



Can I ask about the Books of Allāh?

These were Books revealed by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, for the benefit of mankind. In Arabic, they are known as the *KutubAllāh*. They were His direct Word, sent down to earth to guide and instruct us all towards the right path.



Sent down? Sent down to whom?

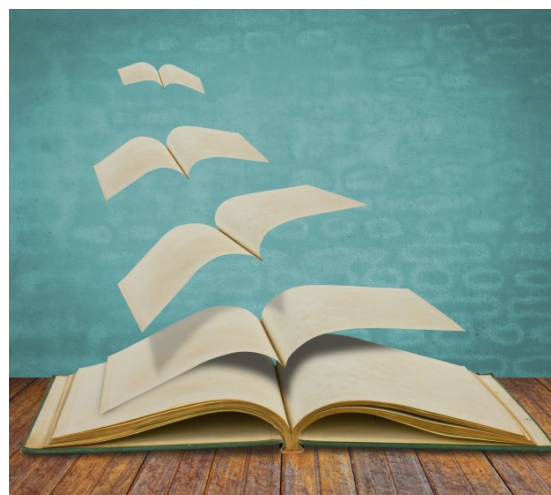
They were sent down to certain of His Messengers.



Messengers?

Yes, special individuals sent to every community to tell men and women about the Oneness of Allāh and about Submission to His Will. The Books of Allāh descended to help those Messengers properly convey the message of Islām, informing and instructing them about, amongst other things:

- Allāh and *tawhīd*;
- *Al ghaib* (the unseen);
- The purpose of our creation;
- The *shari'ah* (Islāmic code);
- The consequences of doing bad;
- The reward for doing good;



The Arabic for 'Messenger' is *rasūl*, (plural – *rusul*). Another name for them is *nabi*, (Prophet – plural, *anbiya*).



So, the books helped these Messengers fulfil their missions?

Yes. The Messengers were very capable people. They performed their tasks of *dā'wah* (calling to Islām) by speaking to all around, by setting excellent examples and by the performance, with the Permission of Allāh, of miracles. However, to strengthen them further, Allāh gave at least five of the *anbiya*, Books. There may have been others, but these are five that we are told about. He tells us,

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ

We have already sent Our Messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain (their affairs) in justice.

Sūrah al Hadīd, 57:25



Who were those five Messengers that we know about?

They were:

1. Ibrāhīm عليه السلام (Abraham). He received Suhuf (Scriptures)¹
2. Mūsa عليه السلام (Moses). He received the Tawrah (the Torah or Old Testament)
3. Dāwūd عليه السلام (David). He received the Zabūr (the Psalms)
4. Ēsa عليه السلام (Jesus). He received the Injīl (the Gospel)
5. Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. He received the Qur'ān



Are those Books mentioned in the Qur'ān?

Yes. They are referred to many times both in the Qur'ān and in the ahadīth. For example,

إِنَّ هَذَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى

*Indeed, this is in the former scriptures, The scriptures of Abraham and Moses
Surah al Ā'la, 87:18,19*

ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Then We gave Moses the Scripture, making complete (Our favour) upon the one who did good (i.e., Moses) and as a detailed explanation of all things and as guidance and mercy that perhaps in the meeting with their Lord they would believe.

Sūrah al An'ām, 6:154



وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ زَبُورًا

*and to David We gave the book (of Psalms).
Sūrah al Isrā', 17:55*

ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آثَارِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً

Then We sent following their footsteps (i.e., traditions) Our Messengers and followed (them) with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy.

Sūrah al Hadīd, 57:27


اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَابًا يَتَقَشَّرُ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكَ هُدًى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

Allāh has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of Allāh. That is the guidance of Allāh by which He guides whom He wills.

And one whom Allāh sends astray – for him there is no guide.

Sūrah az Zumar, 39:23

¹ Musa is also described as receiving the Scripture

 **Were these Books sent for particular time periods?**


Yes, and, with the exception of the Qur'ān, for particular communities also. The earlier Books² came to the specific followers of Ibrāhīm, Mūsa, Dāwūd and Ēsa. The Tawrah, for example, was sent to guide the *Bani Isra'il* (The Children of Israel).

وَأَتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوا مِن دُونِي وَكَيْلًا

And We gave Moses the Scripture and made it a guidance for the Children of Israel that you not take other than Me as Disposer of affairs.

Sūrah al Isrā', 17:2

The recipients of those previous Books, and the generations after them, are described in the Qur'ān as '*Ahlu'l-Kitāb*' (People of the Book). This is because they were communities of people given revelation from Allāh.

 **And then finally, the Qur'ān was revealed for Muslims?**

Actually, the final Book, The Qur'ān, was not revealed for a particular community or to cover a particular, limited time period. Rather, it was revealed for all of mankind until the Last Day. It is also a Book for the *jinn*, the other creation who inhabit the earth with us.

 **You mentioned the Old Testament, the Psalms and the Gospel. Aren't they part of the Bible?**

Yes. Today they are part of what the Christians and the Jews call the Bible.

 **If we believe in Tawrah, Zabūr and Injil, and if all these Books make up the Bible, does that not mean we can *follow* the Bible?**

No. We cannot follow or be guided by those books as they stand today.

 **Why not? You said that those earlier Books were the revealed Word of Allāh.**

Notice my words, 'as they stand today.' There is no question that when the Tawrah, Zabūr and Injil first came to earth, they *were* the original Word of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, pure and unaltered. However, over time, the words and meaning of all these previous Books were changed.

These altered books were then assembled together to make up 'The Bible.' Consequently, today, the Bible contains many statements and beliefs completely contrary to those originally given by Allāh to His Messengers.

 **So, as it stands today, we cannot rely on the Bible as the accurate word of Allāh?**

No. We cannot.

 **And, even though we don't 'follow' those earlier books, we do not deny them?**

That's right. If you deny the *KutubAllāh*, you fall outside the fold of Islām and into the realms of *kufr* (disbelief), may Allāh preserve us from that. Allāh says,

² In this work, the *Tawrah, Zabūr and Injil* will be referred to, Insha'Allāh, as the 'previous books' or 'the earlier books.'

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

O you who have believed, believe³ in Allāh and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allāh, His angels, His books, His Messengers and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray.

Sūrah an Nisā', 4:136



So, who made those changes to the previous Books?

The very recipients of the books themselves, the Jews and the Christians, made those changes.



Why did they do this?

Allāhu 'Ālim (Allāh Knows Best). They could have made changes for a whole host of reasons:

- Maybe to settle divisions and disputes amongst themselves;
- Maybe they were motivated by personal or political desires, to raise themselves in the community;
- Maybe they stood to benefit financially;
- Maybe there were things in the Words of Allāh preventing them from achieving their goals;
- Maybe they undertook reckless and inaccurate translations and interpretations of the texts.



Did they not realise they were tampering with the very words of Allāh?

Many of them knew very well what they were doing. However, without any fear of Allāh and thinking only of themselves, they continued, nonetheless. Allāh warns them,

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

O People of the Book, why do you mix (confuse) the truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while you know (it)?
Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, 3:71



How were those changes made to the previous Books?

Four words sum up why we cannot trust the previous Books as they stand today:

- Adding
- Subtracting
- Twisting
- Translating



Adding

Parts have been added to earlier Scriptures that were never sanctioned by Allāh. He says,

³ i.e., renew, confirm and adhere to your belief.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا
كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ

So, woe⁴ to those who write the 'scripture' with their own hands, then say, "This is from Allāh," in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn
Sūrah al Baqarah, 2:79

Subtracting

Parts that were difficult to bear or that didn't fit into the ideas of the recipients of these Books, were simply removed altogether. Allāh says,

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى ۗ قُلْ أَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمْ
اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

Or do you say that Abraham and Ishmael and Isāc and Jacob and the Descendants were Jews or Christians? Say, "Are you more knowing or is Allāh?" And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony⁵ he has from Allāh? And Allāh is not unaware of what you do.
Sūrah al Baqarah, 2:140

Sometimes material gain could be acquired by removing Allāh's Words.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ أُولَئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا
النَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

