

SUBSUMPTION THEOLOGY: Jesus à la Charte!

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INTRODUCTION

Years ago, I attended culinary school at Asheville-Buncombe Technical College in Asheville, North Carolina. My chef was a Frenchman who was “old school”, not given to the then popular trend of nouvelle cuisine. The instruction was excellent, inclusive of all the important elements of classical French cookery as well as the relevant business and dining room facets of food service. Our class, on certain Fridays at noontime, treated the lunching public (usually it was a treat) to the elegance of American, French, and Russian styles of dining room service with an emphasis on French service, of course. Within French service there were two formal types of menus: Table d’Hote, set complete meals, and À la Carte, a variety of choices of entrée (main dish) and entremets (side dishes) from which our patrons could “pick and choose”. Since 1985, when I graduated, I have worked with some very good cooks who, invariably, had developed their own preferences, whether certain methods of cookery, favorite foods and flavors, or styles of management, and rightly so. Each was his own authority, an artist in his own right expressing himself in the culinary medium. The theological, however, is not the culinary. Theologians may postulate independently and differently from one another at various levels of expertise and specialization. But in the theological, unlike the culinary, there exists the inviolable, the standard of authority established not by men but God. It is acknowledged that the theology of Scripture as purview provides for the variant but not for the deviant; the deviant is provided by another. It is to this I turn.

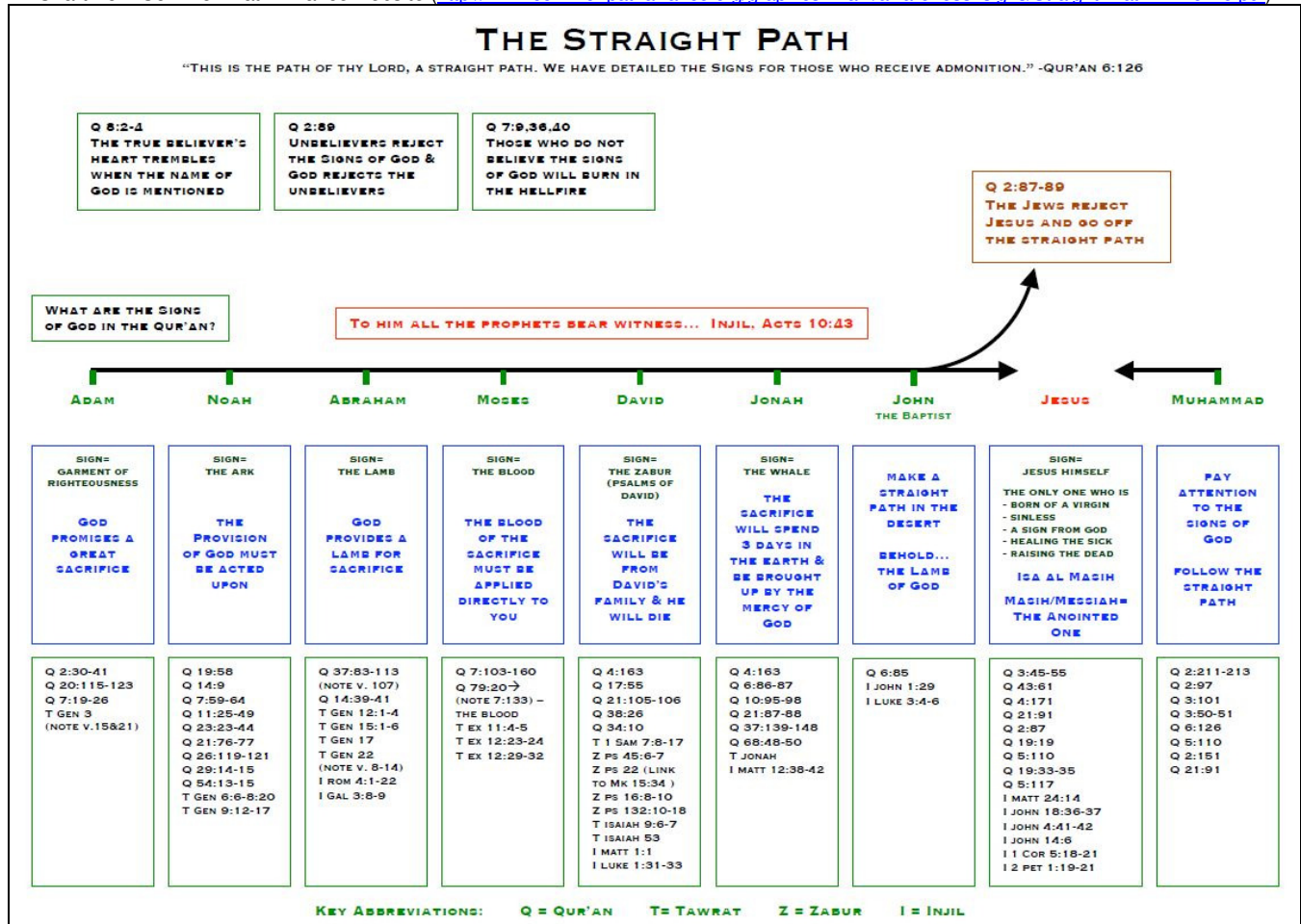
§ The spirit of the age is an evil ubiquity homing in on all things antichrist latent among us. I see it in our day’s automaton obsession with the completion of its global circuit of political and spiritual unity. It bears, in the minds of its acolytes, a foregone conclusion of salvation applicable to any and all the deepest, most troubling issues of our day. The organization, Common Path Alliance (C.P.A.), a proponent of the syncretistic C5 paradigm of missions contextualization, describes itself as “...a group of partners dedicated to joining the worldwide movement of God....” The group’s mission statement is the following: “We exist to unite people who have been divided by religion by seeking our common path to God.” C.P.A. obviously has joined a movement (generally known as “Insider Movement”) for many ministries, organizations, and even churches espouse a similar mission statement. The chart entitled “The Straight Path” on the C.P.A. website, a chart heretical and the reason for this, my refutation, is indicative of the movement’s theology, a theology that is an embodiment of the spirit of the age that serves well the ambition and methodology of their mission but not the LORD. It is a disservice to his Word!

