

Is Muhammad mentioned in the Bible

Reading: John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’ ”

Introduction:

Recently, Lindy and I attended a public festival where we saw a T-shirt with the following inscriptions;

“Jesus is mentioned in the Quran” written on the front, and,

“Muhammad is mentioned in the Bible” written on the back.

Now I am led to believe that Jesus is indeed mentioned in the Koran, although I don’t know in what context, or what it says about Him. However, in the 30 plus years that I have been a Christian, I don’t recall ever seeing anything about Muhammad¹ being mentioned in the Bible. A quick check using my Strong’s Concordance of the Bible didn’t reveal the name Muhammad anywhere in the Bible either. So I “Googled” it to see what was behind the claim, and noted from a couple of Islamic web-sites the arguments being used to support the claim².

In this lesson, I will list four of the main arguments used by Islam to support the claim that Muhammad is “the Prophet” mentioned in the Bible, and then show from the scriptures, *i.e.* the Bible, how those claims are wrong.

Note: The aim of this lesson is not to “bash” Islam. Rather, it is about coming to a knowledge of the truth regarding the claim about Muhammad being the Prophet referred in the Bible.

LESSON

1) Deuteronomy 18:18 “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you ...”

a) Islam claims that the Prophet being referred to is Muhammad, not Jesus

At the end of the wilderness wanderings after the Hebrews had come out of Egypt, Moses addressed the people and re-iterated the Law and its requirements, *etc.* (**Deuteronomy 5:1** onwards). During that discourse, Moses prophesied the following in chapter **18:15-19**;

¹⁵ *The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear ...*

¹⁸ *I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.*

¹⁹ *And it shall be that whoever will not hear my words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of Him.”³*

Islam claims that Muhammad is the Prophet to whom Moses was referring, rather than Jesus, for the following reasons;

¹ Muhammad, born in Meca, Saudi Arabia, around 570 A.D, was a religious and political leader who unified Arabia into a single polity under Islam.

- ref <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad> (January 2014)

² For example, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_the_Bible
<http://www.islam101.com/religions/christianity/mBible.htm>
<http://www.onereason.org/the-other-jesus/muhammad-in-the-bible/>

³ Biblical quotes are from the New King James Version Bible (NKJV).

Is Muhammad mentioned in the Bible

- Muhammad is a descendant of Abraham via Ishmael (**Genesis 16:15; 21:8-21**), therefore qualifies as “*one of your brethren*” to the Hebrews. (Jesus, like Moses, was a descendant via Isaac **Matthew 1:2-16**.)
- Muhammad was like Moses because, among other things, he had a natural birth (unlike Jesus’ miraculous birth), was married and had children (unlike Jesus), was a military leader (unlike Jesus), and died a natural death (rather than be killed as was Jesus).

b) However, Moses was referring to Jesus as the Prophet, not Muhammad

The term, “*like me / like you*”, can be used to make comparisons in a variety of ways. When Moses used the term, he was not necessarily talking about the comparisons used above by the Islamists about his physical life. There is another way that the term “*like me*” could be used with regard to Jesus and Moses – they both brought in covenants for God’s people. In **John 1:17** we read that; “*The law (i.e. the old covenant) was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*”⁴

But the scriptures themselves provide us with far more conclusive proof that Moses was indeed referring to Jesus in **Deuteronomy 18**. In the very early days of the church (30/33 A.D.), the apostles Peter and John went to the Temple and healed a lame man who was there (**Acts 3:1-9**). When the crowd of people saw what had happened, they came to Peter who then used the opportunity to preach the gospel to them (**Acts 3:11 f.f.**). His lesson was primarily about Jesus whom they had given up to be crucified and had been raised from the dead, and of their need for repentance. He then goes on the quote **Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19**, and follows it with the statement;

*“Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow,
as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days”
(Acts 3:24 emphasis mine – SK).*

In other words, the times that Moses and the other prophets were referring to were the life and times of Jesus and the establishment of the New Testament church – the very same context in which Peter uttered those words. Muhammad wasn’t even born until over 500 years later.

