

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

Unleashing the Power of the Truth – Part III **Pastor Ty Blackburn** **Ephesians 6:10-18** **February 1, 2015**

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the sixth chapter of Ephesians. We are looking at, it's going to be a topical message again this morning. Normally we are preaching expositionally, and have been in the Gospel of John for four years now, and we'll be picking up Chapter 15 soon. But I wanted to, in the new year, preach a couple weeks on pursuing spiritual fitness, and we did that from Romans 12. And then I wanted to talk about some issues, and how the Bible responds to those, and how biblical Christians ought to respond to those.

So we talked two weeks ago about the issue of abortion, and last week the issue of homosexuality, and what God's word says about that. Today I want us to talk about the issue of radical Islam, and how we're to respond to that. And as we look, I'm going to talk about a couple of things, we're going to spend a little bit of time talking about in general, and then we're going to talk about what we did, our main focus of these messages is to talk about how as a Christian, on a personal level, we respond to people on the other side of these issues. So the focus will be how do we minister to Muslims with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? That's where we're going to get to. We're going to have to start talking about some general things because this is a complex issue.

Wednesday, January 7, three gunmen, speaking, according to witnesses, perfectly fluent French, broke into a Liberal French magazine in Paris, that majored on satirical journalism, and particularly satirical cartoons, and from time to time attacked various religious entities including Islam, and the prophet Mohammad. These three gunmen, yelling, "Allah Akbar!" as they executed ten people in that publishing office, and two additional police officers, 12 people in all, shocked Paris, and the world. It was the largest terrorist activity against France since the 1960's. This was all about the honor of Mohammed according to them, and that resonated in a powerful way with the events of the last year. We've been hearing about ISIS, the Islamic state in Syria, and in Iraq, beheading and crucifying hundreds of people who would not convert, Christians in Iraq and Syria.

In the aftermath of the Paris massacre, in writing about it, one of the things that came up as I was reading about it was 2,000 French citizens are believed to have left France at different times to go to Iraq and Syria to serve in the armies of ISIS.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

It is believed that hundreds of American citizens have done that, particularly a large number around Minneapolis, have left the US to go serve in these armies doing these barbaric atrocities in the name of Islam.

Islam is a growing religion, and a growing number of people in America. Estimates range from three to four million Muslims in the United States, but it has really been dramatic. In talking with our, we're blessed in our church to have a resident expert on Islam, Ken Temple. He and his wife, Connie, have ministered to folks from Iran, a Muslim nation, for the last 30 years. And Ken was sharing with me that in 1983, when he began ministering to Muslims, there was one mosque in Atlanta. I read the other day that there are now 55 mosques in Atlanta.

And so we have to realize that some of these radicals may even be driving down our streets, walking in our neighborhoods, possibly living next door. As the conflict intensifies, how are we to live with that? As Christians, how are we to live with that? You know, how should we live in response to this kind of reality? I want to read Ephesians 6:10-18 which I think is going to summarize what the real spiritual direction is. We're going to see there are some other things that we want to bring in from a number of different passages, so this is really a point of departure, and we'll probably stop back by here on the way, as we make our way through the Scriptures this morning.

Ephesians 6:10-18 ~ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we come today asking that You, by Your Spirit, would work through Your word, and through the various passages that we look at this morning. To speak to our hearts, to illumine our minds, to comfort our souls, and to direct us. To lead us to repentance, and to lead us to trust, and surrender to our great Savior. We pray this in His name, and for His glory, Amen.

Al Mohler writes in the front of James White's book. In fact, I recommend this highly. We're going to order it for our bookstore. The book is What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Quran by James White. In the front of the book Al Mohler says:

The Christian engagement with Islam will be a defining issue in the 21st Century. This is a couple of years old, so it was before ISIS, and this recent eruption of Muslim violence, but it is going to be a defining issue in the 21st Century. John MacArthur, in the front of that book also writes:

If we are going to meet the Islamic challenge to our faith, we need to be informed, intelligent, and prepared to answer our Islamic neighbors in a forthright, clear, and thoroughly biblical way, yet with gentleness and respect.

