

Lesson 3 –An Overview of Islam
A Study of Religions Beliefs
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Introduction: I have been confronted by Muslims who believe that they have evidence to prove that “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.”

- A. How do we respond to such a challenge?
 - 1. Christians should listen carefully to any evidence our Muslim friend may present. (**Prov 18:13; Jn 8:31-32**)
 - 2. We then should have evidence to present to the Muslim. (**1 Pt 3:15**)
- B. As with every lesson in this series, we want our material to be factual.
 - 1. We want to win souls and not be involved in slander for a human cause.
 - 2. What do most Muslims believe?

I. The Claims and Teachings of Islam

- A. Muslims claim Muhammad to be a Prophet of God. “In the year 610 (believed to be the 26th of Ramadan), while in a cave on Mt. Hirah, Muhammad said that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and commanded him to recite (96:1-19). This recitation became the Qur'an.”⁴
- B. Muhammad claimed to work no miracles.¹
- C. The five Pillars of Muslim Belief.
 - 1. Profession of faith. To be a Muslim one must recite-"There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet."
 - 2. Prayer. The faithful Muslim prays five times daily facing the city of Mecca.
 - 3. Almsgiving. Muslims must give a religious tax and freewill offerings.
 - 4. Fasting. During daylight of the Islamic month of Ramadan Muslims are to fast and abstain from sex.
 - 5. Pilgrimage. Muslims must try to make a sacred pilgrimage to Mecca (one of the first cities where Muhammad taught Islam).
- D. Consider Muhammad’s teaching about the Judgment Day and eternal life: “He said that the Day of Judgment was coming and that a man's works will be weighed on that day. Those whose good deeds out weigh their bad may, by Allah's grace, be saved and enter Paradise which is full of sensual pleasures.”⁴

II. The Koran and the Bible

- A. Muslims believe the angel Gabriel revealed the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad a little at a time. The revelations began about A.D. 610 and continued until Muhammad's death in 632. They believe that the earthly book, bound between covers, is a copy of an eternal book that is kept in heaven.
 - 1. What will you find when you read the Koran?
 - 2. It is a disjointed, incoherent collection of contradictory laws.
 - 3. There is no fulfilled prophecy or claims of prophecy that predicted Muhammad or his work.
- B. Muhammad claimed that the Old Testament prophets were true and that Jesus was a prophet: **Sura 2.136** - Say ye: "We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and

Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: And we bow to God (in Islam)."

1. This is a potential area of common ground.
 2. Why then do they accept these men as prophets and not believe what they wrote? (**Jn 5:45-47**)
 3. Muslims will respond like many "Christian" religions in making some good claims about the Bible and those who wrote it, but in the end they really consider the Bible as an obstacle and not an ally.
- C. Muslims must attack the Bible so that it will not be seriously examined. Here are their lines of attack. (From an email I received a few years ago)
1. We do not have the original manuscripts (autographs) of the Bible.
 2. The original manuscripts were copied by fallible men and as a result every copy that we possess today contains errors. In fact, no two manuscripts are alike.
 3. Because these errors exist, then whatever was originally in the Bible is "unknowable" today.
 4. The copyists intentionally put their own "mischievous" beliefs into the text since the Bible records examples of sexual sins. One example he cites is that the Bible "displays lady's nude bath! (II-Samuel 11: 2-5)."
- D. Let us compare the assertions and charges of this fallible man to the promises of Jesus. (**Matthew 24:35**).
1. The original ancient texts had to be copied by hand in order to be preserved. There are no original manuscripts in existence.
 2. However, honest scholars can easily determine if the present Bible was transmitted accurately or if there was some conspiracy to later change the text.
 - a. We have at least 5,800 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament in existence today, in whole or in part, that testify to the accuracy of the New Testament.
 - b. There are nearly complete manuscripts that date from 280 to 350 AD and there is a fragment that is dated around 125 AD.
 - c. For the Old Testament we have the Dead Sea Scrolls that were written around 100 BC, which include a complete scroll of the book of Isaiah, along with other ancient manuscripts.¹
 - d. When the text of Isaiah found in the Dead Sea Scrolls was compared to what had previously been the oldest known text of Isaiah (written 900 years later), the two texts matched word for word with only minor variations.⁶
 - e. Jesus read from one of these texts of Isaiah in His ministry and called it scripture (Luke 4:16-21)! By doing so He gave His approval for the accuracy and authority of these scrolls produced by copyists.
 3. What kind of "errors" are we talking about? The bulk of these differences are in spelling and word order that have absolutely no affect upon the meaning! For

example: “The king Herod” verses “Herod the king” and “Jerusalem with Him” versus “all Jerusalem with Him”⁷

4. If some men had developed a conspiracy to deliberately change the text, then there should be numerous examples of major differences in these manuscripts.
 - a. These kinds of differences *simply do not exist*.
 - b. It would have been impossible for any later conspirators *to find all the manuscripts* that were spread over several countries and then change them (in some cases parts of scripture were copied and buried with the bodies of Christians!).

