


















Seeking Allah







PART 9

-  To tear down walls by giving non-Muslim readers an insider's perspective into a Muslim's heart and mind. The mystical beauty of Islam that enchants billions cannot be grasped by merely sharing facts. But it is my prayer that by entering my world, you will come to understand you... >
-  By looking over my shoulder, you will be privy to the offensiveness of Christianity to Muslim eyes, begin struggling with the historical facts of the gospel, and feel the ground that shook beneath me as I slowly learned the hidden truths about Islam. >
-  To portray the immense inner struggle of Muslims grappling with the gospel, including sacrifices and doubts. As you will see in parts nine and ten, it is in the midst of this struggle that God is known to reach people directly through visions and dreams. >
-  Expert Contributions. These are truly the hidden treasure of this book. >
-  To equip you with facts and knowledge, showing the strength of the case for the gospel in contrast with the case for Islam. History powerfully testifies to the foundational pillars of the gospel: Jesus' death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and His claim to be God. By doi... >



PART 10

-  But what if His majesty is not as important to Him as His children are?" >
-  But how can Allah be just if He 'simply forgives' arbitrarily? God is not arbitrary. He is absolutely just. How would He be just if He forgave arbitrarily? No, He cannot 'just forgive us if He chooses.' The penalty for my sins must be paid." >
-  So much that I thought I knew about the Quran simply is not true. Is it really Your book? >
-  I have found so much violence and contempt in its pages, the pages of a book I have read and loved every day because it is Your word. >
-  false. I was taught that it has never been changed, but hadith and history show that it has. >
-  So much of what I've been taught about it has turned out to be false. >
-  Why am I speaking to Muhammad in my prayer? He cannot hear me. He is dead! I should not be praying to any man, even if it is the Prophet. And why am I wishing peace upon him? I am not his intercessor. I know these words were first recited when he was alive, but why... >
-  He was the perfect military leader, he was the ultimate statesman, and he was the exemplary follower of Allah. He was al-Insan al-Kamil, the perfect man. >
-  "But now I know the truth about him, and there's too much to sweep under the rug. I know about his first revelation, his raids on caravans, his child bride, his marriage to Zainab, the black magic cast upon him, his poisoning, his assassinations, his tortures, and . . ." >
-  "God, I want Your peace. Please have mercy on me and give me the peace of knowing You. I don't know who You are anymore, but I know that You are all that matters. You created this world, You give it meaning, and either You define its purpose or it has none."Please, God Almi... >
-  Although I did not know it, that peace and mercy of God which I desperately asked for would soon fall upon me. He was about to give me supernatural guidance through dreams and visions, forever changing my heart and the course of my life. >
-  "God, I want Your peace. Please have mercy on me and give me the peace of knowing You. I don't know who You are anymore, but I know that You are all that matters. You created this world, You give it meaning, and either You define its purpose or it has none."Please, God Almi... >







PART 12

-  It is no surprise, then, that Muslims use the adhan not just to awaken one another for the day but also to awaken one another into life. >
-  I bear witness that there is no god but Allah!! bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah! >
-  The adhan calls the Muslims, resonates within them, rallies them, and brings them together in unified prostration before Allah. >
-  The call reminds Muslims to dedicate their lives to Allah the very moment they awaken. >
-  We are Qureshi, after all, and the Qureshi are the tribe of Muhammad. >
-  When I was old enough to realize the prestige of our name, I asked my father if we inherited it from the Prophet. >

PART 14

-  My Muslim heritage was a deterrent for many would-be friends and their families. I was very lonely. >
-  Unfortunately, people are afraid of what they do not know, and my Muslim heritage was a deterrent for many would-be friends and their families. I was very lonely. >

PART 15

-  No one doubted the perfect transmission of the Quran. >
-  The words must be >
-  Muslims believe that every single word of the Quran was dictated verbatim by Allah, through the Archangel Gabriel, to Muhammad. The Quran is therefore not only inspired at the level of meaning but at the deeper level of the words themselves. For this reason, Muslims do no... >
-  al-Qaeda, "the Guide." >
-  perfect >
-  Piety is the greater honor, and most Muslims I knew growing up could recite many chapters of the Quran from memory, but rarely could they >

