

ARE OTHER BOOKS INSPIRED?

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There are many other books in existence besides the Bible which claim to be inspired by God. The Book of Mormon and the Qur'an are two such examples that are worthwhile to examine, in contrast to the Bible. Vast numbers of people believe the respective claims these books make for their divine authorship. The total worldwide membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) is claimed to be over 13 million. There are more than one billion Muslims in the world today, over 19% of the world's population, and is a rapidly growing religion in Europe and North America. So what about the so-called prophets Mormons and Muslims follow and the books they believe came from God?

Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon

Sidney Rigdon was a preacher for the church of Christ in Pennsylvania and Ohio from 1821 to 1830. He had been converted from the Baptist religion by Alexander Campbell. However, in 1830 he was converted to the brand-new Mormon religion and rapidly became a major leader in the Latter Day Saints religion. He soon became the right-hand man of the religion's founder, Joseph Smith, and served as the official spokesman for the Mormon Church for many years. After his own conversion, Rigdon immediately began an effort to convert the members of the Lord's church in Ohio to Mormonism. Some followed him, but many opposed him strongly. These faithful Christians turned Rigdon's own words against him over the question of the inspiration of the Bible versus the Book of Mormon, as he had previously taught that miracles proved the inspiration of the Bible. They rightly pointed out that no such miracles confirmed the Book of Mormon. "He (Rigdon) then said the *old* revelation was confirmed by miracles, but the Book of Mormon would never be; it was not designed to be thus confirmed" (Robert N. Hullinger, *Joseph Smith's Response to Skepticism*, Signature Books, Inc., 1992, p 135, quoting the *Painesville Telegraph* of February 15, 1831). "Joseph Smith would claim some miracles for his new church, but miracles never became the final basis for faith. That was reserved for personally experienced revelation" (ibid). Indeed, the Book of Mormon itself teaches its followers upon what basis to believe its claims of divine authorship: "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4). Mormons typically claim to receive a "burning in the bosom" from the Holy Spirit in answer to this prayer. Of course, the Bible does not teach us to base our faith in God's word upon a feeling in our chest. Nor should we ever believe in a book, prophet, or religion that is based on failed prophecies. Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon religion, prophesied in 1835 that the "coming of the Lord" would "wind up the scene" within 56 years (by 1891), which obviously did not happen. He also foretold in 1832 that a Mormon temple would be built in Independence, Missouri "in this generation" (Doctrine & Covenants 57:1-3). No such temple has ever been built there to this day. The Book of Mormon prophesied that dark-skinned Indian converts would become

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white (2 Nehpi 3). Aside from the blatant racism contained therein, the prophecy itself undeniably failed, and modern editions of the Book of Mormon have even changed the original word “white” to “pure” to try to obscure the obvious failure. Many other examples could be cited but this is clearly enough. Similar false prophecies are on record by the founders of the Seventh-Day Adventist religion, William Miller and Ellen G. White, and also Charles Taze Russell who founded the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Fake “miracles” and false prophecies are the hallmark of leaders of the various Pentecostal denominations. None of these people spoke (or speak) God’s word.

Mohammad and the Qur'an

Muslims strongly believe that Mohammad ibn Abdullah was the last prophet of God and was divinely inspired over a twenty-two year period (A.D. 610-632) to speak the words that are recorded in the Qur'an. The Qur'an repeatedly claims its own divine inspiration. What evidence does it provide for its claims? It claims a unique literary style that man is said to be incapable of producing: “Verily, though mankind and the jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another” (Qur'an 17:88). That is really the only “evidence” that is offered within the book itself for its supposed divine origin. It should be noted that nowhere does God offer literary style as proof that He inspired anyone. Some Muslim scholars believe the Qur'an discusses scientific knowledge that was unknown in Mohammad’s time, but the book itself makes no such claim, and many Muslims themselves dispute this assertion. Most importantly, there are no overt claims of miracles performed by Mohammad recorded in the Qur'an. In fact, the Qur'an denies miraculous signs for Mohammad, describing him as a mere “warner” or “guide” of men: “*And those who disbelieve say: Why has not a sign been sent down upon him from his Lord? You are only a warner and (there is) a guide for every people*” (Qur'an, Surah 13:7). To Muslims, the Qur'an itself is the miracle that proves its divine origin. It would be difficult to find a clearer case of circular reasoning than this! Finally, the Qur'an only vaguely mentions God bringing certain events to pass: “For every announcement there is a term, and ye will come to know” (Qur'an 6:67). But, as Mohammad performed no miracles, he also made no clear predictions of future events. Therefore, although he appears to have had sense enough not to go on record with predictions of the future that would ultimately prove him to be a false prophet, he certainly lacks the evidence of fulfilled prophecy to confirm him as a true prophet of God. The bottom line is the Book of Mormon and the Qur'an, and all other books or men who claim inspiration from God aside from the writers of the Bible, are exposed as making false claims of inspiration since their authors lack God’s testimony on their behalf. They did not perform true miracles, and they did not accurately foretell the future. We have a multitude of miracles and fulfilled prophecies as evidence from God that the Bible truly is His inspired revelation to man, and there is no other!