

## **BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW APOLOGETICS – (ISLAM) - Lesson 11**

*(NOTE: Much of this handout was constructed from notes taken from a lecture given by Dr. Greg Bahnsen on Islam)*

Islam is closer to Christianity in that it contains many of the same elements in Christianity: (i.e., a personal God (supreme being), a prophet who has spoken the words of god, a recorded revelation of god's will -- recorded in Scriptures (i.e., the Koran) ... this is something that seemingly presents a greater challenge for Christians to try and defend their faith against, because while the Christian references the Bible, a Muslim will reference the Koran.

Our critique of Islam is that we're going to be approaching this religion as one that tries very hard to mimic Christianity. As a matter of fact, we're going to approach it in this class in such a way that we're going to consider it a "perversion of Christianity" ... in the exact same way that we'd say that the cults of Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses are Christian cults.

**Mohammedism, a.k.a. Islam, is a Unitarian religion – the claim is that god is one person ... Islam denies the Trinity.**

**Islam means *submission* ... to Allah** (THE god)

**Mohammed, the founder of Islam, was born in 570 A.D. ... a few centuries AFTER the life of Jesus in the 1<sup>st</sup> century ... he died in 620 A.D.**

Mohammed had a turbulent childhood ... raised by different individuals, including various family members

As a young man, he got hired to work as a caravan driver and was exposed to many religions in the East, including Judaism and Christianity.

He eventually met and married a wealthy woman who was 15 years older than he ... this made it possible for him to not have to work for a living and he began a life of reflection and meditation.

At some point during this period of meditations, while in a cave, Mohammed experienced a series of violent convulsions. He originally rejected the revelations received during these convulsions; he regarded them as lies from the devil. At the urging of his wife, however, Mohammed later accepted these revelations as from Allah – the one true God.

This happened over a period of about 22 years ... and included what he believed were dictations to him by Allah ... these were the basis of Surah chapters that were later assembled and became the Koran (the READING ... or, **that which is to be read**).

In addition to his revelations came the call to preach about Allah. Mohammed began preaching the truths he believed were received from Allah to his fellow Arabs.

In Mohammed's view, Allah had been worshipped as one of the many gods, but the other gods Arabs worshipped were false gods ... only Allah was the one true god.

In the early part of his preaching ministry, the Arabs rejected Mohammed's preaching and he had to flee for his life, **from the city of Mecca, to the city of Medina ... This is a famous and celebrated event in Islam – the Flight (Hegira)**. Muslims date everything from this flight.

Mohammed also tried, sometime afterwards, to preach to Jews and Christians ... he regarded both Jews and Christians as worshippers of the one true god – Allah – it's just that they didn't know it ... he wanted them to become even more accurate in their faith by embracing his teachings, which were a continued revelation of Allah to people.

**Mohammed was amazed, astounded, that Christians & Jews both summarily rejected his teachings. They didn't see that their doctrines held any common ground with Islamic teachings.**

Throughout the ancient Arab world at that time, the polytheism among Arabs was profitable in those times, as pilgrims would travel and spend money on their journeys, on their food, lodging and icons, etc. So the Arabs originally rejected Mohammed's tampering with the religious/economic (and later) political systems of their day.

**Mohammed eventually found success preaching in Medina and made many converts. At that point, he raised an army and began battling against all polytheistic Arabs in order to convert them (by the sword) to Islam.** He experienced success in this. Mohammed thus became a very powerful man both militarily and politically.

**Mohammed is regarded by Muslims to be the greatest prophet of Allah.** He endeavored to turn the Arabs of his time, who were polytheistic, to worship the one true god – Allah.

After his death, there was a struggle among various Islamic leaders for both political power and influence over disputed doctrinal differences among the various Islamic sects that were developing – with each one claiming to be the “official” one.

In subsequent decades after Mohammed's death, Islamic leaders continued spreading Islam throughout the middle East, with a desire to eventually takeover Christian dominated Europe. Had it not been for Charles Martel defeating the Muslims at the "Battle of Tours," on October 10, 732, near Poitiers, France, western Europe may have been overrun by the Muslim armies.

