

Understanding Islam

Understanding Islam:

*Do Muslims Believe In The
Same God As Christians?*

By

Don Stewart

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*Do Muslims Believe In The
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Islam is the second largest religion in the world. Only Christianity has more individuals claiming to be believers. However, to many people, Islam is a mystery. Few Christians really understand much about how the religion began, who Muhammad “the prophet” was, what claims are made about him, and what Muslims believe about their God, Allah.

Is Allah, the god of Islam, the same God as the One revealed in the Bible? Do believers in Allah actually believe in the God of Scripture? What exactly is Islam? What does it stand for?

This book gives a basic overview of the Islamic faith. We look at their history, major beliefs, and common practices. In doing so, we will concentrate on the beliefs of the majority of Muslims, the Sunnis. They comprise about 90% of the believers in Islam.

When talking to Muslims, it is essential that we have a correct understanding of what they believe. However, the Islamic faith is complex. In attempting to summarize the basic beliefs of Islam, it must be appreciated, that its founder, Muhammad, was a complex person. It is well-documented that his beliefs and attitudes changed during his lifetime in response to the events that occurred around him. As a result of this, we find certain contradictions in the Islamic belief system.

In addition, just as there are a number of different practices within Christianity, we find there are different practices among those who call themselves Muslims. Therefore, in summarizing Islam, we can only generalize. Certain Muslims may disagree with some of the points that are taught in this section.

There is one more important thing. This book will not only list the major beliefs and practices of Islam, we will also give the biblical response to the claims of Islam. In this way, we will consider the claims of Islam in light of Scripture. This is our purpose in putting together this book. It is not merely meant to supply information about who Muslims are, and what they believe. Rather it is meant to contrast two faiths: Islam and Christianity and see what each of them stands for. In doing so, we will cite Scripture extensively to illustrate the vast differences between these two faiths.

Question 1

Why Is It Important For Christians To Know About Islam?

There are numerous religions in the world that claim to have the “truth” about the existence of God, or gods, the meaning of human life, the problem of evil, and the ultimate destiny of human beings. All of these are in contrast to the Christian faith which not only claims to have the truth but gives evidence to support its claims.

Since this is the case, why should anyone take the time to time to study one particular non-Christian religion, Islam? Why should a believer in Jesus Christ want to know anything about Islam and its followers, the Muslims?

There are a number of reasons why it is important to know some things about Islam. They include the following.

1. Islam Is The Second Largest Religion In The World

Although it is the newest of the world religions, Islam is behind only Christianity in number of adherents. Indeed, over one billion people on the planet, one fifth of the world’s population, claim to be Muslims. This fact alone should cause the Christian to be, at least, somewhat familiar with who Muslims are and what they believe. Islam is not going away and it is good if we know some things about what the faith is all about.

2. Islam Is Actively Seeking Converts

The Islamic faith is also active in promotion. While many religions are content with doing their work behind the scenes, Islam is actively seeking converts.

Consequently, Christians will encounter Muslims who are passionately spreading their faith. We cannot escape contacting them as we tell people about Jesus.

3. Radical Islam Is Linked With World Terrorism

Whether it is fair or not, radical Islam has been linked with world terrorism. The people that commit these murderous acts claim to have a religious sanction. It is important that we have some understanding of why they would do such things.

Obviously, there has to be intense commitment and motivation for someone to murder others for the sake of their own religious convictions. Something in the teachings of this faith is leading certain people to commit these atrocious acts of violence. It is helpful that we can gain some understanding of what drives people to do such horrendous things.

4. We Are To Know Our Enemy

The Bible commands us to know our enemies. Scripture says we are fighting a spiritual battle in the spiritual realm with spiritual weapons. The Apostle Paul wrote the following to the Ephesians about this battle we fight:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm (Ephesians 6:12-13 ESV).

The Islamic faith is an enemy of Christianity. This is clear. Having said this, we do not mean to infer that the Muslim people are enemies of Christians. They are not. Like those involved in all other non-Christian religions they are souls for whom Jesus Christ has died. The offer of salvation from sin extends to them as well.

Therefore, we need to make the distinction between those people who embrace the faith and the faith itself. Our fight is against the religion of Islam and that for which it stands. Our fight is not against the Muslim people.

5. We Are To Know What And Why We Believe

Another reason to understand Islam is because it attacks the Christian faith. There are numerous charges made against Jesus Christ and Christianity from the Quran, the holy book of Islam. These charges must be given a response.

The Bible commands Christians to know what they believe, as well as why they believe.

Peter wrote:

But in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:15 ESV).

Muslims will confront Christians and debate with them about who indeed has the right answer with respect to God's existence, the authority of the Bible, the Person of Jesus Christ, and other important topics.

Since Muslims deal with Christians as to why we believe what we do believe, we need to have an answer for them. Therefore, it is important for Christians to have some understanding about Islam.

Summary To Question 1
Why Is It Important For Christians To Know About Islam?

Islam is one of many non-Christian religions that exist in the world. Yet, this particular religion is important for Christians to study for a number of reasons.

To begin with, while it is the newest of the major religions of the world, it is the second largest religion in the world next to Christianity. For this reason alone, we should know something about this faith. Also, Islam is actively seeking to make converts. Muslims are not just sitting on the sidelines. Indeed, it is growing in its numbers and influence all of the time.

There is something else. One form of Islam is also associated with world terrorism. Its followers are actually murdering themselves and others with the belief that somehow that are doing the will of Allah and promoting the faith. There is obviously some reason they are doing this. We need to have some understanding of what drives them.

Scripture also says we are in a spiritual battle. All non-Christian religions, including Islam, would be in the category of those we are battling. Therefore, we need to use the spiritual weapons which the Lord has provided in our struggle to gain converts from those entrenched in Islam.

Finally, the Bible commands believers to know what they believe and why they believe. Comparing the beliefs of Islam to that of Christianity helps us clarify our understanding of what we believe as well as answer the objections from Muslims. Therefore, for a number of reasons, Bible-believing Christians need to understand the Islamic faith.

Question 2

What Is The Early History Of Islam?

Islam is the name of a religion that began in Arabia in the seventh century A.D. The word Islam is derived from an Arabic verb which means “to submit” or “to surrender.” One who accepts or submits to the religion of Islam is a “Muslim.”

The human founder of Islam was a man named Muhammad (also spelled Mohammed or Muhammed). Muslims consider Muhammad an apostle and prophet. In fact, he is assumed to be the last and greatest of the prophets or the “seal of the prophets.”

The Problem Of Accurate Sources

Before we look at what Islam believes, we must understand certain difficulties we will face. There is a problem in establishing an accurate history of Islam because of the lack of early sources. The earliest written accounts about Muhammad are from some one hundred fifty years after his death. All of these early sources are Muslim.

Indeed, we have no early non-Muslim evidence that supports the claims of Islam. Therefore, our only sources are from those who have already accepted the faith. While this does not mean the reports are untrue, it does mean that we should understand the accounts are coming from those who are sympathetic to its claims.

The Three Main Sources Of Information

The three main sources of our understanding of Islamic beginnings are its holy book, the Quran, the oral traditions about Muhammad that were later written down, known as the “hadith,” and the early biographies of Muhammad.

It is from these three sources that we derive our information about Islam and its “prophet.”

The Beginnings Of Islam

From the sources that we do have, we can summarize the life of Muhammad and the early history of Islam in the following manner.

Mecca: The Birthplace Of Muhammad

Muhammad was born in the year A.D. 570 or 571 in the wealthy merchant town of Mecca which is in present-day Saudi Arabia. At that time, Mecca was a very important trading center that stood on the main caravan routes.

Apart from being a wealthy city, Mecca also was the home of the Ka’ba. This was a cubed-like shrine that housed a number of “sacred stones.”

There was one particular one, the “Black Stone;” that was placed in the eastern wall of the Ka’ba. It was believed that this stone had come from heaven.

