"NO KING BUT GOD"

A theological comparison of God's reign in the biblical and qur'anic David narratives

ABSTRACT

To what extent is the concept of "the reign of God" common ground for Christians and Muslims? This study falls into the discipline known as "comparative theology" and this paper offers a framework to study the theme by juxtaposing related *biblical and qur'anic narratives*. It argues that while there is a degree of commonality between Christian and Muslim belief in God's sovereignty, when we ask how the this is worked out within human history or how God's kingdom comes on earth, the answers are very different. After a survey of the reign of God in Muslim and in Christian reflection, I offer a theological comparison of the biblical and qur'anic stories of David to show how these two distinct understandings of the Kingdom of God are revealed. Despite areas of commonality, the Qur'an's picture of David emerges as part of its hermeneutic of rescinding and rewriting the biblical storyline.

KEY WORDS

Reign or kingdom of God, divine sovereignty, narrative worldview, biblical and qur'anic narratives, prophethood and prophet stories, David and Davidic kingdom, intertextuality, comparative theology, vicegerent, Qur'anic studies, abrogation

To what extent is the concept of "the reign of God" common ground for Christians and Muslims? This paper offers a framework to study the theme by juxtaposing related *biblical and qur'anic narratives*. It argues that while there is a degree of commonality between Christian and Muslim belief in God's sovereignty, when we ask how the this is worked out within human history or how God's kingdom comes on earth, the answers are very different. Theological comparison of the biblical and qur'anic stories of David shows how these two distinct understandings of the Kingdom of God are revealed.

My approach here differs from more common systematic theological comparisons by juxtaposing particular biblical and qur'anic narratives and by investigating their place in the larger metanarratives of which they are a part. King David is a natural focus for the biblical theological concept of the kingdom of God, but is this so for the qur'anic prophet David?

I. THE REIGN OF GOD IN ISLAMIC REFLECTION

When we include the notions of divine sovereignty and the kingdom of God, the idea of God's reign or rule is central for both Muslims and Christians. Consider the following quotes from Muslim thinkers. Among early Muslim leaders challenging British colonial rule in India was Muhammed Ali, who argued that the Qur'an rejected human sovereignty that was not derived from God's law, as in this example:

> The main theme of the Qur'an and… of the sayings of the Prophet as perceived in authentic Traditions is the Kinghood of God and the Service of Man as His Agent and vicegerent… Islam

> recognises one sovereignty alone, the sovereignty of God, which is supreme and unconditional, indivisible and inalienable.[1]

He argued that British attempts to force Muslims to fight against other Muslims in the army violated this principle. Debates during the founding of Pakistan concerned the idea that "God's sovereignty was not just a religious matter but extended equally to law and politics."[2]

In less politically focused Islamic thinking God's sovereignty is still deeply important for devoted Muslims. Ayoub identifies a particular verse in a section on Sufism: "The Qur'an proclaims God's majesty in many verses, but the one that has captivated the imagination of pious Muslims is 'The Throne' verse, which celebrates God's absolute oneness, eternal sovereignty, and all-encompassing knowledge, power, and providential care."[3] This qur'anic verse extols God's total sovereignty over all things in words that recall some of the loftiest language in the Hebrew prophets:

> God… All that is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Him. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they do not comprehend any of His knowledge except what He wills. *His throne extends over the heavens*

[1] Maulana Mohamed Ali, *My Life, a Fragment*, Lahore, 1948, p.205, cited in Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "The Sovereignty of God in Modern Islamic Thought," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25, no. 3 (2015): 389, 400.

[2] Ibid., 417-18.

[3] Mahmoud Ayoub, *Islam: Faith and History* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2005), Ch. 8, second page.

> *and the earth*; it does not weary Him to preserve them both. He is the Most High, the Tremendous. (Q 2:255)[4]

Many verses from the Qur'an reveal why God's universal sovereignty over all created things is a central tenet of Islam.

1. The essence of Islam as submission to God's sovereignty. As Ayoub states, "The name [Muslim] signifies the commitment of its adherents to *live in total submission to God* within a prescribed conduct as defined by the Quran, the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and the living tradition."[5] That Islam means to be in submission to God's will is universally accepted. But the question is how this submission is worked out in different conceptions of Islamic thinking. Zaman's article traces this debate through Islamic history, with a focus on South Asia. The qur'anic verses referred to in most Muslim discussions about the political implications of submitting to God's sovereignty are Q 3:27-28; 6:57; and 12:40.

> Say, "God, holder of all control, You give control [*al-mulk*, sovereignty, Pickthall] to whoever You will and remove it from whoever You will; You elevate whoever You will and humble whoever You will. All that is good lies in Your hand: You have power over everything. (Q 3:26-27)

Political Islam wrestles with relationship between human government and divine sovereignty. How should human kingship be conceived? For example, the basic principle at stake in Iranian royal titles was that no human ruler should take the title of king of kings:

> Early Islam… ostensibly by the espousal of the theocratic concept of God alone being king, was deeply opposed to worldly kingship… One *hadith* quotes the Prophet as saying, "The vilest name in

[4] Unless otherwise noted, qur'anic references are taken from M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[5] Ayoub, Ch. 1, first page.

> the eyes of God on the day of resurrection is (that of) a man who calls himself king of kings (*malik al-amlāk*)" … as referring to *Shāhānshāh*… Two other hadith's... speak of the violent wrath of God against him who is called king of kings and add in explanation: "There is no king but God."[6]

2. The relationship between divine rule and human government. Not surprisingly, Islamic reflection on the concept of God's sovereignty often focuses on the relationship between divine rule and human government. This issue is particularly acute because the supreme example of Muhammed combines both prophetic and governmental roles.[7] This differs from the role of the Hebrew prophets as speaking truth to power as embodied in the kings of Judah and Israel.

In the next two verses, contemporary Turkish translations are careful to limit the extent of divine sovereignty to the religious realm:

> Say, "I stand on clear proof from my Lord, though you deny it. What you seek to hasten is not within my power. *Judgement is for God alone*: He tells the truth, and He is the best of judges." (Q 6:57)

In his Turkish translation of Q 6:57, Mustafa Öztürk carefully limits the "judgment" which is for God alone, to determining the time of judgment (*azabın vaktini tayin hususunda*).[8] Simlar clarification is added to the translation of Q 12:40, which is one of the most cited verses in discussions of the political implications of divine sovereignty:

> All those you worship instead of Him are mere names you and your forefathers have invented, names for which God has sent down no sanction. Authority (*al hukm*) belongs to God alone, and He orders you to worship none but Him: this is the true faith, though most people do not realize it. (Q 12:40)

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[6] Wilferd Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title Shāhānshāh by the Būyids and "the Reign of the Daylam (Dawlat Al-Daylam)"," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 28, no. 2 (1969): 84.

