

Muhammad the Last Messenger of Allah

Summary of 12.4 "Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree IV: Moses' Prophecy About Muhammad (P)"

Last week's program was basically a discussion of the prophecies in the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament and we referred to two important prophecies. One is in Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 18 where God promised to raise a prophet like unto Moses from the brethren of the Israelites. We also discussed the mistaken interpretation to say that this prophecy applies to Joshua or Jesus because this does not apply to either and that the comparison between Moses and Muhammad shows a very close similarity than any other prophet, Israelites or otherwise. We discussed also some of the objections raised that why not include the children of Ketura who are also kin to the Israelites, but again we said that there is no prophet that came with a complete code of law among the children of Ketura. It was only prophet Muhammad that resembles Moses in that respect.

We also discussed a second prophecy, in chapter 33 verses 1 and 2 of the Book of Deuteronomy, where it speaks of God coming from Sinai and rising from Seir and shining forth from Paran. We indicated that this refers to three great prophets in history: Sinai in reference to Moses, Seir in reference to Jesus and is in New Jerusalem and we showed many sources that indicate that it's a reference to Palestine. Then the third stage shining forth or completion of the message from Mount Paran. We discussed the mistaken identification of Paran forgetting that the Bible itself, in 21:21 indicates that this is the place where Hagar and Ishmael dwelt and that is known to historically be Mecca. So the same prophecy speaks of true great Israelite prophets, Moses and Jesus, and one, the greatest Ishmaelite prophet, Muhammad may peace be upon them all.

12.5 Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree V: Isaiah's Prophecies

Host: On last week's program you had mentioned certain passages from the Torah, are there any other prophecies in the Old Testament aside from those in the Torah?

Jamal Badawi:

There are quite a few. Some can be found within the Psalms of David. Some can be found in the Book of Habakkuk and even some can be found in the Song of Solomon. Since we discussed some of these in detail in the previous series a while back, I thought I'd relay three with some additional information that I have been able to find since the series was aired initially. I'm focusing especially on chapter 11, 21 and 41 in the book of Isaiah. All of these three prophecies have one common thread that identifies the great personality that is predicted or prophesized there with the children

of Ishmael whether through Tema or whether through Kedar they all refer to children of Ishmael.

Let's start with the first one, in the book of Isaiah it says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins" (Isaiah 11:1-5).

In the tenth verse it says, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:10). There are three basic clues in this prophecy. The first is that this person that will arise from the stem of Jesse will be amply blessed by God. The spirit of God will be upon him, He will give him wisdom, knowledge of God, understanding, fear of God, riotous, he will be faithful and trustworthy. Secondly, another group of clues or description of the person to come is related to power, not just spiritual power but also temporal power as well. He will be a judge, he will rule in justice, he will bring justice to the poor and he will be engaged in fighting against the wicked until peace has been achieved. A third important clue is that the words coming through his mouth, his utterances will have a great impact upon humanity. Not only in one place- it says he will smite the earth with his mouth- that is more influential than fighting the wicked in the battlefield would be the impact of the words coming to him and revealed through him will have a tremendous impact on earth.

Now there are two major questions: 1) Who after Isaiah (which means after Moses, David and Solomon) fit in this prophecy best? I would say that no one other than prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him can meet those requirements. Yes there have been prophets who could be described as having all the moral descriptions: that they are good people, that God's spirit was upon them, that they had the knowledge of God- that all applies. But how many of those great prophets as well were judges, rulers, and had tremendous impact not only in one locality but upon the entirety of humanity? All the Israelite prophets' impact was mainly among the Israelites. Jesus was never a judge or ruler on earth. Again, who among all these prophets received a revelation so eloquent (that it was miraculous to even the most eloquent of the Arabs) and still until today still has tremendous impact among humanity? The Qur'an did. No book after the previous great revelations can come close even to the Qur'an in this particular part. So the answer this question is most definitely a reference to prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

And 2) Who is this Jesse after all because it identifies him as someone who is going to come from the stem of Jesse? The answer comes directly from The Encyclopedia Biblica edited by Thomas Kelly Cheyne. It says, "Jesse is contracted from Ishmael" because Ishmael in Hebrew is Yeshmael which means "God hears". It is not uncustomary in Hebrew scriptures to abbreviate longer names. So when Yeshmael is

abbreviated it is Yeshe and that in turn changes to Jesse. It's similar to Yehova, which is Jehovah.

So the answer to both questions is that none but prophet Muhammad meets those requirements coming from the descendants of Ishmael and has all the characteristics. To me this is so much and obvious prophecy that anyone who tries to deny it is only trying to avoid facing the truth.

Host: I wholeheartedly agree brother. However, are there any other objections to this?

Jamal Badawi:

Yes, we must discuss objections because nothing is certain unless you consider objections, weak as they may be, but we must look at them nonetheless. The most common objection is that some people make reference to the New Testament saying that this prophecy is actually about Jesus. They say that Jesse is indeed the name of David's father and so is in reference to Jesus peace be upon him.

I must say before making a rebuttal of this objection is that when I say it doesn't apply to Jesus it has nothing to do with any belittling of Jesus because as indicated numerous times before that Muslims have to love, respect and honor him. We don't need any prophecy to prove that Jesus is genuine because he is genuine according to the Muslim faith and there is no question about that. To say that this prophecy doesn't apply to him is to say that this has been misinterpreted by giving reasons.

To start with Jesse is a very minor figure in the Old Testament and if we're referring to someone great whose coming from the stem of another you'd mention whose famous. If that were to be a prophecy about Jesus it would have said from the stem of David because David is a more prominent figure than Jesse. In fact, when some of the New Testament writers, the Gospel, mention Jesus and his lineage, they refer to him as a descendant of David as the famous figure of the Old Testament. It doesn't fit here that Jesse is referring to the father of David, why Jesse in particular?

Secondly, even if we took Jesse in that sense (as an ancestor of Jesus) since there is a reference in the Bible stating that David's father is Jess, we must realize that Jesse had many children, boys and girls, and one of his daughters was married to an Ishmaelite. This is mentioned in the first book of the Chronicles in chapters 10-12. Even in that sense we could say that prophet Muhammad could have descended from Jesse the father of David. This can't be proved conclusively but it can't be dismissed either.

What is more important than these two points, really, is that the profile of the person does not apply to Jesus peace be upon him. Jesus did not sit as a judge ruling over people's disputes and legal aspects. He did not rule and was not a statesman like prophet Muhammad was. He was not a person who participated in the battlefield against the wicked because the verse does say that he will slay or kill the wicked. There was nothing that was conducive or appropriate for the followers of Jesus to resist the overwhelming power of the Roman Empire at the time let alone the opposition of the Israelites.

Above all, as we indicated before from a non-Muslim source, the Encyclopedia Biblica, Jesse is an abbreviation of Ishmael. The only place this prophecy applies is again only with one person after Isaiah, prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

Host: You mention earlier that there were two other prophecies referring to Kedar, the son of Ishmael, could you elaborate on these prophecies?

Jamal Badawi:

In the book of Isaiah it says, “The burden” (a different translations says oracle instead of burden) upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it” (Isaiah 21:13-17).

If we analyze the main elements involved in this prophecy, especially when considering both translations the King James and the Revised Standard versions, it uses the term oracle or burden or divine utterance, revelation, concerning Arabia. The first point is that Arabia has something to do with this prophecy. Secondly, it speaks about the people who inhabit the land of Tema welcoming those who came to them as refugees after those refugees have been persecuted. So there is persecution and there are refugees. Thirdly, it says quite clearly that within a short period of time those apparent persecutors from the children of Kedar will be diminished- their numbers will be reduced, as it appears in verses 16 and 17. There are three basic questions here; 1) where is the land that Tema inhabited, 2) who are those people that are connected with Kedar, and 3) how was this prophecy achieved or come to pass?

First of all, Tema is a land that was inhabited by the offspring of a man named Tema. According to the Bible, Tema was one of the children of Ishmael as shown in Genesis 25: 15. Ishmael is who inhabited Arabia. Some historians actually say that there was a city called Tema and, at one time, it was the largest city or town in the northern part of Saudi Arabia. It was possibly about 335kilometers northeast of what is now known as Medina. But in the middle of the 6th century before Christ, the last of the kings of Babylon attacked the city and killed most of the inhabitants and so many of them escaped south, which is in the direction of Medina in the Arabian Peninsula. This is confirmed, not only from neutral sources but even in Biblical sources, like Biblical scholars like John Mckensly, and his Dictionary of the Bible says that Tema was actually an oasis north of what is now Medina. There is a region in Saudi Arabia which is called Teyma, or Tema. So now we know where Tema is at and it’s location of the northern part of Saudi Arabia or in the vicinity of Medina.

Now to the second question, who are those children of Kedar that are referred to here? The Bible also answers this question. In Genesis, Kedar is given as the name of the second son of Ishmael (Genesis 25: 13).

