

# PROPHECIES IN HARMONY

*A Fireside Aid for Teaching Christians and Muslims*

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## Preface

The purpose of this book is to enable the reader to construe the meanings of some selected verses of the Bible and Qur'án which, for Bahá'ís, clearly establish the fact that Bahá'u'lláh is the Promised One (that is, the Father, the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Messiah, the Qá'im, the Mihdí [or Mahdí], the Avatar, etc.) awaited by the majority of the people on earth. The collection is intended as an aid to gentle fireside teaching or for deepening classes. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has mentioned that such verses as are included here should be collected and memorized:

It is very good to memorize the logical points and the proofs of the Holy Books. Those proofs and evidences which establish the fact that Bahá'u'lláh is the fulfilment of the promises of the Holy Book. These proofs ought to be collected and memorized. (*Star of the West*, III:11, p. 4, 27 September 1912.)

The chapters of this book deal with the significant topics which most often come up during Bahá'í meetings when the discussion turns to Christian or Islámic topics. The central Bahá'í claim that Bahá'u'lláh fulfils the prophecies and expectations that followers of all religions hold concerning their Promised One inevitably gives rise to questions about “the signs of the times”, “a new name”, “salvation”, “seal of the Prophets”, “resurrection”, and so forth. Although most of the Christian and Islámic prophecies about the Promised Day are related, however, some special Qur'ánic quotes pertaining to what has traditionally become the “four common objections of Muslims to more revelations after Islám” (Nakhjavání, p. 4) have been added under Islámic Subjects.

The brief introduction to the selected verses at the beginning of each chapter is not intended to explain in detail the meanings of the quotations, but only to introduce the topic and leave the elaboration of the theme to the fireside speaker or discussion leader. Many of the verses really need no explanation, especially when compared to the other quotes under a given topic. Some passages serve as a guide to understand the inner meanings of other more abstruse passages.

Bahá'í quotations have been added after the Bible and Qur'án passages to clarify and expound upon what has already been alluded to. These passages elucidate the unity of God, the unity of His Messages and Manifestations, and give the reader an opportunity to compare biblical, Qur'anic and Bahá'í teachings on a given topic.

Naturally, Bahá'ís should always take care not to be drawn into futile arguments over the different interpretations of the Bible and the Qur'án that are made by various sects. Rather, they should become acquainted with the inner meanings of the Scriptures and share these with others in a spirit of understanding and loving consideration. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has explained:

All the texts and teachings of the Holy Testaments have intrinsic spiritual meanings. They are not to be taken literally. I therefore pray in your behalf that you may be given the power of understanding these inner real meanings of the Holy Scriptures and may become informed of the mysteries deposited in the words of the Bible so that you may attain eternal life and that your hearts may be attracted to the Kingdom of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 459–460.

And also:

I beg of God through the confirmation and assistance of the True One that thou mayest show the utmost eloquence, fluency, ability and skill in teaching the real significance of the Bible.

*Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas, Vol. II, p. 243.*

Not only are we asked to be acquainted and fluent with the proofs and evidence from the Holy Bible and be aware of their intrinsic spiritual meanings, but also to be knowledgeable about other Holy Books like the Qur’án. Bahá’u’lláh, the Manifestation of God for this Age, in admonishing the reading of the Qur’án, says:

“Say: Perused ye not the Qur’án? Read it, that haply ye may find the Truth, for this Book is verily the Straight Path. This is the Way of God unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.”

*Gleanings, p. 44.*

Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith, referring to the duty of Bahá’ís beside studying their own Faith, says:

“They must strive to obtain, from sources that are authoritative and unbiased, a sound knowledge of the history and tenets of Islám—the source and background of their Faith—and approach reverently and with a mind purged from preconceived ideas the study of the Qur’án which, apart from the sacred scriptures of the Bábí and Bahá’í Revelations, constitutes the only Book which can be regarded as an absolutely authenticated Repository of the Word of God.”

Shoghi Effendi: *The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 41.*

The aim of any true teaching is not disputation or argument. The intent of the teacher should not be to demonstrate to the

seeker that he is wrong, but rather to guide him gradually toward the truth. Bahá'u'lláh drew the attention of the believers to the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a teacher:

A pleasing, kindly disposition and a display of tolerance towards the people are requisites of teaching the Cause. Whatever a person says, hollow and product of vain imaginings and a parrot-like repetition of somebody else's views though it be, one ought to let it pass. One should not engage in disputation leading to and ending with obstinate refusal and hostility, because the other person would consider himself worsted and defeated. Consequently further veils intervene between him and the Cause, and he becomes more negligent of it. One ought to say: right, admitted, but look at the matter in this other way, and judge for yourself whether it is true or false; of course it should be said with courtesy, with kindness, with consideration. Then the other person will listen, will not seek to answer back and to marshal proofs in repudiation. He will agree, because he comes to realize that the purpose has not been to engage in verbal battle and to gain mastery over him. He sees that the purpose has been to impart the word of truth, to show humanity, to bring forth heavenly qualities. His eyes and his ears are opened, his heart responds, his true nature unfolds, and by the grace of God, he becomes a new creation. ... The Most Great Branch ['Abdu'l-Bahá] gives a willing ear to any manner of senseless talk, to such an extent that the other person says to himself: He is trying to learn from me. Then, gradually, by such means as the other person cannot perceive, He gives him insight and understanding.

Quoted in H. M. Balyuzi: *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 27.

One will notice that the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His day to day living, cannot be separated from the manner in which He taught

the Faith. It is the same thing with our own lives—the more we improve our spiritual lives, the more our deeds reflect the attributes of God developed within us, the more we are enabled to memorize the passages and quotations that establish the fact that Bahá'u'lláh is the fulfilment of all the religions of the past, and the better instruments we become for the Light of God to flow through us to others.

## Part One:

### He who was promised

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: “Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!” He who is the Father is come, and the Son (Jesus), in the holy vale, crieth out: “Here am I, here am I, O Lord, My God!” whilst Sinai circleth round the House, and the Burning Bush calleth aloud: “The All Bounteous is come mounted upon the clouds!”

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 27.

### The coming of the Promised One

The Holy Bible speaks of the coming of a Promised Day and alludes to it in many passages. This is also true of the sacred books of all other religions. The various prophecies concerning this glorious time are very similar: There will come a Day when the Kingdom of God will be established and His “will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Evil will be destroyed, the righteous will rule, and the true religion will be established. There will be no more war; it will be the end of sorrow and suffering; all the people of the world will be brought together. And all this will be accomplished by one man, whose miraculous advent will signal the arrival of the Promised Day.

In the following passages from the Bible, we notice, however, that it is not Christ Himself in the body that is coming again, but rather the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of Truth. The Bible

promises the coming of the Spirit of Truth, the Glory of the Lord, the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and so forth. The One alluded to in the Qur'án is the Mihdí, the Qá'im, the Summoner, and so forth. Although there are several different names mentioned in both the Bible and the Qur'án, yet in reality it is the same Spirit. The same Spirit promised by all the religions of the past.

### **Biblical references**

John 14:16            “And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him or knows him ...”

John 16:12–13      “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

John 14:30            “I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming.”

John 14:26            “But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

John 15:26            “But when the Counsellor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me ....”

John 16:7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 3:7 (The Family of Imrán) “O our Lord! For the day of whose coming there is not a doubt, thou wilt surely gather mankind together. Verily, God will not fail the promise.”

Súrah 13:38–39 (Thunder) “To each age its Book. What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm: for with Him is the source of revelation.

Súrah 7:32 (The Heights) “O children of Adam! there shall come to you Apostles from among yourselves, rehearsing my signs to you; and whoso shall fear God and do good works, no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they be put to grief.”

Abú-‘Abdi’lláh (Íqán, p. 240) Abú-‘Abdi’lláh, questioned concerning the character of the Mihdí, answered saying: “He will perform that which Muhammad, the Messenger of God, hath performed, and will demolish whatever hath been before Him even as the Messenger of God hath demolished the ways of those that preceded Him.”

Káfi, Tablet of Fátimih (Íqán p. 245) ( concerning the character of the Qá’im: “He shall manifest the perfection of Moses, the splendour of Jesus, and the patience of Job. His chosen ones shall be abased in His day. Their heads shall be offered as presents even as the heads of the Turks and the Daylamites.

They shall be slain and burnt. Fear shall seize them; dismay and alarm shall strike terror into their hearts. The earth shall be dyed with their blood. Their womenfolk shall bewail and lament. These indeed are my friends!”

Bihár (Íqán p. 254) “In our Qá’im there shall be four signs from four Prophets, Moses, Jesus, Joseph, and Muhammad. The sign from Moses, is fear and expectation; from Jesus, that which was spoken of Him; from Joseph, imprisonment and dissimulation; from Muhammad, the revelation of a Book similar to the Qur’án.”

Sádiq (Íqán pp. 253–254) “Mufaddal asked Sádiq saying: “What of the sign of His manifestation, O my master?” He made reply: “In the year sixty, His Cause shall be made manifest, and His Name shall be proclaimed.”

Súrah 46:30 (al-Ahkáf) “O our people! Obey the Summoner of God, and believe in him, that He may forgive your sins, and rescue you from an afflictive punishment.”

Súrah 30:29 (The Greeks) “Set thou thy face then, as a true convert, towards the Faith which God hath made, and for which He hath made man. No change is there in the creation of God. This is the right Faith, but the greater part of men know it not.”

Súrah 7:50–51 (The Heights) “And now have we brought them the Book: with knowledge have we explained it; a guidance and a mercy to them that believe. What have they to wait for now but its interpretation? When its interpretation shall come, they who

aforetime were oblivious of it shall say, “The Prophets of our Lord did indeed bring the truth.”

### **Bahá’í references**

The Revelation which, from time immemorial, hath been acclaimed as the Purpose and Promise of all the Prophets of God, and the most cherished Desire of His Messengers, hath now, by virtue of the pervasive Will of the Almighty and at His irresistible bidding, been revealed unto men. The advent of such a Revelation hath been heralded in all the sacred Scriptures.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 5.

The time fore-ordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come. The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures, have all been fulfilled. Out of Zion hath gone forth the Law of God, and Jerusalem, and the hills and the land thereof, are filled with the glory of His Revelation. Happy is the man that pondereth in his heart that which hath been revealed in the Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self Subsisting.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 12–13.

O kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God’s, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*,  
p. 17.

He Who hath revealed the Qur’án unto Muhammad, the Apostle of God, ordaining in the Faith of Islám that which

was pleasing unto Him, hath likewise revealed the Bayán, in the manner ye have been promised, unto Him Who is your Qá'im, your Guide, your Mihdí, your Lord, Him Whom ye acclaim as the manifestation of God's most excellent titles. Verily the equivalent of that which God revealed unto Muhammad during twenty-three years, hath been revealed unto Me within the space of two days and two nights. However, as ordained by God, no distinction is to be drawn between the two. He, in truth, hath power over all things.

The Báb: *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 139.

“Followers of the Gospel,” Bahá'u'lláh addressing the whole of Christendom exclaims, “behold the gates of heaven are flung open. He that had ascended unto it is now come. Give ear to His voice calling aloud over land and sea, announcing to all mankind the advent of this Revelation—a Revelation through the agency of which the Tongue of Grandeur is now proclaiming: ‘Lo, the sacred Pledge hath been fulfilled, for He, the Promised One, is come!’” “The voice of the Son of Man is calling aloud from the sacred vale: ‘Here am I, here am I, O God my God!’ ... whilst from the Burning Bush breaketh forth the cry: ‘Lo, the Desire of the world is made manifest in His transcendent glory!’ The Father hath come. That which ye were promised in the Kingdom of God is fulfilled. This is the Word which the Son veiled when He said to those around Him that at that time they could not bear it ... Verily the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth ... He is the One Who glorified the Son and exalted His Cause ....” “The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him.”

Bahá'u'lláh: *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 104–105.

Thou didst ask as to chapter 14, verse 30 of the Gospel of John, where the Lord Christ saith, ‘Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.’ The Prince of this world is the Blessed Beauty; and ‘hath nothing in Me’ signifieth: after Me all will draw grace from Me, but He is independent of Me, and will draw no grace from Me. That is, He is rich beyond any grace of Mine.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*,  
p. 170.

To Him Jesus Christ had referred as the “Prince of this world,” as the “Comforter” Who will “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement,” as the “Spirit of Truth” Who “will guide you into all truth,” Who “shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, as the “Lord of the Vineyard,” and as the “Son of Man” Who “shall come in the glory of His Father” “in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,” with “all the holy angels” about Him, and “all nations” gathered before His throne. To Him the Author of the Apocalypse had alluded as the “Glory of God,” as “Alpha and Omega,” “the Beginning and the End,” “the First and the Last.” “Identifying His Revelation with the “third woe,” he, moreover, had extolled His Law as “a new heaven and a new earth,” as the “Tabernacle of God,” as the “Holy City,” as the “New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” To His Day Jesus Christ Himself had referred as “the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory.” To the hour of His advent St. Paul had alluded as the hour of the “last trump,” the “trump of God,” whilst St. Peter had spoken of it as the “Day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be

dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” His Day, he, furthermore, had described as “the times of refreshing,” “the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began.”

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, pp. 95–96.

To Him Isaiah, the greatest of the Jewish prophets, had alluded as the “Glory of the Lord,” the “Everlasting Father,” the “Prince of Peace,” the “Wonderful,” the “Counsellor,” the “Rod come forth out of the stem of Jesse” and the “Branch grown out of His roots,” Who “shall be established upon the throne of David,” Who “will come with strong hand,” Who “shall judge among the nations,” Who “shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips slay the wicked,” and Who “shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” Of Him David had sung in his Psalms, acclaiming Him as the “Lord of Hosts” and the “King of Glory.” To Him Haggai had referred as the “Desire of all nations,” and Zachariah as the “Branch” Who “shall grow up out of His place,” and “shall build the Temple of the Lord.” Ezekiel had extolled Him as the “Lord” Who “shall be king over all the earth,” while to His day Joel and Zephaniah had both referred as the “day of Jehovah,” “the latter describing it as “a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.” His Day Ezekiel and Daniel had moreover, both acclaimed as the “day of the Lord,” and Malachi described as “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” when “the Sun of Righteousness” will “arise, with healing in His wings,” whilst

Daniel had pronounced His advent as signaling the end of the “abomination that maketh desolate.”

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, pp. 94–95.

O thou who art waiting, tarry no longer, for He is come. Behold His Tabernacle and His Glory dwelling therein. It is the Ancient Glory, with a new Manifestation.

Bahá’u’lláh quoted in *Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*, p. 23.

### **The signs of his coming**

The Holy Scriptures have given us many signs to watch for which will signal the advent of the Promised Day. Among these signs are: changes in the heavens, the restoration of the fortunes of Israel, the Gospel preached throughout the world, the spread of decadence and immorality, the decline of religion, and so on. Anyone who studies this question will notice that the signs mentioned have all become a reality.

Although the existence of some of these signs is obvious, others must be regarded from a spiritual perspective. How could the sun be literally darkened, or the moon cease to shine? Even if this were to happen, there would be no light to see the promised Return, and we would all die without the heat of the sun. Stars falling from heaven? This could probably be done in a Hollywood production studio, if we plan to live in a world of fantasy. But every star is many millions of times larger than our planet. No star could even approach the earth without the world being destroyed.

The Bahá’í Writings teach us that these signs each have inner spiritual meanings that must be unravelled.

### **Biblical references**

Isaiah 13:9–16 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.

For the stars of the heavens and their constellations, will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising and the moon will not shed its light.

I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant, and lay low the haughtiness of the ruthless.

I will make men more rare than fine gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir.

Therefore, I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.

Amos 9:14–15 “I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.

I will plant them upon their land, and they shall never again be plucked up out of the land which I have given them,” says the Lord your God.

Daniel 12:1 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book.”

Mark 13:7–10 “And when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the

end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places, there will be famines; this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs.

“But take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.”

Matthew 24:29–31 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Luke 21:25 “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come.”

Matthew 24:21–22 “For then, there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until

now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

2 Timothy 3:1–5 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. Avoid such people.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 17:4 Night Journey And we solemnly declared to the children of Israel in the Book, “Twice surely will ye enact crimes in the earth, and with great loftiness of pride will ye surely be uplifted.”

Súrah 29:25 The Spider “But on the day of resurrection some of you shall curse the others; and your abode shall be the fire, and ye shall have none to help.”

Súrah 22:1–2 The Pilgrimage “O Men of Mecca, fear your Lord. Verily, the earthquake of the last Hour will be a tremendous thing!

On the day when ye shall behold it, every suckling woman shall forsake her sucking babe; and every woman that hath a burden in her womb shall cast her burden; and thou shalt see men drunken, yet are they not drunken: but it is the mighty chastisement of God!”

Súrah 80:33–37 He Frowned “But when the stunning trumpet-blast shall arrive, On that day shall a man fly from his brother, And his mother and his father, And his wife and his children; For every man of them on that day his own concerns shall be enough.”

### **Islámic Traditions**

*The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 179 “In the latter days a grievous calamity shall befall My people at the hands of their ruler, a calamity such as no man ever heard to surpass it. So fierce will it be that none can find a shelter. God will then send down One of My descendants, One sprung from My family, Who will fill the earth with equity and justice, even as it hath been filled with injustice and tyranny.”

Ibid. “A day shall be witnessed by My people whereon there will have remained of Islám naught but a name, and of the Qur’án naught but a mere appearance. The doctors of that age shall be the most evil the world hath ever seen. Mischief hath proceeded from them, and on them will it recoil.”

Ibid. “At that hour His malediction shall descend upon you, and your curse shall afflict you, and your religion shall remain an empty word on your tongues. And when these signs appear amongst you, anticipate the day when the red hot wind will have swept over you, or the day when ye will have been disfigured, or when stones will have rained upon you.”

‘Aválim (Íqán p. 241) “A Youth from Banú-Háshim shall be made manifest, Who will reveal a new Book and promulgate a new law .... Most of His enemies will be the divines.”

