



HEY, GOD, WHAT ABOUT ISLAM?

Summer Sanctuary Bible Studies
Woodbury Lutheran Church
Session 3 – June 20, 2004

Origin and Extent

- Islam – Arabic word meaning “submission” or “surrender” to God
- Muslim – one who submits himself or herself to God
 - Before Mohammed the Arab people worshiped many gods and spirits (about 360). Those in Mecca worshiped the Most High God Allah. This early religion stemmed from worshiping the moon god, which explains why Islam’s religious icon is a crescent moon.

Sources of Islam

- Founded on Four Sources: the *Qur’an*, the *Hadith* (canonical traditions), *ijma’* (community consensus), and *qiyas* (analogy).
 - *Qur’an* – or Koran - eternal, infallible, and unalterable Word of God
 - Mediated by inspiration through the angel *Jibril*(Gabriel) to Muhammad
 - Muhammad was only the vehicle
 - Compiled from the largest chapter to the smallest chapter, so it is confusing
 - *Hadith* – accounts of canonical tradition from Muhammad that help interpret the Qur’an
 - These are thousands of *Hadiths* and the Muslims have a hard time knowing which ones are truly from Muhammad
 - *Shari’ah* - both *Qur’an* and *Hadith* = Holy Law
 - The point in which God and people meet. It models “the best community that has been raised up for mankind” (3:110).

The Five Pillars of Islam

- Confession, Witness, or *Shahada*
 - In order to be Muslim one must confess that “there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.” Once this is confessed, you are officially a Muslim.
 - “Believe in Allah and His messenger” (7:158)
 - “Obey Allah and obey the messenger” (24:54)
- Worship – *Salat* (formal) or *dua* (individual)
 - Centers around ritual prayers performed 5 times a day facing Mecca
 - Dawn, midday, midafternoon, sunset, and before retiring for bed
 - Friday the whole male population should worship in mosque. If the women want to worship there are usually areas within the mosque where they can worship or they can worship through prayer at home.
- Fasting or *Sawm* – During the month of Ramadan the Muslim people will fast during the day.
- Tithing or *Zakat* – They make a pledge from their income to be given to the needy within their community.
- Pilgrimage or *Hajj* – Each Muslims is strongly encouraged to journey to Mecca at least once in their life, and during their journey they are to recall the history of Islam.
- Some say a Jihad (Holy War or Struggle) is the 6th pillar. Jihad’s can be internal and external. Holy war is a hot topic now, and we need to see that for us the War on Terrorism is not a Jihad. Most modern Muslims say that the spiritual jihad is the most profitable.

What Muslim’s Believe?

- God (Allah) is one person, the creator and preserver, merciful and compassionate, Lord of the Day of Resurrection and Judgment.
 - Against polytheism and artistic representations of Allah
 - Representations cannot do justice to Allah because God is inconceivable

- God is all powerful "He is powerful over everything" 2:284
- Christians hold to a plurality of persons but a unity of substance
- Salvation – Muslims have three ways in which you can acquire salvation: Trying to get your good works to out weigh your bad works, Martyrdom gets you a free trip to the top, and being born into the a Muslim people.
- Prophets – These individual's are divinely inspired and speak on behalf of God.
 - Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses were also prophets
 - Jesus was just a prophet , so he was not the redeemer
 - Muhammad is the final messenger.

Life of Muhammad

- Muhammad was born in 570 A.D. and was raised by his grandparents.
- The Night of Power/destiny is the night when Muhammad received the words of the Koran
- The Hegira is the emigration from Mecca to Medina, and Medina was the first town to become a Muslim community.
- The conquest of 630 A.D. – Muhammad traveled back to Mecca with over 10,000 soldiers, conquered the land, and destroyed all the idols.

Society

- *Khalifah* – successor – designated leader of the Muslim community
- Classic Islamic political theory hold that under God Muslims should strive for world supremacy
- Divide world into three categories
 - *Ummah* - community that carries out God's will as manifested in the *shariah*
 - People of the Book – Jews and Christians – inferior to Muslims
 - Polytheists – idol worshipers and posses no scriptures- inferior to Muslims and People of the Book
- Muslims are divided into Two Main Divisions
 - *Sunni Muslims* – follow the *sunnah* path of Muhammad as recorded in *Hadith*
 - 80% of the Muslims population is Sunni, and they followed – Abu Bakr the first caliph after Muhammad
 - *Shi'i Muslims* – they say that Ali the fourth caliph according to the Sunni should have been the 1st caliph because he was Muhammad's son-in-law (10%)
 - Mostly located in Iran, Iraq, India, Pakistan, and Lebanon

Islam and Christianity: Some Comparisons and Contrasts

- Muslims view Islam as the continuation or extension of Judaism and Christianity

- From an Islamic Perspective
 - Jesus, the Son of God, and the Trinity
 - Jesus is only a servant of God and His messenger.
 - They say that God would not allow Jesus, The prophet, to die on a cross.
 - Integrity of the Bible
 - Christians have corrupted the New Testament
 - They say that everything valuable from the NT can be found in the Qur'an. Islam not only continued the previous prophetic religions, but it perfected them.
 - Ex. What good is the Model T Ford when you have the latest Rolls Royce
- Salvation
 - For Muslims – each individual must bear his or her own burden
 - All people are weak, but essentially good and only needs God's guidance because they posses the capacity to accomplish the law

The Bottom Line

Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him.
Christianity is a faith in which God sent his son to die for you.