

## Episode 30

### Manuscripts of the holy Quran

*Mohamed: Dear viewers, we welcome you to a new episode of the program, "Questions About Faith". We have with us our honorable guest, Reverend Zakaria Botros. You are most welcome.*

F Zakaria: Thank you.

*Mohamed: Dear friends, before we start our program, let me share with you some verses from the Bible. "O Lord, our Lord how excellent is Your name in all the earth. You have set Your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained. What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor, You have made him to have dominion above the works of Your hands, You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, that pass through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!"*

*My dear viewers, in the previous episode we spoke about the evidence of revelation, and how the Bible was compiled, and also how the Quran was compiled. And Reverend Zakaria has promised to speak in a separate episode, which is this one today, about the manuscripts of the Bible, as well as the manuscripts of the Quran.*

*So would you please tell us this time about these manuscripts?*

**F Zakaria:** Surely. The Bible has more than one manuscript, rather dozens of manuscripts, or even hundreds of manuscripts. And I heard from a trusted expert in this field, that there are thousands of manuscripts, and there is a book that lists all those codices or manuscripts. But from my own study and readings, I am positive that the most recent discovery of the most ancient manuscript is that of the Dead Sea scrolls. It is the most recent discovery - it was discovered in 1958 or 1959 - of the most ancient manuscripts. It dates back to the first century B.C. It has full portions of the Old Testament. The thing that is both strange and beautiful about this, is that Abbas Mahmoud Al Aqqad, the well known Egyptian author, wrote in "The Book Of Al Helal", a monthly periodical in the December issue of 1959. He says the following about the valley of Qumran which was the title of that issue. This is what he wrote: "We expected that the discoveries of the valley of Qumran, would prove the distortion of the Bible. But the discoveries of the valley of Qumran only go to prove that the Bible is true." This was published in the book of Helal periodical, the December 1959 issue.

*Mohamed: And they were identical to the Bible we have today.*

**F Zakaria:** Exactly. This is by the testimony of this man who is a well-known Islamic writer. He is the author of the series called "Abqariat" (geniuses), like the genius of Mohamed, and Christ, and so forth. He is a researcher. He is famous. Abbass El Aqqad. So this is his own

testimony. And I have kept the issue as a testimonial from a conservative Islamic writer about the discoveries of the valley of Qumran. Of course, there were hundreds of volumes written about the discoveries of the Qumran valley.

***Mohamed: And these manuscripts are still there today.***

**F Zakaria:** Yes, they are in a museum in Jerusalem. But many studies were conducted on them by different scientific institutions. Beside this manuscript, which is the oldest, there are several other ones that date back to the second century A.D. to the sixth century A.D. Among them are The Vatican codex, which is kept at the Vatican, and the Sinai codex, which was found in Saint Catherine's Monastery in Sinai. Now you can find this in the British Museum. And the Alexandrian codex, referring to Alexandria; this is also in the British Museum now. And there are many others, like the ones in Cambridge, and there are also the codices of Naga' Hammady, in Egypt. These are also recent discoveries that prove the authenticity of the Bible, and prove that it was never altered. So these are the old manuscripts of the Bible. The Bible is a Divine Book. And it is very certain that God's hand preserved it. And to this day there is no proof of the falsehood of the Bible, or that it is different from the original manuscripts. All the contradictions that the Bible is accused of, may seem apparent to the superficial, shallow reader. But, when he studies the background and sees why it is so, he will realize the truth. Let me give you an illustration. The incident of the transfiguration. In the Gospel according to Matthew chapter 17, it says about this incident, "*now after six days, Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, led*

*them up on a high mountain by themselves.” And in Luke, the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 9, it says “about eight days after these sayings.” So there is a difference here. How come he says six days here, and in another place, eight days? Where did this discrepancy come from? Here, Luke says: *about eight days after these sayings that He took Peter, John and James,*” ...*

***Mohamed: And the discrepancy is quite clear.***

F Zakaria: Of course, it's very obvious; there are two days difference.

***Mohamed: What's your own explanation for that?***

F Zakaria: Well, it is not my own actually. It is the explanation of the Bible scholars, who searched and compared the two texts. They said that Matthew counted it, namely six days, without counting the day on which the event of the previous chapter took place. So he did not include the day when he said six days afterward, he did not include the first day, neither did he include the day of the transfiguration itself, because it was there. He took the net sum between these two days, so he counted six days exclusively. Luke counted them in the usual way. He included the day on which Jesus was talking, and the day on which He was transfigured. Therefore they are eight days. This will seem huge for a superficial reader: “Ah, we caught one here. Is it six or eight days?”

