

# Is Muhammad Foretold in the Bible?

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## Contents:

[MUHAMMAD IN THE BIBLE?](#)

[MOSES AND THE PROPHET](#)

[1. The Word of God in the Prophet's mouth](#)

[2. A prophet from among their Brethren](#)

[3. A Prophet like unto Moses](#)

[4. Jesus - the Prophet like unto Moses](#)

[JESUS AND THE COMFORTER](#)

[BIBLIOGRAPHY](#)

## MUHAMMAD IN THE BIBLE?

During 1975 Ahmed Deedat held a series of lectures at the Durban City Hall, two of which set out to prove that Muhammad is foretold in the Bible. The first lecture, entitled "What the Bible Says About Muhammad", dealt with the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18.18 in the Old Testament, and in it Mr. Deedat sought to show that Moses was predicting the coming of Muhammad when speaking of a prophet to follow him who would be like him. During 1976 Mr. Deedat published this lecture in booklet form under the same title. In his second lecture in 1975 he spoke on "Muhammad the Natural Successor to Christ" and here he endeavoured to prove that Jesus was foretelling the coming of Muhammad when he exhorted his disciples to wait for the coming of the one he called the Comforter who, he said, would follow him.

Deedat's lectures were typical of numerous similar attempts that have been made by Muslim writers over the years to make these two particular prophecies fit Muhammad. The effort has generally arisen from a verse in the Qur'an which states that the coming of Muhammad was foretold in the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures. It reads:

Those who follow the Apostle, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures) - in the Law and the Gospel.

Surah 7.157

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Muslims have searched exhaustively through the "Law and the Gospel" (the Tawrat and the Injil, the Old and New Testaments respectively) for proof that these two books indeed contain prophecies of the coming of Muhammad. The Qur'an seems to suggest that these prophecies would be found in the Torah and the Gospel without much difficulty, but when Muslims have applied themselves to finding these alleged predictions, they have been unpleasantly surprised to discover that in these two books it is Jesus who is the subject of the many prophecies in them and not Muhammad. The birth of Jesus, his ministry, parables, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, second coming, deity, glory and honour are the concerns of the prophetic texts of the Torah and the

Gospel, and so extensively do these prophecies herald his advent as the ultimate climax of God's revealed truth and love towards men that one cannot help but be struck by the fact that the Bible makes no allowance for the anti-climax of a "prophet" to follow him. Such prophecies are conspicuous only by their absence.

Nevertheless, spurred on by the assurance in the Qur'an that the Bible indeed foretells the coming of Muhammad, Muslims have made every effort to find these prophecies. The obvious dearth of material in support of their quest has led most of them to wisely rely solely on the two prophecies we have already mentioned - one in each of the Testaments -, to prove their claim. Others, like Kaldani and Vidyarthi, have unwisely tried to apply every major prophecy in the Bible to Muhammad (including striking predictions of the crucifixion, atoning work and resurrection of Jesus Christ in Isaiah 53 for example!), but the shameless twists of interpretation that they have been compelled to resort to together with an abdication of all reason in their efforts to prove their points has fortunately restrained other Muslims from following in their steps and they have accordingly relied solely on the two prophecies we have mentioned, one by Moses and one by Jesus respectively.

We are in the circumstances entitled to presume that these two prophecies are believed by the Muslims to be the strongest in support of their claims. Accordingly, if it can be proved that these texts do not in any way refer to Muhammad, or anticipate his advent or prophethood, then the whole theory that Muhammad is foretold in the Bible must simultaneously fall to the ground.

We shall therefore in this booklet generously consider the strongest evidence of the Muslims that Muhammad is foretold in these two passages and will, in the light of the context of each passage, and of other factors crucial to a proper determination of the matter, decide whether the evidence is sufficient to prove the point or whether the case must ultimately be found to go against them.

It is universally accepted in all civilised communities that if a matter is to be determined properly, all the relevant evidence must be weighed together and all irrelevant evidence must be ignored accordingly. No matter how great the temptation may be to ignore the relevant facts while giving undue weight to the irrelevant ones if this is the only way a matter can be decided in one's favour, the man who really loves the truth and seeks for it will resist the temptation. It is our sincere hope that the Muslims who read this document will do likewise.

## **MOSES AND THE PROPHET**

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him".

Deuteronomy 18.18

Whenever Muslims seek to establish that Muhammad is foretold in the Torah, the Old Testament, they invariably refer to this verse as the one obvious prophecy in support of their claim. They argue that the prophet who was promised by God to Moses was Muhammad because:

1. The Qur'an is allegedly the Word of God and therefore, as Muhammad recited each passage that was delivered to him, he had the words of God put into his mouth in accordance with the words of this prophecy;
2. The prophet to come would be from among the brethren of the Israelites, hence the Ishmaelites,

because Israel (Jacob) and Ishmael were both descended from Abraham, and the tribes who descended from the twelve sons of Ishmael are therefore "brethren" of the tribes who descended from the twelve sons of Israel. As Muhammad was the only Ishmaelite to claim prophethood in the line of the Old Testament prophets, they aver that the prophecy can only refer to him;

3. Muhammad was like Moses in so many ways that the prophecy can only refer to him.

We shall consider these claims briefly and will do so in the light of the context of the prophecy, for this is the only way that a correct interpretation of the text can be obtained. Every intelligent expositor of scripture knows that no passage can be fairly interpreted if it is isolated from its context. Therefore it is essential to quote from the whole passage in which the prophecy is found and the following two extracts are of great importance:

The Levitical priests, that is, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings by fire to the Lord, and his rightful dues. They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance as he promised them.  
Deuteronomy 18.1-2.