Before addressing the chart, it is important to recall basic elements of hermeneutics that pertain to the C5 paradigm of missions. They are indigenization and syncretism. My Bible college text says, “Indigenization is the use of various forms of communication and transmission found in the culture to which a speaker or writer is bringing his message” (Mickelsen 172). An example of this is the apostle John communicating in terms of light and darkness, a philosophical idea popularly understood by his reading audience. For instance, he wrote, “And this is the judgement: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (3. 19). In no way did his figurative language diminish the truth about the Son of God, rather, it explained it. Mickelsen, within his text, immediately addresses its antithesis: “Syncretism [and the C5 paradigm] on the other hand, is an invalid procedure by which the content of the gospel is changed or partially assimilated by a hostile worldview found in another culture” (172). In this case, the Insider Movement diminishes the biblical identity of Jesus to accommodate the theological hostility of Islam. For instance, to ease their acceptance in Islam, Insiders do not speak of Jesus as the Son of God even though his true identity is central to the gospel. Instead, as a consequence, inadvertently or not, they perpetuate the outrageous belief among Muslims that, if it were so, if he were the Son of God, he would be the result of sexual intercourse between God, the Father, and Mary, the virgin. This is syncretism.

Consider the following two hypotheticals. The theological hostility of this heresy to the gospel is like the inappropriate behavior of a disgruntled patron in a French restaurant. He insists on ordering À la Carte despite his awareness that the menu is strictly Table d’Hote. Rebuffed, he takes matters into his own hands, orders two complete meals, and adds to one meal another meal as if it were a side dish. The result is the subsumption of the

one into the other, the one no longer itself that has become a subordinate element in the other. Another way of looking at this is through the lens of deductive reasoning. The proponents of IM (Insider Movement) seem to hypothesize like this: "Since Muslims read about Jesus in the Qur'an, and Jesus is in the Bible, then Islam and Christianity intersect in Jesus." Even though the concept finds no affirmative premise in Scripture, and, despite the fact the Qur'an denies the deity of Jesus, the thought is logical and is utilized as a cogent, "evangelistic" IM tool for reasoning with Muslims. This approach appeals to the IM heterodoxy among missions, and it may be convincing to an average Muslim, but its result is truth distorted, the theological subsumption of Jesus. The action of heresy is like that of a wave that eventually breaks onto the shore and then washes back into the ocean. Subsumption theology has the same sort of action; it "breaks" onto a specific audience and then washes back into the body of Christ. For instance, a church near me, far from any Islamic enclave of Muslims, Christ the Rock Community Church in Menasha, Wisconsin, propagates this heresy.

Chart from Common Path Alliance website (http://www.commonpathalliance.org/graphics_main/awareness_signs/Straight_Path_Timeline.pdf)



Click on the above chart to read a full-sized image.

I. THE CHART AS CONTEXT

At the outset it is important to recognize that both Muslims and Christians ultimately are the chart's intended audience. Within the body of Christ, IM Christian missionaries metastasize this heresy and syncretistic methodology. Its title, "The Straight Path", as phraseology, figures prominently and repeatedly in the Qur'an. By many times, qur'anic references outnumber biblical ones, they always are listed first, and biblical terminology is consistently qualified by qur'anic terminology. (The agreement between the Bible and the Qur'an that the chart attempts to establish for the "Signs" is belied by what the full context of each book actually says about them. As I address the chart's specifics, this will become evident to the reader.) The Jewish people in the scheme of the chart are depicted as forfeit, and this dismissiveness is similar to how they are depicted in the Qur'an. If the chart's aim is to reveal to Muslims Jesus in the Qur'an, its success is found not in that but in the redefining of

Jesus in the Bible. The placement of Jesus on this chart is more like a “hyphen” between mongrelized topics of the Bible and Muhammad of Islam. Jesus is more like a functionary for the path, not as one of the path. As a whole the chart is qur’anic; its every element is contextualized accordingly.

The depiction of the time line implies a chronology of persons and events that are bound by time, including Jesus. The chart informs neither by graphic nor by Scripture reference the biblical teaching of Jesus’ pre-incarnate state, one of many biblical teachings contradicted and disputed in the Qur’an. That Muhammad is on the line is glaringly interpolative. And where is the church, the body of Christ!?! Overarching is Qur’anic authority in which the graphic as a whole is couched. The reader is presented with a conception of biblical teachings eisegested to facilitate in the reader’s mind their qur’anic interpretation.

One is hard-pressed to find congruence between the people who say “We exist to unite people...” and their apparent indifference in offending Christian orthodoxy. The Qur’an says, “They do blaspheme who say: ‘Allah is Christ the son of Mary...!’ ‘They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a trinity...’ ‘Christ the son of Mary was no more than an apostle; Many were the apostles that passed away before him’” (Qur’an 5.72, 73, 75). But the Bible says, “And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God’” (Luke 1.35; English Standard Version). And Isaiah prophesied, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (9.6). The Bible clearly teaches that Christ is a member of the godhead and the Qur’an, written hundreds of years after the Bible, clearly teaches that its god, Allah, rejects that teaching. It is of paramount importance to the reader that he understands that the chart intends the interchangeability of the names ‘God’ and ‘Allah’ as a premise for engendering the conflated idea that Christians and Muslims are mutually within the kingdom of God. Common Path Alliance, as a “group of partners dedicated to joining the worldwide movement of God...”, if the chart is any indicator at all, seems to believe that the God of the Bible and the god of the Qur’an are the same despite their crucial contradictions. Allah predominates as the god of “the worldwide movement” while Jesus is demoted to prophet, akin to Muhammad (promoted to prophet).