2) Isaiah 29:12 “Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate ...”

a) Islam claims that the “one who is illiterate” was a reference to Muhammad

The claim is that when the Archangel Gabriel commanded Muhammad by saying, “*Read*”, he (Muhammad) replied, “*I am not learned.*”⁵ In other words, Muhammad was illiterate at the time.

b) However, the text is not talking about a literal book – it is an illustration

Isaiah 29 is a prophecy of woe on Judah for its unfaithfulness. It had forsaken the Lord and served idols during the reigns of previous kings, particularly Ahaz (**2 Kings 14 – 16; 2 Chronicles 25-28**). Isaiah forewarns about an invading army that will besiege the place (**Isaiah 29:1-8**). But the people were in spiritual blindness – they were not taking any notice.

⁴ In **Hebrews 9:14-22**, we read about Jesus being the mediator of the new covenant.

⁵ <http://www.islam101.com/religions/christianity/mBible.htm> (as at 04-Dec-2013), section “3. Muhammad (pbuh) is prophesised in the book of Isaiah”

Is Muhammad mentioned in the Bible

Isaiah then goes on in verses **11-12** to say that their rejection of the warnings are like a book that is sealed and given to the literate – *i.e.* those who can read. They say that they can't read it because the book is sealed. He then goes on to say that the book is given to the illiterate – *i.e.* those who cannot read. Their excuse is that they cannot read.

Isaiah 29:12 has nothing to do with Mohammad. The verse, along with verse **11**, is merely an illustration showing how Judah was not listening to the admonitions from the Lord. Isaiah then continued by saying what the Lord has said;

“ ... *Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honour me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from me*” (**Isaiah 29:13**).

In order to try and make **Isaiah 29:12** refer to Muhammad, you would have to take the verse completely out of context, and then read Muhammad into it.

3) John 1:19-21, 25 “*Are you the Prophet? ...*”

- a) Islam claims that “*the Prophet*” mentioned here is not Jesus, but Muhammad, because “*the Prophet*” is mentioned in addition to “*the Christ*”.

When John was baptising people, the religious leaders came to him and asked him why he was baptising, and who did he claim to be. John said, “*I am not the Christ*”, and so the leaders asked him if he was Elijah or the Prophet. (**John 1:19-21**). They then asked in verse **25**; “*Why then do you baptise if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?*”.

The claim is that, because “*the Prophet*” and “*the Christ*” are mentioned separately, then they are not the same person. Following on from this, Islam also claims that this proves that **Deuteronomy 18:18**, in talking about a “*Prophet*”, is not a reference to Jesus.

- b) However, the Christ and the Prophet can be, and are, the same person - Jesus

Yes, the Jewish leaders in **John 1** did mention “*the Christ*” and “*the Prophet*” as though they were separate people. The Jews of the day may indeed have thought they were separate identities⁶, but that does not necessarily mean that they were (or are) separate.

Note: **John 1:19-21, 25** is simply recording what non-inspired people said, regardless as to whether what they said was actually true or not. For example, **Matthew 26:65** records the accusation from the high priest that Jesus had spoken blasphemy. The fact that the high priest's words are recorded does not, of itself, mean that what the high priest said was true.

In fact, Jesus was referred to by various names and titles in the scriptures;

- both Stephen and Paul referred to Him as “*the Just One*” – **Acts 7:52; 22:14**
- Isaiah called Him “*Wonderful, Counsellor, Prince of Peace*” – **Isaiah 9:6**
- Matthew refers to Him as “*the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*” **Matthew 1:1**

⁶ Remember also that the Jews did not have the complete picture about the Christ, *etc.*, until Jesus had actually come and the gospel was preached – **1 Peter 1:10-12**. Until then, it was all a bit of a mystery (**Ephesians 3:1-5**).

Is Muhammad mentioned in the Bible

- John referred to Him as “*the Word*” – **John 1:1; 14**
- Jesus referred to Himself by various names and titles, such as, “*the Good Shepherd*” (**John 10:11**), “*the Way, the Truth, the Life*” (**John 14:6**). He even referred to Himself (by implication) as “*a prophet*” – **Luke 4:24, 13:33**.

The point is this. Jesus was given many names and titles, but they all referred to the same person. And as we have already seen above, the apostle Peter understood that the term, “*the Prophet*”, mentioned by Moses in **Deuteronomy 18:18** was a reference to Jesus.