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren - him shall you heed - just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, or see this great fire any more, lest I die'. And the Lord said to me, 'They have rightly said all that they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And whoever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die'.  
Deuteronomy 18.15-20.

We shall proceed to briefly consider the three points that supposedly prove that Muhammad is the prophet referred to in the text and thereafter will, in the light of the context of the passage, discover precisely which prophet is referred to in the prophecy contained in Deuteronomy 18.18.

## **1. THE WORD OF GOD IN THE PROPHET'S MOUTH.**

Christians do not believe that the Qur'an is the Word of God but, purely for the sake of argument, we shall proceed as if God did indeed put his words in Muhammad's mouth to discover whether this might prove that Muhammad is the prophet referred to in Deuteronomy 18.18. In our view the statement "I will put my words in his mouth" does not help to identify the prophet referred to at all. It is true of every prophet that God has put his words in his mouth. For God said to Jeremiah:

"Behold I have put my words in your mouth".  
Jeremiah 1.9

Furthermore we also read in Deuteronomy 18.18 that the prophet to follow Moses "shall speak to them all that I command him". Now we read that Jesus once said to his disciples:

"For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal

life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me".  
John 12.49-50.

A similar text which illustrates this point is found in the great prayer which Jesus prayed on the last night that he was with his disciples. He said:

"I have given them the words which thou gavest me".  
John 17.8

In no way, therefore, can the identity of the prophet in the text of Deuteronomy 18.18 be established from the fact that God would put his words in his mouth. With every prophet who is true this is the case and the great prophet referred to in the text, who would be uniquely like Moses in a way that none of the other prophets were, must accordingly be identified from other sources.

## **2. A PROPHET FROM AMONG THEIR BRETHREN.**

Muslims allege that the expression "their brethren" in Deuteronomy 18.18 means the brethren of the Israelites, hence the Ishmaelites. In this case, however, if we are truly to discover the real identity of the prophet who would be like Moses, we must consider the expression in its context.

God said, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren." Of whom is God speaking when he speaks of "them" and "their"? When we go back to the first two verses of Deuteronomy 18 we find the answer:

"The Levitical priests, that is, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel ... they shall have no inheritance among their brethren".  
Deuteronomy 18.1-2.

It is abundantly clear from these two verses that "they" refers to the tribe of Levi and that "their brethren" refers to the remaining eleven tribes of Israel. This is an inescapable fact. No honest method of interpretation or consistent method of exposition can possibly allow that Deuteronomy 18.18 refers to anyone else than the tribe of Levi and the remaining tribes of Israel. Let us briefly examine the only possible exposition of the prophecy that can lead to a correct interpretation and identification of "their brethren". We need only accentuate the relevant words from Deuteronomy 18.1-2 to discover the only possible conclusion that can be drawn. The text reads:

"The tribe of Levi shall have no inheritance with ISRAEL. They shall have no inheritance among THEIR BRETHEREN".

Therefore the only logical interpretation of Deuteronomy 18.18 can be: "I will raise up for them (that is, the tribe of Levi) a prophet like you from among their brethren (that is, one of the other tribes of Israel)". Indeed throughout the Old Testament one often finds the expression "their brethren" meaning the remaining tribes of Israel as distinct from the tribe specifically referred to. Let us consider this verse as an example:

But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel.  
Judges 20.13

Here "their brethren" is specifically stated to be the other tribes of Israel as distinct from the tribe of Benjamin. In Deuteronomy 18.18, therefore, "their brethren" clearly means the brethren in Israel of the

tribe of Levi. Again in Numbers 8.26 the tribe of Levi is commanded to minister to "their brethren", that is, the remaining tribes of Israel. In 2 Kings 24.12 the tribe of Judah is distinguished from "their brethren", once again the remaining tribes of Israel. (Further scriptures proving the point are Judges 21.22, 2 Samuel 2.26, 2 Kings 23.9, 1 Chronicles 12.32, 2 Chronicles 28.15, Nehemiah 5.1 and others).

Indeed in Deuteronomy 17.15 we read that Moses on one occasion said to the Israelites "One from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother". Only an Israelite could be appointed king of Israel - "one from among your brethren" - no foreigner, be he Ishmaelite, Edomite or whoever he may be, could be made King of Israel because he was not one of "their brethren", that is, a member of one of the tribes of Israel.

At this stage, therefore, we have a fatal objection to the theory that Muhammad is foretold in Deuteronomy 18.18. He was an Ishmaelite and accordingly is automatically disqualified from being the prophet whose coming was foretold in that verse. The prophet was obviously to come from one of the tribes of Israel other than the tribe of Levi. God said he would raise up a prophet for the Levites like Moses from among "their brethren", that is, from one of the other tribes of Israel. As we intend to prove that Jesus was the prophet whose coming was foretold it will be appropriate to mention at this stage that he was descended from the tribe of Judah (Matthew 1.2, Hebrews 7.14). He is therefore ably qualified to be the prophet who would be raised up from among the brethren of the Levites.

