

Place Lurgan Baptist 20:1:2009

THE CHAOS OF THE CULTS

Reading: 1 John 4:1-16

7. ISLAM

Islam is the name of the religion which came out of the revelations and teachings of Mohammed. It is the Arabic term for “*submission*.” Muslim is the name given to a person who adheres to the religion of Islam. The word means “*one who submits*.” So a Muslim is a person who submits to the will of Allah, the Islamic name for God as revealed by Mohammed. *Now Islam is not a cult, but a major world religion distinctly different from Christianity.* In the United Kingdom today, we are living in a multicultural society. People are coming to our land with a different culture, a different religion, a different code of ethics, and each has the right to worship their god according to their conscience. The tragedy that is many Muslim regimes do not afford the same religious liberties to Christians. The January 1996 World Watch Persecution Index published by Open Doors, revealed that, apart from North Korea and China, Islamic-dominated countries occupied every single spot on the top ten list of countries where persecution of Christians is most severe. Now why is Islam so important ?

1. Because there are 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide.

Do you know what that is ? That is one fifth of the world’s population. David Legge in his book “*Strongholds Shaken*,” states,

There are now 2 million Muslims in the United Kingdom and probably just over 200 mosques. In Britain, on a daily basis there are approximately 22 million copies of Muslim newspapers published. Two millions Muslims, 200 mosques, and 22 million copies of newspaper, in anyone’s estimation is evidence of a vibrant religion.
(Strongholds Shaken p 186)

It has been predicted that by the year 2025 a third of the world’s population will be Muslim. By 2010 it will be the second largest religion in the USA, and it is now the second largest religion in Europe. Muslims are spreading their unbiblical message across the world while we Christians who have the truth, are sitting at ease in Zion.

2. The collective power of Islam is able to dramatically influence the world economy.

We have all heard of OPEC. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. Do you know who the five founding members were ? Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Most of which are dominated by Islam. My Islam has the ability to play a key role in the social stability or instability of dozens of nations around the world. It is the driving force between numerous nations in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

3. Because of Islam’s opposition to Israel:

(1) THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

Mohammad said, as recorded in the Sahih Al-Bukhari hadith, “ *The last day will not come until the Muslims confront the Jews and the Muslims destroy them. In that day Allah will give a voice to the rocks and the trees and they will cry out ‘ O Muslim, O Abdullah, there is a Jew hiding behind me. Come and kill him.’*”

(Moshe Ma’oz The Image of the Jew in Official Arab Literature and Communications Media Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1976, 14)

Why must Israel be destroyed ? Because Muslims believe that Allah has promised them the land of Palestine. At a conference of the Islamic Committee for Palestine, in Chicago, Illinois in December 1990, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Oudeh, one of the leaders in the Islamic Jihad movement said, “ *Now Allah is bringing the Jews back to Palestine in large groups from all over the world to their big graveyard, where the promise will be realized upon them and what was destined will be carried out.*” (From the PBS video, Jihad in America narrated by Stephen Emerson first aired in the USA 22nd November 1994) The Sheikh was obviously referring to Mohammad’s prophecy that the Muslims would kill all Jews at the last day.

A Muslim is told to make no friends of Jews and Christians (Surah 5 verses 51 & 57) But a Christian will make a friend of a Muslim, for no-one is beyond the voice and care of a Christian believer. *Now how did Islam begin ? How did it progress ? What are its beliefs ? What about its practices ? Where does it differ from Christianity ?*

Mohammed, the founder of Islam was born in the city of Mecca in Arabia around 570 AD. He was born into a Quraish tribe. The Quraiah of Mecca had a prosperous business as the guardians of the Ka’aba, this was an idol, temple filled with some 360 images representing the various tribal deities worshipped by anyone who might be passing through Mecca in one of the hugh commercial caravans. Allah, was recognized as the chief of the idols in the Ka’aba. It had been the official god of Mohammed’s tribe for centuries before he was born.

