

# The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

## PARAKLETOS OR PERIKLYTOS?

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It is often claimed by many Muslims that due to the phonetic closeness of the Biblical Greek term **Periklytos** (The much praised) with **Parakletos** (as it appears in the New Testament and usually rendered as 'Comforter'), that a translator or later scribe could have confused the two expressions or corrupted it intentionally.

This hypothetical assertion has its basis in seeking support for the veracity of Prophet Muhammad's <sup>(pbuh)</sup> ministry which in turn, has its roots in Muslim interpretations such as those of verses 61:6 and 7:157.

### 061.006

"And when, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of God (sent) to you, confirming the Law before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me (**Arabic: min ba'di**), whose name shall be **Ahmad**." But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, "this is evident sorcery!"

### 007:157

"Those who follow the Messenger, the gentile (**Arabic: Umiyya**) Prophet whom they find written down with them (**Arabic: maktuban indahum**) in the Torah and Gospels (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them; so (as for) those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful"

**Please see related article [1] below** which discusses both verses. **Please also see related article [2] below** which discusses the term 'ummi'.

There is **no documented evidence in any ancient New Testament manuscript**, even those that **predate the Quran** that such a confusion or corruption of a term 'Periklytos' ever took place.

All Biblical instances of the term are found as 'Parakletos' (comforter) and **not** Periklytos. The word 'Periklytos' does not appear anywhere in the Greek New Testament or the Old Testament in Greek (Septuagint).

A genuine mistake of this term made by a scribe remains highly unlikely as there seems to be no discrepancy in all the verses within the different Biblical manuscripts extant today where the term 'Parakletos' has been encountered. However, a deliberate corruption could possibly be argued for but strong motives would need to be considered for such an assertion to be viable. Two strong motives are advanced below which are theological in nature.

- (1) An intentional corruption of the term as 'Jesus' was considered the final saviour by Christendom.
- (2) An intentional corruption of the term to deny any support for Prophet Muhammad <sup>(pbuh)</sup> in particular.

The second option is not tenable as no early manuscript **predating the Quran by many centuries** exhibits any discrepancy of the term.

However, it can be argued that the term was generally changed to deny any future law bearing prophet's or messengers for the hypothetical reason cited in option 1. For this to have been a feasible occurrence, the change would have had to be made when the earliest Gospels were committed to writing within decades of the end of Prophet Jesus's <sup>(pbuh)</sup> ministry. Due to its early dissemination, this would not have amounted to a change, but an original transcription.

That the earliest scribes with possible theological slants (centuries before the Council of Nicaea) would have risked the introduction of such a term as 'Parakletos' which could leave an element of doubt also seems highly unlikely. Arguably, it would have remained far safer and easier to remove any mention of such a term **altogether** rather than inviting the possibility of a theological dispute.

**Therefore, there appears no convincing motive for a deliberate obfuscation of the term 'Periklytos'. Rather, the term 'Parakletos' seems like a genuine transcription.**

The earliest extant extract of the New Testament today is in Greek and is dated around **125 AD**. The fragment exists (no larger than one's credit card) at the Rylands library in Manchester, England. On one side it contains a section from verses 31-33 and on the other 37-38 from the 18th chapter of the Gospel of John.

Approximately 5700 New Testament Manuscripts in Greek are known with **many** differences between them. Some are insignificant like accidental spelling errors, scribal errors while others are intentional, some theological. A plethora of scriptures are available to any ardent student of New Testament scholarship to scrutinise these changes, which are also comprehensively documented. The Quran's assertion that changes have **indeed** occurred are well proven and there are great insights as to the possible reasons why. This area of Biblical scholarship is well advanced, well

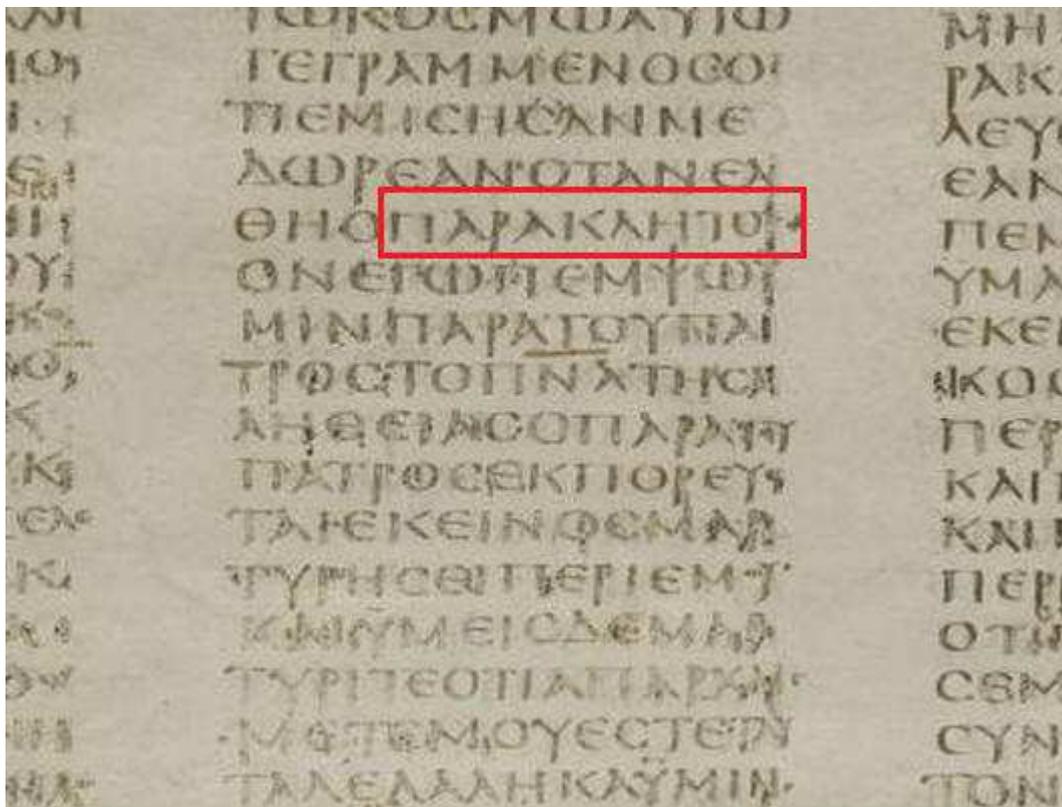
documented, comprehensive and highly erudite which should deserve appreciation even though it can be critiqued and contested.

