

A SURVEY OF ISLAM

Acts 4:12 / John 14:6 / Genesis 16:11-12

Islam is a religious, social and political force and every Christian should be aware of it. With so many millions (& soon to be billions) embracing the Islamic faith and with entire countries ruled and dominated by Islamic teachings, practices, and laws their world-view is becoming more and more prevalent, even in America.

[The number of mosques has increased significantly in the U.S. in the last decade. There was a 74 % increase in the number of Islamic houses of worship rose from 1,209 in the year 2000 to 2,106 in 2010. USA Today, February 29, 2012.]

Much of the world's oil is controlled by Islamic countries.

Western universities are seeing a large influx of Muslim teachers

Christians need to, more than ever know how to approach the followers of Mohammad and share the good news of Jesus Christ with them.

To facilitate our study let's use the following outline:

- I. DEFINITIONS
- II. BRIEF HISTORY / BACKGROUND.
- III. WRITINGS.
- IV. CORE BELIEFS OF ISLAM.
- V. THE 5 PILLARS OF ISLAM
- VI. PRACTICES / SHARIA LAW
- VII. ISLAMIZATION
- VIII. TERRORISM AND RADICAL ISLAM
- IX. HOW THEN CAN WE REACH A MUSLIM WITH THE GOSPEL?

SOME DEFINITIONS

Islam, the Arabic term for "submission,"

Based on the teachings of Mohammed.

Muslim is the name given to one who adheres to the religion of Islam. One that "submits"

Allah is the Arabic term for God.

Why don't they just use God for God?

They believe that the Hebrews word for God (Yahweh and Elohim) were originally Allah in the first 5 books of the old testament (the Pentateuch) which is a component of the Koran.

Muslims also feel strongly that the English word God does not convey the real meaning of the word Allah.

Muhammad was an Arab born in the city of Mecca in A.D. 570 (died A.D. 632).

This was nearly 600 years after Christ and the beginning of the Christian Church

His name in Arabic means the one who is praised

That is why Mecca is so revered by the Muslims

He claimed that he was the last prophet

He claimed that Jesus was nothing more than a prophet

Qur'an (Koran is the older spelling) is Arabic for "the recitation," and refers to the collection of revelations supposedly given by Allah through his archangel to Muhammad and preserved as the Islamic scripture.

Muslims believe in the Law of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the Injil, or Gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, they believe that the Scriptures from Jesus were superseded by the scripture given through Muhammad, and that the Bible used by Christians and Jews is a distorted version of those other scriptures.

Wherever the Bible contradicts Islam, the Muslim says the Bible is incorrect.

Ayatollah refers to a spiritual master or leader in Shi'ite Islam the smaller group of Muslims

Shi'ite means partisans -of Ali).

[Imam refers rightful leader of Shi'ite Islam.]

The imam is the permanent prayer leader of a mosque or congregation in Sunni Islam the larger group of Muslims.

Jihad refers to a Muslim holy war or spiritual struggle against infidels.

It is the doctrine that calls on Muslims to combat the enemies of their religion.

It is a holy war or crusade undertaken as Islamic duty.

The jihad of the sword involves waging war against enemies of Islam.

Muslims contend that those who die in combat become martyrs and are guaranteed a place in paradise.

In strict Islamic law jihad is a duty on all adult male believers until Islam has attained universal domination; hence there can be no peace with unbelievers but only limited truces.

II. BRIEF HISTORY / BACKGROUND.

Muhammad was orphaned early in his life and tradition

says that he was raised by his grandfather [who also died] and then his uncle Muhammad (age 25) was a poor man and he studied the Upanishads with the Buddhist Monks until he realized that poverty was not for him.

He married a wealthy widow named Khadija (age 41).

His wife gave him love, wealth, leisure, and an influential position Meccan society.

He had two sons, who die in infancy, and four daughters. At about the age of 40, Muhammad is said to have begun to see visions and receive revelations.