The various tribes throughout Arabia would make a yearly pilgrimage, known as the hajj, to visit the Ka’ba and the sacred stone. The people would kiss this black meteoric stone during this pilgrimage as well as pray to one or more of the various gods which were enshrined there. The Quraysh tribe, of which Muhammad’s family belonged, was the custodians of the sacred shrine.

The people of Arabia were for the most part engaged in idol worship. They believed in and worshipped many gods. There were some 360 different deities worshipped at the Ka’ba. In addition, to the idolatrous population, there were Jewish and Christian groups living in Arabia at that time.

The Christians were those that had fled from the Byzantine Empire because they had been condemned as heretics for their false doctrine about Jesus. Therefore, any picture of Christianity, which Muhammad or others would have heard about, would have been distorted. This helps us understand some of the misconceptions that Muhammad held about the Christian faith.

Muhammad’s Early Years

According to the reports that have come down to us, the early years of Muhammad were not very happy. His father, Abdullah, died before he was born. His mother, Aminah, died when Muhammad was only six. His grandfather died when Muhammad was eight. Without mother or father, the orphan Muhammad was raised by his uncle Abu Talib.

Muhammad Becomes Prosperous In Business

As he grew to manhood, Muhammad became a successful businessman. He made his first business trip to Syria at age twelve. Later, he joined the merchant’s guild at Mecca and traveled the caravan trading route. He managed the caravan trade for a wealthy widow named Khadijah. When he was twenty-five and she was forty, they married. The couple resided in Mecca and had seven children. Sadly, all of them died at a young age except for one daughter, Fatimah.

In Mecca, Muhammad lived the life of a successful businessman. In his business dealings, he would come in contact with both Jews and Christians. While religion was discussed, Muhammad was not persuaded by Jewish or Christian beliefs, or the beliefs of the idolatrous people of Arabia. Religiously, he was not satisfied.

Muhammad Comes To Believe Only One God, Named Allah, Exists

Because Muhammad was wealthy, he could spend large amounts of uninterrupted time thinking about religious matters. He was bothered by

the idolatrous practices of his people. Muhammad came to believe that there was only one true God who existed. His name was Al-lah or Allah. On a regular basis, Muhammad would go up to a cave on Mount Hirah, three miles from Mecca, to fast and pray to this one God. While meditating, he would enter a trance-like state.

He Starts Receiving Visions And Messages From Allah

The year A.D. 610 was a turning point for Muhammad and for the religion that would later be called Islam. At about the age of forty, while on Mount Hirah, Muhammad began to experience visions and receive messages. His first vision, called “the Night of Power and Excellence” took place in the month of Ramadan about the year A.D. 610. This month or Ramadan was sacred in the polytheistic culture of that time.

According to Muhammad a heavenly being appeared in the sky and then came to within two bow shots of him. The first word from this angelic visitor is thought to be the Arabic word meaning “recite.” This word is related to the Arabic term “Quran” which means “recitation.”

Muhammad believed that the messages he received were from the angel Gabriel, the same one mentioned in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Gabriel was delivering these messages on behalf of the one God Allah. Though Muhammad was at first uncertain about the messages, his wife, who may have been Jewish, convinced him that these visions were indeed from the one, true God.

Privately, he told a few people of his experiences. His first converts were from his own family. The first adult convert apart from his family was a wealthy merchant named Abu Bakr. For two years, Muhammad did not publicly proclaim the messages he was receiving.

The Message Of Allah, The One True God, Begins To Be Proclaimed By “The Prophet”

Finally, Muhammad decided to proclaim to others the revelations from Allah. At Mount Safa near Mecca, he made an open call to Islam. His message was there is one God, and his name is Allah. Furthermore, any worship of idols is an abomination to Allah. Therefore, judgment is coming to this idolatrous people.

It is important to realize that the people were already familiar with the god Allah. Indeed, they acknowledged him as the chief god. However, they also acknowledged and worshipped other gods. Muhammad’s unique message was that Allah was the only God who existed, and that worship of any other type of god or idol would result in divine judgment.

The Satanic Verses

Early on, Muhammad recited verses which permitted devotion to the “daughters of Allah.” These were three goddesses who were enshrined in the Ka’ba along with Allah.

Later, however, he recited new verses which replaced these earlier ones. Devotion was now to be to Allah alone. These verses which permitted the devotion to the “daughters of Allah” were then rejected because they were assumed to have been recited by Satan, not Allah! They became known as “the Satanic Verses.” Muhammad eventually came to teach a consistent doctrine of strict monotheism. There is only one God, and his name is Allah. He has no partners.

As he continued to receive these revelations, the number of converts to this new-found faith increased. Since he could neither read nor write, Muhammad had to recite the revelations that he was receiving. Others had to write down his recitations. A collection of these recitations was made into a new scripture known as the Koran, or Quran. As we earlier mentioned, this word means “the reading” or “the recitation.”

Muhammad Is Forced To Flee His Home In Mecca: The Hijrah

The new religion was not without opposition. The people of Mecca believed him to be either a madman or an imposter. Some of the believers in his new religion went to Abyssinia, modern-day Ethiopia. Fearing for his life, on July 15, 622, Muhammad and a small group of his followers were forced to leave Mecca to the city of Yathrib.

Later, Yathrib would be renamed Medina or “the city of the prophet.” The year 622 is highly significant in Islamic history. The flight of Muhammad to Medina is known as the “hijrah.” Muslim calendars begin the Islamic era from this date (A.H. “after hijrah”).

In Yathrib, the people were more receptive to his teachings than the one in Mecca. The people were not idolatrous like those in Mecca but rather they believed in only one God. This made Muhammad’s message of the unity of God attractive.

In addition, they needed a strong leader who could unite the various tribes. Muhammad tried to play the role of peacemaker between the diverse warring groups.

However, his efforts met with resistance. Muhammad then organized an army to stabilize the situation. He and his army killed those who did not accept his new religion. Once in control, he built a house of worship, known as a mosque, and formed the first Islamic state. His government laid out the rules to regulate the behavior of the people. These rules were based upon the new religion of Islam.

The Doctrine Of Islam Begins To Be Formed In Medina

It was during this time at Yathrib, or Medina, when the doctrine of Islam began to take shape. At first, the Jews and Christians were somewhat sympathetic to Muhammad’s teachings. He was speaking out against idolatry and emphasizing the unity of God. In addition, he adopted a

number of Jewish practices. Since Muhammad's message was to his own idolatrous people, he could live in harmony with the Jews and Christians.

However, all of this soon changed. When the Jews refused to accept Muhammad as their prophet or adopt Islamic practices the message began to be modified. No longer was his message restricted to his own peoples. He was Allah's prophet to all humanity. Indeed, he taught that Allah had given the Jews and Christians divine revelation from the beginning, but they had corrupted it.

Muhammad said that while both the Jewish and the Christian religions were God-given, he himself was chosen to reveal a religious system that was more perfect than either of them. He was now sent to deliver the last revelation of the one true God to humanity, and to correct the errors of these two religions. The Quran was now the supreme revelation of God. It superseded all previous revelations. Thus, Christianity and Judaism needed to be abandoned.

Consequently, the direction of prayer was changed. Initially, Muhammad had taught that believers were to face Jerusalem when they prayed. However, in his second year at Medina, a revelation came to him that said the direction of prayer was now to be toward Mecca.

Islam Expands Its Influence And Conquers Mecca

Within eight years after coming to Yathrib, or Medina, the armies of Muhammad controlled all of Arabia. He conquered Mecca in A.D. 630, or in the eighth year after the "hijrah." Consistent with the visions he received about Allah, Muhammad ordered every idol destroyed in the main temple, with the exception of the black stone in the Ka'ba. This stone that was formerly used in idol worship was the only one of the 360 idols that Muhammad did not destroy.

Muhammad ruled all of Arabia in the name of the one, true God, Allah. He is the first person to unite the tribes. He died in 632 and was buried in Medina. However, his religion did not die with him.

Islam After Muhammad

After Muhammad's death, Islam continued to flourish. The immediate successor, or Caliph as he is called, was Abu Bakr, his first adult convert from outside his family. He was succeeded in A.D. 634 by Caliph Umar. Umar ruled until A.D. 644 when Caliph Uthman succeeded him. During this time, Islam continued to expand throughout the region.

