



ISLAMIC
EVANGELISM
TURNING ANGER INTO URGENCY

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INTRODUCTION

According to a study completed in 2011, Islam is the world's second largest religion with 1.57 billion adherents (*Executive Summary. The Future of the Global Muslim Population. Pew Research Center, January 27, 2011*). Islam is also the fastest growing religion in the world with approximately 80% of its followers living outside of the Arab world. While the average growth of Islam has slowed in recent years, perhaps there is no better time in history for Christians to understand the complexity of the doctrines of Islam for the purpose of giving the gospel to a Muslim who needs salvation through Christ alone. **1 Peter 3:15 says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"** Are you prepared to make a defense of your faith to a Muslim who is in desperate need of salvation? Prior to giving the gospel to a Muslim, it is imperative that a Christian know the basics of Islam. This study is intended to educate Christians on the basic tenets of Islam, and then give considerations on how to reach Muslims for Christ.

A Word of Caution

Have you ever asked yourself the question, "How much does God love Muslims?" The answer is theologically simple. "For God so loved the WORLD..." The Just One died for the unjust. How many of us have gotten on our knees today and asked God to save ISIS as they are sinners who need Jesus Christ as Savior? How many of us will strive tomorrow to be the messenger God uses to deliver the message of salvation to such a person if God allows? God saved Saul, the murderer. He can and desires to save more just like him.

Islam is not a religion! It is a political, social, theological, and economic system that arose in the 7th century. While "Islam" is the name of the religion, its followers are called "Muslims." Muslims claim Islam is an Abrahamic religion and the Qur'an (Koran), the "holy book" of Islam, traces its roots to the Garden of Eden. The path diverges from the Bible quickly, as it ignores The Fall, and tries to claim that Shari'ah Law was established in the Garden. Ishmael, the first son of Abraham with his slave Hagar, is recognized as an important prophet and patriarch. He is purported as the ancestor of several Arab tribes and is believed to be the forefather of Islam's founder, Muhammad. Islam believes that Muhammad established the great nation in the lineage of Abraham as opposed to Jacob (Israel) in the Bible.

The word "islam" is derived from the root word "al-Silm," which means "submission" or "surrender." There is no disagreement about this among Arabic or Islamic scholars because there is only one root word. Lesser educated Muslims sometimes claim that the root word of Islam is "al-Salaam," which is "peace" in Arabic, but it is not. Therefore, Islam is a movement of submission. The Qur'an not only calls Muslims to submit to Allah, but also commands them to subdue people of other religions until they are in a full state of

submission to Islamic rule. This has inspired the aggressive history of Islam and its success in conquering other cultures.

Islam claims it is a religion of peace and submission to Allah. “Allah” is the Arabic word for “god,” but Allah is certainly not related to the God of Judaeo-Christian religions. We will review the history of Islam, examine Islam’s pillars of faith in practice, and research methods for evangelizing Muslims.

THE FOUNDER

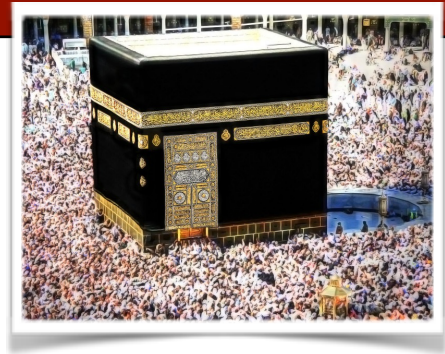
Muhammad Ibne Abdullah was born around AD 570 in the city of Mecca, which is in the country of Saudi Arabia. At the time, Mecca was the cultural and religious center of the region. To the best of this writer’s knowledge, there are no ancient, non-Islamic texts that record the life of Muhammad. The three main sources are the *Qu’ran*, *Muhammad and the Life History of Muhammad*, and *The Expeditions of Muhammad*.

Understanding the culture of Mecca is very important in understanding the identity of Muhammad. When he was born, Mecca was not a globally well-known place, but it was the commercial and religious center of Arabia. The people were divided into warring tribes, but major cities were centers of peace for the sake of commerce. The focal point of Mecca was a shrine in the center of the city called the *Ka’aba* (Arabic for cube). The shrine contained over three hundred idols, but there was one chief god named *Hubal* (most likely derived from Ba’al). There was no governmental authority in Arabia during the sixth century. Tribes were responsible for their own welfare, governance, and relationships with other tribes. There was a generally accepted span of four months each year that all tribes stopped war among themselves for the sake of religious pilgrimages.

Muhammad’s tribe (Quraish), ruled over Mecca and the surrounding area. His father died just before his birth, and his mother left him with a nurse for two years as was the tribe’s tradition. Shortly thereafter, his mother died and Muhammad was left to his grandfather. Two years later, Muhammad’s grandfather died and he was left to his uncle, Abu Talib. At the age of 12, Muhammad began accompanying Talib on mercantile trips and spent much of his youth tending sheep and goats in the valleys of Mecca. Abu Talib introduced Muhammad to Christianity and Judaism on these business trips. At the age of 25, Muhammad worked for a wealthy widow merchant in Mecca named *Khadijah*. She became impressed with the young man and proposed to Muhammad even though she was 15 years older. They were soon married and she bore him 6 children in all.

When Muhammad was 35, a violent storm shattered the Ka’aba in Mecca. Muhammad’s tribe rebuilt the shrine and used a black stone, which some believe to be a meteorite, as the cornerstone of the shrine. This black stone still plays a sacred role in Mecca at the Ka’aba to

this day, which is now contained inside the largest mosque in the world (called Masjid al-Haram).