(a) HIS CLAIMS:

Are this. Mohammed claimed that he received supernatural revelations from God through the angel Gabriel. These alleged revelations were written down by others and compiled into a book called the Koran, the Muslim Bible. These revelations presented a new idea, that Allah was not merely the chief god in the Ka’aba but the only god anywhere, that Mohammed was Allah’s exclusive prophet and that the whole world must be brought into submission to Allah. The authoritative Cambridge History of Islam discusses these revelations by noting that,

Either in the course of the visions or shortly afterwards, Mohammed began to receive messages or revelations from God he believed that he could easily distinguish between his own thinking and these revelations Mohammed continued to receive the messages at

intervals until his death. (A. M. Holt The Cambridge History of Islam vol 2) So much for his claims, what about,

(b) HIS CHARACTER:

Well, at first he was a sincere reformer. He opposed polytheism. He opposed religious corruption. He opposed excessive abuse of alcoholic drink, all of which were characteristic of his people. Sir Norman Anderson studied law at Cambridge and Arabic and Islamic Law at the University of Cairo. He said this,

The adult Mohammed soon showed signs of a markedly religious disposition. He would retire to caves for seclusion and meditation, he frequently practiced fasting, and he was prone to revolutionary dreams. He was generous, resolute, genial and astute, a shrewd judge and a born leader of men. He could, however, be cruel and vindictive to his enemies, he could stoop to assassination, and he was undeniably sensual. (J.N.D. Anderson The Worlds Religions Eerdmans 1966 pp. 54, 60,) So Mohammed was given these revelations of God that were never given before to men.

(2) THE PROGRESS OF ISLAM

From then to now is astonishing. Initially there was,

(a) THE CONTROVERSY WITH MOHAMMED:

For this new doctrine that Allah was the only god and that Mohammed was his prophet was opposed by the Meccans. It didn't seem to them to be a great idea to do away with the gods except Allah, they felt it could do their business harm. So faced with growing opposition to his " *revelations,*" Mohammed fled from Mecca in AD 622. This event, known as the Hijra (migration) is very important, because the Muslim calendar dates from this time. So the Hijra is the flight from Mecca northward about 250 miles to the city of Medina. Here he gained power, the number of his followers grew, so much so, that in AD 630 Mohammed returned to Mecca, conquered it, and made it the spiritual centre of his new religion. By AD 632 the year of the prophet's death, the movement had not only retaken Mecca but the entire Arabian peninsula. Edward Panosian says,

By 710 the movement had spread all across North Africa and into Spain. Later it was to go into eastern Europe, on several occasions as far as the city of Vienna in Austria. It spread rapidly. It spread by conquest. Its missionary and mood was conquest. It used the sword and it used taxation. The people of the Scriptures who are referred to often in the Koran, meaning the Jews and the Christians were given the opportunity to pay tribute money but not allowed to propagate their message openly. (Islam and the Bible Edward Panosian Ambassador p 7,)

My do you realise that this is the fastest growing religion in the world today ? Somehow we in the West feel that immigration alone is the reason why there is an increase in the number of those who adhere to Islam. But latest census figures tell us that 14,200 indigenous British people have converted to Islam. The Muslim Council of Britain has co-opted Joe Ahmed Dobson, another Muslim convert and son of Frank Dobson the former government Health Secretary, to the chair of its regeneration committee. This religious system is making tremendous strides in our day. But while Islam progressed,

(b) THE DIVERSITY BETWEEN MUSLIMS:

Became apparent. The Sunni became the majority group. The Shiite, a minority, claimed to be more orthodox than the Sunni by retaining closer attention to Mohammed's extra Koranic teachings. Another grouping is the Sufi. You see the word Islam is as diverse within its components as is the word " *Christianity.*" But what does Islam believe ? Think with me about,

(3) THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM

And these principles or beliefs flow from their holy book, the Koran. You see, more than any other factor the followers of Islam have their lives directed by the book they believe is the Word of God the Koran.

Dr. J. Christy Wilson of Princeton University comments,

Next to the Bible, it is the most esteemed and most powerful book in the world.