Sádiq (Íqán p. 241)                      “There shall appear a Youth from Banú-Háshim, Who will bid the people plight fealty unto Him. His Book will be a new Book unto which He shall summon the people to pledge their faith. Stern is His Revelation unto the Arab. If ye hear about Him, hasten unto Him.”

### **Bahá’í references**

And now, concerning His words—“The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.” By the terms “sun” and “moon,” mentioned in the writings of the Prophets of God, is not meant solely the sun and moon of the visible universe. Nay rather, manifold are the meanings they have intended for these terms. In every instance they have attached to them a particular significance. Thus, by the “sun” in one sense is meant those Suns of Truth Who rise from the dayspring of ancient glory, and fill the world with a liberal effusion of grace from on high. These Suns of Truth are the universal Manifestations of God .... Thus it is that through the rise of these Luminaries of God the world is made new, the waters of everlasting life stream forth, the billows of loving-kindness surge, the clouds of grace are gathered, and the breeze of bounty bloweth upon all created things. It is the warmth that these Luminaries of God generate, and the undying fires they kindle, which cause the light of the love of God to burn fiercely in the heart of humanity. It is through the abundant grace of these Symbols of Detachment that the Spirit of life ever-lasting is breathed into the bodies of the dead. Assuredly the visible sun is but a sign of the splendour of that Day-star of Truth, that Sun Which can never have a peer, a likeness, or rival.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 33–34.

That the term “sun” hath been applied to the leaders of religion is due to their lofty position, their fame, and renown. Such are the universally recognized divines of every age, who speak with authority, and whose fame is securely established. If they be in the likeness of the Sun of Truth, they will surely be accounted as the most exalted of all luminaries; otherwise, they are to be recognized as the focal centres of hellish fire. Even as He saith: “Verily, the sun and the moon are both condemned to the torment of infernal fire.”

... by the words “the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven” is intended the waywardness of the divines, and the annulment of laws firmly established by divine Revelation, all of which, in symbolic language, have been foreshadowed by the Manifestation of God. None except the righteous shall partake of this cup, none but the godly can share therein.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 37 and 41.

In like manner, strive thou to comprehend from these lucid, these powerful, conclusive, and unequivocal statements the meaning of the “cleaving of the heaven”—one of the signs that must needs herald the coming of the last Hour, the Day of Resurrection. As He hath said: “When the heaven shall be cloven asunder.” By “heaven” is meant the heaven of divine Revelation, which is elevated with every Manifestation, and rent asunder with every subsequent one. By “cloven asunder” is meant that the former Dispensation is superseded and annulled. I swear by God! That this heaven being cloven asunder is, to the discerning, an act mightier than the cleaving of the skies!

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 44.

And now, with reference to His words: “And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. “These words signify that in those days men will lament the loss of the Sun of the divine beauty, of the Moon of knowledge, and of the Stars of divine wisdom. Thereupon, they will behold the countenance of the promised One, the adored Beauty, descending from heaven and riding upon the clouds. By this is meant that the divine Beauty will be made manifest from the heaven of the will of God, and will appear in the form of the human temple. The term “heaven” denoteth loftiness and exaltation, inasmuch as it is the seat of the revelation of those Manifestations of Holiness, the Day-springs of ancient glory. These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mother, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though they be dwelling on this earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above. Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of the divine presence.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 66–67.

The Book of Isaiah announces that the Messiah will conquer the East and the West, and all nations of the world will come under His shadow, that His Kingdom will be established, that He will come from an unknown place, that the sinners will be judged, and that justice will prevail to such a degree that the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the sucking child and the asp, shall all gather at one spring, and in one meadow, and one dwelling. The first coming was also under these conditions, though outwardly none of them came to pass. Therefore, the Jews rejected Christ. ...

The second coming of Christ also will be in like manner: the signs and conditions which have been spoken of all have meanings, and are not to be taken literally. Among other things it is said that the stars will fall upon the earth. The stars are endless and innumerable, and modern mathematicians have established and proved scientifically that the globe of the sun is estimated to be about one million a half times greater than the earth, and each of the fixed stars to be a thousand times larger than the sun. If these stars were to fall upon the surface of the earth, how could they find place there? It would be as though a thousand million of Himalaya mountains were to fall upon a grain of mustard seed. According to reason and science this thing is quite impossible. What is even more strange is that Christ said: “Perhaps I shall come when you are yet asleep, for the coming of the Son of man is like the coming of a thief.”<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the thief will be in the house, and the owner will not know it.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 111–12.

In the same way, Israel, scattered all over the world, was not reassembled in the Holy Land in the Christian cycle; but in the beginning of the cycle of Bahá’u’lláh this divine promise, as is clearly stated in all the Books of the Prophets, has begun to be manifest. You can see that from all the parts of the world tribes of Jews are coming to the Holy Land; they live in villages and lands which they make their own, and day by day they are increasing to such an extent that all Palestine will become their home.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 65–66.

## **He comes in the clouds**

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Thess. 5; 2; 2 Pet. 3:10.

The Holy Scriptures tell us that the promised Redeemer will come to earth “in the clouds,” “on the clouds,” or “with the clouds.” Even if we take this prophecy literally, it would be clear that if anyone descended from heaven in cloud—he would be hidden by those clouds from sight. A saviour riding on a cloud could not be seen by those below on earth.

The Bahá’í Writings explain the meaning of the 44 clouds” as barriers which prevent humanity from recognizing the true Prophets of God. They are clouds of prejudice and pride and idle fancy, clouds of tradition and man-made dogma—anything which stands between the believer and the true messenger of God.

### **Biblical references**

Mark 13:25–26 “... and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory.”

Mark 14:61–62 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.”

Matthew 24:30 “... then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Luke 21:27 “And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds...

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 2:206 (The Cow)      What can such expect but that God should come down to them overshadowed with clouds, and the angels also, and their doom be sealed?

Súrah 25:25–26 (The Criterion)      On that day shall the heaven with its clouds be cleft, and the angels shall be sent down, descending:

On that day shall all empire be in very deed with the God of Mercy, and a hard day shall it be for the Infidels.

### **Bahá'í references**

It is evident that the changes brought about in every Dispensation constitute the dark clouds that intervene between the eye of man's understanding and the divine Luminary which shineth forth from the dayspring of the divine Essence. Consider how men for generations have been blindly imitating their fathers, and have been trained according to such ways and manners as have been laid down by the dictates of their Faith. Were these men, therefore, to discover suddenly that a Man, Who hath been living in their midst, Who, with respect to every human limitation, hath been their equal, had risen to abolish every established principle imposed by their Faith-principles by which for centuries they have been disciplined, and every opposer and denier of which they have come to regard as infidel, profligate and wicked—they would of a certainty be veiled and hindered from acknowledging His truth. Such things are as “clouds” that veil the eyes of those whose inner being hath not tasted the Salsabíl of detachment, nor drunk from the Kawthar of the knowledge of God.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 73–74.

By the term “clouds” is meant those things that are contrary to the ways and desires of men .... These “clouds” signify, in one sense, the annulment of laws, the abrogation of former Dispensations, the repeal of rituals and customs current amongst men, the exalting of the illiterate faithful above the learned opposers of the Faith. In another sense, they mean the appearance Of that immortal Beauty in the image of mortal man, with such human limitations as eating and drinking, poverty and riches, glory and abasement, sleeping and waking, and such other things as cast doubt in the minds of men, and cause them to turn away. All such veils are symbolically referred to as “clouds”. These are the “clouds” that cause the heavens of the knowledge and understanding of all that dwell on earth to be cloven asunder. Even as He hath revealed: “On that day shall the heaven be cloven by the clouds.” Even as the clouds prevent the eyes of men from beholding the sun, so do these things hinder the souls of men from recognizing the light of the divine Luminary.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 71–72.

And they are waiting for Him to come down from there again, riding upon a cloud, and they imagine that there are clouds in that infinite space and that He will ride thereon and by that means He will descend. Whereas the truth is that a cloud is but a vapour that riseth out of the earth, and it doth not come down from heaven. Rather, the cloud referred to in the Gospel is the human body, so called because the body is as a veil to man, which, even as a cloud, preventeth him from beholding the Sun of Truth that shineth from the horizon of Christ.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 168.

### **The place He will appear**

The prophecies in the Holy Scriptures conspicuously indicate the place where the Promised One is to appear. Reading the history of the Bahá'í Faith, and meditating on the following passages, it is clear that the banishments of Bahá'u'lláh fulfil these prophecies. From Tehran, the capital of Iran, “east” of the Holy Land, Bahá'u'lláh was banished to Baghdád. From there He was sent to Constantinople (Istanbul) and then to Adrianople (Edirne) and finally—by way of Egypt—to the prison city of ‘Akká.

Bahá'u'lláh's name translates as the “Glory of God” or the “Glory of the Lord.” The importance that Isaiah gives to Mount Carmel and the plain of Sharon (south of Mt. Carmel)—which he promises will see the “Glory of the Lord”—provides another indication of the location of the appearance of the Promised One.

Similarly, in Islám there are numerous references to the location of ‘Akká and how blessed is he who visits ‘Akká as a pilgrim.

### **Biblical references**

Ezekiel 43:1–2     Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the east ...

Amos 1:2     “The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.”

Ezekiel 43:4–5     As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

Ezekiel 3:22–23 And the hand of the Lord was there upon me; and he said to me, “Arise, go forth into the plain, and there I will speak with you.” So I arose and went forth into the plain; and, lo, the glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face.

Micah 7:11–13 A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended. In that day they will come to you, from Assyria to Egypt, and from Egypt to the River, from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain. But the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their doings.

Isaiah 35:1–2 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

Isaiah 2:2–4 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift

up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

### Islámic references

Súrah 10:26 (Jonah)           And God calleth to the abode of peace; and He guideth whom He will into the right way.

Súrah 50:40–41 (Qáf)       And list for the day whereon the crier shall cry from a place near to every one alike:

The day on which men shall in truth hear that shout will be the day of their coming forth from the grave.

‘Abdu’l-Aziz (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 178)   ‘Abdu’l-Azíz, son of ‘Abdu’l-Salím, hath related unto us that the Prophet—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: “‘Akká is a city in Syria to which God hath shown His special mercy.”

Anas (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 178–180)   Anas, son of Malik—may God be pleased with him—hath said: “The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: “... I announce unto you a city, on the shores of the sea, white, whose whiteness is pleasing unto God—exalted be He! It is called ‘Akká. He that hath been bitten by one of its fleas is better, in the estimation of God than he who hath received a grievous blow in the path of God. And he that raiseth therein the call to prayer, his voice will be lifted up unto Paradise .... There are kings and princes in Paradise. The poor of ‘Akká are the kings of Paradise and the princes thereof. A month in ‘Akká is better than a thousand

years elsewhere .... Blessed the man that hath visited ‘Akká, and blessed he that hath visited the visitor of ‘Akká .... And he that saith in ‘Akká: ‘Glorified be God, and praise be unto God, and there is none other God but God, and most great is God, the Exalted, the Mighty,’ God will write down for him a thousand good deeds, and blot out from him a thousand evil deeds, and will uplift him a thousand grades in Paradise, and will forgive him his transgressions. And whoso saith in ‘Akká: ‘I beg forgiveness of God,’ God will forgive all his trespasses.

### **Bahá’í references**

Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings:  
He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come!

Bahá’u’lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 16.

He, for Whose sake the world was called into being, hath been imprisoned in the most desolate of cities (‘Akká), by reason of that which the hands of the wayward have wrought. From the horizon of His prison city He summoneth mankind unto the Dayspring of God, the Exalted, the Great.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 56.

The Sun of Truth shineth resplendently at the bidding of the Lord of the kingdom of utterance, and the King of the heaven of knowledge, above the horizon of the prison city of ‘Akká. Repudiation hath not veiled it, and ten thousand hosts arrayed against it were powerless to withhold it from shining. Thou canst excuse thyself no longer. Either thou must recognize it, or—God forbid—arise and deny all the Prophets!

Bahá’u’lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 119.

... a Voice was raised from the direction of Hijáz, calling aloud and saying: “Great is thy blessedness, O ‘Akká, in that God hath made thee the dayspring of His Most Sweet Voice, and the dawn of His most mighty signs, Happy art thou in that the Throne of Justice hath been established upon thee, and the Day-Star of Cod’s loving-kindness and bounty hath shone forth above thy horizon. Well it is with every fair-minded person that hath judged fairly Him Who is the Most Great Remembrance, and woe betide him that hath erred and doubted.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 79.

Hearken with thine inner ear unto the Voice of Jeremiah, Who saith: “Oh, for great is that Day, and it hath no equal.” Wert thou to observe with the eye of fairness, thou wouldst perceive the greatness of the Day. Incline thine ear unto the Voice of this All Knowing Counsellor, and suffer not thyself to be deprived of the mercy that hath surpassed all created things, visible and invisible. Lend an ear unto the song of David. He saith: “Who will bring me into the Strong City?” The Strong City is ‘Akká which hath been named the Most Great Prison, and which possesseth a fortress and mighty ramparts.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 144.

Carmel, in the Book of God, hath been designated as the Hill of God, and His Vineyard. It is here that, by the grace of the Lord of Revelation, the Tabernacle of Glory hath been raised. Happy are they that attain thereunto; happy are they that set their faces towards it.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 145.

... Bahá’u’lláh’s tent, the “*Tabernacle of Glory*,” was raised on Mt. Carmel, “*the Hill of God and His Vineyard*,” the

home of Elijah, extolled by Isaiah as the “*mountain of the Lord*”, to which “*all nations shall flow.*”

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, p. 194.

... ‘Akká, itself, flanked by the “*glory of Lebanon*, “and lying in full view of the “*splendour of Carmel*,” at the foot of the hills which enclose the home of Jesus Christ Himself, had been described by David as “*the Strong City*,” designated by Hosea as “*a door of hope*”, and alluded to by Ezekiel as “*the gate that looketh towards the East*,” whereunto “*the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East*,” His voice “*like a noise of many waters.*”

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, p. 184.

### **The time of His coming**

Although both the Bible and Qur’án contain many references to the time of the coming of the Promised One, for the sake of simplicity and quick reference, this chapter will concern itself with only a couple of them. The one well-known prophecy in the Bible is found in the Book of Daniel and was confirmed by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.

Daniel says that from the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (457 BC) to the end of the abomination of desolation, there were to be 2,300 days. According to the Bible, each day counts as a year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). After seven weeks and sixty-two weeks (483 days), the Messiah (the anointed one) would be cut off. At the end of the 2,300 days, the sanctuary would be restored.

From the issuing of the decree in 457 BC until the birth of Christ, there were 456 years. Subtracting 456 from 483 leaves the year AD 27) as the date of the crucifixion of Christ. Subtracting 456 from 2,300 leaves AD 1844 as the end of the

abomination of desolation, the year the Báb declared His mission.

In Islám, the Qur’án states, “to each age its Book” (Súrah 13:38) and “Every nation hath its set time” (Súrah 7:33). To the Muslim dispensation He hath ordained “a day whose length shall be a thousand of such years as ye reckon” (Súrah 32:4). The reckoning of the said day started after the last of the 12 Imáms passed away in the year AH 260. By adding the period of 1,000 years previously mentioned to the year 260, we get AH 1260 which is equivalent to AD 1844 the year the Bahá’í Faith began.

### **Biblical references**

Daniel 8:13–14    Then I heard a holy one speaking and another holy one said to the one that spoke, “For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot?” And he said to him, “For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.”

Daniel 9:25–26    “Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty–two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat .... And after the sixty–two weeks, an anointed one shall be cutoff ....”

Matthew 24:2–3, 15         “Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down.”

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?” ...

“So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) ....”

Daniel 12:6–7 And I said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?” The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven; and I heard him swear by him who lives for ever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time.

Daniel 12:11–12 And from the time that the continual burnt offering is taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty–five days.

Revelation 11:1–2 I was given a long cane, a kind of measuring-rod, and told: ‘Now go and measure the temple of God, the altar, and the number of the worshippers. But have nothing to do with the outer court of the temple; do not measure that; for it has been given over to the Gentiles, and they will trample the Holy City underfoot for forty–two months.

Revelation 11:8–9 Their corpses will lie in the street of the great city, whose name in allegory is Sodom; or Egypt; where also their Lord was crucified. For three days and a half men of every people and tribe, of every

language and nation, gaze upon their corpses and refuse them burial.

Revelation 12:5–6 ... she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 13:38–39 (Thunder) To each age its Book. What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm: for with Him is the source of revelation.

Súrah 7:32 (The Heights) Every nation hath its set time. And when their time is come, they shall not retard it an hour; and they shall not advance it.

Súrah 32:4 (Adoration) From the Heaven to the Earth He governeth all things: hereafter shall they come up to him on a day whose length shall be a thousand of such years as ye reckon.

Súrah 22:46 (The Pilgrimage) And they will bid thee to hasten the chastisement. But God cannot fail His threat. And verily, a day with thy Lord is as a thousand years, as ye reckon them!

Súrah 23:45–46 (The Believers) Neither too soon, nor too late, shall a people reach its appointed time. Then sent we our apostles one after another.

*The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 49 (Imám Ja'far) “Verily, in the year sixty His Cause shall be revealed, and His name shall be noised abroad.”

*The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 49 (Muhyi-d-Dín-i-‘Arabí) “The year of His Revelation is identical with half of that number which is divisible by nine (2520).”

*The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 50 (Muhammad-i-Ak**h**bá**á**rí) “In the year Ghars (the numerical value of the letters of which is (1260) the earth shall be illumined by His light, and in Gharasih (1265) the world shall be suffused with its glory. If thou livest until the year Gharasi (1270), thou shalt witness how the nations, the rulers, the peoples, and the Faith of God shall all have been renewed.”

*The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 50 (Imám ‘Alí) “In Ghars the Tree of Divine guidance shall be planted.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Bahá’í references**

Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and re-adorned .... That city is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation. In the days of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the days of Jesus the Gospel; in the days of Muhammad the Messenger of God the Qur’án; in this day the Bayán; and in the dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest His own Book—the Book up to which all the Books of former Dispensations must needs be referred ...