It was at this time that Muhammad began preaching publicly against the multiplicity of idols which were worshiped at Mecca's central shrine, the Ka'ba [meaning "cube" that is believed to hold the stone of creation – a remnant of the Garden of Eden].

Muhammad believed, or at least reported, that he had received his visions from Allah, through the angel Gabriel.

He like the followers of Jesus angered the merchants that sold idols to pilgrims by promoting monotheism

Muhammad and his many followers were forced to leave Mecca for Yathrib, a mainly Jewish city 280 miles north where Muhammad had converted some pilgrims coming to Mecca.

So many became converts that the city became what became known as Medina, “the city of the Prophet.”

From that time it took Muhammad, only ten years to build his band of followers into a strong army which conquered nearly all of central and western Arabia.

Muhammad, who had been previously cast out of Mecca, returned less than a decade later and made it his capital.

Muhammad was clearly a great military leader.

He also considered himself to be the prophet of Allah, and as such, he founded Islam, which he taught was a return to the pure worship of the one true God of Abraham.

Muhammad believed that God’s true path came from Ishmael the first son born of Hagar to Abraham, when Abraham disobeyed God’s command to wait for a child to be born of his aging wife, Sarah (Gen 16:11-12).

It is important to remember that God had already preserved His written word through the nation of Israel, through Abraham’s son Isaac. He had already fulfilled the promises made to Abraham through His son, Jesus Christ.

The deviation happens in that Hagar’s son (Ishmael) was the true lineage of prophets.

That Isaac was the incorrect lineage.

This connection is crucial to understanding the Islamic religion.

The Ka'ba, which was the central shrine of Arabs in Mecca, Muhammad believed to have been built by Abraham as a place of worship to God.

Muhammad considered Abraham to be his father and thus, the religion he founded was to be, not so much a new thing, but a return to the worship of the one true God of his father.

It is important to note, however, that the name given to god by Muhammad, Allah, does not find its roots in the true worship of Abraham, but in pagan traditions.

“Allah corresponded to the Babylonian god Baal, and Arabs knew of him long before Mohammed worshiped him as the supreme.

Allah was the god of the local Qurish tribe which was Mohammed's tribe before he invented Islam to lead his people out of their polytheism.

Allah was known as the Moon God, of which he had 3 daughters who were viewed as intercessors for the people into Allah.

Mohammed drove the other idols away; he made one god now the only god and he was its messenger.

Mohammed used the name Allah, which was of a specific idol without ever distinguishing it from the idol the Meccans were already worshiping...

These names show the devotion of Mohammed's pagan roots, and also prove that Allah was part of a polytheistic system of worship before Allah was made the supreme and only god from the other God's.

The crescent moon was the symbol of the moon God Allah and is used as a symbol of Islam today.

Muhammad's interest in establishing Islam seems to be almost entirely driven by a desire for power and a desire to unify that power around a central ideal or religion.

He wanted to drive out the competing Gods

IV. CORE BELIEFS OF ISLAM

At first glance, Islamic belief appears to be almost compatible with Christianity and/or Judaism.

Often people claim that the Muslims believe in the same God as Christians: "They just don't accept Jesus Christ."

However, as we shall see, the Muslim God is not like the Christian God.

Islam rejects the biblical doctrines of the Trinity and the deity of Christ (1 John 2:21-24).

Muslims' hope for salvation begins with a belief in Allah.

Their salvation depends upon their own efforts.

They perform good deeds hoping that these will outweigh their sins.

A faithful Muslim will lead a disciplined life by following the Five Pillars of Faith.

Muslims believe that Allah in mercy sent many prophets to all the nations of the world to guide men in the right way, and to convey his word to them.

Muslims generally believe that there are 25 primary prophets,

beginning with Adam as number one and Jesus as number 24.

Muhammad is number 25 and the final prophet.

Being the last, he supersedes and is greater than all the other prophets.