This is what the Scripture calls us to, but it is going to take some preparation on our part, and to that end, we're planning on having, I mentioned Ken Temple a bit earlier, missionary to the Iranian people, and speaks Farsi and goes several times a year to different places in the middle east to minister the Gospel to believing former Muslims, believing Iranians, and also to reach out to Muslims to bring them to Christ. He is going to be teaching on March 4, Wednesday night, about Islam, and I'm thinking we probably need more than one week to get it in. So we're working on that, and planning on that, so put that on your calendars, Wednesday, March 4, but we need to work to be prepared.

Now, I want us to be careful about how we approach this, and what we're going to do is, we're going to talk about, I have two preliminary questions I want us to consider before I get into the main outline. The main outline is going to be the identical outline that we've been using in the previous two weeks. Remember when we talked about addressing the issue of abortion, or the issue of homosexuality, we were thinking in terms of talking to someone who is coming from the other viewpoint. So we said, "How are we to spiritually minister to these

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

people?” Well, we need to unleash the truth of God’s word, but the way that we do it is we *Create a Context for the Truth*, and we *Speak the Truth*. Those are our main points again today, but there are going to be a couple preliminary questions that I want us to consider before we get to those two main points, okay? Two preliminary questions.

The first question is: *As citizens, as Christians who are citizens of the United States, how do we respond to Militant Islam in the world?* The first thing that we need to understand is that as citizens of the United States, we have a responsibility to support our government, and to serve in the military, to serve as police officers, and if not to serve in the military, or to serve as police officers ourselves, to support them. I mean, it is appropriate and biblical for our armed forces to fight against the forces of ISIS, and to seek to eradicate them. That’s why God has raised up this state. He says in Romans 13, we’re to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake. For there is no authority except those ordained by God, and that the state bears the sword.

The idea is the state bears the sword to punish evildoers, and so that means militarily, and it also means from a standpoint of law enforcement, the FBI, the local police. So we need to be thankful to God for those blessings that he’s given us, and support them every way we can, and realize it is perfectly appropriate for a Christian to be engaged in that. The idea of a just war is something that has been talked about through Christian history, way back to Augustin, and certainly biblically there is a place for bearing arms against those who do evil. So in that sense, we understand that, when you think about it in big terms, it is appropriate for us to support policies that would lead us to be wise about the way we handle the threat of Islam today. It is discouraging for us if you’re, like I said, it is prone to make us fret if we are reading the paper and hearing how our president, and how many of our other leaders are responding to the threat. Because, like ostriches, they are sticking their head in the sand, and pretending that it is not that way.

Even President Bush was guilty of this when he continued to say Islam is a religion of peace. You know, we’re going to see that, I mean, Muslims, like Christians, they are a great variety, and they are not all of the same stripe. There are those who are more faithful to the text of the Quran, like we are faithful to the text of the Bible, and there are those who are less faithful to the text of the Quran, like many professing Christians are less faithful to the text of the Bible. But the Quran, correctly understood, we’re going to see, is not a religion of peace. It is a religion

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

that is committed to world domination through violence and military conquest if necessary.

The idea, in fact, one of the key doctrines that is there in the Quran is the idea that there are really two houses, the way that the Muslim mind sees the world. They have a worldview that, I think this is where the president, and so many western elites just don't understand their way of thinking, but we as Christians can understand it because in a way, they are like us. We have a worldview that starts with revelation. If you are a biblical Christian, you believe that what matters most is what God has said, not what man thinks. We don't start with man, we start with God, and so they do the same thing, and we can commend them for that. And even in dialoguing with them, that is a great place to start. We also, even though you see the people around you living ungodly lives, they tend to think we are all just alike. You know, the people who haven't been in America, and those that come even, wonder if we're all not just a bunch of Pagans, those who are more conservative in their Islamic faith. No, we believe that the Bible is the authority for life. We start there.

So those that do start there though, one of the doctrines that is taught in Islam is that they see the world through the lens of the Quran, the whole world is made up of two houses—the House of Islam and the House of War. The House of Islam is the area which is under Muslim rule, and the House of War is everything else. And their determination is to make everything the House of Islam. That is just clear, that is the view of consistent textual Muslims, those who want to be faithful to the text of Islam. Understanding that helps us to understand how we ought to pray for our leaders. We ought to pray that they have insight into this.