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 199.

Daniel mentions two dates. One of these dates begins with the command of Artaxerxes to Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem; this is the seventy weeks which came to an end with the ascension of Christ, when by His martyrdom the sacrifice and oblation ceased.

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<sup>2</sup> In Arabic the word Ghars means to plant and in numerology its numerical value is: Gha = 1000, R = 200, S = 60, i.e. the year 1260 Híjrah—Islámíic Calendar).

The second period,, which is found in the twenty sixth verse, means that after the termination of the rebuilding of Jerusalem until the ascension of Christ, there will be sixty–two weeks: seven weeks are the duration of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which took forty–nine years. When you add these seven weeks to the sixty–two weeks, it makes sixty–nine weeks, and in the last week (69–70) the ascension of Christ took place. These seventy weeks are thus completed, and there is no contradiction.

Now that the manifestation of Christ has been proved by the prophecies of Daniel, let us prove the manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Up to the present we have only mentioned rational proofs; now we shall speak of traditional proofs.

In the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, verse thirteen, it is said: “Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” Then he answered (v. 14): “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”; (v. 17) “But he said unto me ... at the time of the end shall be the vision”. That is to say, how long will this misfortune, this ruin, this abasement and degradation last? meaning, when will be the dawn of the Manifestation? Then he answered, “Two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Briefly, the purport of this passage is that he appoints two thousand three hundred years, for in the text of the Bible each day is a year. Then from the date of the issuing of the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem until the day of the birth of Christ there are 456

years and from the birth of Christ until the day of the manifestation of the Báb there are 1844 years. When you add 456 years to this number it makes 2300 years. That is to say, the fulfilment of the vision of Daniel took place in the year AD 1844, and this is the year of the Báb's manifestation according to the actual text of the Book of Daniel. Consider how clearly he determines the year of the manifestation; there could be no clearer prophecy for a manifestation than this.

In Matthew, chapter 24 verse 3, Christ clearly says that what Daniel meant by this prophecy was the date of the manifestation, and this is the verse: "And he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" One of the explanations he gave them in reply was this (v. 15): "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand)." In this answer he referred them to the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, saying that every one who reads it will understand that it is this time that is spoken of. Consider how clearly the manifestation of the Báb is spoken of in the Old Testament and in the Gospel.

To conclude, let us now explain the date of the manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh from the Bible. The date of Bahá'u'lláh is calculated according to lunar years from the mission of and the Hejira of Muhammad; for in the religion of Muhammad the lunar year is in use, as also it is the lunar year which is employed concerning all commands of worship.

In Daniel, chapter 12, verse 6, it is said: “And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and that when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.”

As I have already explained the signification of one day, it is not necessary to explain it further; but we will say briefly that each day of the Father counts as a year, and in each year there are twelve months. Thus three years and a half make forty-two months, and forty-two months are twelve hundred and sixty days. The Báb, the precursor to Bahá'u'lláh, appeared in the year 1260 from the Hijrah of Muhammad, by the reckoning of Islám.

Afterwards, in verse 11, it is said: “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolation be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five-and-thirty days.”

The beginning of this lunar reckoning is from the day of the proclamation of the prophethood of Muhammad in the country of Hijáz; and that was three years after his mission, because in the beginning the prophethood of Muhammad was kept secret, and no one knew it save Khadíjah and Ibn Nawfal. After three years it was announced. And Bahá'u'lláh in the year 1290 from the proclamation of the

mission of Muhammad, caused His manifestation to be known.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 41–44.

In the beginning of the seventh century after Christ, when Jerusalem was conquered, the Holy of Holies was outwardly preserved—that is to say, the house which Solomon built; but outside the Holy of Holies the outer court was taken and given to the Gentiles. “And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months”—that is to say, the Gentiles shall govern and control Jerusalem forty and two months, signifying twelve hundred and sixty days; and as each day signifies a year, by this reckoning it becomes twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the duration of the cycle of the Qur’án. For in the texts of the Holy Book, each day is a year; as it is said in the fourth chapter of Ezekiel, verse 6: “Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”

This prophesies the duration of the Dispensation of Islám when Jerusalem was trodden under foot, which means that it lost its glory—but the Holy of Holies was preserved, guarded and respected—until the year 1260. This twelve hundred and sixty years is a prophecy of the manifestation of the Báb, the “Gate” of Bahá’u’lláh, which took place in the year 1260 of the Hejira of Muhammad, and as the period of twelve hundred and sixty years has expired, Jerusalem, the Holy City, is now beginning to become prosperous, populous and flourishing.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 46.

“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not

suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.” (Revelation 11:9).

As it was before explained, in the terminology of the Holy Books three days and a half signify three years and a half, and three years and a half are forty and two months, and forty and two months twelve hundred and sixty days; and as each day by the text of the Holy Book signifies one year, the meaning is that for twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the cycle of the Qur’án, the nations, tribes and peoples would look at their bodies—that is to say, that they would make a spectacle of the Religion of God: though they would not act in accordance with it, still, they would not suffer their bodies—meaning the Religion of God—to be put in the grave. That is to say, that in appearance they would cling to the Religion of God and not allow it to completely disappear from their midst, nor the body of it to be entirely destroyed and annihilated. Nay, in reality they would leave it, while outwardly preserving its name and remembrance.

Those “kindreds, people and nations” signify those who are gathered under the shadow of the Qur’án, not permitting the Cause and Law of God to be, in outward appearance, entirely destroyed and annihilated—for there are prayer and fasting among them—but the fundamental principles of the Religion of God, which are morals and conduct, with the knowledge of divine mysteries, have disappeared; the light of the virtues of the world of humanity, which is the result of the love and knowledge of God, is extinguished; and the darkness of tyranny, oppression, satanic passions and desires has become victorious. The body of the Law of God, like a corpse, has been exposed to the public view for twelve hundred and sixty

days, each day being counted as a year, and this period is the cycle of Muhammad.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 52–53.

Consider how the prophecies correspond to one another. In the Apocalypse, the appearance of the Promised One is appointed after forty–two months, and Daniel expresses it as three times and a half, which is also forty–two months, which are twelve hundred and sixty days. In another passage of John’s Revelation it is clearly spoken of as twelve hundred and sixty days, and in the Holy Book it is said that each day signifies one year. Nothing could be more clear than this agreement of the prophecies with one another. The Báb appeared in the year 1260 of the Híjrah of Muhammad, which is the beginning of the universal era-reckoning of all Islám. There are no clearer proofs than this in the Holy Books for any Manifestation. For him who is just, the agreement of the times indicated by the tongues of the Great Ones is the most conclusive proof. There is no other possible explanation of these prophecies. Blessed are the just souls who seek the truth.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 71–72.

#### He comes as a thief

The Scriptures, in addition to foretelling the time of His coming, have also indicated the manner in which the Promised One will come. Many passages in the Bible and the Qur’án insist that He will come as a “thief in the night,” “while they are unaware,” “while they are sunk in heedlessness and while they believe not.” That is, He will come secretly and unexpectedly, and the people will be unaware.

As at the time of Christ and Muhammad, the Promised One was in the world, and yet the vast majority of people remained unaware.

### **Biblical references**

Luke 17:20–21 Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Lo, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

Matthew 24:42–44 “Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Mark 13:33–37 “Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch!”

Revelation 3:3 “If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.”

Revelation 16:15 (“Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake, keeping his garments that he may not go naked and be seen exposed!”)

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief  
...

1 Thessalonians 5:2–3 For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 7:186 (The Heights) They will ask thee of the Hour—for what time is its coming fixed! Say: The knowledge of it is only with my Lord: none shall manifest it in its time but He: it is the burden of the Heavens and of the Earth: not otherwise than on a sudden will it come on you.

Súrah 12:107 (Joseph) What! Are they sure that the overwhelming chastisement of God shall not come upon them, or that that Hour shall not come upon them suddenly, while they are unaware?

Súrah 19:40 (Mary) Warn them of the day of sighing when the decree shall be accomplished, while they are sunk in heedlessness and while they believe not.

### **Bahá’í references**

... and still the people, even as the Messiah saith, slept on: for the day of the Manifestation, when the Lord of Hosts descended, found them wrapped in the slumber of

unknowing. As He saith in the Gospel, My coming is even as when the thief is in the house, and the goodman of the house watcheth not.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 35.

All the people of the world are buried in the graves of nature, or are slumbering, heedless and unaware. Just as Christ saith: “I may come when you are not aware. The coming of the Son of Man is like the coming of a thief into a house, the owner of which is utterly unaware.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá. *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 198–99.

... Christ said: “Perhaps I shall come when you are yet asleep, for the coming of the Son of man is like the coming of a thief.” Perhaps the thief will be in the house, and the owner will not know it.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 112.

### **He comes with a new name**

In the Holy Scriptures, we find the promise that, at the time of the end, the One who is expected will come bearing a new name. This often comes as a surprise especially to Christians, many of whom expect Christ to return to earth in the same body, with the same name, and even speaking the same words as He did the first time. But the scriptures clearly indicate that there will be a new name, and they also tell us what that name will be.

Many passages refer to the coming of “the glory of God” or “the glory of the Lord.” In Arabic, these words translate as Bahá’u’lláh—the title that the Founder of the Bahá’í Faith assumed. This is the new name of the Promised One.

### **Biblical references**

Isaiah 62:2           The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD Will give.

Ezekiel 43:2–5      And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the east; and the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was like the vision which I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

Isaiah 40:5           “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Matthew 24:4–5     And Jesus answered them, “Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.”

Matthew 24:23      “Then if any one says to you, ‘Lo, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.”

Revelation 2:17    He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it.

Revelation 3:11–12            I am coming soon; hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

Revelation 21:22–24            And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it ...

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 39:68–69 (The Troops)            And there shall be a blast on the trumpet, and all who are in the Heavens and all who are in the Earth shall expire, save those whom God shall vouchsafe to live. Then shall there be another blast on it, and lo! arising they shall gaze around them: And the earth shall shine with the light of her Lord, and the Book shall be set ...

(“light of her Lord” is in reference to Bahá’u’lláh, as ‘Bahá’ means ‘glory’, ‘light’, or ‘splendour’—the second part of Bahá’u’lláh’s name ‘of the Lord’ is equivalent to ‘of her Lord’).

Súrah 69:13–17 The Inevitable            But when one blast shall be blown on the trumpet, And the earth and the mountains shall be upheaved, and shall both be crushed into dust at a single crushing. On that day the woe that must come suddenly shall suddenly

come, And the heaven shall cleave asunder, for on that day it shall be fragile; And the angels shall be on its sides, and over them on that day eight shall bear up the throne of thy Lord.

*The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 49 (Muhyi'd-Dín-i'-'Arabí) "In His name, the name of the Guardian ('Alí) precedeth that of the Prophet (Muhammad)."

(Bahá'u'lláh's predecessor, a Manifestation of God in His own rights, His given name was 'Alí Muhammad).

### **Bahá'í references**

He was formally designated Bahá'u'lláh, an appellation specifically recorded in the Persian Bayán, signifying at once the glory, the light and the splendour of God, and was styled the "Lord of Lords," the "Most Great Name," the "Ancient Beauty," the "Pen of the Most High," the "Hidden Name," the "Preserved Treasure," "He Whom God will make manifest," the "Most Great Light," the "All-Highest Horizon," the "Most Great Ocean," the "Supreme Heaven," the "Pre-Existent Root," the "Self-Subsistent," the "Day-Star of the Universe," the "Great Announcement," the "Speaker on Sinai," the "Sifter of Men," the "Wronged One of the World," the "Desire of the Nations," the "Lord of the Covenant," the "Tree beyond which there is no passing."

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, p. 94.

To Him Isaiah, the greatest of the Jewish prophets, had alluded as the "*Glory of the Lord*," the "*Everlasting Father*," the "*Prince of Peace*," the "*Wonderful*," the "*Counsellor*," the "*Rod come forth out of the stem of Jesse*" and the "*Branch grown out of His roots*," Who "*shall be established*

*upon the throne of David,” Who “will come with strong hand,” Who “shall judge among the nations,” Who “shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips slay the wicked,” and Who “shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” Of Him David had sung in his Psalms, acclaiming Him as the “Lord of Hosts” and the “King of Glory.”*

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, p. 94–5.

### **The Unity of God and His Manifestations**

All the Messengers of God have claimed to be one and the same. They all came from the one God, with the same spirit, bringing the same spiritual teachings to different places and different peoples, at various times in history. Each prophet brought a message perfectly tailored to the time, the place, the culture to which he appeared. But, all have praised each other, all have glorified each other, all have prophesied about one another. Each prophet has explained in a different way that the messengers that come from God are, in reality, one and the same—the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Return of the last one.

Each of these Divine Beings came to fulfil a specific mission for a certain age and to a particular people. To obey them in each age is to obey God; to turn away from them is to turn away from God.

#### **Biblical references**

Deuteronomy 18:17–19     “And the Lord said to me ‘I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not give heed to my words which he

shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.””

Deuteronomy 33:2 “The Lord came from Sinai, and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran, he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand.

John 10:16 “And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.”

John 5:46 “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

John 10:27–30 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

John 8:56–58 “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad.” The Jews then 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.”

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 2:285 (The Cow) We make no distinction between any of His Apostles.

Súrah 2:130 (The Cow) Say ye: “We believe in God, and that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes: and that which hath been given to Moses and to Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them: and to God are we resigned (Muslims).”

Súrah 4:161 (Women) Verily we have revealed to thee as we revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and as we revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and Jesus, and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron, and Solomon; and to David gave we Psalms.

Súrah 42:11 (Counsel) To you hath He prescribed the faith which He commanded unto Noah, and which we have revealed to thee, and which we commanded unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying, “Observe this faith, and be not divided into sects therein.”

Traditions (*Gleanings*, pp. 66–67) “Manifold and mysterious is My relationship with God. I am He, Himself and He is I, Myself, except that I am that I am, and He is that He is.”

Tradition (*Gleanings*, p. 67) “There is no distinction whatsoever between Thee and Them, except that They are Thy Servants.”

Tradition (*Íqán* p. 153) “I am all the Prophets.” “I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.”

### **Bahá’í references**

Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honour to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted. Every true Prophet hath regarded His Message as fundamentally the same as the Revelation of every other Prophet gone before Him.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 78–79.

These sanctified Mirrors, these Day Springs of ancient glory, are, one and all, the Exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the Universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty .... These Tabernacles of Holiness, these Primal Mirrors which reflect the light of unfading glory, are but expressions of Him Who is the Invisible of the Invisibles. By the revelation of these Gems of Divine virtue all the names and attributes of God, such as knowledge and power, sovereignty and dominion, mercy and wisdom, glory, bounty, and grace, are made manifest ... all the Prophets of God, His well-favoured, His holy and chosen Messengers are, without exception, the bearers of His names, and the embodiments of His attributes. They only differ in the intensity of their revelation, and the comparative potency of their light.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 47–48.

Beware, O believers in the Unity of God, lest ye be tempted to make any distinction between any of the Manifestations of His Cause, or to discriminate against the signs that have accompanied and proclaimed their Revelation. This indeed is

the true meaning of Divine Unity, if ye be of them that apprehend and believe this truth.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 59.

Thus He saith: “Our Cause is but one.” Inasmuch as the Cause is one and the same, the Exponents thereof also must needs be one and the same.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 153.

The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same Temple and the same Foundation. Both of these are spiritual springtimes and seasons of the soul-refreshing awakening and the cause of the renovation of the life of mankind. The spring of this year is the same as the spring of last year. The origins and ends are the same. The sun of today is the sun of yesterday. In the coming of Christ, the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh have the same basic principles, but are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined age.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá’í World Faith*, p. 400

## Part Two:

### Some Christian subjects

#### The Word of God

Jesus said: “Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.” (Luke 21:33) However, Jesus is not the only “Word.” The Words of God are endless.

Christians know and understand that the Word of God was revealed in stages. The earliest Hebrew prophets spoke to the people and gave them God’s Word—Abraham, Noah, Jacob and others. Then Moses appeared and spoke the Word of God, bringing a new Law. After him, the minor prophets of Israel continued to guide the people with the Word of God Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and so forth. When Jesus Christ began His ministry, He represented the Word of God for His day.

Bahá’is call this periodic dispensation of God’s Will “Progressive revelation.” In every age, the Word of God is renewed with the appearance of a new prophet or Manifestation of God who brings the teachings which are needed in proportion to our stage of maturity. As Jesus said: “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth ....” Nonetheless, the spiritual truth of the Word of God is never changed. Only the presentation of the Word of God, the outward forms of religion, will change to suit the time and the place where they appear.

#### **Biblical References**

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth ...

John 3:31–36      He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth belongs to the earth, and of the earth he speaks; he who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony; he who receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit; the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life ...

John 3:12      “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”

John 16:12      “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”

### **Islámic References**

Súrah 3:40–41 (The Family of Imrán)      Remember when the angel said, “O Mary! Verily God announceth to thee the Word from Him: His name shall be, Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, illustrious in this world, and in the next, and one of those who have near access to God; And He shall speak to men alike when in the cradle and when grown up; And he shall be one of the just.”

Súrah 4:169 (Women)      O ye people of the Book! overstep not bounds in your religion; and of God, speak only truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God, and his Word which he conveyed into Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from himself.

Súrah 18:109 (The Cave) Say: Should the sea become ink, to write the words of my Lord, the sea would surely fail ere the words of my Lord would fail, though we brought its like in aid.

### **Bahá'í References**

The Word of God is sanctified from time. The past, the present, the future, all, in relation to God, are equal. Yesterday, today, tomorrow do not exist in the sun.

