

Islam Part 3

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REVIEW:

Having had two lessons on Islam, one introducing the theology of Islam and another introducing the history of Islam, I am confident we need far more study to even begin to get a firm grasp of it.

We are dealing with a religious movement that has writings and scholars going back hundreds of years. We are engaging with a culture and a political movement that has infiltrated and conquered civilizations spanning thousands of miles. It is necessary for us to study Islam because it becomes the major organized antagonist of Christianity from its inception until now. It is antagonistic at first merely in its philosophy, but very quickly in Jihad.

Rather than create an entire 13-week course on the subject, we must be content with introduction. The goal of these three classes then is not to teach you everything about Islam that you could possibly know, nor even to have a firm grasp of it, but to begin you on a path of study that hopefully you will continue on your own and for us so that we will recognize it as it shows up through church history.

Today we will try to wrap up that introduction and answer any initial questions we might have. We also will touch on the influence Islam has had on Christianity as well as how to engage with Muslims. Another comparison we can make is that between Islam and Mormonism.

I. UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGINS OF ISLAM

A. ISLAM AS A MOVEMENT

1. When Did It Begin?

Pastor Don mentioned the date 610AD as the date Muhammed claims to have received a revelation from God through the angel Gabriel. However, if you ask a Muslim when Islam began, they would tell you that it has existed since Abraham.

Muhammed believed that Abraham was a Muslim, Moses was a Muslim, even Jesus was a Muslim. This was his way of understanding of the Bible. (Surah 5:44)

So to Muslims, Muhammed was the great prophet who finally restored true worship of God after it had been corrupted by Jews and Christians for hundreds of years.

2. Is It A Political Or Religious Movement?

Islam is both a religious and cultural/political movement.

As a religious movement, it has its own writings. The Koran was written by Mohammed in the late 6th or early 7th century. The Hadith was written around 846AD.

The practice of Islam is to present itself as a religious movement when they are a minority then to take political power when they gain a majority.

2. What Does Islam Mean? What is a Muslim?

Islam means submission though at its root is the idea of peace.

A Muslim is a person who submits.

God is a holy God who must be obeyed. There is no redemption or standard for forgiveness.

3. What is the Core Doctrine of Islam?

? What is the chief tenet of Christianity?

The core doctrine of Islam is the oneness of God. The writer of the Koran is consumed with the unity of God and against idolatry.

Both groups suffer from a misunderstanding of their core tenets.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE PRACTICE OF ISLAM

Islam is not a word centered. They have a Koran and the Hadith, but often Muslim practice contradicts what is clearly written. (Surah 9:5)

Allah himself at judgment arbitrarily damns or forgives a person. You can have a good Muslim who keeps the Koran perfectly all of his life show up at judgment and be cast away while a murderer is let into heaven by the whim of Allah.

A. FIVE PILLARS

1. Shahada

This is the Sunni religion, which has the majority of adherents in Islam.

From Wikipedia: The first pillar of Islam is the *Shahada*, the assertion of faith. There are two shahadas: "There is no god but God" and "Muhammad is the messenger of God". This set statement is normally recited in Arabic: *lā 'ilāha 'illā-llāhu muḥammadun rasūlu-llāh* (لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ) (رَسُولُ اللَّهِ) "There is no god but God (and) Muhammad is the messenger of God." It is

essential to utter it to become a Muslim and to convert to Islam.

The first shahada promotes the essential unity of the faith, proclaiming that there is no god but God. The Tawhid, which is the prayer that states "no god but God" is a major component of the Islamic faith, for it asserts the monotheistic aspect of Islam, promoting unity of God as the source of existence. The second shahada demonstrates God's essential mercy. This prayer proclaims Muhammad as the last prophet, and it uses Muhammad as the prime example of guidance for all Muslims. Muhammad received revelation that was distorted by earlier communities, such as Jewish and Christian societies; Muhammad was the recipient of the Quran's guidance himself and now is bearer of this guidance for the rest of the Muslim community throughout history.

The Shahada, or profession of faith is said five times a day during prayer. It is the first thing said to a newborn, and the last thing to a person on their death-bed, showing how the Muslim prayer and the pillars are instrumental from the day a person is born until the day they die.