The third question, was this prophecy already achieved? Did it come to pass? The answer is definitely yes and only through prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. There are at least four reasons for that.

1) Prophet Muhammad was raised in Arabia about which this prophecy speaks when it says about the burden, the new revelation or oracle upon Arabia. This can be found in the book of Isaiah in chapter 21 verse 13.

2) It is well known, historically, that prophet Muhammad and his companions were severely persecuted and abused because of their faith by their own relatives, their fellow Arabs that were also the children of Kedar the son of Ishmael. We find, for example, a reference of the persecution in verse 15.

3) It is well known, historically, also that because of that persecution the prophet and his companions were actually forced to seek refuge in Medina, which is the land of the children of Tema. It is known that these refugees were received very warmly and were supported by the people of the land of Tema who shared everything with them and defended them. The reference to these incidents is in verse 14.

4) It is known that in the second year of the migration, or *hijra*, to Medina, the pagans of Mecca came with a powerful army and tried to suppress the Muslims and finish them off. The army of the non-believers, who are also of the children of Kedar, outnumbered the Muslims more than 3 to 1 in addition to being far better equipped than the Muslims. The famous battle known as the battle of Badr took place where many of the chief persecutors, torturers and killers of Muslims were killed. Seventy of them, the children of Kedar, were killed and seventy others were taken as prisoners of war. This all fits nicely with the end of the glory of Kedar, at least the pagan Kedar, before Islam won over the peninsula and as is seen in verses 16 and 17 in Isaiah chapter 21.

To my knowledge, this particular prophecy is one of the most amazing prophecies in the Bible about the coming of prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. On one hand it speaks about his lineage of himself and the people who migrated connecting them to either Kedar or Tema and both are children of Ishmael. It also refers to Mecca and Medina where the prophet migrated. Secondly, it specifies Arabia as the place where these events were to take place and that's what happened exactly. Thirdly, it even gives the exact events within a reasonable time frame (The battle of Badr) and the victory over the children of Kedar.

I don't know of any other event in history after prophet Isaiah where all of these particular details were fulfilled to the letter but in the case of prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

Host: As we asked concerning the prior prophecies, what objections have arisen in regards to this prophecy?

Jamal Badawi:

Honestly speaking I have never seen an objection to this prophecy in particular. There have been lots of literature to say that Muslims are forcing the interpretations of the

Bible and so on. On this particular prophecy, at least in my humble knowledge, I've never seen an objection to it. Quite frankly, I very much doubt that anyone can come up with any viable rejection of this. In other prophecies, there is always the question of it being able to apply to Jesus. But with this one it talks about Arabia, the children of Kedar, the children of Tema, and of places and events specific to those. To my knowledge, I haven't seen any objection to this particular prophecy.

Host: How about the third prophecy in Isaiah? What does it say?

Jamal Badawi:

This one is also most amazing and again there is no way of saying that it doesn't apply to the prophet Muhammad because it also connects, like the two others, with the children of Ishmael through his son Kedar.

The Bible says, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands. The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools."(Isaiah 42: 1-15)

The main points of this prophecy is to praise one great person called the servant of God upon whom the spirit of God will be. This person will bring forth justice to the nations and he will not fail or be discouraged until he achieves justice on earth. He is a person who is decent and loves knowledge and does not extinguish civilization on knowledge (as seen in verses 2 and 3). He will give light to the nations and bring people from darkness to light (verses 6 and 7). He will be given a code of law and his religion will spread in the farthest coastlands. He will be the last prophet if we were to interpret the term 'my glory will I not give to another' (verse 8), which means this will be the last prophet to whom God's glory through revelation will be given. With

his coming, there will be a new style of praising God, i.e. sing a new song unto the Lord. There will be a new way of praising God from all the ends of the earth as we find in verse 10. The villages, which is inhabited by the children of Kedar, the son of Ishmael, will feel happy because of his coming and praise God and also the inhabitants of Sela. One of the ways of praising God will be shouting from the top of a mountain (verses 11 and 12). Finally, this prophet will have victory over his enemies as can be seen in verses 13-15.

Furthermore, in Isaiah chapter 42 verse 24 and 25, “Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.” It exhorts people who give up the teachings of Jacob in favor of the opinions of other people, that is to return the people to the true faith that was revealed to through all the prophets.

These are just brief overview of the main elements in these verses.

Summary of 12.3 “Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree III: Attempts to Exclude Ishmael”

We discussed some of the objections that were raised by scholars and writers that determine the prophecies about the advent of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the book of Genesis. More particularly the book of Genesis shows that God promised to bless all the nations of earth through the descendants of Abraham and that both Isaac and Ishmael were both specifically mentioned in these blessings.

We discussed first the claim that Isaac was the only legitimate son or that Isaac is the son of the free woman while Ishmael is the son of the slave woman, Hagar, or that Isaac is the only son of promise. We discussed all of these objections in the cases that to all these views, really, it would be contrary to the cherished values that all Jews, Muslims and Christians uphold in terms of humanity, justice and equality of the races. We indicated, also, that these kinds of claims are contrary to the Bible itself, because specifically in Genesis 21 verses 13 and 18 we find specific mentions of the blessings bestowed on Ishmael in making of him a great nation. The Bible clearly indicates that Hagar was a legitimate wife and called Ishmael the seed of Abraham or the son of Abraham.

The other objection discussed was when people say that if the prophecies include these children of Abraham why not then include the children of Ketura, the third wife of Abraham. We said let it be. We have no problems, as Muslims, with that since this is not a matter of either/or. Ishmael and Isaac had been specified in specific and explicit terms in the Bible. This is not a problem at all.

The other aspect we discussed was that many of these objections are not really well founded and even the writers of the Old Testament, themselves being Israelites, obviously were more inclined to magnify the role of the Israelites and put down the role of their cousins, the Ishmaelites, which is a natural human bias expected.

At the end, we discussed the question, which also relates to this human bias, about who was the son of sacrifice. We indicated that according to the Qur'an there is no doubt that was Ishmael and not Isaac. Even though we still respect both of them. By reading the Bible, we indicated that in Genesis 22 verse 2, there are some inconsistencies because it says to Abraham to take his *only* son Isaac. The Bible acknowledges that the only son that Abraham had for fourteen years was not Isaac but Ishmael and Isaac was born 14 years later. Obviously, this indicates that maybe the original version of this passage was that he was to take his only son Ishmael.

This was basically the discussion and conclusion of the prophecies in the book of Genesis.

12.4 Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree IV: Moses' Prophecy About Muhammad (P)

Host: are there any other prophecies of prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him in what is commonly referred to as the Torah?

Jamal Badawi:

In other words the first five books of the Bible. There are two major other prophecies in the Torah. One is in Deuteronomy 18 and the other is in same book in chapter 33. Let me give you two verses from Deuteronomy 18 verses 18 and 19: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee (Moses), and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Now, to explain this prophecy I believe we need to relate it both to what was mentioned before in the Book of Genesis where it says about blessing the nations of the earth through the descendants of Abraham, which includes the Israelites and the Ishmaelites as well. Now, the question is that Moses is saying or quoting God as promising to raise a prophet from the brethren of the Israelites. Obviously, the word brethren could refer to the same people or could refer to a clan or group that is closely connected with them.

Since, this prophesy is made already in the presence of the Israelites, a blessing before the birth of Moses, that means then that the reference to brethren here would be the closest kin to the Israelites. The closest kin to the Israelites are the descendants of the other son, Ishmael, the Ishmaelites.

Secondly, it says "a prophet like unto thee". I am aware that some theologians have tried to interpret this as a prophecy in reference to the coming of Jesus peace be upon him. I find that rather strange because on one hand the same theologians uphold that Jesus was not only a prophet, but he was God incarnate. He was a full man and full God. As such, that does not seem to relate to this kind of comparison of a prophet like Moses. Moses was only a prophet whereas Muhammad was only a prophet and so this comparison stands quite clearly. On the other hand, prophet Jesus peace be upon him is an Israelite he's not from the brethren of the Israelites.

If one examines carefully, some of the issues of comparison of ten points (and this was mentioned in detail in a previous series Muhammad in the Bible, so I'll be brief here) where we find that Muhammad and Moses are very very similar in their lives and in all of these points Jesus is different. That includes the natural birth of both Moses and Muhammad but not so in the case of Jesus. They both had a normal family life with having children and that is not known in the case of Jesus. The fact that both of them died of natural causes and we know that according to the Qur'an and the Bible the end of Jesus' mission on earth is clouded with some mystery. Also, in the case of Moses and Muhammad, they both received a code of law, a complete code of law; Jesus' teaching was essentially spiritual and he said so himself when he said that he did not come to destroy the law but came to fulfill them. Moses and Muhammad both faced their enemies in hot pursuit and they both have moral as well as physical victory over their enemies. We don't have these parallels in the life of Jesus. Moses and Muhammad were both prophets, judges and statesmen; they succeeded or God gave them the life and the possibility to achieve in their objectives, not only in the spiritual sense but also in establishing a state and control over the state according to the commands of God. That is not a parallel in the case of Jesus.