THE FOUNDING

By the age of 40 years old, Muhammad's practice was to hike two miles from Mecca to Mt. Hira for meditation and contemplation in a cave because he was troubled with the state of religion in Mecca. He was greatly concerned over the immoral lives of his fellow Arabs. On one particular day, Muhammad hurried home to his wife for comfort claiming that an evil angelic being, called a jinn, appeared to him (Qur'an 81:19-29). Jinn are theorized to be living beings created from fire, yet invisible, that dwell on the earth. Khadijah comforted Muhammad stating that God would never allow anything but a true vision to appear to him. She was able to persuade him that the being was not a jinn, but rather the angel Gabriel with an important message. Muhammad's proclivity toward dreams, trances, and visions troubled him to the point of seeking escape by suicide. It was during one of these suicide attempts, Islam teaches, the angel Gabriel called out to him, "O Muhammad, thou who art the prophet of the lord, I am Gabriel." It is also said that when Muhammad would have a revelation, sweat would pop up on his brow, and he would drop to the ground, at which time Gabriel would again appear to him and repeat his instruction that Muhammad was a prophet of Allah sent to reclaim the lost people of the land. It was these visions and Muhammad's revelations from the "angel" Gabriel that led to the formation of Islam.

Muhammad's tribe apparently distinguished between Allah and the God of the Jews, whom they called ar-Rahman, but the Qur'an identifies the two as the same Lord. "Call upon Allah, or call upon Rahman: by whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names." (Surah 17.110)

Muhammad began proclaiming the messages he received from Gabriel to his fellow Meccans. As Muhammad's converts grew, he began to speak out against idol worship. The Meccans had no issue in believing in one, supreme God. They recognized him as Allah, but they also refused to cease idol worship.

Ten years after Muhammad introduced Islam to the world, Khadijah died. Two months later, he married a widow (Sawda), and then was betrothed to a six-year-old girl (Aisha), whom he would marry when she turned nine years old.

"The Prophet engaged me when I was a girl of six (years)... Allah's Apostle came to me in the forenoon and my mother handed me over to him, and at that time I was a girl of nine years of age" (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 234).

Narrated Aisha: that the Prophet married her when she was six years old and he consummated his marriage when she was nine years old, and then she remained with him for nine years (*Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 62, Number 64*).

Muhammad would eventually be married to 15 women. He married someone new every year following his first wife's death, many of them as a result of war and plunder. Modern Islam teaches that men are only allowed four wives. Muhammad made an exception for himself, however, in Surat 33:50.

In AD 622, the social elites in Mecca began to persecute Muhammad and his followers because of the popularity of Islam's message and the growing economic impact. Muhammad was forced to move out of Mecca in a journey that is now known as the *Hegira* or *Hijrah* (The Migration) to the city of Yathrib, later renamed *Medina*. Muhammad began a series of "holy wars" that were even in conflict with warring Arab tribes. Conquered people were given three options: accept Islam, pay tribute, or die by the sword (see the Repentance Surat, verse 29). As a result of this method of forced conversion, many Christian churches were turned into mosques to please the conquering Muslims, while many other Christians, not willing to take the easy way out, were killed.

Since Muhammad still had a deep love for his birth city of Mecca, the city's conquest was his first and foremost objective. After raising an army of ten thousand warriors, he marched on the city. Most of Mecca capitulated peaceably, although there was some resistance. Once the city was secured, Muhammad marched to the Ka'aba and destroyed the idols he had hated so much. To this day, the Islamic Ka'aba is the center of religious worship as Muslims bow to it in their prayers five times a day.

Muhammad developed a deep hatred for three Jewish tribes near Medina who had the ability to identify his message as one of confusion, taken from their own teachings. They rejected him as a prophet and accused him of plagiarism. Muhammad turned his anger excessively against these Jews and attempted to wipe them out. This set a precedent for modern Islam. During a battle with the Quraiza Jews, over two thousand Jews were slaughtered by Muhammad and his warriors. The Jewess Zainab, (Muhammad's fifth wife and adopted son's ex-wife) lost her husband, father, and brother in the bloodbath. Seeking revenge, Zainab poisoned Muhammad's dinner. Despite spitting out the food before it could kill him, its effects, combined with pneumonia, led to his death at age 64.

THE SECTS

History records that the twelve months following Muhammad's death were spent in bitter, bloody battles to subdue the Arab tribes who became apostate. However, Islam continued to grow after Muhammad's death, led by four Khalifs (Caliphates) elected by the closest followers of the prophet. Jihad also continued in much the same way it had under their prophet. In AD 634, the Islamic military force advanced on Palestine and Syria and defeated the Byzantine armies at Yarmouk River. Forty thousand more Muslims marched to conquer North Africa, followed by the surrender of Jerusalem to the plundering Muslims in AD 637.

According to the *Traditions*, Muhammad predicted that his followers would become divided into 73 sects, every one of whom would go to hell, except one, true sect that kept his faith. The number of sects, now over 150, has far exceeded Muhammad's prediction. The two main branches of Islam diverge in their beliefs over who is the true inheritor of the mantle of the Prophet Muhammad. Sunnis believe that it comes down through **followers** of the Prophet Muhammad who, they say, are his chosen people. The Shi'ites believe that Islam was transmitted through the **household** of the Prophet Muhammad.

Sunni Muslims constitute a 90% majority of the believers in Islam, and are considered to be mainstream traditionalists. Because they are comfortable pursuing their faith within secular societies, they have been able to adapt to a variety of national cultures, while following their three sources of law: the Qur'an, the Hadith, and consensus of Muslim scholars.