E. I challenge all *to read the Bible and to read the Koran*! Many Muslims will not take up this challenge!

III. Jesus and Muhammad – Which was a true prophet from God?

- A. Muhammad denies that Jesus died on the cross. **Sura 4.157** - That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of God"; - they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not:-
 1. The answer to this question *will be based on evidence*! How does Muhammad prove his assertions?
 2. On the other hand, how can we as Christians *prove the death, burial and resurrection of Christ*?
- B. What *proof do we have* that Muhammad was a prophet from God?
 1. You *simply must accept these claims* because Muhammad *gave no evidence* to establish himself as a Prophet.
 2. “One of the reasons I am so skeptical about Muhammad's "so-called" revelations is that they lack any credible evidentiary verification and review, there are no independent witnesses as to the content of his revelations, he dictated them from memory after the fact, and that source of the Quran is from only one person, there is no verifiable prophecy, and no verification of facts are available from anyone other than Muhammad himself.”
 3. Why would anyone become a believer in this man’s claims?
- C. What proof did Jesus give that He was from God?
 1. Jesus said *the prophets spoke of Him*. (**John 5:39; Luke 24:27; 44**)
 2. *Jesus worked miracles* that bore testimony of Him. (**John 5:36; 10:25**)
 - a. The blind man Jesus healed could see the implications. (**Jn 9:32-33**)
 - b. What other answer is possible?

IV. What is the evidence for the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus?

- A. Jesus *pointed to His own resurrection* as the ultimate proof to his enemies. (**John 2:19-21; Matt 27:63-64**)
 1. This made the enemies work harder to prevent it.
 2. This was "the sign" to all unbelievers. (**Matt 12:39-40**)
- B. The *motive and lives of the eyewitnesses* testify to their credibility.
 1. There was *nothing to gain* by these men making up lies. (**1 Cor 15:30-32**)

2. These men *all died a martyr's death*, except John.
- C. *Test the evidence* presented by the eyewitnesses (**Matt 27:57-66**)
 1. Jesus was dead. (**John 19:32-36**)
 2. The body was placed in a *new tomb*. (**Matt 27:60**)
 3. The tomb was *cut out of rock*. (**Matt 27:60**)
 4. *A large stone* covered the entrance. (**Matt 27:60**)
 5. *A Roman seal* was placed on the stone. (**Matt 27:66**)
 6. *A Roman Guard* was placed at the tomb. (**Matt 27:65-66**)
 7. The tomb *was inspected carefully*. (**John 20:3-8, 11**)
- D. Who moved the stone?
 1. Did the Jews? (**Matt 27:62-66**)
 - a. The Jews were the very ones trying to prevent the resurrection.
 - b. If so they could present the body 50 days later! (**Acts 2:32, 36**)
 2. Did the Romans?
 - a. The Romans would not want to risk their necks for “Jewish superstition.”
 - b. The penalty for a Roman guard's failure was death. (**Acts 16:27; 27:42**)
 3. Did the Disciples?
 - a. This was the best explanation the Jews could produce. (**Matt 28:11-15**)
 - b. If they were asleep, how did they know it was the disciples?
 - c. Why did the Romans authorities not prosecute the apostles?
 - d. Did the apostles give their lives for a lie?
 4. Who then moved the stone? (**Acts 13:27-31**)
- E. Jesus' tomb *is empty* while Muhammad's *is occupied*.

Conclusion: Will you find the forgiveness of God?

- A. Jesus pointed to His sacrifice as the only way to God. (**John 3:16; 8:24; 14:6**)
- B. Muhammad pointed to an impersonal God that has scales to weigh your works.
Salvation is *wholly of man and is earned*. *How good is good enough?*
- C. Forgiveness is assured through the promises of God! (**Acts 2:38, Romans 4:1-6**)

¹**The Hutto – El Dareer Debate**, Birmingham, Alabama October 21-25, 1974

²**The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book**, Edited by Ibn Warraq; Prometheus Books, 1998 <http://debate.org.uk/topics/books/origins-koran.html>

³**The Compilation Of The Qur'an As Recorded In The Hadith** - By Ney Rieber
<http://www.bible.ca/islam/islam-quran-changed-editing-process.htm>

⁴**Muhammad, CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS & RESEARCH MINISTRY**,
<http://www.carm.org/islam/muhammad.htm>

5 - Bruce, F.F. (1953), *The New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), fourth edition.

6. - The Reality of Copyists' Errors URL:
<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/608>

7. J. W. McGarvey (1886), *Evidences of Christianity*, Pages 13-15