

Glendale Christian Church



A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE
TO

ISLAM

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I. The Historical Background to Islam

The Story of Muhammad

- Born 570 AD, Muhammad's father died before his birth and his mother died when he was 6 years old. Consequently, he was raised by his uncle, as part of the Banu Hashim clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe which dominated the Saudi Arabian city of Mecca.
- Muhammad entered the caravan trade and became the business manager for a wealthy widow named Khadija, whom he eventually married (he was 25, she was 40). They had 7 children, 3 of whom died early in life. Muhammad remained faithful to Khadija and, contrary to local customs, did not take a second wife while she lived.
- In 610 AD, when he was 40 years old, while meditating in a cave near Mecca, Muslims believe the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad. According to the majority, or Sunni, tradition, Muhammad feared that the angel was a messenger of Satan and had to be compelled to follow the angel's instructions. According to the minority, or Shia, tradition, Muhammad recognized Gabriel and willingly followed his instructions.
- Muhammad began preaching in Mecca, condemning paganism, idolatry, and corruption. He was persecuted for these beliefs, and so after 7 years, he and his followers fled Mecca to live in caves in the mountains. His wife Khadija died during the hardships of this time. After her death, Muhammad married other women, beginning with Aisha (the 9-year-old daughter of friend and follower Abu Bakr), and adding up to 10 other wives (most of whom were widows of his followers who died in battle for Islam; his marriage to them was viewed as a compassion as they gained respect and security).
- The earliest biographers of the prophet mention an interesting incident that occurred during this mid-Meccan period. It is related that in one of his sermons in front of the leaders of Meccan antagonists, Muhammad, in order to win the support of his opponents, proclaimed that the favorite deities al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat could be considered divine beings whose intercession was effectual with God. But soon the prophet believed these words to be interpolations of Satan and substituted the words that we now have in 53:19–23 (see also 22:51). These have become known as the “Satanic verses.”
- The people of Medina called Muhammad to mediate a blood feud, and after his success in doing so, he became the ruler of Medina. The migration from Mecca to Medina became known as the *hijra* and is remembered in the *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca).
- Muhammad initiated a policy of guerilla warfare to gain control of Mecca, which was the commercial capital of the Arabian Peninsula. He himself led at least 3 raids on Meccan caravans. The Meccans eventually raised an army and Muhammad and his followers engaged and decisively defeated their much larger force in the Battle of Badr. His success over superior forces is seen by Muslims as a sign of God's blessing on his mission.
- A year later, Muhammad's forces were defeated by the Meccans at the Battle of Uhud and Muhammad was wounded. The following year, Muhammad successfully defended Medina from the Meccan armies and made a treaty with them. In 630, however,

Muhammad accused the Meccans of breaking the truce and invaded Mecca, showing great leniency to the Meccans who surrendered.

- Muhammad died in 632 AD.

Evaluation of Muhammad's prophetic claim

- When asked to perform miracles to support his claims, Muhammad refused to do as other prophets had (3:181–84). Instead, he claimed that **the language and teaching of the Qur'an were proof that his message was divine.**
 - But, even if the Qur'an is beautiful in style, it is not perfect or truly unparalleled.
 - But, there is nothing really unique about the basic content of the Qur'an, since even Muhammad insisted that all the prophets before him were given the same message.
 - But, if literary style is a sign of divine origin, then Muslims would have to conclude that the writings of Homer and Shakespeare were divinely inspired, too.
 - But, Muhammad is not the only one to have received revelation from an angel. Judaism, Christianity, and Mormonism all make the same claims, yet Muslims reject them for their false teaching. Why then should we accept the Islamic claim as true?
- The **military victory at Badr**, where Muhammad defeated a much larger force, is often taken as an indication of divine confirmation
 - But, if Badr's victory is a sign of divine confirmation, then why was not the subsequent clear defeat at Uhud a sign of divine disapproval?
 - But, Muhammad is not the first outnumbered military leader in history to win a big victory. The Israeli six-day war in 1967 was one of the quickest and most decisive battles in modern warfare. Yet no Muslim would consider it a miraculous sign of the divine approval of Israel over an Arab nation (Egypt).
- **Miracles** are attributed to Muhammad **in the Hadith** (traditions about the prophet).
 - But, the character of these seems to include much legendary embellishment.
 - But, the vast majority of stories from the hadith are rejected by most Muslim scholars as not being authentic
- Muhammad's **moral example**¹
 - Muhammad sanctioned his followers' raiding of the commercial Meccan caravans. The prophet himself led 3 such raids.