The Sunnis began after the death of Muhammad. They sought to make Abu Bakr, Aisha's father, the leader or Caliphate of Islam to replace Muhammad. The Sunnis emphasize the power and sovereignty of Allah and his right to do whatever he wants with his creation. Its leadership is through the Caliphate, who is considered the successor to Muhammad. Most Sunni Muslims believe that the caliph has always been a merely temporal ruler, and that the ulema (educated class of Muslim legal scholars engaged in several fields of Islamic studies) has always been responsible for adjudicating orthodoxy and Islamic law.

In modern times, certain members of the Sunnis have risen to terrorize the world by forming the militant group, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). ISIS believes that the Shi'ites are apostates and must die in order to forge a pure form of Islam. The current leader of ISIS is Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai. He was renamed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in an attempt to claim himself as a descendant of Muhammad and the rightful new Caliphate of the Sunnis.

The Shi'ites split with the Sunnis after the assassination of the fourth caliph in AD 661. Shi'ites believe that the successor to Muhammad should have been Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, and subsequent successor through the lineage of Muhammad's wife, Fatima. Sunnis and Shi'ites war to this day over this disagreement.

Shi'ism is broken into three main sects. The Twelve-Imam (Persia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Syria); the Zaydis (Yemen); and the Ismailis (India, Iran, Syria, and East Africa).

Each group has differences in doctrine. In 1979, the Shi'ite order of the Twelve Imams, often called "Twelvers," overthrew Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran. In his place, they installed Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini to enforce Islamic law as Iran's supreme leader. Khomeini declared that his command was as good as that of the prophet Muhammad. After his death in 1989, Khomeini was succeeded by Ali Hoseyni Khamenei who still holds the position of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid.

The Twelve Imams

The largest sect is Shia Islam. They believe in twelve divinely ordained leaders (imams) who are spiritual and political rulers. The last of the twelve, Muhammad al-Mahdi, disappeared (occultation) in AD 941 and will reappear to establish a new caliphate.

Among the nearly 68 million people in Iran, the vast majority are Muslims who place their hope not in modern-day politics or rulers but in a person who walked the earth centuries ago and is promised to return. This is the order of the 12th Imam. A majority of Shi'ite Muslims traditionally believe that the "12th Imam" (Islamic religious leader), born in A.D. 868, was placed by Allah into hiding (known as occultation) until the day of judgment. He is often referred to as the Mahdi, an Arabic word that references their messiah. Shi'ites traditionally believe he is Mohammad ibn Hasan, the 12th in the line of imams who were descendants of the prophet Mohammad. Though they do not know when the Mahdi will return, they believe he will come to end the misery of his people.

THE 5 PILLARS

The Five Pillars of Islam are core beliefs that shape Muslim thought, deed, economy, and society. A Muslim who fulfills the Five Pillars of Islam, remains in the faith of Islam, and sincerely repents of his sins will make it to paradise (Jannah). If he performs the Five Pillars but does not remain in the faith, he will not be saved. Therefore, Islam is a system of good works in order to gain salvation.

Pillar 1: The Shahada

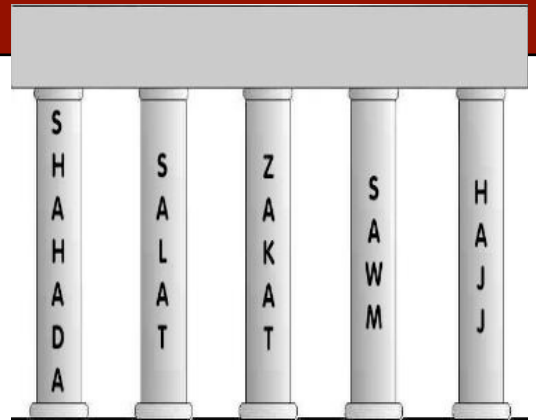
The Shahada is the Islamic proclamation: "There is no true God except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

This is the confession that Allah is the one and only true God, that Allah alone is worthy of worship, and that Allah alone is the sovereign lord who does what he wills with whomever he wills. It means that all his rules and laws found in the Qur'an are to be followed. Muhammad is the true and greatest prophet of Allah, and recognition of

Muhammad as the Prophet of God is required. It was through Muhammad that Allah conveyed the final revelation.

Pillar 2: Prayer (Salat)

Prayer involves confession of sins which begins with the purification of the body and ends with the purification of the soul. Prayer is performed five times a day. The first prayer is at dawn and the last at sunset.



Pillar 3: Fasting (Saum)

The month of Ramadan is the month of fasting in Islam. It is an act of worship where the faithful follower denies his own needs and seeks Allah. Usually, this fasting entails no drinking, eating, or marital relations during the daylight hours for the entire month of Ramadan. At the conclusion of Ramadan there is a very extravagant feast (Eid) to mark the end of the fast.

Pillar 4: Alms-giving or charity (Zakat)

Charity benefits the poor and helps the giver by moving him towards more holiness and submission to Allah. Alms-giving is considered a form of worship to God. A true Muslim is very generous.

Pillar 5: Pilgrimage (Hajj)

The Hajj is a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca that occurs during the Islamic month of Dhu al-Hijjah. Every able-bodied Muslim is obliged to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their life.

LITERATURE

There are four holy books in Islam.

1. **The Holy Qur'an.** Muslims believe the Qur'an to be the final revelation of Allah's word to man, and a completion and confirmation of previous "scriptures." The Qur'an is the linchpin of the Islamic worldview. It is the basis of Muhammad's prophetic claims, the foundation of Shari'ah law, and the common denominator among all Muslims. It is the most frequently, verbally recited book in the world.