In the same way there is priority with regard to glory—that is to say, the most glorious precedes the glorious. Therefore, the Reality of Christ, Who is the Word of God, with regard to essence, attributes and glory, certainly precedes the creatures. Before appearing in the human form, the Word of God was in the utmost sanctity and glory, existing in perfect beauty and splendour in the height of its magnificence. When through the wisdom of God the Most High it shone from the heights of glory in the world of the body, the Word of God, through this body, became oppressed, so that it fell into the hands of the Jews, and became the captive of the tyrannical and ignorant, and at last was crucified.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 116–17.

Yet the Sun of Reality, the Word of God, shone from the Messianic mirror through the wonderful channel of Jesus Christ more fully and more wonderfully. Its effulgences were manifestly radiant, but even to this day the Jews are holding to the Mosaic mirror. Therefore, they are bereft of witnessing the lights of eternity in Jesus.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 115.

There is no intrinsic meaning in the leaves of a book, but the thought they convey leads you to reflect upon reality. The

reality of Jesus was the perfect meaning, the Christhood in Him which in the Holy Books is symbolized as the Word.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 155.

“The Word was with God.” The Christhood means not the body of Jesus but the perfection of divine virtues manifest in Him. Therefore, it is written, “He is God.” This does not imply separation from God, even as it is not possible to separate the rays of the sun from the sun. The reality of Christ was the embodiment of divine virtues and attributes of God. For in Divinity there is no duality. All adjectives, nouns and pronouns in that court of sanctity are one; there is neither multiplicity nor division. The intention of this explanation is to show that the Words of God have innumerable significances and mysteries of meanings—each one a thousand and more.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 155.

### Salvation!

Most Christians believe that Christ came to die on the cross for the remission of our sins, and that in Christ’s martyrdom we can find our salvation. Of course, this is true—and this is the case with all the Manifestations of God—if our faith is supported by deeds. Not only Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, but also His life and His teachings can enable us to overcome all sin, such as anger, hatred, prejudice, greed, selfishness, etc. However, if these sins cannot be overcome, then the sacrifices of all of the Manifestations of God are of no benefit to us. “So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” (James 2:17).

### **Biblical references**

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 19:16–17 And behold, one came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?” And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.”

James 2:14–17 What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 2:23 (The Cow) But announce to those who believe and do the things that are right, that for them are gardens ‘neath which the rivers flow!

Súrah 20:77-78 (Tá Há) But he who shall come before Him, a believer, with righteous works, these! the loftiest grades await them:

Gardens of Eden, beneath whose trees the rivers flow: therein shall they abide for ever. This, the reward of him who hath been pure.

Súrah 8:2–4 (The Spoils) Believers are they only whose hearts thrill with fear when God is named, and whose faith increaseth at each recital of his signs, and who put their trust in their Lord; Who observe the prayers, and give alms out of that with which we have

supplied them; These are the believers: their due grade awaiteth them in the presence of their Lord, and forgiveness, and a generous provision.

Súrah 9:20 (Immunity) They who have believed, and fled their homes, and striven with their substance and with their persons on the path of God, shall be of highest grade with God: and these are they who shall be happy!

### **Bahá'í references**

You ask if, through the appearance of the kingdom of God, every soul hath been saved. The Sun of Reality hath appeared to all the world. This luminous appearance is salvation and life; but only he who hath opened the eye of reality and who hath seen these lights will be saved.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá'í World Faith*, pp. 389–90.

He is Alpha and Omega. He is the One that will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life and bestow upon the sick the remedy of true salvation. He whom such grace aideth is verily he that receiveth the most glorious heritage from the Prophets of God and His holy ones. The Lord will be his God, and he His dearly-loved son.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 13.

When the sanctified breezes of Christ and the holy light of the Greatest Luminary were spread abroad, the human realities—that is to say, those who turned toward the Word of God and received the profusion of His bounties—were saved from this attachment and sin, obtained everlasting life, were delivered from the chains of bondage, and attained to the world of

liberty. They were freed from the vices of the human world, and were blessed by the virtues of the Kingdom.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 125.

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Day Spring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof, hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine Inspiration.”

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 11.

## **Baptism**

Most Christian churches require baptism in water before one can be considered a true Christian. There are various customs and practices associated with baptism, and these have become an important part of church life. However, Bahá’ís believe that these ceremonies in themselves have no effect on the soul. Originally, baptism was intended to be a symbol of repentance and of the cleansing power of Christian belief. But the way that it is practised today is quite different.

John the Baptist exhorted the people to repent. Only after they had done so did he baptize them—using water as a symbol of spiritual cleansing. Of course, the people that he baptized were Jews, and they remained Jews after baptism. John promised that Christ would baptize his followers with the Holy

Spirit and with fire. Obviously, this baptism is symbolic, since baptism with spirit or with fire are physically impossible.

The ritual of baptism with water is not practised in the Bahá'í Faith. But the need for a cleansing of the spirit and the renewal of one's inner life through religion is recognized and understood.

### **Biblical references**

Matthew 3:11      “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

John 1:29–33      The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.’ I myself did not know him; ... but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

John 3:5–6      Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

### **Islámic Reference**

Súrah 2:132 (The Cow)      Islám is the Baptism of God, and who is better to baptise than God? And Him do we serve.

## **Bahá'í references**

The principle of baptism is purification by repentance. John admonished and exhorted the people, and caused them to repent; then he baptized them. Therefore, it is apparent that this baptism is a symbol of repentance from all sin: its meaning is expressed in these words: “O God! as my body has become purified and cleansed from physical impurities, in the same way purify and sanctify my spirit from the impurities of the world of nature, which are not worthy of the Threshold of Thy Unity!”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 91.

As Christ desired that this institution of John should be used at that time by all, He Himself conformed to it in order to awaken the people and to complete the law of the former religion. Although the ablution of repentance was the institution of John, it was in reality formerly practised in the religion of God.

Christ was not in need of baptism; but as at that time it was an acceptable and praiseworthy action, and a sign of the glad tidings of the Kingdom, therefore, He confirmed it. However, afterward He said the true baptism is not with material water, but it must be with spirit and with water. In this case water does not signify material water, for elsewhere it is explicitly said baptism is with spirit and with fire, from which it is clear that the reference is not to material fire and material water, for baptism with fire is impossible.

Therefore, the spirit is the bounty of God, the water is knowledge and life, and the fire is the love of God. For material water does not purify the heart of man; no, it

cleanses his body. But the heavenly water and spirit, which are knowledge and life, make the human heart good and pure...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 91–92.

Reflect, also, that baptism in the days of John the Baptist was used to awaken and admonish the people to repent from all sin, and to watch for the appearance of the Kingdom of Christ. But at present in Asia, the Catholics and the Orthodox Church plunge newly born children into water mixed with olive oil, and many of them become ill from the shock; at the time of baptism they struggle and become agitated. In other places, the clergy sprinkle the water of baptism on the forehead. But neither from the first form nor from the second do the children derive any spiritual benefit.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 94–95.

### **The Lord’s supper**

Holy Communion, or the sacrament of the Eucharist, is another practice that is observed by most Christian churches. Again, Bahá’ís see this ritual as symbolic, rather than having—in itself—any effect on the soul. When Christ said: “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst,” (John 6:35) He was obviously talking in symbolic terms.

### **Biblical references**

Matthew 26:26–29 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many

for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Mark 14:22–25 And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22:17–20 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body ..."

John 6:47–63 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you

have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day, For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever.” This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernum.

Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, “Do you take offence at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”

John 6:33 “For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world.”

### **Bahá’í references**

The position of Christ was that of absolute perfection; He made His divine perfections shine like the sun upon all believing souls, and the bounties of the light shone and radiated in the reality of men, This is why He says: “I am the bread which descended from heaven; whosoever shall eat of this bread will not die.”—that is to say, that whosoever shall partake of this divine food will attain unto eternal life: that is, every one who partakes of this bounty and receives these perfections will find eternal life, will obtain pre-existent

favours, will be freed from the darkness of error, and will be illuminated by the light of His guidance.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 121.

This is the meaning of the words of Christ, “I gave My blood for the life of the world”—that is to say, I have chosen all these troubles, these sufferings, calamities, and even the greatest martyrdom, to attain this object, the remission of sins (that is, the detachment of spirits from the human world, and their attraction to the divine world) in order that souls may arise who will be the very essence of the guidance of mankind, and the manifestations of the perfections of the Supreme Kingdom.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 121.

Although they consider the wine and the bread in the church as the blood and body of Christ, yet this is but the appearance and not the reality. But the reality of Christ is the words of the Holy Spirit. If thou art able, take a portion thereof.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá’i World Faith*, p. 390.

The Supper of the Lord which His Highness the Spirit [Jesus] ate with the apostles was a heavenly supper and not one of material bread and water, for material objects have no connection with spiritual objects. As at that time material food was also present, therefore the leaders of the religion of Christ thought that it was material food which was changed into spiritual food.

The proof that it was not material food is this: The apostles upon many occasions partook of material food with His Highness Christ, yet the supper of that night became designated as the “Lord’s Supper”. From this designation it is plain and evident that they ate heavenly food at that supper.

That heavenly food consisted of the love of God, the knowledge of God, the mysteries of God and the bestowal of God.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá’í World Faith*, pp. 390–91.

Make ye an effort in every meeting that the Lord’s Supper may become realized and the heavenly food descend. This heavenly food is knowledge, understanding, faith, assurance, love, affinity, kindness, purity of purpose, attraction of hearts and the union of souls. It was this manner of the Lord’s Supper which descended from the heavenly kingdom in the day of Christ.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá’í World Faith*, pp. 407–408.

### **The meaning of “life” and “death”**

Many passages in the Holy Scriptures refer to the mystery of life and death. And these clearly differentiate between spiritual life and spiritual death, as opposed to physical life and physical death. Both the Bible and the Qur’án as well as the Bahá’í Scriptures, explain that spiritual life is the cause of eternal happiness—whereas physical life is, of course, only temporary.

The physical body lasts only a few decades, at most. It is the spiritual that is eternal. However, as physical beings, we may acquire spiritual attributes by directing our hearts to the light of Divine Guidance, by developing our latent talents, by service to our fellow human beings, by prayer and study of the Sacred Texts, and by facing the tests that this physical world provides. In these ways can we develop the life of the spirit. Otherwise, we are as dead—though we may be physically alive.

### **Biblical references**

Matthew 8:21–22 Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” But Jesus said to

him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”

Revelation 3:1–2 “I know your works; you have the name of being alive, and you are dead. Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of God.”

John 5:25 “Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”

John 6:63 “It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”

John 11:25–26 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”

1 John 3:13–14 Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 8:24 (The Spoils) O ye faithful! make answer to the appeal of God and his apostle when he calleth you to that which giveth you life.

Súrah 2:258–259 (The Cow) God is the patron of believers: He shall bring them out of darkness into light:

As to those who believe not, their patrons are Thagout:<sup>3</sup> they shall bring them out of light into

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<sup>3</sup> Translated as Evil Ones by ‘Abdu’lláh Yúsuf ‘Alí.

darkness: they shall be given over to the fire: they shall abide therein for ever.

Súrah 6:122 (Cattle)      Shall the dead, whom we have quickened, and for whom we have ordained a light whereby he may walk among men, be like him, whose likeness is in the darkness, whence he will not come forth?

Súrah 35:20–21 (The Creator)      And the blind and the seeing are not alike; neither darkness and light; nor the shade and the hot wind; Nor are the living and the dead the same thing! God indeed shall make whom He will to hearken, but thou shalt not make those who are in their graves to hearken; for only with warning art thou charged.

Súrah 30:18 (The Greeks)      He bringeth forth the living out of the dead, and He bringeth forth the dead out of the living: and He quickeneth the earth when dead. Thus is it that ye too shall be brought forth.

### **Bahá'í references**

By the terms “life” and “death,” spoken of in the scriptures, is intended the life of faith and the death of unbelief. The generality of the people, owing to their failure to grasp the meaning of these words, rejected and despised the person of the Manifestation, deprived themselves of the light of His divine guidance, and refused to follow the example of that immortal Beauty.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 114.

... true life is not the life of the flesh but the life of the spirit. For the life of the flesh is common to both men and animals, whereas the life of the spirit is possessed only by the pure in

heart who have quaffed from the ocean of faith and partaken of the fruit of certitude. This life knoweth no death, and this existence is crowned by immortality. Even as it hath been said: “He who is a true believer liveth both in this world and in the world to come.” If by “life” be meant this earthly life, it is evident that death must needs overtake it.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 120–21.

Observe: those who in appearance were physically alive, Christ considered dead; for life is the eternal life, and existence is the real existence. Wherever in the Holy Books they speak of raising the dead, the meaning is that the dead were blessed by eternal life; where it is said that the blind received sight, the signification is that he obtained the true perception; where it is said a deaf man received hearing, the meaning is that he acquired spiritual and heavenly hearing.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 101–102.

That is why those who were heedless and denied God were said by Christ to be dead, although they were apparently living; in relation to the people of faith they were dead, blind, deaf and dumb. This is what Christ meant when He said, “Let the dead bury their dead.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 279.

Such things have come to pass in the days of every Manifestation of God. Even as Jesus said: “Ye must be born again.” Again He saith: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The purport of these words is that whosoever in every dispensation is born of the Spirit and is quickened by the breath of the Manifestation of Holiness, he verily is of those that have attained unto “life” and

“resurrection” and have entered into the “paradise” of the love of God. And whosoever is not of them, is condemned to “death” and “deprivation,” to the “fire” of unbelief, and to the “wrath” of God.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 118.

### **The symbolic meanings of parables**

Jesus told many parables which are recorded in the Bible. He used parables extensively to express through metaphor and colourful imagery—certain spiritual concepts which otherwise would have been difficult or impossible to explain. The parables present spiritual truths through material imagery and example.

Taking parables literally is a serious mistake. It requires prayer, meditation, and careful study to uncover the spiritual verities which are found in the parables of Jesus. A literal understanding of these stories is always misleading.

Many of these parables concern the “Kingdom of God. “Meditation on these parables can open the doors of God’s Kingdom to the sincere seeker. Jesus uses these parables to talk about the time of His coming—and to talk about the coming of the Promised One. In the Parable of the Vineyard, the Parable of the Marriage Feast, and the Parable of the Ten Maidens, Jesus explains in symbolic terms the nature of the coming of any Manifestation of God and how He is received by the careless and the faithful.

### **Biblical references**

Matthew 13:34–35 All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.

Mark 4:10–12      And when he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables. And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven.”

Luke 8:9–10      And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, “To you has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.”

Mark 4:33–34      With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

Matthew 13:10–15 Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says:

‘You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive.’”

Matthew 22:1–14 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment!’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Matthew 25:1–13 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish

took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom,! Come out to meet him.' Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Matthew 21:33–34“Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes,

what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes’?”

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it.”

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 2:24 (The Cow) Many will He mislead by such parables and many guide:— but none will He mislead thereby except the wicked.

Súrah 39:28 (The Troops) Now have we set before man in this Qur’án every kind of parable for their warning.

Súrah 3:5 (The Family of Imrán) He it is who hath sent down to thee “the Book.” Some of its signs are of themselves perspicuous;—these are the basis of the Book—and others are figurative. But they whose hearts are given to err, follow its figures, craving discord, craving an interpretation; yet none knoweth its interpretation but God. And the stable in knowledge say, “We believe in it: it is all from our Lord.” But none will bear this in mind, save men endued with understanding.

### **Bahá’í references**

Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! This is the Word which the Son

concealed, when to those around Him He said: “Ye cannot bear it now.” And when the appointed time was fulfilled and the Hour had struck, the Word shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God. Beware, O followers of the Son, that ye cast it not behind your backs.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 11.

You are like unto the man who layeth out an orchard and planteth all kinds of fruit trees therein. When the time is at hand for him, the lord, to come, ye will have taken possession of the orchard in his name, and when he doth come in person, ye will shut him out from it.

Verily We planted the Tree ... and provided its Orchard with all kinds of fruit, whereof ye all have been partaking. Then when We came to take over that which We had planted, ye pretended not to know Him Who is the Lord thereof.

Be ye not a cause of grief unto Us, nor withhold Us from this Orchard which belongeth unto Us, though independent are We of all that ye possess ....

We have planted the Garden of the Bayán in the name of Him Whom God will make manifest (i.e., Bahá'u'lláh), and have granted you permission to live therein until the time of His manifestation; then from the moment the Cause of Him Whom God will make manifest is inaugurated, We forbid you all the things ye hold as your own, unless ye may, by the leave of your Lord, be able to regain possession thereof.

The Báb: *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 135.

### **The Mission of Christ**

Jesus explained that He was sent to the people in order to teach them about the Kingdom of God. The mission of Christ

was the same as the mission of all the Manifestations of God: they each came at a particular time in history to bring us the Divine Teachings and to prepare the way for the Day promised to all mankind.

Jesus came to humanity as a Divine Teacher, to free us from the vices and sins of attachment to this world and to attract us to the Word of God. Those who believed in Him and followed His teachings were saved. They passed from death to life.

### **Biblical references**

Luke 4:42–43      And when it was day he departed and went into a lonely place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them; but he said them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.”

John 18:37          Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth.”

Matthew 10:34      “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

John 11:25–26      “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 2:81 (The Cow)      ... and to Jesus, son of Mary, gave we clear proofs of his mission, and strengthened him by the Holy Spirit.

Súrah 5:79 (The Table) The Messiah, Son of Mary, is but an Apostle; other Apostles have flourished before him; and his mother was a just person: they both ate food.

Súrah 43:63–64 (Ornaments of Gold) And when Jesus came with manifest proofs, he said, “Now am I come to you with wisdom; and a part of those things about which ye are at variance I will clear up to you; fear ye God therefore and obey me. Verily, God is my Lord and your Lord; wherefore worship ye him: this is a right way.”

Súrah 61:6 (Battle Array) And remember when Jesus the son of Mary said, “O children of Israel! of a truth I am God’s apostle to you to confirm the law which was given before me, and to announce an apostle that shall come after me whose name shall be Ahmad!

### **Bahá’í references**

... is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God’s universal Manifestations would be apparent.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 240–241.