By the middle of the seventh century, Islam possessed most of Syria, Iraq, Persia, and Egypt. Some thirty years later the followers of Muhammad were taking over parts of Europe, North Africa, and Central Asia. The armies advanced through Spain into France but were halted in A.D. 732 at the decisive battle of Tours-Poitiers. These lands which they conquered are under Islamic control to this day with the exception of Spain which expelled the Muslims, known as Moors, in 1492.

Today, one billion people worldwide claim to be Muslims, the followers of the religion which was formulated in the Arabian Desert in the seventh century A.D.

Furthermore, apart from Jesus Christ, Muhammad has probably had more influence in human history than any other individual. Indeed, in his short time as “the prophet,” this one man changed a fragmented Arabian culture which believed in and worshipped many gods into a unified band of people with the belief in one God. He had provided these people with a new vision as well as a clear sense of destiny. Consequently, the religion which has sprung from this one man is definitely a force to be reckoned with.

Observations About Islam And Its Beginnings

From a Christian perspective, there are a number of observations and contrasts that we can make between the origin of Islam and that of Christianity. A few obvious things come to mind.

1. In Contrast To Islam The Records About Jesus Are Trustworthy

The records that substantiate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ are reliable. This is in contrast to the records we have about Islam and the Quran. While the New Testament was written some six hundred years before the Quran, the text has been transmitted more accurately. Indeed, we know that it reads today the same as how it originally read. In other words, we can have complete confidence that the message of Jesus has not been altered.

Moreover, what we have in the New Testament are firsthand accounts of people who were either eyewitnesses of the events in Jesus’ life, or those who recorded eyewitness testimony. The writers testified to the fact that they were there to witness the events they recorded. John, one of Jesus’ apostles, wrote:

He who saw it has borne witness— his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe (John 19:35 ESV).

The Apostle John was there and is telling us what he saw. We are dealing with firsthand testimony, eyewitness testimony.

The Quran, on the other hand, is the result of an alleged communication between Allah and Muhammad. There is no possible way to verify it historically. We have to take his word that God spoke to him through the angel Gabriel since no one else heard the communication. All we have is his unconfirmed word.

2. Muhammad Had An Incorrect View Of Christianity

As we mentioned, the contact that Muhammad had with Christians were with those whom the church branded as heretics. They held a number of

views of Jesus Christ that were inconsistent with orthodox beliefs and with the teachings of Scripture.

Therefore, the “prophet” began with certain misconceptions about what Christians actually believed. We find the same misconceptions about Jesus in the holy book of Islam, the Quran. The Christian God, that Muhammad rejected, is, in part, not the God that the New Testament reveals. Indeed, it is a different God and a different Jesus.

This, of course, is not new. Indeed, the Apostle Paul was faced with those in his day who preached a different Jesus and a different message about Him. Paul wrote the following to the Corinthians:

But I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your minds may be corrupted from a complete and pure devotion to Christ. For if a person comes and preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you had not received, or a different gospel, which you had not accepted, you put up with it splendidly! . . . For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself is disguised as an angel of light. So it is no great thing if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their destiny will be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15 CSB).

Thus, the idea of presenting a different Jesus and a different gospel was something that Paul the Apostle faced. The fact that Muhammad came along and also preached a different Jesus should not surprise us.

3. Christianity Was Spread By Love Not The Sword

The Christian faith was spread by believers who gave their lives in the proclamation of the gospel. There were innumerable people who were imprisoned, tortured, and killed because they were spreading the message of God’s love for humanity as show in Jesus Christ. This is consistent with the teachings and behavior of the founder of the faith. Jesus suffered and died without resisting or fighting back.

In complete contrast to this, Islam conquered by the sword. Its converts were made by force. This is consistent with the teachings and practices of its founder. The contrast between Islam and Christianity in this particular area could not be greater.

4. The Return Of Christ Will See God’s Kingdom Come To Earth

Finally, Islam and Christianity have two different ways in which they view their faiths dominating the world. The Bible teaches, and most Christians believe, that it will be Christ and His Second Coming that will usher in the kingdom of God on the earth.

Islam is attempting to do this by its own methods of proclaiming its message. Muslims hope that the entire world will be conquered and thus become one Islamic state.

Therefore, Islam and Christianity, at the outset, have a number of crucial things that divide them. Consequently, the two faiths cannot be reconciled. At least one of them has to be wrong.

Those who attempt to reconcile the religions face two basic problems. First, there is complete disagreement over the essentials of the faith. There is no possible way to harmonize them.

Second, it fails to take seriously that each religion claims to be ultimate truth. Therefore, it is disrespecting the claims of each group.

This sums up the early history of Islam as well as contrasting it with the Christian faith. As we can readily observe, the differences between the two faiths are legion.

Summary To Question 2 **What Is The Early History Of Islam?**

A man named Muhammad, born around A.D. 570, in what is present-day Saudi Arabia, founded the religion of Islam. Followers of Muhammad are called Muslims. They are those who submit to the teaching of Islam. Since Islam is the second largest religion in the world it is important that we know something about its origins and early history.

However, one of the problems in attempting to discern the truth of Islam is the problem of sources. The earliest written sources about Islam come from a century and a half after Muhammad lived. They are from those who are sympathetic with Muhammad and his teachings. This must be kept in mind when evaluating Islam.

These sources include the Quran, the holy book of Islam, early traditions known as the hadith, and the biographies of Muhammad.

From these sources we learn that Muhammad claimed to receive the revelations from the true God, Allah. He claimed that he was proclaiming the same message as found in the Old and New Testament. These revelations, however, went beyond the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. Consequently, Islam is now the true religion. Muhammad therefore is the last and the greatest of the prophets.

Muhammad was a wealthy businessman living in the city of Mecca when he claimed to have received these visions from Allah. The message was that Allah was the only God who actually existed. Thus, these many other gods and idols that the people worshipped did not exist. Allah demanded worship of him and him alone. Judgment would fall upon those who rejected worship of him.

Eventually Muhammad won converts to his newly found faith. His armies were the first to unify all the tribes in that region. Islam then began its conquest of the remainder of the world and is still attempting world domination.

There are certain observations that we can make about the beginnings of Islam.

First, the records about Muhammad have nowhere near the reliability as those of Jesus even though the events occurred six hundred years later in history. The text of the New Testament has survived in an accurate manner.

Indeed, we know that it says the same things as what was originally written. The same cannot be said for the Quran since there are a number of substantial variations of the text that has survived.

We also know that Muhammad's contacts with Christians were from those who held heretical beliefs about Jesus. His misconceptions about Christianity and Christ are reflected in the Quran. In other words, he did not get the correct picture of Jesus.

There is also the difference as to how Islam spread. Rather than being spread by love, as was the gospel of Jesus Christ, Islam was spread by the sword. The prophet Muhammad led the way in this way of spreading the newfound faith.

Finally, while both Christianity and Islam desire to spread their message to the end of the earth, Christianity believed that will be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ that establishes God's kingdom. Islam assumes the faithful can conquer the world through their own means.

While each claims to be "the" truth, it is obvious that they cannot both be true at the same time. At least one of these claims is wrong. The evidence will demonstrate that the facts are on the side of Jesus Christ and Christianity. His claims can be verified. The claims of Muhammad cannot.

Question 3

**What Are The Various Divisions Of Islam Today?
(Shiah, Sunni, Wahabi Or Salafism)
What Do They Have In Common,
What Are Their Differences?**

There are two main divisions of Muslims: Shiah and Sunni. About 90% of the Muslims of the world are Sunni while the remaining 10% are Shiah. It is important that we understand what they have in common and where they differ. We will briefly explain what each group is all about.

The Sunnis

The division between the two groups dates to the death of Muhammad in A.D. 632. Sunni means “example of the prophet.” It first emerged during a dispute about who would become the next caliph, the leader of the Islamic community. The Sunni followed the Arabian practice of appointing a committee of elders to choose the leader. They elected Abu Bakr, Muhammad’s first convert, as caliph. He is assumed by Sunnis to be the rightful successor to Muhammad.