The Qur'an is a difficult read for any Christian who approaches it assuming it is similar to the Bible. It is not! In fact, the Qur'an was not even designed to be read like a book. When Muhammad was alive, there was no such thing as a written book in Arabic. What the early Muslims knew as "Qur'an" were short liturgical recitations. After Muhammad died, all these recitations were compiled into a book we call "the Qur'an." This explains

why many who try to read the Qur'an walk away confused and frustrated. It was not designed to be read like the Bible. Western Christians view it as a disjointed book because it actually is!

A second reason that Christians have difficulty reading the Qur'an is because it is only a part of Islam's worldview. Many Evangelical and Fundamental Christians view the Bible with the philosophy of *Sola Scriptura*; that is, the Bible is the sole authority as the literal Word of God. The Qur'an is far from *Sola Scriptura*. The Islamic way of life mostly comes from written traditions, called the "Hadith."

Most Muslims do not learn the tenets of Islam through the direct reading of the Qur'an; they absorb it through observation in the lives of other Muslims. In fact, 80% of Muslims never actually read the Qur'an in their lifetimes because for anyone to read the Qur'an, he would need to be fluent in Arabic. In Islam, the translations of the Qur'an into other languages do not carry the weight or authority of the original manuscripts written in Arabic because they are viewed as interpretations and not translations. When searching for a Bible, a Christian would look for a desired translation (KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, NIV, etc...). Muslims do not view any English translation as the true Qur'an; they view it as a man's interpretation of the Arabic form. Many Muslims also claim that there is only one perfectly preserved Arabic version of the Qur'an.

No other book in the world can match the Qur'an ... The astonishing fact about this book of ALLAH is that it has remained unchanged, even to a dot, over the last fourteen hundred years. ... No variation of text can be found in it. You can check this for yourself by listening to the recitation of Muslims from different parts of the world. (Basic Principles of Islam, p. 4)

All of the Islamic evidence shows there are different canonical versions of the Qur'an used around the world today. They differ in basic letters, diacritical dots, vowels, and the names of God; and variances do change the meaning of words and sentences. Therefore, not all Qur'ans are identical.

2. **Tawrat:** "Tawrat" or "Tawrah" is the Arabic word for the Hebrew word "Torah." It is a reference to the first five books of Moses, also known as the "Pentateuch." The Tawrat is similar to the Jewish Torah, but Muslim scholars believe the Jewish Torah has been corrupted. Most lay Muslims accept the first five books of the Bible as an acceptable source for reading the Tawrat. The Qur'an does assert that Allah revealed the previous scriptures to the Jews and to the Christians, but that those who knew the scriptures "changed the words from their right places" and "forgot a good part of the message" (Qur'an 5:44). According to the Qur'an, all good prophets are governed by the Tawrat.

3. **Zabur of David:** The Zabur is often interpreted as being the Book of Psalms, the holy Scripture revealed to King David. The 150 Psalms in the Bible are still praised by many Muslim scholars, but Muslims generally discard Psalms not written by David.
4. **Injeel:** The Injeel (Injil) is the Arabic name given to what Muslims believe to be the original Gospel of Jesus given by Allah. Some lay Muslims believe the Injeel refers to the Bible's entire New Testament, while scholars believe it refers to a distinct, original book given to Isa (the Muslim name for Jesus) as the word of Allah. Some scholars believe the Gospels, as found in the Bible, contain portions of the teachings of Jesus, but do not represent or contain the original Gospel, which has been corrupted and/or lost. Therefore, Injeel was a single book written not by a human, but by Allah. There is much dissension as to the real identity of the Injeel.

Sunni Islam also recognizes the Hadith as an authoritative guide.

Kutub al-Sittah (Hadith). The Hadith are a collection of sayings, acts, and anecdotes of Muhammad. The Kutub al-Sittah, literally "the six books" even though there were originally five, were compiled by six Sunni scholars in the ninth century. They are sometimes referred to as Al-Sihah al-Sittah, which translates as "The Authentic Six." The sixth book was added in the eleventh century, and they have been generally accepted as the official canon of Sunni Islam.

1. Sahih Bukhari, collected by Imam Bukhari (d. 256 AH, 870 CE), includes 7,275 hadith
2. Sahih Muslim, collected by al-Hajjaj (d. 261 AH, 875 CE), includes 9,200 hadith
3. Sunan Abu Dawood, collected by Abu Dawood (d. 275 AH, 888 CE), includes 4,800 hadith
4. Jami al-Tirmidhi, collected by al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH, 892 CE), includes 3,956 hadith
5. Sunan al-Sughra, collected by al-Nasa'i (d. 303 AH, 915 CE), includes 5,270 hadith

Depending on Sect:

6. Sunan ibn Majah, collected by Ibn Majah (d. 273 AH, 887 CE), over 4,000 hadith
or
6. Muwatta Malik, collected by Imam Malik (d. 179 AH, 795 CE), 1,720 hadith

Many of the Islamic traditions that Christians are familiar with do not come from the Qu'ran, but rather the Hadith. How many times to pray, rules for ceremonial washing and rituals, details on fasting and commerce laws, and the promise of 72 virgins in Paradise after martyrdom come from the Hadith. Some Hadith even render Qur'anic verses "abrogated," or repealed, depending on which imam interprets them. Islam is a complex system of ancient, time-honored traditions, authoritative leaders, and theological branches that interact with the Qur'an to form the beliefs of Islam. So which writing is more authoritative? The Qur'an or the Hadith? The answer depends upon which Muslim you are asking.

