
ENCOUNTERING ISLAM

Why Islam?

Goals for Tonight

- Overview & Basic info on Islam
- The Big 3 (*And their application to other false belief systems*)
 1. Who is God?
 2. Who is Jesus?
 3. How are we saved?
- Give practical guidance on how to minister to Muslims around us
- Time for Q & A

Basic Terminology

Qur'an

Sura

Aya

Hadith

Islam

Muslim

Life & History of Mohammed and Early Islam

- 570 Mohammed is born in Mecca
- 577 Mohammed's mother dies
- 595 Marries Khadijah
- 610 Claims to have received the Qur'an from Gabriel
- 613 Teaches Islam publicly
- 619 'The year of sorrow' – Mohammed loses Abu Talib (uncle) & Khadijah
- 620 Isra and Mi'raj ("The Night Journey") – Reported ascension to heaven
- 622 Hijra ("Migration to Medina") – similar to the exodus
- 624 Battle of Badr
- 625 Uhud (defeat)
- 627 Battle of The Trench
- 629 Conquest of Mecca
- 632 Mohammed dies
- 632-661 Era of 'rightly guided' caliphs ("Rashidun")
 - Abu Bakr, Mohammed's father-in-law

- Umar ibn al-Khattab, Mohamed's father-in-law – Muslim rule expanded greatly under his leadership
- Uthman ibn Affan, Mohammed's son-in-law – Gathered and established the orthodox readings of the Qur'an
- Ali, Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law – Rashidun ends with civil war under Ali's leadership

Mohammed's Importance

Last Prophet

Prominent, Not Worshipped

Religious, Military, and Political

Prophesied in the Bible

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper."

John 14:16

"A cloud is said to have overshadowed the Kaaba, showering down saffron, musk, and amber. Every idol fell on its face and the wise dreamt that a number of strong camels were leading the horses of Arabia across the Tigris. On that night in every holy book of the world a drop of blood appeared to signify that Muhammad would be a prophet armed with a sword. And on the altar of every monastery and hermit's cell was written, 'Know that the untaught prophet is born'.

*The Book of Muhammad
by Mehru Jaffer pg. 25*

A Current Picture

- 2nd largest religion in the world
- Fastest growing in the world?
- Indonesia is the most Islamic country in the world
- In the United States, there are 3 million Muslims (more than Presbyterians or Anglicans)
- Sunni and Shia are 2 main sects of Islam, though there are others. Sunni Islam is the largest sect.
- Around 500 Muslims worship at *The Islamic Center of Northeast Tennessee* during holidays (by Willow Springs park)

#1: Who is God?

Islam, “Allah”

The Muslim conception of “Allah” is false

Christians and Muslims do not worship the same God
“Allah” is simply the Arabic word for God

Unitarian monotheism

God is both one being and person

Utterly transcendent

Allah cannot be compared to his creation in any way
Neither physical nor a spirit
Does not have a personal relationship with his creation

In the Qur’an, Allah is described as creator, eternal, gracious, merciful (Sura 1:3), and loving (Sura 85:14)

However, most of Allah’s actions and character in the Qur’an can be described as harsh, angry, wrathful, distant, and arbitrary

The sin of Shirk (an unforgivable sin)

Associating any other person in the worship of Allah
Those that worship the Trinity are engaged in Shirk (Sura 4:116,171)

Christianity

There is only one God (Deut. 6:4)

God is eternal, gracious, merciful, loving, faithful and just (Ex. 34:7)

God is spirit (John 4:24)

Created man in his image (Gen. 1:26-27)

Loves His creation so much that He enters into it (John 3:16, Romans 3:26)

God adopts us as children, considers us heirs & friends (Galatians 3:26, 4:7; James 2:23)

Trinitarian monotheism

God is one being (Deut. 6:4, Isaiah 44:6-8)
The three persons of the Trinity are of one substance (Isaiah 44:6-8, John 10:30, Acts 5:4)

#2: Who is Jesus?

Muslim Jesus

Only a prophet or messenger (“Razul”, Sura 4:171)

Discussed in the Qur’an more than Mohammed

Sinless, Born of a virgin (Sura 3:45-47)

Childhood accounts (Sura 3:47)

Bringing life to clay birds (Sura 5:110)

Speaking from the cradle (Sura 19:29-34)

So she pointed to him. They said, “How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child?”