The Shiahs

The Shiahs consist of about 10% of all professing Muslims. They number more than 170 million worldwide and are dominant in Iran. Shiah Islam can be summarized as follows. The Shiahs deny the authority of the first three Sunni caliphs.

They believe the rightful successor was Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad. Shiahs consider that only direct descendants of the Muhammad should become leader. Ali’s supporters would come to be known as Shi’ites “the party of Ali.”

Islam has not changed its goals from the beginning; it still wishes to achieve world domination. The Sunnis and Shiahs each want this. However, their tactics differ as to how they are to achieve this goal.

The Wahabi’s

There is another group of Muslims which continue to have considerable influence. They are known as the Wahabi’s. The Wahabi’s can be described as a puritanical sect of Islam. They were founded in the 18th century by a man named Muhammad ibn-Abd-al-Wahab. The Wahabis regard all other sects of Islam as perverting the truth of Islam.

To this day, Wahabi Islam remains the official ideology of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We should also note that many Wahabi’s consider the term derogatory preferring the name Salafism instead. The goal of the Wahabis is to restore Islam to its pure form. Therefore, they are interested in ridding the faith of all superstitions and innovations.

This is a brief summary of these main divisions of Islam.

Summary To Question 3

What Are The Various Divisions Of Islam Today? (Sunni, Shiah, Wahabi Or Salafism) What Do They Have In Common, What Are Their Differences?

Today, Islam is divided into two main groups: Sunni and Shiah. The Sunnis are by far the largest group making up of about 90% of all Muslims.

After Muhammad's death a committee was formed to determine his successor. According to Sunni Islam, Abu Bakr, Muhammad's first convert, was the rightful successor to the prophet.

The Shiahs, on the other hand, believe the rightful successor to Muhammad was Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad. They believe only direct descendants of Muhammad should lead Islam. Both the Sunni's and Shiahs have the same goal. This consists of world domination for Islam. The Wahabi's, or the Salafis, were founded in the 18th century. They believe that Islam has strayed from its beginning. They reject all other sects. The Wahabi's are the official form of Islam in Saudi Arabia. This gives a simple idea of how Islam is divided. Of course, much more could be said.

Question 4

What Are The Basic Beliefs Of Islam?

The Islamic faith consists of both belief and works. The beliefs consist of six articles of faith while the works, or religious duties, consist of the obeying the five pillars of Islam.

The beliefs of Islam come not only from their holy book the Quran, but also from a collection of practices and traditions that were said to come from Muhammad. These are known as the “hadith.” The plural of hadith is “ahadith.” From the ahadiths, we find more detailed explanations about how Muhammad lived his life. Faithful Muslims are supposed to follow Muhammad’s example. We can make the following observations.

The Six Articles Of Faith

There are six articles of faith that all Muslims must believe with all of their heart. They must also confess these beliefs with their mouth. They are as follows.

1. Allah [God]

The first article of faith is the belief in Allah. Faithful Muslims must recite the following creed:

There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his apostle

The unity of Allah is central to Islam. Denial of this is called shirk. It is the unpardonable sin. Allah does not have partners; he has no equal.

It should be noted that Allah is the Arabic word for God. When Arabic-speaking Christians refer to the God of the Bible they all call Him “Allah.” However, they are not referring to the same God as Muslims. This can obviously cause some confusion. Therefore, we must remember that Allah is not only the name of the God of Islam it is also an Arabic term that can be a general name for God.

2. Angels

A second pillar of the Islamic faith is the belief in angels. Islam teaches that Allah created these beings from “light.” The greatest angel is Jibrail, or Gabriel. He is the one who revealed the Quran to Muhammad. He is also called the holy Spirit. He is the one who strengthened Jesus during His temptation with the devil.

Mikail, or Michael, is another chief angel. While Gabriel and Michael are found in Scripture, a third important angel, named Izrail, is not. He is associated with taking care of believers when they die.

Muslims also believe in spirits known as “jinn.” Allah created these spirits out of smokeless fire. These spirits can be either bad or good. Most of them are believed to be bad. These jinn inhabit desert places, ruined buildings, certain mountains, and wells. Muslims are fearful of the jinn and take precautions to protect themselves from the attack from these spirits.

The followers of Islam tend to be animistic; they believe there is certain power residing in objects. For example, Muslims must pray toward Mecca, and the sacred rock in the Ka’ba. When they make their once in a lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca, they circle this sacred stone seven times and kiss it. They believe there is some sort of power residing in it.

The devil is also called Iblis, or Shaytan. Sometimes he is referred to as an angel, other times he is described as a jinn.

3. Books

Muslims believe that Allah has revealed his commands to human beings through 104 sacred books. However, only four of them now remain. They were given to Moses (the Law, or Torah, the Taurah), to David, (the Psalms or Zabur), to Jesus (the gospels or New Testament, the Injil), and to Muhammad, (the Quran). The Quran, the last of these revelations, is the primary one. If there is any contradiction between the Quran and the previous revelations, it is assumed that the previous revelations were corrupted.

4. Prophets

Islam believes that Allah has spoken to humanity from the beginning of human history through various prophets. The same truths have been consistently revealed to all of Allah’s prophets from the beginning. Islam recognizes a number of prophets. Nine of them are considered to be Major Prophets. They include Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, David, and Jesus. Muhammad is the last and the greatest of the prophets according to Islam. Indeed, he is known as the seal of the prophets.

The prophets are not worshipped in Islam. This includes Muhammad. All of them are considered to be human beings, including Jesus. None of them are believed to be divine. The Quran says:

The apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His apostles; We make no difference between any of His apostles; and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord! Your forgiveness (do we crave), and to you is the eventual course (Surah 2:285).

Islam has a number of prophets that are listed nowhere in Scripture or, for that matter, anywhere else.

Islam believes and teaches that its religion can be traced back to the beginning of time. It actually started with Adam, not with Muhammad.

Therefore, it cannot and should not be seen as new religion starting in the seventh century A.D.

5. The Day Of Judgment

The idea that there will be a day of judgment is a major theme in the Quran and in Islam. There will be obvious signs before it occurs. This includes signs in heaven and on earth as well as the appearance of a man of sin, or antichrist. The Quran says the following about the judgment:

The terrible calamity! What is the terrible calamity! And what will make you comprehend what the terrible calamity is? The day on which men shall be as scattered moths, and the mountains shall be as loosened wool (Surah 101:1-5).

On judgment day, the balances will be weighed. The Quran says:

Then as for him whose good deeds are preponderant, these are the successful. And as for him whose good deeds are light, these are they who shall have lost their souls, abiding in hell (Surah 23:102-103).

Those whose deeds are light will be lost.

6. Allah's Decrees

Allah, as the mighty God, has power over all things. His will always prevails. Accordingly, events are predestined, or determined, ahead of time. A Muslim, therefore, becomes fatalistic in his belief.

The Quran says:

For Allah leads to stray whom he wills and guides whom he wills (Surah 35:8).

There is more. The Arabic word Islam means "submission." Thus Muslims are to submit to the will of Allah. Their concern is not to find forgiveness from Allah, but rather to submit to whatever he has decided for them. This submission to Allah is central to Islam.

A person is to submit to what Allah has predestined for him. Associated with the concept of submission to God is that of submission to Islamic authority. Muslims are to agree with what Islamic teachers say. Submitting to them is the same as submitting to Allah.

Conclusion: Muslims Believe Islam Is The Only True Religion

After considering Islamic beliefs, the obvious conclusion is that Muslims believed they alone have the true religion. This is stated in the Quran:

If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost all spiritual good (Surah 3:85).

The line is clearly drawn. Islam claims to be the one way to reach the one true God. There is no room for more than one way to reach the truth.

Christian Response To The Six Articles Of Faith

Christianity would take issue with each of the six articles of faith that are in Islam. We can summarize the conclusions as follows.