Jesus Christ came to teach the people of the world this heavenly civilization and not material civilization. He breathed the breath of the Holy Spirit into the body of the world and established an illumined civilization. Among the principles of divine civilization He came to proclaim is the Most Great Peace of mankind. Among His principles of

spiritual civilization is the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Among the principles of heavenly civilization He brought is the virtue of the human world. Among the principles of celestial civilization He announced is the improvement and betterment of human morals.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 11.

Christ appeared in this world nineteen hundred years ago to establish ties of unity and bonds of love between the various nations and different communities. He cemented together the sciences of Rome and the splendours of the civilization of Greece. He also accomplished affiliation between the Assyrian kingdom and the power of Egypt. The blending of these nations in unity, love and agreement had been impossible, but Christ through divine power established this condition among the children of men.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 18.

Jesus Christ was an Educator of humanity. His teachings were altruistic; His bestowal, universal.

He taught mankind by the power of the Holy Spirit and not through human agency, for the human power is limited, whereas the divine power is illimitable and infinite. The influence and accomplishment of Christ will attest this.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 85.

This young man, Christ, by the help of a supernatural power, abrogated the ancient Mosaic Law, reformed the general morals, and once again laid the foundation of eternal glory for the Israelites. Moreover, He brought to humanity the glad tidings of universal peace, and spread abroad teachings which were not for Israel alone but were for the general happiness of the whole human race.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 16.

When the sanctified breezes of Christ and the holy light of the Greatest Luminary [Bahá’u’lláh] were spread abroad, the human realities—that is to say, those who turned toward the Word of God and received the profusion of His bounties—were saved from this attachment and sin, obtained everlasting life, were delivered from the chains of bondage, and attained to the world of liberty. They were freed from the vices of the human world, and were blessed by the virtues of the Kingdom.

This is the meaning of the words of Christ, “I gave My blood for the life of the world”—that is to say, I have chosen all these troubles, these sufferings, calamities, and even the greatest martyrdom, to attain this object, the remission of sins (that is, the detachment of spirits from the human world, and their attraction to the divine world) in order that souls may arise who will be the very essence of the guidance of mankind, and the manifestations of the perfections of the Supreme Kingdom.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 125.

### The miracles of Christ

Most of the miracles mentioned in the Holy Bible have an inner spiritual significance which goes beyond their outward form. Of course, it is not beyond the power of an omnipotent God to raise the dead, for instance, or to cure a leper of his disease. But, the prophets of God do not come into the world to provide a side-show of miracles to entertain the crowd. The prophets come to teach spiritual truths that will influence the souls of all people.

If Christ raised bodies from the dead, as is recorded in the Gospels, of what real significance is this? Did not these same persons who were raised die again at some later date? Similarly, if the blind were given sight, the deaf hearing, and the lame made to walk, were these physical miracles not also only temporary?

But when the spiritually dead were given eternal life through the Word of God, or the spiritually blind were given permanent sight by His teaching, wasn't that the true and lasting miracle? Isn't that the miracle that we can experience today?

### **Biblical references**

John 9:39–41 Jesus said, “For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

Matthew 16:8–12 But Jesus ... said, “O men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ... How is it that you fail to perceive that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Luke 7:20–23 And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you saying, ‘Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for

another?”” In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them, “Go tell John what you have seen and heard: the, blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offence at me.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah5:109–110 (The Table)      When He shall say: O Jesus! Son of Mary! call to mind my favour upon thee and upon thy mother, when I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit, ... and thou didst create of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by my leave, and didst breathe into it, and by my leave it became a bird; and thou didst heal the blind and the leper, by my leave; and when, by my leave, thou didst bring forth the dead; and when I withheld the children of Israel from thee, when thou hadst come to them with clear tokens: and such of them as believed not said, “This is nought but plain sorcery.”

Súrah 29:48–50 (The Spider)      But it is a clear sign in the hearts of those whom “the knowledge” hath reached. None except the wicked reject our signs.

And they say, “Unless a sign be sent down to him from his Lord. ....” Say: Signs are in the power of God alone. I am only a plain spoken warner.

Is it not enough for them that we have sent down to thee the Book to be recited to them? In this verily is a mercy and a warning to those who believe.

Súrah 13:39 (Thunder)      Apostles truly have we already sent before thee, and wives and offspring have we given them. Yet no apostle had come with miracles unless by the leave of God.

Súrah 2:57–58 (The Cow)      And when Moses asked drink for his people, we said, “Strike the rock with thy rod;” and from it there gushed twelve fountains: each tribe knew their drinking-place: “Eat and drink,” said we, “of what God hath supplied, and do no wrong on the earth by licentious deeds:”

And when ye said, “O Moses! we will not put up with one sort of food: pray, therefore, thy Lord for us, that He would bring forth for us of that which the earth groweth, its herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions:” He said, “What! will ye exchange that which is worse for what is better? Get ye down into Egypt;—for ye shall have what ye have asked:” Vileness and poverty were stamped upon them, and they returned with wrath from God: This, for that they disbelieved the signs of God, and slew the Prophets unjustly: this, for that they rebelled and transgressed!

### **Bahá’í references**

We testify that when He (Jesus) came into the world, He shed the splendour of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified.

Leprosy may be interpreted as any veil that interveneth between man and the recognition of the Lord, his God. Whoso alloweth himself to be shut out from Him is indeed a leper, who shall not be remembered in the Kingdom of God, the Mighty, the All-Praised. We bear witness that through the power of the Word of God every leper was cleansed, every sickness was healed, every human infirmity was banished. He it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 86.

... most of the miracles of the Prophets which are mentioned have an inner significance.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 37.

I do not wish to mention the miracles of Bahá'u'lláh, for it may perhaps be said that these are traditions, liable both to truth and to error, like the accounts of the miracles of Christ in the Gospel, which come to us from the apostles, and not from anyone else, and are denied by the Jews.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 37.

The meaning is not that the Manifestations are unable to perform miracles, for They have all power.

But for Them inner sight, spiritual healing and eternal life are the valuable and important things. Consequently, whenever it is recorded in the Holy Books that such a one was blind and recovered his sight, the meaning is that he was inwardly blind, and that he obtained spiritual vision, or that he was ignorant and became wise, or that he was negligent and became heedful, or that he was worldly and became heavenly.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 102.

The Holy Manifestations are the sources of miracles and the originators of wonderful signs. For Them, any difficult and impracticable thing is possible and easy. For through a supernatural power wonders appear from Them; and by this power, which is beyond nature, They influence the world of nature. From all the Manifestations marvellous things have appeared.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 100.

... if we relate to a seeker, a stranger to Moses and Christ, marvellous signs, he will deny them and will say: “Wonderful signs are also continually related of false gods by the testimony of many people, and they are affirmed in the Books. The Brahmans have written a book about wonderful prodigies from Brahma.” He will also say: “How can we know that the Jews and the Christians speak the truth, and that the Brahmans tell a lie?” ... Therefore, miracles are not a proof. For if they are proofs for those who are present, they fail as proofs to those who are absent.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 100–101.

Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all the people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 101.

### The ascension of Christ

Jesus said, “No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.” (John 3:13) The physical body of Christ did not descend from heaven, but was

born from the womb of His mother. It was the holy and divine Spirit of Jesus Christ that came down from heaven. His ascension was also spiritual.

Crucifying Jesus, His enemies believed that they had destroyed Him and that His teachings would vanish. They counted His death as a victory, yet in reality His Spirit was never touched. And that Spirit revived the disciples and conquered the world. Jesus had said, “It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. (John 6:63)

Some of the resurrection stories in the Bible explain that the disciples, after the crucifixion of Christ, were sad and discouraged. Only after speaking about Jesus for the whole day, and going over the prophecies and scriptures concerning the Messiah, and breaking bread together did they realize that Jesus was alive in spirit and had been walking with them all along.

### **Biblical references**

John 3:13 “No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.”

Luke 24:13–31 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What is this conversations which you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these

days?” And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.” And he said to them, “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight.

## **Islámic references**

Súrah 3:48 (The Family of Imrán) Remember when God said, “O Jesus! verily I will cause thee to die, and will take thee up to myself and deliver thee from those who believe not.”

Súrah 4:56 (Women) And for their saying, “Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus the Son of Mary, an Apostle of God. “ Yet they slew him not, and they crucified him not, but they had only his likeness. And they who differed about him were in doubt concerning him: No sure knowledge had they about him, but followed only an opinion, and they did not really slay him, but God took him up to Himself. And God is Mighty, Wise!

### **Bahá’í references**

Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 85–86.

The resurrections of the Divine Manifestations are not of the body. All Their states, Their conditions, heir acts, the things They have established, Their teachings, Their expressions, Their parables and Their instructions have a spiritual and

divine signification, and have no connection with material things.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 103.

And as it has become evident that Christ came from the spiritual heaven of the Divine Kingdom, therefore, His disappearance under the earth for three days has an inner signification and is not an outward fact. In the same way, His resurrection from the interior of the earth is also symbolical; it is a spiritual and divine fact, and not material; and likewise His ascension to heaven is a spiritual and not material ascension.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 104.

Therefore, we say that the meaning of Christ’s resurrection is as follows: the disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signifies His teachings, His bounties, His perfections and His spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after His martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather it was lost, for the believers were few in number and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting His counsels into practice, and arising to serve Him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and His bounty appeared; His religion found life; His teachings and His admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body until the, life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 104.

Such is the meaning of the resurrection of Christ, and this was a true resurrection. But as the clergy have neither understood the meaning of the Gospels nor comprehended the symbols, therefore, it has been said that religion is in contradiction to science, and science in opposition to religion, as, for example, this subject of the ascension of Christ with an elemental body to the visible heaven is contrary to the science of mathematics. But when the truth of this subject becomes clear, and the symbol is explained, science in no way contradicts it; but, on the contrary, science and the intelligence affirm it.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 104–105.

... there is the subject of Christ’s coming from heaven: it is clearly stated in many places in the Gospel that the Son of man came from heaven, He is in heaven, and He will go to heaven. So in chapter 6, verse 38, of the Gospel of John it is written: “For I came down from heaven”; and also in verse 42 we find: “And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?” Also in John, chapter 3, verse 13: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 103.

Verily the heaven into which the Messiah rose up was not this unending sky, rather was His heaven the Kingdom of His beneficent Lord. Even as He Himself hath said, “I came down from heaven,” and again, “The Son of Man is in heaven.” Hence it is clear that His heaven is beyond all directional points; it encircleth all existence, and is raised up for those who worship God. Beg and implore thy Lord to lift

thee up into that heaven, and give thee to eat of its food, in this age of majesty and might.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 167–68.

They were not willing to have the body of His Holiness Jesus Christ put in the Jews’ cemetery. The Apostles went and bought a piece of land and interred him. Then the Jews took their refuse there. Later men came and built a great church over it. This was built by the mother of one of the Caesars, after three hundred years. Even up to this time in certain parts it is known as the Church of Refuse. This is really the Tomb of Christ.

*Star of the West*, V:6, p. 84, 24 June 1914.

In regard to the verse, which is revealed in the Qur’án, that His Holiness, Christ was not killed and was not crucified, by this is meant the Reality of Christ. Although they crucified this elemental body, yet the merciful reality and the heavenly existence remain eternal and undying, and it was protected from the oppression and persecution of the enemies, for Christ is Eternal and Everlasting. How can He die? This death and crucifixion were imposed on the physical body of Christ, and not upon the Spirit of Christ.

*Star of the West*, II:7–8, p. 13.

### **Jesus, the son of God**

In many passages, the Bible refers to Jesus as the “Son of man” or the “Son of God.” In the Bahá’í Writings, He is titled the “Spirit of God,” the “Son of God,” the “Son of man,” and the “Essence of the Spirit.”

The title “Son of God” does not mean that God, the All-Glorious, impregnated Mary and produced a physical son—

since God is not a physical being and is far exalted above any human attribute. Rather, the term “Son of God” has a spiritual meaning. Similarly, other appellations have been given to other Manifestations of God: Moses was known as the Interlocutor, He Who spoke with God; Muhammad was known as the Friend of God, or the Apostle of God; Bahá’u’lláh took the title “the Glory of God”.

Furthermore, Jesus conferred the title of “sons of God” on all those who believe in Him. (John 1:12–14) He explained that He and God were one in a figurative sense. For He was given the authority of God, and whoever accepted Him accepted God, whoever rejected Him rejected God.

### **Biblical references**

John 10:27–30 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

John 17:20–23 “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one ....”

John 10:33–36 The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken) do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?”

John 5:19 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing ....”

John 5:23 He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 9:30 (Immunity) The Jews say, “Ezra (‘Uzayr) is a son of God”; and the Christians say, “The Messiah is a son of God.” Such are the sayings in their mouths! They resemble the saying of the Infidels of old! God do battle with them! How are they misguided!

Súrah 5:76 (The Table) Infidels now are they who say, “God is the Messiah, Son of Mary;” for the Messiah said, “O children of Israel! worship God, my Lord and your Lord.” Whoever shall join other gods with God, God shall forbid him the Garden, and his abode shall be the Fire; and the wicked shall have no helpers.

Súrah 5:79 (The Table) The Messiah, Son of Mary, is but an Apostle; other Apostles have flourished before him.

Súrah 4:169–170 (Women) O ye people of the Book! overstep not bounds in your religion; and of God, speak only truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God, and his Word which he conveyed into Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from himself. Believe there in God and his apostles, and say not, “Three:” (there is a Trinity)—Forbear—it will be better for you. God is only one God! Far be it from His glory that He should have a son! His, whatever is in the Heavens, and whatever is in the Earth! And God is a sufficient Guardian. The Messiah disdaineth not to be a servant of God, nor do the angels who are nigh unto Him.

### **Bahá’í references**

As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized, that the reality of the mystery of the Immaculacy of the Virgin Mary is confessed, and the primacy of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, is upheld and defended. The Founder of the Christian Faith is designated by Bahá’u’lláh as the “*Spirit of God*,” is proclaimed as the One Who “*appeared out of the breath of the Holy Ghost*,” and is even extolled as the “*Essence of the Spirit*.” His mother is described as that “*veiled and immortal, that most beautiful, countenance*,” and the station of her Son eulogized as a “*station which hath been exalted above the imaginings of all that dwell on earth*,” whilst Peter is recognized as one who God has caused “*the mysteries of wisdom and of utterance to flow out of his*

mouth.” “Know thou,” Bahá’u’lláh has moreover testified, “that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things.”

Shoghi Effendi: *The Promised Day is Come*, pp. 109–110.

Jesus said unto him “Arise from thy bed; thy sins are forgiven thee.” Certain Jews, standing by, protested saying: “Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” And immediately He perceived their thoughts, Jesus answering said unto them: “Whether it is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, arise, and take up thy bed, and walk; or to say, thy sins are forgiven thee? that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.” This is the real sovereignty, and such is the power of God’s chosen Ones!

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 133–134.

When for the second time the unmistakable signs of Israel’s disintegration, abasement, subjection and annihilation had become apparent, then the sweet and holy breathings of the Spirit of God (Jesus) were shed across Jordan and the land of Galilee; the cloud of Divine pity overspread those skies, and rained down the copious waters of the spirit, and after those swelling showers that came from the most great Sea, the Holy Land put forth its perfume and blossomed with the knowledge of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 80.

Such were the words uttered by Christ. On account of these words they cavilled at and assailed Him when He said unto them, “Verily the Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son.” Be thou informed of this, and learn thou the secrets of

thy Lord. As for the deniers, they are veiled from God: they see not, they hear not, neither do they understand.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 42–43.

Observe how those souls who drank the living waters of redemption at the gracious hands of Jesus, the Spirit of God, and came into the sheltering shade of the Gospel, attained to such a high plane of moral conduct that Galen, the celebrated physician, although not himself a Christian, in his summary of Plato’s *Republic* extolled their actions.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 84.

Afterward Christ came, saying, “I am born of the Holy Spirit.” Though it is now easy for the Christians to believe this assertion, at that time it was very difficult. According to the text of the Gospel the Pharisees said, “Is not this the son of Joseph of Nazareth Whom we know? How can He say, therefore, I came down from heaven.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 16.

... when the Qur’án denies Christ is the Son of God it is not refuting His words but the false interpretation of them by the Christians who read into them a relationship of an almost corporeal nature, whereas Almighty God has no parents or offspring. What is meant by Christ, is His spirit’s relation to the Infinite Spirit, and this the Qur’án does not deny. It is in a sense attributable—this kind of Sonship—to all the Prophets. *Lights of Divine Guidance*, No. 1652, pp. 493–4. (From letter written on behalf of the Guardian, 19 May 1945.)

Was Jesus the only one who had no father?

Bahá’ís believe that Jesus was born into this world without a father. However, arguments over this issue are futile. The

greatness of Christ does not depend on whether or not he had a physical father. The greatness of Christ rests on His life and His teachings. He was a Manifestation of God who, like all other Divine Teachers, demonstrated all perfections and glory.

We should note that Jesus is not the only one that the Bible states was born without a father. The Book of Hebrews indicates that “Melehizedek, king of Salem” was without father or mother. (Hebrews 7:1–3) Also, Adam—according to the Bible—was created by God without father or mother. And Eve, who became Adam’s wife, was also created without parents. (Genesis 1:27 and 2:7, 21–22)

### **Biblical references**

Matthew 1:18–25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emman’-u-el” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he

took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Romans 1:2–3 This gospel God announced before-hand in sacred scriptures through his prophets. It is about his Son: on the human level he was born of David's stock, but on the level of the spirit—the Holy Spirit—he was declared Son of God.

John 6:41–42 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'"

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 19:17–23 (Mary) ... we sent our spirit to her, and he took before her the form of a perfect man. She said: "I fly for refuge from thee to the God of Mercy! If thou fearest Him, begone from me." He said: "I am only a messenger of thy Lord, that I may bestow on thee a holy son."

She said: "How shall I have a son, when man hath never touched me? and I am not unchaste."

He said: "So shall it be. Thy Lord hath said: 'Easy is this with me;' and we will make him a sign to mankind, and a mercy from us. For it is a thing decreed."