[7] See Randall Bush's 2020 ETS presentation.

[8] Mustafa Öztürk, *Kur'an-ı Kerim Meali* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2016).

Here Öztürk qualifies the phrase, "Authority belongs to God alone," by adding in brackets the areas of religion, faith, and worship (*din, inanç ve ibadet hususunda*).[9] This preserves the secular character of Turkish constitutional law by limiting God's sovereignty to the area of personal religious practice.

The Qur'an asserts the divine control over all things: "It is He who has control over the heavens and earth and has no offspring—no one shares control with Him" (Q 25:1-2). The statement that God has no offspring (and) no partner in his sovereignty fuels Muslim claims that Christians commit the gravest sin in associating partners (Jesus) with God in his rule. But the question of "sharing" control with God has intra-Islamic ramifications as well, as seen in the 'Modernist–Islamist' divide.

In the so-called Modernist position, "the community at large decides what expression to give to the Qur'an's moral norms: 'God neither acts as political Sovereign nor as a law-maker. The Muslim people themselves are the Sovereign and the law-maker.'"[10] For Modernists, the human legislature, comprised of Muslim representatives, is a valid supreme body. But for Islamists, such language is deeply concerning. "The idea that the Muslim community was itself the arbiter of what limitations to impose upon itself was, to [Islamists], the very negation of the sovereignty of God."[11]

To wrap up this brief survey of the reign of God in Islamic reflection, there are two primary ways in which submission to God's sovereignty is worked out in practice. In majority Muslim

[9] Ibid.

[10] Zaman, 411.

[11] Ibid.

societies that are organized on secular principles, such as Turkey, this submission is centered in communal and individual religious practices such as prayer, fasting, and the like. In societies where legislation is based on Islamic law, the focus is on legal interpretation and enforcement of God's law in every aspect of life. Belief in divine sovereignty (and divine unity – Tawhid) works its way out in Sufi thought and practice in the pursuit of mystical union with God and in Sunni thought and practice primarily in the pursuit of a unified, just society.

II. THE REIGN (KINGDOM) OF GOD IN CHRISTIAN REFLECTION

Jesus taught his followers to "seek first the Kingdom of God" (Mat 6:33). Jonathan Edwards is quoted as saying that "The seeking of the kingdom of God is the chief business of the Christian life."[12] Scholars throughout church history have seen the Kingdom of God as a (if not *the*) central theme of the Bible. Thomas Schreiner builds his biblical theology around this theme: "I intend to argue in this book that the 'kingdom of God,' if that term is defined with sufficient flexibility, fits well as a central theme of the entire Bible."[13]

1. Yahweh is the king of creation. Like the Qur'an, the Bible portrays God as the universal sovereign of creation in numerous passages declaring his creation of the heavens and the earth. "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool… For My hand made all these things" (Isa 66:1-2; cf. Gen 1; Ps 95:3-5).

[12] Attributed to Jonathan Edwards in R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1986), 86.

[13] Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), xii-xiii.

The Hebrew Bible frequently highlights the creator God Yahweh's preeminence over all rival, false, "gods of the nations." I recently taught a course on biblical theology of religions from the vantage point of "the kingdom of God and the gods of the kingdoms." The book of Daniel may be the preeminent exposition of this supremacy. The Babylonian sovereign Nebukadnessar was recognized as "king of kings" (Dan 2:37) but was brought low until he recognized that God alone rules and gives authority (4:34-35). That human rulers are called to recognize the sovereignty of the God of heaven is common ground with the Islamic perspective.

2. Two aspects of the kingdom of God. Christians identify two distinct aspects of the term "kingdom of God" in the Bible.

> First of all, it designates the rule of God. In one sense, God is always the King of kings and the Lord of lords, reigning over everything that happens. But in another sense, God's rule has been flouted since the fall of humankind, and the Scriptures tell the story of the kingdom regained.[14]

We differentiate between God's eternal, "universal" kingdom and his "mediatorial" kingdom, which Schreiner describes as God's flouted and regained rule.[15] Most of the biblical story is about the loss and long process of restoration of the mediatorial kingdom. We'll see that this primary storyline is not common ground with the qur'anic framework of history.

This "mediatorial" Kingdom is established in the primal creation narratives in Genesis 1. God entrusts the earth to man and woman made in his image, granting them "dominion" as

[14] Ibid., xiii.

[15] "Mediatorial" is the term used by Alva J. McCLain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968).

delegated sovereigns, under God (Gen 1:26-27). This is not entirely unlike the Qur'an's *khalifa* or vicegerent concept.[16]

Islam rejects the Christian understanding of the sweeping effects of Adam's disobedience (Gen 3-11), limiting it rather to a brief interlude which had no effects on future humanity. But the corruption ensuing from the first human sin runs throughout the biblical narrative and can be construed as pernicious opposition to the good rule of God. Violence, evil, suffering and death overshadow human history. This enmity continues until final judgment at the end of the story (1 Cor 15:24-28). In the words Hebrews, "at present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him" (Heb 2:7-8).[17]

3. The throne of the tabernacling God. One of the clearest images of the biblical kingdom concept is found in the tabernacle narrative of Exodus 25-40. This extensive and detailed section shows that the tangible presence of God as king among his people is central to their fulfilling the divine calling as a "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:1-6). God's movable house is set up in the middle of the Israelites. Inside the most holy place is the Ark of the Covenant, which represents the throne of God. The King legislates from here (Exod 30:6; Lev 1:1).

[16] Adam is called a *khalifa* or successor in Q2:30, as is David in Q38:26. Glaser argues that while *khalifa* indicates status and function assigned by God, image emphasizes nature and relationship to God. Ida J. Glaser, "Qur'anic Challenges for Genesis," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament.*, no. 75 (1997): 11, 14.

[17] Hebrews cites Psalm 8:4-6 in expressing God's long-term purpose for the "world to come" (Heb 2:5-10). The psalmist is celebrating God giving dominion over the created realm to mankind (Gen 1:26-30).

4. The coming Davidic kingdom. God's choice of David as king and his promise that one from David's lineage will receive an eternal kingdom (2 Sam 7) introduces the Davidic element into the progress of the restoration of God's kingdom. The importance of this biblical theme and Jesus' identity as "son of David" raises the question of David's role in the Islamic perspective. I will turn to this comparative study below. Despite failures the reign of David and his son Solomon is the highpoint of the kingdom in Israelite history. So closely identified with the divine kingdom is this reign that Solomon is said to "sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD" (1 Chr 28:5; 29:23).