Al Mohler, in one of his articles after the Paris attack, wrote an article about basically western secularism, trying to understand Islam which comes at it from a revelation worldview, and there is just this inability to understand it. Listen to what he says.

One of the fundamental problems among western elites is that they cannot understand a theological worldview. Particularly, the theological worldview of Islam. Being basically rational and secular in their own worldview, western elites find it almost impossible to understand the radical actions taken by Islamic terrorists. For example, Islamic teaching distinguishes the House of Islam, that part of the world which is under submission to the Quran and Sharia law from the House of War, that portion of the world that is not yet brought under Sharia rule.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

That logic is simply something that the modern secular mind really cannot understand, and the American government seems almost resolutely determined to ignore, or even deny. Speaking on Hugh Hewitt's radio program, Republican Senator, Lindsay Graham, of South Carolina, indicated that he believes that what we are witnessing is a religious war, but that statement is not echoed by other sectors of the American government, in particular, the United States Department of State, and even more pointedly, the American White House. President Obama continues to refer to the group that calls itself the Islamic State, by the acronym ISIL, trying to do anything to avoid mentioning the word 'Islam'.

Mohler goes on to write:

In an absolutely stunning development this morning (This would be January 8.) USA Today ran an article by an extremist Muslim cleric in Britain, Anjem Choudary, (This is the Muslim cleric in England. The USA Today gave him the platform.) who wrote:

Contrary to popular misconception, Islam does not mean 'peace' but rather means 'submission to the commands of Allah alone'. Therefore, Muslims do not believe in the concept of freedom of expression, as their speech and actions are determined by divine revelation, and not based on people's desires.

He went on to write:

Although Muslims may not agree about the idea of freedom of expression, even non-Muslims who espouse it may say it comes with responsibilities in an increasingly unstable and insecure world, the potential consequences of insulting the messenger Mohammad, are known to Muslims, and non-Muslims alike.

Chaudary basically went on to defend what happened in Paris.

Muslims consider the honor of the prophet Mohammad, to be dearer to them than that of their parents, or even themselves. To defend it is considered to be an obligation upon them. The strict punishment if found guilty of this crime under Sharia is capital punishment, implementable by an Islamic State. This is because the messenger Mohammad said, 'Whoever insults a prophet, kill him.'

That is Islam. Now, as I've said, not every Muslim is literal in the way they are going about living it, but that is essentially the realities. Now obviously we need a

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

government that is going to protect us from that. How do you deal with that? Well, let's turn to 1 Timothy 2. The Scripture is profitable for every need that we have. It tells us how to live. Paul is writing to Christians who live in a day when they were being persecuted by incredibly ungodly people, and also by an incredibly ungodly government. Nero is on the Roman throne at this time. Look what Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2, Verse 1:

1 Timothy 2:1-2 ~ First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

Paul says, "Pray for your leaders." We don't need to be frustrated. We don't need to be sitting there, like I said, watching the news and fretting, burning, getting stewed up over how stupid is this. Wait a minute, put it in context. In the dark, what can you see? If people are in the dark, if our leaders are in the dark, what can they see? We must pray for God to grant them His common grace. Even better, His saving grace. But common grace to even allow them to see what is up and down. So we pray for them.

But listen why we pray for them. It is so important to see this in context. He says pray ...for ***kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.*** Now if we end at Verse 2, we would think, "Well, yeah, that sounds good. I want to live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity, don't you?" But look at, he gives us the purpose of praying for that in the next couple of verses. The reason we should pray for that is a Kingdom reason. Look what he says:

1 Timothy 2:3-6 ~ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

The reason we pray for tranquility, and quietness, is so that the Gospel can go forth. That is our motivation. And so if God doesn't let us have tranquility and quietness, that's up to Him, still our agenda is the Gospel, and the Gospel going forth. But we are to pray for our leaders, so that's one of the things we can do. We can support the military, and we can pray for our leaders.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