And she conceived him, and retired with him to a far-off place.

And the throes came upon her by the trunk of a palm. She said: "Oh, would that I had died ere this, and been a thing forgotten, forgotten quite!"

Súrah 19:28–29 (Mary) Then came she with the babe to her people, bearing him. They said, “O Mary! now hast thou done a strange thing! O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of wickedness, nor unchaste thy mother.”

Súrah 3:40–42 (The Family of Imrán) Remember when the angel said, “O Mary! Verily God announceth to thee the Word from Him: His name shall be, Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, illustrious in this world, and in the next, and one of those who have near access to God; And He shall speak to me alike when in the cradle and when grown up; And he shall be one of the just.”

She said, “How, O my Lord! shall I have a son, when man hath not touched me?” He said, “Thus: God will create what He will; When He decreeth a thing, He only saith, ‘Be,’ and it is.”

Súrah 3:52 (The Family of Imrán) Verily, Jesus is as Adam in the sight of God. He created him of dust: He then said to him, “Be”—and he was.

### **Bahá’í references**

Likewise, reflect upon the state and condition of Mary. So deep was the perplexity of that most beautiful countenance, so grievous her case, that she bitterly regretted she had ever been born. To this beareth witness the text of the sacred verse wherein it is mentioned that after Mary had given birth to Jesus, she bemoaned her plight and cried out: “O would that I had died ere this, and been a thing forgotten, forgotten quite!” I swear by God! Such lamenting consumeth the heart and shaketh the being. Such consternation of the soul, such

despondency, could have been caused by no other than the censure of the enemy and the cavillings of the infidel and perverse. Reflect, what answer could Mary have given to the people around her? How could she claim that a Babe Whose father was unknown had been conceived of the Holy Ghost? Therefore did Mary, that veiled and immortal Countenance, take up her Child and return unto her home. No sooner had the eyes of the people fallen upon her than they raised their voice saying: “O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of wickedness, nor unchaste thy mother.”

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 56–57.

And now, meditate upon this most great convulsion, this grievous test. Notwithstanding all these things, God conferred upon that essence of the Spirit, Who was known amongst the people as fatherless, the glory of Prophethood, and made Him His testimony unto all that are in heaven and on earth.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 57.

The honour and greatness of Christ is not due to the fact that He did not have a human father, but to His perfections, bounties and divine glory. If the greatness of Christ is His being fatherless, then Adam is greater than Christ, for He had neither father nor mother. It is said in the Old Testament, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Observe that it is said that Adam came into existence from the Spirit of life. Moreover, the expression which John uses in regard to the disciples proves that they also are from the Heavenly Father. Hence it is evident that the holy reality, meaning the real existence of

every great man, comes from God and owes its being to the breath of the Holy Spirit.

The purport is that, if to be without a father is the greatest human glory, then Adam is greater than all, for He had neither father nor mother.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 89–90.

“Then surely the first man had neither father nor mother, for the existence of man is phenomenal. Is not the creation of man without father and mother, even though gradually, more difficult than if he had simply come into existence without a father? As you admit that the first man came into existence without father or mother—whether it be gradually or at once—there can remain no doubt that a man without a human father is also possible and admissible; you cannot consider this impossible; otherwise you are illogical. For example, if you say that this lamp has once been lighted without wick and oil, and then say that it is impossible to light it without the wick, this is illogical.” Christ had a mother; the first man, as the materialists believe, had neither father nor mother.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 88.

This rod out of the stem of Jesse might be correctly applied to Christ, for Joseph was of the descendants of Jesse, the father of David; but as Christ found existence through the Spirit of God, He called Himself the Son of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 62–63.

With regard to your question concerning the Virgin Birth of Jesus; on this point, as on several others, the Bahá’í Teachings are in full agreement with the doctrines of the Catholic Church. In the “Kitáb-i-Íqán” (Book of Certitude) p. 56, and in a few other Tablets still unpublished, Bahá’u’lláh

confirms, however indirectly, the Catholic conception of the Virgin Birth. Also ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the “Some Answered Questions”, Chapter XII, p. 73, explicitly states that “Christ found existence through the Spirit of God” which statement necessarily implies, when viewed in the light of the text, that Jesus was not the Son of Joseph.”

*Lights of Divine Guidance*, No. 1639, pp. 490–1. (From letter written on behalf of the Guardian, 14 October 1935.)

### The meaning of anti-Christ

What is the anti-Christ? According to the Bible, any person or spirit that does not believe in Jesus Christ, does not glorify Him, and does not follow His teachings, that is anti-Christ. The Scriptures do not specify a certain time or place when the anti-Christ is to appear. John wrote that the anti-Christ was “in the world already.” (1 John 4:3)

Of course, the Bahá’í Writings acknowledge the divinity of Jesus Christ and glorify Him. As to the anti-Christ, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that “wherever hatred and antagonism take the place of love and spiritual fellowship. Antichrist reigns instead of Christ.”

### **Biblical references**

1 John 2:22           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.

1 John 4:1–3           Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is

not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already.

Matthew 24:23–24 “Then if any one says to you, ‘Lo, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”

### **Bahá’í references**

Consider the sad picture of Italy carrying war into Tripoli. If you should announce that Italy was a barbarous nation and not Christian, this would be vehemently denied. But would Christ sanction what they are doing in Tripoli? Is this destruction of human life obedience to His laws and teachings? Where does He command it? Where does he consent to it? He was killed by His enemies; He did not kill. He even loved and prayed for those who hung Him on the cross. Therefore, these wars and cruelties, this bloodshed and sorrow are Antichrist, not Christ.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 6.

No less bitter is the conflict between sects and denominations. Christ was a divine Centre of unity and love. Whenever discord prevails instead of unity, whenever hatred and antagonism take the place of love and spiritual fellowship, Antichrist reigns instead of Christ. Who is right in these controversies and hatreds between sects? ... to be a Christian is not merely to bear the name of Christ and say, “I belong to a Christian government.” To be a real Christian is to be a servant in His Cause and Kingdom, to go forth under His banner of peace and love toward all mankind ...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 6.

“We do not believe in Anti-Christ in the sense the Christians do. Anyone who violently and determinedly sought to oppose the Manifestation could be called an ‘anti-Christ’, such as the Vazír in the Báb’s day, Hájí Mírzá Áqásí.”

*High Endeavours, Messages to Alaska*, No. 85, p. 69. (Letter written on behalf of the Guardian.)

## Part Three:

### Some Islámic subjects

#### **“The true religion with God is Islám”**

If we examine the meaning of the word Islám, we find that “Islám” comes from the Arabic verb “aslam”, which literally means “to submit oneself” or “to willingly surrender oneself” to the Will of, God; hence, a “Muslim” is one who willingly surrenders his will to the Will of God.

His Holiness Muhammad refers to “Muslims” not only as His followers, but as followers of any true religion from God. He refers to Abraham, Ishmael, Moses, Jesus and the disciples, all as Muslims; even though the Qur’án had not been revealed by then. He further regards all the Messengers of God as one and the same and states in the Qur’án, “we make no distinction between any of His Apostles.” (Súrah 2:285). His Holiness Muhammad regards the One who revealed the Qur’án to Him as the same One True God who revealed the Scriptures to previous Apostles and says, “We believe in it, for it is the truth from our Lord.” He further adds, “We were Muslims before it came.” (Súrah 28:53). Thus explaining in broader terms, the meaning intended by the word “Islám”, which is, submissiveness to the Will of God and His Teachings, regardless of epoch, name of Book and Messenger. In other words, Islám is, “any revealed religion irrespective of its Messengers.” (*Some Notes Based on Bahá’í Proofs Based on the Holy Qur’án*, p. 5).

His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh, Manifestation of God for this Day, explains the oneness of the Messengers of God by characterizing Himself as the resurrection of all previous Manifestations of

God; thus re-affirming and establishing the concept of the Oneness of God and His Manifestations.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 3:17–19 (Family of Imrán) The true religion with God is Islám: and they to whom the Scriptures had been given, differed not till after “the knowledge” had come to them, and through mutual jealousy. But as for him who shall not believe in the signs of God—God will be prompt to reckon with him!

If they shall dispute with thee, then say: I have surrendered myself to God, as have they who follow me.

Say to those who have received the Book, and to the common folk, Do ye surrender yourselves unto God? If they become Muslims, then are they guided aright: but if they turn away—thy duty is only preaching; and God’s eye is on His servants.

Súrah 3:78–79 (Family of Imrán) Say: We believe in God, and in what hath been sent down to us, and what hath been sent down to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and in what was given to Moses, and Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord. We make no difference between them. And to Him are we resigned (Muslims).

Whoso desireth any other religion than Islám, that religion shall never be accepted from him, and in the next world he shall be among the lost.

Súrah 10:72–73 (Jonah) Recite to them the history of Noah, when he said to his people,—If, O my people! my abode with you, and my reminding you of the signs

of God, be grievous to you, yet in God is my trust: Muster, therefore, your designs and your false gods, and let not your design be carried on by you in the dark: then come to some decision about me, and delay not.

And if ye turn your backs on me, yet ask I no reward from you: my reward is with God alone, and I am commanded to be of the Muslims.

Súrah 10:84 (Jonah)           “And Moses said: “O my people! If ye believe in God, then put your trust in Him—if ye be Muslims.”

Súrah 12:102 (Joseph)       “O my Lord, thou hast given me dominion, and hast taught me to expound dark sayings. Maker of the Heavens and of the Earth! My guardian art thou in this world and in the next! Cause thou me to die a Muslim, and join me with the just.”

Súrah 5:111 (The Table)     And when I revealed unto the Apostles, “Believe on me and on my Sent One,” they said, “We believe; and bear thou witness that we are Muslims.”

Súrah 2:121–122 (The Cow)   And when Abraham, with Ishmael, raised the foundations of the House, they said, “O our Lord! accept it from us; for thou art the Hearer, the Knower.

O our Lord! make us also Muslims, and our posterity a Muslim people; and teach us holy rites, and be turned towards us, for thou art He who turneth, the Merciful.

Súrah 2:125–127 (The Cow)      When his Lord said to him, “Resign thyself to me,” he said, “I resign myself to the Lord of the Worlds.”

And this to his children did Abraham bequeath, and Jacob also, saying, “O my children! truly God hath chosen a religion for you; so die not unless ye be also Muslims.”

Were ye present when Jacob was at the point of death? when he said to his sons, “Whom will ye worship when I am gone?” They said, “We will worship thy God and the God of thy fathers Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, one God, and to Him are we surrendered (Muslims).”

Súrah 2:130 (The Cow)      Say ye: “We believe in God, and that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes: and that which hath been given to Moses and to Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them: and to God are we resigned (Muslims).”

Súrah 22:77 (The Pilgrimage)      And do valiantly in the cause of God as it behoveth you to do for Him. He hath elected you, and hath not laid on you any hardship in religion, the Faith of your father Abraham. He hath named you the Muslims.

Súrah 28:52–53 (The Story) They to whom we gave the Scriptures before it, do in it believe.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “It” in the above verse refers to the “Qur’án”. Notice the following verse, “We were Muslims before it came.”)

And when it is recited to them they say, “We believe in it, for it is the truth from our Lord. We were Muslims before it came.”

### **Bahá’í references**

Even as He hath revealed: “No distinction do We make between any of His Messengers. “For they, one and all, summon the people of the earth to acknowledge the unity of God .... Thus hath Muhammad, the Point of the Qur’án, revealed: “I am all the Prophets.” Likewise, He saith: “I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses and Jesus.” ... This Revelation is exalted above the veils of plurality and the exigencies of number. Thus He saith: “Our Cause is but One.” Inasmuch as the Cause is one and the same, the Exponents thereof also must needs be one and the same. Likewise, the Imáms of the Muhammadan Faith, those lamps of certitude, have said: “Muhammad is our first Muhammad is our last, Muhammad our all.”

Bahá’u’lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 51.

O Jews! If ye be intent on crucifying once again Jesus, the Spirit of God, put Me to death, for He hath once more, in My person, been made manifest unto you. Deal with Me as ye wish, for I have vowed to lay down My life in the path of God. I will fear no one, though the powers of earth and heaven be leagued against Me. Followers of the Gospel! If ye cherish the desire to slay Muhammad, the Apostle of God, seize Me and put an end to My life, for I am He, and My Self in His Self. Do unto me as ye like, for the deepest longing of Mine heart is to attain the presence of My Best-Beloved in His Kingdom of Glory. Such is the Divine decree, if ye know it. Followers of Muhammad! If it be your wish to riddle with your shafts the breast of Him Who hath caused His Book the

Bayán to be sent down unto you, lay hands on Me and persecute Me, for I am His Well-Beloved, the revelation of His own Self, though My name be not His name.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 101.

Every discerning observer will recognize that in the Dispensation of the Qur'án both the Book and the Cause of Jesus were confirmed. As to the matter of names, Muhammad, Himself, declared: "I am Jesus." He recognized the truth of the signs, prophecies, and words of Jesus, and testified that they were all of God. In this sense, neither the person of Jesus nor His writings hath differed from that of Muhammad and of His holy Book, inasmuch as both have championed the Cause of God, uttered His praise, and revealed His commandments. Thus it is that Jesus, Himself, declared: "I go away and come again unto you." Consider the sun. Were it to say now, "I am the sun of yesterday," it would speak the truth.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 21–22.

Praise be to Thee, O Lord My God, for the wondrous revelations of Thy inscrutable decree and the manifold woes and trials Thou hast destined for Myself. At one time Thou didst deliver Me into the hands of Nimrod; at another Thou hast allowed Pharaoh's rod to persecute Me. Thou, alone, canst estimate, through Thine all-encompassing knowledge and the operation of Thy Will, the incalculable afflictions I have suffered at their hands. Again Thou didst cast Me into the prison-cell of the ungodly, for no reason except that I was moved to whisper into the ears of the well-favoured denizens of Thy Kingdom an intimation of the vision with which Thou hadst, through Thy knowledge, inspired Me, and revealed to Me its meaning through the potency of Thy might. And again

Thou didst decree that I be beheaded by the sword of the infidel. Again I was crucified for having unveiled to men's eyes the hidden gems of Thy glorious unity, for having revealed to them the wondrous signs of Thy sovereign and everlasting power. How bitter the humiliations heaped upon Me, in a subsequent age, on the plain of Karbilá! How lonely did I feel amidst Thy people! To what a state of helplessness I was reduced in that land! Unsatisfied with such indignities, My persecutors decapitated Me, and, carrying aloft My head from land to land paraded it before the gaze of the unbelieving multitude, and deposited it on the seats of the perverse and faithless. In a later age, I was suspended, and My breast was made a target to the darts of the malicious cruelty of My foes. My limbs were riddled with bullets, and My body was torn asunder. Finally, behold how, in this Day, My treacherous enemies have leagued themselves against Me, and are continually plotting to instil the venom of hate and malice into the souls of Thy servants.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 88–89.

### **“This day have I perfected your religion”**

The teachings of Islám were perfect and complete during the Islámic cycle, as were other teachings perfect and complete during the Age for which they were intended. The Qur'án affirms this concept by saying that other religions were complete during their time: “Then gave we the Book to Moses-complete for him who should do right, and a decision for all matters, and a guidance ....” (Súrah 6:55). This is further explained by yet another verse: “To each age its Book. What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm: for with Him is the source of revelation (Súrah 13:38–39).

If His Holiness Muhammad meant by “perfect” and “complete” that there will be no more Revelations from God, He would not have stated in numerous passages the coming of New Manifestations from God (Qá’im, Mihdí, etc.), nor would He have said: “... but of knowledge, only a little to you is given.” (Súrah 17:87) or that the words of God are endless, “Say: should the sea become ink, to write the words of my Lord, the sea would surely fail ere the words of my Lord would fail, though we brought its like in aid.” (Súrah 18:109).

For this Day, His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh has added a wealth of new books and teachings for the Age in which we now live. If we are to live in peace and harmony, we have to accept and abide by these new teachings.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 5:5 (The Table)      This day have I perfected your religion for you, and have filled up the measure of my favours upon you: and it is my pleasure that Islám be your religion; ...

Súrah 7:50–51 (The Heights)      And now have we brought them the Book: with knowledge have we explained it; a guidance—and a mercy to them that believe.

What have they to wait for now but its interpretation? When its interpretation shall come, they who aforetime were oblivious of it shall say, “The Prophets of our Lord did indeed bring the truth ....

Súrah 75:15–19 (The Resurrection)      Move not thy tongue in haste to follow and master this revelation: For we will see to the collecting and the recital of it; But when we have recited it, then follow thou the recital,

And, verily, afterwards it shall be ours to make it clear to thee.

### **Bahá'í references**

Say: By the righteousness of the Almighty! The measure of the favours of God hath been filled up, His Word hath been perfected, the light of His countenance hath been revealed, His sovereignty hath encompassed the whole of creation, the glory of His Revelation hath been made manifest, and His bounties have rained upon all mankind.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 259.

Thy proof was established and Thy bounty fulfilled, and Thy Cause perfected.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Prayers & Meditations*, p. 182.

Thus it is related in the “Biháru'l-Anvár”, the “Aválim,” and the “Yanbú” of Sádiq, son of Muhammad, that he spoke these words: “Knowledge is twenty and seven letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. No man thus far hath known more than these two letters. But when the Qá'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest. Consider; He hath declared Knowledge to consist of twenty and seven letters, and regarded all the Prophets, from Adam even unto the “Seal”, as Expounders of only two letters thereof and of having been sent down with these two letters. He also saith that the Qá'im will reveal all the remaining twenty and five letters.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 243–244.

“You are the noblest nation that has ever been raised up for mankind”

In its time, the Islámic Civilization was “the noblest Nation that has ever been raised up for mankind” and was the envy of the whole world. It brought about the concept of nationhood and created a civilization which benefited all nations. However, as the Qur’án states: “Every nation hath its set time. And when their time is come, they shall not retard it an hour; and they shall not advance it.” (Súrah 7:32) Furthermore, among the numerous references in the Qur’án regarding future Manifestations of God, His Holiness Muhammad states: “there shall come to you Apostles from among yourselves, rehearsing my signs to you.” (Súrah 7:33) He clearly indicates, ‘there shall come to you Apostles’ and with the coming of Apostles from God, new civilizations develop, bringing mankind a step forward in the ever advancing evolution of human kind.

