Difficulties in the Qur'an

The purpose of this page

We do not reject the Qur'an because of this list of contradictions. There are many reasons of much more substantial nature why we do not believe the Qur'an to be from the one true God. You will find those discussed on other pages of this web site (e.g. [1], [2]). This page is not intended as an attack on the Qur'an. Sadly, many Muslims have become unnecessarily aggrevated because they did not understand the purpose of this collection.

It is my experience that many Muslims try to evade a discussion of the real issues regarding the truth of Islam and Christianity by pushing "101 Bible Contradictions" (or similar compilations) into our face. Muslim web sites abound in articles and collections attacking the integrity of the Bible by means of contradiction lists. Many have the attitude that "because the Bible is riddled with contradictions, errors, absurdities and problems, there is no need for me to make the effort to understand it." With such an attitude no real dialog can develop. Our goal is to get beyond superficial word games to discussing the relevant core issues over which we differ.

It has mostly proven useless to explain one set of contradictions because there is always another one that can be added to the list. It is important to be able to give explanations of the difficult Biblical passages including those that seem contradictory. We are working hard to provide good answers to honest questions in our Bible Commentary and the section on alleged Bible contradictions. However, most Muslims' rejection of the Bible is not based on such contradiction lists. For most Muslims this rejection is an integral part of their faith long before they have ever seen any such "contradictions". These lists are usually only used as a convenient means to justify a rejection of the Bible which would otherwise be very difficult to explain rationally.

Counteracting this evasive or even hostile attitude is the purpose of this page. If both sides can come to the recognition that their own book, the scripture which is the basis of their faith, be it the Bible or the Qur'an, contains some very difficult passages which might even look like plain errors or logical contradictions (depending on the level of hostility employed when looking at it), then we might be more forgiving towards the other and be motivated to not judge prematurely but to make a serious effort to understand each of the books and the essential teachings of the respective faith in a deeper way before we come to a decision why we do or do not believe them.

Debates about contradictions are rarely fruitful because people tend to insist reading the texts of the opponent in the most rigid and literal manner to make it look bad, while being very lenient with their own book, allowing extra assumptions, metaphorical interpretations and other means to somehow explain how this can be understood without being a contradiction.

Some Muslims have proven by their provided responses that they possess a quite ingenious and creative mind. It is for our readers to decide whether or not the provided answers are fully satisfactory for them. It is not for me to make that decision on their behalf. This is one reason that I will not remove even those contradictions that I find answered to my personal satisfaction. A second reason is that keeping the effectively answered contradictions on this site will help Muslims and Christians who don't know the possible responses to contradictions they encountered elsewhere, to find them here. As such this page can
be a valuable resource for both Christians and Muslims, similar to various Christian pages about seeming Bible contradictions. To compare like with like, I will make the strongest possible case for something being contradictory and wrong, similar to the Muslim attacks on the Bible. The difference to Muslim web sites is that we give the right of response.

It is our prayer that even this page may help Muslims and Christians to make progress in mutual understanding, to come to a proper perspective regarding the "contradictions issue" and to a realization what the real issues are which we need to concentrate on in our dialogs and debates.

Having clarified the purpose of this page we now challenge our Muslim friends with the following compilation to rethink their approach for determining the truth of scripture.

---

**Introduction**

Because the Bible seemingly contains errors therefore the Bible is not God's word. The Qur'an on the other hand is free from discrepancies and this is proof that the Qur'an is from God since Sura 4:82 states:

> Do they not ponder on the Qur'an?
> Had it been from other than Allah,
> they would surely have found therein much discrepancy.

See also this Muslim presentation: [The no-contradiction challenge of the Qur'an](http://www.answering-islam.org/quran/contra/index.html).

But reality is not as simple as many would want us believe. There are three basic categories of contradictions in the Qur'an:

1. **Internal contradictions**: Verses contradicting each other or the laws of logic
2. **External errors**: Verses contradicting the facts of history or science
3. **Verses contradicting the earlier revelations**

Further: [Contradictions between Muslim Traditions and the Qur'an](http://www.answering-islam.org/quran/contra/index.html)

- Other web sites with pages on errors, contradictions or problems in the Qur'an.