(Introducing Islam J. C. Wilson p 30,)

You see, whatever Muslims believe and do, it is the teachings in the Koran that have inspired these beliefs and actions. This is why no one should underestimate the importance of the Koran. Now Muslims believe that Allah has given a long series of revelations, including the Old and New Testaments. But these revelations end with the Koran, which supersedes and to a large degree cancels out the others. As the Encyclopedia Britannica observes

For the Muslims the Koran is the Word of God, confirming and consummating earlier revealed books and thereby replacing them (Encyclopedia Britannica 1958 ed)

So Muslims believe that the Koran is the literal Word of God, dictated supernaturally to Mohammed from the angel Gabriel and they believe that is the Koran is perfect and without error. Now on every major doctrine the Koran and the Bible contradict each other, the nature of God, Christ, salvation, man, Scripture etc, for example in

The Koran

God is Unitarian

Christ is a man

Salvation, by works: uncertain

The Bible

God is Trinitarian

Christ, is God incarnate

By grace: assured

The Koran is two thirds the size of your New Testament. It has 6,225 verses. It is composed of 114 chapters or surahs arranged very strangely according to length but

having no subject continuity. Nor are they listed in order of their having been “*received*,” by the prophet. The opening of the Koran begins like this.

Praise be to Allah, lord of the worlds, the beneficent, the merciful, owner of the day of judgment. Thee alone we worship. Thee alone we ask for help. Show us the straight path, the path of those of whom thou hast favoured, not the path of those who earned thine anger, nor of those who go astray. (Islam & The Bible Edward Panosian p, 9)

Then follows 113 chapters. The longest is first. It has 286 verses. The shortest ones are last. They range from three to five verses. Each is a single revelation, and it has been stated by the Muslim commentators that surah number two, the one that has 286 verses, the longest one, contains most of the Koran. The rest is elaboration and repetition. Now the Koran teaches certain beliefs. It teaches,

(a) There is ‘one God,’ and his name is Allah and Mohammed is his prophet:

This is monotheism and the peculiar role of Mohammed as the most recent of the prophets. This is a paraphrasing of (Deut 6:4) “*The Lord our God is one Lord*,” but as we shall see the God of the Bible, is certainly not Allah of Islam.

(b) There is Belief in angels who intercede for men:

Angels are very important to the Muslim faith since it was the angel Gabriel who allegedly transmitted the Koran to Mohammed.

(c) There is Acceptance of the Prophets:

Muslims believe that Allah has sent 124,000 prophets to mankind, although only about 25 are mentioned in the Koran. Six of the principal prophets are Adam the chosen of Allah, Noah the preacher of Allah, Abraham the friend of Allah, Moses the speaker of Allah, Jesus the word of Allah, and Mohammed, the apostle of Allah. Because Mohammed’s revelation is considered the greatest of all, he is called the “*Seal of the Prophets*,” “*Peace of the World*,” and given more than 200 other titles.

(d) Predestination:

They believe that everything that happens, both good and evil is predestined by Allah’s will, his immutable decree. This is not God’s sovereign good pleasure, it’s a kind of fatalism. This is the reason that Islam is “*submission*.” I mean those who of us who know Christ are called to submit to His gracious will, and it’s a loving submission to a loving Father. It is not a cold, despotic command to submit. We do know what the future holds, but we know Him who holds the future, and that gives us confidence and peace in the midst of our submission. The submission to Allah is different.

(e) The Day of Judgment:

Muslims believe that on this day the good and evil deeds of men will be placed on a “ *scale*.” Those Muslims having sufficient personal merit and righteousness and the favour of Allah will go to eternal heaven, all others will go to eternal hell.

There is no heaven for those who deny the Koran
(Surah 7 v 40)

Now this is a basic statement of Islamic belief. How can Muslims then enter paradise ? Well, in Islam you submit to God’s will through the practice of the “ ***pillars of Islam***.” If these pillars or practices are fulfilled, and a person remains in the Muslim faith, then heaven is a possibility, although never guaranteed. What then, are,

(4) THE PRACTICES OF ISLAM

(a) Reciting the Creed:

A Muslim is to affirm and repeat the creed, “ *There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet.*”

(b) Prayer:

The Muslim must pray five times daily facing Mecca wherever he happens to be in the world. He is to pray at daybreak, just before noon, in the afternoon, after sunset, so it will not seem as he is worshipping the sun, he is also to pray at nightfall. Now he is to go through a series of

procedures, standing, kneeling, and falling prostrate, while he repeats verses from the Koran and the first Surah. The call to prayer is sounded by a Muslim crier (muezzim) from a tower called a minaret, and of course this is part of their public place of worship, called the mosque. *Have you ever been in a Muslim city at the hour of prayer ? Have you heard the call to prayer from the crier ?* I recall several years ago staying in the south side of the city of Jerusalem. We were leading a group in Israel and staying at the Mizpah Rachael Hotel. One night some of us decided to go into the city centre. So we went down to the local bus stop. We could see the bus but no driver. Then going a little further we spotted him. There he was, standing, kneeling, falling prostrate on his prayer rug, observing one of the “ *pillars of his religion.*”

(c) Fasting:

Especially during the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan the Muslim is required not to drink, eat or engage in sexual relations between dawn and sunset of each day of the twenty eight days of the month of Ramadan. If you happen to be in a Muslim country during this month you will be asked not to eat in front of Muslims, and to respect this calendar month.

(d) Giving of Alms:

A Muslim is required to give at least two and a half percent of his wealth for the benefit of the poor. In Muslim cities the world over, beggars give you the

privilege of earning favour with Allah by asking you for alms. Another pillar of Islam is,

(e) Pilgrimage:

A pilgrimage to Mecca Mohammed's place of birth. This is required at least once during the lifetime of every Muslim who is physically and financially able to make the trip. Nearly two million Muslims perform Hajj each year. Now there is another religious duty that is often associated with the five pillars of Islam, although it is considered optional by some. It is called,

(f) Jihad:

We have often heard this word on the news. The word means "*exertion.*" This is the Muslim holy war or Jihad. Now Jihad may be interpreted as internal, that is a spiritual struggle, or it may be external, that is defending Islam. You see, when the situation warrants it, it's the duty of every Muslim to go to war to defend Islam against its enemies. Anyone who dies in a holy war is allegedly guaranteed eternal life in heaven and is considered a martyr for Islam.

Now many in our day and age have concluded that Allah in the Koran is just the same as Jehovah in the Bible. This is definitely not the case. The Muslim god is not the God of the Bible. You see, when we compare Islam with Christianity we notice,

(5) THE PROBLEMS WITH ISLAM

Let me limit myself to three.

(a) The GOD of the BIBLE is missing from Islam:

Islam teaches that the true God is the Muslim deity, Allah. All other views of God are false because the Koran says

The true religion with God is Islam (Arberry p, 15)

The Koran states of Allah,

There is no God but he, the living, the everlasting.
(Arberry p, 65)

But who is Allah ? Is he anything like the God of the Bible ? Well, let's see.

1. The Koran states that Allah is one person only:

They are unbelievers who say ' God is the Third of Three.' No god is there but one God. If they refrain not from what they say, there shall afflict those of them that disbelieve a painful chastisement. (Arberry p, 140)

Do you see what the Koran is saying ? We are unbelievers because we accept the historic doctrine of the Trinity. Now although many Muslims believe otherwise, Christians do not believe in three gods, we believe in one God existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matt 28:19 Jn 1:1 Acts 5:3)

2. Allah has a different character from the God we worship:

The God of the Bible is different from Allah because He is a God of love. Allah himself emphasizes that he does not love the sinner. (Arberry p, 81, 90, 142) How different from the God of the Scriptures. My God does not love the sin but he loves the sinner. Paul says, “ *But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*” (Rom 5:8) Essentially, Allah is primarily a God of power, not a God of love, but the Bible declares, “ *God is love.*” (1 Jn 4:16) In Islam the sinner and the ungodly are condemned, in the Bible the sinner and the ungodly are loved.

3. Allah cannot be known, but the God of the Bible can:

In “ *Who is Allah in Islam*, “ Abd-al-Masih writes,

Allah is the unique, unexplorable and inexplicable one, the remote, vast, and unknown God. Everything we think about him is incomplete, if not wrong. Allah cannot be comprehended. (Cited in a book review in Reach Out vol 6, nos 3 & 4, 1993, p, 15)

All this stands in contrast to the Biblical teaching that we can know God personally, on an intimate relational level. Do you recall the words of the Lord Jesus ? “ *This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*” (Jn 17:3) The Lord

Jesus again said, “ *My sheep know me.*” (Jn 10:14) The apostle Paul said, “ *I know whom I have believed.*” (2 Tim 1:12) John exclaimed, “ *We do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*” (1 Jn 2:3) My the God of Islam is not the God of the Bible, for they constitute two distinct concepts of God.