Yet as God is reintroducing his kingdom into the world through the nation of Israel, the biblical picture reveals ongoing opposition to the kingdom of God. Human and demonic rebellion against God's rule continues (Ps 2:1-3; Eph 2:1-3; 6:12). Satan is repeatedly called "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

The Hebrew prophets speak of a kingdom which God will set up within human history, "in those days and at that time" (Jer 33:15-17); "in the days of those kings" (Dan 2:44), through a Davidic figure to whom universal dominion is given (Isa 9:6-7; Dan 7:13-14). This expectation forms an important element of the New Testament world as John the Baptist burst onto the scene.

5. Jesus and the kingdom of God. "'No King but God!' was the cry that echoed with revolutionary fervor around the tumultuous land of Palestine in the century or so either side of Jesus' birth. Zealous Jews knew that YHWH was God. They knew that one day he was going to

vindicate his people."[18] The announcement that this kingdom was arriving was the "good news" to which Jesus called Israel to respond with repentance and faith (Mar 1:14-15). He preached the "gospel of the kingdom" everywhere he went and told his followers it would be proclaimed to all the nations (Mat 4:23; 9:35; 24:14). He was welcomed as the "son of David" (Mat 21:9).

In his great sermon on the mount (Mat 5-7) Jesus calls his followers to live according to a distinctive system of values, expressed memorably by John Stott: "This Christian counter-culture is the life of the kingdom of God."[19] Yet Jesus also taught them to look for the kingdom at the end of the age when the Son of Man returned in power: "when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near" (Luk 21:25-31). But first, he must die. This was crucial to his "not-of-this-world" kingdom agenda (John 18:36). In fact, through his being "lifted up" in crucifixion the "ruler of this world" (Satan) would be cast out (John 12:31-32).

Christian studies explore the paradoxical link between the cross of Christ and the Kingdom of God.[20] The apostolic preaching centered on God raising the crucified Jesus from the dead and exalting him to his throne "according to the Scriptures." Christians believe themselves to belong already to Christ's dominion, already a priestly kingdom of God (Rom 14:17; Rev 1:9). But they also await the glorious return of the King of kings "with the clouds" (Rev 1:5-7; 19:11-16).

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[18] Michael Manning, *No King but God: Walking as Jesus Walked* (Eugene: Resource Publications, 2015), xii.

[19] John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester; Downers Grove: Inter-varsity Press, 1985), 15, 19.

[20] An example is N. T. Wright, *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels*, 1st. ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2012).

The end of the biblical narrative shows God dwelling with human beings, with his "throne" set among his restored creation. This throne is described as the "throne of God and of the Lamb," in terms that could not more be more clear about Jesus the Son sharing the divine identity with God the Father (Rev 22:1-4). The kingdom of the world becomes "the kingdom of God and of his Christ" (Rev 11:15; cf. 12:10).

6. Christian ideas about the kingdom. Christian reflection has generated many ideas about the kingdom.[21] There is currently widespread agreement that, however formulated, the biblical Kingdom of God is both "already here" (at least for those who accept Christ's reign), and also "not yet".[22] There is an age to come when the kingdom will be consummated. While we differ concerning when and how Christ's followers "reign with Christ on the earth" (Rev 5:9-10; 20:4-5), the general trajectory is not in doubt: "The kingdom of the world" shall become "the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev 11:15).

Muslims reject this biblical understanding of God's reign for many reasons. Palestinian-American scholar Ismail Al Faruqi, one of the most thoughtful and knowledgeable Muslim critics of Christian and biblical positions, highlights the central issues as he sees them:

> To many people in the West, whom Allah blessed with a critical mind… the myths of Hellenized Christianity have never been accepted. The incarnation of God, the trinity, salvation as fait accompli,

[21] For a summary of "various interpretive ideas about the kingdom" see McCLain, 7-11.

[22] Russell Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004).

> *the Kingdom of God as both here and not-here*, God's death and resurrection… original sin and fallenness — all these have remained utterly opaque and incomprehensible.[23]
>
> Judaism maintained that in the other world, the absolute good would be realized which was lost forever in this world, and which would never be realized in this world. Such is based upon *the view that the Kingdom of David was itself the Kingdom of God*, and that God would send a messiah to restore it cataclysmically at the end of time.[24]

As we turn to David in the Qur'an and the Bible, we see other reasons why the biblical understanding of the kingdom of God does not fit into the Islamic understanding of God's dealings with the world. Or to put it the other way around, how the qur'anic narrative seeks to replace the biblical narrative with an alternate story of God's dealings with the world.

III. BIBLICAL AND QUR'ANIC NARRATIVE WORLDVIEWS

Why compare David narratives? Firstly, because the biblical and qur'anic worldviews are both shaped and shown by their respective storylines and smaller stories. Comparing these narratives offers a different type of insight than that resulting from comparing systematic theological concepts. Secondly, the biblical and qur'anic narratives are often ostensibly about the same characters, including David, who is a prophet in the Qur'an. Thirdly, because David is central to the biblical understanding of the kingdom, his role in these narrative worldviews merits investigation.

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[23] Ismail Al Faruqi, "Da'wah in the West: Promise and Trial," cited in Charles D. Fletcher, *Muslim-Christian Engagement in the Twentieth Century: The Principles of Interfaith Dialogue and the Work of Isma'il Al-Faruqi* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 514. Italics added.

[24] Isma'il R. Al-Faruqi, *Islam: Religion, Practice, Culture, and World Order* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2012), 15. Italics added.

The notion of the Kingdom of God which runs through the biblical storyline relates to the main elements of (at least one form of) a Christian worldview: Creation, Fall/Corruption, Redemption (kingdom) and Consummation.

A Muslim qur'anic worldview on the other hand, can be understood as comprised of three main elements: *Tawhid, Prophethood* and *Afterlife*.[25] These two sets of worldview elements can be juxtaposed for the purpose of theological comparison, resulting in three pairings.

Creation-Corruption ↔ Tawhid

Redemption/Kingdom ↔ Prophethood

Consummation ↔ Afterlife

In the second pairing above, where the Bible underscores one ongoing story of God's kingdom being restored within history, the Qur'an highlights God's repeated sending of prophets with reminders of God's sovereignty. Scholars of intertextuality between the Bible and the Qur'an often focus on these qur'anic *prophet stories*, which are recounted differently from their biblical counterparts (Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, etc.) and are used for different purposes.[26]

[25] ####

[26] Biblical and para-biblical narratives related to qur'anic prophet stories are referred to as *Isrā'īliyyāt* in Muslim reflection and their reliability for use in qur'anic interpretation is frequently rejected as being "of Jewish origin and thus alien to Islam." Roberto Tottoli, "Origin and Use of the Term Isrāʾīliyyāt in Muslim Literature," *Arabica* 46, no. 2 (1999): 193. The NT distinguishes the Hebrew Scriptures from "Jewish myths" or the so-called "exegetical narratives" which often overlap Islamic stories. (########)

In the Qur'an these apparently familiar stories serve like sermon illustrations, to reinforce its primary prophetic message of ethical monotheism and submission to God's sovereignty. The Qur'an frequently marks its prophet stories with the call to "remember."