For condemning this heresy I have been criticized by proponents of IM for being off point, for failing to appreciate the methodology’s effectiveness in Islam. These folks seem to believe that the C5 expedience of their compromises, and even their tacit facilitation of the denial of the deity of Christ, have no bearing whatever on their outcomes. The Bible says, “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 3. 10, f.). My point being, regeneration of the sinner is the Lord’s work, but it is my responsibility to recognize the Foundation laid and build in accordance. Those who build with the syncretism of Common Path Alliance are misrepresenting the gospel, failing to build in accordance with the Foundation: “each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done” (I Corinthians 3. 13).

Having studied the chart and all its references, biblical and qur’anic, I think it best to go about refuting it out of its order to accord with the biblical centrality of Jesus and to reveal more completely the chart’s heretical nature.

II. “SIGN = JESUS HIMSELF”

“- Born of a Virgin”

The sign that is Jesus, prophesied by Isaiah some seven hundred years before the Incarnation and thirteen hundred years before the Qur’an was written, is this: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (7.14). In Hebrew the word Immanuel (עִמָּנוּאֵל) means “With us is God” (H.A.W. 677). It carries a covenantal connotation: “And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you” (Genesis 17. 7). Immanuel, as covenantal terminology, also is expressed by the covenantal people of God: “The LORD of hosts is *with us*; the God of Jacob is our fortress” (Psalm 46.11; italics added). Remember, it was through Isaac and not Ishmael that the covenant of promise was established (Genesis 17.18-21 cf. Galatians 4.21, ff.). It is instructive how the item, “Born of a virgin,” though true and in harmony with the Qur’an functions in this case to distract the reader from the importance of the identity of the person born.

With us is God, not merely an apostle or prophet as the Qur'an asserts, and certainly not a mere mortal like Muhammad! In the Qur'an, when Mary asked how she, a virgin, could birth a child, it says "Allah createth what He willeth: When He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it, 'Be', and it is!" (3.47). But about the Incarnation, the Bible says, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God" (Luke 1.35). It is the identity of "Immanuel", the Son of God, that the chart subsumes. The powerful truth of what his personage encompasses makes evident the deceit of the chart's narrowness. Thomas C. Oden, in his work, The Word of Life, writes of the Son, "The Word of Life is continuously present in the sustenance of creation, the whole story of providence unfolding in world history, including history prior to and following incarnation and resurrection" (73). For proof he turns us to Colossians 1. 17: "And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together." And also: "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1. 3).

Dear reader, the Qur'an says, "[It is not befitting to Allah that He should beget a son]" (Qur'an 19.35). So then, how can Allah be the God of Jesus when the Bible says Jesus is the Son of God? He cannot be, and the Father says this: "For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'?" (Hebrews 1.5) The verse is cited from Psalm 2. 7 and is dually an affirmation of the ascendancy of king David and Israel and the Davidic covenant itself, and the relationship of the Father to his Son, Jesus, The King. These are clear biblical attestations of the filial relationship of Jesus, the Son of God, and God, the Father.

"- Sinless"

The sinlessness of Jesus should be couched in the context of his office as "high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5.10). The writer of Hebrews says of him, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, *yet without sin*" (4.15; italics added). And the office of this high priest, Christ Jesus, was sworn by HE who could swear by nothing greater than himself: "The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek'" (Psalm 110. 4; Hebrews 7.21). The chart asks of the reader an obtuseness and willingness to miss the importance of Jesus sacrifice. Under this item none of the Qur'anic references claims Jesus' sinlessness and the one biblical one that broaches it does not speak to his atonement: "he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9.26). The chart decontextualizes Jesus into a subordinate position relative to its Qur'anic context, and this is another example of its subsumption of Jesus and the crucial importance of his person and ministry.

"- A Sign from God"

Being from someone is different from being someone; and the subtlety of the wording of this item also is instructive. The apostle Paul wrote, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the *form* of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped..." (Philippians 2. 5, f; italics added). The word, *form*, in the Greek is μορφή (morphe): "This term in classical Greek as well as in biblical Greek means 'the set of characteristics which constitutes a thing what it is.' It denotes the genuine nature of a thing" (Erickson 325). The word, *equality*, in the Greek is ἰσα (isa): "*equal* in number, size, [or] quality" (Bauer 381). In the gospel of John the same root is used: "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself *equal* with God" (5. 18; italics added). The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is, "...true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father..." (Bettenson 26; The Nicene Creed). He is a sign, the sign Immanuel: with us is God!

"- Healing the Sick"

In Matthew, chapter twelve, verses twenty-two and following there is the account of a man once blind and mute who had been healed by Jesus. The man was δαιμονιζομαι, "possessed by a demon" (Bauer 169). The context develops into that of power and the in-breaking of the kingdom of God. The people present were amazed by this power "and said, 'Can this be the Son of David?'" (v.23). They knew of the covenant that the LORD

established with King David: “And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever” (II Samuel 7.16). We read in Psalm 110. 2, “The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!” Of this Keil-Delitzsch wrote, “Jahve [or, Yahweh] will lay all his enemies at his feet, but not in such a manner that he himself remains idle in the matter. Thus, then, having come into the midst of the sphere of his enemies, shall he reign, forcing them to submission and holding them down” (Vol. 5, p. 190). The exegesis renders the prophetic, the very thing the people there present with Jesus understood, the very thing that birthed their courage to hope! It was that Jesus might be the Messiah: “The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces...he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed” (I Samuel 2.10).

Jesus said to the defiant Pharisees present, “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (v. 28). In the immediate preceding context Matthew in verses seventeen through twenty-one quotes the prophet Isaiah. This prophetic text characterizes Jesus as the chosen Servant of the LORD, less militaristic but no less powerful, immanent yet seemingly more transcendent. The text comes across as the Holy Spirit’s and Matthew’s way of developing more completely the readers’ understanding of the true nature of both the Messiah and the kingdom of God. The rule of God would be spiritual, a New Covenant as the prophet Jeremiah foretold: “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God and they shall be my people” (31.33).