2. Salah

From Wikipedia: The Second Pillar of Sunni Islam is Salah, or prayer. Before a prayer is observed, ablutions are performed including washing one's hands, face and feet. A caller (Muezzin in Arabic) chants aloud in from a raised place in the mosque. Verses from the Quran are recited either loudly or silently. These prayers are a very specific type of prayer and a very physical type of prayer called prostrations. The prayers are performed strictly at dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night.

3. Zakat

From Wikipedia: Zakat means purification which indicates that a payment makes the rest of one's wealth legally and religiously pure. By following this pillar, Muslims have to deduct certain amount of their income to support the Islamic community, and it usually about 2.5% of an individual's income. This practice is not found in the Quran but rather in the hadith. The tax is used to take good care of the holy places and mosques in the individual's specific Muslim community or to give assistance to those in need or who are impoverished.

The principle of knowing that all things belong to God is essential to purification and growth. Zakāt is obligatory for all Muslims who are able to do so. It is the personal responsibility of each Muslim to ease the economic hardship of others and to strive towards eliminating inequality.

There are five principles that should be followed when giving the zakāt:

- a. The giver must declare to God his intention to give the zakāt.
- b. The zakāt must be paid on the day that it is due.
- c. After the offering, the payer must not exaggerate on spending his money more than usual means.
- d. Payment must be in kind. This means if one is wealthy then he or she needs to pay a portion of their income. If a person does not have much money, then they should compensate for it in different ways, such as good deeds and good behavior toward others.
- e. The zakāt must be distributed in the community from which it was taken.

4. Sawm

From Wikipedia: Fasting takes place during Ramadan, which is the holy month in the Islamic calendar. Using a lunar calendar means the month of Ramadan shifts 11 days earlier each year. Sawm is directly stated in the Quran saying: "eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn, then complete the fast till night...". The fast occurs from dawn to sunset each day during which time believers are expected to prohibit themselves from any food, drink, sexual intercourse, or smoking. However after sunset and before dawn, individuals can participate in any of the actions previously stated as they desire.

5. Hajj

From Wikipedia: During one's life, a Muslim is required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca during the 12th month of the lunar calendar. This ritual consists of making journey to Mecca wearing only 2 white sheets so all of the pilgrims are identical and there is no class distinction among them.

After a Muslim makes the trip to Mecca, he/she is known as a hajj/hajja (one who made the pilgrimage to Mecca).

B. TWELVERS

Shia Islam as 9 pillars. Twelver Shia Islam has fifteen pillars.

1. Tawhid (monotheism: belief in the oneness of God)
2. Adl (divine justice: belief in God's justice)
3. Nubuwwah (prophethood)
4. Imamah (succession to Muhammad)

5. Mi'ad (the day of judgment and the resurrection)

6. Salah

7. Sawm

8. Zakat

9. Khums

Khums is an annual taxation of one-fifth (20%) of the gains that a year has been passed on without using. Khums is paid to the Imams; indirectly to poor and needy people.

10. Hajj

11. Jihad: Striving for the cause of Allah

12. Enjoining good

13. Forbidding wrong

14. Tawalla: Expressing love towards good.

15. Tabarra

This is an expressing disassociation and hatred towards evil.

C. ISMALIS

Ismalis follow the five pillars of the Sunni, but add *Walayah* (guardianship) and Jihad.

CONCLUSION: HELPFUL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Not every Muslim is the same.

2. They don't believe that Islam came 600 years after Christ.

They believe that they have the original religion of Abraham uncorrupted.

3. Cultural Distinctions are Not Necessarily Wrong

4. Islam had a profound impact on Christianity.

Throughout history, one can see the influence of Islam.

Tasbih and the Rosary

Jihad and Crusade

Pillars and Sacraments

5. Who is the true Muslim?

You can argue whether the true Muslim is the one that practices Jihad or the one that lives at peace with his neighbors. There are cultural and nominal Muslims just like there are cultural and nominal Christians. There is probably even more of an emphasis on culture and politics simply because Islam at its core is a cultural and one is born into it. Every Muslim believes this.