1. The True God Is Yahweh, Not Allah

The true God is not Allah, the God of Islam but rather is Yahweh, or Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of Islam and the God of Christianity are not the same God. Allah is not Yahweh. He is a different God, one that does not really exist.

Christians who speak Arabic worship the true God. Yet they refer to Him as Allah since this is the Arabic name for God. It is clear to them, however, that they are not worshipping the same God as the Muslims.

2. Christianity Has A Different View Of Angels And Does Not Accept The Reality Of The Jinn

The Christian faith also believes in the existence of angels. However, in Scripture, angels are spirit-beings. The Bible does not tell us exactly when they were created or what they were created from. The idea of a separate category of spirits, or jinn, is not taught in Scripture.

While there are such things as evil spirits, or demons, they are usually assumed to be sinful angels rather than a special class of spirit-beings.

3. God Has Revealed Himself In Two Testaments, Not Three

The fact that God has revealed Himself to the human race in written form is accepted by Christians. Both the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, have been given by divine revelation. The New Testament was the final revelation that God has given to humanity.

The writer to the Hebrews put it this way:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors at many different times and in many different ways through the prophets. In these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. God made his Son responsible for everything. His Son is the one through whom God made the universe (Hebrews 1:1-2 God's Word).

Jesus Christ is God's last word to humanity. God has said all that He needs to say. Nothing more needs to be added.

4. Jesus Is Not To Be Classed Among The Prophets

The prophets were men and women that God sent to His people to speak forth His truth. Jesus also was a prophet. He was One who spoke for the Lord to the people. However, Jesus was not a merely “great” prophet. Indeed, He is the one to whom the Law and the prophets spoke. We read about this in John’s gospel. It says:

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45 ESV).

Jesus is the culmination of the various prophecies found in the Old Testament. He is God the Son who became a human being to let us know what God is like. The Bible says of Him:

No one has ever seen God. But his only Son, who is himself God, is near to the Father’s heart; he has told us about him (John 1:18 NLT).

God is explained to us through the Person of Christ. Therefore, He should never be classed among the prophets. They are not in His class. Indeed, He is God Himself.

5. The Day Of Judgment Will Be Decided On How One Views Jesus

The Bible speaks of a Day of Judgment. This judgment will be based upon how individuals respond to the message of Jesus Christ. The Bible says that He will judge all humanity. The Apostle Paul wrote:

And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 NLT).

Judgment is coming and Jesus will be the judge.

6. God’s Decrees Are Not Fatalism

The Christian faith accepts the biblical truth that God has made certain decrees for the human race. He has pronounced certain things which must come to pass. However, they do not have the same fatalistic view that Islam has. People have legitimate choice to believe or not to believe.

We read Jesus saying:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! (Matthew 23:37 ESV).

He wept over the city of Jerusalem because they would not believe in Him. It was not because they could not believe. They had choice and they exercised this choice.

As is now obvious, Islam and Christianity are far apart from each other concerning their main beliefs. There is no way to reconcile the six articles of faith in Islam with what the Bible teaches and with what Christians believe. Someone has to be wrong in their claims.

Summary To Question 4 What Are The Basic Beliefs Of Islam?

There are six articles of faith that all Muslims must believe. It is important that we understand what they are as well as contrast them to what Christians believe.

First, Allah alone is God. He has no equals. Furthermore, Muhammad is his apostle. This is the primary belief of Islam, and each Muslim must confess this.

Islam also teaches the existence of angels, good and bad, as well as spirits called jinn. This is another pillar of their faith.

In addition, Islam acknowledges a number of holy books. This includes the writings of Moses, the psalms, the gospels, and the Quran which is the final revelation of Allah.

Islam believes that Allah has sent a number of prophets to the world, including Jesus. However, Muhammad was the last and the greatest. His word is final.

Central to Islam is the Day of Judgment when the works of all humans will be weighed on a scale of balances. The ones with good deeds will go to heaven while the ones with more bad deeds will go to hell.

Finally, Islam teaches that Allah is in absolute control of all events. He predestines, or determines, everything ahead of time according to his own will. Therefore, it is the responsibility of humans to submit to his predetermined plan.

Clearly, Islam believes itself to be the one true religion. By definition, all other religions are not true. Consequently, compromise with other religions is not possible.

The Christian has a number of responses to these pillars of Islamic faith. They are as follows.

The true God is not Allah, but Yahweh. Allah is unity but not a Trinity. The God of the Bible is Trinitarian. He is one God who exists in three distinct centers of consciousness or Persons. Islam explicitly denies the Trinity.

The Bible teaches the existence of angels both good and bad. However, the existence of spirits, or jinn, is not taught in the Scripture. We do find the existence of evil spirits, known also as demons, but these creatures are usually assumed to be fallen angels rather than a distinct type of spirit.

The only Holy Book for Christians is the Bible. God has finished speaking to the human race, in the sense of giving divine revelation, through the apostles of Christ. There has been no divinely inspired Word from God after their time. Thus, the Quran is not the Word of God.

It is blasphemous for the Christian to list Jesus Christ among the prophets. While Jesus was indeed a prophet, He was much more. He claimed to be God the Son, the Creator of the universe. He is not in the same league as the biblical prophets.

There will be a judgment day as far as the Bible is concerned but it will be based upon ones view of Jesus Christ. It will have nothing to do with weighing the works of people to see if they have been good or bad. Our final destination, whether it be heaven, or hell, will depend upon how we respond to Jesus.

The Bible does indeed teach the absolute sovereignty, or control, of God. Yet, there is no such thing as the fatalism like is found in Islam. God gives human beings legitimate choice. We can choose Him, or we can reject Him.

While both Christianity and Islam claim to be the true faith, it is obvious that both cannot be true. When the evidence is evaluated, it becomes clear that it is the Christian faith which has the facts on its side.

Question 5

What Is Holy Book Of Islam? (The Quran, The Koran)

The source of all authority in Islam is the Quran. Muslims believe that it is the actual words of Allah, the one God, dictated to Muhammad the prophet in the Arabic language. We need to make the following observations about the Quran.

What Is The Quran?

The Quran (also spelled Qur'an or Koran) is the holy book of Islam. It is divided into chapters or surahs. The Quran contains 114 surahs. The surahs are further divided into verses called "ayahs." References are given like chapter and verse numbers in the Bible. However, the verse numbers will vary according to different printings of the Quran.

The Surahs are not arranged in chronological order. Rather their order is roughly due to their length with the longest ones in the beginning.

The word Quran is derived from an Arabic word *qara* which means "to read" or "to recite." It is based on the first word of Surah 96 which begins by saying the following:

Proclaim, or read in the name of your Lord and Cherisher

It is generally believed that the first five verses of this Surah were the first parts of the Quran that were put in written form.

Except for the first Surah which is a prayer addressed to Allah, Allah himself is the speaker in all of the other Surahs. Thus, the Quran does not consist of Muhammad speaking, but rather Allah.

1. The Claims Of Islam Concerning The Quran

Islam makes a number of claims about the Quran. They can be summarized as follows.

The Entire Text Was Dictated To Muhammad By The Angel Gabriel

According to Islam, the entire text of the Quran was revealed to Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel. The material was revealed in various portions from A.D. 610 through Muhammad's death in A.D. 632.

The Quran claims to be a unique revelation from Allah. It says of itself. It says the following of itself:

Say: If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Quran, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others (Surah 17:88).

Elsewhere it says:

And this Quran is not such as could be forged by those besides Allah, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a clear explanation of the book, there is no doubt in it, from the Lord of the worlds Or do they say: He has forged it? Say: Then bring a chapter like this and invite whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful (Surah 10:37.38).

Clearly, it claims to be Allah's revelation.

The Original Quran Has Existed Eternally In Heaven

Muslims believe there is an original Quran that has existed eternally in heaven. This Quran is on a stone tablet written in the Arabic language, the language of heaven. Since the original Quran is written in Arabic, the Arabic language is given special reverence. This is emphasized in Quran. It says:

These are the verses of the Book that makes things manifest. Surely we have revealed it -an Arabic Quran - that you may understand (Surah 12:1,2).