TEACHINGS

Islam promotes some teachings that are radically different than the teachings found in Judeo-Christian religions. Some of these teachings are very complex and interpreted differently by the many different sects of Islam.

1. **Shari'ah Law.** Shari'ah is an Arabic word that literally means “a path to be followed.” Muhammad intended for all of Islam to be governed by a single, civil law or a common rule of life. Shari'ah is, therefore, the ruling system that is based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah (Sunnah Qawliyyah), habits, practices (Sunnah al Fiiliyyah), and silent approvals (Sunnah Taqririyyah). Shari'ah was systematized between the eighth and tenth centuries, some 200 to 300 years after Muhammad received his first revelation. There is no strict, codified, or uniform set of laws that can be called Shari'ah. It is more like a system of several laws, based on the Qur'an, the Hadith, and centuries of debate, interpretation, and precedent.

Shari'ah is not simply a legal system. In fact, only 80 of the 6,236 verses in the Qur'an mention specific legal injunctions. The vast majority of Shari'ah addresses human behavior, function, and personal as well as private beliefs. When applied fully, Shari'ah is a moral code of life that Muslims must adhere to, including prayers, fasting, and donations to the poor. It dictates every religious, political, social, domestic, and private belief. The majority of Shari'ah is not compatible with other forms of government, human rights, freedom of thought, or women's rights.

In non-Islamic areas, Shari'ah is enforced and interpreted by jurists in the religious community known as “fugahaa.” In Islamic states, it is enforced and interpreted by judges known as “quidis.” Both interpretations are called “fiqh.” Some actions relating to other humans can be regulated by the state, while actions relating to God are between an individual and God. Many Muslim-majority countries have criminalized violations of the belief, character, and action components of Shari'ah regardless of one's identifying religion.

Muslim countries ruled totally by Shari'ah include Egypt, Mauritania, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, the Maldives, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and certain regions in Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, and the United Arab Emirates.

Some Muslim countries use Shari'ah to govern family law, but use secular courts to determine everything else. These include Algeria, Comoros, Djibouti, Gambia, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, and Syria.

Several Muslim-majority countries that do not employ Shari'ah at all are Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Albania, Kosovo, and Turkey.

Several countries that provide Islamic family law courts for their citizens are Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, India, Israel, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

The United States has no Islamic courts, nor does it recognize Shari'ah to be authoritative, however, judges sometimes have to consider Islamic law in their decisions. One example would be a judge having to recognize the validity of an Islamic marriage contract from a Muslim country in order to grant a divorce in the US.

Islamic states find difficulty in understanding the separation of church and state since Shari'ah ensures morality as well as civil law. When many Muslims see a Western nation's magazines with nudity or near nudity, satellite programs that promote filth, or television commercials for any kind of alcoholic beverage, they assign these actions to Christianity since the United States claims to be a Christian nation. A Muslim living in an Islamic state or republic cannot comprehend why those who produce such materials are not punished by the government.

2. **Jihad.** Jihad literally means "struggle" in Arabic. Among orthodox Muslims, the word has come to mean "holy war." There are two kinds of Jihad: Greater Jihad (the inner struggle for sanctity) and the Lesser Jihad (an actual fight against infidels, or non-Muslims). For our purposes, we will discuss only the Lesser Jihad. This is the Jihad that has resulted in countless attacks against U.S. and Israeli interests. The Qur'an refers to Jews and Christians specifically as "infidels." Therefore, it should be no surprise that Israel and the U.S. (a nation at least founded as a Christian nation) would be the primary targets of the Jihad. Many would say that only "radical" Muslims espouse Jihad. If that is so, then every Muslim who believes in the Qur'an must be radical since the Qur'an explicitly encourages waging war against infidels (Surah 8:60; Surah 61:4; Surah 2:190-193; Surah 9:38-39; Surah 4:101; Surah 4:89; Surah 9:5).

HOW TO GIVE THE GOSPEL

Now that a brief overview of Islam has been established, I pray that you will develop a burden for reaching Muslims with the gospel. Effectively giving the gospel to a Muslim is no easy task. Simply handing a gospel tract to a Muslim is not sufficient. An Islamic world view and a Christian world view are so radically different that a bridge between the two must be built prior to giving the gospel. Muslims and Christians speak two different spiritual languages. In order to share the gospel, a Christian must learn to “speak” the Muslim’s language. Most Muslims who come to Christ do so because God uses witnesses who are authentic, sincere, sensitive, patient, and compassionate.

1. **Be Authentic.** The fundamental key to effectively giving a Muslim the gospel is following the greatest command he recognizes (Mark 12:28-34). Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. A Muslim needs to view and experience your authentic faith and spiritual walk because he is taught that there is no god but Allah. By loving the one, true God authentically, you can teach Muslims that Christians have a personal relationship with God, something they desire very much.
2. **Be Sincere.** Jesus said that the second greatest command is to love your neighbor as yourself. How many American Christians truly love their Muslim neighbor? The most valuable thing you can give to a Muslim is your time. Get to know Muslims, spend time with them, learn to love them, and the opportunity will arise to share your faith. Be sincere about learning about their faith, lifestyle, and passions.
3. **Be Sensitive.** Being sensitive to a Muslim can be very difficult. The natural tendency is to either blame every Muslim for the terrorism going on around the world or suspect every Muslim of being a terrorist. Not every Muslim wants to kill Christians and Jews. Just like there are liberal, Neo-Orthodox, or Post-Modern Christians, there are also liberal, westernized Muslims. Regardless of whether Muslims are orthodox or liberal, they still need to hear the gospel. Avoid insults, labels, stereotyping, and offensive behavior. Treat a Muslim with respect since he is created in the image of God. Muslims are lost in darkness. For them to awaken, it is best not to shine the full flashlight in their faces. A better approach is to progressively turn the light on over time. This does not mean hiding or changing the gospel.
4. **Be educated.** 1 Peter 3:15 is clear. “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you...” To effectively give the gospel to a Muslim, you will have to train for battle. You will need to know what they believe, why they believe it, and how committed they are to that belief.