### **3. A PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES.**

The Islamic publications listed in the Bibliography to this booklet are full of comparisons between Moses and Muhammad where evidence is brought forward of certain likenesses between them. These publications also produce many differences between Jesus and Moses as the authors try to disprove that Jesus is the prophet whose coming was foretold in Deuteronomy 18.18.

In his booklet "What the Bible Says About Muhammed" Mr. Deedat produces a number of similarities between Moses and Muhammad which he claims do not exist between Moses and Jesus. Most of these are meaningless, however, and only serve to show the supreme uniqueness of Jesus over against the whole human race. For example, Deedat argues that Moses and Muhammad were both born naturally of human parents and are buried on earth, whereas Jesus was born of a virgin-woman, had no earthly father, and ascended to heaven (Deedat, "What the Bible Says About Muhammed", p. 7, 12). It is obvious that all men have natural parents and go back to the dust, and all Mr. Deedat is doing is to reveal certain ways in which Jesus was absolutely unique among men. This does not help to identify the prophet predicted by Moses, however.

In the publications referred to we do find occasionally more prominent likenesses between Moses and Muhammad which do need to be analysed more carefully. Three such comparisons are:

1. Moses and Muhammad became the lawgivers, military leaders, and spiritual guides of their peoples and nations;
2. Moses and Muhammad were at first rejected by their own people, fled into exile, but returned some years later to become the religious and secular leaders of their nations;
3. Moses and Muhammad made possible the immediate and successful conquests of the land of Palestine after their deaths by their followers, Joshua and Umar respectively.

At the same time it is alleged in these publications that Jesus and Moses were so different, according to Christian belief, that Jesus cannot be the prophet referred to. Such differences are these:

1. Moses was only a prophet but, according to Christian belief, Jesus is the Son of God;
2. Moses died naturally but Jesus died violently;
3. Moses was the national ruler of Israel which Jesus was not at any time during his ministry here on earth.

We are constrained to ask: do these similarities and contrasts in any way prove that Muhammad is the prophet like Moses whose coming was foretold in Deuteronomy 18.18? It is the easiest of matters to show that this sort of reasoning will in no way assist us to discover the real identity of the prophet. Firstly, none of the alleged differences between Moses and Jesus are of any importance. The Bible often calls Jesus a prophet as well as the Son of God (see, for example, Matthew 13.57, 21.11, and John 4.44) and the fact that Jesus died violently is hardly relevant to the issues at stake. Many prophets were killed by the Jews for their testimonies, a fact to which both the Bible and the Qur'an bear witness, (cf. Matthew 23.31, Surah 2.91). Furthermore the Bible teaches that the Christian Church as a whole has replaced the nation of Israel in this age as the collective object of God's special favours. Likewise, whereas Moses led that nation during his life on earth, so Jesus today heads the Church of God from his throne in heaven above. In this respect, therefore, he is really like Moses.

Secondly, if we reverse the process we can show many similarities between Moses and Jesus where Muhammad at the same time can be contrasted with them. Some of these are:

1. Moses and Jesus were Israelites - Muhammad was an Ishmaelite. (This is, as we have seen, a crucial factor in really determining the identity of the prophet who was to follow Moses).
2. Moses and Jesus both left Egypt to perform God's work - Muhammad was never in Egypt. Of Moses we read: "By faith he forsook Egypt" (Hebrews 11.27). Of Jesus we read: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (Matthew 2.15).
3. Moses and Jesus forsook great wealth to share the poverty of their people which Muhammad did not. Of Moses we read: "He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt" and that he chose "to share ill-treatment with the people of God" (Hebrews 11.25-26). Of Jesus we read: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8.9).

So we have similarities between Moses and Jesus where Muhammad can be contrasted with them. This shows how weak the Muslim method of comparing Moses with Muhammad (while contrasting them with Jesus) is, for it works both ways. How then can we truly identify the prophet who was to be like Moses?

As there were numerous prophets down the ages, it is logical to assume that this prophet would be uniquely like Moses in a way that none of the other prophets were. Clearly the prophet to come would emulate him in the exceptional and unique characteristics of his prophethood. Indeed we would expect that God would give some indication in the prophecy of the distinguishing features of this prophet who was to be like Moses. We only have to refer to the context of the prophecy to find this striking verse which very clearly gives us an indication of the nature of the prophet to follow:

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your

brethren - him you shall heed - just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die' ".  
Deuteronomy 18.15-16.