And then also understand, as we saw in our first passage, there may be a religious war going on, and there is. The people that are fighting it, they are doing it out of their belief in the Islamic faith. It is a religious war, but we need to be clear as Christians, we should not see ourselves at war with them in the same way they see themselves at war with us. They are at war with the United States. They may think they are at war with us, but ultimately we're not at war with them because our struggle is not with flesh and blood, but with the principalities, and the powers, and the world forces of wickedness in heavenly places. We have one enemy and he is Satan. And we understand through the Scriptures that they, like every other unbeliever, though they may be more outwardly hostile, though when you think about it, the folks we've talked about recently, the homosexuals, they are pretty hostile too. They just haven't resorted to the same level, and exactly the same tactics.

In fact, I read an article the other day where it says, it noted how there is a lot of similarity in the way that the homosexual lobby views free speech, and the way that Muslims view free speech. What did the Muslims do when they didn't like what was printed by that French magazine? They seek to silence everybody that would speak out against them by attacking like that. What does the gay lobby do? When someone speaks out, they seek to ruin them, so that everybody else will be silenced. They don't do physical violence, but they do emotional damage. They try to ruin somebody, ruin their business. It is a very similar situation.

So in reality, you see, the war we fight is always the same, and it is a war about the truth. It is a war about the Gospel. Our war is not a physical war. I said earlier, you may have to serve in the United States Armed Services, and you fight physically, and you defend, and you have to kill in that circumstance. Or you are a police officer, you may have to fire a gun at someone. That is appropriate. And as a Christian you may have to defend your home, and that is certainly something that is allowed, to use a weapon for that. But when it comes to the Gospel, we are not at war with them. Christianity is not at war. Our church is not a part of a war, not a physical war, yet we are a part a spiritual war. The spiritual war for the hearts of men.

So we need to understand that, and to realize that this is an opportunity, and a tremendous opportunity for the Gospel to go forth. Whenever there have been times throughout history of intense conflict, those have been opportunities where people are more open to the Gospel. God has deemed throughout church history to

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

grow His Kingdom, His church, in times of intense difficulty. So if the difficulties get worse here in America, for whatever reason, the message is: Don't fret. Rest in the Lord, trust in the Lord, do good, proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ. And as we do that, we will overcome them by the word of our testimony, that is our proclamation, our belief in Christ, the truth of who Jesus is, and the blood of the Lamb. No force greater than that. We have the power of the Gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation. It is not the power of a bullet, or the power of a rocket launcher, it is something far, far greater than that. It is the same power that spoke, as we said in 2 Corinthians 4, the same God who said, "Let there be light," and the light shone out of darkness. Paul says, "has spoke into your hearts to reveal the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." He looks into black, dark hearts and He says, "Let there be light," and someone is saved.

And so He can do that. Is it too hard for Him to save a Muslim who is a radical terrorist? Is that too hard for God? Is it harder for Him to save the person that is over there in Syria and Iraq murdering someone than it was for Him to save you? The Bible says, "No, there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. No difference, all must come through the glory of Christ." So we understand that, then that frames for us the way we should approach it.

Now we come to just the outline proper. How should we handle it personally? We talked about how we handle it in a general way, what should we do as citizens? Now, what should we do as citizens of the Kingdom of God? We talked about what we do as citizens of the United States, but now citizens of the Kingdom of God. How do we respond when we have the opportunity to talk to a Muslim, to relate to a Muslim? And there are two points. Our first point, as the last two weeks is *Create a Context for the Truth*.

1) Create a Context for the Truth:

We see, as we study the Scriptures, that God always creates a context for the truth. This is one of the reasons I think that Jesus healed as a part of His preaching ministry. He healed and He showed the kindness of God, the mercy of God, the love of God in touching the leper, or in healing the lame man, and telling the blind man, put the dirt on his eyes, and telling him to go wash, and making him see. He showed His glory, He showed His love, and then His message of the Gospel is framed in that.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

We noted how the law was given after God delivered the people, not before. God delivered the people from the clutches of Egypt, brings them out, and then He gives them His law. “Here’s My covenant.” So the idea is love creating a context for the truth. So we should do that. We’re to speak the truth in love. We’re to look to show kindness to people, to be about good works, to be thoughtful, and sensitive, and kind as much as we’re able, but then to see that that is not just an end in itself. That’s a means to the end of the proclaiming the Gospel with clarity and conviction.