***Mohamed: So you are saying that all the accusations that the Bible has been distorted and is contradictory, are actually groundless, and cannot be proven.***

F Zakaria: But they are superficial observations.

*Mohamed: It depends on the reader, and the way he understands the text.*

**F Zakaria:** That's why I hope that this channel would allow us to do a special program in the future, to discuss the subject of whether the Bible has been distorted or not, using examples. We spoke in a previous episode, that the Bible is not distorted. But we want real examples. They say, "Oh yes, it is this way here and it is that way there." So there are these seeming contradictions. I hope that there will be time in a future episode to allow us to discuss whether these are real discrepancies or not, using examples with real details, similar to this one here.

*Mohamed: We pray that the Lord will give us this chance, and make it happen.*

**F Zakaria:** I really hope so, because these things really do bother some people's minds, I mean simple ordinary readers, and not only them, but also the enemies of the Bible. The enemies of the Bible try to make it appear to everyone that the Bible includes contradiction. And those enemies are actually the atheists who appeared during the European Renaissance in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They began to pull away from the Church and religion, and they wrote books against the Bible, critiques and editorials. Some of the ignorant Muslims took up those fabrications, embraced them and started to challenge the authenticity of the Bible. And I say they are ignorant with due respect to their positions, for one reason: Let an atheist challenge the Holy Bible as much as he wishes. But to the Muslim

whose Quran itself bears witness to the authenticity of the Bible, this is actually harmful and not beneficial.

***Mohamed: Here is a side question. It is not the subject for our discussion now. Some people say that there is a Gospel called the Gospel of Barnabas. What's this Gospel of Barnabas? Very briefly, if you please. Is this Gospel included in the Bible that you have right now; the one you use? Or is it not there?***

**F Zakaria:** No it's not there. I call it, "the lie of the gospel of Barnabas."

***Mohamed: You mean it is not a gospel at all?***

F Zakaria: No, not a gospel at all.

***Mohamed: So, there is no such thing as the gospel of Barnabas?***

**F Zakaria:** Actually it's a good thing you asked about it, and I'm going to digress from the subject of today. It is a good chance, especially since you brought it up. Let's look into the abridged Arabic Encyclopedia, "Al Mawsoo'a Al Arabia Al Moyassara". Let's see what it says about the gospel of Barnabas. Under letter "B", Barnabas, Here it is, on page 354.

***Mohamed: Are you using an Islamic reference book here?***

**F Zakaria:** Yes, of course this is the abridged Arabic Encyclopedia.

***Mohamed: The abridged Arabic encyclopedia***

**F Zakaria:** It says here: "the Gospel of Barnabas is a false book written by a European in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It contains gross mistakes in its description of the political and religious environment in Jerusalem at the time of Christ. It puts on the mouth of Jesus the statement that He is not Christ." Namely, that it makes Jesus say about Himself, "I'm not Christ." Who is Christ then? It goes on to say "He rather came to tell the good news about Mohamed who would be Christ."

***Mohamed: My dear viewers, what we have just heard leaves no room for doubt that the Gospel of Barnabas has nothing to do at all with the Bible. Thank you. Back to our topic.***

**F Zakaria:** Now we have covered the issue of the manuscripts. Your question about them has been answered.

***Mohamed: I have another question for you regarding the manuscripts of the Quran. Will you please share with us about the codices of the Quran?***

**F Zakaria:** Yes, of course, because experts of Quranic studies have written about the manuscripts of the Quran as well. There are two main codices. The first codex is called the Samarqand codex. The codex of Samarqand is now kept in the British Museum. I'm sorry in the Turkish Museum, *in* Turkey. It is in the **Dotcaby** Museum, in Istanbul, Turkey.

***Mohamed: Dotcaby Museum, in Istanbul, Turkey.***

**F Zakaria:** Yes. It is said to date back to the year 32 after Hagra. That is the year 654 A.D. regardless of the verification of the date; this is not our issue now. It dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Originally, it dates back to the **second** century A.D., since it is the manuscript of Al Hajaj Ibn Yussef Al Thaqafy. Opinions differ on this issue. But let's not get into these disagreements. This codex is not dotted; it has no dots; the “B” is the same as the “T” because it has only one accent. You can turn it into any letter you like if you put dots.

