

The Bible and the Qur'an

Thousands protest in Afghanistan, chant 'Death to America' over once-planned Quran burning

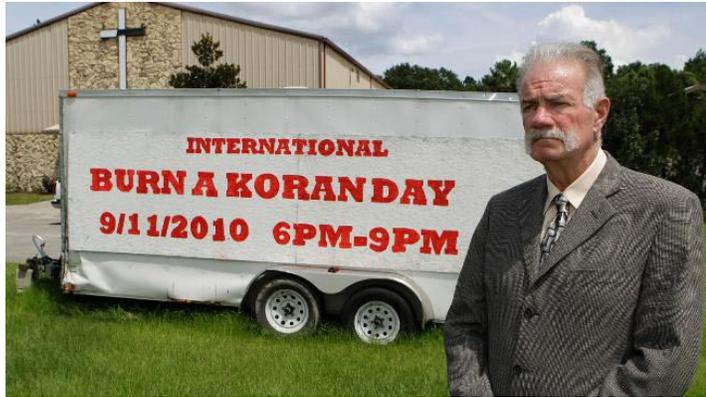
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(source: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/09/11/thousands-afghanistan-protest-chant-death-america-planned-quran-burning/>)

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghans set fire to tires in the streets and shouted "Death to America" for a second day Saturday despite a decision by an American pastor to call off plans to burn copies of the Islamic holy book.

The protests, the largest drawing a crowd estimated at more than 10,000 people, continued despite a decision by a Florida pastor to call off plans to burn copies of the Quran on the ninth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States that triggered the war in Afghanistan.

The pastor, Terry Jones, told NBC on Saturday that "we feel that God is telling us to stop" the Quran burning, which had stirred outrage among millions of Muslims and others worldwide.



"We're not going to go back and do it," Jones said, referring to the planned burning. "It is totally canceled."

But in a country where most people have limited access to newspapers, television and the Internet, most Afghans were unaware of Jones' decision. The Taliban have been distributing pamphlets decrying Jones' plans, claiming they showed the Americans were in Afghanistan to wage war against Islam.

In Logar province near the capital of Kabul, police fired warning shots to prevent protesters from storming the governor's residence in the provincial capital of Puli Alam, officials said. Villagers set fire to tires and briefly blocked the main highway to neighboring Pakistan, according to provincial spokesman Din Mohammad Darwish.

Nabi Charkhi, the deputy provincial police chief, estimated the crowd at more than 10,000. Witnesses said Taliban agitators were among the crowd. The witnesses spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear for their personal safety. At least four people were injured, police said.

"All these youths, elders have gathered here because of the Quran," said Amir Gul, a Logar protester. "We will continue our protest until they change their decision about burning our holy book and we will not keep silent."

Another protester, Abdullah Hanafi, said that if copies of the Quran are set ablaze, the government should join forces with the Taliban "to force all the invaders from our country."

In the northeastern province of Badakhshan, several thousand people took to the streets in three separate districts, although the demonstrations were generally peaceful, according to provincial police chief Gen. Agha Noor Kemtuz.

The Bible and the Qur'an

Several hundred protesters rallied Saturday outside the giant Bagram Air Field, a major NATO base north of Kabul. The protest ended peacefully after about an hour, Afghan officials said.

At least 11 people were injured in similar protests across Afghanistan on Friday.

Last Tuesday, the top U.S. and NATO commander, Gen. David Petraeus, warned that images of the burning of a Quran "would undoubtedly be used by extremists in Afghanistan — and around the world — to inflame public opinion and incite violence."

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen echoed those sentiments, saying any burning "would be in a strong contradiction with the all the values we stand for and fight for."

A pamphlet circulated by the Taliban among Afghan refugees in the Pakistani city of Quetta called the burning of the Quran "an immoral and stupid crime"

"And it is Americans who are doing this," the pamphlet said. "This is the brutal policy of the enemy of Muslims."

In 2005, 15 people died and scores were wounded in riots in Afghanistan sparked by a story in Newsweek magazine alleging interrogators at the U.S. detention center in Guantanamo Bay placed copies of the Quran in washrooms and flushed one down the toilet to get inmates to talk. Newsweek later retracted the story.

