

# *Islam*

A Brief Look from a Christian Perspective

# *Introduction*

- Islam: The fastest growing religion?
- Growing in influence even in America
- So many aspects:
  - Political
  - Cultural
  - Spiritual

# *Brief Highlight*

- Islam: Muhammad's Religion
- Islam: The Qur'an (Koran)
- Islam: Sacral Society
- Islam: Work Salvation

# *Muhammad's Religion*

- The central figure in Islam is Muhammad, “the last prophet”
- So much so that he is above reproach and must not be pictured
- The religion Islam is shaped by Muhammad's personality
- Born in Mecca, AD 570/571-632
- Orphaned at an early age, brought up by his uncle, Ali Talib

# *Muhammad's Religion*

- Muhammad was influenced by Christianity, but the wrong type
  - Catholicism: Mary as the “mother of God,” Muhammad mistakenly thought that Christians worship the Trinity: Father, Son, Mary
  - Nestorians: teaching that Jesus was two separate persons, divine and human
- Muslims today deny it, but Muhammad derive many things from Christianity, including monotheism

# *Muhammad's Religion*

- At the age of 40, Muhammad grew tired of Mecca, and meditated in surrounding caves
- This was when he had his first revelation supposedly, which he proclaimed three years later
- At first he thought he was devil-possessed, but his wife Khadijah supported the idea of divine revelation

# *Muhammad's Religion*

- But is Muhammad truly a prophet?
- Muslims try to find the prophethood of Muhammad in the Bible (because Suras 7:157 and 61:6) says it:
  - Deuteronomy 18:18
  - Song of Solomon 5:16
  - John 14:16, 16:7 – periclytos instead of paracletos

# *Muhammad's Religion*

- Muhammad fails the test of a prophet:
  - False prophecies
  - Contradict Scripture
  - Lifestyle – at least 13 wives, including 9 years old Aisha and his own daughter in law
- Muhammad cannot be the prophet foretold in the Bible, although the Bible did foretell about him: 2 Peter 2:1



# *The Qur'an*

- The Qur'an is supposedly the Perfect Revelation from God to Muhammad, but historically the process of compilation of the Qur'an only started after Muhammad died.
- There were plenty of recensions of the Qur'an, and many textual issues. At one point, there was attempt to create a standard version and burn the rest.

# *The Qur'an*

- Muhammad used the “excellence” of the Qur'an as proof of its divine origin. In truth it is very uninspiring, and truly hard to read, organized not by chronology but by length – longest to shortest.
- And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true. -- Qur'an 2:23

# *The Qur'an*

- The Koran reflects Muhammad's imperfect understanding of the Bible and Christianity
  - Many wrong allusions: Aaron being Mary's sister, Haman being a minister of Pharoah
  - Many deviations in the Koran is self-serving: the exaltation of Ishmael.
  - Many extrabiblical sources incorporated, such as apocryphal stories of Jesus' power.

# *The Qur'an*

- There are plenty of fables and scientific fallacies in the Qur'an
  - The 90 feet Adam
  - Talking ants
  - Solomon's flying carpet
  - Sun setting into a muddy pool
- The Hadith is a collection of sayings and deeds of Muhammad, considered next in importance to the Qur'an

# *The Qur'an*

- Although the Qur'an is clearly fallacious, Christians can use several things in the Qur'an to advantage:
  - The Qur'an teaching about the Bible
  - The Qur'an teaching about “Isa”
- We must be careful not to use the Qur'an as the foundation of justifying the Bible, but merely as a stepping stone towards the Bible

# *The Qur'an*

- Tacitus (AD 55-120), a renowned historical of ancient Rome, wrote in the latter half of the first century that ‘Christus ... was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also.’ (Annals 15: 44).
- Thallus, a secular historian writing perhaps around AD 52 refers to the death of Jesus in a discussion of the darkness over the land after his death. The original is lost, but Thallus’ arguments — explaining what happened as a solar eclipse — are referred to by Julius Africanus in the early 3rd century.
- Mara Bar-Serapion, a Syrian writing after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, mentions the earlier execution of Jesus, whom he calls a ‘King’.
- The Babylonian Talmud refers to the crucifixion (calling it a hanging) of Jesus the Nazarene on the eve of the Passover. In the Talmud Jesus is also called the illegitimate son of Mary.
- The Jewish historian Josephus describes Jesus’ crucifixion under Pilate in his Antiquities, written about AD 93/94. Josephus also refers to James the brother of Jesus and his execution during the time of Ananus (or Annas) the high priest.

# *Islam: A Sacral Society*

- From the beginning, Islam was a political movement as well as religious
- War and political control is used to spread Islam
- They operate with a sacral-society concept
  - Always attempting to create an Islamic nation
  - Always attempting to enforce Shariah law

# *Islam: A Sacral Society*

- They are very visual and “earthly minded” – physical victory = spiritual might, Jesus as a prophet could not have been crucified, etc.
- They zeal and aim is earthly
  - World domination
  - Jihad
- War and violence an integral part of Islam
  - Islam's stance on “kafir”
  - Islam's stance of apostates



# *Islam: A Sacral Society*

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Warning:

This film contains very shocking images.

# *Islam: Work Salvation*

- Soteriology in Islam is work salvation. The five pillar:
  - The confession that Allah is one and Mohammed is a prophet (Kalima)
  - Prayer facing Mecca five times each day (Salat)
  - Alms giving (Zakat)
  - A month of fasting during the daylight hours practiced annually (Ramadan)
  - A pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a Muslim's life (Hajj).

# *Islam: Work Salvation*

- As with all work salvation, there is no certainty of heaven or eternal life
- Even Muhammad himself was not sure of heaven and forgiveness
- He commands his followers to always pray that peace and forgiveness be given to him: Muhammad (SAW)
- This is not surprising because the Qur'an is never about God's love

# *Christian Response*

- How can the Christian respond to Islam?
- Biblical Christianity
  - Doctrinal purity
  - Moral purity
- Tell them the Good News
  - The person of Jesus
  - The way of Salvation
- Support missions at home and in Islamic areas

# *The Resurrection of Christ*

- Christ did die – an important point
  - The Bible says so
  - Why would Christ's followers be interested in Christ's death?
  - Secular historians recorded Christ died
- Christ arose
  - The empty tomb
  - Eyewitnesses
  - How could Christianity have begun without it?