### **Main points of teaching in Islam**

- 1) Allah is the one true god
- 2) God gave many prophets to men, but Mohammed is the last and greatest of his prophets
- 3) There are 4 inspired books: The Pentateuch, the Psalms, the gospel of Jesus, and the Koran
- 4) The Koran is the most important out of the 4 inspired books
- 5) Muslims, if they are properly taught, believe that Christians and Jews are also "people of the book" ... in other words, orthodox Muslims don't see the Bible plus the Koran as being "the book" ... but rather just the inspired books as being "the book." **Muslims are taught, however, that both Christian and Jewish scriptural texts AND proper theological understanding of their texts have been corrupted. So the Koran is used to correct their erroneous doctrines.**
- 6) **Muslims see Christians, for example, as in error in that we're polytheistic because we hold to the doctrine of the trinity.**
- 7) Whatever is considered to be "the gospel of Jesus" might be either what we know as the gospel of John, or a compilation of the gospel writings about Jesus (the Muslim I've spoken to the most always referenced the gospel of John)
- 8) Muslims believe there are many intermediary spiritual beings (such as angels)
- 9) They believe in a resurrection, final judgment, and eternal life in either heaven or hell for every individual.
- 10) Whether a person goes to heaven or hell is dependent upon their good or bad deeds (**it is a salvation based upon works**)
- 11) Heaven is a place of sensuous delight and gratification ... there are virgins waiting for the men to lie down with them upon the couches while the men are fed grapes and are pleased ... heaven, in Islam, is an especially good place for men ... *read the Koran for more on this.*
- 12) Not much theology in Islam focuses on origins ... **the emphasis is upon the future judgment and rewards, especially upon the followers of Islam.**
- 13) **Kismet – the doctrine of FATE. This is an important doctrine in Islam that has come to evolve over time ... a person's destiny has been pre-determined ... there is no way to alter or change it** ... fate ultimately determines the course of one's destiny ... *when you throw the dice, it has been fated*
- 14) **To become a Muslim is easy ... one must simply recite, "There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet."**

- 15) There a period of prescribed prayers each day ... a call to prayer several times a day
- 16) There is alms-giving that is emphasized
- 17) Every Muslim must make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca during their lifetime
- 18) **There is personal and occasional need for *jihad* – holy war.** In Islam, the most emphasis upon this word is in the personal sense, where an individual Muslim wages war against the forces of the world that would lead him astray from devotion to Allah ... but it also includes the right of Muslims to wage a physical holy war against the enemies of Allah ... this includes the killing of polytheists and those who oppose Allah.
- 19) **The promises given to those who wage a jihad against the enemies of Allah were a great incentive to Mohammed’s soldiers during the years of conquering other Arabs. There is the famous promise of death bringing one straight to heaven, where they are greeted by virgins and pleased eternally.**

## Internal Critique of Islam

**The Koran claims to be a confirmation of the Old Testament Law and the New Testament gospel of Jesus** ... in other words, it claims to be the final revelation that confirms both of them ... *Surah 3: 1. Alif-Lam-Mim. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings]. 2. Allah! La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. 3. It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur'an) to you (Muhammad) with truth, confirming what came before it. And he sent down the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel).*

**... the problem with this is that it’s not in harmony with either the OT Law or the New Testament gospels...**

The Koran draws from what it considers to be the “previous revelations” in the Bible. For example, the story of the virgin birth of Christ is taken right out of the Bible ... it’s just that Mohammed got the story wrong ... the Koran has the sister of Aaron as being the mother of Jesus (the Koran calls her Mary, but in reality, Mohammed made a mistake and incorrectly identified Miriam as the mother of Jesus ... this is a mistake that probably resulted from the *oral culture*, which conveyed the religious teachings orally down through the generations ... in other words, he got the stories of Mary and Miriam mixed up) (Surah 19)

**The test of a TRUE prophet, as described in the Pentateuch, is that a true prophet won’t say things aren’t in keeping with what the one true God has *already revealed about Himself.*** God, not being a man that He should lie, requires that His true prophets not disavow what God has already revealed about Himself. In other words, if a newer

so-called revelation isn't in keeping with the previous revelation, then the newer revelation must be disavowed because it's inconsistent with the truth that was revealed prior to it.

### **Deuteronomy 13**

*1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, **Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;** 3 **Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams:** for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. 5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death;...*

**Subsequent revelations must be consistent with prior (previous) revelations, or else they cannot be considered to be revelations from the same "God." This isn't just logical, but explicitly indicated in Scripture.**

**Our apologetic then can simply be "the Koran contradicts the Bible." The Pentateuch, the Psalms, the gospel of (John) Jesus contradict the Koran.**

For example:

**The Koran denies the Trinity** – (*Genesis 1:26 - Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky..."*) Let us make man in **OUR image** and in OUR likeness.