> "(*Remember*) when Abraham's Lord tested him with (certain) words..." (Q.2:124 Droge)
>
> "And *remember* David and Solomon, when they gave judgement (Q.21:78)
>
> "*Remember* Job, when he cried to his Lord…" "And *remember* Ishmael, Idris, and Dhu'l-Kifl… And *remember* the man with the whale… *Remember* Zachariah…" (Q.21:83, 85, 87, 89)

This supports its claim to "confirm" previous Scriptures (Q.48) and calls for comparison to understand how the Qur'an is using these stories for its own agenda. We find that as the Qur'an "confirms" earlier revelation it also intends to "correct" or give the true story. Christians should not be surprised by significant differences in the Qur'an's accounts of the same characters. They are purposeful, as Walid Saleh shows in his study on the qur'anic Saul story.

> The Qur'an was aware of the discrepancy between its presentation of the religious history of the Jews and the Christians and the one that the Jews and the Christians presented. . . the Qur'an did not offer a typological hermeneutics when confronted with the scriptures of the earlier communities, but a *hermeneutics of abrogation, gainsaying, and retelling.*[27]

In ###### shown how this qur'anic approach is seen in its Abraham narratives which diverge deeply from the biblical Abraham narrative, especially as appropriated by the New Testament. Here I apply that comparative theological approach to the qur'anic and biblical David stories.

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[27] Walid A. Saleh, "'What If You Refuse, When Ordered to Fight?': King Saul (Talut) in the Qur'an and Post-Quranic Literature," in *Saul in Story and Tradition*, ed. Carl S; White Ehrlich, Marsha C (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 264.

IV. THE QUR'ANIC DAVID

Our comparative study is prompted by two issues noted above: First, Davidic themes are integral to the biblical notion of the kingdom of God. Second, David is also an important character in the Qur'an. So, we ask, is there any comparable connection with between divine sovereignty and the qur'anic David?

While there is no single David narrative in the Qur'an, some general content of a qur'anic David "narrative" can be reconstructed from the nine suras in which he is mentioned. The Qur'an's references to David can be loosely grouped into the following four stories or episodes

Story 1 – David defeats Goliath (Q.2:249-251) and is given sovereignty, or a kingdom (Q.2:252; Q.38:17-20).

Story 2 – David repents when confronted with two disputants (Q.38:21-26).

Story 3 – David is listed among (revelation-receiving) prophets, receives the *Zabur* (Q.4:163-164; Q.6:84-85; Q.17:55-56), leads nature in praise (Q.34:10; Q.38:18-19) and, like Jesus, curses Israelite idolaters (Q.5:78-79).

Story 4 – David is blessed with powers along with Solomon, makes chain mail (Q. 21:78-82; Q.27:15; Q.34:10-11) and shares in Solomon stories (Q.27:16-22; Q.34:12-13; Q.38:30-40).

1. Story 1 – Saul, fighting in God's cause, the Ark, military victory. In Sura 2, David is linked with Saul (Talut) and Samuel: "Their prophet (Samuel) said to them, 'God has now appointed Talut [Saul] to be your king… God grants His authority to whoever He pleases'" (Q 2:246-247). Walid Saleh argues that there is a sustained argument in the Medinan Sura al-Baqara for "fighting in God's cause."[28] It begins this emphasis with verse 154 ("those who are killed in

[28] Ibid.

God's cause") and returns to it several times. Saul's story is central in this encouragement to "fight in God's cause." Another element suggesting parallels with the biblical story is the Ark.

> The sign of his authority will be that the Ark [of the Covenant] will come to you. [29] In it there will be [the gift of] tranquility from your Lord and relics of the followers of Moses and Aaron, carried by the angels. There is a sign in this for you if you believe. (Al-Baqara 2:248)

The biblical David narrative recounts the journeys of "the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim" (1 Sam 4:4; cf. 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15). It is the symbolic throne of God dwelling among his people. The ark is taken by the Philistines but returned due to God's judgment on them. This miraculous return may be the "sign" here referred to in the Qur'an.

> And when they [Talut and his warriors] met Goliath [Jalut] and his warriors, they said,
> 'Our Lord, pour patience on us, make us stand firm, and help us against the disbelievers,'
> and so with God's permission they defeated them. David killed Goliath, and God gave him sovereignty and wisdom and taught him what He pleased. (Al-Baqara 2:250-251)

Walid Saleh discusses the Qur'an's "theology of war" and says that "the story of Saul played a major role in arguments set forth in Sura 2 to legitimize fighting."[30] The Qur'an links David's victory over Goliath with God giving him sovereignty. He is described as God's servant (as in the Bible) and as "a man of strength who always turned to Us" (38:17-20). David's weaknesses are not emphasized in the Qur'an.

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[29] "Surely the sign of his kingship is that the ark will come to you. In it is a Sakina (shekinah?) from your Lord…" (Droge)

[30] Saleh, 273.

2. Story 2 – Two litigants, David's repentance. The most difficult qur'anic passage for traditional Muslim thinking is the story of two litigants who climb into David's private quarters, asking David to judge between them fairly. "This is my brother. He had ninety-nine ewes and I just the one, and he said, 'Let me take charge of her,' and overpowered me with his words'" (Sad 38:21-23).[31]

For readers familiar with the Hebrew Bible, this story of two men and their sheep points to 2 Samuel 12, where Nathan confronts David regarding his sins of adultery and murder with a story of a wealthy sheep owner who takes the poor man's one ewe lamb. Walker points out that in Sura 38 this story is the first in a series of "servants of God" in 38:17-49 who "repent" or "turn" or "return" (David, Solomon, Job, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Ishmael, Elisha and Dhu 'l-Kifl).[32]

David gives his judgment and then understands that he has been "tested" and repents, receiving forgiveness (Q 38:24-25). The degree of correspondence to 2 Samuel 11-12 is debated by Muslim interpreters in light of the traditional Islamic doctrine of the sinlessness of the

[31] Q 21:78-79 may refer to this case as well, as David and Solomon pass judgment regarding sheep.

[32] Carol M. Walker, "David and the Single Ewe Lamb: Tracking Conversation between Two Texts (S Samuel 12:3 and Q38:23) When They Are Read in Their Canonical Contexts," in *Biblical Interpretation in Islamic Context: Qur'anic Conversations*, ed. Danny Crowther, et al., Routledge Biblical Interpretation in Islamic Context Series (New York: Routledge, 2017), 80-81.

prophets.[33] A straightforward reading of the passage shows David asking for forgiveness and repenting. The likeness to the Samuel story supports the understanding that he had indeed sinned.

