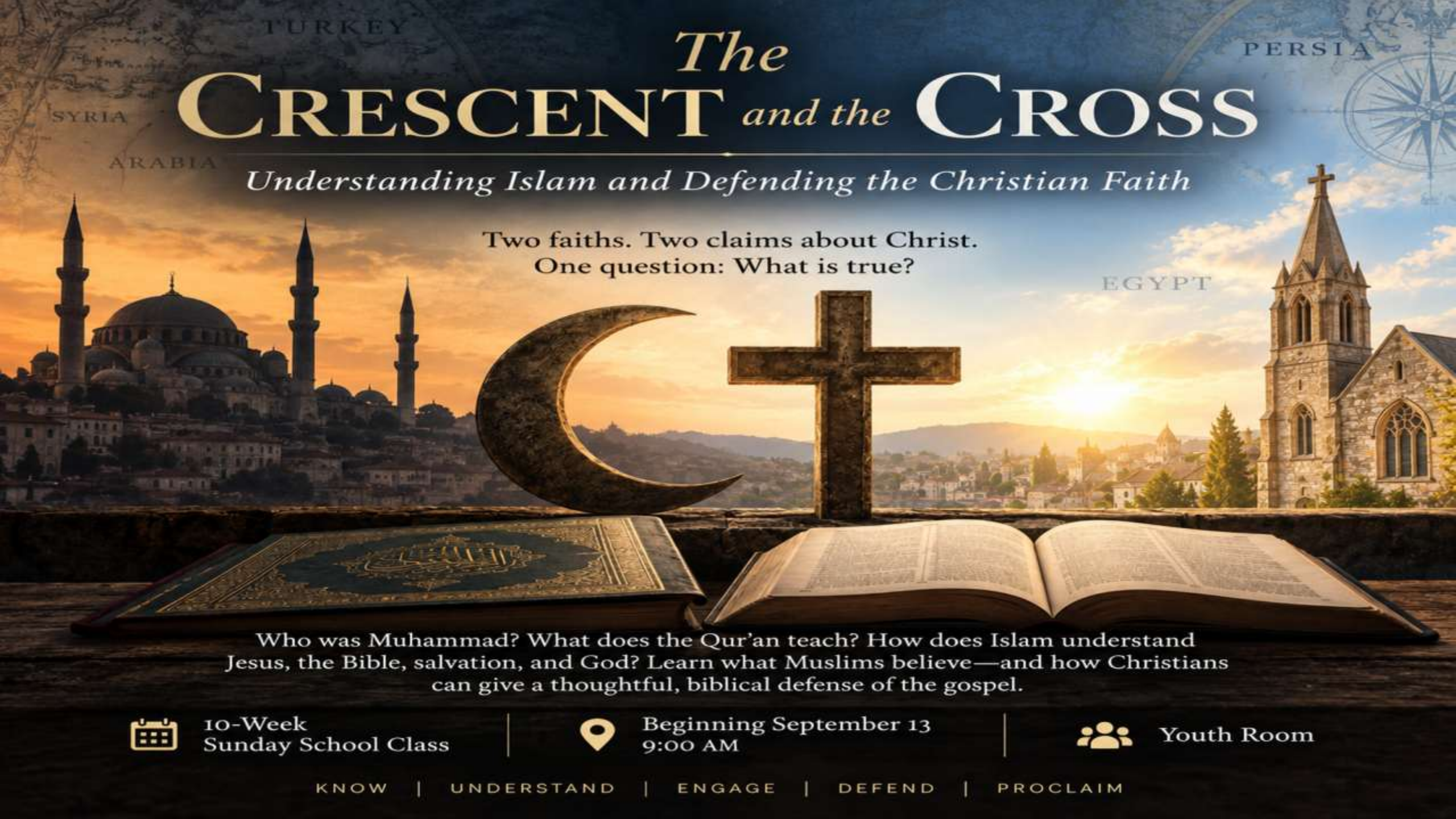




The CRESCENT *and the* CROSS

Understanding Islam and Defending the Christian Faith

Two faiths. Two claims about Christ.
One question: What is true?

Who was Muhammad? What does the Qur'an teach? How does Islam understand Jesus, the Bible, salvation, and God? Learn what Muslims believe—and how Christians can give a thoughtful, biblical defense of the gospel.



