



SESSION 9: THE LANGUAGE OF GOD

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this session is give the participant an understanding of how the methods of biblical criticism work and actually reinforce (rather than subvert) faith.

To achieve this goal, the session will focus on the following objectives:

1. Muhammad's sources for his knowledge of the Gospels and of New Testament people.
2. How sources colored Muhammad's understanding of Christianity and of Christ.
3. The important role scriptural criticism has played in all the Abrahamic faith traditions, historically and currently, and how this work protects the faith from exploitation.

ACTIVITIES

Discussion

- ❖ Review and discuss NOS chapter 15, "The Mother of Jesus: Mary/Maryam."
 - What does Brian Brown say about the impact of scriptural criticism upon faith? In terms of its impact, how does it strengthen or weaken faith?
- ❖ Review and discuss the story of Mary, mother of Jesus.
 - Compare and contrast Mary's story as it is told in the Qur'an and in the New Testament.
 - What does the Qur'an say about Isa as a baby? What does this imply about Jesus' nature?
- ❖ Review and discuss the concepts and methods of biblical criticism.
 - Review Biblical Criticism handout, particularly the synopses of specific critical methods.
 - How did the story get into the Qur'an and the New Testament? Discuss the pros and cons of the following modalities:
 - Pure divine inspiration imparted to Muhammad and the Gospel writers.
 - Previous receipt of the story from other people.
 - Actual witness of the events narrated.
 - Various combinations of the above.
 - How does writing (i.e., the process of documenting a story "on paper") impact the story?
 - How does language (oral and written) impact a story? How does it affect the content?
- ❖ If time allows, review NOS Chapter 14, "Cameo Appearances," pp.153-162.
 - Could the Qur'an be seen as a critical interpretation of the Judaic and Christian scripture?

READINGS AND ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT SESSION



Noah's Other Son

Session 9

For next session, participant should read the following:

1. NOS: Ch. 16, "The Temple ," pp.175-186.
2. Qur'an: Focus on close reading (slowly, aloud) of the surahs included in the above.
3. Bible: Luke 1:5-80, The Birth of John The Baptist