

Most Christians seem to be unaware that there are self-styled Bibles, New Testaments, Scripture selections, and “Scripture-based products” in audio and video formats promoting Islam. Even more concerning is that a number of Christians have been unknowingly funding and distributing them.

Since 1987, some professing evangelicals began publishing Islamized “Scripture” which continues to this day. Islamic terms, including phrases from the Qur’an, are often used in place of key, biblical terms. This practice is part of C5 or Insider Movements for Muslims (C5/IM). C5/IM claims that a Muslim can retain a Muslim identity while having saving faith in Jesus Christ and result in a “Jesus Movement” *within* Islam.

These “translations” have been referred to by such terms as “Muslim-friendly,” “contextualized,” and “heart language.” More recently, they have been categorized as “Muslim Idiom Translation” (MIT).

Versions of MIT can be found in languages such as: *Albanian, Arabic, Baluchi/Balochi, Bengali, Indonesian, Malay, Oromo, Siraiiki, Tamachek, Turkish, and Urdu*. Some languages contain multiple MIT versions such as Arabic and Bengali. They come in various formats: *books, cassettes, CDs, and videos*. Those in digital formats are sometimes available on websites and through apps for phones and tablets.

## Distinguishing Features

MIT is normally characterized by any one or more of the following:

- non-literal renderings for Father and Son terminology
- words and phrases from the Qur’an
- Islamic theological terms
- the omission of certain passages

## Representative (Mis)renderings

Matthew 28:19: “the name of the Protector, his Representative and the Holy Spirit” (instead of “the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”)

James 2:19: “there is no god but Allah” (instead of “God is one”). This is the first part of the *shahada*, or Islamic creed.

Galatians 2:20: “caliph of God” (instead of “Son of God”). This makes Jesus a religious and political successor of Muhammad.

Omissions: Luke 15; Rom 8:1-9, 12-33, 35-36, 38-39; Gal 4:1-7

## How can I be sure that a translation of God’s Word is accurate and faithful to the biblical languages and not a MIT?

Assessing the validity of a Scripture translation or a “Scripture-based product” in a language that one does not understand requires effort. For the sake of honoring the Lord and loving people, this effort is both necessary and worthwhile. In light of this, the following practical advice is offered:

- 1) Request a “back translation” in English (or other language that you understand) from the responsible party for the translation or “Scripture-based product.” Compare key terms and passages in this “back translation” to a reliable Bible translation. If the “back translation” contains any of the distinguishing features of MIT it is not an accurate and faithful translation.
- 2) Find someone who knows the language of the translation or “Scripture-based product.” This can be a native speaker or someone who has learned the language such as a missionary. Try to get two or three independent reviews of key terms and passages. If the reviews reveal any of the distinguishing features of MIT it is not an accurate and faithful translation.

## Key Terms & Passages to Verify

The following categories are helpful in determining if a translation or “Scripture-based product” is a MIT. Patience is necessary in locating the indicated references. Many versions do not use the traditional chapter and verse numbering. The verses are often re-ordered or are not individually numbered.

### 1. How are the terms “Father” in reference to God and “Son” and “Son of God” in reference to Jesus rendered?

Some representative verses to verify are:

Father: Matt 6:9; 28:19; Mark 14:36; Luke 11:2; John 5:18; Rom 8:15; Jam 1:17

Son: Matt 3:17; 28:19; Mark 9:7; Luke 1:32; John 3:16; Gal 4:6; Heb 1:8

Son of God: Matt 4:3; Mark 15:39; Luke 1:35; John 20:31; Rom 1:4; Heb 7:3

Are “Father” and “Son”/“Son of God” replaced with non-literal renderings?

Is there any additional wording with these 3 terms? Sometimes additional Islamic wording is used, violating the wording and meaning of the Greek New Testament (NT).

Are there any parenthetical “definitions,” footnotes, prefatory articles, or spoken comments that redefine these 3 terms?