¹ These examples and more come from Norman L. Geisler, and Abdul Saleeb *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2002), 174-181.

- Muhammad sanctioned a follower to lie to an enemy named Khalid in order to kill him. This he did. Then, at a safe distance, but in the presence of the man's wives "he fell on him with his sword and killed him.
- Muhammad was not indisposed to breaking promises when he found it advantageous (cf. 2:217; 66:2)
- On at least two occasions Muhammad ordered people assassinated for composing poems that mocked him.
- Muhammad attacked the last Jewish tribe of Medina based on the suspicion that they had plotted with the Meccan enemies against Muslims. Unlike the previous two Jewish tribes who had been simply expelled from the city, this time all the men of the tribe were put to death and the women and children were sold into slavery.

Muslim History after Muhammad²

- **Era of the "Right Guided Calilphs"**
 - **Abu Bakr** (632-634) – under his leadership Muslim armies invaded Syria, and he arranged and compiled the official version of the Qur'an
 - **Umar** (634-644) – under his leadership Muslim armies conquered Iraq, Iran, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. He was assassinated in 644.
 - **Uthman** (644-656) – assassinated in by a group of Muslims discontent with his appointment of his brother as ruler in Egypt.
 - **Ali** (656-661) – the adopted son of Muhammad and also his son-in-law (he married Muhammad's daughter Fatima). His reign was marred by internal unrest and revolts. In one of these, Ali's willingness to make peace with a rebel governor angered a group of separatists called Kharijites. He was assassinated by the Kharijites in 661.
- **Umayyad Empire (661-750)**
 - Muslim rule was established over North Africa, much of Spain, Persia, large areas of Afghanistan, most of what is now Pakistan through the rapid advance of Muslim armies
 - Muslims consider this a miracle which proved the truth of Muhammad's claim to be the true Prophet of God
- **Abbasid Empire (750-1258)**
 - Islam's golden era
 - The time period of the Crusades

² The following account is based on the majority Sunni versions (85% of Muslims); the Shiite have some differing traditions.

- Destruction of the Caliphate by the Mongols
- Fragmentation led to
 - **Safavid Empire** in Iran (collapsed in 1736)
 - **Mogul Empire** in India (annexed by the British in 1857)
 - **Ottoman Empire** in the West (disintegrated during WWI; led to the modern states of Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq)

Muslim Communities and Sects

- **Sunni**
 - Majority (85% of Muslims)
 - From *Sunna* "the trodden path," "way," or "practice" of the Prophet
- **Wahhabi**
 - Revivalist movement during the 18th century; official version of Islam in Saudi Arabia
 - Calls for a return to the pure teachings of the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet
 - Initially had a desire to suppress all unbelievers, and began attacks on what they saw as remnants of paganism that were corrupting Islam.
 - Turned to missionary zeal and propagation of message by more peaceful means; intensified after the Israeli defeat of Muslim forces in 1967.
- **Shia**
 - Minority (15% of Muslims)
 - Followers of Ali who were loyal to Muhammad and his children
 - Instead of accepting the caliph (political and social leader whose right to govern Muslims depended on military skill) they developed the idea of an Iman (religious leader who assumed the religious and political leadership of the community by virtue of his piety and scholarship)
- **Qarmatins, Ismailis, Druze**
- **Kharjites**
 - Radical charismatic group
 - Believe that Muslims are duty-bound to impose their understanding of law and social conduct on everyone, believers and nonbelievers alike. To do otherwise, would be to compromise the purity of the faith:

7:157 *Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with*

them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear. Then those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him: they are the successful.