The Torah was revealed to Moses in Mount Sinai and was all written down during his lifetime, so was the Qur'an revealed to prophet Muhammad and this is not so in the case of the teachings of Jesus where records were written much after that. In all of these points, like I said, these and more relate obviously that the closest prophet that came after Moses that was like unto him with the same greatness and the same impact and the same nature of the message and life was not really prophet Jesus, even though we recognize his prophet-hood and his authority and all, but was really pertaining to prophet Muhammad may peace be upon them all.

Host: What objections, if any, are there to this interpretation and what is your response to these objections?

Jamal Badawi:

First of all there are some who claim that this prophecy may apply to Joshua, who came after Moses. Again that is not a very good explanation because Joshua was only a student and a follower of Moses, he did not receive a complete code of law. He was just following and implementing the law that Moses had received.

A second objection is similar to the one we mentioned last time, in the course of discussion of Genesis, some say when Moses is told by God that He will raise a prophet like him from the brethren of the Israelites that the children of Ketura may also be regarded as brethren of the Israelites. This is true, but tell of us which prophet from the children of Ketura resembles Moses in his greatness and impact on history who had received the complete code of law after Moses? The answer is none. There may have been prophets but none really that compare with either Moses or Muhammad.

A third objection is that some say that the definition of his brethren could mean from 'among you'. As I indicated earlier this is a definite possibility. They say, further, that in the very same chapter a few verses before "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall

hearken.” (Deuteronomy 18:15) Again, “from the midst” of you does not necessarily mean that that prophet is going to be an Israelite prophet, because we all know that when prophet Muhammad went to Medina was actually living in the midst of Jews. There were Jews already living in Medina in the area of Yathrib where he migrated. He was raised in the midst of them, but not necessarily was an Israelite himself but the brethren of the Israelites.

We must notice here that this is not just some sheer conjecture because there are places in the Bible where the term ‘brethren’ has been used to refer to the children of Ishmael. Examples of that are in reference to Ishmael: “and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.” (Genesis 16:12) and “he died in the presence of all his brethren” (Genesis 25:18).

Furthermore, if you compare Deuteronomy verse 15 with verse 18 one says in the midst of you while the other says from among your brethren. The second verse is more important because it quotes God directly and so should be given more authority. Even if we take verse 15 as it is, from the midst of you, then the prophet Muhammad still fills this requirement because he was living in the midst of Jews in Medina.

In addition to this, the context of the prophecy does not apply as we indicated early because it’s saying that this prophet would be like Moses. Moses had a complete code of law and Jesus didn’t.

The fourth objection is that some say that there are similarities that can be drawn between Moses and Jesus, which are not applicable to prophet Muhammad. First of all, both Moses and Jesus were Israelites and Muhammad was not. If we were to take this argument then why single out Jesus alone when there are so many prophets that came after Moses. It is not a conclusive argument in itself; it could be supporting evidence. A second argument is that both Moses and Jesus were redeemers for their people. What again is meant by redeemer? I think that redeemer as understood by Jews is different from what redeemer is viewed by Christian theology. In one sense, if we were to apply the term redeemer to Moses, then it applies to Muhammad and all the other prophets as well. They save the people from sins and save them from tyranny and so Jesus and Moses are not the only case. A third objection is that both Jesus and Moses left Egypt in order to do the work of God, both of them gave up a great deal of wealth and lived in poverty, both of them ‘spoke’ to God directly and both of them have represented a sort of covenant from God. My response to this group of objections is that many of the writers who write those objections are perhaps not very familiar with Islam.

A typical example is a little booklet that was written in South Africa by a lawyer, Bill Christ, that indicates that he lacks the basic understanding of what Islam is really all about and the history of Islam. First of all, he says that both Moses and Jesus left Egypt to do the work of God he makes a reference to the book of Hosea in chapter 11 verse 1 where it says “called my son out of Egypt”. We have discussed this before in the series on Jesus and indicated that this prophecy has nothing to do with Jesus because ‘my son’ here is in reference to Israel. There is a misunderstanding, not only of Islam but also misinterpretation of the Biblical statements beyond what they’re talking about.

Even if we take it as referring to Jesus, Muhammad also left Mecca, his home, to do the work of God in Medina after persecution. This doesn't seem to provide any contrast at all between the prophets. The point that was raised by the writer that Moses and Jesus forsook wealth and lived in poverty; he may not have read anything about the history of prophet Muhammad because a month or two would pass without Muhammad eating a single cooked meal in his household and survived only on water and milk or dates. The prophet died while his shield was held as collateral with a Jew because he bought from him barley. He died leaving nothing behind. So this applies to all three prophets.

The discussion moves on to the miracles performed by Moses and Jesus, well the same applies to prophet Muhammad. He did have miracles though they were not over emphasized neither in the Qur'an or by the prophet himself, but the greatest of all of these miracles is the Qur'an itself and we indicated that it in itself is a miracle in a 32 segment series in this program.

When the author says that Moses and Jesus talked to God 'face to face', he must not have realized that prophet Muhammad also spoke in an even more direct way with God in the night of his ascension when he was taken on a journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and ascended unto the heavens. This point is not a distinction between Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. All of them had that privilege and honor from God.

The fourth and final objection is an argument that was raised by an Egyptian priest by the name of Sargious. He says that the chapter 2 verse 19 in Deuteronomy that whoever does not listen to this prophet God will be required of him. The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic and so how could God hold people who don't know Arabic responsible if they do not know the language? This is a very strange argument because this can be said about any scripture. They are all revealed in different languages. The idea is that it is communicated and translated to other languages which means that anyone receiving that message in whatever language he understands and whatever translation and then does not harken to that then God will punish him for refusing or being too proud to accept the message of God as coming through the last prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him.

In addition to this, I must say that having responded to all of these objections, it appears to me that the context of the prophecy itself, even in itself, is a great and important truth that applies only to prophet Muhammad.

Host: In reference to this passage, could you elaborate and explain what you mean by this comment in context?

Jamal Badawi:

When I recited the two verses earlier we indicated that God is saying that He will put His word in his mouth. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deuteronomy 18:18-19) Obviously, we can say that basically about any of the prophets because the prophet is communicating the mission and the message of God then God is putting the

words in their mouths. However, there is no prophet that we know of where the literal meaning of God putting the words in his mouth is the case in the revelation of the Qur'an. The revelation of the Qur'an is quite different from any other revelation before it. As the prophet describes that the angel of revelation comes to him and dictates the Qur'an word for word and he repeats it. That's the closest meaning really of God putting the words in his mouth. This is, by the way, confirmed in the Qur'an says that "Your companion [Muhammad] has not strayed, nor has he erred, nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed." (53:2-4)

When it says that God put the words in his mouth, it does not apply to Jesus because if Jesus is a full man and a full God then he does not have anyone to put words in his mouth. He himself is divine, according to that definition. Obviously, the argument doesn't really have any standing in this case. Nor does it apply to a Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is also a part of the trinity.

In addition to this, in the end of the chapter it indicates again one sign about the prophet to come that a prophet who says or predicts something that does not come to pass then we shall not be afraid of him. In other words, he is not a genuine prophet. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." (Deuteronomy 18:22). In several programs in the past, we've indicated, with conclusive and clear evidence, that the no single prophecy made by prophet Muhammad did not come to pass (they all came to pass no matter how unlikely they seemed). They include the victory of Muslims against the two great superpowers of the time: the Persians and the byzantine empires, the protection of the Qur'an from loss or change, Suraqa the man who tried to kill the prophet becoming a Muslim and live until he participates in the conquest of Persia and many other prophecies. Not a single one did not come to pass. The context also indicates that the Bible is referring to none but prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

Host: Let's get back to something you said earlier in the program about prophecies concerning the coming of prophet Muhammad may peace b upon him. You mentioned one, could you tell us what the second one is?

Jamal Badawi:

The second one is in the book of Deuteronomy where it says, "And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." (Deuteronomy 32:1-2). It says that God came from Sinai, rose up unto them from Seir and came forth from Mount Paran. In the King James translation it also says that with him came ten thousand saints and from his right hand came a fiery law for them. In those two verses we understand that applies to three great prophets: Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Sinai is an apparent reference to God giving the Torah to Moses.