For your convenience: [Download all contradictions](http://www.answering-islam.org/quran/contra.zip) in a .zip format [292 K]

If you are able to resolve to your own satisfaction the Qur'an problems presented here, then probably you will be able to understand that Christians can with a similar effort explain to their own satisfaction most of the difficulties in the Bible. Try to be fair and evaluate the Bible with an equal standard as the Qur'an. Don't judge it with harsher criteria than you are ready to use when reading the Qur'an. Even better, read the Bible to understand its meaning and message and not to find fault with it on such superficial levels.

Think about this: [Errors in the Bible prove that the Qur'an is not from God](http://www.answering-islam.org/quran/contra/index.html).

To several of the presented problems Muslim responses are available on our site. Links to the individual responses will be given usually at the bottom of the pages dealing with the specific issue. If you want to contribute your personal response to one of the topics below I need to insist that you do this in this format also outlining my policy on linking or displaying Muslim responses, as well as the issue of using
Internal Contradictions:

1. **And it just doesn't add up:** Sura 4:11-12 and 4:176 state the Qur'anic inheritance law. When a man dies, and is leaving behind three daughters, his two parents and his wife, they will receive the respective shares of 2/3 for the 3 daughters together, 1/3 for the parents together [both according to verse 4:11] and 1/8 for the wife [4:12] which adds up to more than the available estate. A second example: A man leaves only his mother, his wife and two sisters, then they receive 1/3 [mother, 4:11], 1/4 [wife, 4:12] and 2/3 [the two sisters, 4:176], which again adds up to 15/12 of the available property.

2. **How many angels were talking to Mary?** When the Qur'an speaks about the announcement of the birth of Jesus to the virgin Mary, Sura 3:42,45 speaks about (several) angels while it is only one in Sura 19:17-21.

3. **Further numerical discrepancies** Does Allah's day equal to 1,000 human years (Sura 22:47, 32:5) or 50,000 human years (Sura 70:4)? --- How many gardens are there in paradise? ONE [as stated in 39:73, 41:30, 57:21, 79:41] or MANY [18:31, 22:23, 35:33, 78:32]? --- According to Sura 56:7 there will be THREE distinct groups of people at the Last Judgement, but 90:18-19, 99:6-8, etc. mention only TWO groups. --- There are conflicting views on who takes the souls at death: THE Angel of Death [32:11], THE angels (plural) [47:27] but also "It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death." [39:42]

   Angels have 2, 3, or 4 pairs of wings [35:1]. But Gabriel had 600 wings. [Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 54, Number 455]

4. **Six or eight days of creation?** Sura 7:54, 10:3, 11:7, and 25:59 clearly state that God created "the heavens and the earth" in six days. But in 41:9-12 the detailed description of the creation procedure adds up to eight days.

5. **Quick or Slow Creation?** Allah creates the heavens and the earth in six days [7:54] and many Muslims want to be modern and scientific, and make that six eons, but then again, He creates instantaneously [2:117], "Be! And it is".

6. **Heavens or Earth? Which was created first?** First earth and then heaven [2:29], heaven and after that earth [79:27-30].

7. **Calling together or ripping apart?** In the process of creation heaven and earth were first apart and are called to come together [41:11], while 21:30 states that they were originally one piece and then ripped apart.

8. **What was man created from?** A blood clot [96:1-2], water [21:30, 24:45, 25:54], "sounding" (i.e. burned) clay [15:26], dust [3:59, 30:20, 35:11], nothing [19:67] and this is then denied in 52:35, earth [11:61], a drop of thickened fluid [16:4, 75:37]

9. **Where is Allah and his throne?** Allah is nearer than the jugular vein [50:16], but he is also on the throne [57:4] which is upon the water [11:7], and at the same time so far away, that it takes between 1,000 and 50,000 years to reach reach him [32:5, 70:4].
10. **The origin of calamity?** Is the evil in our life from Satan [38:41], Ourselves [4:79], or Allah [4:78]?