Therefore, the Quran on earth is a representative of the one in heaven.

The Quran Is The Final Revelation Of Allah To Humanity

Islam believes that the Quran is the final revelation of the one true, God, Allah. While the Old and New Testament were also given by Allah, the Quran is his final word to humanity. The Quran says:

Allah makes to pass away and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book (Surah 13:39).

Since the Quran was dictated by Allah, there are no contradictions in the text.

There Can Be No Authorized English Translations Of The Quran

There is not any standard English translation of the Quran, neither could there be. It is believed only the original Arabic version has authority. The Quran, in Arabic, is the perfect Word of Allah.

2. The Collection Of The Messages In The Quran

With respect to the collection of these messages, we can make the following observations.

The Message Was Recited By Muhammad To Others

Since Muhammad could not read or write, these revelations were recited by Muhammad to others. The recitations were written down, or memorized, by the companions of Muhammad.

The Recitations Were Collected After Muhammad's Death

After his death, attempts were made to assemble the Quran by Muslim leaders. The various portions were found written on such things as stones, leaves, and on the shoulder blades of camels.

In addition, the memories of those who heard these recitations were used to compile the Quran. The final compilation of the revelation occurred about the year A.D. 650.

3. The Quran And Other Holy Books

According to Islam, the final source of authority is the Quran, which Muslims believe to be the word of Allah. Although Islam teaches that the Old and New Testaments are divinely inspired, they believe that Christians and Jews have corrupted the Scriptures. Islam considers the Bible wrong in any place where it conflicts with the Quran. The Quran is the only trustworthy source of teaching for the Muslims.

Muslims believe the Quran to be the uncreated, literal speech of Allah; the one true God. The Quran says that there has eternally existed in Paradise the Preserved Tablet, which is the eternal Word of God. This is where revelation to humanity descends (Surah 13:39).

Muslims Believe That The Bible Is God's Revelation To Humanity

Islam believes the Torah, or the Law of Moses, is also divinely inspired. It says:

Say: We believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us, and in that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit (Surah 2:136).

It also speaks of the Tavrut and Injeel (the Law of Moses and Gospel) that Allah sent to the Jews and Christians:

He has revealed to you the Book with truth, verifying that which is before it, and he revealed the Tavrut and the Injeel aforetime, a guidance for the people, and he sent the Quran (Surah 3:3).

The revelations of Allah also extend to the life of Jesus:

Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah, and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus, Job, Jonah and Aaron and Solomon and we gave to David we gave the psalms (Surah 4:163).

Therefore, the Bible is considered sacred Scripture by Muslims.

The Scripture Is To Be Consulted

Islam teaches that Scripture should be consulted when problems arise. Any problems should be settled by the statements of Scripture. It says:

But if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to you, ask those who read the Book before you; certainly the truth has come to you from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the disputers (Surah 10:94).

Thus, the Quran encourages people to consult the Scripture.

Muslims Believe The Bible Has Been Corrupted By Jews And Christians

Islam claims the Bible and the Quran are both Holy Scripture given by Allah. The Quran says:

O you People of the Book! Believe in what we have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you (Surah 4:47).

We also read:

And this is a Book which we have sent down, bringing blessings and confirming (the revelations) which came before it (Surah 6:92).

Why Do These Holy Books Contradict Each Other?

While the Bible and the Quran are considered to be sacred by Muslims, they are contradictory to each other in much that they teach.

Consequently, the Jews and Christians brought a number of arguments against Muhammad and his followers on the basis of what their Scriptures taught. Muslims were forced to come up with some sort of answer to these questions.

The basic question which had to be answered was this: How could there be discrepancies if the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Quran all came from the same source? If the Quran only confirmed what was in the Old and New Testaments, then why do we find these contradictions?

Christians And Jews Are Corrupters Of The Truth

Muhammad addressed this issue during his time in Medina. He said the Word that had been previously given in the Old and New Testaments had been corrupted by both Jews and Christians; the “people of the Book.”

The Quran makes the following accusation:

Most surely there is a party amongst those who distort the Book with their tongue that you may consider it to be (a part) of the Book, and

they say, It is from Allah, while it is not from Allah, and they tell a lie against Allah whilst they know (Surah 3:78).

The Changes Were Deliberately Made By Jews

Therefore, when the Bible and the Quran are in conflict, the Quran corrects that which was corrupted in the Bible. Muhammad accuses the Jews of knowingly perverting the word of God after having heard and understood it. The Quran says:

Do you then hope that they would believe in you, and a party from among them indeed used to hear the Word of Allah, then altered it after they had understood it, and they know (this) (Surah 2:75).

He accused them of deliberately perverting God's Word. The Quran says:

[Some people actually] write the Book with their own hands and then say, "This is from God" (Surah 2:79).

They are said to have purposely changed the Scripture:

[These] transgressors changed the word from that which had been given them (Surah 2:59).

The Jews are accused of corrupting the text by displacing words, changing them from one place to another. In this way, they twist the things that God has said:

Of the Jews there are those who displace words and say: "We hear and we disobey ... with a twist of their tongues" (Surah 4:46).

The Quran accuses Christians of neglecting Scripture. It says:

And with those who say, we are Christians, We made a covenant, but they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of, therefore we excited among them enmity and hatred to the day of resurrection; and Allah will inform them of what they did (Surah 5:14).

The charge of concealment is also leveled against the "People of the Book."

We read elsewhere in the Quran:

"Why do you clothe truth with falsehood," the People of the Book are asked, "and conceal the truth while you have knowledge?" (Surah 3:71).

These people will be severely judged for their behavior.

The Quran says:

Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear in the Book for men, these it is whom

Allah shall curse, and those who curse shall curse them (too). (Surah 2:159).

In another place, it says:

Surely those who conceal any part of the Book that Allah has revealed and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies, and Allah will not speak to them on the day of resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement (Surah 2:174).

Muhammad Brought The Light To The Darkened Situation

Muhammad, on the other hand, is depicted as coming into the world to bring light to this darkened situation:

With it Allah guides him who will follow his pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by his will and guides them to the right path (Surah 5:16).

Jews are seen as not assigning the correct attributes to Allah. The Quran says:

And they do not assign to Allah the attributes due to Him when they say: Allah has not revealed anything to a mortal. Say: Who revealed the Book which Musa brought, a light and a guidance to men, which you make into scattered writings which you show while you conceal much? And you were taught what you did not know, (neither) you nor your fathers. Say: Allah then leave them sporting in their vain discourses (Surah 6:91).

Of Christians, it is said that forgot what God had revealed to them:

They forgot a good part of the message that was sent them (Surah 5:15).

This was Islam's way of attempting to explain the obvious discrepancies between the Quran and the Old and New Testament. They simply attribute it to deliberate changing of the text by Jews and Christians.

Interestingly, some Muslim scholars have concluded that the text wasn't actually changed by Jews and Christians merely that they misunderstood what was taught. Such is the confusing nature of Islamic belief.

The Gospel Of Barnabas Gives A More Precise Life Of Christ

Muslims sometime refer to a work called the Gospel of Barnabas as a more authoritative source to the life of Jesus. They believe it gives the correct explanation of what Jesus said and did. In the Gospel of Barnabas, Jesus is said to have been an Islamic prophet, the forerunner of Muhammad.

The Literary Beauty Of The Quran

There is one final point which should be mentioned. Those who read the Quran in Arabic testify to its literary beauty. Even non-Muslims agree that it is a great literary work. Muslims often use this to argue for its divine nature. They contend that a book with such beauty could not have come about from mere humans.

Consequently, it must be a divine work, a work of God. Thus, the beauty of the Quran is used as the final line of evidence of its divine inspiration.

These points sum up some of the basic facts about the composition of the Quran as well as the way Muslims view this book. To them, the Quran is sacred beyond description.

The Christian Response To The Quran

While Islam believes the Quran is the word of Allah, there are a number of problems with this view. They include the following.

1. The Text Of The Quran Did Not Always Read The Same

The Islamic tradition teaches that when Muhammad died, in A.D. 632, the various revelations he had recited had not been yet gathered into a single book. They were merely recorded “on palm leaves and flat stones and in the hearts of men.”