Some people claim that Seir is a mountain in Sinai, but this is doubtful because it speaks of three different places: Sinai, Seir and Paran so it could not be the same

place. On the other hand, we find in some old references that Seir actually is a village in Palestine. In the 14th Century, Ibn AlQayem referred to Seir in his book *Ibadat al Harara* as *Seyer*. This is a village that is known until today in Jerusalem. All the references, even in the 14th century, in geography, specifically Al Yaquti Al Baghdadi, says that this is the name of the mountains in Palestine between Nazareth and Tabariah (Volume 3 page 71 of *Mujam Al Buldan*).

Obviously, this is a reference to the coming of Jesus. Then the verse states the coming forth from Mount Paran. Again, people have tried to interpret Paran as a place in Sinai and have given all kinds of contradictory explanations. Some say it's in the middle of Sinai, some say it's in the western slopes of Sinai, and some say it's a mountain in Sinai but this is in fact contrary to what the Bible says. According to the book of Genesis it says that when Abraham took his wife Hagar and his son Ishmael they settled in the wilderness of Paran, "And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt" (Genesis 21:21). Now, we all know that the Ishmaelites did not settle in Sinai, they settled in Mecca where the Kabah was later built and where the well of Zamzam gushed with water underneath the feet of Ishmael at the time.

On the other hand, the book of Genesis uses the Hebrew term El-Paran which is the same place. It says, "Unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness"(Genesis 14:6). El-Paran, in Hebrew, means the sanctuary. The Kabah has always been a sanctuary.

In the book of Numbers, Paran is mentioned as distinct from Sinai, which is on the borders of Sinai but not part of Sinai itself. It says, "The children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran"(Numbers 10:12).

Furthermore, it is pointless to repeat because it says Sinai, Seir, and Paran. The interesting thing about this prophecy is that it is consistent with the progression of revelation by Moses, then through Jesus and then ultimately through prophet Muhammad. Notice the words carefully it says that God came from Sinai and rose up unto them just like the sun does and when it comes to Paran or Mecca it says it shone upon them. This is the completion of revelation, the completion of religion, the culmination of the essence of all revelation that has been given to the previous prophets in the past.

I don't think there's anything that is clearer and more obvious than that.

The other signs that shows that it's in the proper context is it says that from His right hand went a fiery law for them. Prophet Jesus did not bring a code of law. The only great prophet with a complete code of law after Moses is none other than prophet Muhammad. It also says that with him came 10,000 saints. This is the exact number of the Muslim army in a major turning point of the history of Islam when they returned to Mecca, the place from which they were driven away.

Summary of 12.2 "Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree II: Paran, Be'ca, and Ishmael"

First of all the entire program was on the prophecies of the advent of Prophet Muhammad in the context of the Bible, and specifically the book of Genesis. We continued the discussion of the well that was shown to Hagar and said that in all likelihood that this was the well of Zamzam. The 84 Psalm of David verses 4-6 speaks about Be'ca, which is one of the names of Mecca. Then we moved on to discuss the origin of the word itself and where it came from and found that on the basis of both, ancient Arabic sources as well as Biblical sources that Be'ca in all likelihood is a reference to a specific place and not to an allegorical place as some people believe.

Subsequent to that we discussed the story of Hagar and Ishmael and how they came to live in Mecca or Be'ca. we discussed this from the Islamic standpoint: from indirect evidence from the Qur'an as well as historical evidence on the history of the Arabs and the Ishmaelites. We also referred to some Biblical sources that corroborated the same conclusion. Towards the very end of the program it was indicated that the prophecy in Genesis of blessing the nations of the earth through the children of Abraham is in itself sufficient to show the common grounds between Muslims, Christians and Jews because it is well known that the Israelite prophets all came through the descent of Isaac and prophet Muhammad is a descendant of Ishmael. This shows how the promise of God was came to pass and was fulfilled.

12.3 Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree III: Attempts to Exclude Ishmael

Host: At the end of last week's program, we had touched upon on some of the responses from Jewish and Christian scholars. Could you discuss that further?

Jamal Badawi:

Let's first deal with the four common objections. The first is that Ishmael should be separated from Isaac because Isaac was the legitimate son. The Interpreter's Bible, on page 605, discusses this objection of Ishmael being an illegitimate son. Why should the question of Ishmael's legitimacy be raised at all in the Bible? The Bible itself, in the book of Genesis in chapter 16 in verse 3 describes Hagar as a wife to Abraham. She may be the second wife but she is still considered a wife. Polygamy was a common practice among the Israelites of the time. Where does the question of legitimacy fit then? Especially, if the Bible itself calls prophet Ishmael a seed of Abraham (Genesis 16:15 & 21:13). Therefore the question of legitimacy and separating the two should not be raised.

The second objection is that it is sometimes argued that Isaac was the son of Sarah the free woman while Ishmael was the son of Hagar a slave. If this objection was raised in a place where apartheid and white supremacy was a common practice, then one could probably understand this attitude of discrimination between the children with the same father. But how could this objection be raised by people who are religious and sincere to their faith and by people whose moral and religious values believe in God and the equality of human beings? Even more strange is that according to the Bible itself, the status of the first-born child does not change because of the status of

the child's mother. This is found, for example, in the book of Deuteronomy in chapter 21 verses 15-17 and from reading the Interpreter's Bible one can easily discern that this law in Deuteronomy, even though attributed to Moses, has its roots from ancient traditions of Israelites and throughout the Bible this basic tradition of the double-honor for the first son has always been maintained even before Moses.

Another example: The Interpreter's Bible says, "However, the law of the first-born had ancient sanction, and so long as it was accepted justice demanded that mere favoritism not be allowed to deprive the eldest son of his rights." (Volume 2, pg. 461) I only wish that the writers of The Interpreter's Bible remembered that when they wrote the first volume and raised questions on the legitimacy of prophet Ishmael and limit the term legitimate to Isaac alone.

The third objection is that Isaac is the only son of promise. They say that Genesis 17:2 refers that the covenant would be with Isaac. In chapter 21 verse 12, it says "for in Isaac shall thy seed be called". This objection is contrary to the Biblical text itself for a number of reasons. The first reason is that God's promise to bless the nations of the earth through Abraham and his children is general and does not limit it to one branch of Abraham's family tree. It is quite easily seen in the book of Genesis 12:3 and even after the verse of Ishmael and before the verse of Isaac as found in the book of Genesis 17:4. There is no reason to say that the subject of God's promise is a matter of either or: either this branch of his family or that branch. The promise was clear and general and applied to all the children of Abraham. Another reason is that to say the covenant will be in the seeds of Isaac does not mean this is to the exclusion of Ishmael or other branches of the Abrahamic family tree so long as there is evidence that they are included in that divine promise. Now to say also that the covenant was believed as everlasting with Isaac again does not exclude them. The term everlasting is not always used literally; for example, in the book of Isaiah (9:6) it describes one to come as an "everlasting father," which is allegorical. For centuries prophethood was explicit in the descendants of Isaac but this doesn't exclude Ishmael's descendants.

On the other hand, whenever there is provenance the covenant has conditions that go with it. Anyone who breaks the conditions of the covenant cannot expect the other side to keep up the commitment. This is only normal. The Bible is filled with examples that show the Israelites where they have already broken the covenant with God on many occasions. And so if God decides to move the tree of prophethood or even just endow the other branch with prophethood of the Abrahamic family tree that's not really a breaking of the covenants because it was already broken by the Israelites. The last episode of breaking the covenant was their rejection of the last Israelite prophet, Jesus may peace be upon him.

The Bible, even in its present form contains more than one text, implicit and at times explicit, that God would also bless Ishmael. There are numerous examples of this. The first, the news of the forthcoming birth of Ishmael, the glad tidings, was conveyed by the angel of God as shown in Genesis 16:11. It reminds us that there is some importance and an honor that is being bestowed on Ishmael. The name Ishmael itself was chosen by God and communicated through the angel. This means that God chose that name for him. This is another aspect of honor to Ishmael. The meaning of the name Ishmael comes from the word Yeshmael, in Hebrew, which means God Hears.

Whether it is interpreted as God hears the affliction and prayers of Hagar or the prayers of Abraham to send, in the spot where he placed Hagar and Ishmael, a prophet from among themselves and that would be Prophet Muhammad. In both cases, that would be another aspect of honor.

Another example is that a symbol of covenant with God among the Israelites was circumcision and Ishmael, according to the Bible, was circumcised (Genesis 17:22-27). Despite the fact that Jesus, may peace be upon him, himself was a good Jew of the Israelites and was circumcised. We know that this practice was taught after him because of the teachings of Paul. It was again revived only when Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, came as the grandchild of Ishmael and Abraham and that is an indication of the revival of the covenant with God.