WHAT NOT TO DO

1. **Do not fight about the Bible's superiority over the Qur'an.** Realize that asking educated, thought-provoking questions in humility is a much more effective approach. For example, "Tell me about Islam; can you be sure that you are saved? Do you know that you are going to Heaven? If so, how?" Most Muslims cannot answer these questions.
2. **Do not debate the deity of Christ.** Muslims believe the Trinity is blasphemy; they group Jesus with prophets like Lot, Alexander the Great, Ishmael, Moses, Abraham, and Adam. The convincing of Christ's deity in a Muslim heart is a matter of time and Holy Spirit leading.
3. **Do not initially discuss Jesus' death on the cross.** Muslims believe that Jesus ascended directly to Heaven without death. God transformed another person to appear exactly like Jesus who was then crucified. In time, with teaching from the Tawrah and the prophets, the case of substitutionary atonement is necessary. Muslims are deliberately programmed against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.
4. **Do not say, "The Bible says..."** Frankly, Muslims do not care what the Bible says. They believe it to be corrupt. However, Muslims do accept the Tawrah, Psalms of David, and the Injil (it must be determined how much or if any is accepted). Many American Muslims accept an English translation of the Pentateuch to be Scripture, although not inspired. While Christians do not typically witness out of these books, the Gospel is still contained in them. The Law was given to be a schoolmaster showing the need for a Savior (Galatians 3:24).
5. **Do not discuss the present war to establish a Palestinian statehood.** Dispensationalists believe that God still has a place for the nation of Israel in his plans for the future, and that the State of Israel is directly relevant to his purposes. The temptation is to side with Israel against the Muslim world. It is better to not enter into this discussion. When pressed on the issue, remain positive and neutral focusing on their passion for the topic.
6. **Do not insult Muhammad.** Muhammad is the Muslim Christ. How do you react when someone insults Jesus? Quite often, the Christian will be confronted by Muslims with the question, "What do you think of Muhammad?" This question can be a simple inquiry or provocative test. If Muhammad is criticized, the audience is lost. If Muhammad is overly commended, you can be discredited. While Muhammad certainly is a false prophet, telling a Muslim such is offending his deepest convictions. Since Muhammad was a reformer who grew up among people steeped in idolatry, recognize his courage to deliver the Arabs from idolatry and raise their lifestyle to a more dignified level by uniting warring tribes.

7. **Do not belittle Islam.** Christianity does not need to discredit Islam to vindicate itself, it stands firm and sure on its own foundations. Our culture has taught us that belittling an opponent means victory. In the case of evangelism, it turns to a matter of life and death.
8. **Do not take the shotgun approach.** Sometimes, it is necessary to shoot the gospel gun with bold authority. Other times, it is necessary to use surgical precision. Witnessing to a Muslim will require the latter.

WHAT TO DO

1. **Be bold in the gospel.** Current trends in the evangelism of Muslims direct Christians to say away from all argumentation. While it is certainly wise to avoid quarrels and heated disputes, intelligent discussion is imperative in giving the gospel. The Apostle Paul was bold in his argumentation to the Jews in Thessalonica that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 17:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 2:112). The Muslim and the Jew have the same problem. They both reject the true identity of Christ. Since the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), the gospel is the message that is needed. Notice three things that Paul did at Thessalonica:
 - **Paul reasoned.** The word “reasoned” in Acts 17:2 is the Greek word *dialegomai*. It means to “question one another, dispute, or argue with one against.” Paul entered into debate and discussion putting the gospel’s veracity to the test. In fact, Paul did this quite frequently as he went from city to city visiting the synagogues and spending much time in them (Acts 19:8-9). Debate is healthy and biblical while quarrels and insults are not.
 - **Paul used the Scriptures.** Paul did not rely on smooth speech, empty cliches, or inventive methods. Paul reasoned around the Word of God because it is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12). If a Christian is not willing to wield his sword, he has no defense but emotion and self-experience, neither of which is meaningful to Muslims. Paul, very capably, used the Scriptures that the Jews accepted and understood. The Jews, while looking for the Messiah, either rejected Jesus of Nazareth or had not heard of his being the Messiah. Muslims accept Jesus as a prophet already. A major help to giving a Muslim the gospel is to use the Scriptures about Jesus he already knows.
 - **Paul explained and proved that Jesus was the Christ.** While he was not able to persuade all, Paul certainly did persuade some Jews. Muslims already have their version of Jesus that you are attempting to correct. The Christian who shirks the challenge of presenting the Scriptures with boldness and surety, not only misses a

golden opportunity to give a thorough vindication of his beliefs, but is also likely to appear to the Muslims to be evading the issues.