- **Sufism**
 - Mystics; supplement obedience with loving devotion
 - Personal quest for spiritual experiences

II. Muslim Beliefs and Practices

The Qur'an

- Unlike the Christian view of inspiration, where God reveals Himself to an individual by putting His knowledge into their mind, Muslims claim that the Qur'an is a preexistent message determined by God that is given to people. The human has no part in the authorship of the Qur'an, he/she is responsible to record the message verbatim. Thus, Qur'an means "recitation" in Arabic.
- The revelations of Muhammad were recited by him as they came. Muhammad's companions wrote down the words he spoke on whatever writing surface was handy: parchment, pieces of bone, palm leaves, etc.
- Abu Bakr (Mohammad's successor), collected together as many writings as possible and compiled the Qur'an into 114 Suras (chapters) organized from larger to smaller. The Qur'an as a whole is slightly shorter than the New Testament. Once compiled, he sought out and destroyed any variant readings.
- Because the Qur'an relies upon poetic forms and is believed to be the actual words of God, Muslims believe it cannot be translated into any other language. So-called translations are actually "renditions" of the text.
- Early (Meccan) Suras (86 total) are generally more inclusive and ecumenical; late (Medinan) Suras (28) take a far more critical view of other religious traditions, including Christianity and Judaism.

Evaluation of the "miracle" of the Qur'an

- **Literary Style**

10:37 *And this Qur'an is not such as could ever be invented in despite of Allah; but it is a confirmation of that which was before it and an exposition of that which is decreed for mankind - Therein is no doubt - from the Lord of the Worlds.*

- But, eloquence is highly questionable as a test for divine inspiration. At best it only proves that Muhammad was extremely gifted

- But, if eloquence were the test, then a case could be made for the divine authority of many literary classics, such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.
- But, it is by no means the universal opinion of unprejudiced Arabic scholars that the literary style of the Qur'an is superior to that of all other books in the Arabic language
- **Muhammad's illiteracy – since he could not read or write, the production of the Qur'an is even more miraculous**
 - But, some question whether Muhammad was actually illiterate
 - But, even if he was not formally trained, Muhammad was a bright person possessing great skills
 - But, some critics argue that it is possible that Muhammad's first impression was right, that he received the information from a superintelligent evil spirit.
- **Perfect preservation of the Qur'an**
 - But, even if the present Qur'an were a perfect word-for-word copy of the original as given by Muhammad, it would not prove the original was inspired of God. All it would demonstrate is that today's Qur'an is a carbon copy of whatever Muhammad said
- **Prophecies given in the Qur'an**
 - But, the only really substantive prediction was about the Roman victory over the Persian army at Issus (in 30:2–4), which was at most 3-14 years after the prophecy, and the wording of the prophecy is ambiguous.
 - But, it is neither long-range nor unusual
- **Unity of the Qur'an**
 - But, later (Medinan) revelations supersede earlier (Meccan) revelations, so it is hard to claim that it is a unity
 - But, the existence of a concept like Abrogation when only a span of 20 or so years is in view is highly questionable
 - But, just because a book has no contradictions does not mean God is the author
- **Scientific Accuracy of the Qur'an**

23:14 *Then fashioned We the drop [of sperm] a clot [of blood], then fashioned We the clot a little lump [i.e. a fetus], then fashioned We the little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators!*

- But, this is scarcely a scientific description of embryonic development

18:85-86 *And he followed a road [86] Till, when he reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring, and found a people thereabout. We said: O Dhu'l-Qarneyn! Either punish or show them kindness.*

- But this doesn't sound particularly scientifically accurate
- **The Qur'an changes lives**
 - But, when one fervently believes something to be true he/she lives by it. But this still leaves open the question as to whether it is the Word of God. For example: what Muslim would accept the argument that Karl Marx's *Das Capital* is inspired because it has transformed millions of lives and many cultures?
 - But, if one is going to press the argument from changed lives, defenders of Christianity offer one that would seem to be equally strong: a Galilean peasant accompanied by a few fishermen who produced more change in 3 years of preaching than a conqueror at the head of his army did in more than 20.