The prophet would be raised up just as God had raised Moses up as the mediator of the covenant which he gave at Horeb. The Israelites pleaded with Moses to become a mediator between them and God because they did not wish to hear God's voice face to face, and God said "They have rightly said all that they have spoken" (Deuteronomy 18.17). God henceforth raised Moses up as the mediator of the covenant between himself and Israel. We need also to consider that God spoke to Moses in a very special way as well and in the Bible we read:

Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.  
Exodus 33.11

The Qur'an also teaches that God spoke directly to Moses in a way in which he did not speak to other prophets (Surah 4.164). Furthermore, to confirm the great mediatorial work which Moses was to perform, God did great signs and miracles through him in the presence of all Israel. Now as God had promised that the prophet to come would be like him in this mediatorial work, we must conclude that the distinguishing features of the prophet would be these:

1. He would be the direct mediator of a covenant between God and his people;
2. He would know God face to face;
3. His office would be confirmed by great signs and wonders which he would do by the power of God in the sight of all the nation of Israel.

This conclusion is in fact clearly established by these last words in the Book of Deuteronomy:

And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.  
Deuteronomy 34.10-12.

The three distinguishing features of Moses as a prophet are clearly mentioned: he was the mediator between God and Israel, he knew the Lord face to face, and he did great signs and wonders. The prophet like him would obviously have to emulate these unique features of his prophethood. Did Muhammad possess these exceptional characteristics by which the prophet was to be recognised?

Firstly, whereas God spoke directly to Moses, so that he was a direct mediator between God and the people of Israel, the Qur'an is alleged to have come at all times from the Angel Gabriel to Muhammad and at no time did God directly communicate it to him face to face, as the Muslims themselves admit. He also did not mediate a covenant between God and the people of Israel.

Secondly, Muhammad performed no signs and wonders. Although the Hadith record some fanciful miracles, these are purely mythical, for the Qur'an very clearly says of Muhammad that he performed no signs. In Surah 6.37, when Muhammad's adversaries say "Why has no sign been sent down to him from his Lord?", Muhammad is bidden to reply merely that God could send one if he wanted to but had not

done so. In the same Surah we read that Muhammad said, "I have not that for which you are impatient" (Surah 6.57), meaning signs and wonders such as Moses had. He goes on to say that if he had had them, the dispute between him and them would have been decided long ago.

Again in the same Surah Muhammad's adversaries say they will believe if signs come from God, but he only replies that God has reserved them because they would still disbelieve anyway (as indeed the Jews did with Jesus - John 12.37). Furthermore the Qur'an also says that Muhammad's adversaries in Mecca also once said to him:

"Why are not (signs) sent to him, like those which were sent to Moses?"  
Surah 28.48

The answer the Qur'an gives is much the same - they rejected the signs of Moses anyway, so why do they now expect Muhammad to perform signs? Nevertheless, in terms of the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18.18, this was a very poignant and significant observation for it plainly distinguishes between Moses and Muhammad in the very important matter of performing signs and wonders. How indeed could Muhammad possibly be the prophet whose coming was foretold in Deuteronomy 18.18 if he was not granted the power to perform the kind of signs and wonders performed by Moses? In this case, therefore, he was definitely not like Moses in one of the vital, distinguishing characteristics of his prophethood. The Qur'an has its own testimony to this effect.

So we find that Muhammad was not a direct mediator between God and man, nor could he do any signs and wonders to confirm his office. Deuteronomy 34.11 makes it essential that the prophet like Moses would do similar signs and wonders to those which Moses did, and as Muhammad did not, we have a second fatal objection against the theory that he is the prophet foretold in Deuteronomy 18.18. We can conclude by saying that whatever evidence the Muslims may produce in favour of their assertion, the really relevant and crucial evidence needed to prove the point is not only unfavourable in his case but in fact fatally rules out the possibility that he might indeed be the prophet of whom Moses spoke.

## **4. JESUS - THE PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES.**

Considering now whether Jesus is the prophet referred to, let us begin by answering a few typical objections raised by the Muslims. Firstly, if he was the Christ, they say he could not be the prophet to follow Moses, because the Jews distinguished between Elijah, the Christ, and the prophet (John 1. 19-21). The argument goes that John the Baptist is believed by the Christians to have come in the spirit of Elijah, Jesus was the Christ, and Muhammad, therefore, must have been the prophet. We have already shown, however, that it is impossible for Muhammad to be the prophet. In any event nothing conclusive can be construed from the speculations of the Jews. They once said of Jesus: "This is indeed the prophet" (John 7.40). On another occasion they said he was "one of the prophets" (Matthew 16.14), on another "a prophet" (Mark 6.15) and worse still thought of him as both Elijah (Mark 6.15) and John the Baptist himself (Matthew 16.14).

It needs to be pointed out that the Bible does not teach that Elijah, the Christ, and the prophet were to come in that order. The questions put by the Jews to John, whether he was Elijah, the Christ, or the prophet, merely expressed their own hopes and expectations of figureheads to come. In the light of their confusion, however, we can see that no serious consideration can be given to the distinctions they made between the Christ and the prophet. It is also important to note that the predictions of the prophet, etc., were made in the reverse order in the Old Testament (the prophet was promised by Moses, most of the

prophecies of the coming Christ were set out in the writings of the later prophets, and the promise of the coming of Elijah only appears at the end of the book in Malachi 4.5). Furthermore no deliberate distinction between the prophet and the Christ was ever drawn in these prophecies and it is not surprising to find the Jews in one breath proclaiming that Jesus was indeed both the prophet and the Christ (John 7.40-41).