- ▶ Piety is the greater honor, and most Muslims I knew growing up could recite many chapters of the Quran from memory, but rarely could they explain the meaning or context of those verses. >
- ▶ Never put the Quran on the ground!""Okay.""Always raise it high. Put it in the most honored place, wash your hands before touching it, and only touch it with your right hand. This is not just any book, it is the word of Allah. Treat it with the respect He deserves!" >
- ▶ We were taught to read the Quran melodically, making the sound of the recitation as beautiful as possible. Some men dedicate their lives to this practice, perfecting their pitch, tempo, pronunciation, and melody. >
- ▶ one was into 114 chapters, and the other was into thirty parts. The latter is a system that Muslims devised long after the Quran was compiled, mainly so that the entire Quran could be easily >
- ▶ What was the message that Muhammad considered so important? Essentially this: God is not a father, and He has no son. >
- ▶ recited during the thirty days of Ramadhan. >

PART 16

- ▶ Muslims consider Muhammad's life exemplary, and devout Muslims emulate him as much as possible. To do so, Muslims learn stories about his life from books of sirah and hadith. They almost never read the stories themselves >
- ▶ Shia: Followers of Shi'ism, one of the two major branches of Islam >
- ▶ "No, Abba. Muslims only fight to defend themselves. The Meccans were attacking the Muslims." >
- ▶ "No, beyta. They had the upper hand in every way. We won because Allah helped us. If this battle had gone naturally, we would have lost, and Muhammad would have been killed, audhu billah. God will always help the Muslims, because we are His people. >
- ▶ They conquered Mecca.""And where was this prophesied?"I interjected, "In the Bible! Deuteronomy!"10 There was a whole field of Islamic polemics called "Muhammad in the Bible," and our books of Islamic knowledge were full of references to biblical prophecies about Muham... >
- ▶ its Dark Ages, Islam was in its Golden Era." >
- ▶ Didn't they follow Hazrat Isa?" >
- ▶ "Many of the Meccans saw Muhammad 's mercy that day and couldn't help but proclaim the beauty of Islam. The whole of Arabia was so in awe of Muhammad that they all became Muslim. The Messenger and message were irresistible, and soon, the Muslim empire expanded fr... >
- ▶ "Western society owes much to Islam. Science, medicine, mathematics, philosophy . . . Muslims had a huge impact in all these fields. That's why we still find Arabic words in all of them, like 'algebra' and 'alchemy.' Unfortunately, when the Western civilizations conquered, they destr... >
- ▶ When Muhammad finally had a chance to strike them down, no less than they deserved, he gave mercy to them all. Is it any wonder Muhammad is called rehmatullah, the Mercy of Allah?" >
- ▶ "Yes, he forgave everyone. These are the same people who killed Muhammad 's uncle, who are responsible for the death of Khadija, who persecuted Muslims for years and then launched many wars against th >

- ▶ judgment will come. That is the day Islam will be victorious." >
- ▶ . He had our hearts, and he had our allegiance. >
- ▶ Only the Quran is perfect. Only Islam is incorruptible. Allah will guard it until the message spreads and the world becomes Muslim. That is when the day of >
- ▶ To me, it was all a part of Allah's plan for mankind, a plan that was finally enacted through the greatest man who ever lived, Muhammad >
- ▶ "Beyta, they weren't following Hazrat Isa. They stopped following him a long time before. They turned Jesus into a god, and so they dishonored Hazrat Isa and blasphemed Allah! That is why Allah sent Muhammad and Islam as the final message for all of mankind. It emb... >

PART 17

Chapter Six

- ▶ The mosque is a very dear place to Muslims, especially expatriated Muslims who long for fellowship. But none of those are the primary purpose of a mosque. >
- ▶ The primary purpose is congregational prayer, salaah. These are the obligatory prayer rituals, offered five times daily by all Muslims. First standing, then bowing, then briefly prostrating with their foreheads to the ground before rising and sitting on their heels, Muslims recite pres... >
- ▶ Each of the five daily prayers has its own name: fajr, zuhr, asr, maghrib, and isha. Although the words and postures are the same for all, the number of repetitions differs. Each repetition is called a rakaat. A Muslim is required to pray seventeen rakaat daily, and optional prayers ca... >
- ▶ It is Islamic lore that Abraham built the Ka'ba with his son Ishmael, and when Muhammad took refuge in Medina, he commanded Muslims to start facing the Ka'ba during salaah. They have done so ever since, whether standing in a circle in the Grand Mosque, which houses the Ka'... >
- ▶ The process of reciting the Quran during prayer was an ingenious method to propagate the Quran in the mostly illiterate society of seventh-century Arabia, and it still works today. >
- ▶ With that minor exception, Muslims take pride in the equality found in salaah. From rich men to poor men, statesmen to workmen, all men line up side by side and pray as one. >
- ▶ Thus, a hierarchy of piety is often found in the rows of salaah, with elder, respected Muslims toward the front. >
- ▶ My parents were fine with this >
- ▶ This may lead one to wonder why Muslims continue to pray five times a day. What is the point in reciting the same words five times a day, every day, when they don't mean anything personally? I wondered that myself when I was young, and when I asked Abba, he said "Nabeel,... >
- ▶ Even then, the words are exogenous to the worshiper, not the least because they are in a foreign language. This is true even for Arabic speakers. >
- ▶ Since the postures and words are memorized,11 there is nothing extemporaneous -- indeed, nothing personal -- about salaah. For the vast majority of Muslims, it is simply an act of duty, not personal or heartfelt expression. >