Five Core Beliefs of Islam

- **The oneness of God:** There is no God except Allah, therefore all other claims to deity--including Jesus--are false. It is due to this uncompromising emphasis on God's absolute unity that in Islam the greatest of all sins is the sin of *shirk*, or assigning partners to God.

4:116 *Lo! Allah pardoneth not that partners should be ascribed unto Him. He pardoneth all save that to whom He will. Whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah hath wandered far astray.*

- **Prophets:** Muslim scholars are of the opinion that prophets are either completely sinless or at least free from all major sins or faults. Among the prophets, five are recognized to be in the highest rank and are given the title of *ulu'l-'Azm* (people of the determination or perseverance). They are: Muhammad (the apostle of God), Noah (the preacher of God), Abraham (the friend of God), Moses (the speaker with God), and Jesus (the word of God). Some also include Adam (the chosen of God) as the sixth person in the list.
- **Scriptures:** (see the section on the Qur'an above)
- **Angels:** In addition to angels God created other spiritual beings called *jinn*.

15:26-27 *Verily We created man of potter's clay of black mud altered, [27] And the jinn did We create aforetime of essential fire.*

- **Day of Judgment:** The Qur'an is consistent in its emphasis that "the alternative for each individual at the day of judgment are two: the bliss of the garden or the torment of the fire. The Islamic view of human beings acknowledges no fallen nature or depravity. Humanity's fundamental problem is not usually viewed as rebellion against God, but as weakness and forgetfulness that are inherent in human nature. Thus, in a very real sense, Islam teaches that heaven can be earned by the good works of the believer as long as he is careful to fulfill his religious obligations and makes up for his shortcomings by performing other favorable duties.

23:102-103 *Then those whose scales [of good deeds] are heavy, they are the successful [with regard to salvation]. [103] And those whose scales are light are those who lose*

their souls, in hell abiding.

Five Pillars (required observances) of Islam

- **Declaration of faith** (*shahada* – “witness, testimony”): “there is no god but God [Allah] and Muhammad is the messenger of God.”
- **Prayer** (*salat*): prayers are made 5x per day. Friday is the day of assembly, where Muslims are expected to pray together in a group at a mosque
- **Alms** (*zakat* – “purification”): this involves an annual contribution of 2.5 percent of an individual’s wealth and assets
- **Fast of Ramadan** (*sawm*): this involves abstaining from dawn to sunset from food, drink, and sexual activity
- **Pilgrimage** (*hajj*): every Muslim who physically and financially is able to travel to Mecca is obligated to do so

The Doctrine of Abrogation

- Definition: later revelation can abolish and replace earlier revelation
- Some Muslims totally reject the idea, others allow that it does occur but is rare.
- The majority of Muslims view it as a normal part of Qur'anic interpretation
- The abrogated verses are usually the early, Meccan Suras which are abrogated by the later, Medinan Suras

2:106 *Nothing of our revelation (even a single verse) do we abrogate or cause be forgotten, but we bring (in place) one better or the like thereof. Knowest thou not that Allah is Able to do all things?*

- **Remember:** the earlier Meccan Suras are considerably more positive toward Christianity and Judaism than the later Medinan Suras.

The Lower Status of Women

- Men can marry several wives (polygamy) but women cannot marry several husbands (polyandry)
- The Qur’an explicitly affords men the right to divorce their wives but does not accord the equal right to women.