**Mohamed:** *There were no dots.*

F Zakaria : No dots

**Mohamed:** *Does it have any diacritics?*

**F Zakaria:** No, neither does it have diacritics.

**Mohamed:** *Neither dots, nor diacritics.*

**F Zakaria:** I made a copy of it, from the Museum. Here is a copy of this codex from the museum. This font, Kufi script. Neither dots nor vowels. No Dammas, No Fathas, no Kasras, no doubling, nothing at all. This is one verse, and here is a copy of another verse.

**Mohamed:** *Also with neither diacritics, nor dots.*

**F Zakaria:** Here is a third copy. Here are several verses, and so forth. This is the codex itself, which is now in Samarqand, I mean Turkey. It is rather the codex of Samarqand. Here it is.

**Mohamed:** *Can the viewers check this out?*

**F Zakaria:** Of course, it is a well-known codex. It is there in the museum, in Turkey.

**Mohamed:** *Can you point out the website, please?*

**F Zakaria:** Ok. Here it is. [www.geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com).

**Mohamed:** [www.geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com)

**F Zakaria:** It is there on the Internet, and I made a copy from there. Are you following? So then, this codex shows the serious difference between itself and the current Quran.

**Mohamed:** *And what is that difference?*

**F Zakaria:** It contains 750 differences. Shall I give you examples?

**Mohamed:** *Yes, please.*

**F Zakaria:** In Surah 3 Al Omran, verse 78, here in the manuscript, in Al Omran, verse 78 in this codex of Samarqand. This is the exact wording in it: *“They say it comes from God, they knowingly tell a lie about God.”* but in the new Quran that you have today, if you get it out, you can read: *“They say it comes from God but then they added, “while it is not from God and then they knowingly tell a lie about God.”* So why this addition? Was this bit in the preserved tablet? O.K. Now here is the original manuscript that is supposed to date back to

the year 32 after Hira. So it is supposed to be Othman Ibn Affan's copy. This is the exact wording of it. Why then, has this phrase been added? This bit, that is, "*while it is not from God?*" Another example: Surah 6, Al Ana'am, verse 146. The manuscript says, "*We have forbidden those who are Jews, their tallow*". But in the copy circulated today, we read, "*We have forbidden those who are Jews*", then a huge addition, "*everything having a claw, and in the case of cattle, sheep and goats, we have forbidden them their tallow*". So this is the manuscript that is now in Istanbul. 750 differences like this one. Here is another example. In Surah 6, Al Ana'am, verse 141 it says, "*It is He who has produced trellised gardens and date palms and field crops.*" That's what the original says. But let's see what we have nowadays: "*It is He who has produced gardens both trellised and untrellised.*" This bit, "*and untrellised*" is not there. Why has it been added? Was this again in the preserved tablet? And how could someone add something to the preserved tablet? Alright. See what it says in Surah 3, Al Omran verse 37: "*It comes from God providing for everyone.*" But look at this: "*It comes from God, for God provides for everyone.*" Why the addition? Isn't this a book that is pre-existent in a preserved tablet? So, does the preserved tablet have these replacements and juxtapositions?

***Mohamed: This is what I learned as a child***

**F Zakaria:** And every Muslim: "*a glorious Quran in a preserved tablet.*" So if "*it is glorious*" and "*in a preserved tablet*", what changed it then? This is codex number one, that is, the Samarqand codex.

***Mohamed: You mentioned that there is another codex.***

**F Zakaria:** Yes, there is, which is the London codex, found in the British Museum. It dates to 150A.H., the year 150 A.H. That is, the second century after Hira, which corresponds to the year 772 A.D. And this codex still remained - though it dates back to the second century - still remained without vowelizing and without dotting, exactly like the Othmnic copy. This is what Al Sajestany says on page 7, in his book "Al Masahef". Al Sajestany says in pages 158 and 159: " Al Hassan and Ibn Sereen hated the dotting of the Quran in the Quranic copy, and hated the dotting of the Quran according to grammar, that is, parsing and syntax, because it was at that time that Abo Al Aswad Al Do'aly began to put the dotting and the diacritics in the Quran. So nobody agreed to it, they wanted it as is, without diacritics or dots. So here in his book, Al Sajestany mentions that they hated dotting and diacritics. And certainly, you cannot distinguish the "B" letter with a dot underneath and the T letter with two dots on top, and the "Th" letter with three dots on top, and the N letter with one dot on top and the Y letter with two dots underneath. The one word could have five meanings, which is exactly what happened, and we have an example of that. Actually, the same applies to the "Hah" and "Khah", and to "Tah" and "Thah". They give us an example here, on the word that could be written as "Noun". It has no dots like you say "Noun", "Ein", "Lam", "Meem", "Heh". You can read this word in eleven different ways. 11 ways. It can read: "we know it", or "you know it" in the masculine singular or, "he knows it" or, "we teach it" or, "you teach it" in the masculine singular, or "he teaches it" in the masculine singular or, "we are being taught it", because there are no