▣ Salaat solidified my father as my spiritual leader and indelibly chiseled the Quran into my heart. That is the power of salaat. >

PART 18

▣ According to Anas ibn Malik, Muhammad said, 'Anyone who proclaims the shahada is Muslim.' And the shahada is clear: 'There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger.' Even today, all you have to do is recite the shahada and you will be accepted into the fold of... >

▣ "We recite the shahada >

▣ What we don't believe is falsehood! We don't believe, like the Shia do, that Allah made a mistake by allowing Abu Bakr to become khalifa! We don't believe, like the Sunnis do, that we can murder people in the name of Allah, let alone murder other Muslims! These are egregious beli... >

▣ The remaining 5 - 10 percent are those who fit >

▣ Six Articles of Faith."We believe in the one God Allah >

▣ For the most part, those that recognize Abu Bakr's caliphate follow one of the four schools of Sunni Islam, and they make up about 80 percent of the world's Muslims. >

▣ Kafir: Infidel, non-Muslim >

▣ "They have the audacity to call us kafir because we do not interpret two words in the Quran the way they do. Two words! Khatam an-nabiyeen, the seal of the prophets.' >

▣ He argued that people of many faiths are waiting for their prophets to come back. Jews are waiting for Elijah, Hindus are waiting for Krishna, Buddhists are waiting for Buddha, and Christians are waiting for Jesus. Ahmad claimed to be all these figures wrapped up in one. To top it... >

▣ The lesson to be learned is that there is much division in Islam. The best determination of whether a man is Muslim is if he exclusively declares that Allah is God and Muhammad is Allah's messenger. Beyond this point, there is great diversity in Islam. >

▣ But perhaps most important, Muhammad himself would consider Ahmadis Muslim: "Do not excommunicate anyone who declares that there is no God but Allah."12 >

▣ A man is Muslim if he exclusively declares that Allah is God and Muhammad is Allah's messenger. >

PART 19

▣ WHEN IT COMES to sharia, the diversity in Islam can lead to widely disparate views. Sharia is not a field that the average Muslim knows well. >

▣ "The hadith elaborate and clarify what is found in the Quran, but they never contradict. There is no contradiction in Islam. If a hadith is found in any way to contradict the Quran, then it is inauthentic and must be disregarded. If no hadith can be found to clarify an issue, then we mu... >

▣ Differences aside, it is worth noting that a great deal of overlap exists between the majorities of Muslims. For example, all four major schools of Sunni thought and all three major schools of Shia thought teach that people who leave Islam must be killed for their apostasy. disagreein... >

▣ Differences aside, it is worth noting that a great deal of overlap exists between the majorities of Muslims. For example, all four major schools of Sunni thought and all three major schools of Shia thought teach that people who leave Islam must be killed for their apostasy, disagreein... >

▣ Since the hadith are the second rung of sharia, these differences of opinion have real consequences. Many of the differences between the ways Sunnis and Shias practice Islam are over this very matter. Their books of hadith are disparate. >

PART 20

▣ In our culture, dreams are carefully considered because, as a well-known hadith teaches, "The dreams of the faithful are prophetic."13 In fact, dreams are the only means I know of by which the average Muslim expects to hear directly from God. >

▣ Dreams are the only means by which the average Muslim expects to hear directly from God. >

PART 21

▣ Ramadhan is the Muslim holy month. For thirty days, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, not allowing any food or water to pass through their lips. This practice is obligatory for all able-bodied Muslims, which is why it is the fourth pillar of Islam. At the end of the thirty days, Muslims... >

▣ Ramadhan. To Muslims, the holy month means much more. It is a time to build community, restore broken relationships, strive for >