### 2. How is the end of Luke 3:38 rendered?

A common rendering is “Adam whom God created” or “Adam who was from God.” The literal translation is: “Adam, the son of God.” The word, “son,” in “son of God” should be identical to the other occurrences of “son” in Luke 3:23-38.

### 3. How are “children of God” and “sons of God” rendered?

These two phrases are usually not literally translated. Some representative verses to verify are:

children of God: John 1:12; 11:52; Rom 8:16, 21; 9:8; Phil 2:15; 1 John 3:1-2, 10; 5:2

sons of God: Matt 5:9; Luke 20:36; Rom 8:14, 19; Gal 3:26 (see also 2 Cor 6:18; Gal 4:5-6; Heb 2:10; 12:7-8)

### 4. How is Son of Man rendered?

This phrase is usually not literally translated. This feature eliminates the divinely-inspired parallel between “Son of God” and “Son of Man.” This parallel is an essential biblical witness that Jesus is both divine and human. Some representative verses to verify are:

Matthew 12:8; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:48; John 3:13-14; Acts 7:56; Rev 1:13

### 5. How is “Lord” in reference to Jesus rendered?

The Greek NT often refers to Jesus by the word, *kurios*, which is translated in English as “Lord.” *Kurios* is also used for the divine Name, Yahweh, when quoting the Old Testament (OT). This is in keeping with the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT used by many of the Jews in the 1st century AD. Many of these OT passages are attributed to Jesus in the NT thus identifying Him as Yahweh.

In MIT, however, *kurios* in reference to Jesus is often rendered with a different word than is used for Yahweh. Many times this word only refers to a human leader like “master” or an Islamic religious leader such as a Sufi Muslim spiritual master or guide. Some representative verses to verify are:

## Further facts about “Muslim Idiom Translation” (MIT)

Matt 7:21-22; Mark 2:28; Luke 1:43; John 9:38; Acts 2:25 (Ps 16:8); Rom 10:9, 12-13 (Joel 2:32); 14:9-11 (Isa 45:21-23); Phil 2:10-11 (Isa 45:21-23); 1 Tim 6:14-15; Rev 17:14; 19:16 (Deut 10:17; Ps 136:1-3); Heb 1:10-12 (Ps 102:22, 25-27)

### 6. How is Psalm 2:7 rendered?

The NT quotes the last part of Psalm 2:7 (“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”) in 3 places: Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5. In MIT “Son” and “begotten” are often not literally translated. It commonly contains an interpretive rendering that refers to Jesus as being crowned or appointed as a king or some other kind of human leader.

### 7. Incorporating the Shahada

In several Arabic versions, the first part of the *shahada*, or Islamic creed is inserted in the text (“there is no god but Allah”). There is no linguistic or theological justification for this. Some representative verses to verify are:

2 Sam 7:22; 22:32; 1 Chr 17:20; Ps 18:31; Isa 45:14; 1 Cor 8:4, 6; Eph 4:6; 1 Tim 2:5; Jam 2:19

## Conclusion

**MIT versions are inaccurate and unfaithful translations of Scripture. They should not be distributed.** They alter and obscure the very things necessary for Muslims to believe if they are to be saved. For this reason, determine to only distribute accurate and faithful translations of God’s Word. May God bless your efforts as you witness to Muslims and disciple converts.

- Adam Simnowitz

**For more information regarding MIT the reader is referred to the author’s online charts, articles, and thesis available at: [biblicalmissiology.org](http://biblicalmissiology.org) and [answering-islam.org](http://answering-islam.org)**

### How does MIT help Muslims?

Muslims have claimed that Jews and Christians changed the Bible in order to reject Muhammad as the final prophet. MIT now gives Muslims “proof” that “Christians” have changed the Bible.

### How does MIT disparage the Bible and Muslims?

First, the use of non-literal renderings for “Father” and “Son” terms is a practical denial that they are inspired by God. Second, it implies that the Bible does not give sufficient context to understand these terms. Third, it implies that Muslims cannot understand words in context.