Another favourite objection is that Jesus died at the hands of the Jews and God said, in Deuteronomy 18.20, that only the self-styled prophets would die. Every prophet, however, died - many violently as the Qur'an and the Bible jointly testify - and the mere physical death of a prophet was certainly no evidence against his divine mission. God obviously did not mean that every true prophet would not die! What he meant was that a false prophet was to be put to death and would perish eternally - and all his prophecies with him. Only Judgment Day will reveal all the false prophets of the ages.

What we are ultimately concerned about is this - God gave a definite promise that a prophet would arise like Moses who would mediate another covenant and that signs would accompany this covenant to confirm its heavenly origin. The very Bible that contains the prophecy of the prophet to come confirms quite clearly that that prophet was Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter, claiming that God had foretold the coming of Jesus Christ through all the prophets, appealed specifically to Deuteronomy 18.18 as proof that Moses had done so (Acts 3.22). Jesus himself said, "Moses wrote of me" (John 5.46) and it is difficult to find elsewhere in the five books of Moses such a direct prophecy of his advent. Peter chose Deuteronomy 18.18 as the one distinctive prophecy in all the writings of Moses of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world.

Likewise in Acts 7.37 Stephen appealed to Deuteronomy 18.18 as proof that Moses was one of those who had "announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One", Jesus, the one whom the Jews had recently betrayed and crucified.

After witnessing all the signs that Jesus had done and after taking part in the New Covenant which he had mediated face-to-face between God and his people, the early Christians knew that Jesus was the prophet whose coming was foretold in Deuteronomy 18.18. They also knew that the prophecy of a prophet to come like Moses had been supplemented by God's promise to the prophet Jeremiah that he would mediate a new covenant in the days to come between himself and his people. For in speaking of this new covenant God clearly distinguished between it and the old covenant he had made with Moses and it was therefore obvious that the one who would mediate it would be the prophet whose coming Moses had foretold. God said:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more".  
Jeremiah 31.31-34.

"I will make a new covenant", God said, thereby confirming the promise in Deuteronomy 18 that a

prophet would come to mediate between God and his people in the likeness of Moses. The promised new covenant was directly compared with the covenant God had made with Moses. The covenant would be different to that given through Moses but the prophet who would mediate it would be like him. It is therefore quite obvious that the prophet whose coming was foretold in Deuteronomy 18.18 would be the one to mediate this new covenant between God and his people. And we read: "Therefore Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant" (Hebrews 9.15). To ratify the first covenant we read that:

Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words'.

Exodus 24.8

Just as the first covenant had therefore been ratified by the blood of a sacrificial offering, so the prophet to follow Moses would be like him and would also ratify God's new covenant with blood. And Jesus therefore said:

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood".

1 Corinthians 11.25

God's promise of the coming of a prophet like Moses who would mediate a new covenant was one of the great blessings in the days preceding the advent of Jesus Christ. Although God mediated the old covenant through Moses, the blazing fire the Israelites saw together with the tempests and other portents made them "entreat that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given" (Hebrews 12.19-20). They all broke the covenant (Jeremiah 31.31) and died in the wilderness like flies (1 Corinthians 10.5). They failed to receive the life that was promised to those who abided by the old covenant.

Therefore God promised to their descendants that he would raise up another prophet like Moses and would mediate a new covenant through him which God's people would both give heed to and obtain the promised blessings accompanying it - true knowledge of God, forgiveness of sins, power to keep God's law, and the public favour of God (Jeremiah 31.33-34). This new covenant Jesus brought in in due time.

Unlike the Israelites under the old covenant who fell by the wayside, the people of God through this new covenant have come "to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel" (Hebrews 12.23-24). This is the covenant which Jesus brought in.

Jesus therefore is the promised prophet like Moses for he mediated the new covenant between God and his people. Like Moses (and in a way in which no other prophet could compare), he also knew God face-to-face and became a direct mediator between God and men. "I know him, I come from him, and he sent me", Jesus said (John 7.29). Again he proclaimed: "No one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11.27). And yet again Jesus said: "Not that anyone has ever seen the Father except him who is from God - he has seen the Father" (John 6.46). And what further evidence do we need that Jesus knew God face-to-face and is the direct mediator between him and men than these two verses: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by me ... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14.6, 14.9).

When he spoke to God face-to-face, "Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him" (Exodus 34. 29-30). When the image of the invisible God was directly revealed through the

transfigured face of Jesus Christ, "his face did shine as the sun" (Matthew 17.2). No other prophet could claim such a distinction - no one else knew God face-to-face in such a way that his face shone while he communed with him.

Not only was the new covenant mediated through Jesus who knew God face-to-face as Moses had done, but he too performed great signs and wonders to confirm his mediatorial work. One of the greatest signs that Moses did was to control the sea: "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind" (Exodus 14.21). Although other prophets had power over rivers (Joshua 3.13, 2 Kings 2.14), no other prophet emulated him in controlling the sea until Jesus came and we read that his disciples exclaimed "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (Matthew 8.27). He caused a raging storm on the Sea of Galilee to cease with just three words: "Peace - be still" (Mark 4.39).