Iblis (diabolos or Satan) is the chief enemy of man (because he refused Allah's command to worship Adam and rebelled against Allah) and is head of all the demons and evil jinn. (These jinn are invisible moral beings that can choose obedience or disobedience).

Two fierce black angels visit corpses in the grave shortly after death and ask them, "Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?"

The Final Judgment.

Images of paradise, especially for men, are very prominent.

Muslims also believe in hell.

Even with all their devotion, a Muslim can never be sure of where he or she will spend eternity because one's ultimate destiny is subject solely to the capricious will of Allah.

The only way to know for sure that you will spend eternity in paradise is to die in jihad.

All other Muslims must await the day of resurrection where their deeds will be weighed in Allah's scales.

Then they must cross the long narrow bridge Sirat where the wicked will fall into hell.

Holy Day.

Friday is the Muslim Holy Day.

Mohammad preached his first sermon after his arrival in Medina on Friday which then became the day for congregational worship in Islam.

Twelve noon is when services begin

Conversion.

The sword is more effective than the tongue in making converts to Islam.

V. THE 5 PILLARS OF ISLAM

The Islamic worldview is based on upholding the Pillars of Islam.

For a Muslim, God has not provided a savior; there is no shed blood of Calvary for them.

In their view, they are working hard every day to perhaps earn the opportunity for eternal life and favor from God.

The first pillar is The Confession of Faith (Shahabad).

Muslims continuously recite a simple statement that is also quite comprehensive in scope. It is professing the oneness of Allah and accepting the Prophet Muhammad as his messenger to humanity.

Muslims declare, “that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.” As a profession of their faith, they would say, in Arabic, “I testify that there is only one god Allah and that Muhammad (Peace Be Unto His Name) is his messenger.” To become a Muslim, you must simply repeat this confession three times.

James writes, “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe and shudder” (James 2:19).

The second pillar of Islam is The Prayers of Salat.

This requires practicing Muslims to face Mecca five times a day at specific time for prayer

The third pillar is the Giving of Alms or Zakaat.

Alms-giving which is required from all who are able to do so.

Since Muhammad was a poor orphan it is a Muslim's duty to help the poor and the orphans.

A fourth pillar, is the Ritual Fast called Sawm,

during the 9th [lunar] month of the Islamic year, the season of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Muslim calendar). Muslims have to abstain from food, drink, smoke, and sexual relations from dawn to dusk during this month.

They are also to be especially mindful of other sins.

The last pillar is the Pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca.

The Haji is a pilgrimage that occurs during the Islamic [12th] month of Dhu al-Hijjah to the holy city of Mecca.

Originally and still for some Muslims the first two pillars are combined and the last pillar of Islam is the jihad or holy war.

Today it is often referred to as the sixth pillar of Islam.

A revelation came to Muhammad that he should make war on idolaters and force them to submit and become Muslims, and so he did.

VII. ISLAMIZATION

The vast majority of Muslims in the U.S. and around the world (90 percent plus) are peaceful, conservative people.

They don't believe in jihad.

Radical Islam is moving around the world

They are working their way into the countries of the west

They are working their ways into the schools of the west

They are working their ways into secular positions within the countries of the west.

How do we combat the islamization of the world?

By doing what Christ told us to do in Matt 16

IX. HOW THEN CAN WE REACH A MUSLIM WITH THE GOSPEL?

The presentation of the Gospel to Muslims outside of the United States is considered extremely dangerous as we have seen on television.

But we have a unique opportunity here in the United States to be missionaries in our own country since the Muslim population in the US is growing exponentially.

It is reported that there are 6 million Muslims in America today.

How can we approach Muslims that we know today?

1st, Become acquainted with Muslims and with Islam.

To influence Muslims you must reach out to them.

They are God's creation

They are people like us with happiness and sorrow, burdens and anxieties, fears and hopes, failures and sins.