How do you create a context for the truth? How do you create that sense of connection in relationship, and get your heart ready to share the truth, and get their heart ready to receive it? The same three sub-points I think are good here today as well. First of all, the way you create a context for the truth is when you’re talking to someone, when you see someone, and when you have the opportunity to share with someone, you pray. That’s the first thing we should always be doing. Men ought always to pray and not to faint. We need to pray, “Lord, help me. I’ve got an opportunity to talk to this person. Give me the words to say. Help me get my heart right.” You begin praying for that person. “Work in their life. Work in my life.”

The second thing you do is put off pride and put on humility. Remember again, the only reason that you know what you know is because you’ve been given what you know. The difference between you and that person may be where you were born. What did you have to do with that? Did you choose the place of your birth? Did you choose all the circumstances of your life? We think we made choices along the way, and we do have opportunities to make choices, but ultimately God is the one who is governing everything around us. And so the first person who shared Christ with you, God brought them, and God gave you ears to hear and eyes to see. So what we have then is what God has given to us. So put off pride and put on humility. I’m no smarter and no better than this person.

Then put off self-interest and put on love. Stop thinking about what you have at stake in the situation. It’s kind of like what I was saying earlier. When you think about the big stuff, I mean, if you were to find out that you’re living with somebody, you have a neighbor that’s a Muslim, and I know probably from time to time with all that we have going on, you even wonder if you see strange activity going on. I was talking with one of our church members about that. There’s a neighbor that they know is Muslim, and he’s not always understanding what he’s doing. “What’s he doing with those bags of fertilizer?” You know, that kind of thing. And honestly, it’s appropriate to call the police for an investigation. I’m not

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

saying anything like that. That's not different than loving the sinner. Helping them stop their sin is gracious to them. Don't let them add to the weight. If they reject Christ, they're going to just suffer more intensely for what they've done. If you can stop them, you've been a blessing even in that. But you see those people around, and it's easy to wonder if someone's more intense maybe in their discussion.

I remember when I was in college, we had a few—this was back in the early and mid-80s, and the day that we attacked Tripoli, do you remember that? It was when President Reagan, we tried to go after Moammar Gadhafi. I was walking through the student center, and there was not anybody else in there. It was just me. It was one of those times I was just happened to be walking through. The TV was on over there. It was always on, and there were these two students that were yelling in some language I didn't understand. They were all bent out of shape over what was happening in Tripoli, and obviously they were Muslim. And I'm not trying to get into the issue of what exactly happened there. I'm just saying that at that moment, I knew they felt strongly about their Islamic faith, and could be seen as the enemy of the United States. But how does that mean we should respond to them though? We lay that aside when we're talking person to person, because your citizenship is in Heaven, and that reality is far more important than your citizenship in America, and so you're a representative of the King, and you have the calling to, as a representative, an ambassador of King Jesus, to go and to proclaim the offer of Good News to those who are at war with Him. You are proclaiming the favorable year of the Lord, and you're looking for an opportunity to tell them, "You, even though you're at war with Christ, you have the opportunity to repent. Kiss His hand, lest He become angry. Submit to Him. Bow to Jesus and be saved."

So you want to create the opportunity about that by being sensitive in laying aside all of the other agendas and issues. And I think we to especially beware of prejudice. I think this is something that particularly in evangelical circles, we have to watch out for, because in the last 100 years or so, we've probably seen an over-emphasis on our connectedness to Israel and the Jews. Now, I believe that God has a plan for the Jews. I think Romans 11:25-29 makes this clear. The Lord hardened the Jews for a period of time, and He's going to bring many of ethnic Israel to Himself, and so that there is a special place in the heart of God for Israel. That's my personal conviction.

