who claim that the word *parakletos* is a corruption of the word *periklutos* do not point out any problems concerning the nature and the functions of the Comforter as Jesus describes them in the Gospel. Here are the texts in their entirety:

John 14:16,17: "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

John 14:26: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

John 15:26,27: "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

John 16:7-15: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."

All these passages have the same historical context. These are things Jesus said to his apostles the night before his death, after Judas had gone out to betray him. He was preparing his apostles for the

ordeal which was coming (his arrest and execution) and was encouraging them in regard to the work which they would have to accomplish when he was no longer there. The promise of the Comforter's help surely gave them confidence. After his resurrection, Jesus repeated his promise concerning the Holy Spirit (the Comforter):

“He also presented Himself alive [to his apostles] after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’” (Acts 1:3-5)

The coming of the Comforter was thus to take place within a few days. Muhammad was born in 570 A.D. and proclaimed himself to be a prophet forty years later. After nearly 600 years, all the disciples to whom Jesus spoke and whom he commanded not to depart from Jerusalem had been dead for a long time when Muhammad came. If Muhammad were the promised Comforter, the promise was not fulfilled in the time frame that Jesus specified and the apostles were not able to benefit from any help he brought.

In addition, Jesus said to his apostles concerning the Comforter, “But you know Him” (John 14:17). The apostles of Jesus could not know Muhammad. Plus, it is clear from the words of Jesus that the Comforter would not be a man. Not only does he call him “Spirit,” but he says that the world cannot see him. He says to the apostles, “He dwells with you and will be in you.”

Muhammad, as a mortal man, could not “abide with [the apostles, or even with men in general] forever” (John 14:16). Someone might answer that the words of the Comforter remain with us as they are contained in the Qur’an. But Jesus did not say that the words of the Comforter would abide—he referred to the Comforter himself. Besides, the words of the Qur’an are not presented as being those of Muhammad, but rather those of Allah. The words of Muhammad are found in the hadiths.

The Comforter was to “teach all things” (John 14:26); he was to “guide into all the truth”; obviously, the Comforter is the one who has knowledge of all things. The Qur’an presents Muhammad, however, as

being a messenger whose knowledge was limited. For example, Allah says to Muhammad in Surah 17:86 – *Al-Isra*, “And they ask you (O Muhammad) concerning the Rooh (The Spirit); Say: ‘The Rooh: it is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you have been given only a little.’” Some of those who listened to Muhammad wanted to know their destiny in the hereafter, and they questioned him about it. In Surah 46:9 – *Al-Ahqaf*, Allah tells Muhammad to answer them in this way: “Say: I am not an innovation among the Messengers, and I know not what shall be done with me or with you. I only follow what is revealed to me; I am only a clear warner.” His knowledge concerning the things to come was thus limited. In another passage (10:94 – *Yunus*) Allah says to him, “If you are in any doubt concerning what We have sent down to you, then question those who have read the Book before you: the Truth has come to you from your Lord, so do not be one of the doubters.” So Allah told Muhammad to question the Jews and the Christians concerning the points on which he might have doubts, because they had read the Book (the Bible) and could instruct him. It would be very surprising if “the Comforter” needed to be taught instead of teaching us all things, but that would have been the case if Muhammad were the Comforter of which Jesus had spoken.

Jesus said more than once that the Comforter would come in his name (the name of Jesus), that he would come as an answer to the prayer of Jesus, that he would take what belonged to Jesus and declare it to men, and that his role would be to glorify Jesus. Although Muhammad may have said some good things about Jesus as a prophet, Muhammad never said that he came in Jesus' name or that he had been sent by Jesus or at the request of Jesus. Muhammad did not glorify Jesus—he did not elevate him above himself or the other prophets. The description that Jesus gives of what the Comforter would do does not correspond to what Muhammad did in his ministry.

According to the Gospel, the Holy Spirit is the Comforter promised by Jesus to his apostles. In the hadiths Muhammad never identifies himself as being Spirit. Nor does he use the title “Comforter” to speak of himself. The Qur’an does, however, recognize the existence of the Holy Spirit. Allah says in Surah 2:253 – *Al-Baqarah*, “And We gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit.” The Spirit which had, according to Allah, confirmed Jesus would come to help the apostles of Jesus.

It is important to point out that thousands of manuscripts (handwritten copies) of the texts of the New Testament are available, manuscripts which date from before the lifetime of Muhammad. None of these manuscripts contain the word *periklutos* in any verse at all.

Muhammad himself did not say that this word in the Bible had been changed. To the contrary, the Qur'an affirms several times that the word of Allah cannot be altered:

Surah 6:34 – *Al-Anam*: “And there is none to change the words of Allah.”

Surah 10:64 – *Yunus*: “There is no changing the words of Allah.”

Surah 18:27 – *Al-Kahf*: “And recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book of thy Lord. There is none who can alter His words.”

In the Gospel, Jesus makes a similar declaration: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

Allah told Muhammad to strongly recommend to Christians and to Jews that they trust the Book which had been given to them and that they obey it:

“Say: O People of the Book, you follow no good till you observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord.” (Surah 5:68 – *Al-Ma'idah*)

Or again:

“Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit.” (Surah 2:136 – *Al-Baqarah*)

It seems clear that Allah would not have allowed men to change the words which he had given to Jesus. Muhammad never suggested that such a thing had taken place. The real reason we find so many problems in the idea that Muhammad is the person of whom Jesus was speaking in John 14:16 is simply that Jesus was not talking about Muhammad, and the New Testament texts have not been changed, after all.