When the chart calls Jesus ‘Messiah’ but lists Qur’anic verses that contradict Scripture and interpose the usurpation of his messianic role, then I conclude that the guiding interest at hand is unholy. One of the Qur’anic references listed is as follows: “And Allah will teach him the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel, And (appoint him) an apostle of the children of Israel, (with this message), ‘I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord...And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by Allah’s leave...’” (Qur’an 3.48, f.). This next one also was listed: “Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not ‘Trinity’: desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is one Allah. Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son...” (Qur’an 4.171). With its hindsight the Qur’an intentionally disinform the reader of who Jesus really is! The Qur’an is antichrist: “Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son” (I John 2.22). Not only the Qur’an but Common Path Alliance, Frontiers, and many others are participating in this denial for they are denying to the whole world that Jesus is the Son of God (!): “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also” (I John 2.23). Which Muslim sensibility is worth this denial? For what holy purpose do these and others appeal to a book that is antichrist? Whom to Muslims are these heretics bringing, the Messiah, or their mongrel? This is the theological subsumption of Jesus.

“- Raising the Dead”

“Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world” (John 11.27). It was because of what Martha knew of Jesus’ life and ministry, and especially the declaration of himself in that very moment (the next quote), that she believed. Her brother, Lazarus, had died four days ago and by his death Jesus was about to reveal undeniably that he was the Messiah! “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’” (v. 25, f.). When Jesus says, “...yet shall he live...” I am struck by its similarity in the converse to “you shall surely die” in Genesis chapter two. Of a tree he partook, and we died: of a tree He partook, and we live! (I Corinthians 15.22) The text in John is speaking of the grandest of things, the renewal of the covenant of creation in which by believing in Jesus we again in harmony live with our creator, CHRIST! (Colossians 1.13-17)

It is a profound truth that, when Jesus is recognized for who he is, he becomes to man’s autonomy a mortal threat. This was true of the chief priests and Pharisees and is to this day also true of you and me (John 11.57). The religious-powerful sought to do what each of us does, arrest him! To give way or surrender to him means the very same thing to us as it did to them, the “taking away” of our place (v. 48). To surrender, as I see it, is to believe, and to believe is my life’s certain death. Why does the Insider Movement do what it does, create

charts like this one, present distortion, etc.? Because, they are still living: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me... (Mark 8.34). To follow Jesus means to follow him to our crucifixion and death to serve His gospel, not a self-serving religious career in ‘spiritual correctness’ that is itself a Unitarian lie! Specific to this Paul wrote “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2.20).

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Note that Jesus in the Qur’an says that “[...] quicken the dead, by Allah’s leave...” (Qur’an 3.49). Remember, the Qur’an states unequivocally that Allah is only one, is no father, and has no son. The Bible, as to raising the dead, says this: “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will” (John 5.21). Subsumption theology is Christological heresy and an attack of deception aimed at our understanding of the godhead: “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Colossians 2. 8, f.).

III. “Sign = Garment of Righteousness”

This section of the chart is remarkable as to its implication, that Allah is the creator. As a beginning for the chart’s chronology it serves to render the idea that Allah is enduring and eternal. Its qur’anic references comprise another instance of an attempt at usurping the authority of the Bible and establishing an Islamic perspective of God. Really, it is nothing more than a qur’anic bastardization of Genesis, written with the convenient benefit of more than two millennia of hindsight.

The textual concern is how the Qur’an interposes the concept of a created “vicegerent”, “an administrative deputy of a king or magistrate” (Webster 1,313). The Qur’an states, “Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: ‘I will create a vicegerent on earth...’” (2.30). I identify Jesus as the vicegerent to be understood by this designation in the ultimate sense even though the chart and Qur’an do not explicitly. I do so because the constancy of the Qur’an and the chart is the corruption of his identity (and I believe the Lord is prompting me to).

The Bible is clear on the pre-incarnate Son of God: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1. 1-3). The qur’anic person, as a heretical theological implication designed for the readers’ consumption, the vicegerent, is completely incompatible with the biblical parallel of Christological divinity found in the gospel of John that its designer intends to supercede. This intention is discernable by the chart itself and how it lists chapter three of Genesis where we find what some biblical scholars term ‘the proto evangelion’, or, ‘the first good news’ which pertains crucially to Christological divinity. It is to verse fifteen that the chart refers: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” Victor P. Hamilton’s work, Handbook on the Pentateuch, includes salient exegesis: “...this is the only place in the Old Testament that the Hebrew word for ‘seed’ or ‘descendant’ occurs with a third-person, feminine, pronominal [pronoun] suffix—‘her seed.’ The uniqueness of the construction becomes even more apparent in the Septuagint [Greek translation of the O.T.] with its reference to the woman’s sperm—‘her sperm(a)! (Where is the man, the father?)” (50). In the second half of verse fifteen the woman’s seed is spoken of singly as one man, a man whose human progenitor excludes a male. Here already is foreseen the intervention of man by the Son of man: “For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead” (I Corinthians 15.21). Likewise, it is an individual that is spoken of as the offspring of the serpent. The eschatological importance is that this verse (Genesis 3.15) prefigures the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, and, ultimately, the defeat of The serpent and consummation of all things: “Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever”” (Revelation 11.15).

In some way the LORD clothed Adam and Eve. He provided the comfort of clothing to help them endure together the fraying encroachment of time. The Hebrew word translated “made” in Genesis 3.21 is “(עשה) āšâ, defined as do, fashion, [or] accomplish....The word āšâ ...connotes primarily the fashioning of the object with little concern for special nuances” (H.A.W. 701). It is true that in some way the LORD God made clothes and clothed Adam and Eve, and that an animal was killed to provide the material. But I am not convinced that verse twenty-one prefigures the sacrificial system, and not for the purpose of disagreeing with the references for this section of the chart: “But the raiment of righteousness, - that is the best. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they may

receive admonition” (Qur’an 7.26). The exegesis does not provide that conclusion: “It is tempting to see atonement in verse 21, or at least to contrast God’s covering with the manmade type (v. 7). And if this is not atonement, at least it is preservation, a gauge of God’s concern and compassion” (Hamilton 48).

