

Faith

The Quran, Part 1

The Quran [Anglicized Koran] is the Holy Book that Muslims recite and turn to for guidance in all aspects of their lives. Its verses have remained intact since their revelation by God in the 7th century. Today’s article, and the next, try to explain the divine origin of the Quran by elaborating upon its preservation, authenticity, and miracles. It also discusses the Quranic message, which has universal appeal and is always relevant.

The Quran is the last testament in a series of divine revelations from God (Allah in Arabic). It consists of God’s unaltered and direct words, revealed through the Angel Gabriel to His messenger Muhammad, peace be upon him (pbuh), the final Prophet, more than 1440 years ago.

Islam continues the message received by previous messengers, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus (peace be upon them all). Therefore, the Quran maintains the original teachings of earlier revelations, including the Torah and the Gospel. The Quran describes that all the prophets taught people to believe in the One God, the Creator. The messengers also instructed them to spend their lives with God-consciousness, doing good deeds and avoiding sins. Moreover, they warned their fellow humans of accountability in the

afterlife, which the Quran stresses in different places.

Since its revelation, the Quran has remained preserved in its exact, primary text. While numerous translations of the Quran exist, they are all based on the single, original Arabic script, making the Quran unique from previous Scriptures in its pure authenticity.

THE MESSAGE: The distinctive approach of the Quran is that its spiritual message includes practical injunctions aimed at the general welfare of individuals, society, and the environment in which we live. The Quran’s message is eternal and universal, transcending our differences in race, color, ethnicity, and nationality, providing guidance on every facet of human life – from economics and trade ethics to marriage, divorce, parenting, gender issues, and inheritance.

Monotheism is the prominent theme of the Quran, affirming that God is One without any partners. In a concisely worded Quranic chapter, God commands, “Say, ‘He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one, nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him’” [Quran 112:1-4].

A foundational message in the Quran is its emphasis on righteous conduct built on firm belief and love for God. The Quran acknowledges human



Guest Column

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desires while reminding individuals to cultivate their souls. In addition, God calls on humans to use their intellect and reflect on the world around them. The Quran encourages humankind to recognize the signs of God’s existence in the precise order of the universe and the careful placement of every object in the total scheme of creation.

As Cat Stevens (Yusuf Islam) has expressed, “Everything made so much sense. The beauty of the Quran is it asks you to reflect and reason. When I read the Quran further, it talks about prayer, kindness, and charity. I was not a Muslim yet, but I felt the only answer for me was the Quran.”

God bestowed His favor upon people by revealing the Book. The Quran says, “Indeed, Allah has conferred a great favor upon the believers by raising among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been in clear error before that.” [Quran 3: 164].

The Quran also says, “And We have sent down to you the Book in truth, confirming what preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. To each of you, We prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return altogether, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ.” [Quran 5: 48].

PRESERVATION: Muslims believe that God sent many revelations to humanity throughout history, and over time, they changed from their original form. However, God chose to preserve His message to humanity in His final revelation, the Quran. The Quran gives a bold statement, which is a miracle in itself, when God states, “Indeed, it is We who sent down the Remembrance [i.e., the Qur’ān], and indeed, it is We Who will preserve it.” [Quran 15: 9]. In yet another statement, God defied anyone to come up with something similar, “Or do they say, ‘He (Muhammad) invented it’? Say, ‘Then bring ten surahs [i.e., chapters]

like it that have been invented and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah if you should be truthful.’” And if they do not respond to you, then know that the Qur’an was revealed with the knowledge of Allah and that there is no deity except Him. So, will you not be Muslims?” [Quran 2: 23]. When they couldn’t, God said, “And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah [i.e., a chapter] the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful.” [Quran 11: 13-14].

Yet, one might wonder, which evidence supports the claim that the Quran has never been modified? The Quran’s unique rhythmic style made it easy to memorize, which has been the primary source of its preservation. Moreover, since Prophet Muhammad could not read or write, he appointed scribes to record the Quran as it was revealed to him. Thus, the complete Quran was not only memorized by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and many of his companions, but it also existed in its entirety in written form during his lifetime.

Within a year after Prophet Muhammad’s death, a manuscript of the entire Quran was assembled by a committee led by his

chief scribe, who followed stringent criteria to safeguard against any errors (in words and pronunciation). This copy was approved unanimously by Prophet Muhammad’s companions, including hundreds who had memorized the entire Quran and were known to the Prophet himself. Eventually, the Major companions of The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) compiled several copies of the Quran in book form and distributed them to the major Muslim cities. One such copy is currently at the museum in Tashkent, and a facsimile of it, produced in 1905, is available in the Columbia University Library.