2:228 *And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. Allah is Mighty, Wise.*

- According to the Qur’an, men can even beat their wives:

4:34 *Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo! Allah is ever High, Exalted, Great.*

- The law requires that two women must bear witness in civil contracts as opposed to one man
- Geisler and Saleeb comment: “one finds it incredible to hear Muslim apologists say, ‘Evidently, Muhammad not only honored woman more than did any other man, but he raised her to the status which truly belongs to her— an accomplishment of which Muhammad alone has so far been capable’[!] Another Muslim writer states, ‘Islam has given woman rights and privileges which she has never enjoyed under other religious or constitutional systems.’”³

The Muslim State

- Mainstream Islam rejects the Western idea of the separation of religion and morality from the duties of the state
- Sayyid Abdul A'la Mawdudi (Islamic Foundation, Leicester, England) -
 - "if you really want to root out corruption now so widespread on God's earth, stand up and fight against corrupt rule, take power and use it on God's behalf. It is useless to think that you can change things by preaching alone."⁴
 - "Merely believing in God as God and in His law as the true law is not enough. As soon as you believe in these two things, a sacred duty devolves upon you: wherever you are, in whichever country you live, you must strive to change the wrong basis of government, and seize all powers to rule and make laws from those who do not fear God...The name of this striving is Jihad."⁵
- Afif A. Taffarah (*The Spirit of Islam*)
 - "the Islamic nation is commanded to establish justice on earth, and ...establish the word of God on earth without doubtful intentions"⁶
 - "Islam is a continuous strife to establish the Word of God on earth, to establish the proper system which brings content and bliss to mankind."⁷

2:216 *Warfare is ordained for you, though it is hateful unto you; but it may*

³ Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 177-178.

⁴ Cited in Irving Hexham, *Understanding World Religions: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 201), 426.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 427.

⁷ Ibid.

happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knoweth, ye know not.

The Meaning of Jihad

- Popular writers in Western societies write that *jihad* does not mean "holy war" - it means "spiritual struggle"⁸
 - This view has little backing in traditional Muslim texts or in the work of more recent writers whose influence shapes modern Islam

2:190-195 *Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors. [191] And slay them wherever ye find them, and drive them out of the places whence they drove you out, for persecution is worse than slaughter. And fight not with them at the Inviolable Place of Worship until they first attack you there, but if they attack you (there) then slay them. Such is the reward of disbelievers. [192] But if they desist, then lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. [193] And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrong-doers. [194] The forbidden month for the forbidden month, and forbidden things in retaliation. And one who attacketh you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you. Observe your duty to Allah, and know that Allah is with those who ward off (evil). [195] Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo! Allah loveth the beneficent.*

- Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966)
 - One of the most influential Muslim writers of the 20th century; his books represent the most articulate statement of Sunni Islam in modern times.
 - Born in Egypt in 1906, not particularly religious in his early life.
 - Accepted an American government scholarship to study the American educational system in Greeley, Colorado
 - The US repulsed him: he was horrified by what he thought is an example of a "lawless society lacking civilization." He concluded that the US was a doomed society,
 - "Look at this capitalism with its monopolies, its usury and whatever else is unjust in it, at this individual freedom, devoid of human sympathy and responsibility for relatives except under the force of law; at this materialistic attitude which deadens the spirit; and this behavior, like animals, which you call 'Free mixing of the sexes': at this vulgarity which you call 'emancipation of women,' at these unfair and cumbersome laws of

⁸ See, for instance, John L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam* (2d ed.; New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2011), 133.