▣ Like a monthlong Christmas, it is an extended time of celebration in Muslim lands around the world. >

▣ The irony of Ramadhan is that, after binging on buffets every morning and every evening, people usually gain weight during the month of fasting. >

▣ It was where I ultimately decided to leave Islam and everything I knew. >

PART 23

▣ Always remember this: no matter where you are or what you are doing, you are an ambassador for Islam. You will always be an ambassador for Islam." >

▣ In the West, Islam is foreign to people, and many of them are opposed to it. They will always see you first and foremost as a Muslim. That is your identity, and you must embrace it." >

▣ Whatever you do, be the most respectful, honest, and dignified one doing it, so that people will praise Islam. Treat your teachers with the utmost respect! Treat them like you would treat me. >

▣ has made you the good person you are." >

▣ It is a blessing and an opportunity for you to represent Islam and to help people understand its beauty. >

▣ Be such a virtuous person that no one can even point a finger of blame at you. In their hearts, they will praise you because they will know you >

Be such a virtuous person that no one can even point a finger of blame at you. In their hearts, they will praise you because they will know you are honorable, or they will dislike you because they dislike themselves. Either way, they will know that Islam h

PART 24

For the most part, Eastern teachers have taught the Muslims that the West is Christian, that its culture is promiscuous, and that the people oppose Islam. So the average Muslim immigrant expects people in the West to be promiscuous Christians and enemies of Islam.

Shades of grey are far less common among authority-based cultures.

Muslim immigrants from the East are starkly different from their Muslim children born in the West.

On the rare occasion that someone does invite a Muslim to his or her home, differences in culture and hospitality may make the Muslim feel uncomfortable, and the host must be willing to ask, learn, and adapt to overcome this. There are simply too many barriers for Muslim immig...

To be Americanized was to be disobedient to your elders, to dress less conservatively, and to spend more time with your friends than your family. Cursing, drinking, and dating were simply unfathomable.

The West is Christian, the West is Americanized

They did not categorize religion with belief but with cultural identity. The tragedy here is that no one has given them a reason to think otherwise. If they were to intimately know even one Christian who lived differently, their misconceptions might be corrected, and they might...

The second generation is as varied and disparate as their peers. If anything can be said of them, it is this: almost universally, they see the world as Westerners and yet still align themselves with Islam.

What, then, does it mean to be Muslim in the West? It can mean anything. If you really want to know what someone is like and what they believe, you have to get to know them and ask them personally. But the best we can do before getting to know someone is to determine wh...

PART 25

Christians believe Jesus is God incarnate, and this is a necessary belief for orthodox Christianity.¹⁶ Muslims believe that Jesus is no more than a prophet, and to consider him God incarnate would be blasphemy and would cause one to be condemned to hell eternally, according...

Traditionally, Muslims and Christians have shared this understanding. Each believes in truth, not the least because they believe their faith is true. But their common perspective extends much farther. They have roughly analogous beliefs in monotheism, spiritual and physical realm...

These commonalities are a double-edged sword. They build a common platform for dialogue such that the two can often understand each other and see the world from a similar perspective. But the commonalities perhaps also serve to sharpen disagreements on the most sensit...

To me, it was self-evident that truth exists. What's the alternative? If truth doesn't exist, then it would be true that truth doesn't exist, and once again we arrive at truth. There is no alternative

Regarding Jesus, there are two issues on which Muslims particularly disagree with Christians: that Jesus died on the cross and that Jesus claimed to be God.

The Quran specifically denies both of these beliefs.¹⁹ To be a good ambassador, I just had to master these two issues and persuasively argue that Jesus never claimed to be God, nor did he die on the cross. For the latter, the founder of our sect had written a small book to eq...

The Quran specifically denies both of these beliefs.¹⁹ To be a good ambassador, I just had to master these two issues and persuasively argue that Jesus never claimed to be God, nor did he die on the cross. For the latter, the founder of our sect had written a small book to eq...
If God can do the large miracle of raising Jesus from the dead, why can He not do the much smaller miracle of keeping him alive on the cross?"

The argument I shared with Kristen, often called "the swoon theory," is shared by Ahmadi Muslims and non-Ahmadi Muslims alike.

The swoon theory is not the original Muslim explanation for Jesus' apparent death, though, nor is it the majority view. Most Muslims believe "the substitution theory." Early in Islamic history, it was argued that Jesus was substituted before being placed on the cross. Allah put Jesus...

Yet others say that Allah put Jesus' face on Judas's body for poetic justice. The last view seems to be the most popular today.