10-Week
Sunday School Class



Beginning September 13
9:00 AM



Youth Room

KNOW | UNDERSTAND | ENGAGE | DEFEND | PROCLAIM

Different
People.
Deeper
Understanding.
Greater
Opportunities.

U

UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

10-Week Sunday School Class Outline

Understand Islam -> Evaluate Islam -> Engage Muslims with the Gospel

1 Who Was Muhammad?

Origins, Arabia, Mecca, Hijra, Medina

2 What Is the Qur'an?

Revelation, recitation, surahs, compilation

3 What Do Muslims Believe?

Allah, Five Pillars, Hadith, Sunni/Shia

4 Islam and the Bible

Same figures, different story and theology

5 Who Is Jesus?

Messiah, prophet, Sonship, Trinity

6 Did Jesus Die and Rise?

Qur'an 4:157, cross, resurrection

7 Muhammad and Jesus

Testing a prophet and comparing claims

8 The Qur'an Examined

Preservation, variants, history, objections

9 Grace or Works?

Sin, judgment, mercy, assurance, gospel

10 How Should Christians Respond?

Questions, clarity, love, evangelism

"Be always prepared
to give an answer..."

1 PETER 3:15



BEGINNING
SEPTEMBER

Understan

Goal: understand what Muslims believe, know what Christians believe, and be prepared to give a gracious biblical answer.

Pre-Quiz: The Bible and the Qur'an

1. How many books are in the Bible—in the Qur'an?

66 books in the Bible. The Qur'an is **only one** book.

2. How many human authors wrote the Bible—and the Qur'an?

About **40 authors** wrote the Bible. The Qur'an was revealed to **one man only**.

3. Over how many years was the Bible written—and the Qur'an revealed?

Over **1,500 years for the Bible**. The Qur'an over about **23 years** (A.D. 610–632).

4. In how many original languages was the Bible written—and the Qur'an?

The Bible in three languages: **Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek**. The Qur'an: Arabic.

5. How many chapters are in the Bible—and the Qur'an?

1,189 chapters in the Bible. **114 chapters (surahs) in the Qur'an**.

The NT has **270 chs.** (About **70 hours to read the Bible**, 10 for the **Qur'an**).

Pre-Quiz: The Bible and the Qur'an

6. How is the Bible arranged (the Qur'an)?

The Bible is arranged in **two Testaments by literary categories**. The Qur'an **by chapter length**, from longest (Surah 2 is 286 verses) to shortest (Surah 108 is 3 verses)—not in chronological order of revelation or as ongoing historical narrative.

7. How does the Bible's story reach its climax (the Qur'an)?

The Bible reaches its climax **in Jesus Christ**—His incarnation, atoning death, resurrection, ascension, and promised return. The decisive event in the Qur'an is the angel's **revelation to Muhammad**. Its ultimate horizon is **the final Day of Judgment**.