Indeed, they who conceal what Allāh has sent down of the Book and exchange it for a small price – those consume not into their bellies except the Fire. And Allāh will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. And they will have a painful punishment.
Sūrah al Baqarah, 2:174

Twisting

The people of the earlier Books inferred their own meanings into Allāh's words. Allāh mentions this behaviour in the Qur'an,

وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلْوُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ
عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

And indeed, there is among them a party who alter the Scripture with their tongues so you may think it is from the Scripture, but it is not from the Scripture. And they say, "This is from Allāh," but it is not from Allāh. And they speak untruth about Allāh while they know.
Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, 3:78

Also,

⁴ i.e. death and destruction.

⁵ Statements in previous scriptures attesting to the nature of Allāh's religion [Islām] and the coming of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم

يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ ۖ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ

*They distort words from their (proper) places (usages) and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded.*⁶

Sūrah al Mā'idah, 5:13

The classical commentator of the Qur'ān, Ibn Kathīr comments on the line “*They distort words from their (proper) places*” saying, “it means that they play havoc with the words of Allāh and misinterpret His Book, taking it to mean things that were never meant and attributing to Allāh things that He never said; May Allāh protect us from that.”⁷

Many of the commandments of Allāh remain intact even today in the Bible, but in a Godless, secular environment, they are simply and conveniently ignored and forgotten by today's *Ahlu'l-Kitāb*⁸. Allāh warns them about this,

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُثْبِتُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ

Say, “O People of the Scripture, you are (standing) on nothing until you uphold (the law of) the Torah, the Gospel and what has been revealed to you from your Lord (the Qur'ān).”

Sūrah al Mā'idah, 5:68

Translating

The earlier Books have been translated, edited and revised beyond all recognition. We do not know what the original Tawrah, Zabūr and Injīl have to say because they are not available today in their original languages, namely the languages of Mūsa, Dāwūd and Ēsa. Did Jesus, the son of Mary, speak the language of King James? Was Moses fluent in Latin or Greek? Clearly not!

Translating Holy Scripture into other languages is extremely dangerous. Even innocent reinterpretation can alter or even destroy the original message. Over the centuries there have been so many translated versions of the Bible, with many of those versions having multiple revisions and editions. At the end of this chapter is a simple cut and paste list from Wikipedia of translations of the Bible over the centuries.



Has the Qur'ān been changed?

This Noble Book is protected by Allāh, Himself. More about that, Insha'Allāh, in the next chapter.

⁶ In the Tawrah concerning the coming of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم

⁷ Tafseer Ibn Kathīr

⁸ The prohibition of interest in business affairs and the ban on the consumption of alcohol are just two of many examples.

The Books of Allāh [part a]

Questions

1. What is the Arabic name for the expression, the 'Books of Allāh'?
2. Name the five Prophets who received Books (Give their names in Arabic and English).
3. Name those Books in Arabic. Who was given what book?
4. What are those five Books known as in English?
5. The *Tawrāh* was sent to instruct and guide which community of people?
6. The four Books, prior to the Qur'an, were collected by the Jews and Christians to make up the Bible?
Why can't we follow or be guided by the Bible today?
7. Who are the *Ahlu'l-Kitāb*? Why are they called by that name?
8. Only Allāh knows, but what could have been possible reasons for the *Ahlu'l-Kitāb* changing the earlier Books?
9. How did they change the Books of Allāh?



Sturdy wooden boat on beautiful blue waters of Rangamati, Bangladesh

**Translations of the Bible over the centuries:
A simple cut and paste list from Wikipedia.
From the Christian 7th Century to 2019**