Another majority view regards Jesus' ascension. The Quran teaches that "Allah raised Jesus to Himself," leading Muslims to believe in the ascension and eventual return of Jesus.²² So, like Christians, most Muslims are waiting for the return of the Messiah.

crucified in Jesus' place. This is how they interpreted the Quranic verse, "Jesus was neither killed nor crucified, but so it appeared."²¹

PART 26

Why had other Christians never asked me this question? Were they content with letting me go to hell, or did they not really believe their faith?

"Well, I'm Muslim, right? Muslims believe that Jesus was sinless and born of the Virgin Mary. He cleansed the leprous, gave sight to the blind, and raised people from the dead. Jesus is the Messiah, the Word of God."²⁴

"But Jesus was not God. He was just a man." I had drawn the battle lines for her and waited to see how she went to war.

How can someone be man and God? Man is mortal, God is immortal. Man is limited, God is infinite. Man is weak, God is omnipotent. To be man is to not be God, and to be God is to not be man."

PART 27

"Allah judges us based on our choices in this world. Everything we do is recorded by angels: one on our right shoulder recording our good deeds, and one on our left shoulder recording our bad deeds. When we stand before Allah, our deeds will be read aloud. No one will be abl...

"And that's why America is the way it is. Christians teach that there is no accountability for their deeds."

Muhammad . Allah will weigh our good deeds and our bad, and if our good deeds are greater than our bad deeds, Allah will give us paradise."²⁵ "What about Christians, Billoo. Can Christians go to heaven?"

Regardless of the exact number, most orthodox sects of Islam believe in the doctrine of abrogation.

Some Muslims argue that this verse was abrogated by a later Quranic verse that says, "If someone comes to Allah with a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him."²⁷

- Some Muslims argue that this verse was abrogated by a later Quranic verse that says, "If someone comes to Allah with a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him."²⁷ >
- Doctrine of abrogation: The belief that teachings and verses of the Quran have been repealed, usually by later Quranic revelation >
- "Yes. The Quran says that if Christians and Jews believe in one God and do good deeds, they can go to heaven."²⁶ >

PART 28

Chapter Sixteen >

PART 34

- "The fact that there are manuscripts of the Bible all over the world means we can compare them and see where changes have been introduced. It's a field of biblical study called 'textual criticism.' If anything is changed, like the verse about the Trinity in first John five, then... >
- comparing it to other manuscripts >
- Manuscript: A physical copy of a text, whether in part or in whole >

PART 35

- The way I saw it, the Old Testament mostly agreed with the Quran: it named many of the same prophets, it showed prophets going to war against polytheists, and it did not say anything about the Trinity. The New Testament is what really offends Muslim beliefs, so this is what w... >
- Well, we have many manuscripts from the second century in the original Greek and dozens more in the third century. In our possession today, we still have two full New Testaments from the early fourth century.³⁶ If you want to see how much the Bible has changed from the fourth t... >
- So you're telling me that we actually have whole Bibles from the early 300s?" "Yup." >
- Aren't the exact words important, David? As a Muslim, I believe that the Quran is exactly the same as it was dictated to Muhammad. Not a single word has ever been changed.³⁸ From what you are telling me, it seems like you think the exact words of the Bible do not matter."³⁹Th... >

PART 36

- Are you saying that the gospels of the New Testament are earlier than all other accounts of Jesus' life?" "Yes. All the other accounts of Jesus' life came much later." >
- Injil: The book that Muslims believe Allah sent to Jesus, often considered to be the gospels of the New Testament >

- Injil: The book that Muslims believe Allah sent to Jesus, often considered to be the gospels of the New Testament >
- to Jesus, often considered to be the gospels of the New Testament >
- First, it's pure conjecture. 'What if' is not much of an argument if there is no evidence. Second, you know the Quran tells Christians to 'judge by the Injil.'³⁹ That means they still had it in Muhammad's day. The Injil is not a lost scripture." >
- Insistent, David responded, "Nabeel, with the level of skepticism you're proposing today, I'm not sure you could hold to any beliefs. We'll see when we get there, but for now, do you realize we're just working with levels of probability? There's no such thing as absolute certainty, not... >
- "So it all depends on how skeptical you're willing to be. Feel free to be as skeptical as you want, but just don't be inconsistent. If you're going to be this skeptical about the Bible, I want you to be equally skeptical when we take a look at the Quran." >
- I don't know, Nabeel. Even science is inductive, relying on observations and best explanations, not always deductive conclusions. I don't think what we're discussing is too >