IV. “Sign = the Ark”

It is clear by the slogan by which this section is captioned, “The Provision of God Must be Acted Upon,” that the designer wants all aboard (please pardon the pun; I couldn’t help myself). The Qur’an states “We sent Noah to his people. He said: ‘O my people! worship Allah: ye have no other god but Him. I fear for you the punishment of a dreadful day!’” (7.59). In the Qur’an it also says, “...and Noah called out to his son, who had separated himself (from the rest): ‘O my son! embark with us’....And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the flood” (11.42, f.). But the Bible makes clear that all of Noah’s sons, all three, entered the ark. (Genesis 6.10; 7. 7)

The Bible teaches that “Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6. 8). The word “favor” in Hebrew is “(jn) ghēhn: favour, grace” (B.D.B. 336a). The word is the same one used in Genesis 39.21 of Joseph, who by the LORD was given favor from the jailer; and in Exodus 33.12 of Moses, whose favor was based on the LORD’S presence with him and Israel. In Genesis 6.8 the Septuagint translates “favor” as “grace”. I note this because of the caption and how its emphasis is on action, the action of humans whose rescue is their only hope. Somehow, according to the caption, the action of humans becomes their rescue. The contradictory nature of such logic is heightened by the context of Genesis: not all the people are to be rescued (6.13).

It is significant that Lamech, Noah’s father, anciently prophesied: “...he fathered a son and called his name Noah, saying, ‘Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands’” (Genesis 5.28, f.). Note that this was spoken of Noah at his birth, before his volition or virtue could inspire such a prophecy. The LORD had chosen Noah. Also, Noah’s human and life context was that of such depravity that “it grieved [the LORD] to his heart” (Genesis 6. 6). It was not that the LORD had found a rose among thorns; rather, the LORD had planted a rose bush among briars. Grace was the basis for the Noahic covenant: “But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you” (6.18). After the Flood, once the ark had again rested upon the earth, and after the earth had dried, Noah sacrificed animals to the LORD: “Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar” (8.20 underlining mine). It was the grace and election of the sovereign LORD (neither human merit nor sacrifice) which was the basis for this covenant. It was for creation’s sake that Noah was chosen as the LORD’S steward of His faithfulness to maintain and renew the covenant of creation: “I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth” (9.13).

V. “Sign = The Lamb”

Here the chart is attempting to introduce the idea that, because Ishmael and Isaac are mutually sons of Abraham, the Covenant of Promise includes them both. But this is a distortion whose intention in the immediate is the establishing of a connection between Muhammad (through Ishmael) and Isaac. “For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named’. This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring” (Genesis 21.12; Romans 9.6-8). It is through Ishmael that Islam is genealogically connected to Abraham but what is its connection with the Lamb?

The Qur’an says, “And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice: and we left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times...” (37.107, f.). The statement reflects the following: “...and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22.18). Both the Bible and the Qur’an are speaking of Abraham. The LORD established his covenant with Abram years before his sons were born (Genesis 12. 1-4). During the intervening years Abram worried that he had no son to be his heir, but the LORD spoke to him (in chapter fifteen): “This man [Eliezer] shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir’. And he brought him outside and said, ‘Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’ And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to

him as righteousness” (vv. 4, 5). The promise was made by the LORD and believing it, the promise of the son, the LORD counted as righteousness. This child is the child of the promise and shall be Abram’s ‘only son’.

In Genesis sixteen we find the account of the birth of Ishmael. Abram now is approaching eighty-six years old (v. 16). Sarai, convinced that the LORD has “prevented” her from having children, offered to Abram Hagar, her Egyptian servant and she conceived (vv. 2, 4). Time passes, and now Abraham (formerly “Abram”) had aged ninety-nine years and Sarah (formerly “Sarai”), his wife, was physically unable to bear children: “The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah” (Genesis 18.11). Yet the LORD’S promise of a son borne by Sarah is restated but it is met with the acquiescent laughter of a pessimistic old woman. “And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him” (Genesis 21.2).

It is important here to note that Ishmael is excluded neither from the God of the covenant nor from the Abrahamic covenant, but of the covenant God established with Isaac and his offspring Ishmael is not heir. The chart wishes that shared human genealogy is of ultimate importance, but it is not. The half-brothers share blood but not the ultimate purpose for which Isaac is chosen, the purpose to which I turn.

The supernatural event that is the birth of Isaac has the utmost relevance to the fallacious implication of the chart. It implies that, because Ishmael and Isaac are equally sons of Abraham, the significance of their offspring is mutual in every way. The chart illustrates a false parity between Mohammad (from Ishmael) and Jesus (from Isaac). But it is Jesus, not Mohammad, who is “...the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant” (Hebrews 9.15). In contradiction of the chart, the sovereign LORD of the Bible and of history demonstrates the uniqueness of Isaac’s life, his lineage, and his posterity’s ultimate culmination.

“Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son” (Genesis 18.14). Compare the following verses: “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” ~ “For nothing will be impossible with God” (Genesis 18.14; Luke 1.37). Luke is recounting the words of the angel, Gabriel, who, in one sentence, foretold two supernatural births: that of John, the Baptist and Jesus, the Christ. The two verses hearken what is the ultimate purpose of the covenant the LORD established between himself and Isaac: Jesus Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of all covenants! Even the explanation for how in the person of Jesus this achievement would be realized is included in Isaac’s life.

The weaning of young Isaac with its celebration marks the point of the separation of Ishmael and Isaac. Sarah, protective of her long-in-coming only son, notices what may have been Ishmael mocking the young child. So, she appeals to Abraham for protection: “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac” (Genesis 21.10). Abraham was displeased by Sarah’s plea, but God told Abraham to grant her request, and he did. (Centuries later the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write of this in chapter four of his epistle to the Galatians.)