Another of the great signs that Moses did was the feeding of the Israelites with bread from heaven. When the Israelites at the time of Jesus saw him perform a similar miracle by feeding no less than five thousand people with just a few loaves of bread they were convinced that he was the promised prophet.

When the people saw the sign which he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world'.

John 6.14

When they saw the sign, they said "This is the prophet". They knew well enough that the promised prophet would be recognised among other things by the performance of signs similar to those which Moses had done. When Jesus gave no indication of repeating the sign, the Israelites recalled that Moses had performed his feat for forty years unabated. So they said to Jesus, "What sign do you do that we may see and believe you?" (John 6.30), appealing to Moses' act of sustaining the lives of their forefathers in the wilderness. Jesus replied:

"I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh".

John 6.48-51.

In every way he gave proof that he was the prophet who was to come - one to mediate a covenant like that mediated through Moses at Horeb - one who would know God face-to-face - one who would perform great signs and wonders as Moses had done. In every way the Jews were right on this one point when they said "This is really the prophet" (John 7.40).

So it is proved that Muhammad is not foretold in Deuteronomy 18.18 but rather that the prophet whose coming was foretold in that verse was Jesus Christ. We shall go on to see that if Muhammad is not foretold on the Old Testament, neither is he foretold in the New Testament.

We shall again see that Jesus Christ is the climax of all prophecy in all the revealed scriptures of God. For all the promises, revelations and blessings of God are vested in him - the fountainhead of the love and favour of God towards men.

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 1.20

We shall also see, even more clearly, that in the Torah and the Gospel there is only one Saviour, one man alone through whom the favour of God can be obtained. While there were many prophets in ages past - both true and false - yet for us there is only one Lord and one Saviour - Jesus Christ. Again it will be seen how deeply God wishes to impress this truth upon all men that they may believe in and follow Jesus Christ into the Kingdom of Heaven.

For all who do not heed his words or believe in him with all their hearts, there remains only a "fearful prospect of judgment" (Hebrews 10.27) when God will fulfill his warning in Deuteronomy 18.19 by requiring of them their unbelief in the Saviour he sent and he will surely dismiss them, one and all, from his presence for ever and ever.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household.

Acts 16.31

## JESUS AND THE COMFORTER

Whenever Muslims seek to prove that Muhammad is foretold in the New Testament, they immediately appeal to the promise of Jesus that the "Comforter" would follow him and claim that this Comforter was Muhammad (particularly as in the Qur'an, Jesus is alleged to have foretold the coming of Muhammad in Surah 61.6 in similar language). Whereas the Revised Standard Version uses the word "Counsellor" rather than "Comforter", we shall use the word "Comforter" throughout this chapter because it is more familiar to the Muslims. The texts where the Comforter is mentioned by Jesus are:

"And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you".

John 14.16-17.

"But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you".

John 14.26

"But when the Comforter comes, whom I shall send you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me".

John 15.26

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you".

John 16.7

It is generally alleged by Muslims that the Greek word "paracletos" (meaning Comforter, Counsellor, Advocate, etc., in effect, one who unites men to God) is not the original word but that Jesus in fact foretold the coming of Muhammad by name and that the translation of his name into Greek (or at least the meaning of his name in Greek) is "periklutos", that is, the "praised one".

There is not a shred of evidence in favour of the assertion that the original word was "periklutos". We have thousands of New Testament manuscripts pre-dating Islam and not one of these contains the word "periklutos". In view of the fact that Muslims are prone to levelling false allegations that Christians are regularly changing the Bible, it is rather intriguing to find that they have no scruples about doing this themselves when it suits them to do so. In any event a cursory reading of the texts where the word

"paracletos" appears will show that this is the only word that suits the context as I will show in one instance later on in this chapter.

Some wiser Muslims admit that "paracletos" is correct, but they claim in any event that Muhammad was the Comforter whom Jesus was referring to. Let us briefly examine some of the texts in a truly exegetical manner to discover whether Muhammad is indeed the Comforter whose coming Jesus foretold.

It is quite obvious from the four texts quoted that Comforter, Holy Spirit, and Spirit of Truth are interchangeable terms and that Jesus is speaking of the same person in each instance. The one obvious fact that emerges is that the Comforter is a spirit. (The fact that Jesus always speaks of the Spirit in the masculine gender in no way suggests that the Comforter must be a man as some of the publications in the Bibliography suggest. God himself is always spoken of in both the Bible and the Qur'an in the masculine gender and God is spirit - John 4.24. In the same way Jesus always speaks of the Comforter as a spirit and not as a man).

If we apply sound exegesis to John 14.16-17 we shall discover no less than eight reasons why the Comforter cannot possibly be Muhammad.

1. "He will give YOU another Comforter".

Jesus promised his disciples that God would send the Comforter to them. He would send the Spirit of Truth to Peter, and to John, and to the rest of the disciples - not to Meccans. Medinans or Arabians.

2. "He will give you ANOTHER Comforter".