PART 38

- My dad taught me everything I know about religion, and he knows way more than I do. If I saw that even he could not answer objections, then I would begin to look into things more carefully." >

PART 39

- Like me, he loved talking about matters of religion because he was convinced of the truth of Islam. He saw every opportunity to discuss our beliefs as an opportunity to honor and glorify God. >
- Historical Jesus: Jesus as he can be known through historical records >

PART 40

- Eastern authors were able to make passionate cases that compelled the heart, but Western authors thought more systematically and linearly, equipping themselves with excellent counterarguments and more tempered positions. Perhaps if I employed Western methodology with Ea... >
- Historical method: Criteria and techniques used by historians to systematically investigate the past >
- Criterion of multiple attestation: A principle of the historical method that posits that a recorded event is more likely to be historically accurate if it is recorded in multiple independent sources Criterion of early testimony: A principle of the historical method that posits that early accounts... >
- Nabeel, the most important thing is that you have to be consistent when you do your research. >
- Yes, that's what studying history is all about. There will always be competing theories, and no theory about the past is ever perfect. But there is often a best explanation, and sometimes it far exceeds all the others. In the case of the events surrounding Jesus' death, the best explan... >
- "If we can determine that Jesus claimed to be God, that he died on the cross, and that he rose from the grave, then that would be a good >

- "If we can determine that Jesus claimed to be God, that he died on the cross, and that he rose from the grave, then that would be a good case for Christianity." >
- Here's what I want to do: I want to put the main issues of Christianity and Islam into historically investigable terms so that I can determine which one is more likely to be true. So tell me if you agree with this: if we can determine that Jesus claimed to be God, that he died on the c... >
- And now I had found the path of my pursuit: assess the historical case for Jesus' death, his deity, and his resurrection. If these three arguments were strongly evidenced, then there would be a strong case for Christianity. >

PART 41

- Sheikh: A Muslim leader, usually with graduate-level education in Islamic theology >

PART 44

- This ran counter to everything Muslim teachers taught about Jesus in the Bible. Was it possible that a gospel actually said Jesus was the Creator? Why hadn't I heard this before? None of the Christians I had spoken with mentioned this, and I had challenged so many. >
- They all showed Jesus doing miracles, to be sure, but the Muslim explanation for Jesus' miracles was simple: they were all done by God's permission, not by any power intrinsic to Jesus. This is what the Quran said,⁵⁷ and I had long before memorized Bible verses that showed... >
- The result is that Muslims place relatively little weight on surrounding passages when trying to interpret sections of the Quran. For context, they turn instead to historical commentaries, hadith called asbab-an-nuzul. >
- I realized I had missed the big picture. The Bible and the Quran were nothing alike. So fractured are narratives in the Quran that only one story has a clear beginning, middle, and end: the story of Joseph. All the other stories pick up in the middle, or else they are never carried t... >
- There was no need for any commentary in order to understand the gospels. Anyone can understand the Bible. >
- It was obvious that "the Word" was Jesus, not just because John's gospel was ostensibly about Jesus but also because the Quran calls Jesus the "Word of God."⁶² Besides, verse 14 left little doubt: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glo... >
- If Jesus truly did claim to be God, then the Quran is wrong and Islam is a false religion. >

PART 45

- I thought back to a khutba I heard at a mosque in Washington, D.C., where the imam stood at the head of the prayer hall, proclaiming, "Jesus repeatedly denied being God. He always called himself the Son of Man to drive the point home! He is a human. He never calls himself 'the... >
- Could it be that the term "Son of Man" actually meant something more? >
- Jesus called himself the Son of Man more than eighty times in the four gospels >

- the mortal Messiah. >
- By saying this, David had unknowingly lit a short fuse on a hidden powder keg. Muslims are often trained to despise Paul, to see him as the hijacker of early Christianity. From the highest imam in our jamaat all the way down to my father and mother, I had been repeatedly taught t... >
- Because of what the Quran and hadith teach, Muslims must revere Jesus and the disciples. They were people chosen by Allah to spread His true message, including the fact that Jesus was just a human. But somewhere very early in Christian history, people began to worship Jesu... >

