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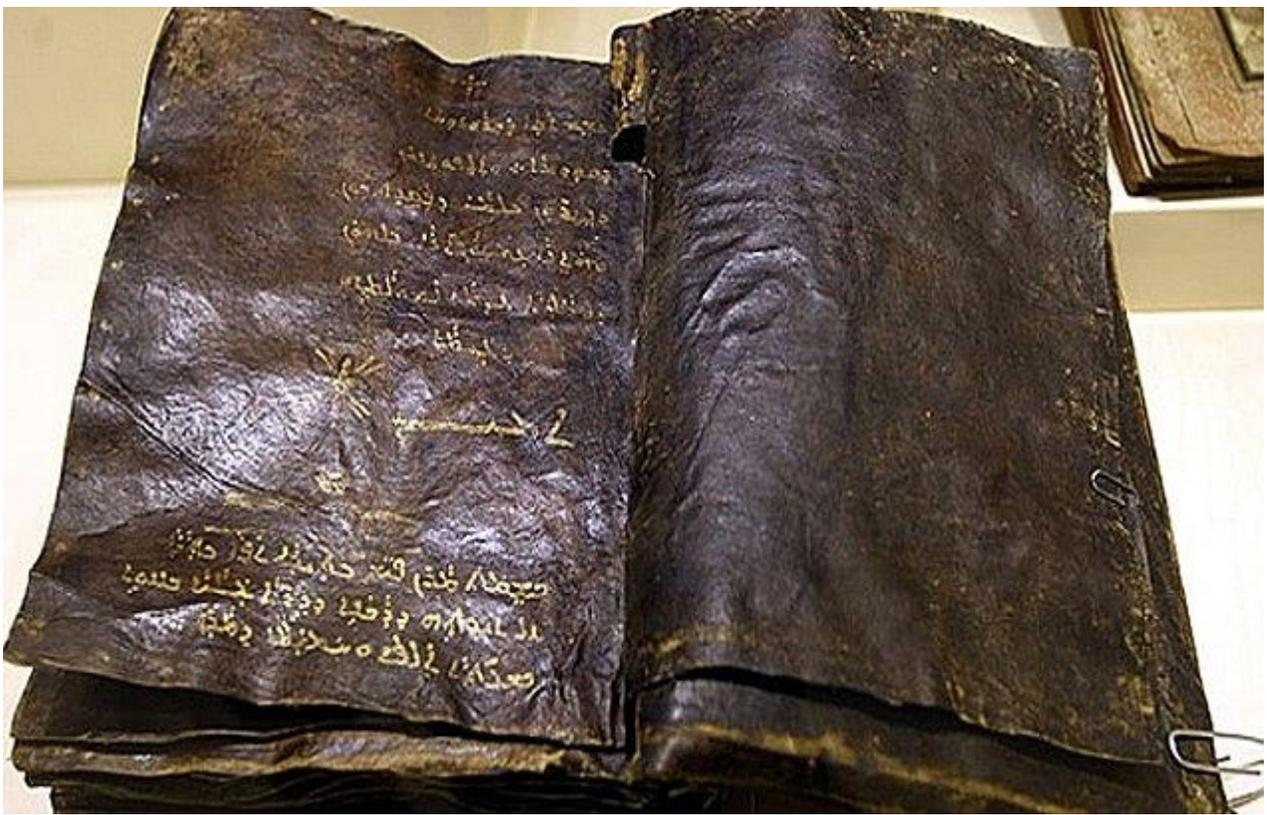
Seized from smugglers, the leather-bound 'gospel' which Iran claims will bring down Christianity and shake world politics

- The text, written on animal hide, is thought to be an authentic version of the Gospel of Barnabas, one of Jesus's disciples
- It was discovered by Turkish authorities in 2000 during an anti-smuggling operation
- 'Laughable' Iranian report claims the book states that Jesus was never crucified and He predicted the coming of the Prophet Muhammad
- The Vatican has made an official request to view the text

A leather-bound religious text, thought to date from the fifth century but discovered only 12 years ago, will cause the collapse of Christianity worldwide, Iran has claimed.

The book, written on animal hide, was confiscated during an anti-smuggling operation in Turkey's Mediterranean region in 2000.

Turkish authorities believe it could be an authentic version of the Gospel by Jesus's disciple Barnabas, and an Iranian press report has claimed that its contents will trigger Christianity's downfall by proving that Islam is the final and righteous religion.