If, as Muslims allege, the original word was periklutos and that Christians changed it into paracletos, then the sentence would have read, "He will give you another praised one". This statement is both out of place in its context and devoid of support elsewhere in the Bible. Jesus is never called the "periklutos" in the Bible (the word appears nowhere in the Bible) so it is grossly unlikely that he would have said "He will give you another praised one" when he never used that title for himself. Worse still, as the Muslims allege that he actually foretold the coming of Muhammad by mentioning his name, the sentence in that case would have read "He will give you another Muhammad". The further the Muslims try to press the point, the more absurd it tends to become.

John 16.12-13 makes it clear that the word "paracletos" is obviously the correct one. The text reads: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth". In other words, I have been your Comforter, your paracletos, and have many things to tell you, but I send the Spirit of Truth to you, another Comforter, another paracletos.

In 1 John 2.1 we read that Christians have an "advocate" with the Father, "Jesus Christ the Righteous", and the word translated "advocate" is paracletos in the Greek. So Jesus is our paracletos, our Comforter and advocate with the Father, and he promised to give his disciples another Comforter. It is therefore logical to find that Jesus promised another paracletos when he himself was described as the paracletos of his followers, but it is illogical to suggest that he would speak of "another periklutos" when the word was never used to describe him in the first place.

3. "To be with you FOREVER".

When Muhammad came he did not stay with his people forever but died in 632 AD and his tomb is in Medina where his body has lain for over 1300 years. Nevertheless Jesus said that the Comforter, once he

had come, would never leave his disciples, but would be with them forever.

4. "The Spirit of Truth whom the world CANNOT receive".

The Qur'an says that Muhammad came as a universal messenger to men (Surah 34.28). If so, Jesus was not referring to Muhammad for he said that the world cannot receive the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth.

5. "You KNOW him".

It is quite obvious from this statement that the disciples knew the Spirit of Truth. As Muhammad was only born more than five hundred years later, it certainly could not be him. The next clause brings out just how the disciples knew him. At this stage we can see quite clearly that the Comforter is a spirit who was in the disciples' presence already.

6. "He dwells WITH you".

Where did the Comforter dwell with them? From various verses, especially John 1.32, we can see that the Spirit was in Jesus himself and so was with the disciples.

7. "He will be IN you".

Here the death-blow is dealt to the theory that Muhammad is the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. As the Spirit was in Jesus, so he would be in the disciples as well. The Greek word here is "en" and this means "right inside". So Jesus was in fact saying "he will be right inside you".

8. The last reason is really a re-emphasis of the first one. Do you notice how often Jesus addresses his own disciples when he speaks of the sphere of influence of the Comforter? "You know him ... he dwells with you ... he will be in you". Quite clearly the disciples were to anticipate the coming of the Comforter as a spirit who would come to them just after Jesus had left them. No other interpretation can possibly be drawn from this text. Only wishful thinking makes the Muslims allege that Muhammad was foretold by Jesus, but a practical interpretation of the texts destroys this possibility.

Let us read how the Spirit came to Jesus: "The Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove" (Luke 3.22). We read that the Spirit, the Comforter, came to the disciples in a similar way just after the ascension of Jesus (as Jesus told them he would): "And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2.3-4). He was with the disciples in the person of Jesus while he was still with them, and he was in the disciples from the day of Pentecost. We thus see the prediction Jesus made in John 14.17 duly fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Within only ten days after the ascension of Jesus, the disciples duly received the Comforter as he was promised to them by Jesus. He had told them to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, should come (Acts 1.4-8) as indeed he did while they were all together praying for his advent in the city. Muhammad is right out of this picture.

Moving on now to John 16.7 (quoted earlier), the whole meaning of this verse also becomes clear from the statement of Jesus, "I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (John 16.12). Jesus also said: "It is to your advantage that I go away" (John 16.7). The disciples could not bear his teaching now because they were ordinary men devoid of power to comprehend or apply what he said. The Spirit of Truth was indeed in Jesus, but was not yet in his disciples, so they were unable to follow

the spiritual elements in his teaching. But after the ascension they received the Spirit and could now communicate and understand his teaching because the Spirit of Truth was in them as well. That is why Jesus said "it is to your advantage that I go away". This is made equally clear elsewhere in the Bible:

What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.  
1 Corinthians 2.9-13.

Paul makes it plain that the Spirit had already been given and if it had not, it could not have been to any advantage to the disciples to be without Jesus once he had ascended to heaven.

So it is abundantly proved that Muhammad is not the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, whose coming Jesus foretold. Who is the Comforter then? He is the very Spirit of the living God as can be seen from some of the quotations already given. On the day when the Comforter duly came upon the disciples, his coming was accompanied by a tremendous sound, "like the rush of a mighty wind" (Acts 2.2). When the Jews heard this, they rushed together to see what was happening. Peter declared to them all:

"This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh' ".  
Acts 2.16-17.

The Comforter, the Spirit of God, had come down on the disciples as Jesus had promised and was to be given to believing Christian men and women from every nation under the sun. But notice how Peter linked the coming of the Spirit with the ascension of Christ:

"This Jesus God raised up and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear".  
Acts 2.32-33.

Clearly the coming of the Comforter was inseparably linked to the risen, ascended glory of Jesus in the highest place that heaven affords. The Comforter is also called "the Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8. 9) and the reason is plain from what Jesus said:

1. "He will glorify me" (John 16.14).
2. "He will bear witness to me" (John 15.26).
3. "He will convince the world concerning sin because they do not believe in me" (John 16. 8-9).
4. "He will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16.14).
5. "He will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14.26).