They are lost yet believing their religion will save them.

They will never know the truth unless someone builds a connecting bridge with them.

2nd, Begin with Peace

Most Muslims, like all other human beings, are desperately seeking peace.

Just as you don't like to be judged by the hypocrites and the ultra-radical in the church, don't judge all Muslims by the actions and attitudes of the radicals.

3rd, Demonstrate Christ's Love.

Christians will need to demonstrate the love of Jesus even toward Muslims.

Do you have any hatred in your heart toward Muslims?

Friends, followers of Islam are made in the image of God and Muslims matter to Him.

To win them we must converse, not quarrel, and treat them with respect not contempt.

1 Peter 3:15: “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

People are not convinced by knowledge, debate, or hostile action like burning the Quran

Instead it is godly living and love that makes a personal impact.

One hundred years ago, the missionary Samuel Zwemer was known as the Apostle to Islam. His whole approach could be summarized with this phrase:

“A ministry of friendship.” He once said that you can say anything to a Muslim provided you say it in love and with a smile.

Muslims are to show Christians affection according to Surah 5:82.

In fact, Surah 10:94-95 commands any Muslim in doubt of his mission / faith to find out more from "those who read the Scripture" who came before Islam (Christ-followers).

Even amidst disagreement, Muslims are required to be respectful and gracious (16:125).

Keep in mind that these are true Muslims, not radical Muslims.

4th, Remember to use the Bible.

Muslims will listen to and read the Bible.

Invite Muslims to home studies.

Surah 15:9. 4:136 says not to reject the books of God (includes the Law, Psalms, & the Prophets) and 5:47 points to the gospel (Which gospel? What is the gospel according to Allah?)

It's imperative for Christians to get grounded in the Bible and in theology.

We must read our Bible, study it, and know it and then encourage [give them a Bible] followers of Islam to read it for themselves.

When Muslims read the Bible, they become intrigued and are especially attracted to Jesus.

Don't argue with them about the Bible, simply share it.

Martin Luther said, "The Bible when attacked should be treated like a lion in its cage.

Rather than attempting to defend it, unleash it!"

Since Muslims believe Jesus to be a prophet, point out that prophets have to tell the truth.

You could then go back to the list of verses from the Gospel of John to show what Jesus said about Himself and the way to salvation.

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

By the way, when handling your Bible, be sure to use a copy that you have not written in for that would be offensive to a follower of Islam.

Also be sure to not let it drop below your waist, and if you stack it with other books, make sure you put it on the top. To fail to do those things is a sign of disrespect in their eyes.

5th, Tell Muslims about Jesus.

Dear friends, don't try to make Jesus more acceptable to people.

Jesus is truth and can stand up to thorough investigation.

Our job is to tell others about Him in love.

Many Muslims have a sincere affection for Jesus Christ as a kind and loving prophet.

But they do not know the vastness of His love, for they refuse to believe that He loved sinners so much that He voluntarily died on the cross to save them.

In wishing to honor Jesus they say that He was so great it was impossible for His enemies to overcome and kill Him.

God being just would never have permitted His holy and righteous prophet Jesus to suffer the shame of the cross.

It is generally believed that God performed a miracle to save Jesus.

He changed one of the enemies to look like Jesus, and he was taken and crucified by mistake in the place of Jesus, whom God took alive to heaven.

Where He is today.

If Jesus Christ is not truly one with God, and if He did not die, there is no adequate sacrifice for the sin of the world, and sinners have no Savior.

We are still in our sins.

There is no glorious resurrection on the third day, no joyous Easter, and no victory over death and sin.

Thus Muslims have no assurance of forgiveness, or of eternal life with God.

Remember their salvation is earned not given freely

For them death has not lost its sting, or grave its victory.

How desperately they need to know and believe the message of the cross and the empty tomb!

By the way, the exclusive truth claims of Jesus do not mean that we should demonstrate an arrogant spirit.