While attempts were made to collect the authoritative text recited by Muhammad, a standard text was not created. A number of variations in the text continued to exist until the tenth century. Even in the mid-twentieth century there were two versions still being used. While the main text was used by most Muslims worldwide, a variation of this text was in use in North Africa.

The Quran was originally compiled by one individual, Zaid ibn Thabit. This was done under the guidance of Abu Bakr, the father-in-law of Muhammad. Later, a group of Arab scholars produced a unified version of the Quran in which they destroyed all copies that had variant readings.

Thus, the text of the Quran is anything but certain. This should be especially troubling to Muslims since it is believed that the Quran is the believed to have been dictated from an Arabic original in heaven.

There is more. Recent ancient manuscripts of the Quran have surfaced in Yemen. These manuscripts demonstrate further variant readings in the text. All of this should not give a Muslim much assurance that they are reading, or listening to, in Arabic, the exact words of Allah.

2. It Has An Incorrect Understanding Of What The Bible Says

While the Quran claims to be the final word of Allah, it does not correctly reflect the truth of Scripture. Time after time it mistakenly attributes

something to Scripture that is not there or contradicts its plain teaching. Since God is not the author of confusion, He would not give a revelation to humanity that contradicted which He previously revealed.

3. There Is No Objective Evidence That It Is Divine

We find no objective evidence that the Quran is divinely inspired. There are no predictions that are miraculously fulfilled, no miracles that have adequate testimony, and the founder, Muhammad, is clearly said to have died, been buried, and remains dead.

4. The Text Of Scripture Has Not Been Changed

The Islam doctrine of *tabrif*, that the Scriptures have been corrupted, is not supported by the evidence. In fact, just the opposite is true. When the evidence is objectively looked at, it becomes clear that the Scriptures have been transmitted throughout history with amazing accuracy. People today can read the Bible with the confidence that nothing has been added or subtracted.

Therefore, the claims of Islam with respect to the Bible are simply untrue. The text of the Old Testament as well as the text of the New Testament has been transmitted with such accuracy that we can be confident we are reading the same thing as what was actually written.

5. The Gospel Of Barnabas Is A Fraud

The gospel of Barnabas, which attempts to give a version of the life and ministry of Jesus that differs from the New Testament, is a fraud. There is no evidence that it was written any earlier than the fourteenth or fifteenth century. It contradicts both the New Testament and the Quran!

It contradicts the New Testament in that it says Jesus was the forerunner to the Messiah who proclaimed the future coming of Muhammad. It also contradicts the Quran by saying Muhammad was the Messiah. Even the Quran acknowledges that Jesus was the Messiah.

6. Literary Beauty Does Not Prove Divine Inspiration

The idea that the Quran may be a literary masterpiece has nothing to do with establishing divine origin. The fact that a book may be a work of beauty does not mean that it is the inspired word of God. If the Quran is what Muslims claim that it is, then there must be some objective evidence to back up their claims. As we have seen, there is none.

7. The Quran Was Written Six Hundred Years After The Life Of Christ

Since the Quran was written some six hundred years after the life of Christ, it certainly is in no position to give authoritative statements about what did and what did not happen in the first century A.D.

No court of law in the world would accept the testimony of someone living six centuries after the fact who had no personal contact with the events he attempts to rewrite. In short, the Quran would be thrown out of court.

On the other hand, the writers of the New Testament were either eyewitnesses to the events they recorded, or they recorded firsthand testimony of others who were there. Their account of Jesus' life and ministry is the only one that should be taken seriously.

This sums up some of the basic facts about the Quran, the holy book of Islam. The facts make it plain that this work, whatever its ultimate source, is not the Word of God. While the Bible certainly gives evidence of this the Quran does not.

Summary To Question 5

What Is The Holy Book Of Islam (The Qur'an Or Koran)

The Quran is the holy book of Islam. Muslims believe it is the last revelation of Allah to humanity. While the Old and New Testament were divinely given, the teaching of the Quran is the final word on all spiritual matters. It is claimed that the Quran contains the recitations of Muhammad that Allah gave to him through the angel Gabriel.

These recitations were eventually collected by those who heard them or wrote them down. The end result, the Quran, is said to be the exact duplicate of a book that has been written in heaven in the Arabic language. Therefore, it is a perfect book. It cannot be altered in any fashion.

When confronted with contradictions between the Quran and the Hebrew or Christian Scripture, the Quran claims that these older revelations were corrupted by Jews and Christians. The final revelation, the Quran, is Allah's perfect word. Muslims sometimes cite a work "The Gospel of Barnabas" as giving a more accurate view of the life of Christ. This work supposedly has Jesus as a Muslim prophet.

Finally, the literary beauty of the Quran is often appealed to as a sign of its divine origin. The fact that the Quran in the original Arabic is a work of beauty demonstrates to Muslims that it must be the word of Allah. Indeed, it is argued that no human could compose such a literary masterpiece.

These are the claims Muslims make for the Quran. However, there is no evidence of any of this being true. Indeed, it is impossible to consider the Quran as the final word from the same God who has revealed Himself in the Scripture.

To begin with, there is no exact text of the Quran in existence. Manuscripts that do exist have variations between them. The "perfect text" does not exist. Consequently we do not have the exact words which "Allah" supposedly gave to us.

Furthermore, there is confusion in the Quran with exactly what the Bible does teach. It either misunderstands or misrepresents certain teachings in

the Scripture. This makes it clear that it cannot be the final word from the God of the Bible.

Add to this there is no evidence that it is divine. In contrast to the Bible, there are no objective miracles, and no fulfilled prophecy. Indeed, there is nothing in the Quran to indicate its divine status.

The Quran also is in error when it says the text of the Bible has been corrupted. The evidence clearly shows that it has not been. Thus, the Quran makes inaccurate claims about both Jews and Christians.

In addition, the Gospel of Barnabas, which supposedly gives a more accurate view of the life of Christ, is nothing but a fraud.

As far as its literary beauty is concerned, this has absolutely nothing to do with its ultimate origin. To be God's Word, there has to be more evidence than the work being a literary masterpiece. Supporting facts must be given to back up the claim of divine inspiration. As we have seen, there are no facts to do this.

Finally, there is the matter of the time of the composition of these books. The Quran was written some six hundred years after the life of Jesus Christ. Obviously, Muhammad was in no position to make authoritative statements about Jesus six centuries after the events took place. The primary source for the life of Jesus is the New Testament. It has evidence to support its divine nature. The Quran does not.

Consequently, the Quran should be rejected as a divinely revealed book.

Question 6

If The Quran Is Not The Word Of God Then What Was Its Actual Source?

There is no objective evidence that the Quran is what it claims for itself, and that Muslims assume it to be; the word of Allah. If this is the case, then an obvious question arises, “Where did all of these recitations come from? What was the actual source of the teachings and commandments that now make up the Quran?” We can list the possibilities as follows.

1. The Quran Was Completely Created By Muhammad

It can be argued that the recitations of Muhammad that make up the Quran were actually from his own imagination. He could be considered to be a religious genius who created all of these words in his own mind. It is also possible that he actually believed that he was God’s prophet.

This line of argumentation views Muhammad as a sincere person who truly believed that God, or Allah, was actually speaking to him. However, he was sincerely wrong.

2. The Quran Was Demonically Inspired

There are many who assume that the source of the recitations that came from Muhammad was demonic. The explanations concerning how he received his revelations, coupled with the description of how he spoke them out loud, have convinced a number of people that a demonic spirit had actually possessed him.

Indeed, when Muhammad first received these “revelations” he himself thought they might be demonically inspired. His first impression, therefore, was correct. Some demonic source was inspiring him.

3. Muhammad Used Stories That Were Already In Circulation

There is some evidence that Muhammad was merely repeating stories that he had already heard in his contacts with Christians and Jews. It is well-known that he had associations with Jews and Christians while he was a successful businessman. Religion was often discussed. Therefore, it is possible that he could have altered the stories he heard from them to produce his recitations.