### Is “Muslim idiom” a misnomer?

Idioms, properly speaking, refer to languages not religions and their adherents. This phrase, however, assumes equivalence between all religions (including Christianity). It is a denial of the biblical teaching that truth is supercultural. It is also a denial that the Gospel, or the message of salvation from sin, through faith in Jesus Christ, is exclusive (e.g. John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

### Why are there so many Arabic versions of MIT?

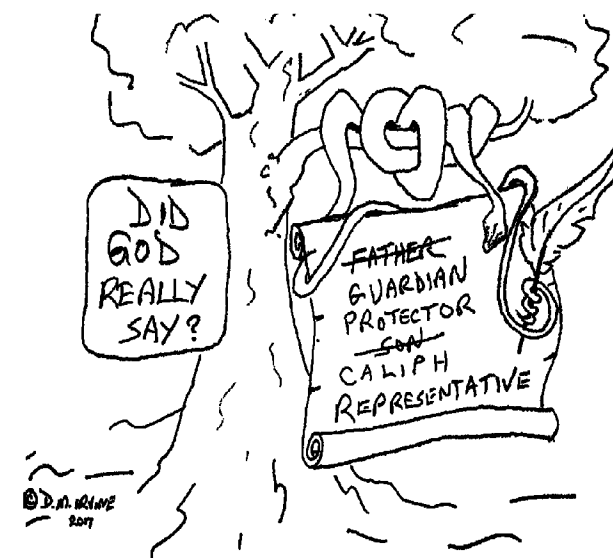
At least 13 distinct MIT versions have been produced in Arabic since 1987. They include different versions for people in the Iraqi cities of Baghdad and Mosul! They also include a “translation” of the Gospels and Acts published in 2008 and its revision in 2016-2017. Over \$200,000 was raised for the first edition and at least that same amount was raised for the revision. One of the translators, who has had “input” into every one of these Arabic versions has his own translation company and is paid for his services.

## Some Bible facts about “Father” and “Son”

- “Father” in reference to God occurs 260x in the Greek New Testament\*
- “Father” in reference to God is the same word used of human fathers
- “Son” in reference to Jesus occurs 79x in the Greek New Testament\*
- “Son of God” in reference to Jesus occurs 45x in the Greek New Testament\*
- “Son” in reference to Jesus is the same word used of human sons
- “Father” and “Son” are not treated as similes or metaphors but as an integral witness to God’s eternal triune nature of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19)
- “Father” is the source for all family. “Father” thus cannot be an analogy (i.e. simile or metaphor) with human fathers (Eph 3:14-15).
- “Son” / “Son of God” is called God (Isa 7:14; 9:6; Heb 1:8; 1 John 5:20), described as the Creator (Pr 30:4; Col 1:13, 16; Heb 1:2), and is stated to be eternal (Isa 9:6; Mic 5:2; Col 1:13, 17; Heb 7:3). “Son” / “Son of God” thus cannot be an analogy (i.e. simile or metaphor) with human sons.
- “Father” and “Son” have enjoyed shared glory and love from eternity as “Father” and “Son” (John 17:5, 24)
- “Father” and “Son” is the basis for believers in Jesus becoming children or sons of God (e.g. John 1:12; Rom 8:14-19, 29; Gal 4:4-7; Eph 1:3-5; 1 John 3:1-2)

\* This number is based on the Greek text of the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland New Testament (NA 27). See “Occurrences of Father, Son, and Son of God, or Familial Language Terminology in the New Testament,” at [biblicalmissiology.org](http://biblicalmissiology.org)

Let’s Stop Giving  
Muslims  
Islamized Bibles



Best Practices For Assessing  
The Accuracy Of Scripture &  
Scripture-Based Products  
In Witness To Muslims

See inside for a typical example of how  
Matthew 28:19 is mistranslated in a  
“Muslim Idiom Translation”