[Jesus] said, “Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I remain alive. And [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive.”

That is Jesus, the son of Mary - the word of truth about which they are in dispute. It is not [befitting] for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, “Be,” and it is.

[Jesus said], “And indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path.”

Did not die on the cross and atone for sins (Sura 4:157)

Most Muslims believe that Jesus didn’t die but was received into heaven

The second coming (Sura 43:61, but mostly discussed in the Hadith)

What about the Holy Spirit?

Muslims believe that the angel Gabriel is the Holy Spirit

Christian Jesus

Creator and sustainer of all things (Col. 1:16-17)

Is God, the second person of the Trinity (John 8:58, Matthew 28:9, Rev. 5:12-14)

Died on the cross for sins and was resurrected (Mark 15:37, Matthew 27:50, Luke 23:46, John 19:30, Romans 5:8, John 20)

He is coming again (Acts 1:11)

**See also historical theological confessional articulations: Nicene Creed, Apostles’ Creed, Westminster Confession of Faith*

#3: How are we saved?

Islam

Islam presents a works righteousness path to salvation

Those who please God with their deeds are granted access to paradise.

The five pillars of Islam

- 1) **Shahada** – The right confession of who God is. Also, one becomes a Muslim by reciting this in Arabic.
- 2) **Prayer** – Prescribed 5 times a day
- 3) **Almsgiving** – Muslims are required to give 2.5% of their wealth
- 4) **Fasting** – During the month of Ramadan
- 5) **Pilgrimage (Hajj)** – Every male must go to Mecca during Ramadan at least once in their life (or perform other prescribed works if unable)

Orthopraxy, rather than orthodoxy

Christianity

Due to our sin, all are unable to earn merited favor from God

Romans 3:23, Isaiah 64:6, Gal. 2:16

We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-10)

When we repent of our sins and place faith in Jesus's work on our behalf, God justifies unworthy sinners as righteous in His sight (Gen. 6:15, Gal. 2:16, Acts 2:38-39)

Muslims see the Christian view of salvation as unfair.

It is - if God were fair to us, He would save no one!

We need mercy and grace, not fairness.

Salvation is *just* though it is not *fair*.

What is the Qur'an?

Qur'an means 'recitation'

Originally was oral

Codified in writing under Uthman

114 Suras, arranged from longest to shortest

Difference between Mecca & Medina suras

In Arabic only

Most translations are titled as, "Translation of the message of the Qur'an"

Few narratives, More a stream of consciousness

Often difficult to establish context

'Abrogation'

Some revelations supersede or replace other revelations

Claims to recognize other Scriptures

Namely, the Torah, Psalms, and the Gospel

More familiarity with Old Testament narratives (Adam and Eve, Noah, Joseph, David)

But almost no familiarity with New Testament teachings

Stories are always a little bit different (See Appendix on 'Noah and the Flood')

Where do we go from here?

Pray

Learn more – See resources below

Talk, get to know, and share the Gospel with Muslims around you

What can I talk about with my Muslim friends?

Views of justice

How can Allah forgive sin without rightly punishing the breaking of the law?
Christianity accounts for cosmic justice because all sin is punished for the elect on the cross and on the reprobate in hell.

Qur'an and the Hadith

Much of distinctive Muslim practice comes not from the Qur'an but from the Hadith. The Hadith is not scripture (like the Qur'an is) but it is very important in Islamic practice. This contrasts the Christian view of the sufficiency of the Bible.

Trinitarian vs. Unitarian view of God

Most Muslims don't understand the Trinity, be able to discuss it as compared to a Unitarian understanding of God.

The language barrier

Define your terms biblically. Muslims use the words mercy, grace, sin, etc. but attach different meanings to them. Always be as clear as possible.

The Bible vs. the Qur'an

Muslims have many misunderstandings about what the Bible is and isn't. Know the difference in translation and transmission history.

Conclusion

- Know that the battle is spiritual
- Stay focused on the important issues
- Be hospitable and willing to invest your time in getting to know your Muslim neighbor
- And pray for them!
- Leaving Islam is not as simple as leaving a Baptist church to join a Methodist church. Expect the unexpected.