With the coming of Bahá’u’lláh, the time of nationhood ended and the emergence of a new civilization, based on the unity of mankind and the unity of all nations began.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 3: 100–111 (The Family of Imrán)      You are the noblest nation that has ever been raised up for mankind. You enjoin justice and forbid evil you believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book accepted Islám, it would have surely been better for them.

### **Bahá’í references**

Reflect for a while upon the behaviour of the companions of the Islámic Dispensation. Consider how, through the reviving breath of Muhammad, they were cleansed from the defilements of earthly vanities, were delivered from selfish desires, and were detached from all else but Him. Behold

how they preceded all the peoples of the earth in attaining unto His holy Presence—the Presence of God Himself—how they renounced the world and all that is therein, and sacrificed freely and joyously their lives at the feet of the Manifestation of the All-Glorious.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 159–160.

When the light of Muhammad dawned, the darkness of ignorance was dispelled from the deserts of Arabia. In a short period of time those barbarous peoples attained a superlative degree of civilization which, with Baghdád as its centre, extended as far westward as Spain and afterward influenced the greater part of Europe.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 368.

During the Middle ages, while Europe was in the lowest depths of barbarism, the Arab peoples were superior to the other nations of the earth in learning, in the arts, mathematics, civilization, government and other sciences.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 24.

A careful and thorough investigation of the historical record will establish the fact that the major part of the civilization of Europe is derived from Islám; for all the writings of Muslim scholars and divines and philosophers were gradually collected in Europe and were with the most painstaking care weighed and debated at academic gatherings and in the centres of learning, after which their valued contents were put to use.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 89.

Those European intellectuals who are well-informed as to the facts of Europe’s past, and are characterized by truthfulness and a sense of justice, unanimously acknowledge that in every

particular the basic elements of their civilization are derived from Islám. For example Draper, the well-known French authority, a writer whose accuracy, ability and learning are attested by all European scholars, in one of his best-known works, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, has written a detailed account in this connection, that is, with reference to the derivation by the peoples of Europe of the fundamentals of civilization and the bases of progress and well-being from Islám.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 92–93.

The Faith of Islám, the succeeding link in the chain of Divine Revelation, introduced, as Bahá’u’lláh Himself testifies, the conception of the nation as a unit and a vital stage in the organization of human society, and embodied it in its teachings. This indeed is what is meant by this brief yet highly significant and illuminating pronouncement of Bahá’u’lláh: ‘Of old (Islámic Dispensation) it hath been revealed: “Love of one’s country is an element of the Faith of God.”’ This principle was established and stressed by the Apostle of God, inasmuch as the evolution of human society required it at that time. Nor could any stage above and beyond it have been envisaged, as world conditions preliminary, to the establishment of a superior form of organization were as yet unobtainable. The conception of nationality, the attainment to the state of nationhood, may, therefore, be said to be the distinguishing characteristics of the Islámic Dispensation, in the course of which the nations and races of the world, and particularly in Europe and America, were unified and achieved political independence.

Shoghi Effendi: *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 120.

**“The seal of the prophets”**

There is a clear distinction made throughout the Qur’án and Traditions between the two Arabic words “Rasúl” (Apostle) and “Nabí” (Prophet). In the Qur’án, the word “Rasúl” (Apostle) refers to the Messengers of God like: Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad; whereas “Nabí” (Prophet) refers to Messengers like: Solomon, David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, etc. The Apostles of God are the ones who bring about a new Message or Book, new laws, a new civilization; whereas a “Nabí” is a Holy Figure who comes to promote existing laws; He is a foreteller of the future, a promulgator and guardian of the existing Message, but He himself does not bring a “Book” of His own—the “Nabí” comes under the shadow of a “Rasúl”.

When His Holiness Muhammad mentioned that He was the “seal” of the Prophets, He used the word “Nabí” (Prophet). He did not say that He was the seal of the “Rasúl” (Apostles). Furthermore, it is important to note the circumstances and time when He stated that He was the “seal” of the Prophets. Muhammad had no male children, and He adopted a young slave of Christian origin named Zyad Ibn al-Háarithah. The Jews at that time, wanting to sow the seeds of doubts, claimed that Muhammad intended to govern His nation by adopting the same system of “Prophethood” the Jews used; hence He adopted a son for that purpose. Muhammad, to refute their machinations, revealed this verse affirming that there will be no Prophets after Him.

In addition to the numerous verses referring to future Manifestations of God, His Holiness Muhammad has repeatedly stated the Oneness of all the Manifestations of God. He considered them all one and the same, the “first” and the “last”. This has been made clear by His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh.

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 33:40 (The Confederates) Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Apostle of God, and the Seal of the Prophets: and God knoweth all things.

### **Bahá'í references**

Thy vision is obscured by the belief that divine revelation ended with the coming of Muhammad, and unto this We have borne witness in Our First Epistle. Indeed, He who hath revealed verses unto Muhammad, the Apostle of God, hath likewise revealed verses unto 'Alí-Muhammad.

The Báb: *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 31.

When God sent forth His Prophet Muhammad, on that day the termination of the prophetic cycle was foreordained in the knowledge of God. Yea, that promise hath indeed come true and the decree of God hath been accomplished as He hath ordained. Assuredly we are today living in the Days of God. These are the glorious days on the like of which the sun hath never risen in the past. These are the days which the people in bygone times eagerly expected. What hath then befallen you that ye are fast asleep? These are the days wherein God hath caused the Day-Star of Truth to shine resplendent. What hath then caused you to keep your silence? These are the appointed days which ye have been yearningly awaiting in the past—the days of the advent of divine justice. Render ye thanks unto God, O ye concourse of believers.

The Báb: *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 161.

Even as in the “Beginning that hath no beginnings” the term “last” is truly applicable unto Him who is the Educator of the visible and the Invisible, in like manner, are the terms “first” and “last” applicable unto His Manifestations. They are at the

same time Exponents of both the “first” and the “last.” Whilst established upon the seat of the “first,” they occupy the throne of the “last.” Were a discerning eye to be found, it will readily perceive that the exponents of the “first” and the “last,” of the “manifest” and the “hidden,” of the “beginning” and the “seal” are none other than these holy Beings, these Essences of Detachment, these divine Souls. And wert thou to soar in the holy realm of “God was alone, there was none else besides Him,” thou wilt find in that Court all these names utterly non-existent and completely forgotten. Then will thine eyes no longer be obscured by these veils, these terms, and allusions.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 163.

Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: “I am God!” He verily speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His name and His attributes, are made manifest in the world. Thus, He hath revealed: “Those shafts were God’s, not Thine!” And also He saith: “In truth, they who plighted fealty unto thee, really plighted that fealty unto God.” And were any of them to voice the utterance: “I am the Messenger of God,” He also speaketh the truth, the indubitable truth. Even as He saith: “Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Messenger of God.” Viewed in this light, they were all but Messengers of that ideal King, that unchangeable Essence. And were they all to proclaim: “I am the Seal of the Prophets,” they verily utter but the truth, beyond the faintest shadow of doubt. For they are all but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation. They are all the manifestation of the “Beginning” and the “End,” the “First”

and the “Last,” the “Seen” and “Hidden”—all of which pertain to Him Who is the innermost Spirit of Spirits and eternal Essence of Essences.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 178–9.

In truth I say: On this day the blessed words “But He is the Apostle of God, and the Seal of the Prophets” have found their consummation in the verse “The day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds.” Render thou thanksgiving unto God, for so great a bounty.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 114.

... yet how many are those who, through failure to understand its meaning, have allowed the term “Seal of the Prophets” to obscure their understanding, and deprive them of the grace of all His manifold bounties! Hath not Muhammad, Himself, declared: “I am all the Prophets?” Hath He not said as We have already mentioned: “I am Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus?” Why should Muhammad, that immortal Beauty, Who hath said: “I am the first Adam” be incapable of saying also: “I am the last Adam?” For even as He regarded Himself to be the “First of the Prophets”—that is Adam—in like manner, the “Seal of the Prophets” is also applicable unto that Divine Beauty. It is admittedly obvious that being the “First of the Prophets,” He likewise is their “Seal.”

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 162.

Furthermore, among the “veils of glory” are such terms as the “Seal of the Prophets” and the like, the removal of which is a supreme achievement in the sight of these base-born and erring souls. All, by reason of these mysterious sayings, these grievous “veils of glory,” have been hindered from beholding the light of truth. Have they not heard the melody of that bird of Heaven, (Imám ‘Alí) uttering this mystery: “A thousand

Fátimih I have espoused, all of whom were the daughters of Muhammad, Son of ‘Abdu’lláh, the ‘Seal of the Prophets?’” Behold, how many are the mysteries that lie as yet unravelled within the tabernacle of the knowledge of God, and how numerous the gems of His wisdom that are still concealed in His inviolable treasures! Shouldest thou ponder this in thine heart, thou wouldst realize that His handiwork knoweth neither beginning nor end.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 166–7.

Even as thou dost witness how the people of the Qur’án, like unto the people of old, have allowed the words “Seal of the Prophets” to veil their eyes. And yet, they themselves testify to this verse: “None knoweth the interpretation thereof but God and they that are well-grounded in knowledge.” (Qur’án 3:7) And when He Who is well-grounded in all knowledge, He Who is the Mother, the Soul, the Secret, and the Essence thereof, revealeth that which is the least contrary to their desire, they bitterly oppose Him and shamelessly deny Him.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 213.

The independent Prophets are the lawgivers and the founders of a new cycle. Through Their appearance the world puts on a new garment, the foundations of religion are established, and a new book is revealed. Without an intermediary They receive bounty from the Reality of the Divinity, and Their illumination is an essential illumination. They are like the sun which is luminous in itself: the light is its essential necessity; it does not receive light from any other star. These Dawning-places of the morn of Unity are the sources of bounty and the mirrors of the Essence of Reality.

The other Prophets are followers and promoters, for they are branches and not independent; they receive the bounty of the

independent Prophets, and they profit by the light of the Guidance of the universal Prophets. They are like the moon, which is not luminous and radiant in itself, but receives its light from the sun.

The Manifestations of universal Prophethood Who appeared independently are, for example, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. But the others who are followers and promoters are like Solomon, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. For the independent Prophets are founders; They establish a new religion and make new creatures of men; They change the general morals, promote new customs and rules, renew the cycle and the Law. Their appearance is like the season of spring, which arrays all earthly beings in a new garment, and gives them a new life.

With regard to the second sort of Prophets who are followers, these also promote the Law of God, make known the Religion of God, and proclaim His word. Of themselves they have no power and might, except what they receive from the independent Prophets.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 164–5.

## Part Four:

### The Plan of God

#### **Resurrection and Judgement Day**

All of the prophetic religions speak of a Day of Judgement or a Day of Resurrection. Although the scriptures speak extensively about this matter, it continues to be one of the most misunderstood questions in every religion. Although Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life,” and similarly the Prophet Muhammad said, “When the Qá’im (the Promised One) riseth, that day is the Day of Resurrection.” Yet many Christians and Muslims understand the Judgement Day to be the end of history, rather than the beginning of new life. They imagine grand apocalyptic scenes in which bodies come up from their graves, angels fly down from the sky and people are sent to a physical heaven or a physical hell.

For Bahá’ís, every divine Manifestation of God is the “resurrection” by which people are judged. Those who accept the Manifestation for their day have judged themselves. They are “resurrected” to new life by their choice.

#### **Biblical references**

John Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection 11:25–26 and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

John 9:39–41 Jesus said, “For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” Some of the

Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

John 3:18–13      He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 5:22–25      “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son, that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.”

John 12:30–31      Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.”

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 17:14 (Night Journey)      ... and on the day of resurrection will we bring forth to him a book which shall be proffered to him wide open.

Súrah 29:25 (Spider)      But on the day of resurrection some of you shall deny the others, and some of you shall curse the others; and your abode shall be the fire, and ye shall have none to help.

Súrah 79:8 (Those Who Drag Forth) One day, the disturbing trumpet-blast shall disturb it, Which the second blast shall follow: Men's hearts on that day shall quake.

Súrah 7:50–51 (The Heights) And now have we brought them the Book: with knowledge have we explained it; a guidance and a mercy to them that believe. What have they to wait for now but its interpretation? When its interpretation shall come, they who aforetime were oblivious of it shall say, "The Prophets of our Lord did indeed bring the truth."

Súrah 14:1 (Abraham) This Book have we sent down to thee that by their Lord's permission thou mayest bring men out of darkness into light, into the path of the Mighty, the Glorious.

Súrah 19:40 (Mary) Warn them of the day of sighing when the decree shall be accomplished, while they are sunk in heedlessness and while they believe not.

Súrah 30:29 (The Greeks) Set thou thy face then, as a true convert, towards the Faith which God hath made, and for which He hath made man. No change is there in the creation of God. This is the right Faith, but the greater part of men know it not.

Súrah 14:49 (Abraham) On the day when the Earth shall be changed into another Earth, and the Heavens also, men shall come forth unto God, the Only, the Victorious.

Súrah 39:67 (The Troops) ... for on the resurrection day the whole Earth shall be but his handful, and in his right hand shall the Heavens be folded together. Praise be

to Him! and high be He uplifted above the partners  
they join with Him!

Súrah 35: 10 (The Creator) It is God who sendeth forth winds  
which raise the clouds aloft: then drive we them on  
to some land dead from drought, and give life thereby  
to the earth after its death. So shall be the  
resurrection.

Tradition (Íqán, p. 144) “When the Qá’im riseth, that day is  
the Day of Resurrection?”

### **Bahá’í references**

This is the Day whereon every man will fly from himself,  
how much more from his kindred, could ye but perceive it.  
Say: By God! The blast hath been blown on the trumpet, and  
lo, mankind hath swooned away before us! The Herald hath  
cried out, and the Summoner raised His voice saying: ‘The  
Kingdom is God’s, the Most Powerful, the Help in Peril, the  
Self-Subsisting.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 43–44.

... by “Resurrection” is meant the rise of the Manifestation of  
God to proclaim His Cause, and by ‘attainment unto the  
divine Presence” is meant attainment unto the presence of His  
Beauty in the person of His Manifestation.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 170.

... what is meant by the Day of Resurrection in this, that from  
the time of the appearance of Him Who is the Tree of divine  
Reality, at whatever period and under whatever name, until  
the moment of His disappearance, is the Day of Resurrection.  
For example, from the inception of the mission of Jesus—  
may peace be upon Him—till the day of His ascension was  
the Resurrection of Moses. For during that period the

Revelation of God shone forth through the appearance of that divine Reality, Who rewarded by His Word everyone who believed in Moses, and punished by His Word everyone who did not believe; inasmuch as God's Testimony for that Day was that which He had solemnly affirmed in the Gospel.

The Báb: *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 106–107.

When the Apostle of God (Muhammad) appeared, He did not announce unto the unbelievers that the Resurrection had come, for they could not bear the news. That Day is indeed an infinitely mighty Day, for in it the Divine Tree proclaimeth from eternity unto eternity, 'Verily, I am God. No God is there but Me'. Yet those who are veiled believe that He is one like unto them, ...

The Báb: *Selections from the Writings of the Báb* , pp. 78–79.

And from the inception of the Revelation of the Apostle of God—may the blessings of God be upon Him till the day of His ascension was the Resurrection of Jesus ... And from the moment when the Tree of the Bayán appeared until it disappeareth is the Resurrection of the Apostle of God, as is divinely foretold in the Qur'án; the beginning of which was when two hours and eleven minutes had passed on the eve of the fifth of Jamádíyu'l-Avval, AH 1260, (22 May 1844) which is the year 1270 of the Declaration of the Mission of Muhammad. This was the beginning of the Day of Resurrection of the Qur'án, and until the disappearance of the Tree of divine Reality is the Resurrection of the Qur'án.

The Báb: *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 107.

Therefore, whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these resplendent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily

attained unto the “Presence of God” Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life. Attainment unto such presence is possible only in the Day of Resurrection, which is the Day of the rise of God Himself through His all-embracing Revelation.

This is the meaning of the “Day of Resurrection” spoken of in all of the scriptures, and announced unto all people.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 143.

Strive, therefore, O my brother, to grasp the meaning of “Resurrection”, and cleanse thine ears from the idle sayings of these rejected people. Shouldst thou step into the realm of complete detachment, thou wilt readily testify that no day is mightier than this Day, and that no resurrection more awful than this Resurrection can ever be conceived.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 144.

### Opposition to the Prophets of God

Opposition to the Word of God can be found in the early history of all religions. There has never been a time when the majority of people have accepted the new teachings of any Manifestation of God with open arms. All of the Messengers of God have had to suffer because of the ignorance, corruption, wickedness, and opposition of their enemies.

### **Biblical references**

Matthew 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!”

Matthew 23:13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in.”

Matthew 23:33–34 “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town ...

Matthew 23:27–31 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you blind the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.”

Mark 7:6–8 “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’ You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.”

## **Islámic references**

Súrah 36:29 (Yá Sín.) Oh! the misery that rests upon my servants! No apostle cometh to them but they laugh him to scorn.

Súrah 33:67 (The Confederates) And they shall say: “Oh our Lord! “Oh our Lord! indeed we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they misled us from the way of God.”

Súrah 6:116 (The Cattle) But if thou obey most men in this land, from the path of God will they mislead thee: they follow but a conceit, and they are only liars.

Súrah 43:21 (Ornaments of Gold) But say they: “Verily we found our fathers of that persuasion, and verily, by their footsteps do we guide ourselves.”

Súrah 3:62–64 (The Family of Imrán) A party among the people of the Book would fain mislead you: but they only mislead themselves, and perceive it not.