11. **How merciful is Allah's mercy?** He has prescribed mercy for himself [6:12], yet he does not guide some, even though he could [6:35, 14:4].

12. **Will there be inquiry in Paradise?** "neither will they question one another" [23:101] but nevertheless they will be "engaging in mutual inquiry" [52:25], "and they will ... question one another" [37:27].

13. **Are angels protectors?** "NO protector besides Allah" [2:107, 29:22]. But in Sura 41:31 the angels themselves say: "We are your protectors in this life and the Hereafter." And also in other suras is their role described as guarding [13:11, 50:17-18] and protecting [82:10].


15. **Does Allah forgive shirk?** Shirk is considered the worst of all sins, but the author of the Qur'an seems unable to decide if Allah will ever forgive it or not. No [4:48, 116], Yes [4:153, 25:68-71]. Abraham committed this sin of polytheism as he takes moon, sun, stars to be his Lord [6:76-78], yet Muslims believe that all prophets are without any sin.

16. **The event of worship of the golden calf:** The Israelites repented about worshipping the golden calf BEFORE Moses returned from the mountain [7:149], yet they refused to repent but rather continued to worship the calf until Moses came back [20:91]. Does Aaron share in their guilt? No [20:85-90], yes [20:92, 7:151].

17. **Was Jonah cast on the desert shore or was he not?** "Then We cast him on a desert shore while he was sick" [37:145] "Had not Grace from his Lord reached him, he would indeed have been cast off on the naked shore while he was reprobate." [68:49]

18. **Moses and the Injil?** Jesus is born more than 1,000 years after Moses, but in 7:157 Allah speaks to Moses about what is written in the Injil [the book given to Jesus].

19. **Can slander of chaste women be forgiven?** Yes [24:5], No [24:23].

20. **How do we receive the record on Judgment Day?** On Judgement day the lost people are given the Record (of their bad deeds): Behind their back [84:10], or in their left hand [69:25].

21. **Can angels disobey?** No angel is arrogant, they all obey Allah [16:49-50], but: "And behold, we said to the ANGELS: 'Bow down to Adam'. And THEY bowed down, EXCEPT Iblis. He refused and was haughty." [2:34].

22. **Three contradictions in 2:97 and 16:101-103** Who brings the revelation from Allah to Muhammad? The ANGEL Gabriel [297], or the Holy Spirit [16:102]? The new revelation confirms the old [2:97] or substitutes it [16:101]? The Qur'an is PURE Arabic [16:103] but there are numerous foreign, non-Arabic words in it.

23. **The infinite loop problem** Sura 26:192,195,196: "It (the Qur'an) is indeed a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds, ... in clear Arabic speech and indeed IT (the Qur'an) is in the writings of the earlier (prophets)." Now, the 'earlier writings' are the Torah and the Injil for example, written in Hebrew and Greek. HOW can an ARABIC Qur'an be contained in books of other languages? Furthermore, it would have to contain this very passage of the Qur'an since the Qur'an is properly
contained in them. Hence these earlier writings have to be contained in yet other earlier writings and we are in an infinite loop, which is absurd.

24. "An old woman" and God's character About the story of Lot: "So we delivered him and his family, - all except an old woman who lingered behind." [Sura 26:170-171] And again: "But we saved him and his family, except his wife: she was of those who lagged behind. [Sura 7:83]. Either this is a contradiction or if indeed Lot's wife is derogatorily called "an old woman" then this does not show much respect for her as a wife of a prophet.

25. More problems with the story of Lot "And his people gave NO answer but this: They said, "Drive them out of your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!" [Sura 7:82 & 27:56]. Yet: "But his people gave NO answer but this: They said: "Bring us the Wrath of Allah if thou tellest the truth." [Sura 29:29]. Obviously these answers are different.

26. The "pleasure" of Allah? Is God's action of punishment or mercy and guidance or misguidance arbitrary?

27. Did Abraham smash the idols? The accounts of Abraham, Suras 19:41-49, 6:74-83 differ quite a bit from Sura 21:51-59. While in Sura 21 Abraham confronts his people strongly, and even destroys the idols, in Sura 19 Abraham shuts up after his father threatens him to stone him for speaking out against the idols. And he seems not only to become silent, but even to leave the area ("turning away from them all").