Quite obviously the great work of the Comforter is to bring people to Jesus, to make them see him as Saviour and Lord, and to draw them to him. The Comforter was given so that the glory of Jesus might be revealed to men and in men. A beautiful example of this is given by the Apostle John:

His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they

remembered that this had been written of him and done to him.

John 12.16

Without the Spirit, they had no understanding, but when they received the Spirit after Jesus was glorified, then they remembered as Jesus said they would. John illustrates this in this passage as well:

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'. Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

John 7.37-39.

As soon as Jesus was glorified the Spirit was given so that the glory of Jesus in heaven might become real to men here on earth. As Peter said (Acts 2.33), once Jesus was exalted at the right hand of God, the Spirit was freely given to his disciples.

Again Peter said, "The God of our fathers glorified Jesus" (Acts 3.13). We cannot see or comprehend this glory of Jesus here on earth (and Jesus himself said, "I do not receive glory from men" John 5.41), but he sent the Spirit so that we might behold this glory by the eye of faith. As Jesus himself said to his disciples of the Spirit:

"He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine, therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you".

John 16.14-15.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and he is given to all true believers so that the glory of Jesus in heaven may become real to men on earth. John makes it plain how a man receives the Holy Spirit:

Now this he spoke about the Spirit, which those who BELIEVED in him were to receive.

John 7.39

To receive the Comforter, the Spirit of God, one must believe in Jesus and surrender body and soul to him. Without the Spirit no one sees or believes in the glory of Christ, but for those who are his true followers and who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1.2), Peter says:

Without having seen him, you love him, though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1.8-9.

The distinction between those who have received the Spirit and those who have not, those who have beheld the glory of Christ and those who have not, comes out very clearly as Peter continues to speak to his fellow-believers:

To you therefore who believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner'.

1 Peter 2.7

The Bible says much about the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, but the great and most handsome work of the Spirit is summed up in Jesus' words:

"HE WILL GLORIFY ME".

## John 16.14

Although the Spirit had been at work in the world before the advent of Jesus Christ, and had indeed filled many of the great prophets and men of old with a longing for the coming Christ, he only finally united himself to men, and men to God, and indeed true believers to one another after the resurrection and ascension of Christ to heaven.

Jesus Christ spoke to his OWN disciples of the coming of the Comforter because the Spirit was sent down to comfort and regenerate all true believers in Jesus. This is one of the most significant and consistent elements of the teaching of Jesus about the Comforter. The prime purpose of the coming of the Comforter - immediately after the ascension of Jesus - was to draw men to him so that those who are influenced by the work of the Comforter will therefore become followers of Jesus. It is further evidence against the theory that Muhammad was the Comforter for, whereas the Comforter would not speak of himself but only of Jesus, Muhammad drew attention away from Jesus to himself, describing himself as the ultimate apostle of God to be followed and obeyed. The Comforter was never to do a thing like this. Jesus made it plain that the Comforter would draw the attention and faith of all men to himself and would glorify him before the eyes of faith of true believers as the Lord of glory in heaven.

After Jesus Christ had ascended to heaven to be glorified at the right hand of God above all the angels and departed saints, the Comforter came immediately upon his disciples to make this glory real to them and through them to spread it all over the world. For Jesus Christ is the very image of the Father's glory. In him are all things united, whether in heaven or on earth. He is the climax of God's plan for the fulness of time. He is the beginning and the end of all God's gracious work in all ages - for all the salvation and glory that God has prepared for those who love him are vested in Jesus.

The Comforter came to give us a foretaste of this glory. He came to make the resplendent glory of Jesus real to those who follow him. As Moses encouraged his people to look forward to the prophet who would be like him, who would mediate a new covenant to save all who truly believe, so the Comforter encourages Christ's followers in this age to look up to the risen, ascended, Lord Jesus Christ who sits on the throne of God in eternal glory above the heavens.

Far from Muhammad being foretold in the Bible, every prophecy, every agent of God, every true prophet and spirit, looks upward towards the radiance of the Father's glory, the one who sits upon the throne, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ ascended to heaven - God took him to himself. For Jesus alone is the Redeemer of the world. He alone is able, as a man, to enter the holy presence of the Father's throne and fill it with his own glorious majesty. So likewise he is able to reconcile sinful men to God and will one day be seen again in all his splendour as he comes to call his own - those who eagerly awaited his coming before his time and all those who since his sojourn on this earth look forward to his return from heaven - to be with him where he is to behold with awe the glory which the Father gave him in his love for him before the foundation of the world.

Moses rejoiced to see his day when speaking of the prophet to come. The Comforter today still rejoices to reveal his glory and majesty to those in whom he dwells. The angels and departed saints await with longing for the day when he shall be revealed to all the universe in all his magnificence - when all men shall be raised from the dead to see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, a day when the Comforter's work will be finally completed, a day when every knee shall bow and

every tongue confess that it is Jesus Christ who is Lord - to the everlasting glory of God the Father - Amen!

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