- 2. Become a Muslim to Muslims.** This is Paul's principle found in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews..." Paul did not deny his faith in Christ, he simply understood his audience and used that information to discuss their need of salvation. Paul examined his situation, assessed the beliefs, heritage and background of his hearers, and connected the gospel to these features. To share the gospel with Muslims, we must discover the beliefs of the Muslims, their view of prophetic history, their assessment of Jesus Christ, and their overall religious perception of life, and present the gospel against that background. The Qur'an cannot be confused with a stepping stone for a Muslim to become a Christian, but it certainly does speak of Jesus in a positive light. In fact, the passages of the Qur'an that agree with the Bible regarding the identity of Jesus are what is needed to give the gospel to a Muslim. By "majoring on the majors" and following the path of least resistance (common doctrines on the New Testament, Old Testament, and Jesus), the Muslim can be attracted toward the gospel.
- 3. Expand your gospel presentation (not the gospel).** When Christians take a traditional evangelical line of approach (setting Jesus forth as the Lord and Savior of all men), Muslims find security in dismissing the message as simply an exposition of Christian doctrine and belief. Muslims comfort themselves by resting in the doctrines and tenets of Islam instead. We need to penetrate, we need to challenge the Muslims where they are and stimulate a process of reflection by presenting the Gospel against their own background, against the Muslims' own views of Jesus and the prophetic history leading up to him.

THE APPROACH

The tragedy of Islam is that it gives Christ's glory to another. Almost every religion started after Christianity avidly defends their founder's faith being referenced in the the Bible. Islam is no different because it links Muhammad to Moses. Recognizing Jesus as the Prophet Moses referred to is the starting point to showing Jesus is also a Priest and King.

Deuteronomy 18:15-18

18:15 - The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

18:16 - According to all that thou desire of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

18:17 - And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

18:18 - will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

Strategy 1

Jesus (Isa) was the Prophet that Moses foretold in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. This passage is held almost universally by Muslims to be a prophesy pertaining to Muhammad. With careful discussion, a Christian can show a Muslim the Prophet is Jesus.

Islamic Objection 1: Moses promised a Law-giving Prophet. The Bible makes no claims about Jesus being a Law Giver.

Biblical Answer: Jesus was, in fact, a Law-giver.

- John 13:3 - A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.
- Galatians 6:2 - Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Islamic Objection 2: The Prophet was not from Israel, but from among Moses' brethren, which must be the Ishmaelites.

Biblical Answer: The Tawrah uses the term "brethren" to refer to Jacob's bloodline and not Ishmael's. For example, in Deuteronomy 17:15 Moses instructs Israel, "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother." Israel never appointed a foreign king. Choosing a king among the "brethren" meant to choose a man from the 12 tribes of Israel.

Islamic Objection 3: The Prophet would have the words of God in his mouth. The Gospels do not consist of words which God put in Jesus' mouth. It is just the story of Jesus and his public addresses.

Biblical Answer: To reject Jesus' words from God is to reject Jesus as a prophet. This makes no sense because the Qur'an clearly identifies Jesus as a prophet. "He said: 'I am indeed a servant of Allah: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet'" (Qur'an 19:30, Yusuf Ali).

The Gospels clearly identify that Jesus' words are from God. John 12:49 says, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."

Islamic Objection 4: Christians only view Jesus as the Son of God and not a prophet.

Biblical Answer: When Jesus prophesied of his death, he stated, "Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them

that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not (Luke 13:33-34)!”

Islamic Objection 5: Muhammad and Moses are more alike than Jesus and Moses.

Biblical Answer: While the Qur’an give similarities between Moses and Muhammad, it also gives many differences. If Muhammad was illiterate (as virtually all Muslims assert and he himself claimed), then he was not like Moses who "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." (Acts 7:22) Muhammad is said to have received his revelations from the angel Gabriel, while Moses received the Law directly from God. Muhammad performed no signs or miracles to verify his calling, yet Moses performed many signs. Also, Muhammad was Arabic, while Moses was of Jewish origin.

The Gospels show that Jesus was very much like Moses. They were both Jewish, which is very important in light of what we have learned about the term "your brethren." They both left Egypt to minister to their people (Heb. 11:27; Matt 2:15). Both also forsook great riches in order to better identify with their people (Heb. 11:24-26; John 6:15; 2 Cor. 8:9).

Conclusion: Both Muhammad and Jesus may be like Moses, but does the Tawrah give any clarification as to what sense the Prophet shall be like Moses? The answer is found in Deuteronomy 34:10-11 where two distinguishing characteristics of Moses are listed:

Deuteronomy 34:10-11

34:10 - And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.

34:11 - In all the signs and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land...

Notice the two specific attributes mentioned about Moses. The first is that the Lord knew Moses "face to face." Muhammad never saw God face to face; Allah is so transcendent, except for the unique case of Moses, he never spoke directly with men.

Jesus, "the Word made flesh," (John 1:14) is the only one who ever had a relationship with God like Moses had. In fact, Jesus' relationship far surpasses that of Moses: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

The second attribute of Moses is that he came with many “signs” and “wonders.” The many miracles that both Moses and Jesus worked are well known. The Qur’an testifies that Muhammad worked no miracles (Qur’an 17:59; 17:90-93; 6:37; 6:109).

Jesus told us who the prophet is that Deuteronomy 18:15-18 is prophesying: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). Therefore, Jesus must be the Prophet that Moses predicted, and not Muhammad. The obvious jumping point is to now let a Muslim hear the gospel directly from Jesus (John 3). A Muslim who fulfills the Five Pillars of Islam, remains in the faith of Islam, and sincerely repents of his sins will make it to Jannah (paradise). If he performs the Five Pillars but does not remain in the faith, he will not be saved. The difficulty is that Jesus and Muhammad had very different messages. Since the average Muslim knows little to nothing about Jesus, we can take time to teach them what Jesus actually said.