Isaac had become a young man, and God, to test Abraham, said: “Take your son your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (Genesis 22.2). It is to the terminology “only son,” the foreshadowing of the founding of the New Covenant, that I draw your attention. [At this theological juncture of my paper it is appropriate to remind the reader of the chart, that the Qur’an says, “It is not befitting to Allah that he should take unto himself a son” (19.35). According to the Qur’an, therefore, Allah cannot be related to Jesus, the Lamb of God, “the only Son from the Father” (John 1.14)!] Abraham and Isaac reach the place of God’s instruction, build an altar, and put in place the wood. Isaac, unsuspecting, has already asked, “My father....Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” to which his father replies, “...God will provide for himself the lamb...” (Genesis 22.7, 8 cf. Exodus 12.1-11). And God did and has again, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3.16). Isaac was not sacrificed but Jesus was, for as John the Baptist said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1.20).

Neither Allah, nor the Qur’an, nor Islam has any authority whatever as to who the Lamb really is. Furthermore, it is the intent of Islam through the Qur’an to subsume the identity of the only Son into something mongrelized, Someone not saving! Which begs the question, what are so-called “Christians”, Common Path Alliance, Frontiers, Christ the Rock Community Church, and others doing propagating such syncretism and heresy? The Bible says “Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son” (I John 2.22).

VI. “Sign = The Blood”

Under this section I refer to what is written in the chart's red rectangle: "TO HIM ALL THE PROPHETS BEAR WITNESS... INJIL, ACTS 10:43". "Injil" denotes what Muslims believe to be a revelation and instruction in righteousness from Allah transmitted by Jesus (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Injil>). In this chart it functions to Qur'anically contextualize the Bible. For instance, the Qur'an says "And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Law that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel [Injil]: therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Law that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah" (5.46). But who is this Jesus in the Qur'an? Notice that the Qur'anic verse above twice says "...confirming the Law that had come before him..." (underlining mine). Notice what the Bible says about the matter of Jesus' existence and being: "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5.18). This was not the first time in his gospel that John records that the Jews believed Jesus was blaspheming, claiming to be God: "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.' So the Jews said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.' So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple" (John 8.56, ff.). The second half of Acts 10.43, the half that the chart excludes, says "...that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." But, again, the Qur'an contradicts the Bible by claiming of Allah, "Thou art our Protector: so forgive us and give us Thy mercy; for Thou art the best of those who forgive" (7.155 underlining mine). Heretofore the Scripture references to which I have referred debunk the idea that Allah is God. They also demonstrate that it is the Son of God who is the Lamb of God who forgives sin in the New Covenant in his blood (I Corinthians 11.25).

"Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel,' 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3.13, f.). It is with this terminology that Jesus, the REAL Jesus, reveals himself (John 8.56, ff.). Dear reader, if the blood of a lesser Jesus would have sufficed for the forgiveness of our sins, would the blood of I AM have been shed? With veracity it is He whom the Bible identifies as the Saviour.

"Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' And Jesus said, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' And the high priest tore his garments..." (Mark 14.61, ff.). About the reaction of Caiaphas, the high priest, Edersheim writes, "They all heard it—and, as the Law directed when blasphemy was spoken, the High Priest rent both his outer and inner garment, with a rent that might never be repaired" (§ 5, p. 561). It is beyond incongruous when, making a mission statement based on Jesus of the Bible, a Christian missionary organization says "Our desire is to see reproducing fellowships of Muslims following Jesus – not just as a great prophet, but as the Word of God. Even in the Qur'an, we see this distinction – (Surah 4:171)." This quote is from the Frontiers website under the heading "Our Ethos...Who We Are". It is duplicitous to present to Muslims a Jesus that is not who Jesus said he is. For instance, the Qur'anic verse in the Frontiers quote includes what they say it does but the rest of the verse says this: "*O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not "Trinity": desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is one Allah. Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son."* More duplicity.

Frontiers organization, despite what Muslims believe and despite the contra-biblical dogma of the Qur'an, also declares "We are a community that follows the commands of Jesus (Isa al Masih), compelled by His love, convinced that He is the 'exact representation of God's (Allah's) nature' (Hebrews 1:3)." Notice their use of the name 'Allah' as if it is an interchangeable term for God that can be used to represent even the God of the Bible. The juxtaposition of the following illustrates their fallaciousness: "...God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us **by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power" ≠ "*O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not "Trinity": desist: it*

will be better for you: for Allah is one Allah. Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son" (Hebrews 1.1-3; Surah 4.171). This is syncretism. When a system of belief hostile to the gospel is embraced; and facilitated is the assimilation of the biblical truth of who Jesus really is; and this becomes a non-issue to missionaries' mode of operation; then described is not the work of missionaries but heretics. Is it not telling that those who find unacceptable Jesus' true identity do so on the basis of his deity: "Why does this man [Jesus] speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2.7). Furthermore, Frontiers, on the same web page officially embraces the propagation of heresy: "We want to go and live among them, identify with them, grow through life with them – not to convert them to a foreign religion or culture (we have no power to do this), but to simply love them in the way Jesus loved us – through grace in the hope of salvation." But the gospel 'is' foreign to them and to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to them 'is' to attempt to convert them because Muslim belief about Jesus, belief that this organization is reinforcing, 'is' contra-biblical: "...Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1.14, f.)! This organization's duplicity is only clarified by their orthodox Christian statement of beliefs that becomes, with their heretical actions as backdrop, a means to a heretical end.

The Bible says, "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son" (I John 2.22). Notice that the apostle is inspired to convey an ontological unity of messiahship: the man Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the Father. This is a pronouncement of judgement, like the judgement of Passover that not only brought death to the house of Pharaoh but also the harsh realization that the gods of Egypt could not thwart I AM: "...and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD" (Exodus 12.12). Christ has again brought judgement on those whose hearts and minds are hardened, who oppose the Deliverer in hypostatic union: * "Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe" (Jude v. 5; *Addendum, April 7, 2010).