Now, there are a number of different positions on that exactly how far you carry it. But I do think there are a lot of people today who carry it too far, and who act like that we should always support Israel no matter what. And I think we should lean

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

that way, myself, but we need to remember that wait, we have to be cautious here and realistic, and understand the realities, and not assume that every act by a Muslim is bad, and every act by an Israeli is good. It tends to be. Overwhelmingly it looks that way. I have to say as I look at it, they're scoring a whole lot better, but there are complexities about the situation we don't understand, and we need to guard that and check that, and as we come to talk with Muslim, realize it can prejudice our relationship with them if we think in those thought forms too much.

We need to remember that though God may have a special plan for the nation of Israel, the reality is He has a special plan for His elect from every nation. Jesus said in Matthew 8:11, "I tell you that many will come from east and west, and will sit down at Abraham's table, and the people of the covenant will be cast out into outer darkness." So He's saving people from every tribe, and tongue, and kindred. That means those in Iraq, and Syria, and every other place. So we can't define our thinking in terms of what we see. We must go by the Scripture. So we put off pride, we put on humility, we put off self-interest, we put on love, we beware of prejudice, and we show kindness. I think showing kindness to Muslims is a way to really reach out to them and then stand out, because those who are more even vocal in their Islamic faith are probably not winning many friends, right? They're not seeing many people that really care about them, but we ought to care about them. We can care about the person who's persecuting us. Jesus says, "Pray for the one who despitefully uses you and persecutes you." Even if we were being persecuted, if we were being beaten by someone, by God's grace we could be praying for them, and God would give us grace, because when we suffer for Christ, the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

So with those things in mind then, we need to speak the truth. We create a context for the truth by cultivating a heart of love, and then we speak the truth, the second point. Create a context for the truth and then speak the truth.

2) Speak the Truth:

Now, we need to be clear on some things, and as I said earlier, we're going to have opportunities to learn a lot more about this later, but I want to hit the key points this morning that can be a help to us. To speak the truth, well, to understand this, let me give a brief sketch of the history of Islam, a very brief sketch.

Mohammad was born about 570 A.D. in Mecca, which is in the country that we now call Saudi Arabia, and he purports to have received revelation directly from

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

the angel Gabriel over a period of 22 years. The Muslim believes that Mohammad received his book the Quran in installments over 22 years, by direct dictation from the angel Gabriel. This book is about one half the size of the New Testament, and in their way of understanding is actually seen to be a continuation of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and then the Quran. They see it as a continuation of the previous doctrines, the previous books. So in that sense, theoretically they believe our Bible is the word of God. Now, I said theoretically, because they believe that the New Testament has been greatly corrupted. They also believe the Old Testament has been corrupted. They believe that the Jewish people messed with the Old Testament and changed it around. They believe that Christians have distorted the New Testament.

So in practical realities, they don't really believe it, but they say they do. The fact that they say they do I think opens an opportunity for further conversation, because in their own book, in Islam, there are several times it talks favorably even. At times it talks about being distorted, but it talks favorably about the New Testament.

So anyway, that's the basic history of it, and the essential theology of it is seen in extreme monotheism. It's extremely monotheistic, and Mohammad ministered in that area of Arabia at a time where polytheism and idolatry was rampant, and he at the revelation that he says he received, is aimed squarely at all kinds of idolatry and polytheistic worship, people worshiping more than one god. So the theology of Islam is all about the oneness of god, and the greatness of god.

Now, I want to talk about four different areas with that introduction of belief that we need to understand and proclaim the truth in context of how they see things. I said earlier that they think they have the same Scriptures we have, theoretically, and that gives us an opportunity. But you might hear somebody say, and the problem a lot of times today is misinformed Christians, professing believers, even pastors, who act like that Islam isn't that far from us. "We worship the same God. We have the same Bible. They believe in Jesus too." You can hear somebody say that. In fact, that's something that may be more and more of a reality as time goes on, because as the enemy works to deceive, he works in the church to deceive. But the same Scriptures, the same God, the same Christ—is that right? No, it's not right at all.