We must always teach Gods message with love and humility.

6th, Emphasis the Differences

Though one should avoid controversy whenever possible in order to save Muslims the differences between a follower of Jesus Christ and Islam must be pointed out.

Allah is a powerful god who is unlike anyone and is therefore unknowable.

Jesus is a personal God who can be known and related to through a close personal relationship.

Salvation for followers of Jesus comes by putting one's trust for salvation and forgiveness in God's Son who died as a sacrifice for sinners.

A Muslim is attempting to save oneself by doing works of merit, which will never be enough to cancel one's sins.

Believers in Jesus follow a Living Lord who conquered death by rising from the tomb on the third day and is with His disciples always,

A Muslim makes a pilgrimage to the grave of a man who died more than 1,300 years ago who is still in his tomb.

True Followers of Jesus receive the Holy Spirit who enables them to live a pure and holy life.

Muslims must struggle in their own natural strength to overcome sin and Satan in order to live a life pleasing to a holy god.

True Followers of Jesus have a guide and example who is the sinless Son of God.

Muslims follow a prophet, who according to the Qur'an, was commanded by Allah to repent of his sins.

A former Muslim said "Islam had the rules and discipline she wanted in her life, but lacked the power to live the life the rules stipulated: 'As a system of personal discipline, Islam has few equals. As a means of earning God's favor, it's a spiritual treadmill.'"

To the Muslim, cleanliness is the path to touching God but Jesus showed that touching Him is the path to cleanliness.

When the unholy touches the holy, the unholy does not defile the holy; the holy purifies the unholy.

For Muslims, Allah is a powerful force, but not a friend.

He's far away, unpredictable, and impossible to please.

There is no statement in the Qur'an that says "Allah is love." [It does say that "Allah loves" two times but his love is conditioned on whether an individual keeps his laws and standards.]

To the Muslim, Allah is the distant one, the cold judge and the hater of infidels.

Most feel disconnected from their holy and harsh deity.

They know they need purification, they live with a sense of shame that they're not doing enough and they seek an intercessor.

Islam is the ultimate religion of works-righteousness while Christianity is all about gift-righteousness.

In Islam, people obey and hope to be accepted.

In Christianity, I am accepted, therefore I obey.

Followers of Jesus face death with the assurance of immediate entrance into the Fathers' House to be in His holy presence forever.

Muslims are awaiting a terrifying questioning by the two angels, and the possibility of eternal existence in the fires of hell.

The realization of these and other basic differences between the two religions has caused sincere seekers for God to choose the "Pearl of Great Price," whatever the cost might be (Mt. 13:45).

Matthew 13:45 New King James Version (NKJV)

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,

Remember this, you and I cannot argue a Muslim into the kingdom because,

"The roots of Muslim beliefs are not found in their minds, but in their hearts." [and culture].

7th, Live Your Life for Jesus.

Because Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, those of us who know Him should have our lives shaped by Him.

Are you living for Him right now?

Do you need to come back if you've been drifting?

Many Muslims say the number one thing that keeps them from Christ is the lifestyle of Christians.

A Christian who lives among Muslims said this: "They are contemptuous of Christians because they think they are worldly..."

According to Muslims, “Christians are morally loose and do not show respect for God

IN CONCLUSION

God so loved the world, including the Muslim world, that He gave His One and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Reaching Muslims with the life-changing gospel message of Jesus Christ will be difficult.

Mighty mountains are blocking the advance of the Good News, not only in Muslim lands, but in Muslim hearts and minds.

All seems lost to the natural man, but not to God. All things are possible with God if we would only believe (Mk. 9:23).

Jesus encouraging His disciples to faith says,

“If you have the faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will be moved; and nothing will be impossible to you” (Mt. 17:20).

With us the task is impossible but with God all things are possible (Mk.10:27).

So share Christ in the power of the Spirit and leave the results to God.

INVITATION