PART 48

- This is only one of the reasons why a strong friendship is critical. A surface-level relationship might snap under the tension of disagreement, but by living our lives together, we were forced to reconcile. >
- This is not merely an affirmation of monotheism but a thoroughgoing cultivation of the concept of God's absolute unity. God's essence, or the very thing that makes Him God, is that He is one: independent, unique, sovereign, set apart, and completely unified. There can be no divisi... >
- Distilling this theology in the context of Muslim-Christian dialogue boils down to this: Tauheed, Islam's most fundamental principle, is antithetical to the Trinity. >
- The same is true for almost all practicing Muslims. A repulsion to the Trinity was part and parcel of my Islamic identity. >

PART 49

- They had just realized before I did that there are truths about our universe that do not fit easily into our minds. >
- That's when it clicked: if there are things in this world that can be three in one, even incomprehensibly so, then why cannot God? >

PART 50

- Of course, Allah could show mercy, but the Quran says Allah does not love sinners. What reason would He have to forgive me? >
- David's words hit me powerfully. I had heard Christians call God "Father," but it never clicked. Only when trying to figure out why God would give me mercy and grace when I deserved none did the gears start turning. >

PART 51

- Yeah, I think so. If I can show with a high degree of probability that Muhammad is a prophet of God, then I can conclude the message he brought is true. Or if I can show that the Quran is a divinely inspired book, then I can conclude that the message it teaches is true." >
- For me, as for most Muslims, an uncritically reverential and fulsome assessment of Islam was a given. >

PART 53

- Even though every Muslim would quickly admit that Muhammad is human, in theory fallible like any other man, they often revere him as flawless. To that end, Islamic theology has accorded him the title al-Insan al-Kamil, "the man who has attained perfection." >
- on them and everything they stand for. >
- Muhammad is grounds for excommunication, or worse >
- Because of hadith and tradition, Muslim religion, culture, heritage, and identity all find their core in the person of Muhammad. That is why Muslims see an attack on his character as equivalent to a personal attack o >
- What makes this surprising is that the same is not the case for Allah. Muslims who question Allah are usually tolerated by other Muslims, but questioning Muhammad is >

PART 54

- ALMOST EVERYTHING MUSLIMS know about Muhammad comes to them orally, rarely from primary sources. Unlike Christians learning about Jesus from the Bible, the Quran has very little to say about Muhammad. >
- Even the earliest records of Muhammad's life are altered versions of previous stories that were also altered. >
- What young Muslims learn about Muhammad is an airbrushed portrait -- this blemish removed and that feature emphasized -- that makes him >
- fit a desired image. Through selective quotation, Muhammad becomes the picture-perfect prophet. >

PART 58

- It should not be assumed that the Quran is the Islamic analogue of the Bible. It isn't. For Muslims, the Quran is the closest thing to an incarnation of Allah, and it is the very proof they provide to demonstrate the truth of Islam. The best parallel in Christianity is Jesus himself,... >
- IF YOU CAN IMAGINE God's mystery and wisdom, His power, depth, and perfection, His divine mandates and prophecies, all synergistically inhabiting the physical pages of a book, vivifying it with the very essence of God, you will begin to understand how and why Muslims revere... >
- Its inimitability is the only defense the Quran provides for itself, yet here was a book that effectively responded to the challenge. This news was explosive. >
- Muslim apologists do not limit themselves to the Quran's own defense of its inspiration. The four other arguments they most commonly appeal to are these: fulfilled prophecies, mathematical patterns, scientific truths, and textual preservation. >
- The first two arguments fell very quickly. There are no compelling prophecies in the Quran. There are many verses that can be construed as prophecies, but the Quran does not assert that they are in any way predictions of the future. Regardless of details, they certainly were not c... >
- The science argument, and especially the perfect preservation of the Quran, formed the keystone of my faith. >

The final two arguments held powerful sway over my regard for the Quran, however. I believed from childhood that the Quran contained advanced scientific truths that Muhammad could not have known without divine revelation. These scientific truths were enough to prove tha... >

PART 59

- The technique of referring to the Quran for miraculously advanced scientific truths soon became so commonplace that a term for the method was coined: Bucailleism. >