VII. "Sign = The Zabur (Psalms Of David)"

"Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses" (Acts 2.29, ff.). The caption for this section of the chart reads "THE SACRIFICE WILL BE FROM DAVID'S FAMILY & HE WILL DIE". Islam differs within itself as to whether Jesus died, but its denial of his crucifixion and endorsement of his ascension are uniform: "...That they said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah;- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not;- Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise..." (4.156, ff.). The ambiguity of the caption is intentional to provide for the Insider Movement "C5-style" plausible agreement whatever the Muslim sensibility encountered. It is more than just peculiar to say of a sacrifice "he will die". Sacrifices are sacrificed, killed (!): "But the angel said to the woman, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead..." (Matthew 28. 5, ff.). The apostle Paul explains the theology of Christ not crucified, never dying: "For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins....But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (I Corinthians 15.16,17,20).

The verse quoted from the Qur'an is not listed on the chart, and the Qur'anic ones listed for this section demonstrate little more than the mentioning of David. A pattern is emerging, one strategic. It seems that the chart's ulterior is dual: to deceive Christians into believing that the Qur'an is at least theologically 'similar' to the Bible; and, to deceive Christians into serving this 'similarity'. Christians participate in the organization (Common Path Alliance) that developed and published this chart. Are they unaware of this chart's existence? Are they blind? How is the willful propagation of heresy, heresy that strikes at the heart of salvation, legitimate in the minds of Christians? Are they Christians? Jesus said, "Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star"

(Revelation 22.15, f., underlining mine). God will not be mocked; the covenant of David cannot be co-opted: “You have said, ‘I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations’” (Psalm 89. 3, f.). It was through his servant Israel that the LORD has brought the promise of the New Covenant in Jesus, the Son of David.

VIII. “Sign = The Whale”

The chart reads, “THE SACRIFICE WILL SPEND 3 DAYS IN THE EARTH & BE BROUGHT UP BY THE MERCY OF GOD”. Spend three days? Is that like spending three days at the Hilton, or maybe just Motel 6? But, dear reader, this is an insidious attempt at deception, to get us to swallow whole the lie that says “believe Jesus never paid for the forgiveness for my sin”. Please refer to what I wrote under subtitle VII for the refutation specific to that.

The Bible says, “And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (Jonah 1.17). Who appointed? “And he [Jonah] said to them, ‘I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land’” (Jonah 1. 9). Allah cannot be he; he is precluded by the filial relationship of the Father and the Son and the ascribing of Creator to the Son “...who made the sea and the dry land” (Jonah 1.9; Colossians 1.15-20; Hebrews 1. 8-10).

It is interesting how Muslims use the account of Jonah’s life and ministry to at once validate Jesus’ rebuke of the scribes’ and Pharisees’ idolatry and extricate themselves from the same. In Matthew, chapter twelve, we read the following: “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, ‘Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you’. But he answered them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah’” (12.38, f.). “Adulterous” to ‘whom’ did Jesus mean? The word adulterous is the Greek μοιχλις meaning “figuratively, in a usage found in Hosea (3:1) in which God’s relation to his people is depicted as a marriage, and any beclouding of it becomes adultery” (Bauer 526). Read Hosea 3.1: “And the LORD said to me, ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods...’”.

It continues to be interesting that the ruins of Nineveh “lie about one half mile east of the Tigris River and are now incorporated within the suburbs of modern Mosul, Iraq. The ruins are dominated by two citadel mounds, the larger to the northwest, Quyunjiq (“many sheep”), divided from the southwestern, Nebi Yunus (“the prophet Jonah”)...” Nineveh comes from the Hebrew transliteration of the Assyrian ‘Ishtar’, a goddess worshiped by the ancient Ninevites. (Tenney, Vol. M-P, 442, f.). Once again, it seems, repentance is needed in now ‘Islamic’ Nineveh. Furthermore, “...something greater than Jonah is here” (Matthew 12.41). If you will recall, it was a “great fish” that brought Jonah to Nineveh where they worshiped Ishtar, “written ideographically [‘the representation of ideas by graphic symbols’] with the cuneiform sign of a fish within an enclosure” (Tenney 443; Webster 597; underlining mine). The irony is amazing! Those who were worshiping a goddess whose name was symbolized by the figure of a fish were called to repent of this and turn to the LORD God by a man whose mode of transportation was unusual in the extreme, that of a fish! In Matthew twelve Jesus refers to Jonah to call to repentance adulterous Israel, the scribes and Pharisees, the religious pious, whose nation and culture was their god. Standing before them was the One sent by God! His mode of transportation: the Incarnation of the Son of God! Does this irony not also include Muslims and all religious adherents whose god is their adulterous religion?

The heinous truth about the Insider Movement is they are a pack of “adulterers” whose lies are a polyphony of spiritual death. Their teeth are a set of theological fangs by which their unsuspecting prey is held in prevaricated comfort. And their god: “a worldwide movement” of unity! “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4.4).

IX. “MAKE A STRAIGHT PATH IN THE DESERT / BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD”

The chart lists as one of its Bible proof texts Luke 3. 4-6 which is cited from Isaiah 40. 3-5. Isaiah wrote, “A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken’”.

John the Baptist as the clarion crier is calling for repentance “like the outrider of a king, who takes care that the way by which the king is to go shall be put into good condition” (Keil-Delitzsch 141). He restates the

imagery from Isaiah that unmistakably is that of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. By whom was that deliverance? By the LORD! Both Isaiah and John use the language of covenant to declare to God's people the stipulation of the covenant to which they are bound, the stipulation of repentance: "...prepare the way of the LORD...", and, "Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham" (Isaiah 40. 3; Luke 3. 8). Here is the introduction of the New Covenant by the LORD of the Passover: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1.29). And it is to the whole world that the seed of Abraham comes: "...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12. 3).