29. Was Noah driven out? "Before them *the people of Noah* rejected (their messenger): They rejected Our servant and said, 'Here is One possessed!' And he was driven out." [Sura 54:9] Now, if he is driven out [expelled from their country] how come they can scoff at him while he is building the ark since we read "Forthwith he (starts) constructing the Ark: Every time that the Chiefs of *his people* passed by him, they threw ridicule on him." [Sura 11:38] He cannot be both: Driven out and near enough that they can regularly pass by.

30. Pharaoh's repentance in the face of death? According to Sura 10:90-92, Pharaoh repented "in the sight of death" and was saved. But Sura 4:18 says that such a thing can't happen.

31. Abrogation? "The words of the Lord are perfect in truth and justice; there is NONE who can change His words." [Sura 6:115] Also see 6:34 and 10:65. But then Allah (Muhammad?) sees the need to exchange some of them for "better ones" [Sura 2:106, 16:101]. And it is not for ignorant people to question Allah because of such practices!

32. Guiding to truth? "Say: 'God - He guides to the truth; and which is worthier to be followed ...?'" [Sura 10:35] But how much is left over of this worthiness when we also read: "Allah leads astray whom he pleases, and he guides whom He pleases, ..." [Sura 14:4]. And how do we know in which of Allah's categories of pleasure we fall? How sure can a Muslim be that he is one of those guided right and not one of those led astray?

33. What is the punishment for adultery? Flogging with a 100 stripes (men and women) [24:2], "confine them to houses until death do claim them (lifelong house arrest - for the women) [4:15]. For men: "If they repent and amend, leave them alone" [4:16]. 24:2 contradicts both the procedure for women and men in Sura 4. And why is the punishment for women and men equal in Sura 24 but different in Sura 4?
34. **Will Christians enter Paradise or go to Hell?** Sura 2:62 and 5:69 say "Yes", Sura 5:72 (just 3 verses later) and 3:85 say "No".


36. **Was Pharaoh Drowned or Saved when chasing Moses and the Israelites?** Saved [10:92], drowned [28:40, 17:103, 43:55].

37. **When Commanded Pharaoh the Killing of the Sons?** When Moses was a Prophet and spoke God's truth to Pharaoh [40:23-25] or when he was still an infant [20:38-39]?

38. **When/how are the fates determined?** "The night of power is better than a thousand months. The angels and spirit descend therein, by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees." [97:3,4] "Lo! We revealed it on a blessed night." [44:3] To Muslims, the "Night of Power" is a blessed night on which fates are settled and on which everything relating to life, death, etc., which occurs throughout the year is decreed. It is said to be the night on which Allah's decrees for the year are brought down to the earthly plane. In other words, matters of creation are decreed a year at a time. Contradicting this, Sura 57:22 says, "No affliction befalls in the earth or in your selves, but it is in a Book before we create it." This means it is written in the Preserved Tablet, being totally fixed in Allah's knowledge before anyone was created. All of the above is contradicted by "And every man's fate We have fastened to his own neck." This says that man alone is responsible for what he does and what happens to him. [17:13]

39. **Wine: Good or bad?** Strong drink and ... are only an infamy of Satan's handiwork. [5:90, also 2:219]. Yet on the other hand in Paradise are rivers of wine [47:15, also 83:22,25]. How does Satan's handiwork get into Paradise?

40. **Will all Muslims go to Hell?** According to Sura 19:71 every Muslim will go to Hell (for at least some time), while another passage states that those who die in Jihad will go to Paradise immediately.

41. **Will Jesus burn in Hell?** Jesus is raised to Allah, [Sura 4:158], near stationed with him [Sura 3:45], worshiped by millions of Christians, yet Sura Sura 21:98 says, that all that are worshiped by men besides Allah will burn in Hell together with those who worship them.

42. **Jinns and men created for worship or for Hell?** Created only to serve God [Sura 51:56], many of them made for Hell [Sura 7:179].