4) John 14 – 16 The “*Comforter*” (or “*Helper*”)

- a) Islam claims that “the *Comforter*⁷” is referring to Muhammad

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples that He would be going away, and that He would send to them the *Comforter* (**John 14:16, 26; 16:13**). Islam claims that this is a reference to the coming of Muhammad.

- b) However, the “*Comforter*” is the Holy Spirit

The context in which Jesus made these statements (about the *Comforter*) was during the period of time following the Passover meal, and before Jesus and the disciples went out to the Garden of Gethsemane (**John 13:2 – 18:1**). In the very near future, Jesus would be leaving His disciples – approximately 40 days after His resurrection (**Acts 1:3**). These men were given the initial task of spreading the gospel throughout the world (**Matthew 28:16-20**). Their only training had been the three years that they had spent with Jesus, including their limited commission (**Matthew 10:5 f.f.**). They had heard Him teach many things, but some things they did not fully understand, and there would be many things they would have forgotten (**Matthew 16:9; Luke 18:34; John 12:16**).

But Jesus would not be leaving them alone to rely on their own memory and understanding. He would send someone to them who would guide them and help them to remember what He had taught them. Let me quote from the gospel of John;

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of Truth” **John 14:16-18,**

“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 14:26,**

“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.” **John 15:26,**

“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 all things to come.” **John 16:13.**

⁷ The “*Comforter*” is also called the “*Helper*” or “*Counsellor*” in some translations.

Is Muhammad mentioned in the Bible

There are three things to note from these verses;

- firstly, the context. Jesus was talking to those disciples who had been with Him for three years. In less than 2 months' time, they would begin the task of spreading the gospel message.
- secondly, the verses specifically say that the Comforter (the Helper) is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth⁸.
- and thirdly, the Comforter/Helper was to remind the disciples of what Jesus had said to them. Therefore, the Comforter was to come within the lifetime of those disciples (who had been with Jesus). Muhammad wasn't even born until about 500 years after the disciples (to whom Jesus was speaking) had died.

Conclusion:

One can only wonder why the Islamists would want to try and claim that the Bible speaks of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. Perhaps they feel that by doing so, it gives acceptance, credibility and legitimacy to their own beliefs. But from what we have seen above, the only way to get Muhammad into the Bible is to start from a pre-conceived position that he is being referred to in the Bible, and then "read" him into the passages. The passages themselves do not indicate that Muhammad is "*the Prophet*", or "*the Comforter*", or "*the one who is illiterate*".

But even if Muhammad was indeed the future prophet referred to in the Bible, He would have had to teach the same things that we find in the New Testament;

- the Comforter was to bring to the disciples' remembrance all the things that Jesus taught them (**John 14:26**). Therefore, if Muhammad was indeed the prophet, he would be teaching the same things that Jesus taught.
- **Galatians 1:8-9** tell us that there is no other gospel other than the one proclaimed in the Bible. Even if angels came and told us something different, then we are not to believe them. The gospel that Paul was referring to points to Jesus, and only Jesus, as the Saviour of mankind (**John 14:6; Acts 2:32-36**). It is only through Jesus that we have salvation, eternal life (**Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:3-14**). Therefore, if Muhammad was indeed "*the Prophet*", then he would be pointing people to Jesus as the way of salvation. I don't think that that is what Islam is about.

But as this lesson has shown, the Bible does not reference the Islamic Muhammad as "*the Prophet*" of the Bible. However, the Bible does talk about false prophets (**Matthew 24:24; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1**), and so we need to be careful that we don't simply believe whatever we hear without some sort of validation from the scriptures (**Acts 17:11**). It is only by following the truth that we can be set free (**John 8:32; 17:17**).

Note: There is also a claim by Islam that one of the phrases used in **Song of Solomon 5:16** is also spelt to represent the name Muhammad. It is a somewhat complicated, linguistic argument, but it ignores the context and message of the book of **Song of Solomon**. The book consists of a dialogue between Solomon, his bride-to-be, and the daughters of Jerusalem.

⁸ Muslims do not believe in the notion of the Trinity – God in three persons (**Matthew 28:19**), therefore they reject the reality of the Holy Spirit.