Ancient: The discovery of this leather-bound text will cause the collapse of Christianity worldwide, Iran has claimed

Others have dismissed the Iranian claims as 'laughable' anti-Christian propaganda.

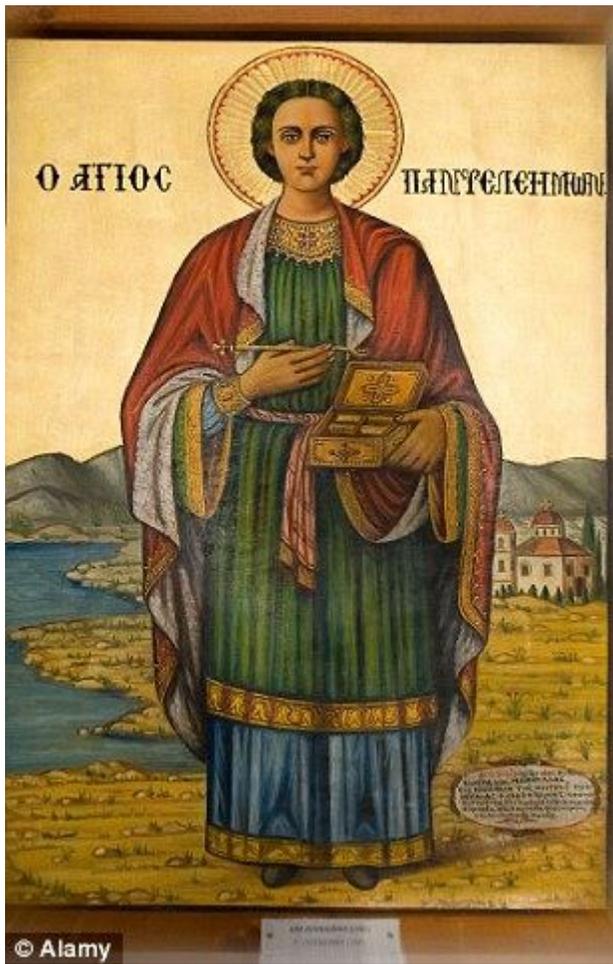
The Basij Press claims the text was written in the 5th or 6th century and it predicted the coming of the Prophet Muhammad and the religion of Islam.

It says the Christian world denies the existence of such a gospel.

Basij claims that Chapter 41 of the Gospel reads: 'God has hidden himself as Archangel Michael ran them (Adam and Eve) out of heaven, (and) when Adam turned, he noticed that at top of the gateway to heaven, it was written "La elah ela Allah, Mohamad rasool Allah," meaning Allah is the only God and Mohammad his prophet.

The Iranian report claims that the text states that Jesus was never crucified and that He himself predicted Muhammad's coming.

The book, written in Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, even predicts the coming of the last Islamic messiah, the report adds.



Saintly: Turkish authorities believe the book could be an authentic version of the Gospel of Barnabas, pictured

Turkish authorities seized the text in 2000 in a crackdown on a gang who were charged with smuggling antiquities, illegal excavations and the possession of explosives.

But excitement at the find only peaked in February this year, when it was reported that the Vatican had made an official request to view the book.

It is not known whether the request was granted.

Its origins are unknown, but [National Turk](#) reported that the book had been kept in the Justice Palace in the Turkish capital, Ankara, and was being transferred under armed police guard to the city's Ethnography Museum.

The Basij report suggests that the discovery is so immense that it will shake world politics.

'The discovery of the original Barnabas Bible will now undermine the Christian Church and its authority and will revolutionize the religion in the world,' it states.



Safe keeping: The book was stored in Ankara's Justice Palace after it was confiscated from smugglers

'The most significant fact, though, is that this Bible has predicted the coming of Prophet Mohammad and in itself has verified the religion of Islam.'

Although Turkish authorities believe the text to be genuine, other observers have questioned its authenticity.

Erick Stakelbeck, a terrorism analyst and a close observer of Iranian affairs, told WND.com: 'The Iranian regime is committed to stamping out Christianity by any means necessary, whether that means executing Christian converts, burning Bibles or raiding underground churches.'

Phil Lawler, writing on the [Catholic Culture](http://www.catholicculture.org)

[website](http://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/the-city-gates.cfm?id=309), described the claim as a 'laughable Iranian challenge to Christianity'.



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