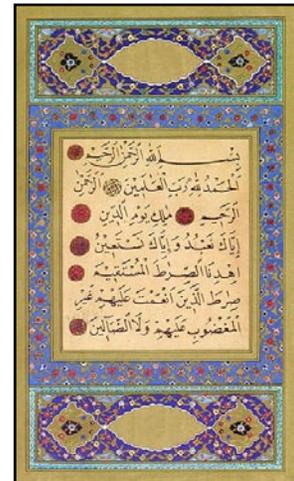
Genesis 16: 1-16 KJV

1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. 4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. 5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee. 6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. 7 And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. 8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. 9 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. 10 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. **11 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. 12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.** 13 And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? 14 Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. 15 And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. 16 And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

The Bible and the Qur'an

The **Qur'an** ([[qur'ʔa:n](#)] pronounced [koor-AHN](#); [Arabic](#): [أَلْقُرْآنُ](#) *al-qur'ān*, literally “the recitation”) is the central religious text of [Islam](#), also sometimes [transliterated](#) as **Quran**, **Kuran**, **Koran**, **Qur'ān**, **Coran** or **al-Qur'ān**. Muslims believe the Qur'an to be the verbal book of divine guidance and direction for mankind. Muslims also consider the original [Arabic](#) verbal text to be the final revelation of [God](#).

Islam holds that the Qur'an was revealed from [Allah](#) to [Muhammad](#) orally through the angel [Jibrīl](#) (Gabriel) over a period of approximately twenty-three years, beginning in 610 [CE](#) (610 AD), when he was forty, and concluding in 632 [CE](#) (632 AD), the year of his death. Muslims further believe that the Qur'an was memorized, recited and written down by Muhammad's [companions](#) after every revelation dictated by [Muhammad](#). Most of Muhammad's [companions](#)—tens of thousands—learned the Qur'an by heart, repeatedly recited in front of Muhammad for his approval or the approval of other [Sahaba](#) Muhammad had approved. The companions also compiled it in written form while Muhammad was alive. Muslim tradition agrees that although the Qur'an was authentically memorized completely by tens of thousands verbally,



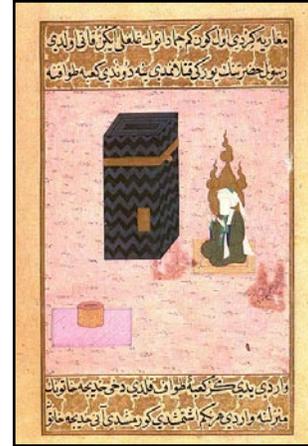
the Qur'an was still established textually into a single book form shortly after Muhammad's death by order of the first [Caliph Abu Bakr](#) suggested by his future successor [Umar](#) Hafsa, Muhammad's widow and Umar's daughter, was entrusted with that Quran text after the second Caliph Umar passed away. When Uthman, the third Caliph, started noticing differences in the [dialect](#) of the Qur'an, he requested Hafsa to allow him to use the Qur'an text in her possession to be set as the standard dialect, the [Quraish](#) dialect aka [Fus'ha](#) ([Modern Standard Arabic](#)). Before returning that Qur'an text to Hafsa, Uthman immediately made several copies of Abu Bakar's Qur'anic compilation and ordered all other texts to be burned. This process of formalization of the orally transmitted text to Abu Bakar's Qur'anic text is known as the "[Uthmanic recension](#)". The present form of the Qur'an text is accepted by most scholars as the original version compiled by Abu Bakr.

[Muslims](#) regard the Qur'an as the main [miracle](#) of Muhammad, as proof of his prophethood, and as the culmination of a series of divine messages. These started, according to Islamic belief, with the messages revealed to [Adam](#), regarded in Islam as the first [prophet](#), and continued with the [Suhuf Ibrahim](#) (Scrolls of Abraham), the [Tawrat](#) (Torah or [Pentateuch](#)) of [Moses](#), the [Zabur](#) ([Tehillim](#) or [Book of Psalms](#)) of [David](#), and the [Injil](#) ([Gospel](#)) of [Jesus](#). The Qur'an assumes familiarity with major narratives recounted in [Jewish and Christian scriptures](#), summarizing some, dwelling at length on others, and, in some cases, presenting alternative accounts and interpretations of events. The Qur'an describes itself as a book of guidance, sometimes offering detailed accounts of specific historical events, and often emphasizing the moral significance of an event over its narrative sequence.