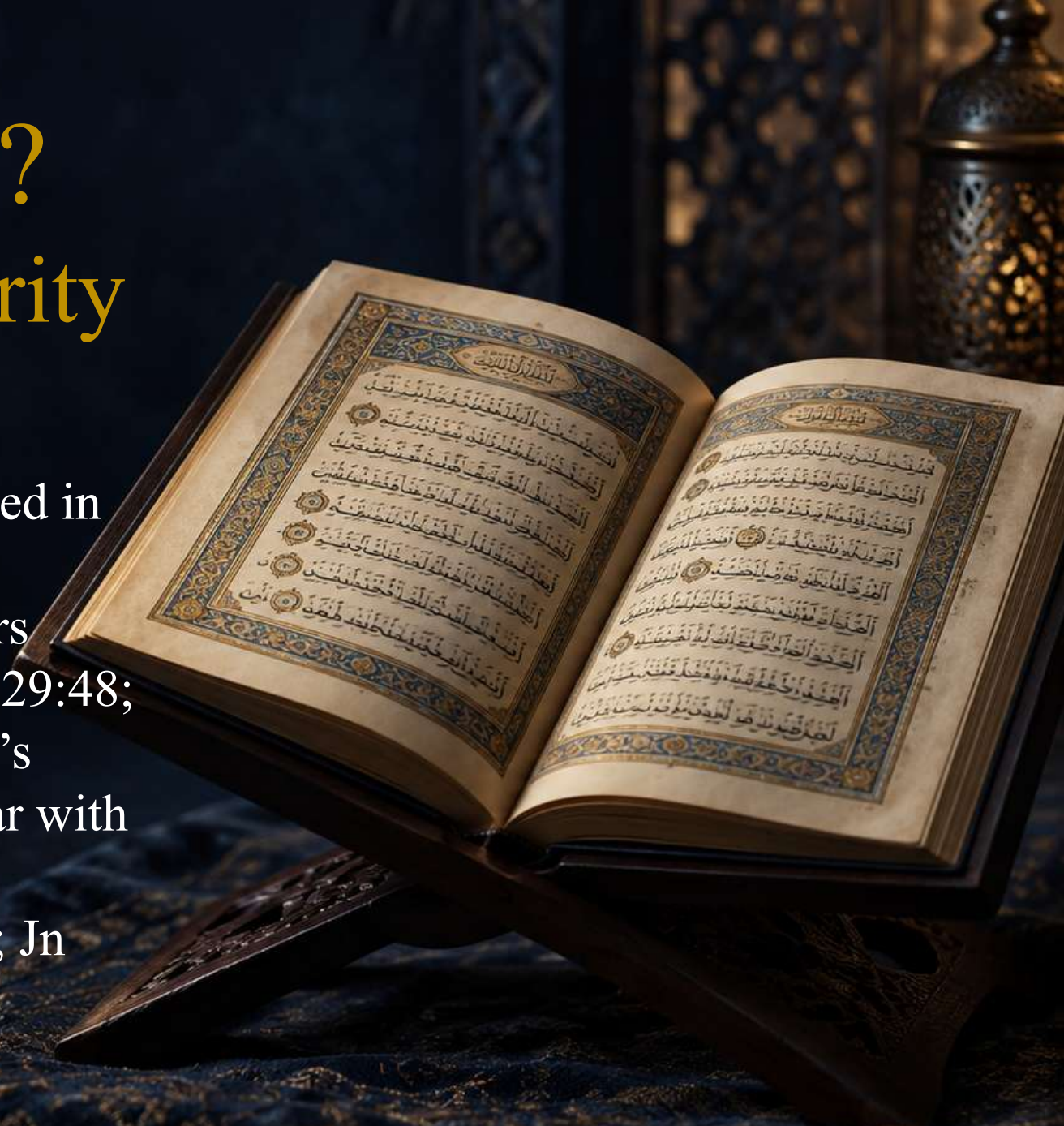
8. What is the Bible chiefly about (the Qur'an)?

God's redeeming work for sinners, promised in the OT and **fulfilled in Jesus Christ**. The Qur'an is chiefly **a call to submit to Allah**, receive His guidance, **obey His commands**, reject idolatry, and **prepare** for final judgment.

What is the Qur'an?