God addresses David after his repentance (38:24-25) reminding him that he is a *khalīfa* or vicegerent on earth, and that therefore he is to judge righteously among people. In his translation footnote Droge notes that the word "is used individually only of Adam and David." This may point to an understanding of David's special role in relation to Adam.

3. Story 3 – David receives Scripture, leads nature in praise. David is listed among 18 divinely "guided" men to whom God gave "the Scripture, wisdom, and prophethood" (Q 6:84-89). The immediately preceding verses recount God showing "Abraham [God's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, so that he might be a firm believer" (Q 6:75). As can be seen in relation to Abraham, recognition of God's "dominion" over creation is essential to prophethood, and thus to David's place. While David's psalms celebrate this aspect of God's reign, David's role as a "prophet" in the Bible include his "foretelling" of Messiah's resurrection and kingdom, as will be noted below.

[33] Ali Makhlabi and Larry Ciccarelli, "The 'Sin' of David in Light of Islamic Thought," ibid., 62-76. Mohammed's extensive study "traces "the evolution of Muslim exegesis from identifying the nature of the error as truly grave, to a minor slip, and finally to absolute exculpation from any sort of wrongdoing." Khaleel Mohammed, *David in the Muslim Tradition : The Bathsheba Affair* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015), 4. The biblical David and Bathsheba narrative was often dismissed by Muslim exegetes as unreliable "*Isrā'īliyyāt*." Tottoli, 198.

David's special role as a recipient a book, mentioned in Q 4:163-164 and Q 17:55, establishes an area of common ground with Christians and Jews.[34] He is given "the Zabur," which is seems to be a reference to the Psalms, when compared with Q 21:105-06, "We wrote in the Psalms [the book, *al-zabūr*], as We did in [earlier] Scripture [*after the reminder*, Droge]: 'My righteous servants will inherit the earth.'"[35] This seems to be a reference to the biblical phrase, "the righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever" (Ps 37:29). Saleh notes as many do that "Psalm 37:29 happens to be the only instance of an explicit verbatim quotation from the Bible in the Qur'an" (Q 21:105). Additionally, he says:

> The quoting of this psalm verse is of utmost significance to the theology of the Qur'an, a quotation echoed in other Qur'anic verses where inheritance and righteousness are understood as related… The adroit use of these three terms [inherit, successor *Khalifa*, victory], encapsulating both eternal salvation and earthly success, makes them foundational for understanding the politics of salvation in

[34] Irving examines the awareness of David and the Psalms in Indian Ocean Muslim societies in the seventeenth century, finding evidence that "David and the Psalms became points of convergence in interfaith dialogue." But he also notes limitations arising from "the differing concepts and terminologies in each of the Abrahamic faiths, the legitimacy of music, the differing interpretations of David as an instrumentalist, and the Islamic doctrine of *tahrīf*, which denies the authenticity of religious texts conserved by Jews and Christians." David Irving, "Psalms, Islam, and Music: Dialogues and Divergence About David in Christian-Muslim Encounters of the Seventeenth Century," *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 2, no. 1 (2016): 76.

[35] The Arabic word translated "The Psalms" here is *al-Zabur* (singular). Droge says "perhaps simply 'the scripture' or 'the book'." The plural word is *al-zubur* as in Q.3:184; 16:44; 23:53; 26:196; 35:25.

the Qur'an. Together, they constitute a web of concepts that ties aspects of military success with salvation, where the dominion of God is given to the believers.[36]

The Qur'an mentions David along with Jesus as cursing disobedient (unbelieving) "Sons of Israel" (Q 5:78-79). The context is relations of Muslims with the "People of the Book" (Q 5:5, 59, 65, 66, 68, 77). In the Qur'an's retelling, figures like Abraham, David and Jesus have all become prophets of monotheism. While it is true that the biblical David (in various psalms) rebukes and calls on Israel to trust their God and Jesus rebukes unbelieving Israel strongly, David's and Jesus's roles are hardly in the same category.

David is granted special ability to lead the praise of nature (Q 34:10; 38:18-19). This corresponds with psalms of David calling on the created world to praise God. Regarding this divinely given ability Wheeler says, "Muslim tradition relates that when David sang, animals would gather around and listen to him so mesmerized that they would die of thirst and hunger (see Q 38.19)."[37] The Psalms of David often call on creation to worship God. David is called the "sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam 23:1).

Neuwirth's study of Qur'an 55 and Psalm 136 helps clarify why biblical "salvation history" is rejected. She notes that "the Qur'an derives the necessity of human confidence in God not from

[36] Walid A. Saleh, "The Psalms in the Qur'an and in the Islamic Religious Imagination," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 282. Jesus notably rejects the use of military force to defend his role as the messianic king, averring rather, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting" (John 18:36; cf. 6:15).

[37] Brannon M. Wheeler, "Dawud / Da'ud," in *The Qur'an : An Encyclopedia*, ed. Oliver Leaman (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 169.

His works in history but rather from His deeds in creation and His power of resurrection" and argues that the "Qur'anic stance is thus diametrically different from the Biblical view on history… as a promise for the future."[38] This will be problematic when we turn to the biblical David narrative which is at the core of that salvation history as it relates to the messianic kingdom of God.

4. Story 4 – David is blessed with powers along with Solomon. In some fascinating passages David is associated with his son Solomon (Q 27:15-22; 34:10-13; 38:30-40), who is given miraculous ability to command the wind (21:81) and communicate with animals such as ants and birds and with jinn who served him in various ways (Q 21:82; 27:15-19). Together they receive ability to pass judgment on difficult cases. David is given ability to make chain mail (Q 21:78-82; 34:10-11) and shares in Solomon stories. While this material shows some overlap between David's stories in the Qur'an and the Bible, it is not particularly relevant to our comparison of perspectives on the reign of God.

V. THE BIBLICAL DAVID

Turning to the biblical narrative, look first at how the Abraham and David narratives are related. Matthew's Gospel begins with a genealogy which links the two stories as part of "the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mat 1:1, 17). In Christian canonical perspective, David's story is integral to the progressive biblical storyline stretching from Abraham to Jesus.

[38] Angelika Neuwirth, "Qur'an and History – a Disputed Relationship. Some Reflections on Qur'anic History and History in the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2003): 1.