**According to the Koran, Jesus wasn't crucified, but Judas was crucified in his place.** And because **Muslims believe that god is one person, and they also deny the Trinity, thus Muslims deny the divinity of Jesus.** The Koran outright denies that Jesus died on the cross, or that Jesus is God ... *Surah 4: 157. And because of their saying (in boast), "We killed Messiah 'Iesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mariam), the Messenger of Allah," - but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of 'Iesa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man), and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not [i.e. 'Iesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mariam) ]: 158. But Allah raised him ['Iesa (Jesus)] up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he is in the heavens). And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise. **Jesus Himself, in numerous places in the gospels, especially the gospel of John, asserts that He is God.** ( John 1:1-3, John 1:14, John 2:19-21, John 3:16-17, John 5:17-18, John 5:36-37, John 6:38, John 8:13, John 8:24-25, John 8:58, John 9:35-38, John 10:30-33, John 14:6-11, John 15:26, John 17:3-5, John 20:28-31 )*

**The doctrine of the Trinity simply isn't denied in the Koran ... it is misunderstood. It teaches that the doctrine of the Trinity means that Christians believe in 3 gods. But that isn't the case. Mohammed didn't properly understand Christian theology before he tried refuting it in the Koran. Keep in mind here, we aren't just saying that Mohammed didn't believe in the Trinity himself ... we're contending that he fundamentally misunderstood the doctrine of the Trinity and then put it into the supposed revelation that he got from Allah. And so we ask, "Wouldn't Allah (assuming that Allah was speaking) not properly understand what the doctrine of Christians was even though they were wrong about it?"**

**The doctrine of the Trinity was formulated well before Mohammed's day. It teaches that there are 3 Persons in one God ... not that there are 3 separate gods. But this seems to be a concept that Mohammed didn't grasp.**

The Koran isn't internally consistent within itself ... it contradicts itself.

**One of the apologetical arguments that Muslims will often make is that Christians believe wrong things theologically because the "gospel version has been distorted" ... the problem here is that if you ask them for manuscript evidence of this there is NONE.**

Muslims will also try to claim that the occasional typographical errors contained in the ancient biblical texts (such as numerical ones often indicated in reference Bibles) prove that the Bible has been corrupted ... and they will insist that the Koran has never been corrupted, and is, therefore, a more reliable "revelation." ... the truth is that when Mohammed died, the Surahs had not been officially established. **In the era of the 4<sup>th</sup> Caliph, the Muslim leader at that time "called in" all known versions of the Koran throughout Muslim lands and then destroyed any versions that didn't match his. This is historical fact.**

According to many Muslim apologists, when Deuteronomy 18:15 is talking about a prophet that is "greater than Moses" who is coming, they think that it's referring to Mohammed and not Jesus. Why? Because, **they say, Jesus was not a lawgiver, while Moses was a lawgiver. The fact is, however, that Jesus was a lawgiver (the Sermon on the Mount is a parallel to Moses on the mountain) ... and they will say, it can't refer to Jesus because Christians regard Jesus as the son of God and not a prophet. But the fact is that Christians DO regard Jesus as the son of God who was prophet, priest and king. Also, Muslims claim that the gospels do not consist of words that God gave to Jesus ... but in John 12:49, Jesus says, "For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken."** (This again shows that many Muslims do not know about the claims made within the Bible itself).

**Some Muslims claim that when Jesus speaks of “the comforter” coming, that he is prophesying of the coming of Mohammed. They are obviously unfamiliar with John 14:26, where Jesus explains, “But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”**

The Koran teaches that Allah is completely “transcendent” ...

- 1) **Tanzih** is an Islamic religious concept meaning transcendence – according to this doctrine, there is nothing in Allah’s being that hints of change or weakness, **Allah cannot be affected by either the actions or attitudes of his creatures** ... he is so above them, so unlike anything in human beings, that he has no reaction to humanity.
- 2) **Mukhalafa** – **this doctrine states that Allah is so different from his creatures and his created order that he cannot be described in human experience.** So this means subjects such as “love”, “comfort”, or “anger” for example, cannot be spoken about in relation to Allah ... in other words, **Allah is so different from us that Allah is above human terms.**

**Thus, if what Islam teaches about Allah is true, then no Muslim could ever truly know anything about Allah ... our language is tied to our human experience** ... all that we have, in order to reference anything, is tied to categories of our human experience.

In other words, Muslims have sought to try and protect the transcendence of Allah in such an absolute way that they’ve actually made the Koran itself an impossibility – **IF Allah were as transcendent as Islam teaches then He could NEVER have revealed himself** (or ITSELF, because the term HE is a part of human experience, right?) to man in the Koran.

If Allah cannot be referenced in human terms, then Allah should be referred to as IT, not HE ... and revelation about IT has also been made impossible.

**Some further thoughts about Mohammed:**

- **He worked no miracles**
- **He spent the last 20 years of his life killing (or having killed) multitudes of people**
- **He took multiple wives (as opposed to God’s view of the “one man, one woman, one lifetime” standard for marriage set forth in Genesis)**

**Most Muslims will simply ignore these things. But we do want to challenge them by asking if such a man can be trusted.** And does he offer a worldview that is consistent and coherent? Why believe the claims that he made as opposed to Jesus, who did work

miracles and also claimed to be God ... who prophesied of his death, burial and resurrection ... in order to verify what He was saying about Himself?

**2 Timothy 2:24-25 (King James Version)**

*24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness ***instructing those that oppose themselves***; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*