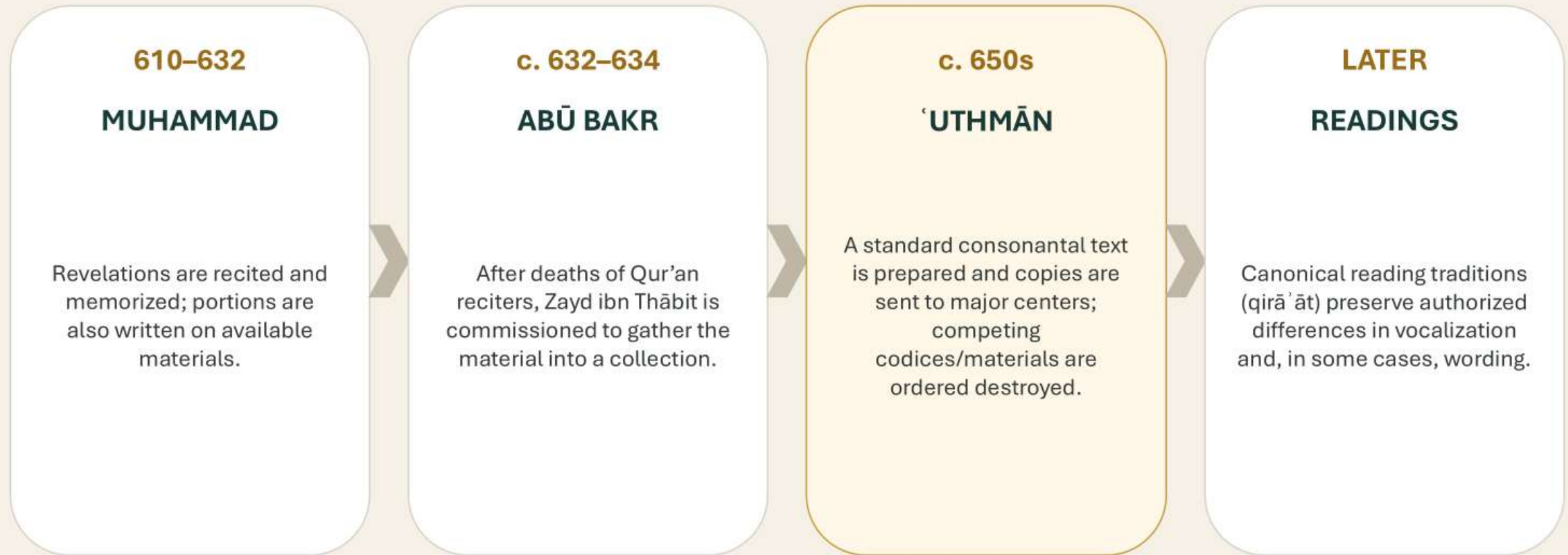
Islam's Supreme Authority

- The Direct and Final Speech of Allah
- Spoken to the Angel Gabriel and conveyed in Arabic to Muhammad over 23 years.
- Recited in Arabic by the Prophet to others
- Muhammad was Ummi-illiterate (Surah 29:48; 7:157-158). Used as proof of the Qur'an's divine authorship since he was unfamiliar with previous revelation and higher poetry.
- Compare this revelation with Heb.1:1–3; Jn 1:1,14; Gal 1:8,9



How Was the Qur'an Collected?

Traditional Islamic accounts distinguish Muhammad's recitation from the later collection and standardization of the written text.



THE BLUE QUR'AN

FAITH · ART · HISTORY

The Blue Qur'an (c. 9th–10th century) is a rare and stunning manuscript, written in gold kufic script on deep indigo-dyed parchment. It represents one of the earliest and most beautiful examples of Islamic calligraphy, where God's words are adorned with both artistic excellence and reverence.

"Indeed, this is a noble Qur'an."

SURAH AL-WĀQI'AH 56:77



SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:255 — DETAIL FROM THE BLUE QUR'AN
GOLD KUFIC SCRIPT, C. 9TH–10TH CENTURY

THE BISMILLAH

BEAUTY · MEANING · DEVOTION

The Bismillah — “In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful” — is one of the most frequently written and beautifully rendered verses in Islamic art. Here it is presented in Thuluth script, a graceful and flowing calligraphic style known for its elegance and spiritual depth.

*“In the name of God,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.”*



BISMILLAH AL-RAḤMĀN AL-RAḤĪM
THULUTH SCRIPT

How Is the Qur'an Organized?

A reader should not expect a Genesis-to-Revelation storyline.

114 SURAHS

Surah = chapter
Ayah = sign / verse

Surah 1: al-Fātiḥah
Then broadly longer →
shorter, with many
exceptions

NOT CHRONOLOGICAL

Events and themes recur across different surahs. Stories may appear in fragments rather than as one continuous narrative.

TWO BROAD PERIODS

Traditional headings identify revelations as Meccan or Medinan, referring to the period before or after the Hijra.

READING CONSEQUENCE

The Qur'an often assumes that the audience already knows the people or controversy being discussed. Context may need to be reconstructed from other passages and later Islamic tradition.

2:1–286 • 12:1–111 • 96:1–19

Meccan vs. Medinan — Why It Matters

The Hijra (622) marks a major change in Muhammad's setting and the Qur'an's subject matter.

MECCAN • c. 610–622

Muhammad is a minority preacher in Mecca. Recurring emphases include:

- Allah's oneness
- resurrection and final judgment
- Paradise and Hell
- stories of rejected prophets
- warnings to unbelievers
- defense of Muhammad's prophetic calling

Examples: Surahs 81–87; 96; 112

MEDINAN • 622–632

Muhammad leads an organized community in Medina. The Qur'an increasingly addresses:

- communal law and worship
- marriage and family
- warfare and treaties
- Jews and Christians
- hypocrisy within the community
- social and political order

Examples: Surahs 2; 4; 5; 8; 9

Abrogation in the Qur'an — Naskh

An earlier revelation or command may be replaced by a later one.