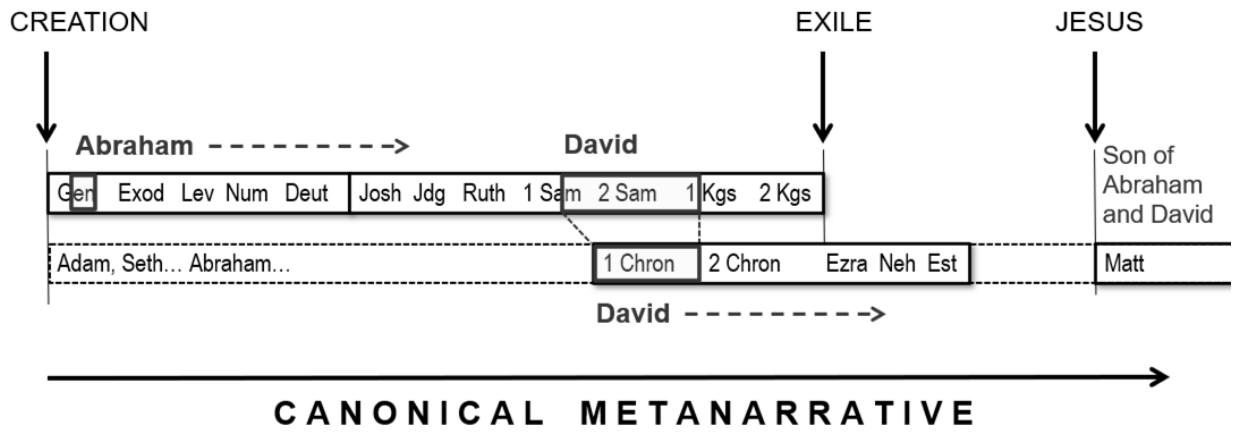

Figure 1

David's importance in the Bible is shown first by the vast number of references to him: referenced in 968 verses in 28 books. Following the primary David narrative, the Davidic dynasty dominates in the historical books. David is named in the title of nearly half of the Psalms, is linked with promises of the future kingdom in the prophets and is the royal ancestor of Jesus the Messiah in the NT.

As can be seen in the diagram above, there are two primary David narratives in the Bible which partially overlap but bring distinct perspectives (1 Samuel 16 – 1 Kings 2; 1 Chronicles 11-29). If we combine these two accounts, we can set out the overall shape of David's story as follows:

A. Genealogy, preparatory events (1 Sam 1-15; 1 Chr 1-10)

B. Sacrifice, anointed king, defeats Goliath (1 Sam 16-17)

C. David's difficulties stemming from Saul's jealousy (1 Sam 18-31)

D. Reign begins (2 Sam 1-5; 1 Chr 11-14)

E. Ark, eternal dynasty, Davidic covenant (2 Sam 6-7; 1 Chr 15-17)

D[1]. Reign established (2 Sam 8-10; 1 Chr 18-19)

C[1]. David's difficulties stemming from his sin and failures (2 Sam 11-20)

B[1]. Goliath war, last songs, sacrifice on Moriah (2 Sam 21-24; 1 Chr 20-21)

A[1]. Preparation for Temple and worship for Solomon (1 Chr 22-29)

1. David anointed. In this ring arrangement the central element is God's promise of an eternal kingdom to David and his "seed" who will be God's "son" (2 Sam 7:12-14). Hannah's song at the beginning of the narrative concludes with this royal expectation: "The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to *his king* and exalt the power of *his anointed"* (1 Sam 2:10, *mâshîyach*). Following a false start of sorts with Saul, David is *anointed* as king in the place of Saul (1 Sam 16:12-14 *mâshach*). The concept God's "anointed" king or "Messiah" found later in the psalms and prophets derives particularly from this "anointing" (e.g. Ps 2:2, 6). The final scene in Samuel where David offers a sacrifice points to the importance of Moriah, which is common ground with the high point of the Abraham narrative (Gen 22; 2 Chr 3:1).

David's slaying Goliath in connection with Saul as king is a common element with the qur'anic narrative (1 Sam 17). The qur'anic name for Saul, Talut, likely means "tall" and in the biblical narrative "tall" or proud figures are brought low.[39] Saul is tall, David's older brother is tall, Goliath (Jalut in the Qur'an) is tallest of all. But the real issue at stake is a "conflict of kingdoms" between the LORD of hosts (YHWH) whom David declares to be the one true and living God, and Goliath's "gods" by whom he curses David and "defies the armies of the living God" (17:26, 43).[40] David's purpose is that "all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel"

[39] Walker's helpful structural analysis of the Book of Samuel highlights God's raising the humble and bringing the mighty down. Walker, 78.

[40] Other such military challenges raise the same issue (e.g. 2 Chr 32:13-19). See Daniel Isaac Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient near Eastern National Theology*, 2nd ed., Evangelical Theological Society Studies (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000).

(17:46). The Bible occasionally identifies these "gods of the nations" with spiritual powers opposing God's reign (Dt 6:14; 32:16-17, 29-39; Ps 96:5-6; 97:7) .

David's difficulties begin with Saul's jealousy of his success (1 Sam 18:7-9), and until the time of his death Saul does not stop trying to kill his rival. Yet Saul's son Jonathan knows that God has chosen David to be king (1 Sam 23:17), and even Saul in his better moments (after David spares his life) recognizes that David is to be king (1 Sam 24:20; 26:25).

2. David as king. David's relationship to the Ark of the Covenant is important for understanding his relationship to the reign of God. "David went to bring up the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim" (2 Sam 6:2). As noted, this ark is the visible symbol of the throne of the "tabernacling God." David both dances and sits "before the Lord" (2 Sam 6:14-16; 7:19). This tangible presence of God is a central theme of Bible which is inseparable from that of the kingdom.

David wants to build a house for the ark of God. But rather than David building God a physical "house", God announces that he will build David a dynastic "house" (*bayit*): "I will raise up your offspring after you… I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam 7:12-14). This promise stands on the same level and in direct continuity with the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 (repeated in Gen 18:18; 22:15-18).[41] It is cited and alluded to in the prophets, Psalms and the NT.

3. David's sins. David's difficulties being again, due to his own sins of adultery and murder, narrated in detail in 2 Samuel 11. This fits with other narratives of sins committed by major

[41] See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 149-58.

biblical characters, where confession opens the way to God's forgiveness.[42] David's repentance is expressed in Psalms 51 and 32. In a NT passage citing Psalm 32, the basis for his forgiveness is explained in light of the "redemption" accomplished through Jesus' sacrificial death: "David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered'" (Rom 4:6-7; Ps 32:1-2). This connection is made clearer by the term *hilastērion* used in the LXX for the "mercy seat" on the ark of the Covenant before which David often came, as well as for "propitiation" in the NT (Rom 3:24-25).

4. Offering on Moriah. In his last act in the Book of Samuel, David offers himself in place of the people of Israel. He prays, "Behold, I have sinned… Please let your hand be against me" (24:17). The place of the sacrifice turns out to be extremely symbolic and significant (2 Sam 24:24-25 with 2 Chr 3:1). The Abraham and David narratives are linked as David offers his sacrifice on Mt Moriah, the range where God led Abraham to build an altar to offer his beloved son Isaac (Gen 22; 2 Sam 24).