By adding the Quran to the word of God, even if they had the Old Testament and the New Testament, to add to it is to completely undo what has been said before. They deny Revelation 22, which says you're not to add to the words of this

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

prophecy. And it contradicts almost everything in the Old and New Testament. The thing it doesn't contradict is we also believe very strongly in monotheism. There are three religions that believe in monotheism—Islam, Judaism, and Biblical Christianity. We all agree on that. They don't think we do. Although Muslims will say sometimes, "We believe in the same God." You may have a Muslim friend that says, "We believe in the same God." They've kind of been taught to say that to help lure you in, but the reality is that when they say they believe in the same God, they mean this. They believe in Allah who was Abraham's God, and David's God, and Jesus' God, but somehow it got messed up with us. So when they say that, they mean, "Yeah, we believe in the same God, but you guys aren't yet submitting." The word *Muslim* means *submit*. "You need to submit to Allah by realizing Allah is the only true God, and Mohammad is His prophet," which is one of their creedal formulations."

So they don't believe in the same God, but it's still a good starting point. They think they do, and if we can get them back into the Bible to look at what the Scriptures say, then they can see that what they're believing today is completely inconsistent with what the Old Testament and the New Testament teach. The New Testament and the Old Testament both teach that God is one, but that one God has made Himself known in three Persons. We believe in Trinitarian monotheism. We believe that God is one.

I read earlier 1 Timothy 2:5, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." There's only one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here's something that's helpful in ministering to Muslims that I read in James White's book, that their view of the Trinity, they think that we believe, and this is in the Quran, that in the Quran it says that our view of the Trinity is that we believe, and this is supposed to be the word of God, right, the inerrant word of God given by Allah to Mohammad through Gabriel—that Christians believe that our Trinity is the Father, and Jesus, and Mary. So their holy book is wrong about what Christians believe, and that doctrine was already clear when they were writing it down in the early 600s. So Mohammad and Gabriel got it wrong. So how can it be a perfect book?

Another thing is I said we'll sometimes hear people say, "We both believe in Jesus." Well, they do believe in Jesus as a prophet, but they believe He's less than Mohammad, and we've got a big problem already right there, because Jesus is not less than anybody. And one of the things that we need to point out to them is that you can go visit Mohammad's tomb, but if you could find Christ's tomb, He's not

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

there. Mohammad is; Jesus is not. He is risen. They believe that though Jesus was a prophet and they respect Him as a prophet, though the New Testament has been distorted and messed up in their view, they believe that He was not crucified. They believe that Allah would not have allowed one of his prophets to be crucified. They cannot accept that, and it's in the Quran as well. "Jesus was not crucified," they say. But the reality is the New Testament teaches that, and history verifies it. There's no question that the man Jesus of Nazareth died on a Roman cross. So here again the Quran is wrong about history.

So if we can say this gently talking to a Muslim, "Do you realize that that's what it says?" But Roman historians who have no dog in the fight testified that Jesus died on a cross. Why would that be? Help them, "Why don't you look again at the New Testament and see what the New Testament says about this Jesus?" We have great confidence in the integrity of the New Testament. They've been sold a bill of goods from their own teachers that the New Testament has been corrupted, but the evidence for the validity of the New Testament goes all the way back to the 1st Century. We have manuscripts, over 22,000 manuscripts, of the Greek New Testament, and when you put them all together, it becomes clear that 99% is identical, the same, when you compare the manuscripts, and that the 1%, that 99% of the 1% relates to things like a vowel, or an ending, or something that totally does not affect any significant meaning in the text.

So you're talking about less than a tenth of a percent of anything that even relates, and those aren't anything significant, but you can say, "Well, that does change this sentence a little bit." And we know that we have the New Testament in its integrity because of this 22,000 from all these different places testifying to the same inerrant, original manuscript. With Islam, there have been all kinds of issues relating to their text. They don't know about that, but James White talks about that in his book.

So if we can have confidence in the New Testament, what we need to do is get them to read the New Testament. One of the things I intend to do is to read the Quran myself so that I can say to a Muslim, "I've read your book. Would you read mine?" Something Ken mentioned to me too is that in talking with Muslims, he's had the opportunity to share with them in so many settings. He was talking about the questions that they will have. They can't understand a lot of things about the Christian faith, and so one of the guys was asking him on a street corner one time, "Why are there four Gospels? Why four? How can you trust that?" I almost want to imitate Ken imitating that person. I can't do that. But anyway, he said, "How

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

can you trust that?” and Ken was standing there on the street corner, and the Lord gave him this illustration, and he said, “If there was an accident right here (this was in Turkey), would it be better in Turkish court to have the testimony of one witness on one street corner, or to have four witnesses on four different corners to that accident?” The man immediately knew, and then a crowd of guys gathered around him, and he got to share with this whole group about the beauty of God’s word in giving us four Gospels, all of which tell us about the glory of our Savior.

