10817 - Ruling on obtaining the previous scriptures

the question

Is it permissible for a Muslim to obtain the Injeel (Gospel) to find out the words of Allaah to His slave and Messenger ‘Eesa (Jesus – peace be upon him)?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is not permissible to obtain any of the previous scriptures which came before the Qur’aan, such as the Injeel (Gospel or New Testament), Tawraat (Torah or Old Testament) and others, for two reasons.

The first reason is that anything in them that is beneficial has been explained by Allaah in the Qur’aan.

The second reason is that the Qur’aan frees us from any need for these books. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur’aan) to you (Muhammad) with truth, confirming what came before it [Aal ‘Imraan 3:3]

“And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (this Qur’aan) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and Mohaymin (trustworthy in highness and a witness) over it (old Scriptures). So judge among them by what Allaah has revealed [al-Maa’idah 5:48]

So whatever good may be in the previous books is to be found in the Qur’aan.

With regard to the questioner’s statement that he wants to find out what Allaah said to His slave and Messenger ‘Eesa, this information is to be found in what Allaah has told us in the Qur’aan. So there is no need to look elsewhere. Moreover, the Injeel (Gospel) that is extant today is distorted.

The evidence for that is the fact that there are four Gospels which contradict one another; there is no one Gospel which can be relied upon.

But the seeker of knowledge who has sufficient knowledge to be able to tell truth from falsehood, may be allowed to read (the previous scriptures) in order to refute the falsehood found therein or to leave the followers of the scriptures with no excuse for not knowing that they are false.