5. Psalms and prophecies of a Davidic "Messiah." David's "last words" in 2 Samuel 23:1-5 show his awareness of being enabled by the Spirit of God who in fact "speaks by" him. David is a "prophet" as we'll note below, but not in the mold of qur'anic prophets. David stands out as both king and psalmist. His psalms are of many types, lament, praise, thanksgiving, teaching, adoration, etc. But the ones emphasized in the NT are those which are related to the messianic

[42] Edwards' comment on Peter's denial of Jesus recorded in Mark's gospel is appropriate for all the biblical narratives of sin and failure in the "heroes" of the faith (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc.): "The church can be honest about sin – even the sins of an apostate apostle – because it is so convinced of grace." James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 452.

kingdom idea in some way. Particularly important are those where David is seen as speaking Messiah's words beforehand as a prophet (Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 110).

The writing prophets recall the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17) as sure hope for the future. Many famous words reinforce this promise, such as the oracle regarding the "son" to be given: "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore" (Isa 9:6-7). The corrupt Davidic dynasty whose history is traced in the two books of Kings will be cut down by God's judgment, but a shoot will spring up from the stump. The Spirit-anointed "shoot/son of David" or "branch of David" will arise and the nations will turn to Him (Isa 11:1-12).

6. Jesus: son of David in the New Testament. Each of the four Gospels pick up the Old Testament narrative in distinctive ways.[43] Matthew and Luke highlight the genealogical continuity (Mat 1:1-17) and the promise fulfillment (Luke 1:67-75) of Jesus' birth with reference to the promises to Abraham and David.[44] The angel speaks to Joseph as the "son of David" and Matthew explains his virgin birth in terms of the prophetic sign promised to the "house of David" (Mat 1:21-22; Isa 7:13-14), and promises Mary the child will inherit the promises made to David: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will

[43] See Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014).

[44] "Matthew hooks his whole plot on Jesus, David, and Abraham (1:1) in order to show that Israel's history, running from the Abrahamic promises to the time of Israel's exile, comes to a messianic consummation through Jesus, who is the eschatological David." Michael F. Bird, *Jesus Is the Christ: The Messianic Testimony of the Gospels* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 60.

give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:30-33).

In the Gospels Jesus clearly identifies himself in terms of both the Davidic messianic covenant and the psalms of David, presenting himself as both David's son and David's Lord (Luke 20:41-44; Ps 110:1).

On the cross Jesus takes the words of David in Psalms 22:1 and 31:5 on his lips. Crowned with thorns, Jesus offers himself on the "altar" of the cross (Heb 13:10), establishing links with Abraham's altar (Gen 22) and David's altar (2 Sam 24).

7. David: A Prophet of Christ. Jesus' apostles, whom he taught about the kingdom of God for 40 days after his resurrection (Acts 1:3), were very direct in speaking of David's prophet-role. Peter explicitly says that David was a prophet who "foresaw and spoke of the resurrection" (in Ps 16) and subsequent exaltation (in Ps 110) of Christ (Acts 2:29-32). David's words testify to Israel's culpable rejection of Jesus, leading to the judicial "hardening" of most of the nation (Rom 11:9-10, citing Ps 69:22-23).

Paul speaks of "the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets… concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:1-3), and urges Timothy to "remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel" (2 Tim 2:8).

The writer of Hebrews uses David's Psalms and God's promises to David repeatedly, citing 2 Samuel 7, Psalms 2, 40, 45 and 110 in this regard. All are seen to speak about the "unshakeable kingdom" being received by those who belong to Christ.

The book of Revelation presents the crucified and risen Jesus as the royal "lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (Rev 5:5-6). He speaks in the final chapter, identifying himself as "the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star" (Rev 22:16).

VI. BIBLICAL AND QUR'ANIC DAVID COMPARED

When we juxtapose the biblical and qur'anic David narratives we find that there are some common aspects to the stories of David's life, where they overlap in terms of names and events, and also major segments of the biblical narrative which are absent in the qur'anic picture. These are shown in this diagram:

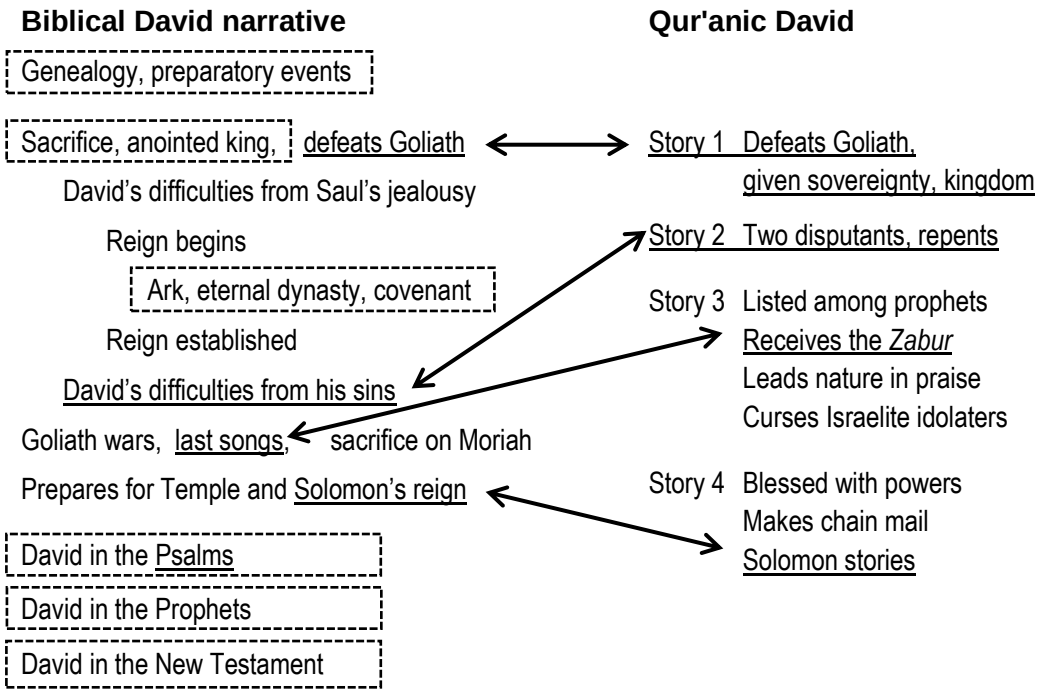

Figure 2

Some common ground is evident. In both sets of narratives, David slays Goliath. In both, David becomes king, receiving sovereignty from God. In both, David is confronted with a report of two disputants. In both, David is granted divine revelation (the Psalms or Zabur). In both, David's story merges into Solomon's story. However, the common ground is limited to the life

of David and in these seemingly common areas there are major differences in the details relating to the overall biblical or qur'anic worldviews to which they belong.