diacritics either, or “you are being taught it”, or “he is being taught it” or, “by his knowledge”, or “by his flag”. So given this single word, like this one here, with no dots and no diacritics, how can you possibly read it?

**Mohamed:** *Well, if one finds the reason, one stops to wonder.*

**F Zakaria:** Here it is. Eleven different ways, eleven forms. This has caused quite a difference between the different Quranic copies. For example, Surah 6 Al Maeda, verse 60: “*say shall I announce to you something worse than this as a recompense from God, those whom God has cursed and become angry at and made them into monkeys and swine, serves the arrogant ones.*” When you read in passing, you see that the subject of the verb “*serves*” must be God, masculine singular, and it is impossible that God would serve the arrogant ones. Isn’t that so? So they started to put in different readings. There are seven readings by Ibn Masood, four by Obai Ibn Aby Ka’ab, six readings by Ibn Abbas and Anas and Obaid Ibn Omaira. Let’s take Ibn Masood, for example. He has seven. Let’s see what he says when he tried to put diacritics: “*and those who served (in the plural) the arrogant ones.*” Another reading: “*And the worshipers of the arrogant ones.*” A third reading: “*and the arrogant ones were served.*” A fourth reading: “*and the servant of the arrogant ones.*” A fifth reading: “*and the arrogant ones were served*” (in the plural). Sorry, five is in the singular. It is number six that is in the plural. Number seven: “*and the servants or slaves of the arrogant ones.*” Chaos. And that is what made Othman burn all the variant copies because they were causing lots of problems. Then Al Hajaj Ibn Yusef Al Thakafy came

and repeated the whole procedure again. He burned all the new copies that were recently introduced. What do we gather from all this? That Mohamed did not leave behind a Quran that was compiled in a book; rather single verses written on parchments, bones, and palm tree fronts. That's a fact. The second fact is: The copy that Abo Bakr compiled after the death of the messenger was kept at Hafsa's house. This copy was destroyed by Marawan Ibn Al Hakam, who tore it up and burned it in order not to conflict with Othman's copy. Fact three: Othman Ibn Affan had burned the copies for the evident differences between them. So much so, that the Muslims killed one another over them. And thus also did Al Hajaj Ibn Yusef Al Thakafy. The ancient manuscripts like the one in Turkey and London vary greatly from the copies circulating today in the hands of Muslims. From all this, we arrive at a big question. Is the current Quran the same one that was there at the time of Mohamed?

***Mohamed: Thank you, Reverend Father. Dear viewers, we leave this question with you to answer, and I have a small comment. I thank God that I asked Him to show me the truth and "you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free." And I said to God, "Here I am, God and Savior , I have searched for You and You found me. I asked You and You answered me. I prayed to You and You heard me, I called upon You and You answered me, and loved me first. Here I am now, not Your slave but a son of God, not a captive, I'm free. I'm no longer wicked, but became righteous. I became like You. I love everyone." These words express what I feel, and that which a lot of brothers and sisters do , those who received faith in Christ, and paid exorbitant prices. They paid dearly. Some were thrown into jail***

*and some lost family and loved ones and some have been deserted by friends and companions. Some of us lost property, businesses and jobs. And some of us are now homeless, denied many things. But let me repeat what the Lord says to every one of you, and of us who chose this path, the path of faith in Christ. “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” My dear viewers, we thank you very much and we welcome all your questions. I want you to know that we only share these things with one goal in mind; only to make the Divine Truth manifest, because it is God's will that everyone should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Lift up your heart with me to God, and ask to know the truth. Pray to God to come into your heart, for the Bible says, “ If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that He is Lord, you will be saved”, from eternal condemnation and punishment. Thank you, dear viewers. We welcome your questions. On the screen, you will see addresses and websites on the Internet. Till we meet in another episode, God bless you all. Thank you.*