1. Aldhelm
2. Bede
3. Psalters (12 in total), including the Vespasian Psalter and Eadwine Psalter
4. King Alfred
5. Aldred the Scribe
6. Farman
7. Ælfric
8. Wessex Gospels
9. Caedmon manuscript
10. The Ormulum
11. A translation of Revelation
12. Rolle
13. West Midland Psalms
14. Geoffrey Chaucer in The Canterbury Tales
15. Fourteenth Century Biblical Version
16. Life of Soul
17. Nicholas Love, O'Cart, The Mirror of the Christ
18. Grail Psalms
19. Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures
20. The Living Oracles
21. Confraternity Bible
22. The Christian Scriptures
23. World English Bible and World Messianic Bible
24. Cotton Patch Series
25. Five Pauline Epistles, A New Translation
26. The Kingdom New Testament
27. Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST)
28. The Open English Bible
29. A New New Testament: For the Twenty-first Century Traditional/Newly Discovered Texts
30. Good As New: A Radical Retelling of Scripture
31. Aramaic English New Testament
32. Brenton's English Translation of the Septuagint
33. The Emphatic Diaglott
34. Twentieth Century New Testament
35. James Moffatt's 'The New Testament
36. Helen Barrett Montgomery, Centenary Trans.
37. Phillips New Testament in Modern English
38. Wuest Expanded Translation
39. New Testament translated: Richmond Lattimore
40. Bible in Worldwide English
41. God's New Covenant: A New Testament
42. The Unvarnished New Testament
43. Third Millennium Bible (The New Authorized Version)
44. The Common Edition New Testament
45. Lexham English Bible
46. William Caxton Wycliffe's Bible (1388)
47. Tyndale Bible
48. Coverdale Bible
49. Matthew's Bible
50. Great Bible
51. Taverner's Bible
52. Geneva Bible
53. Bishops' Bible
54. Douay–Rheims Bible
55. King James Version (Authorized Version)
56. Douay-Rheims Bible (Challoner Revision)
57. Quaker Bible
58. Thomson's Translation
59. Webster's Revision
60. Ferrar Fenton Bible
61. Young's Literal Translation
62. Julia E. Smith Parker Translation
63. Revised Version
64. Darby Bible
65. The Woman's Bible
66. American Standard Version
67. Emphasized Bible
68. Scofield Reference Bible
69. Westminster Version of Sacred Scripture
70. Concordant Literal Version
71. Jewish Publication Society of America Version
72. Tanakh
73. Moffatt, New Translation
74. Lamsa Bible
75. An American Translation
76. New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures
77. Revised Standard Version
78. Knox Bible
79. Berkeley Version
80. Children's King James Version
81. Judaica Press Tanakh
82. Amplified Bible
83. Jerusalem Bible
84. Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition
85. Modern Language Bible
86. New American Bible
87. New English Bible
88. The Living Bible
89. New American Standard Bible
90. The Story Bible
91. The Bible in Living English
92. An American Translation
93. Good News Bible
94. New International Version
95. Simple English Bible
96. New King James Version
97. A Literal Translation of the Bible
98. New Jerusalem Bible
99. New Jewish Publication Society of America Version.
100. Recovery Version of the Bible
101. New Life Version
102. Christian Community Bible, English version
103. Easy-to-Read Version
104. New Revised Standard Version
105. Revised English Bible
106. New Century Version
107. The Scriptures
108. Clear Word Bible
109. Leeser Bible, Tanakh (Old Testament)
110. The Living Torah and The Living Nach. Tanakh
111. Contemporary English Version
112. God's Word
113. New International Inclusive Language Edition
114. New Living Translation
115. Complete Jewish Bible
116. New International Reader's Version
117. Third Millennium Bible

118. World English Bible
119. English Standard Version
120. The Message
121. The Orthodox Jewish Bible
122. Holman Christian Standard Bible
123. New English Translation (NET Bible)
124. Today's New International Version
125. Revised Standard Version - Second Catholic Ed.
126. CTS New Catholic Bible (Catholic Truth Society)
127. New Community Bible
128. The Orthodox Study Bible
129. The Inclusive Bible
130. Common English Bible
131. Divine Name King James Bible
132. International Standard Version
133. New American Bible Revised Edition
134. Names of God Bible
135. The Voice Bible
136. Modern English Version
137. Tree of Life Bible
138. Christian Standard Bible
139. Easy English Bible
140. The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with
Commentary
141. Evangelical Heritage Version
142. Saint Joseph New Catholic Bible (Saint Joseph
edition)
143. Revised New Jerusalem Bible
144. 365 Day Bible
145. Literal Standard Version
146. Mickelson Clarified Translation