What is more important, is that there are clear and explicit statements in the Bible that show exclusively that the divine blessings of the nation of the earth does include Ishmael and his descendants. Genesis describes the angel conveying the message to Hagar and says, "And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed" (21:13). The same chapter says, "for I will make him a great nation" (21:18). The term 'great nation' was not even used in the Bible to refer to Isaac. It was used in the book of Exodus to refer to Moses. When Abraham was afraid that the glad tidings of the birth of his second son, Isaac, may mean that his eldest child Ishmael had lost favor with God and find that the Bible clarifies that he will also be blessed. God tells Abraham in regards to Ishmael, "I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly" (Genesis 17:20). Notice the text used the term *bless* and when God speaks about blessing includes blessing in the spiritual and leadership sense. Also notice that it says that God will multiply him exceedingly. Before Islam, the children of Ishmael were not really multiplied that exceedingly. It was only after Islam that not only the Arabs who descended of Ishmael but those who consider themselves the spiritual descendants of Ishmael (the Muslims all over the world regard themselves as descendants of Ishmael) all multiplied considerably. Today 1 out of every 5 human beings is Muslim.

Some people say that if they were to go with the understanding of the term seeds of Abraham then why not include the descendants of Ketura his third wife? From the Islamic standpoint, why not? It is not a matter of either/or as stated earlier. All the nations of the earth should not be excluded at the expense of the other. On the other hand, who among the descendants of Ketura became as prominent as Moses, Jesus and Muhammad became? We know that among the Edomites prophet Job may have come from that group. In any case, we do not say that the children of Ketura should be removed from that divine promise. The Bible seems to be much more explicit and clear in blessing Isaac and Ishmael. We're talking about two major branches, not excluding others, of a tree that developed two great nations.

Host: On more than one occasion you've used the phrase "the Bible in it's present form," is there a reason behind that?

Jamal Badawi:

There is definitely a reason behind that. The end of the previous series touched on this discussion of whether the Bible is exclusively the word of God or does it contain the

word of God alongside with additions, interpretations and explanations by the authors of the various books of the Bible. The other reasons, which may perhaps relate more directly with this particular topic on the prophecies include that we should not forget that the authors of the various books of the Old Testaments were Israelites. Their attitude was to look down upon the Ishmaelite brethren even though they are their cousins. They believed they were superior to the Ishmaelite and superior to everyone else in the world. This is recognized not only by historians but also by Biblical scholars. The Interpreter's Bible says, "Many Israelites did not want a God who would be equally the God of all nations on the earth. They did not want one who would be impartial Holiness. They wanted a god who would be partial to them. So we read in Deuteronomy of the demands for a complete extermination of non-Israelite people of Palestine (Deuteronomy 7:2) and as to the carrying out of that injunction read the harsh sentences of Deuteronomy 20:10-17" (Volume 1 pg. 575). If this was the understanding of the Christian authors of the Interpreter's Bible, why are they doing exactly the same thing as the Israelites have done? When the issue comes up regarding the blessing of Ishmael and his descendants (Prophet Muhammad) why can't they interpret the Biblical text in the same way, humane and consistent, and why should they continue to pursue the long standing erroneous tradition of belittling the Ishmaelites and their descendants including Prophet Muhammad, and putting down their importance. It cannot be explained in terms of a reaction to the position of Muslims. If Muslims were belligerent towards the Israelite prophets and attacked them or they believed that the blessing of Ishmael is at the expense of Isaac and do not recognize Isaac, then one could understand putting down the Ishmaelite's as a reaction to this. But as indicated, in numerous occasions, Muslims have all the respect and admiration towards all the Israelite prophets: Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, all of them. So it's very difficult to understand the attitude that still persists among some authors.

Host: There's a question about Ishmael that keeps on coming up. Now, was he the son of sacrifice or was it Isaac? How do the Quranic and Biblical versions of this particular issue differ?

Jamal Badawi:

First of all, let me indicate in natural that it is commonly believed among our Jewish and Christian brethren that the son of sacrifice, where God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, was Isaac. The Muslim version of this is that it was Ishmael. It would only be fair to challenge both views on what their documentations are and to see if there is any reconcilability or any inconsistency on the one side or the other. As far as the Islamic version, it is biblically Ishmael who is the son of sacrifice. There is no question about that. One can easily refer to Surah number 37 in the Qur'an in verses 101-113. I am going to the Qur'an directly because it is quite possible that Muslim literature may have erroneous understandings or interpretations of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is definitely more authoritative than the ideas of any interpreters.

In this section of the Qur'an, it describes how God gave glad tidings to Abraham of the birth of *ghulamun haleem* (verse 101) or a child who will be able to forbear suffering and then it says that when that child grows up his father, Abraham, told him

that he had seen in a dream that he was to sacrifice his son. The son answered and told his father to do what he was ordered to do and that his father will find him, by God's will, among those who forebear and persevere. Then it goes on and describes how Abraham took his son, Ishmael and the moment when he was about to sacrifice him that God sent a big ram as a substitute for Ishmael. This was a symbol showing that God is not interested in the sacrifice of the blood of humans at all. It was just a test of faith that prophet Abraham passed with an A+ I should say. But it continues and we find that after that incident, by way of rewarding Abraham, as we find in verse 112 in that surah, it says, "We gave him good tidings of Isaac, a prophet from among the righteous."

The sequence of events then shows that the son's sacrifice most definitely was Ishmael, and when he succeeded Abraham was given the glad tidings of the forthcoming birth of Isaac.

In addition to this, referring to the Qur'an, we find that there is an Islamic tradition, a rite that has been going on even before Islam and still remains until this day is the slaughtering of animals on Eid Al-Adha or the Feast of Sacrifice. And this is done as it is well known historically as a communal relation of the story of Abraham and Ishmael and the willingness of Ishmael to accept to sacrifice himself. This tradition has been carried out every year.

As far as the Biblical version, the Bible acknowledges that Ishmael was born first and that when Isaac was born Ishmael was around 14 years old. This means that the only son that Abraham had for fourteen years was Ishmael. This is from Genesis 16:16 and 21:5. On the other hand, in the book of genesis chapter 21 verse 2 it says that God commanded Abraham to take his only son Isaac, how could Isaac be the only son if Ishmael was already around for fourteen years? One cannot say that the difference here is Isaac being the only son of promise because we have already given ample evidence that the promise included both Isaac and Ishmael. This raises important questions related to the previous one: Is it possible that the Isaac was a later addition? Is it possible that the original text said Ishmael and some editor replaced it with Isaac? The answer to this question is that the Biblical scholars admit that lots of editing has taken place, especially when trying to show the superiority of the Israelites over the Ishmaelites. In any case, I just tried to answer as honestly as I can but it does not mean at all that being the son of sacrifice, whether Isaac or Ishmael, belittles the other one because respect is accorded to all of them. The fact is that the son of sacrifice was Ishmael and there is no question about it.

Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree I: Introduction

Host: Today we will start a new topic: Muhammad may peace be upon him- the last messenger of Allah. However, before we start I have a couple questions. How do Muslims reconcile their reservations with the Bible and in particular with the following: how the Qur'an confirms the Bible and the Qur'an says that no one will change the word of God.

Jamal Badawi:

There are three basic issues related to this problem. First of all, even though it is common to say that the Qur'an confirms the Bible; strictly speaking this is not correct. The term Bible does not appear anywhere in the Qur'an. The term Old Testament and New Testament does not appear anywhere in the Qur'an. The Qur'an actually confirms the original revelation that was given to Prophet Moses and called the Tawrah (Torah) and the Enjeel (the Gospel) that was revealed to Prophet Jesus. Other scriptures that are mentioned in the Qur'an include the Zabure revealed to Prophet David and the Suhuf revealed to Prophet Abraham. The idea that the Qur'an confirms the Bible, the Old Testament or the New Testament is incorrect. Even then when we take a term like Torah, it isn't the exact equivalent in understanding the scriptures between Muslims and Jews and Christians, for example. Among the Jews and Christians the Torah is believed to be the first five books, beginning with Genesis, in the Bible.

However, if you look carefully into these books, you'll find many of them don't really represent revelation given to Moses but are biographies of Moses. Also, towards the end of chapter 34 in the book of Deuteronomy, which is part of the Torah it talks of Moses' death and being buried, which obviously is not of the work of Moses nor is it the revelation given to him on Mount Sinai as Muslims believe. As such even the definition of Torah in the Judea-Christian literature is not like the Quranic reference to the Torah, or law, specifically the revelation given to prophet Moses not biographies about him.

Secondly, the term Enjeel, in the Qur'an, the equivalent of the Gospel (in the singular form) should not be equated with the four Gospels. The Qur'an speaks of the word of God, not the word of Mark, Luke, Matthew, and John. That is not the word of God, that's their own biographies. What the Qur'an speaks of is the revelation given to prophet Jesus peace be upon him, something that he was guided by divine revelation. Whether he asked people to write it or not we don't know for sure, but it is the same type of divine revelation that was given to Moses, Mohammad, Abraham, or David for that matter may peace be upon them all.