43. **Who is the father of Jesus?** A more involved argument that is difficult to summarize in one sentence.

44. **Begetting and Self-sufficiency** A self-contradiction on account of confused terminology.

45. **Could Allah have a son?** Sura 39:4 affirms and Sura 6:101 denies this possibility.

46. **Did Jesus Die already?** Surah 3:144 states that all messengers died before Muhammad. But 4:158 claims that Jesus was raised to God (alive?).

47. **One Creator or many?** The Qur'an uses twice the phrase that Allah is "the best of creators" [23:14, 37:125]. What other creators are in mind? On the other hand, many verses make clear that Allah alone is "the creator of all things" [e.g. 39:62]. There is nothing left for others to be a creator of.
From among all nations or from Abraham's seed? Surah 29:27 states that all prophets came from Abraham's seed. But 16:36 claims that Allah raised messengers from among every people.

Marrying the wives of adopted sons? It is important that Muslims can marry the divorced wives of adopted sons [Sura 33:37], yet it is forbidden to adopt sons [Sura 33:4-5].

Another eleven contradictions...

Further:
- Examples of conflicting versions of the same story in the Qur'an
- Contradictory Grammar
- ... and more ...

Further pages with Muslim responses:
- A summary response to (some of items) above
- Responses by Ishak Mermerci

Adnan Khan also collects responses to contradictions on this sub site of "Answers to Polemics against Islam". That is also the place where I first found Misha'al Al-Kadhi’s response titled "Does the Word of God in the Noble Qur'an Contain Contradictions?" He never informed me that he was writing about me ... Maybe he hoped that as long as I don't know about it he will not be refuted? Carefully compare my reasoning and his reply, since many times he only responds to the short abstract given on this page, without paying any attention to the detailed discussion of each of these contradictions, found when one follows the given links.

The same approach was taken by Laaman Ball in his Response to Internal Contradictions which prompted my question in return.

Some interesting responses from the sectarian Qur'an Only camp: [* , * , *]

Osama Abdallah also put together a number of responses [* , *]

Answering Islam's Critics is Shabir Ally's new page in response to the Qur'an Contradictions. Having just written a response to only the first entry above, he already claims they are all invalid. That seems somewhat premature to us.

External Contradictions:

Introductory question

Science:

1. Solomon listening to ants? In Sura 27:18-19 Solomon overhears a conversation of ants. Fact is that ants do not use sound but smell to communicate.

2. The stars and the moon The Qur'an teaches that there are seven heavens one above the other [67:3, 71:15], and that the stars are in the lower heaven [67:5, 37:6, 41:12], but the moon is depicted as being in/inside the seven heavens [71:16], even though in reality the stars are much further away from the earth than the moon.
3. Qur'an and Science: Section Four in Dr. Campbell's book
4. Qur'an and Embryology
5. Can non-living matter think, feel and have a will?
6. The human embryonic development
7. The place of Sun rise and Sun set
8. Stars created to be thrown at devils?
9. Sun and moon are subject to man?
10. Mountains and Earthquakes
11. The impossible conversation
12. Solomon and the animals...
13. Thinking with the breasts?
14. All things are made in pairs? Sura 51:49 claims that everything is created in pairs. But this is not true. There are quite a number of things that have no counterpart and species where only one gender exists.

History:
15. Moses and the Samaritan?
16. The farthest Mosque?
17. Alexander the Great, a Muslim?
18. None else was named "John" before John the Baptist?
19. Two Pharaohs who crucified?
20. Burnt bricks in Egypt?
21. Were they utterly destroyed?
22. The anachronistic title al-`Aziz given to Potiphar [with special gratitude to Islamic Awareness for making such a big deal about a minor point on a defunct web page, and forcing the issue into public attention.]