(b) The GIFT of the BIBLE is missing from Islam:

Paul talks about the Lord Jesus as God’s unspeakable gift. But what does Islam say about Jesus Christ ? Well, they praise Jesus as a prophet of God, as sinless as “ *the Messiah*,” as “ *illustrious in this world and the next*,” (Sura 3:45) They cite the Koran which says,

And we gave Jesus Son of Mary, the clear signs, and confirmed Him with the Holy Spirit. (Arberry, p 64)

But Islam does not believe in the Christ as set forth in the Scriptures.

1. Islam denies the Deity of Jesus Christ:

They say He was one of God’s many prophets but not God’s only son.

It is not for God to take a son unto Him (N.J. Dawood, The Koran, Baltimore: Penguin Books 1972, p, 34)

Yet the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is God’s one and only Son. The Saviour Himself said, “ *For God so loved the world life*,” (Jn 3:16) Surely every book in the

New Testament assumes the deity of Jesus Christ. Yet any Muslim who believes that Jesus Christ is God has committed “ *the one unforgivable sin,*” (shirk) a sin that will send him to hell forever. (The Facts of Islam, p 20)

2. Muslims also deny that Christ died on the Cross:

They believe that Allah would never allow this to happen to one of his special prophets. They teach that God substituted someone else in His place. Again, they reject the clearest teaching of the New Testament, for Christ repeatedly stated that He had to go to the cross. Do you recall Matthew’s words, “ *From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day.*” (Matt 16:21 Lk 18:31 Jn 12:27) Thank God, it is a historical fact that Christ died and rose again, and when we believe in Him we are saved. Can I ask you this “ *what think ye of Christ ?*” (Matt 22:42)

***What think ye of Christ is the test
To try both your state and your scheme
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him***

Islam claims that it honours and reverences Christ, but it rejects what the Bible teaches about Him, and what He taught about Himself. (a) (b)

(c) The GRACE of the BIBLE is missing from Islam:

You see, there is no original sin in Islam. There is no atonement. There is no redeemer. Just keep the rules. Islam is a religion of salvation by personal righteousness. In other words, the Muslim thinks that by striving to please God and by doing good works, he will hopefully gain heaven through personal merit. The Koran clearly teaches that salvation is achieved on the basis of good works. Consider these statements,

Every soul shall be paid in full what it has earned.
(Arberry p, 93)

Islam teaches that the on the day of judgment one’s good and evil deeds will be weighed on a scale. If the good outweighs the bad, you’ll go to heaven, if the bad outweighs the good, you’ll go to hell. The Koran asserts,

In the Day of Judgment they whose balances shall be heavy with good works, shall be happy, but they whose balances shall be light, are those who shall lose their souls and shall remain in hell forever.
(Sura 23:104-105)

No Muslim in this life can ever know if his good works are sufficient for him to get into heaven. What a contrast to what the Bible teaches. ***That salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.*** Paul testifies “ *For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.*” (Eph 2:8-9) In contrast to the teachings of

Islam, the Bible tells us that anyone who wishes may come to God, freely receive salvation, and know that he or she has eternal life. (1 Jn 5:13) What about you this ? Do you know that you have eternal life ? Is Christ your personal Saviour ?

My if you believe the Word of God, you are necessarily opposed spiritually to any book of man which claims to be of God. We need to stick to our message. The world, the Muslim world, the Jewish world, the Whole world needs it. ***The gospel is the answer.*** We will not solve the world's problems but in the providence of God we may be a link in a chain to bring Christ to a needy soul. For “ **Christ is the answer to the world's need.**” Think of this.

Mohammed was the prophet of war, Christ is the Prince of Peace: (Is 9:6-7)

Mohammed's disciples killed for the faith, Christ's disciples were killed for their faith: (Acts 12:2)

Mohammed's method was violent compulsion, Christ's aim was voluntary conversion: (Acts 3:19)

Mohammed practiced force, Christ preached faith:
(Jn 6:29)

Mohammed's tomb, occupied, Christ's tomb, empty.