marriage and divorce, which are contrary to the demands of practical life."⁹

- As a result of his experience, he concluded that U.S./Western World had returned to a pre-Islamic state of ignorance, called *jahiliyyah* ("apostate"). The only solution for such a situation, he concluded, "is to replace this Jahiliyyah with Islamic ideas and traditions"¹⁰
- In 1952, Qutb returned to Egypt and joined the Muslim Brotherhood, believing that an Islamic revolution was necessary to restore Islam to its rightful place in society.
- Ayman Al-Zawahri, one of the co-founders of Al Qaeda and a close confidant of Osama bin Laden, sees himself as a disciple of Sayyid Qutb
- Iman Khomeini (Ayatollah Khomeini), *Islam and Revolution* (Berkeley, Calif.: Mizan Press, 1981)
 - In the context of exploitation of Iranian resources by large oil companies and foreign powers (115-116), he argues for the establishment of an Islamic government and for jihad as one of the means to bring this about. Jihad and establishment of Sharia law as means of bringing freedom to all people, so that they are free to choose to serve God (40-149)
- Assassins who killed Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat (6 Oct 1981) published a booklet *The Neglected Duty*
 - Established a case on the Qur'an and Hadith (collected traditions of the Prophet) that jihad means holy war and that it is incumbent on all good Muslims. It must not be restricted to "defensive war"; Islam was "spread by the sword" and that to believe otherwise is to reject the clear teachings of M himself
 - "jihad by the sword" is a practical means to free humans from the demonic dominance of a corrupt society. Jihad provides Muslims with a practical way of imposing God's law, the Sharia, on society to free people from their own evil inclinations and the evils that are encouraged by rulers who do not acknowledge the true law of God. In other words "Sharia law is necessary to create the social conditions under which conversion to Islam becomes attractive. Jihad makes this possible."
- Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam: A Reader* (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener, 1996)
 - "Classical Muslim Qur'an interpretation...regarded the Sword Verses, with the unconditional command to fight the unbelievers, as having abrogated all previous verses concerning the intercourse with non-Muslims." (2)

⁹ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (1964; Beirut: Holy Koran Publishing House, 1980), 185.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 262.

- Sword verses are found in Sura 9 of the Qur'an, which is traditionally understood as the last Sura to be revealed to Muhammad. Therefore, it is said to take precedence over all previous Suras

9:5-14 *Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. [6] And if anyone of the idolaters seeketh thy protection (O Muhammad), then protect him so that he may hear the Word of Allah, and afterward convey him to his place of safety. That is because they are a folk who know not. [7] How can there be a treaty with Allah and with His messenger for the idolaters save those with whom ye made a treaty at the Inviolable Place of Worship? So long as they are true to you, be true to them. Lo! Allah loveth those who keep their duty. [8] How (can there be any treaty for the others) when, if they have the upper hand of you, they regard not pact nor honour in respect of you? They satisfy you with their mouths the while their hearts refuse. And most of them are wrongdoers. [9] They have purchased with the revelations of Allah a little gain, so they debar (men) from His way. Lo! evil is that which they are wont to do. [10] And they observe toward a believer neither pact nor honour. These are they who are transgressors. [11] But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then are they your brethren in religion. We detail Our revelations for a people who have knowledge. [12] And if they break their pledges after their treaty (hath been made with you) and assail your religion, then fight the heads of disbelief - Lo! they have no binding oaths - in order that they may desist. [13] Will ye not fight a folk who broke their solemn pledges, and purposed to drive out the messenger and did attack you first? What! Fear ye them? Now Allah hath more right that ye should fear Him, if ye are believers [14] Fight them! Allah will chastise them at your hands, and He will lay them low and give you victory over them, and He will heal the breasts of folk who are believers.*

- Irving Hexham comments: “the popular, milk-and-water version of Islam found in most religious studies texts is, to say the least, misleading. Jihad is indeed primarily a form of warfare waged in defense of Islam. This means that, however much one may disagree with the methods of people like Osama bin Laden, it is highly misleading to dismiss them as "extremists" or argue that they "don't understand Islam," as some writers suggest. The truth is, bin Laden and his followers have decided that Islam is under threat from the West and that Western values are undermining Muslim societies. Therefore in their own eyes, they are fighting a legitimate war, or jihad, in defense of Islam. Unless North Americans recognize this fact, they will never understand the depth of Muslim feeling on this issue why so many Muslims express sympathy for bin Laden while at the same time disassociating themselves from his attack on America.”¹¹
- Later, Hexham continues: “For Muslims, Islam is a religion of peace, because the imposition of Islamic rule brings areas under Muslim control to peace and order in