The Bible makes clear that our message is Jesus has been crucified, and that that is at the very heart of the good news. We preach Christ and Him crucified. To Jews, a stumbling block, to Greeks, foolishness. It may be foolishness to all the rest of the Gentiles including Muslims, but we are to proclaim it. We’re to share it. Our hope is that Jesus died, and the reality is one of the things that we have is that we have as Reformed Christians who are committed to the inerrancy of Scripture, we start at the same place. We start with what God has said. They’re trying to start with what God has said. They have a high view of God.

We as Reformed Christians have a high view of God. There are a lot of Christians that don’t, and that really offends them. I mean, Evangelicalism and its syrupy candy-coated kind of Christianity is not attractive to Muslims. But you and I believe in a God who reigns in the heavens and does as He pleases. And so we preach a God that is great, and holy, and high, and exalted, and we can come at that and share that with them. They also struggle with the fact that a Christian nation like America, and they think America is all Christians when they come over, and then they find out hopefully over time that it’s not, but look at what comes out of this Christian nation. Look what comes out of Hollywood. Look at all the ungodliness and wickedness that has come out of this nation. They look at people who claim to be Christians, living like the world. We believe as Christians that though we’re not saved by good works, we are saved unto good works. It matters how we live, and so we have that in common.

We can say to them, “No listen, you’re looking at people who may profess to be Christ’s but the Scripture says,” and take them to our Bible. “The Scripture says you’ll know them by their fruits, by their works.” Show them our faith by our good works. So there are many areas of contact that we have with them because of what we believe, to start dialogue and communication, and to show them love, and hospitality, and friendship, but then not to hesitate to proclaim. And this is one of the things Ken was saying too. You can imagine if you have people who are willing to go in and risk their lives and strap bombs to themselves, they respect

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

commitment. America and its namby-pambyism, and the Evangelical Church and its wishy-washy stance on everything is not going to gain a hearing. But we who stand on the word of God and proclaim with confidence, and this is what we're supposed to do, we're supposed to herald the good news.

God has spoken. His word is perfect, and you can be saved. And we're to take that message to every single person, and to rejoice in God's faithfulness. When we have to share it with our neighbor whatever his nationality, whatever his ethnicity, whatever his religion, we proclaim Christ Jesus and Him crucified, the hope of the world, and the hope for that lost person at that moment. And when we do that, when we love people and we share the truth, there is nothing that can stand against that. The reality is God is working, and there are testimonies already of people who are being saved in those places where things are happening in such violence and darkness.

I love what John says in the prologue. "In Him was life, and that life was the Light of men." He's talking about Jesus. In Jesus is life and the Light of men. "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overtake it." The Light must win, so proclaim His Light.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer...

Our Father, how grateful we are for the fact that You have taken us from our darkness and You have spoken into it the glory of the Gospel of Christ. We pray for those that are in the room today that have not yet had that reality happen, or are not yet today new creations, that even today You might speak life into them. Lord, give them grace to look to Christ, to surrender to Him, to repent of their sins, and to place all of their faith in His finished work at Calvary, for He became an offering for sin, satisfying the demands of the law. For a holy God to be able to bring sinners into His presence, someone had to pay. We praise Your Name that You took that payment upon Yourself. Father, we pray that all of us might be filled with more and more wonder and more and more joy, that we are now the children of God. And help us in the reality of that joy and the reality of that wonder to share that in love with our neighbors. Help us to have hearts of compassion with people who are in darkness, and there are all different sorts of darkness around us, but we thank You that no matter what the darkness that ails them, the answer is the Light of Jesus Christ which we can proclaim to them. Help us be more faithful witnesses, and may You bring many people in this day from darkness into Your marvelous light. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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“Unleashing the Power of the Truth – Part III”

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