PART 60

- The Quran is the cornerstone of the Islamic worldview, underlies all of sharia, serves as the fulcrum of daily devotions, and provides the source of Islamic identity. In the minds of most Muslims, if the Quran were not perfectly preserved, their world would be in jeopardy. >
- At no point has anything in the Quran ever been changed. It comes down to us exactly as Muhammad received it from Gabriel." In this, we are told, is a prophecy of the Quran fulfilled: "Surely We have revealed the Reminder [Quran] and We will most surely be its guardian" (15:9). >
- Why Islam?" summarizes the sentiment well: "The Psalms, the Torah, and the Gospel, according to Islam, are no longer in their original state. They have been added to, cannot be traced directly to their prophets, or were simply altered. Only the Quran has been preserved in its origi... >
- Thus, the preservation of the Quran undergirds the unparalleled confidence of the modern Muslim zeitgeist. It is not even a remote possibility in most Muslims' minds that the Quran of today might be different from the Quran of Muhammad's day. >
- Then, to settle the disputes over the Quran once and for all, Uthman "ordered that all the other Quranic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be destroyed by fire." >
- That was it. According to widely accepted knowledge, there were no arguments over its contents, no poor memories, no fear of lost passages, no solitary witnesses, no forgotten verses, and certainly no orchestrated destruction of variants. The process of collecting the Qu... >
- These were the men that Muhammad hand selected as the best teachers of the Quran, but as I studied the early sources, I found that they did not agree with the final Quran, which has been passed down as today's version. They did not even agree with each other. >
- The doctrine of the Quran's perfect preservation, far from defending the faith, needed to be defended by faith. >
- So, in truth, the scholars were not arguing that the Quran had remained unchanged. They were arguing that Allah intended all the many changes that came to it. That was a defensive position at best, not one that could bear the weight of the entire Islamic case. >

PART 63

- It was then that I realized the value of apologetics and what the arguments had done for me. All my life, barriers had been erected that kept me from humbly approaching God and asking Him to reveal Himself to me. The arguments and apologetics tore down those barriers, posi... >
- The work of my intellect was done. It had opened the way to His altar, but I had to decide whether I would approach it. If I did, and if I really wanted to know God, I had to cast myself upon His mercy and love, relying completely upon Him and His willingness to reveal Himself to m... >

PART 64

- THE COST FOR A MUSLIM to accept the gospel can be tremendous. Of course, following Jesus meant that I would immediately be >

- Why Islam?" summarizes the sentiment well: "The Psalms, the Torah, and the Gospel, according to Islam, are no longer in their original state. They have been added to, cannot be traced directly to their prophets, or were simply altered. Only the Quran has been preserved in its original state." >
- Thus, the preservation of the Quran undergirds the unparalleled confidence of the modern Muslim zeitgeist. It is not even a remote possibility in most Muslims' minds that the Quran of today might be different from the Quran of Muhammad's day. >
- Then, to settle the disputes over the Quran once and for all, Uthman "ordered that all the other Quranic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be destroyed by fire." >
- That was it. According to widely accepted knowledge, there were no arguments over its contents, no poor memories, no fear of lost passages, no solitary witnesses, no forgotten verses, and certainly no orchestrated destruction of variants. The process of collecting the Quran... >
- These were the men that Muhammad had selected as the best teachers of the Quran, but as I studied the early sources, I found that they did not agree with the final Quran, which has been passed down as today's version. They did not even agree with each other. >
- The doctrine of the Quran's perfect preservation, far from defending the faith, needed to be defended by faith. >
- So, in truth, the scholars were not arguing that the Quran had remained unchanged. They were arguing that Allah intended all the many changes that came to it. That was a defensive position at best, not one that could bear the weight of the entire Islamic case. >

PART 63

- It was then that I realized the value of apologetics and what the arguments had done for me. All my life, barriers had been erected that kept me from humbly approaching God and asking Him to reveal Himself to me. The arguments and apologetics tore down those barriers, positioning... >
- The work of my intellect was done. It had opened the way to His altar, but I had to decide whether I would approach it. If I did, and if I really wanted to know God, I had to cast myself upon His mercy and love, relying completely upon Him and His willingness to reveal Himself to me... >

PART 64

- THE COST FOR A MUSLIM** to accept the gospel can be tremendous. Of course, following Jesus meant that I would immediately be ostracized from my community. For all devout Muslims, it means sacrificing the friendships and social connections that they have built from... >
- worse. They often do not have the financial means to survive the next day, let alone fight for their children in court. They would have to do all this while reeling from an emotionally violent expulsion from their extended families. >
- I never said, "I choose to remain Muslim because it would cost my family if I were to follow Jesus." Far from it, I subconsciously found ways and means to go on rejecting the gospel so I would not be faced with what I would have to pay. >
- Shirk: The unforgivable sin in Islam** >
- Shirk is specifically discussed in the context of Jesus in 5:72. He who believes Jesus is God, "Allah has forbidden Heaven for him, and his abode will be the Hellfire." >
- It is no understatement to say that Muslims often risk everything to embrace the cross. >