I'd like to raise another issue as well. When the Qur'an speaks of confirming any previous scriptures, it is conditional and indicates in no uncertain terms that the Qur'an and the Qur'an alone as the last well preserved revelation is the final judge and the criterion to sift through any previous scripture to discern what is the word of God and what is the word of humans; which parts remained intact and which parts might have gone through some changes throughout history. The term *muhaymen*, which appears in the Qur'an, in surah number 5 and verses 48 through 51, deals specifically with this issue of the Qur'an being *muhaymen*. This word, *muhaymen* in Arabic, as Mawlana Mawdudi explains in his Commentary on the Qur'an, means to uphold, to safe guard or preserve, to watch over and to stand witness. All of these definitions apply to the Qur'an in its relationship to previous scriptures. First of all, the Qur'an safeguards and preserves the teachings of previous prophets. It watches over the revelations that God sent before by explaining their true meanings to negate any confusion, misunderstanding or misinterpretation that has arisen throughout history. It stands witness because it bears witness, as Mawdudi says, to the word of God contained in those previous scriptures and helps sort it out from interpretations and commentaries that were later added to them.

The third issue is that some people would say that the Qur'an itself says that there is no one who will change the word of God. And so how could Muslims say that the Bible has changed from the original revelations given to these prophets? Now if you refer to the Qur'an and see what some of those writers refer to, you'll find that there are only three verses in the Qur'an that speaks about changing the word of God. Each one of them appears in a different meaning depending on the context of the surah. I also checked the tafseer, interpretation of the Qur'an.

First of all, in surah 6 verse 115, *kalimat* or words as it is often translated to say, is used in the sense of *decree* that no one is going to change the decrees of God in creation. In the same surah but in verse 34, *kalimat* is used here in the sense of the promise of God, when read in context, to give victory to His messengers. In surah 18 in passage 27, the word *kalmiat* appears in the sense of preserving God's words or creation. Notice here that the promise made that His words will be preserved does not cover the promise to preserve the words of human beings. Some biblical scholars, for example, raise the issue that we don't know whether John wrote this or not or Paul wrote this or not etc. Another example: is the book of Hebrew actually written by Paul or someone else? That does not go within the promise of God, because they are the words of humans and not the word revealed by God to His messengers and prophets like Moses, Jesus, or Mohammad peace be upon them.

Secondly, in any religion that says that no one can change the word of God, we have to look at it on two levels. In any religion, anyone can change the word of God on paper. One can get a copy of the Bible and write it out differently. One can get a copy of the Qur'an and change it. So the physical change in terms of writing, any human can do that in any religion for that matter. But the level that the Qur'an refers to, even when it speaks about the revelation, that no one is going to change the word of God. It means the essence of His revelation will ultimately be preserved and would be protected from change. Even though people may have changed or attributed words to God that He didn't say, or people have forgotten or lost part of the scriptures ultimately it will be preserved. And Muslims believe that this is precisely one of the great benefits of the Qur'an as the last revelation, which has been totally protected, that restores and clarifies the word of God that was given to different prophets because we believe in the unity of the mission of all of these prophets. In this sense, there is the promise that the word of God was ultimately preserved.

Interestingly enough the Qur'an gives good criteria to find out which book can be judged as being the word of God in its totality. This appears in surah 4 verse 82:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا

كثيراً

“Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.”

Host: Do you have any concluding remarks on the previous series before we move on?

Jamal Badawi:

The main things I wanted to emphasize is mainly towards our Christian brethren if they are unaware of this, that basic difference between Islam and Christianity is not the belief in honoring or loving Jesus because a Muslim who fails to honor and love Jesus as a great messenger of God cannot be a Muslim for it is an article of the Muslim faith to do so and it is in the Qur'an. The main difference, really, is related to the idea of deifying Jesus and other related doctrine that humans added later on as the idea of God incarnate and the idea of the trinity and the idea of substituting human sacrifice. It is quite clear that first of all there is no scriptural basis whatsoever to the belief of God incarnate. In fact it is contradictory to the long-standing religious tradition of the Old Testament.

For nearly two thousand years, there has been no successful attempt to explain the ideas of Jesus being a full God and a full man or the idea of the trinity in any intelligible terms. It cannot even be expressed properly. And one cannot explain that it is a mystery, because it is not a mystery it is an idea that was intellectualized by human beings. We have to explain for two thousand years and for the expected future it is impossible to reconcile the impossible.

By reviewing the earlier part of the previous series, the history of Unitarian Christians was found that in the very early church Christians believed in nothing but the humanity of Jesus may peace be upon him. It was a matter of history that gave rise to the Trinitarian church under the auspices of the Roman Empire. There is evidence of the persecution of Christians who did not agree with the idea of the trinity or God incarnate.

Another point, we have also shown in ample ways throughout this series that this is not just a Muslim understanding or critique. Many Christian biblical scholars themselves, many of whom are clergy and sympathetic to the Christian faith, have come up with the same conclusion that the Qur'an stated 1400 years ago that the trinity and God incarnate has been an absorption of ideas of other nations and religions prior to the coming of Jesus may peace be upon him. This is precisely what the Qur'an said before those scholars' researched this.

It is my hope that this series will be a humble contribution; at least in clarifying the position of Muslims visa vie the common link between them and their Christian brethren: Jesus may peace be upon him. Maybe it may contribute to bridging the gap between Muslims and Christians in the future by coming back to the essence of all divine revelation: the worship of the one true God who was worshipped by Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad may peace be upon them all.

Host: Moving on to the new series on Muhammad peace be upon him the last messenger of Allah. How does this series fit in with previous topics in this program?

Jamal Badawi:

Let's start first by defining essential terms like Islam, what does it mean, the distinction between Islam as a way of life and as the behaviors and actions of people who claim to be Muslim which is not one and the same. Also, explaining the meaning of Islam as a *deen*, which means the complete way of life.

Essentially the first four series beyond the introduction dealt with the essential articles of faith. One series dealt with the *tawheed* or the pure monotheistic faith of Islam- the oneness and unity of God. The second series, dealt with the prophethood and the Muslim understanding of the laws and nature of prophets and of the revelation. The third one was on Muhammad being in the Bible and an offshoot of prophethood- speaking about the prophecies about the advent of prophet Muhammad in the Old and New Testament. The last of the four was on the beliefs pertaining to life here and related issues.

From this section, we moved on to the pillars of faith and more particularly the emphasis on the minimum acts of worship that translates the faith into action including such things as the regular five daily prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadan, giving zakat or charity and pilgrimage. Then we moved on to discuss the moral system of Islam, which was another very lengthy series. It covered topics such as the philosophy of the morals and ethics in Islam and how it differs from secular morality and other religious moralities for that matter. What distinguishes the foundation of the Islamic moral system. From that we moved on to specific issues pertaining to the forbidden and allowed in Islam in matters of safeguarding religion, mind, faith, ownership, and property. It also covered almost ten programs of a series that dealt with the moral virtues as derived from the Qur'an or the Sunnah of prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him. Following this was another relatively long series covered the social system of Islam speaking in general about the foundation of the social structure of Islam, the notion of human brotherhood, the issue of brotherhood between believers, the choice of friends. However, most of the series was devoted to family and family life in Islam including issues that need clarification where there's a lot of myth and stereotyping about in the western world like the status of women in Islam and then it went on to the laws of marriage in Islam, rights of both parties, the rights of children, the rights of parents, marital rights, rights of relatives, dissolution of marriage, and so on.

After that, we moved to another system: the economic system of Islam. How Islam provides a foundation for a just economic life without totalitarianism and without greedy individualism. This series included quite a bit on historical aspects such as contribution of Muslims to science and civilization as one aspect of productivity when they were true to their faith. Following that we moved into the political system of Islam and the system of government according to Islam and how the rules should be chosen and how the affairs of a Muslim state should be run by mutual consultation and not dictatorship as we find in many parts of the world today.

After speaking about the beliefs, worship, moral, political, economic, and social systems we moved on to discuss the sources of Islam and we focused our attention in a long series of 64 programs on the first and most important source, the Qur'an. The series about the Qur'an was divided up in half with one half dealt essentially with one

question regarding the authority of the Qur'an; how do we know it is the word of God and not authored by the prophet from previous scriptures or taught to him by some other human scholars or teachers in the past. We discussed that in great detail. In the second half we examined the question of the authenticity of the Qur'an and its sciences. How was the Qur'an recorded, how did it reach us, how do we know there have been no changes, losses or discretion of the original revelation as given to Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. In addition, we discussed other issues pertaining to the sciences of the Qur'an.

The last series we've covered is called Jesus the beloved messenger of Allah. This was a 64 segment series that dealt essentially with the comparative aspects of Jesus as the common link between Muslims and Christians. I said that this was a very relevant issue in the context of North American, the western world and other countries where Muslims and Christians live side by side and that they should understand each other's position and understanding on this issue.