O people of the Book! why disbelieve the signs of God, of which yourselves have been witnesses?

O people of the Book! why clothe ye the truth with falsehood? Why wittingly hide the truth?

Súrah 3:94–95 (The Family of Imrán) Say: O people of the Book! why repel believers from the way of God? Ye fain would make it crooked, and yet ye are its witnesses! But God is not regardless of what ye do.

O believers! if ye obey some amongst those who have received the Scripture, after your very Faith will they make you infidels!

Súrah 7:34 (The Heights) But they who charge our signs with falsehood, and turn away from them in their pride,—

shall be inmates of the fire: for ever shall they abide therein.

Súrah 8:32–33 (The Spoils) And oft as our signs were rehearsed to them, they said, “Now have we heard: if we pleased we could certainly utter its like! Yes, it is mere tales of the ancients.”

And when they said, “God! if this be the very truth from before thee, rain down stones upon us from Heaven, or lay on us some grievous chastisement.”

Súrah.2:81 (The Cow) So oft then as an apostle cometh to you with that which your souls desire not, swell ye with pride, and treat some as impostors, and slay others?

Súrah 16:38 (The Bee) And to every people have we sent an apostle saying: Worship God and turn away from Tághút. Some of them there were whom God guided, and there were others decreed to err. But go through the land and see what hath been the end of those who treated my apostles as liars!

Súrah 11:11 (Húd) And if we defer their chastisement to some definite time, they will exclaim, “What keepeth it back?” What! will it not come upon them on a day when there shall be none to avert it from them? And that at which they scoffed shall enclose them in on every side.

Súrah 17:16 (The Night Journey) For his own good shall the guided yield to guidance, and to his own loss only shall the erring err; and the heavy laden shall not be laden with another’s load. We never punished until we had first sent an apostle.

Súrah 44:9–13 (Smoke) But mark them on the day when the Heaven shall give out a palpable SMOKE, Which shall enshroud mankind: this will be an afflictive torment. They will cry, “Our Lord! relieve us from this torment: see! we are believers.”

But how did warning avail them, when an undoubted apostle had come to them; And they turned their backs on him.

### **Bahá’í references**

Consider the past. How many, both high and low, have, at all times, yearningly awaited the advent of the Manifestations of God in the sanctified persons of His chosen Ones. How often have they expected His coming, how frequently have they prayed that the breeze of divine mercy might blow, and the promised Beauty step forth from behind the veil of concealment, and be made manifest to all the world. And whensoever the portals of grace did open, and the clouds of divine bounty did rain upon mankind, and the light of the Unseen did shine above the horizon of celestial might, they all denied Him, and turned away from His face—the face of God Himself. Refer ye, to verify this truth, to that which hath been recorded in every sacred Book.

Bahá’u’lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 4.

Leaders of religion, in every age, have hindered their people from attaining the shores of eternal salvation, inasmuch as they held the reins of authority in their mighty grasp. Some for the lust of leadership, others through want of knowledge and understanding, have been the cause of the deprivation of the people. By their sanction and authority, every Prophet of God hath drunk from the chalice of sacrifice, and winged His flight unto the heights of glory. What unspeakable cruelties

they that have occupied the seats of authority and learning have inflicted upon the true Monarchs of the world, those Gems of divine virtue! Content with a transitory dominion, they have deprived themselves of an everlasting sovereignty.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 15.

... in all sacred books mention hath been made on the divines of every age. Thus He saith: “O people of the Book! Why disbelieve the signs of God to which ye yourselves have been witnesses?” And also He saith: “O people of the Book! Why clothe ye the truth with falsehood? Why wittingly hide the truth?” Again, He saith: “Say, O people of the Book! Why repel believers from the way of God?” It is evident that by the “people of the Book,” who have repelled their fellowmen from the straight path of God, is meant none other than the divines of that age, whose names and character have been revealed in the sacred books, and alluded to in the verses and traditions recorded therein, were you to observe with the eye of God.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 16.

For what reason do they refuse to embrace the Truth, and allow certain traditions, the significance of which they have failed to grasp, to withhold them from the recognition of the Revelation of God and His Beauty, and to cause them to dwell in the infernal abyss? Such things are to be attributed to naught but the faithlessness of the divines and doctors of the age.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 247–48.

These leaders, owing to their immersion in selfish desires, and their pursuit of transitory and sordid things, have regarded these divine Luminaries as being opposed to the standards of their knowledge and understanding, and the

opponents of their ways and judgements. As they have literally interpreted the Word of God, and the sayings and traditions of the Letters of Unity, and expounded them according to their own deficient understanding, they have therefore deprived themselves and all their people of the bountiful showers of the grace and mercies of God.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 82.

Not one Prophet of God was made manifest Who did not fall victim to the relentless hate, to the denunciation, denial, and execration of the clerics of His day!

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 165.

“O heedless one! Rely not on thy glory, and thy power. Thou art even as the last trace of sunlight upon the mountain-top. Soon will it fade away as decreed by God, the All-Possessing, the Most High ... O foolish doubter! Because of you the Apostle (Muhammad) lamented, and the Chaste One (Fátimih) cried out, and the countries were laid waste, and darkness fell upon all regions. O concourse of divines! Because of you the people were abased, and the banner of Islám was hauled down, and its mighty throne subverted. Every time a man of discernment hath sought to hold fast unto that which would exalt Islám, you raised a clamour, and thereby was he deterred from achieving his purpose, while the land remained fallen in clear ruin.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 99–100.

How many men and women awaited the manifestation of the Messiah after Moses. Yet when His beauty shone forth and His face appeared, they (the people) did not recognize Him, but continued to follow the superstitions of the Pharisees, who used to say: “Where is the throne of David, the Glorious? Where is his iron rod? Where are his innumerable hosts?

Where are his attacking armies? Where are the angels of heaven?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas*, Vol. I, p. 230.

Consider those who opposed the Son [Jesus], when He came unto them with sovereignty and power. How many the Pharisees who were waiting to behold Him, and were lamenting over their separation from Him! And yet, when the fragrance of His coming was wafted over them, and His beauty was unveiled, they turned aside from Him and disputed with Him.

Bahá’u’lláh, quoted in *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 31.

They are even as the Pharisees who both prayed and fasted, and then did sentence Jesus Christ to death.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 174.

Blessed are the just souls who seek the truth. But failing justice, the people attack, dispute and openly deny the evidence, like the Pharisees who, at the manifestation of Christ, denied with the greatest obstinacy the explanations of Christ and of His disciples. They obscured Christ’s Cause before the ignorant people, saying, “These prophecies are not of Jesus, but of the Promised One Who shall come later, according to the conditions mentioned in the Bible.” Some of these conditions were that He must have a kingdom, be seated on the throne of David, enforce the Law of the Bible, and manifest such justice that the wolf and lamb shall gather at the same spring.

And thus they prevented the people from knowing Christ.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 71–2.

How great, how very great is the Cause! How very fierce the onslaught of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Ere long shall the clamour of the multitude throughout Africa, throughout America, the cry of the European and of the Turk, the groaning of India and China, be heard from far and near. One and all, they shall arise with all their power to resist His Cause. Then shall the knights of the Lord, assisted by His grace from on high, strengthened by faith, aided by the power of understanding, and reinforced by the legions of the Covenant, arise and make manifest the truth of the verse: “Behold the confusion that bath befallen the tribes of the defeated!”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 17.

### The select few

Despite opposition to the Manifestations of God, there are always a select few who, by the bounty of God, are aided to acquire the Spirit of Faith. These few believers always manage to withstand the trials, difficulties, and ordeals that assail them. Those who attain to this station remain firm and steadfast in the path of God. Their rewards, as all the scriptures confirm, are beyond description—spiritual rebirth, love, rapture, and ecstasy enkindled in the believer’s heart.

### **Biblical references**

Matthew 22:14 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Matthew 7:21 “Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Luke 6:22 “Blessed are you when men hate you, they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on

account of the Son of man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

### **Islámic references**

Súrah 29:69 (The Spider) And whoso maketh efforts for us, in our ways will we guide them: for God is assuredly with those who do righteous deeds.

Súrah 7:33 (The Heights) O children of Adam! there shall come to you Apostles from among yourselves, rehearsing my signs to you; and whoso shall fear God and do good works, no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they be put to grief.

Súrah 2:105–106 (The Cow) And they say, “None but Jews or Christians shall enter Paradise.” This is their wish. Say: Give your proofs if ye speak the truth.

But they who set their face with resignation Godward, and do what is right,—their reward is with their Lord; no fear shall come on them, neither shall they be grieved.

Súrah 89:27–30 (The Daybreak) Oh, thou soul which art at rest, Return to thy Lord, Pleased, and pleasing him: Enter thou among my servants, And enter thou my Paradise.

### **Bahá’í references**

By the sorrows which afflict the beauty of the All Glorious! Such is the station ordained for the true believer that if to an extent smaller than a needle’s eye the glory of that station were to be unveiled to mankind, every beholder would be

consumed away in his longing to attain it. For this reason it hath been decreed that in this earthly life the full measure of the glory of his own station should remain concealed from the eyes of such a believer.

Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 108.

This is a Day great and blessed. Whatsoever was hidden in man is today being revealed. The station of man is great, were he to cling to truth and righteousness and be firm and steadfast in the Cause. Before the God of Mercy, a true man appears like unto heaven. The sun and moon of that heaven are his sight and hearing and its stars are his shining attributes. His station is the highest and his signs are the educator of the world.

Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 208.

Know thou, of a truth, that if the soul of man hath walked in the ways of God, it will, assuredly, return and be gathered to the glory of the Beloved. By the righteousness of God! It shall attain a station such as no pen can depict, or tongue describe. The soul that hath remained faithful to the Cause of God, and stood unwaveringly firm in His Path shall, after his ascension, be possessed of such power that all the worlds which the Almighty hath created can benefit through him. Such a soul provideth, at the bidding of the Ideal King and Divine Educator, the pure leaven that leaventh the world of being, and furnisheth the power through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. Those souls that are the symbols of detachment are the leaven of the world.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 161.

## **Two prophets to appear**

The Holy Books make reference to two Manifestations of God who are either to appear contemporaneously, or one shortly after the other. Often the prophecies indicate that one of these will prepare the way for the other.

In the Old Testament, there are references made to the Messiah and the Lord of Hosts. In the Gospels, there are the promises of the return of Christ and the return of Elijah. (Matthew 17:10–11) In the Qur’án also, reference is made to two who are to appear, the Mihdí and the Messiah.

### **Biblical references**

Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.”

Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I ‘will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.”

Zechariah 4:11–14 Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” And a second time I said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the oil is poured out?” He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said, “These are the two anointed who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

Revelation 9:12 The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

Revelation 11:14 The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

## Islámic references

Súrah 79:6–8 & 13 (Those Who Drag Forth) One day, the disturbing trumpet-blast shall disturb it, Which the second blast shall follow: Men's hearts on that day shall quake: ... Verily, it will be but a single blast.

Súrah 39:68–69 (The Spider) And there shall be a blast on the trumpet, and all who are in the Heavens and all who are in the Earth shall expire, save those whom God shall vouchsafe to live. Then shall there be another blast on it, and lo! arising they shall gaze around them:

And the earth shall shine with the light of her Lord.

Súrah 55:46–47 (The Merciful) But for those who dread the majesty of their Lord shall be two gardens:

Which then of the bounties of your Lord will ye twain deny?

Dawn Breakers p. 50 (Muhammad-i-Ak**h**bá**í**) “In the year Ghars (the numerical value of the letters of which is 1260) the earth shall be illumined by His light, ... If thou livest until the year Gharasí (1270), thou shalt witness how the nations, the rulers, the peoples, and the Faith of God shall all have been renewed.”

## Bahá'í references

“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” The first woe is the appearance of the Prophet, Muhammad, the son of ‘Abdu’lláh—peace be upon Him! The second woe is that of the Báb—to Him be glory and praise! The third one is the great day of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts and the radiance of the Beauty of the

Promised One. The explanation of this subject, woe, is mentioned in the thirtieth chapter of Ezekiel, where it is said: “The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near.”

Therefore, it is certain that the day of woe is the day of the Lord; for in that day woe is for the neglectful, woe is for the sinners, woe is for the ignorant. That is why it is said, “The second woe is past; behold the third woe cometh quickly!” This third woe is past; behold the third woe cometh quickly!” This third woe is the day of the manifestation of Bahá’u’lláh, the day of God; and it is near to the day of the appearance of the Báb.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 56.

Siyyid Kázim-i-Rashtí, Shaykh Ahmad’s disciple and successor, had likewise written: “The Qá’im must needs be put to death. After He has been slain the world will have attained the age of eighteen.” In his *Sharh-i-Qasídiy-i-Lámíyyih* he had even alluded to the name “Bahá”. Furthermore, to his disciples, as his days drew to a close, he had significantly declared: “Verily, I say, after the Qá’im the Qayyúm will be made manifest. For when the star of the former has set the sun of the beauty of Husayn will rise and illuminate the whole world.

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, p. 97.

St. John the Divine had himself, with reference to these two successive Revelations, clearly prophesied: “The second woe is past; and behold the third woe cometh quickly.” *This third woe,*” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, commenting upon this verse, has explained, “*is the day of the Manifestation of Bahá’u’lláh, the*

*Day of God, and it is near to the day of the appearance of the Báb.*”

Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, p. 92.

All the peoples of the world are awaiting two Manifestations, Who must be contemporaneous; all wait for the fulfilment of this promise. In the Bible the Jews have the promise of the Lord of Hosts and the Messiah; in the Gospel the return of Christ and Elijah is promised.

In the religion of Muhammad there is the promise of the Mihdí and the Messiah, and it is the same with the Zoroastrian and the other religions, but if we relate these matters in detail, it would take too long. The essential fact is that all are promised two Manifestations, Who will come, one following on the other.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 39.

Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! This is the Word which the Son concealed, when to those around Him he said: “Ye cannot bear it now.” And when the appointed time was fulfilled and the Hour had struck, the Word shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God. Beware, O followers of the Son, that ye cast it not behind your backs. Take ye fast hold of it. Better is this for you than all that ye possess.

Verily He is nigh unto them that do good. The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth and of the favoured angels hath come to pass. Say, verily, He hath testified of Me, and I do testify of Him. Indeed, He hath purposed no one other than Me. Unto this beareth witness every fair-minded and understanding soul.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 11.

## **The man whose name is the branch**

Another of the amazing bounties which have been conferred upon us in this Day by the mercy of God is the prophecy concerning “the man whose name is the Branch.” Not only does this prophecy refer to His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh, but also to His son ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, whom Bahá’u’lláh has designated as the ‘Most Great Branch,’ and who in resemblance to his Father, has built the temple of the Lord, bore royal honour, and ruled wisely, with justice and righteousness:

Bahá’u’lláh was the “Divine Branch,” the “Incomparable Branch,” the “Lordly Branch,” and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, was, as his name signifies, the “Servant of the Glory” who was designated as the ‘Most Great Branch,’ the “Master,” the “Mystery of God,” who “bath branched from this Ancient Root.”

### **Biblical references**

Zechariah 3:8      Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men of good omen: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.

Zechariah 6:12–13 Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall grown up in his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear royal honour, and shall sit and rule upon his throne.”

Jeremiah 23:5      “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.”

## Bahá'í references

We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: ‘When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.’ The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch (‘Abdu’l-Bahá). Thus have We graciously revealed unto you our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful. Verily God hath ordained the station of the Greater Branch (Muhammad ‘Alí) to be beneath that of the Most Great Branch (‘Abdu’l-Bahá). He is in truth the Ordainer, the All-Wise. We have chosen ‘the Greater’ after ‘the Most Great’, as decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 221–222.

When the Ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces towards Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.

Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 134.

There hath branched from the Sadratu'l-Muntahá this sacred and glorious Being, this Branch of Holiness; well it is with him that hath sought His shelter and abideth beneath His shadow. Verily the Limb of the Law of God hath sprung forth from this Root which God hath firmly implanted in the Ground of His Will, and Whose Branch hath been so uplifted as to encompass the whole of creation. Magnified be He, therefore, for this sublime, this blessed, this mighty, this exalted Handiwork!

Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 135.

You have written that there is a difference among the believers concerning the “Second Coming of Christ.” Gracious God! Time and again this question hath arisen, and its answer hath emanated in a clear and irrefutable statement from the pen of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, that what is meant in the prophecies by the “Lord of Hosts” ... is the Blessed Perfection (Bahá'u'lláh) and His holiness the Exalted One (the Báb). My name is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (Servant of Bahá). My qualification is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. My reality is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. My praise is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem, and servitude to all the human race is my perpetual religion ... No name, no title, no mention, no commendation have I, nor will ever have, except ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This is my longing. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 139.

## **Future Manifestations of God**

Just as all the previous Prophets and Manifestations of God have foretold the coming of the One who would appear after them, so Bahá'u'lláh has spoken of the Manifestation to come. However, He has made it clear that no Manifestation will come before the expiration of a thousand years after His Revelation.

## **Bahá'í references**

“God hath sent down His Messengers to succeed to Moses and Jesus, and he will continue to do so till the ‘end that hath

no end'; so that His grace may, from the heaven of Divine bounty, be continually vouchsafed to mankind.”

“I am not apprehensive for My own self, My fears are for Him Who will be sent down unto you after Me Him Who will be invested with great sovereignty and mighty dominion.” ...

“By those words which I have revealed, Myself is not intended, but rather He Who will come after Me. To it is witness God, the All-Knowing.” “Deal not with Him, as ye have dealt with Me.”

Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 116–17.

Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying imposter. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will, assuredly, send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible, indeed, is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the spirit of God and His mercy which encompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 346.

Be ye assured, moreover, that the works and acts of each and every one of these Manifestations of God, nay whatever pertaineth unto them, and whatsoever they may manifest in the future, are all ordained by God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, p. 59.

Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future ‘in the shadow of the clouds,’ know verily that in so far as their relation to the source of their inspiration is concerned they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they appear, each and every one of them ‘doeth whatsoever He willeth.’”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 111.

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