The memorization process began during Prophet Muhammad’s life, and Muslims still emphasize memorization. In his book, An Introduction to Hadith, John Burton explains that oral transmission through the generations aids preservation by diminishing reliance solely on written records. Manuscripts not protected through memorization can be altered, edited, or lost over time. However, a book committed to memory by millions of people worldwide over centuries cannot be changed due to the number of people who know it word-for-word.

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Southern Baptists poised to ban churches with women pastors. Some are urging them to reconsider

From its towering white steeple and red-brick facade to its Sunday services filled with rousing gospel hymns and evangelistic sermons, First Baptist Church of Alexandria, Virginia, bears many of the classic hallmarks of a Southern Baptist church.

On a recent Sunday, its pastor for women and children, Kim Eskridge, urged members to invite friends and neighbors to an upcoming vacation Bible school — a perennial Baptist activity — to help “reach families in the

community with the gospel.” But because that pastor is a woman, First Baptist’s days in the Southern Baptist Convention may be numbered.

At the SBC’s annual meeting June 11-12 in Indianapolis, representatives will vote on whether to amend the denomination’s constitution to essentially ban churches with any women pastors — and not just in the top job. That measure received overwhelming approval in a preliminary vote last year.

Leaders of First Baptist –

which has given millions to Southern Baptist causes and has been involved with the convention since its 19th century founding — are bracing for a possible expulsion.

“We are grieved at the direction the SBC has taken,” the church said in a statement.

And it’s not alone.

By some estimates, the proposed ban could affect hundreds of congregations and have a disproportionate impact on predominantly Black churches.

The vote is partly the culmination of events set in motion two years ago.

That’s when a Virginia pastor contacted SBC officials to contend that First Baptist and four nearby churches were “out of step” with denominational doctrine that says only men can be pastors.

The SBC Credentials Committee launched a formal inquiry in April.

Southern Baptists disagree on which ministry jobs this doctrine refers to. Some say it’s just the senior pastor, others that a pastor is anyone who

preaches and exercises spiritual authority.

And in a Baptist tradition that prizes local church autonomy, critics say the convention shouldn’t enshrine a constitutional rule based on one interpretation of its non-binding doctrinal statement.

By some estimates, women are working in pastoral roles in hundreds of SBC-linked churches, a fraction of the nearly 47,000 across the denomination.

— AP

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Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.



John 14:6

Stillwater Bible
Proclaiming Christ, Training Believers
JB Bond, Senior Pastor

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G.R.O.W. Groups	9:45 a.m.
Worship Service	11:00 a.m.
Kids' Church	11:20 a.m.

Tuesdays

Cornerstone @ The Union (RM 297)	7:30 p.m.
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Wednesdays

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Sunday AM Worship - 10:30
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Wed PM Bible Study - 7:00

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WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

www.fumcstw.org
400 W. 7th • 372-5854

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Sunday School.....10:00am
Closer Walk.....10 am Family Life Center

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4th & Knoblock • 372-2744

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9 am
Worship Service
8 am & 10:30 am

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Independent Baptist
Expository Preaching

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Thursday7:30pm

723 E. 17th

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524 S. Duncan • 405-372-5580
www.stillwaterfpc.org

Sunday Worship

9:45 a.m. - Sunday School
11:00 a.m. - in person, online
On KSPI radio AM 780 & FM 94.3
and the Stillwater FPC Facebook page

Sunnybrook Christian Church

421 E. Richmond Rd • 377.0923
www.sunnybrookccc.org

SUNDAY SERVICE	SUNDAY SCHOOL
9:45 am	8:30 am
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KIDS CHURCH 9:45 & 11:15 am

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Southside Baptist Church of Stillwater

1223 S. Perkins Rd.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 AM + 6 PM
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YOUTH & ADULT BIBLE STUDY 6:30

Paul Hutchinson – Pastor
Address – 1223 S. Perkins. Rd.
Phone: 408-372-2411
Email: southsidestillwater@gmail.com

The Islamic Society of Stillwater

616 N. Washington St.
Friday (Weekly) Prayers
1:40 PM - 2:10 PM
For Daily Prayer Times
www.icstillwater.org

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

711 N. Country Club Rd.

Sunday Mass 8:30 11:15 a.m. 1 p.m. (en español) Tue & Thu Mass 12:10 p.m. Wednesday Mass 12:10 p.m. 6 p.m. (en español)	Friday Mass 12:10 p.m. Saturday Mass 9 a.m. 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass) Confessions Tues-Fri 11:30-12 p.m. Wednesday 5 p.m. Saturday 9:45-11 a.m.
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405-372-6886 www.sfxstillwater.org

Zion Lutheran Church - LCMS

Sunday - 8:00, 10:30 AM

www.zionlutheranstw.org

John E. Wackler, Pastor
504 S. Knoblock • 372-3703