Strategy 2

Since Muslims believe in many of the same prophets as Judaism and Christianity, build a bridge between the prophets and the oneness of God as Savior.

One common ground that Muslims share with Jews and Christians is that there are many prophets who teach that God is mighty and that he seeks to save those who are lost. In fact, many Muslims will teach Bible stories about the prophets to their children, although they are highly altered and blurred. Our goal will be to show how Jesus fulfills the need of a Savior. Begin with the fact that both the Bible and the Qur’an teach the foundational truth of the oneness of God.

Moses (Moosa or Musa)

One event that captures Muslim’s attention is a conversation between Moses and his father-in-law, Jethro (Exodus 18:8-11). Moses was just returning from Egypt, where he had led the Israelites out of slavery. Moses recounted to Jethro all that God had done and Jethro replied, “Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.” Notice what Jethro said. “God is greater than all gods.” A Muslim would say the same thing by stating, “Allahu akbar.”

The next event is the giving of the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:2-3 says, “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Muslims agree with the first commandment religiously. They also agree with the second commandment (Surah 2:50).

David (Daood or Da’ud)

God’s oneness and saving power are scattered all through David’s Psalms that Muslim accept as Scripture. Here is one great example:

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.” (Psalm 68:19-20)

Hosea

Long after Moses had died, Hosea reminded Israel of the saving nature of God alone:

“Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.” (Hosea 13:4)

Daniel (Danyal)

Daniel told the powerful story of how his three friends refused to bow down and worship the golden statue because it was a sin against God. Once they were thrown into the fiery furnace, the story takes an incredible turn and Nebuchadnezzar says:

“Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.” (Daniel 3:29)

Jonah (Yunus or Younis)

The Qur’an agrees with the Bible that Jonah was saved by God from a near-death experience. After he was thrown from the ship, the raging sea ceased its turmoil and the ship’s crew was spared. From the belly of the great fish, Jonah prayed:

“But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.” (Jonah 2:9)

Isaiah (Ishiya)

The prophet Isaiah wrote about King Hezekiah’s rescue from the King of Assyria:

“Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.” (Isaiah 37:20)

Isaiah also declared:

“There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” (Isaiah 45:21-23)

It is no coincidence that Moses, David, Hosea, Daniel, Jonah, and Isaiah all have the same message. The prophets have spoken. God’s power is awesome and unique and he has a

desire to save. These two themes are repeated by many prophets. From these two principles we can say that God is great and that God is Savior. The word “savior” means “deliverer” or “rescuer.” The Qur’an lists 99 different, beautiful names for Allah. It is logical to ask a Muslim, after studying the prophets, if Allah is ever named as “Savior” in the Qur’an. Most Muslims will agree that Allah is Savior, yet will never be able to find it in the Qur’an because it is not there.

Muslims truly believe in the teaching of the prophets. They must honor God as Savior since the ancient prophets did as well. The name “Savior” is vital, considering God will command the whole world to acknowledge him as Savior in Isaiah 45:21-23. Isaiah also foretold of a special “servant” who would bring God’s salvation to the whole world.

“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6)

God is great and mighty to save just like the prophets have said. There can only be one, true God who is the Savior. All others are false gods. God has promised to send salvation through a servant who will restore Israel and be a light to the Gentiles. Who could this servant be? Surprisingly, Muslims anticipate the coming of Jesus (Isa) as the Messiah because the prophets foretold of him. Isaiah is very clear that the servant, Jesus, will bring God’s “salvation unto the end of the earth.” Here are some questions you can share with a Muslim at this point:

Question: What is the meaning of the name Isa or Jesus?

Answer: The name Jesus (Yeshua) means, “God is salvation.” It makes sense to a Muslim that the servant of Isaiah 49:6 is Isa, God is salvation.

Question: How did Christ reflect the name Jesus in his actions and personality?

Answer: This can be answered physically and spiritually. Jesus performed miracles and signs that demonstrated his saving power. Muhammad never did this. Jesus was raised from the dead. This is affirmed in the Qur’an and the Bible. It demonstrates that Jesus is God’s salvation.

Question: How did Jesus change the lives of the people he met?

Answer: There are several true accounts of how Jesus saved lost people and forgave sinners. The Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar had five husbands and was living with a man who was not her husband. She was changed and told her village that she had met the Savior (John 4:29). Zacchaeus was a thieving tax collector who came to know that Jesus “came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). Jesus had the authority to forgive the sins of the woman who wiped his feet with her tears (Luke

7:36-48). The thief on the cross was welcomed into Paradise (Luke 23:39-43). You have your own testimony.

Question: How did Jesus, as the servant in Isaiah 49, accomplish bringing salvation to the world?

Answer: The death of Jesus Christ has the ability to save men from sin:

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:44-47)

Conclusion: A Muslim may end up rejecting this line of argumentation because he is taught that Jesus did not die on the cross. Indeed, 1 Corinthians 1:18 is true. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” Yet, this is the gospel and power of God unto salvation.

Strategy 3

Enter into a long-term book study with a Muslim and study the text of Scripture together. You will both be exposed to the truth of God.

- 🎧 Cross, John R. *All That the Prophets Have Spoken*. Durham, ON: Goodseed International, 2013.
- 🎧 This book is this writer’s favorite for use in any evangelistic Bible study or foundational discipleship class for a Muslim. It is easy to read, well thought out, and very detailed.
- 🎧 The Christian version of this book is *Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*. This is an excellent book for an evangelistic Bible study or foundational discipleship for someone who is familiar with Christianity.