So far we've been speaking about Islam in some comparative aspects but we have never really touched, in detail and in a separate series on the life of the prophet and messenger of Islam, Muhammad may peace be upon him. I think that this will be relevant and I hope of some interest too.

Host: How does the mission of prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him fit in with the mission of previous prophets in human history?

Jamal Badawi:

I'm glad that you said "in human history" and not just "the middle east" because this is precisely what the Qur'an speaks about. One verse in the Qur'an indicates that there is no nation or a people without a prophet having gone among them. This includes the east and the west and all places in the world.

The Qur'an insists that all prophets in all parts of the world have taught nothing but one essential message with variations in the details but the core of the message of the worship of one God and to follow His moral laws and His guidance in one's life has been a common denominator in all of those missions of the prophets. For Muslims, the coming of prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him is the climax of the blessing that God has promised prophet Abraham and since the Abrahamic family tree is very important, though not exclusive, in the history of prophethood and the proclamation of pure monotheism. Then we can also say that the coming of prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him is the climax of all revelations and all the history of prophethood in history as the culmination and the embodiment of all the prophetic traditions in human history. This is evident I believe not only in the Qur'an itself alone but is evident in the Bible even in its present form today. This not just in the grammatical statement void of any evidence but it is a topic that I mentioned was subject over a complete series of 8 segments under the title Muhammad in the Bible.

Host: You mentioned prophet Abraham. How does he relate to prophet Muhammad may peace be upon them both?

Jamal Badawi:

There is a parallel between what the Qur'an says and what is in the Bible. For the purpose of clarification, I'm going to refer to what the Bible says. From the book of Genesis, we know that Abraham was quite old and had reached the age of 85 while still childless. He didn't have any hope of bearing any children since Sarah, his wife, was also old, possibly in her 70s. Despite this we find that in the book of Genesis, chapter 12 verses 2 and 3 that God promises to bless the nations of the earth through the seeds of Abraham. The promise is repeated in Genesis 15:5 that God will make of his seed as many as the stars in the heavens. Now, how was that divine promise fulfilled to a man whose wife was barren and old and did not have any children?

The Bible tells us that God directed Sarah to give Abraham her hand maid by the name of Hagar as a second wife, and I emphasize the term wife because the Bible uses this term to refer to Hagar. Polygamy was a common practice among many Israelite prophets. In the hope that maybe Hagar may bear a son for Abraham. Because of conflict that has risen between Sarah and Hagar, Hagar fled to the desert and cried in distress. The Bible says that the angel of God came to her and told her that God will multiply her seed exceedingly and that she shall bear a son and that this son would be called Ishmael or in Hebrew Yeshmael which means God hears. We also find reference to that in chapter 15 of the book of Genesis. Hagar follows the instruction of the angel and returned to Abraham and Sarah and told them what happened and the prophecy was fulfilled. The first son was born to Abraham and his name was in accordance to the instruction that the angel had given was Ishmael.

Now, we all know from the Bible, which is similar to Muslim tradition that Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, were taken to the wilderness of Paran, which is Mecca where they settled. According both the Bible and the Muslim traditions and facts that that is where they settled in the wilderness of Paran as found in Genesis 21. From the descendants of Ishmael came the prophet Muhammad as we all know. That was how the promise of God was fulfilled. Through the second son, Isaac (the Israelite prophets) and the first son Ishmael. Interestingly enough the Bible says that when Hagar and Ishmael were taken to the wilderness and Ishmael was thirsty, it says that the angel showed Hagar a miraculous well that came suddenly from which she drank and started to settle in that area. This is what Muslims believe to be the well of Zamzam, which is still gushing with water until this very day in Mecca inside of the Kaba the holy place. It is interesting to conclude that the Bible itself, in the psalms of David, psalm 84 verses 4-6 speaks also of those passing through the valley of Be'ca finding a well. This translation is still there in the King James Version of the Bible and it's interesting to notice that Mecca and Be'ca are the same place and these are two names of the very same place.

Summary of 12. 1 "Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree I: Introduction"

First of all we started to relate the new series to the previous programs that were covered prior to this series. We began with the first segment of this new series by examining how the mission of prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him fits with the mission of the previous prophets. Then we clarified that from a Muslim

understanding the mission of prophet Muhammad is the climax of all divine revelation; the culmination and embodiment of all prophetic traditions throughout history, not only in the Middle East but everywhere else as well. More specifically, we stated that his mission is the climax of the Abrahamic family tree and the promise that was given to Abraham and his children that all the nations of the earth will be blessed through them. To clarify how this promise of God was fulfilled we indicated that Abraham was childless. His wife Sarah who was barren gave him a bondswoman by the name of Hagar as his second wife. From Hagar came Ishmael, the first son born to Abraham. God promised to bless Ishmael and to make from him a great nation, which the book of Genesis indicates. Finally, we said that prophet Ishmael and his mother Hagar settled in the wilderness of Paran, which is actually the land of Hijaaz, more particularly Mecca, which is also known as Be'ca. From that place came the last prophet, prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him. We indicated that the name, Mecca or Be'ca, has actually already been mentioned in the 84 Psalm of David in verses 4-6.

Muhammad (P) & Abrahamic Tree II: Paran, Bacca, and Ishmael

Host: To talk about this prophecy is actually quite an interesting one and I know that this has been covered a few years ago but I was wondering if we could discuss it again in the context of this series.

Jamal Badawi:

I definitely agree with you, but have some bias because I happen to like this particular topic. It is important because, to start with, in the previous series for example, Jesus the beloved messenger of God, we tried to show that there is one important common ground between Muslims and their Christian brethren and that is that they both believe in Jesus and love him and honor him. We then discussed the areas of differences and understanding. That was at least one basic common ground. On the other hand, I would also say that this topic in the context of dealing with the life of prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him, may turn out to be another possible common ground between Muslims and Christians.

This may sound strange but even if we started from the Bible, as it is, we will find that there are many passages, which are perhaps less known and possibly misunderstood that seem to provide that common ground. As such, they are in-line with what the Qur'an states that the coming of prophet Muhammad was indeed prophesized by several prophets in the past including Abraham, Moses and Jesus may peace be upon them.

Secondly, since the topic of that series is the history of the last prophet of God, prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him, it is useful to also try and place his roots in history and the prophecies about his advent being the climax of divine revelation

throughout history. My only reasons for hesitating, initially, to go into much detail on this is that, as you mentioned, it's covered in a previous eight segment series. However, we could possibly elaborate on some issues, not necessarily to be an exact replica of what was covered before or taking the exact same approach to the topic, but perhaps if we refer to some additional research done after the first series were already finished, which I will show that they tend to confirm the conclusion of that series. Also, and more importantly, to discuss some of the objections that I have been aware of in writing and through dialogues since the series was done in 1980. So if you feel that there is some benefits in continuing with this, I definitely don't mind. Like I said, I have some bias to this topic because it's a topic where I have deep interest in and personally I find it extremely fascinating.

Host: Let's start off with the point you made at the end of the previous program that Mecca was actually mentioned in the Bible. Now, what is the significance of this and how do non-Muslim biblical scholars explain this?

Jamal Badawi:

The mention of Mecca, or Be'ca, which is the same name, in the Bible is very important because there is no other place in the ancient world that was known by the name of Mecca, or Be'ca, except for one place that is in Arabia where Ishmael and Hagar lived and where prophet Muhammad was born. This is exceedingly important I believe. However, in order to appreciate that mention and discuss some of the views of orientalist or objections of the interpretations offered let me just read the text of that section from the revised standard version of the Bible. Again, it is Psalm 84 verses 4 through 6.

It says, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools." The prophecy to me seems to be quite interesting because, to start with, it speaks about blessing the people who are dwelling in the house of God ever-singing His praise. Of course, you could say that this applies to Jerusalem, having a temple where God was praised but also remember that there is no house on earth today and for the past 1400 years where the name of God has been praised more than the Kabah built by prophet Abraham before Jerusalem was even built. It was the place where people always prayed and revolving around the Kabah, day and night, in every season. This is the amazing thing about the Kabah.

The part that relates to the question of the well that we were talking about in the previous program and the water gushing at the feet of prophet Ishmael when he was crying for water, it says that they go through the Valley of Baca make it a well. There is reference to water here in the context of people passing through the valley of Baca. Now it must be pointed out here that again I emphasis that Mecca and Be'ca is the same place. In fact it's only a variation in tribal dialects. And the Qur'an itself, revealed 1400 years ago, uses both names interchangeably. In one verse, it uses the term Be'ca and the other uses Mecca. So, they are the same place.