Given all the differences known which have been painstakingly understood (accidental, intentional etc), there is not one shred of **evidence** in **any ancient NT manuscript of which there are numerous** that a corruption of the term 'Periklytos' suggested by Muslim doctors **ever** took place. To any unbiased scholar of the New Testament, this will arguably remain a fantastic claim advanced by Muslims to provide support for a particular theological position.

The Quran teaches believers to **verify claims (17:36)** and not to rely on '**zan' (6:116)** (assumption).

## CODEX SINAITICUS

The Codex Sinaiticus is the earliest **complete** Christian Bible which can be dated to circa 350 CE (Approximately 250 years before the revelation of the Quran). It is considered one of the best texts in Greek of the New Testament along with the manuscript of the Codex Vaticanus. Even in this well attested manuscript there is no proof that any corruption or confusion of the term 'Periklytos' ever took place. This manuscript also attests to the transcription of the term 'Parakletos' as highlighted in **red** below.



## PARAKLETOS:

# ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΤΟΣ

John 15:26

But when (Greek: hotan) the Comforter (Parakletos) is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" [2]

### History of the Codex Sinaiticus

"By the middle of the fourth century there was wide but not complete agreement on which books should be considered authoritative for Christian communities. Codex Sinaiticus, one of the two earliest collections of such books, is essential for an understanding of the content and the arrangement of the Bible, as well as the uses made of it" [3]

01 Codex Sinaiticus, eapr, (21) fourth century, 148ff., 4 cols., 48ii., 43 x 38 cm. London: British Library, Add. 43725. Complete Bible (parts of the Old Testament lost, 11ff. of the Pentateuch and 1f. of the Shepherd of Hermas discovered 1975 in St. Catherine's Monastery), with the letter of Barnabus and the Shepherd of Hermas, the only four-column manuscript of the New Testament. The romance of its discovery was recounted by Constantin von Tischendorf himself (43 Old Testament folios first discovered in 1844, followed in 1853 by an abortive attempt and in 1859 by successful access to the rest of the manuscript, which was eventually "presented" to the Tsar by a complicated arrangement); bout from the Soviet government by England in 1933 for £100,000. Facsimile edition by Kirsopp Lake (Oxford: 1911). The text with numerous singular readings (and careless errors) was highly overrated by Tischendorf, and is distinctly inferior to B, together with (and p75) it represents the Alexandrian text. (Evv: 23(1) 80(1/2) 170(2) 95(8); Acts 11(1) 24(1/2) 68(2) 18(s); Paul 74(1) 43(1/2) 172(2) 53(s); Cath: 23(1) 6(1/2) 63(2) 16(s); category 1) Plate 7 [4]

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## FINAL THOUGHTS

There is no documented proof from Biblical sources that the Biblical term 'Parakletos' (comforter) was ever a misrepresentation of the Greek 'Periklytos' (the much praised). All manuscripts predating the revelation of the Quran only refer to the term 'Parakletos' (comforter). Therefore, to assert such a corruption of the term is untenable based on evidence.

### 017.036

"And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed! the hearing and the sight and the heart - of each of these you will be questioned"

## Related Articles:

- (1) [Ahmad](#)
- (2) [Was the Prophet Muhammad <sup>\(pbuh\)</sup> Really Illiterate?](#)

## REFERENCES

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The highlight marked in red is my own insertion. It has no bearing on the original text other than it emphasises relevance to the topic at hand. This is merely an illustration and has solely been utilised for educational and explanatory purposes.

[2] The Bible: King James Version

[3] Codex Sinaiticus, About Codex Sinaiticus, Significance, [online] <http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/codex/significance.aspx> [Accessed 27th November 2011]

[4] KURT. A, ALAND.B, The Text of the New Testament, First published as Der Text des Neuen Testaments, second edition, (c) 1981 Deutsche Biblegesellschaft Stuttgart, English translation (c) 1987, 1989 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, First edition 1987, Second edition 1989, Paperback edition 1995, Translated by Erroll F. Rhodes, Page 107

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