The repentance that John calls for is righteousness, moral and ethical, that befitting the people of God. But this covenant, the New Covenant, instead of an external imposition and standard of righteousness will be an internal spiritual reality: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31.31, ff.). Dear reader, it is not the righteousness of man as the caption implies that is of concern here but that of Jesus Christ: "And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness" (Romans 4.5).

The only reference from the Qur'an under this caption is consistent with Qur'anic falsity, implying parity between John and Jesus: "And Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous..." (6.85). But the Bible says just after the chart's reference from Luke: "...and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, 'I baptize you with water but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire'" (Luke 3.15, f.). John testifies that Jesus is superior. The quotation from the Qur'an is a denial that it is the righteousness of Jesus solely that by faith is reckoned to others. And the chart's maker says "The 'Jews' Reject Jesus And Go Off The Straight Path" as if the rejection of Jesus is by category of race or ethnicity. The Bible says of Abraham, "And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15. 6). This was before the covenant of circumcision. Then millennia later God "breathed out" through the apostle Paul, "The purpose was to make him [Abraham] the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well..." (II Timothy 3.16; Romans 4.11).

X. "PAY ATTENTION TO THE SIGNS OF GOD / FOLLOW THE STRAIGHT PATH"

The chart illustrates a false parity between Mohammad and Jesus. It is Jesus, not Mohammad, who is "...the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant" (Hebrews 9.15). Jesus, with the apostles on the night of Passover, explained to them that he, himself, THE LAMB OF GOD, was about to be sacrificed. Jesus said to them, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22.20). It is Jesus, not Mohammad, to whom the covenant came, through Isaac, not Ishmael. Furthermore, only Jesus was sinless, capable of atoning for the sins of the whole world. As it is written, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Corinthians 5.21). The writer of Hebrews says, "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.' This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant" (7.21, f.).

Muhammad's lineage is claimed to be traced back to Ishmael who was born naturally by his mother, Hagar, slave to Sarah, Abraham's wife (Genesis 16. 1-4). Jesus' lineage is traced back to Isaac (half-brother of Ishmael) who was born supernaturally by Sarah, even though "The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah" (Genesis 18.11). As it pertains to the practical theological differences symbolized by the two sons (Ishmael and Isaac), they are Law and Grace, Slavery and Freedom. Paul writes the Epistle to the Galatians, a letter to a church being persecuted by legalists (Judaizers). It includes an allegory that employs as metaphors Hagar and Sarah (4.21-5.10). Hagar symbolizes the slavery of the Law, the position of bondage those under the Law are held in by plenary requirements of perfect obedience. But Sarah symbolizes freedom from the Law, new covenantal Grace, freedom by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The two sons of these two women in Paul's allegory figure as two covenants, Law and Promise. Ishmael figures as the son born of natural means subject to natural limitations and their consequences. Isaac figures as the son born of supernatural means, the result that

Sarah's natural limitations could never have produced, means by which the LORD "did to Sarah as he had promised" (Genesis 21.1). This brings us to Mohammad, "Last and Only Prophet in the Line of Ishmael...Slave of Allah" (Common Path Alliance chart: "Abraham's Two Sons of Mercy"). The truth about Islam and Mohammad is depicted and stated inadvertently here. It is a religion outside the covenant of promise from Isaac, one very much of bondage and Mohammad is its prophet. Our chart, with the juxtaposition of Jesus and Mohammad among others, implies parity between them. Reader, be reminded of the verse in the Qur'an and what it says, how "it is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son" (19.35). To those who argue the interchangeability of the names of God, saying that Allah and Yahweh are the same God, the Bible says, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God" (Luke 1.35). The god of the Qur'an is not the God of the Bible. The excellence of Jesus, that he is the Son of God, nullifies the chart's implied parity between Mohammad and Him. There is a definite covenantal difference between that of the world, to which Islam belongs, and the covenant of promise, to which the Church belongs. Jesus Christ is the door of the covenant of promise through which, by grace through faith in him, you may become heirs!

The Qur'an says of Muhammad, "But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and believe in the (Revelation) sent down to Muhammad - for it is the Truth from their Lord..." (47.2). In the Qur'an, for many reasons, but also because of its contextualization and characterization of Jesus specifically, the revelation of Muhammad is false. Jesus said, "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters" (Luke 11.23). Jesus in this text demonstrates the power and supremacy of his kingdom, the kingdom of God. He did so by "...casting out a demon that was mute" (verse 14). The salience of the text is the overcoming power Jesus has as the King. This power is the Spirit of God who breaks in to break out those held captive, to gather them as subjects freed by the power of his kingdom. The word "scatters" (verse 23) in the Greek is "σκορπίζω: used figuratively of a wolf chasing sheep in all directions" (Bauer 757). Common Path Alliance, the publisher of this chart with its promotion of Muhammad as prophet, is as a wolf chasing and scattering, an enemy of Christ.

XI. SUMMARY

"The Straight Path" is crooked; it leads to a cliff, a dead end that might never be seen. The chart's title reference from the Qur'an says, "This is the way of thy Lord, leading straight: We have detailed the signs for those who receive admonition" (6.126). And detailed they have, with lie after lie after lie. The Bible says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119.105). My purpose for writing this refutation is to bring light to the reader's path. This Light dispels the darkness of whom Isaiah spoke: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined" (9. 2).

Dear reader, if in defending the truth I am offending the lie, so be it. Ultimately there is but One to whom I answer; the same is true of you.

"HALLELUJAH!
 FOR THE LORD OUR GOD THE ALMIGHTY REIGNS.
 LET US REJOICE AND EXULT AND GIVE HIM THE GLORY,
 FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME,
 AND HIS BRIDE HAS MADE HERSELF READY;
 IT WAS GRANTED HER TO CLOTHE HERSELF
 WITH FINE LINEN, BRIGHT AND PURE—"
 (Revelation 19. 6, ff.)

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