Regarding the question as to whether there are any objections, which go beyond what we covered in the first series about prophet Muhammad. The first objection was one

that I heard in the process of the dialogue with Jewish and Christian scholars in the University of Southern California about a year ago. A question was raised about the issue of the prophecies and so I mentioned that Be'ca, or Mecca, was already mentioned in the Psalms of David and indicates the importance of that place and blessing of the people there. A Jewish scholar, who is a professor of theology and Jewish studies, said that Be'ca does not mean Mecca but means a valley. So I said to him, Professor if you want to go back to the text of the Bible it says they go to the Valley of Baca and if the word Baca means valley then it means the valley of Valley or the valley of the valley. This doesn't really make any sense. I don't know what source he used for showing that Baca means a valley, because it doesn't mean a valley at all.

Some have claimed that the term Be'ca comes from Baca, which means to weep and I think in one of the translations of the Bible it uses the term to mean the Valley of Weeping. I've seen that, for example, in the Arabic translation of the Bible. The reader can easily discover that when you address an Arabic speaking person, whether Muslim or Christian, and use the term Mecca or Be'ca they'll know immediately that it's Mecca. I wonder why the term Valley of Weeping or Wadi al Buca is used in the Arabic Bible. I find that this explanation is not very reasonable at all to say that Be'ca is not a reference to a specific place.

First of all, we don't know where in history is a valley called the Valley of Weeping. We don't see, particularly, any place, to my knowledge that carries that name. Secondly, if it is said that this is an allegorical name in the same way that the Bible sometimes speaks of the Valley of the Shadow of Death or something of that nature. The question here is why should we assume this to be an allegorical name? Why should we say it's an allegorical name if we know of a place, which historically exists and was called Be'ca? It's just like saying New York City never existed and doesn't exist and start analyzing the etymology and saying that New means so and so and York means so and so but it is just an allegorical name and doesn't really mean a specific place. Be'ca, also known as Mecca, is a well-known place in history. Why is this then considered an allegorical name?

In relation to this there are a number of reasons that make it quite comfortable with the understanding that this is a clear reference to Mecca. Firstly, the term Be'ca is an Arabic term and it was explained by a famous Arab geographer, Shahab Adeen al-Yakooti al-Baghdadi, in his famous multi-volume book called *Mujam Albuldan* says (he died in the early 13th century of the Christian era) that the reason Be'ca was called by this name was because it comes from the Arabic word *Yatabacun* which means *to crowd* and is a reference to the pilgrims during the season of pilgrimage when they come to a small limited space and so are crowded with one another. This was mentioned in his first volume of this book on page 75.

A second reason is that some of the Christian sources also seems to refer to mecca and recognizes that this is actually part of the prophecies, not necessarily very openly, but in an indirect way. Some examples of this are as follows; the New Oxford Bible describes Be'ca as "unknown far away place which is frequented by pilgrims who make pilgrimage to an unknown holy place". I fully agree except for the term 'unknown' is not a mystery. Yes, it is a far away place from Jerusalem. It is a place

that is frequented by pilgrims and those pilgrims are visiting a holy place, which is known place that is Mecca.

This place was not a place of pilgrimage only after Islam and after prophet Muhammad may peace be upon him. History shows that the Kabah was visited by pilgrims since the days of Abraham and Ishmael as soon as it was built. The Kabah is definitely a holy place. A second example is that according to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, the first volume page 402 describes the Valley of Baca as a thirsty valley; a valley so named because it contained trees that exuded resin or gum, perhaps of several species of the Balsam tree. This is interesting because one of the most famous type of resin is known as the *Samr al Arabi*, or the Arabic gum. A third example is found in the Interpreter's Bible, in volume 2 on page 465, gives a similar explanation saying that Baca comes from Baaca which is a shrub or tree. The point is that even if we take Baca in the sense of weeping, the flow of the resin or gum from the tree may resemble weeping. But in all of these explanations, which are all from Christian sources, they indicate that this place is indeed Mecca and rather than an unknown or allegorical place.

In view of this consistent evidence from a variety of sources, some of which are quite old sources, it is only fair to say that Mecca or Be'ca was the place where Ishmael lived and where prophet Muhammad was born. It is the same Baca that was mentioned in Psalm 84. This is part, again, of the fulfillment of the divine promise to bless the nations of the earth through the seeds of Abraham.

Host: I'd like to change our focus now to the story of Hagar and Ishmael, but as it is in the Bible and as it is in the Qur'an. Could you compare the two?

Jamal Badawi

On one hand, in the Bible, it is said that Abraham took Ishmael and Hagar away after Isaac was weaned. That means that Ishmael must have been at least sixteen years old at the time, possibly even seventeen. Why? Because according to the Bible Isaac was born about fourteen years after the birth of Ishmael. In the Jewish tradition a child is weaned at about the second or third year. So this means Ishmael was about sixteen or seventeen years old. On the other hand, the Bible, in Genesis chapter 21 verses 14-19, the main exodus of Hagar and Ishmael is describes, leaving no doubt in the mind of any perceptible reader, Ishmael as a small baby rather than a seventeen year old teenager. Both of these cannot be correct at the same time.

In the 21st chapter of Genesis, it describes how Abraham put the skin full of water and the child on the Hagar's shoulder. Why would Hagar carry a sixteen year old? It says that when Hagar was left in the wilderness she cast her child under a shrub and then she was very scared that he may die out of thirst and she couldn't stand sitting and looking at him suffering. Then she began running back and forth looking for water. It says that when the angel showed her the well that gushed with water, Hagar went and filled her container and brought it back to Ishmael. Anyone would easily recognize that this is a description of a small child not a sixteen year old. If he was a teenager he'd be the one who should be looking for water for his mother instead of the reverse.

Like I said earlier, in the very same chapter, we're told that the reasons why Hagar and Ishmael were taken away was that after Isaac was weaned, Ishmael was joking or speaking in a way to Isaac that Sarah did not like and so she told Abraham to take them away. This backs the story that he'd have been a teenager or older at the time and that doesn't fit with the other description.

Another observation that is in the Islamic tradition, it is known that Ishmael was taken when he was a small child to Mecca according to a divine command and a divine plan and that the well of Zamzam, which is still gushing with water until today, is the one that gushed under the feet of Ishmael while he was crying of thirst as a baby. The Islamic tradition is quite consistent.

There was something that really attracted my attention in the Bible. In the 21st chapter of Genesis in verse 14, it says that Ishmael and Hagar wandered in Beer-sheba, and they dwelt in the wilderness of Paran. Now, to tie in this chapter between Beer-sheba, which most geographers would identify as in the southern part of Palestine and to connect it with Paran is difficult for anyone to understand. This is because some of the dictionaries of the Bibles identify Paran as being part of the Sinai peninsula and we'll come to that discussion later on. In fact Paran means Mecca but we'll come to that later. Even in their own references, the dictionaries of the Bible mention it as in Sinai.

The Qur'an does not specify, for example, the exact place where Ishmael was taken but one can easily discern that it was indeed Mecca. This is because in surah 13 verse 37, the Qur'an says that when prophet Abraham was praying saying Oh my Lord I have kept my progeny in an untilled or barren land and of course if you connect that with the history of the development of the Ishmaelites there then you'd know where the place was. It is interesting to note that the term Sheba, according to the Bible, is actually a designation of the name of one of the descendants of Ketura. Ketura was the third wife of Abraham and she married him after Sarah had passed away. That appears in Genesis chapter 10 verses 28-30 and also in chapter 25 verse 3.

The Bible also tells us that Joktan lived in the territory, which runs between Neshan and Sephar, which is in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Obviously that expanse of land includes Mecca and in fact, in Mecca, until today we are told lives a particular tribe known as the Shebani or coming from Sheba. They are historically the ones who had looked after the Kabah. I must add also that historically it has not been proved at all by anyone really that the Ishmael and his mother dwelt in Beer-sheba: the southern part of Palestine. Despite of these differences it appears to me that the text of the Bible is quite clear on the promise to bless the progeny of Abraham and that this blessing includes both Isaac as well as Ishmael.

It would be of interest to note here that there had been a new and emerging phenomenon among some Christian writers to recognize that prophet Mohammad is indeed a descendent of Ishmael. This has been recognized, for example, in the Davis Dictionary of the Bible and in the international Standard Bible encyclopedia, and in the Smith Bible dictionary. They have acknowledged the lineage of prophet Mohammad as a descendent of prophet Ishmael. I believe that this was a clear prophecy and the prophecy was fulfilled.

Host: If this is clear, why is this not accepted by both Jewish and Christian scholars?

Jamal Badawi

In my humble understanding, the prophecy is very clear and very important in the meantime, because as mentioned earlier it could potentially, if understood without bias, it could provide very important common ground not only between Muslims and Christians but I think it could even extend to the Jews as well. All accept and believe in the original revelation of the Bible and all three religions belong to and descend from Abraham. This prophecy, in itself, suffices to make the point. Unfortunately I find that many writers don't focus on its importance and don't raise objections, which quite frankly I find particularly unscholarly. Perhaps this is an issue we can pick up later on when we have more time.