But more important than these particulars are the areas that have nothing in common. In the canonical biblical perspective David continues a long historical narrative linked by genealogy to Abraham through Judah. David's "anointing" as king begins a trajectory that leads directly to the Spirit-anointed Branch of Jesse and the Servant foretold by the prophets (e.g. Isa 11:1-12; 42:1-6; 61:1-3) and to Jesus the anointed Messiah/Christ in the New Testament. In the Qur'an the title "Messiah" is given to Jesus eleven times but is never explained[45] and has none of its Hebrew sense of anointed king. Rather it seems used particularly in passages rejecting Christian claims of Jesus' deity.[46] In the Qur'an neither the title nor the concept of messiah is related to David.

This qur'anic omission of David's anointing as "messiah" and the promise of an everlasting kingdom to David's offspring (2 Sam 7) are as problematic from a Christian perspective as the

[45] "Messiah is not a concept of great importance to the Qur'an. It seems to be simply a proper name." Khalil Samir Samir, "The Theological Christian Influence on the Qur'an: A Reflection," in *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds, Routledge Studies in the Quran (New York: Routledge, 2007), 152.

[46] "While no explanation is offered of the title Messiah, and it is applied to Jesus at all periods of his life from birth to exaltation, yet it appears to have a particular sense... [citing Q4:171 and Q5:75]. On the negative side this is a defence of the unity and transcendence of God. On the positive side it places the Messiah in the succession of messengers and prophets of the past." Edward Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'ān* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1995), 30.

absence in the Bible of Abraham's vigorous defense of monotheism against his people's idolatry is problematic for Muslims who read Genesis.

David's sacrifice on the site later known as Temple Mount, not found in the Qur'an, has particular significance when considered in connection with Abraham's earlier sacrifice on that same site. Yet this is in tension with the qur'anic perspective where the Kaaba in Mecca is the central focus for prayers and the Abrahamic rites of the annual pilgrimage.

Still more significant than even these omitted parts of the biblical David narrative is the progressive development of the Davidic kingdom expectation in the Psalms and prophets and its fulfillment in Jesus the Messiah in the New Testament. In the Bible, David is at the heart of the story of the kingdom of God replacing the kingdom of this world. This comprehensive story is absent in the Qur'an. While at first glance the qur'anic and the biblical David narratives seem to overlap, in fact they are parts of quite different stories.

CONCLUSION

Like many other characters who are referred to in the Qur'an, David turns out to have limited similarity with his biblical counterpart. The qur'anic David is a *model prophet*, not the biblical *anointed king* to whom God promises an everlasting kingdom. In the qur'anic worldview David is one of many prophets of God's sovereignty. He is a prophet *like* Jesus and Muhammad, and his book the Zabur is understood to be a book *like* the Qur'an. The qur'anic David narratives fit within the pattern of prophet stories whose "biblical" counterparts have been recast in the likeness of Muhammed and their stories rewritten as part of his story.

In the biblical worldview David is the key figure in messianic kingdom narrative which runs throughout the Bible. He is a prophet *of* Jesus the Messiah. His psalms express the very words *of* the Messiah and celebrate the overarching narrative of Christ and his kingdom. The prophets

announce the coming of the ultimate Root of David, the Messiah, whose coming is nothing less than the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These mutually incompatible frameworks can be set out in the following comparative diagrams.

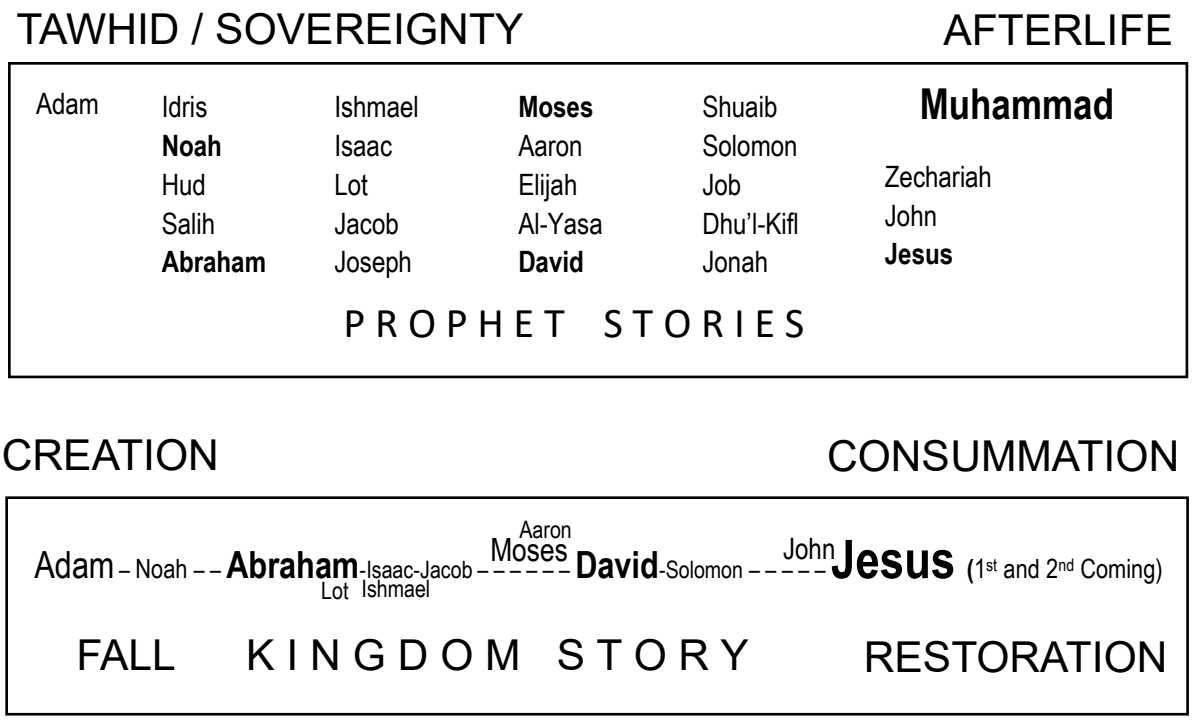

Figure 3

Despite agreement about God's universal sovereignty, we have two different stories about how God is establishing his reign over the nations of this world. The Qur'an's portrait of David emerges as part of its hermeneutical program of rescinding and rewriting the biblical storyline. While Christians and Muslims may agree on some moral and societal issues based on their understanding of doing the will of the sovereign God, their visions of God's kingdom are irreconcilable. Only one can be true.

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