¹¹ Hexham, *Understanding World Religions*, 434.

accordance with Islamic teachings about the will of God. Thus it is a Pax Islamica, which imposes peace by dominating all opponents by force of arms. At the same time, areas remaining free from control by Muslim rulers are viewed as the "realm of war," awaiting subjection to Islamic rule and the administration of Sharia law."¹²

- It is notable that nowhere in Islamic teachings do we find statements like "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39) or "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt 5:44). Nor do we find the general proclamation, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14)
- Geisler and Saleeb list additional Suras in support of violence in the Qur'an: 2:190-193, 2:216, 2:224, 3:157-158, 3:169, 3:195, 4:101, 4:74-75, 4:89, 4:95, 5:36, 5:54, 8:12-17, 8:59-60, 8:65, 9:5, 9:29, 47:4, and 61:4.¹³
- Geisler and Saleeb also refer to a PBS "Frontline" special on state-sponsored religious education in Saudi Arabia which featured a lesson titled, "The Victory of Muslims over Jews." The teachings of this saying are summarized in several propositional statements such as:
 - It is fate decided by Allah that the Muslims and Jews will fight till the end of the world.
 - This Hadith predicts for the Muslims God's victory over the Jews.
 - Jews and Christians are the enemies of believers. They will never approve of the Muslims, beware of them
 - The report is available online at:
www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/etc/textbooks.html
- Pacifist movements do exist within Islam, however, they are the minority.

III. Strategies for Reaching Muslims for Christ¹⁴

- **Cultural Adaption**
 - Paul met Jews on their turf, in the synagogue (Acts 17:1-2)
 - Paul started where the Jews were at (what the OT said about Messiah)
 - **Application:** introduce accurate verses about Christ from the Qur'an; reinforce truth in the Qur'an before we try to expose Muslims to the fuller truth from the Bible

¹² Ibid., 437-438.

¹³ Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 320-322.

¹⁴ The material from this section is taken from Fouad Elias Accad, *Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Navpress, 1997). Of particular help is a 7 step process for what to say to a Muslim.

- **Establishing cultural common ground**
 - Paul: approached Athenians in a sympathetic and friendly manner, stating his case with illustrations from their own culture
 - Paul: rejected the Athenians' erroneous concept of God, but did not have a problem using the common Greek word for God “*Theos*”
 - **Application:** “*Allah*” is the primary Arabic word for God; it was used by the vast majority of Jews and Christians in Arabia for 500 years before Muhammad dictated the Qur’an
- **Cultivating a lifestyle that leads to life**
 - If a Muslim has been taught that Christianity is heresy, then he probably won't be interested in listening to a Christian present Christianity, unless that Christian who is in contact with him has become a close, dear friend to him and has a character that commands respect.
 - **Application:** cultivate a Christian character that is praiseworthy before even Christianity’s critics. Remember, devout Muslims who give to the poor, fast 1 month a year, pray 5x each day, etc. do so out of reverence to God. It is helping them see that only through Isa (Jesus) can any human being be truly “Muslim” (“surrendered” to God).
- **Watch our Terminology**
 - "follower of Isa" or "Muslims who are truly surrendered to God through the sacrifice of Messiah Isa" ("Muslim" means "surrendered") instead of saying “Christian.”
 - Avoid “Son of God”; a Muslim immediately understands it to mean that God had physical sexual intercourse with a human woman—something that they consider impossible and horrifying
 - **Application:** employ Muslim terminology where we can (for the OT, Psalms, NT, etc.) and avoid terminology and actions which could offend

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