Recommended Resources

The Bible

What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an, James White

James White debates:

- Adnan Rasheed, youtu.be/OEPlcWcCsY4
- Abdullah Hamimi, youtu.be/9PCKLWLdQ68
- Yasir Qadhi, youtu.be/updtj99Fp8o and youtu.be/r2tPHLOej1w

James Anderson's teaching

- Ligonier lectures (www.ligonier.org/learn/series/exploring-islam/ or via app)
- RTS lectures (subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rtis/li/+d2eo563 or via app)

Kingdom of the Cults, Walter Martin – A very good, concise overview of many common false religions.

Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus, Nabil Qureshi (*Although this book is very edifying and a worthwhile read, be careful about using this book evangelistically. Qureshi belonged to a sect generally considered to be unorthodox by both Sunni and Shia Muslims.)

The Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenges of Islam, Colin Chapman

The Gospel for Muslims, Thabiti Anyabwile

Answering-islam.org – A good apologetics resource

The Qur'an, especially Suras 1, 3, 4, 12

The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (a sort of Study Qur'an)

Whyislam.org – A popular Islamic apologetic site useful for reading about Islam from a practicing Muslim perspective

Not Robert Spencer or Usama Dakdok (*they generally are uncharitable and likely will not equip you well to engage with Muslims*)

Appendix: Noah and the Flood in the Bible and the Qur'an

Bible

The Lord, seeing the wickedness of man determines to send a flood to destroy the world. (Gen. 6:5-8).

Noah finds favor in God's sight and is told to build an ark (6:14-16)

Noah is commanded to bring 2 of every clean animal on the ark. (7:1-3)

It rains forty days and nights; the flood covers the earth. (7:12-13)

The water subsides. The Lord establishes a covenant with Noah that the world will not be destroyed with water again. (9:8-17)

Qur'an

Noah is sent to warn his people.

"Warn your people before there comes upon them a grievous penalty." — Holy Qur'an, 57:61

"I have come to you with a clear warning that you worship none but God. Verily I fear for you the penalty of a grievous day." — Holy Qur'an, 11:25-26

The people falsely accuse Noah and mock him.

"We see nothing special in you except as a man like ourselves. Nor do we see any who have followed you but those who are the meanest amongst us and immature in judgment. Nor do we see in you any excellence over us; in fact we think you are a liar." — Holy Qur'an, 11:27

"And O my people! I ask you for no wealth in return: my reward is from none but God." — Holy Qur'an, 11:29

"And O my people! I ask you for no wealth in return: my reward is from none but God." — Holy Qur'an, 11:29

"O Noah! Indeed you have disputed with us and you have prolonged the dispute: now bring upon us what you have threatened us with, if you are of the Truthful Ones." — Holy Qur'an, 11:32

"Truly God will bring it on you if He wills, — and then, you will not be able to frustrate it." — Holy Qur'an, 11:33

“And they have said (to each other) ‘Abandon not your gods: abandon neither Waddnor Suwa, neither Yaguth nor Yauq, nor Nasr.’ — Holy Qur’an, 71:23

“O my Lord! I have called to my people by night and by day, but my call only (increases their) flight (from the True Path). And every time I have called to them, that You may forgive them, they have thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, grown obstinate and given themselves up to arrogance. So, I have called to them aloud: further I have spoken to them in public and secretly in private.” — Holy Qur’an, 71:5-9

“Whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him, they mocked at him...” — Holy Qur’an, 11:38

Noah is commanded to build an ark.

“Construct the Ark within Our sight and under Our guidance. Then when comes Our command, and the fountains of the earth gush forth, take on board pairs of every species, male and female, and your people except those of them against whom the Word has already been issued: and address Me not in respect of those who are unjust; for verily they shall be drowned (in the flood).” — Holy Qur’an, 23:27

God sends the flood. Noah, most of his family, and the believers are saved. One of Noah’s sons dies in the flood.

‘O my son! embark with us and be not with the unbelievers’. The son replied: ‘I will betake myself to some mountain, it will save me from the flood’. And Noah said: ‘This day nothing can save you from what God has decreed, for only those on whom He has Mercy will be saved’. And the waves came between them and the son was among the drowned ones.” — Holy Qur’an, 11:42-43

Ark comes to rest on Mount Judi.

“O Earth! swallow up your water, and O Sky! withhold your rain! and the water abated and the matter was ended. The Ark rested on Mount Judi.” — Holy Qur’an, 11:44

“O my Lord! enable me to disembark with Your Blessings, for You are the Best of all to enable us to disembark.” — Holy Qur’an, 23:29