KEY QUR'ANIC TEXTS

2:106 “We do not abrogate a verse... except that We bring forth one better than it or similar to it.”

16:101
“When We substitute one revelation for another...”

13:39
“Allah eliminates or confirms what He wills...”

CLASSIC EXAMPLE: ALCOHOL

2:219 Benefits and harms acknowledged



4:43 Do not approach prayer intoxicated



5:90–91 Intoxicants are to be avoided

Traditional Islamic understanding

Abrogation does not mean Allah corrected a mistake; rather, different commands were given for different stages and circumstances of the Muslim community.

QUESTION: If the Qur'an is the perfect speech of Allah, why does one divine command sometimes replace another?

HOW ARE THE SURAHS NAMED?

Most titles come from a distinctive person, object, event, image, or word in the chapter—not necessarily its main subject.

PEOPLE	Jonah (10) • Joseph (12) • Abraham (14) • Mary (19) • Muhammad (47) • Noah (71)
GROUPS / PEOPLES	Women (4) • Believers (23) • Romans (30) • Quraysh (106) • Mankind (114)
ANIMALS	Cow (2) • Cattle (6) • Bee (16) • Ant (27) • Spider (29) • Elephant (105)
PLACES	Heights (7) • Cave (18) • Mount (52) • City (90)
NATURE / CREATION	Thunder (13) • Light (24) • Smoke (44) • Star (53) • Moon (54) • Sun (91)
TIMES	Dawn (89) • Night (92) • Morning Brightness (93) • Declining Day (103) • Daybreak (113)
OBJECTS	Table Spread (5) • Iron (57) • Pen (68) • Palm Fiber (111)
EVENTS / JUDGMENT	Victory (48) • Resurrection (75) • Earthquake (99) • Striking Calamity (101)
RELIGIOUS IDEAS / ATTRIBUTES	Repentance (9) • Criterion (25) • Most Merciful (55) • Sincerity (112)
ARABIC LETTERS	Tā-Hā (20) • Yā-Sīn (36) • Šād (38) • Qāf (50) — 4 surahs

KEY POINT: A surah title is usually a label, not a summary. “The Cow” (Surah 2) has 286 verses; the cow appears only in 2:67–73.

THE QUR'AN AT A GLANCE

114 CHAPTERS | 14 MAIN THEMES

The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters (sūrahs), and every chapter is given a name.

#		THEME CATEGORY	NUMBER OF CHAPTERS
1		Allah, His Oneness & Attributes	16
2		Revelation, the Qur'an & Its Message	9
3		Prophets and Earlier Nations	15
4		Judgment, the Afterlife, Paradise & Hell	18
5		Creation, the Universe & Natural Signs	9
6		Humanity, Life, and Moral Guidance	9
7		Worship, Devotion & Spiritual Life	7
8		Law, Ethics & Social Teaching	6
9		Community, Society & Relationships	6
10		Struggle, Jihād & Defense	8
11		Warnings, Rejection & Consequences	8
12		Stories, Parables & Lessons	8
13		Guidance for Believers & Character	6
14		Global Mission & Call to Humanity	3
TOTAL			114

1. ALLAH'S ONENESS AND SOVEREIGNTY

THE FOUNDATIONAL THEME OF THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an repeatedly declares that Allah is the one true God, the only Creator, Lord, and Judge, and that all people must submit to Him alone.



THE ONE GOD (TAWHĪD)

Allah is unique. There is no god beside Him. Associating partners with Him (*shirk*) is the greatest sin.

"Say, He is Allah, the One."

QUR'AN 112:1



ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY

Allah creates, rules, gives life and death, guides whom He wills, and controls all things.

"To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth."

QUR'AN 3:189



CREATOR AND SUSTAINER

Allah alone created the heavens and the earth and sustains the entire universe.

"Allah is the creator of all things."

QUR'AN 39:62



THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

Allah alone judges. All humanity will stand before Him. None can question His authority.