source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quoran>

The Bible and the Qur'an

Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullāh (Arabic: محمد; Transliteration: *Muḥammad*; pronounced [mʊˈħæmməd] (; also spelled **Muhammed** or **Mohammed**) (ca. 570/571 Mecca[مَكَّة] / [مَكَّة] – June 8, 632), was the founder of the religion of **Islam** [إِسْلَام] and is regarded by **Muslims** as a **messenger** and **prophet** of **God** (Arabic: الله *Allāh*), the greatest law-bearer in a series of **Islamic prophets** and by most Muslims the last prophet as taught by the **Qur'an 33:40–40**. Muslims thus consider him the restorer of an uncorrupted original **monotheistic faith** (*islām*) of **Adam**, **Noah**, **Abraham**, **Moses**, **Jesus** and **other prophets**. He was also active as a **diplomat**, **merchant**, **philosopher**, **orator**, **legislator**, **reformer**, **military general**, and, according to Muslim belief, an agent of divine action. In **Michael H. Hart's** *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, Muhammad is described as the most influential person in history. Hart asserted that Muhammad was "supremely successful" in both the religious and secular realms.



Born in 570 in the **Arabian** city of **Mecca**, he was orphaned at an early age and brought up under the care of his uncle **Abu Talib**. He later worked mostly as a merchant, as well as a shepherd, and was first married by age 25. Discontented with life in Mecca, he retreated to a cave in the surrounding mountains for **meditation** and reflection. According to Islamic beliefs it was here, at age 40, in the month of **Ramadan**, where he received **his first revelation** from God. Three years after this event Muhammad started **preaching** these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "**God is One**", that complete "surrender" to Him (lit. *islām*) is the only way (*dīn*) acceptable to God, and that he himself was a prophet and messenger of God, in the same vein as **other Islamic prophets**.

Muhammad gained few **followers** early on, and was met with **hostility from some Meccan tribes**; he and his followers were treated harshly. To escape persecution, Muhammad sent some of his followers to **Abyssinia** before he and his remaining followers in Mecca migrated to **Medina** (then known as Yathrib) in the year 622. This event, the **Hijra**, marks the beginning of the **Islamic calendar**, which is also known as the Hijri Calendar. In Medina, Muhammad united the conflicting tribes, and after eight years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, his followers, who by then had grown to 10,000, **conquered Mecca**. In 632, a few months after returning to Medina from his **Farewell pilgrimage**, Muhammad fell ill and died. By the time of his death, most of the **Arabian Peninsula** had **converted to Islam**; and he united the **tribes of Arabia** into a single **Muslim religious polity**.

The revelations (or *Ayat*, lit. "Signs of **God**") — which Muhammad reported receiving until his death — form the verses of the **Qur'an**, regarded by Muslims as the "Word of God" and around which the religion is based. Besides the Qur'an, Muhammad's life (*sira*) and traditions (*sunnah*) are also upheld by Muslims. They discuss Muhammad and other **prophets of Islam** with reverence, adding the phrase *peace be upon him* whenever their names are mentioned. While conceptions of Muhammad in **medieval Christendom** and **premodern** times were largely negative, appraisals in **modern history** have been far less so. His life and deeds have been **debated and criticized** by followers and opponents over the centuries. He is revered as a true prophet and **Manifestation of God** in the **Baha'i Faith**.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad>

The Bible and the Qur'an

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AN HISTORICAL COMPARISON

Source: <http://debate.org.uk/topics/history/bib-qur/conclu.htm>

Now that we have carried out a cursory study of the historicity for both the Qur'an and the Bible, it is important that we make some conclusions. What can we say concerning the veracity of these two scriptures in light of the evidence produced by the manuscript, document and archeological data at our disposal?

Starting with the Qur'an, it is reasonable to conclude that these findings indeed give us reason for pause concerning its reliability. Manuscript, as well as documentary and archaeological evidence indicates that much of what the Qur'an maintains does not coincide with the historical data at our disposal which comes from that period. From the material amassed from external sources in the 7th-8th centuries, we now know:

- 1) that the **Jews** still retained a relationship with the Arabs until at least 640 A.D.;
- 2) that Jerusalem and not Mecca was more-than-likely the city which contained the original **sanctuary** for Islam, as **Mecca** was not only unknown as a viable city until the end of the seventh century, but it was not even on the international trade route;
- 3) that the **Qibla** (direction of prayer) was not fixed towards Mecca until the eighth century, but to an area much further north, possibly Jerusalem;
- 4) that the **Dome of the Rock** situated in Jerusalem was possibly the original sanctuary;
- 5) that **Muhammad** was not known as the seal of prophets until the late seventh century;
- 6) that the earliest we even hear of any **Qur'an** is not until the mid-eighth century;
- 7) and that the earliest Qur'anic **writings** do not coincide with the current Qur'anic text. All of this data contradicts the Qur'an which is in our possession, and adds to the suspicion that the Qur'an which we now read is NOT the same as that which was supposedly collated and canonized in 650 A.D. under Uthman, as Muslims contend (if indeed it even existed at that time). One can only assume that there must have been an evolution in the Qur'anic text. Consequently, the sole thing we can say with a certainty is that only the documents which we now possess (from 790 A.D. onwards) are the same as that which is in our hands today, written not 16 years after Muhammad's death but 160 years later, and thus not 1,400 years ago, but only 1,200 years ago.

As for the Bible, with the abundance of existing manuscripts (handwritten copies) of the New Testament (more than 24,000), we know little has been lost through the transmission of the text. In fact there is more evidence for the reliability of the text of the New Testament than there is for any ten pieces of classical literature put together. It is in better textual shape than the 37 plays of William Shakespeare which were written a mere 300 years ago, after the invention of the printing press! This is indeed surprising, considering the early period in which the manuscripts were compiled, as well as the flimsy material on which they were written. The fact that we have such an abundance of manuscripts still in our possession points to the importance the scriptures have held for the church over the centuries. As far as we can know, the names, places, and events mentioned in the Bible have been recorded accurately so that what we have

The Bible and the Qur'an

is the representation of what God said and did. Besides the massive numbers of early New Testament documents, the Old Testament can also be substantiated by the Jewish community who continue to corroborate the proof for its accuracy, as well as documents such as the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls which give added weight to the claim that it has never been changed.

Even the Qur'an, possibly written during the 7th-8th centuries recognized the authority of our scriptures (see suras 2:136; 3:2-3; 4:136; 5:47-52,68; 10:95; 21:7; and 29:46). We also know that, outside of the few scribal errors, the historical events and personages are adequately correct, as they do not confuse names, dates and events, and in fact, surprisingly, continue to coincide with current archaeological findings. This is indeed significant, since with each successive year, ongoing documental and archaeological discoveries fail to divulge any historical contradictions. Instead they continue to corroborate what the Bible has been saying for 2,000-3,000 years (examples such as the *Ebla* tablets, or the newly discovered tomb of the priest *Caiaphus* give continuing credibility to the scriptures historical trustworthiness).

Therefore, the testimony of the historical evidence is that the Bible and not the Qur'an can be trusted as an accurate and reliable historical document. While we continue to unearth data which substantiates the Bible's accuracy, we likewise unearth further data which eradicates the validity for the Qur'anic account. If a scripture claims to be a revelation from God, it must prove its claim by establishing its historical credentials, to the extent that even a third party can agree upon the evidence provided. This the Bible and not the Qur'an does adequately.

We must also know that the Bible is unique? Consider: Here is a book written over a 1,500 year span (about 40 generations), by more than 40 authors, among whose number were found: kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, a herdsman, a general, a cupbearer, a doctor, a tax collector, and a rabbi. It was written on three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe, and in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial topics, yet from Genesis right on through to Revelation the authors all spoke with harmony and continuity on the theme of the unfolding story of "God's redemption of humanity."

If God truly created the world for His pleasure, He would have created it to work to a pattern. This pattern we would expect to find revealed in His Word; as indeed we do, not only in the life of Jesus, the incarnate Word, who came and dwelt among us, but in the truth of the Gospel which was found in His teaching and later written down by His apostles. It is therefore not surprising that many cultures and governments even today continue to follow its precepts, laws and institutions, even though they do not necessarily adhere to its authorship.

It should not surprise us then that the Bible continues to be the source of God's revelation to His creation, for families and communities around the world, and that, according to the latest statistics, the Bible and not the Qu'ran is uncontested as the most popular book ever written. The statistics prove that it is read by more people and published in more languages than any other book in the history of humanity, so that even now "one copy of the Bible is published every three seconds day and night; or 22 copies every minute day and night; or 1,369 copies every hour day and night; and 32,876 copies every day in the year, and so on...".

It is logical, then, that Christianity, because it holds the repository of Biblical principles and thinking, is the fastest conversion-growing religion in the world today. What better testimony could one ask to demonstrate the Bible's claim to be the truly revealed and inspired Word of God.