The Qur'an in Contradiction to the Earlier Revelations:

Ultimately, the strongest, most serious problem of the Qur'an is that it affirms the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians as authentic and true revelation from God (cf. what the Qur'an says about the Bible), while radically denying central aspects of their message, e.g. the core themes of sacrifice and atonement in the Torah, the crucifixion of Jesus, the deity of Jesus and even the mere messianic title "Son of God" for Jesus, the very nature of God, the fall and the sinfulness of man (*, *), necessity and means of salvation, etc. For this reason Muslims had to invent the unwarranted theory of corruption of the earlier scriptures, even against the clear testimony of the Qur'an itself.

In the following some smaller discrepancies between the Qur'an and the scriptures it supposedly confirms.

Historical Compressions:
1. Saul, David, Gideon and Goliath
2. A Samaritan tempting the Israelites in Moses time?
3. Moses and the Gospel?
4. Punishment for future disobedience?
5. Mary, the sister of Aaron?
6. Pharaoh and Haman?
7. Abraham's name
8. Abraham and Solomon

Other contradictions in comparison to the Bible:

Introductory remark
9. Did God teach Adam the names of the animals?
10. Animal sacrifices for Christians?
11. How many messengers at Noah's time?
12. Why did the Queen of Sheba come to Solomon?
13. Ezra the Son of God?
14. Jesus reached old age?
15. Did the golden calf say 'Moo'?
16. Did disobedience result in extra commandments?
17. How many messengers were sent to Noah's people?
18. The Progeny of Abraham?
19. Two young men?

More contradictions between Qur'an and Bible

Do they not ponder on the Qur'an?
Had it been from other than Allah,
they would surely have found therein much discrepancy.
-- Sura 4:82

Since this verse is claiming that there is "no contradiction / discrepancy" in the Qur'an, therefore itself has to be part of the list of contradictions because it contradicts the existence of the above listed contradictions. Or would you say because it says "much" and the above aren't "enough of them" yet to qualify for "much", all is actually fine?

If you want to use these contradictions when talking to your Muslim friends, then read this.
A book on this topic, listing several hundred difficult issues in the Qur'an is:
`Abdallah `Abd al-Fadi
Is the Qur'an Infallible?
Order Number VB 4009 E
available from:
Light of Life, P.O.Box 13, A-9503 Villach, Austria
Also available in German (Titel: Ist der Koran fehlerlos?) and Arabic.

Other Pages on these topics:
● Contradictions in the Qur'an
● Chapters 6 - 11 in the book "Behind the Veil"
● Errors in the Qur'an
● A Partial List of Problems and Contradictions in the Quran
● Quran Contradictions

If you know of another contradiction or error I have missed so far, I would appreciate a message informing me about it.

The reason for this page...
If you have browsed the contradictions page and have the feeling this is a really mean, disrespectful and distasteful attack on the Qur'an, ... and Muslims would never do things like that to the Bible ... maybe you would like to have a look around some Muslim sites:
● The Bible Criticism Page [1], [2], [3], [4] is copied and displayed on many Islamic sites and often one of the first links that you see when entering these Islamic pages: [1], [1a], [2], ... [3], and a similar page is here.
● A List of Biblical Contradictions taken from Infidels.org. (see the Christian response).

What do you think about Muslims using Atheist material?
I take no joy in this approach. Muslims have forced it on me with their pages.
Please read the purpose statement for this page to understand my motivation better.

Furthermore, there are "genuinely" Muslim pages, that are not just relying on the atheists, but they have their own Bible contradictions. I am giving again several locations of the identical text, to show how important these books are to Muslims and how often they are used.
● Shabir Ally's "101 Clear Contradictions in the Bible" are quite popular, but it is interesting to note that none of the Muslim pages is willing to link to the Christian response to their attack on the Bible.
What is the fear? Why do Muslims demand that we link to their responses on the Qur'an contradictions but they are not willing to link to the Christian response to Bible contradictions?
● Abdul Rahman Dimashkiah presents "Let the Bible Speak" ([1], [2], [3], [4], [5])
Dr. Norlain Dindang Mababaya's "God: Is not the Author of Confusion" is responded to on our site

101 Questions About Christianity ([1], [2])

Bible Contradictions

Mistakes & Contradictions in the Bible

====> Christian Responses

Evaluating the Claims of the Qur'an

Answering Islam Home Page