"To Allah belongs the judgment, and to Him you will be returned."

QUR'AN 6:57



HUMANITY MUST SUBMIT

The proper response is to believe, obey, and submit (*islām*) to Allah alone.

"So submit to Allah, and be among the Muslims."

QUR'AN 3:20

THE BIG
PICTURE

The Qur'an presents itself first and foremost as a call the one sovereign God and to submit to Him in every

PROPHETS AND REVELATION

A CONTINUING MESSAGE FROM ALLAH

The Qur'an presents a long line of prophets, all calling people to the same message: worship the one God, obey Him, and reject false gods.



A CHAIN OF PROPHETS

From Adam to Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus, and Muhammad, Allah sent messengers to guide humanity.

"And We did not send before you any messenger except that We revealed to him..."

QUR'AN 21:7



THE SAME CORE MESSAGE

All the prophets called people to the worship of the one God, to obedience, and to turn away from idolatry.

"Indeed, We sent to every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid taghut (false gods).'"

QUR'AN 16:36



REVELATION THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Allah gave earlier prophets scripture (Torah, Gospel, Psalms), and Muhammad is presented as the final messenger with the Qur'an.

"We have revealed to you the Book in truth, confirming what came before it of the Scriptures..."

QUR'AN 5:48



MUHAMMAD AS THE FINAL MESSENGER

Muhammad is described as the "Seal of the Prophets," sent to all humanity with a universal message.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets."

QUR'AN 33:40

THE BIG
PICTURE

The Qur'an presents a unified story of God's ongoing revelation through the prophets, culminating in Muhammad, calling all people to submit to the one true God.

SUBMISSION TO THE ONE GOD

A CENTRAL THEME IN THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an repeatedly calls all people to submit (islām) to the one true God — to believe, obey, and worship Him alone.



ALLAH IS ONE

Allah is the sole, unique God. There is no god besides Him. Associating partners with Him (*shirk*) is the greatest sin.

"Say, He is Allah, the One."

QUR'AN 112:1



ALLAH IS SOVEREIGN

He creates, rules, gives life and death, guides whom He wills, and controls all things.

"To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth."

QUR'AN 3:189



HUMANITY MUST SUBMIT

The proper response is to believe, obey, worship, and surrender to Allah's will. Islam means submission.

"So submit to Allah and be among the Muslims."

QUR'AN 3:20



ALLAH GIVES SIGNS

Creation, history, and His revelation are signs (*āyāt*) that demonstrate His power and demand a response of submission.

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth are signs for a people who submit."

QUR'AN 3:190



PROPHETS CALL TO SUBMISSION

Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and all the prophets called people to worship the one God and obey Him.

"And We sent no messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allah."

QUR'AN 4:64

THE BOTTOM LINE

"And worship Allah and do not associate with Him anything, and be good to parents, and to relatives, and orphans, and the needy, and speak to people good, and establish prayer and give zakat and whatever good you put forward for yourselves — you will find it with Allah."

QUR'AN 2:83

WARNING & JUDGMENT IN THE QUR'AN

A RECURRING THEME THROUGHOUT

ABOUT

20-30%

OF THE QUR'AN

involves, broadly understood:

- Warning of divine judgment
- Hell/fire and punishment
- Condemnation of unbelief and wrongdoing
- Reminders that Allah sees and knows human actions

NEARLY

1/3

OF THE QUR'AN

is eschatological more broadly when resurrection, Judgment Day, paradise, and the afterlife are included.

KEY POINT

The Qur'an repeatedly presents itself not merely as information about God, but as a **warning** (*nadhīr*) calling hearers to submission before the coming judgment.

"So fear the Fire, whose fuel is people and stones, prepared for the disbelievers."

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:24

The Qur'an's Repeating Message

Across its many subjects, several commands and warnings recur again and again.

ONE GOD

Worship Allah alone.

16:36; 112:1–4

BELIEVE

Receive Allah's revelations and messengers.

2:285

OBEY

Obey Allah and his messenger.

4:59

REPENT

Turn back to Allah and seek forgiveness.

39:53–54

DO RIGHT

Faith is repeatedly joined to righteous deeds.

2:25

REMEMBER JUDGMENT

Resurrection, Paradise, and Hell frame human choices.

99:1–8; 101:1–11