For example, it has been long noted that many of the words of the Quran are very similar to what is found in Jewish and Christian apocryphal literature that was circulating at the time. This has caused a number of people to conclude that Muhammad merely borrowed from current stories when he concocted the words attributed to Allah.

Which of these assessments is correct? No one can be absolutely certain. Any of the three are theoretically possible. It could be some combination

of these three possibilities. We just do not know, and it does not seem likely that we can know.

Does It Really Matter?

In the end, it does not really matter whether Muhammad invented the recitations, whether they were demonically inspired, or whether he used material that was currently in circulation. The fact is that he taught a new religion, or faith, that is opposed to the God-given truth revealed in Holy Scripture.

Whatever the actual source of his revelations, it is not divinely inspired, and it puts the religion of Islam in the same category of all other so-called revelations that have a message contrary to Scripture. Therefore, it is to be classed with all the other sacred books that attempt to explain ultimate reality apart from what God has revealed to us.

When Jesus prayed to God the Father on the night of His betrayal, He said the following:

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17 NRSV).

His Word is the truth! It is not the teaching of Islam or the Quran or in any other so-called sacred work. The truth of God is found in the Bible alone.

Summary To Question 6 If The Quran Is Not The Word Of God, Then What Was Its Actual Source?

While the Quran claims to be the word of Allah, and Muslims accept this claim, there is no real evidence to support it. To the contrary, the Quran contradicts God's earlier revelations to humanity, the Old Testament and the New Testament.

This being the case, we can speculate as to where the information that Muhammad recited actually originated. Seemingly there are three basic possibilities.

First, it is possible that Muhammad sincerely believed that Allah was speaking to him, but the actual source of the words was his own imagination.

In other words, the Quran consists of the thoughts of this one man who invented this new religion apart from any divine word. While Muhammad could have truly thought that he was "the prophet" he was sincerely mistaken.

Others argue that there was a demonic origin to the Quran. This was Muhammad's original thought when he initially received these visions. Instead of being of divine origin, the words and visions Muhammad received were of satanic origin.

There is also the possibility that the words of the Quran were merely a repeating of the many Jewish and Christian apocryphal stories which were circulating at that time. Muhammad may have used these stories as the basis for his recitations which make up the Quran.

So which was it? Was it something that Muhammad simply made up himself? Was he demonically inspired to speak the recitations that are now the Quran? Or did he borrow from stories that were previously circulating? We do not really know the answer. It could be a combination of the three.

However, the damage has been done. The Quran presents a different revelation of God than the one found in Scripture and hence it has led untold numbers of people astray from God's truth. God's truth is found in Holy Scripture and in it alone. This is the only standard of divine truth that God has revealed to the human race. All others are mere pretenders. This includes the Quran.

Question 7

What Are The Essential Religious Practices Of Muslims? (The Five Pillars Of Islam)

The Islamic faith has developed an intricate code of religious observances that are the normal practices of most Muslims worldwide. These are known as the “five pillars.” They are derived from explicit commands in the Quran, the holy book of Islam, or the hadith, the traditions practiced by Muhammad and his followers. These religious observances are not voluntary. Indeed, they are obligatory for all Muslims.

We should also note that some Muslims add Jihad, or the struggle, as a sixth pillar.

We can simply state these five pillars as follows.

1. Confession Of Faith (Shahadah)

The first duty of a Muslim is to confess the following creed:

There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger

This confession of allegiance to Muhammad is of primary importance. In fact, this is how one becomes a Muslim.

2. Prayer (Salat)

Obedience to Allah is demonstrated by prayer. This occurs five times each day; morning, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night. There is no passage in the Quran where these five prayers are mentioned together.

The Quran, however, does say to establish regular prayers:

And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night: for those things that are good remove those that are evil (Surah 11:114).

There is another place where it commands regular prayers:

When you pass congregational prayers celebrate Allah’s praises, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides; but when you are free from danger, set up regular prayers: for such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times (Surah 4:103).

Muslims must always face toward the direction of Mecca when they pray. Prayer can take place at home for individual prayers or in a Mosque for community prayers. There is nothing specifically said in the Quran about this obligation. The requirement comes from the traditions about Muhammad’s behavior and practice that is recorded in the hadith.

Before a Muslim prays there are certain things that must precede it. The Quran gives the following command:

O you who believe! When you prepare for prayer wash your faces and your hands and arms to the elbows; rub your heads with water and wash your feet to the ankles (Surah 5:6).

These are the rules that govern Islamic prayer.

3. Almsgiving, Tithing (Zakat)

This, along with prayer, shows who is a true believer. Money is given to the poor, orphans, and travelers. Money is also given to support Islamic causes. Muslims must give at least 2.5 percent of their total wealth to the poor and needy.

4. Fasting (Sawm)

Fasting occurs during the holy month of Ramada which is the ninth month on the Muslim calendar. This is the same month Muhammad is said to have first received the revelation of the Quran from Allah through the angel Gabriel.

Muslims abstain from food and drink during the daylight hours. They may eat between sunrise and sunset. During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims are to refrain from food, water, and sex from sunrise to sunset.

5. Pilgrimage To Mecca (Hajj)

If at all possible, at least once in a lifetime Muslims are to travel to the holy city of Mecca. This is known as the Hajj. Once there, they are to engage in rituals of prayer and worship at the central shrine, the Kaaba. They are to circle it seven times and kiss it. Muslims believe there is power in this sacred stone. After their pilgrimage to Mecca, Muslims normally go to Medina, also in Saudi Arabia, to touch the grave of Muhammed to receive power.

Salvation Rests Upon Performance Of These Deeds

Muslims believe their eternal salvation rests upon their performance of these religious practices. Muslim buildings have representations of a pair of scales on their walls. This is to remind the faithful that salvation is based upon their good works outweighing their bad works on the scales of justice.

This idea is taken from the Quran. It says:

Then those whose balance [of good deeds] is heavy – They will attain salvation: But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in Hell they will abide (Surah 103:22,23).

The Muslim, therefore, will strive, to obey these regulations.

However, it must be stressed that salvation in Islam is not the same thing as salvation in Christianity. Islam does not believe in original sin. Therefore, it is not necessary to atone for our sins.

The death of Jesus Christ was not something that was essential in the plan of God according to Islam. Salvation is escaping the judgment of hell by following the commands of Allah. The emphasis is on doing rather than believing.

This sums up the essential religious practices which all true Muslims must follow.

Summary To Question 7

What Are The Essential Religious Practices Of Muslims? (The Five Pillars Of Islam)

The religious practices of Islam can be summed up by five pillars. These practices are not voluntary but rather are obligatory. Each Muslim must observe these five things. First and foremost is the confession of the true faith. One must state that Allah alone is God, and that Muhammad is his prophet.

Next is prayer. Prayer must take place five times a day. The prayer must be to Allah while the person is facing toward Mecca,

A third pillar consists of almsgiving or financially supporting Islam. Islamic leaders and Islamic causes must be underwritten or financially supported by faithful Muslims.

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is also a pillar of the faith. This means abstaining from food during the daylight hours for the entire month. Food can be eaten during the darkened time.

Finally, there is the Hajj or a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. Each Muslim is expected to make this pilgrimage once in their lifetime. They visit the sacred shrine and perform a number of religious rituals. This sums up the duties of the faithful Muslim.

For the Muslim, their salvation is based upon the performance of these deeds. If the good deeds outweigh the bad, then the Muslim will be granted access to the pleasures of heaven. If not, the person will be sent to the judgment of hell.

Consequently, in the end, the eternal fate of a Muslim is based upon their works. This is in contrast to the teaching of the New Testament. Our eternal salvation is not based upon anything which we do. Rather it is based upon whom we believe in or trust. If we trust Jesus Christ as the One who has taken away our sins, then we are given the “gift” of eternal life. We cannot earn it. Indeed, Christ has done it all. Our obligation is to believe in Him.

Question 8

What Do Muslims, Jews, And Christians Have In Common?

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have a number of things in common that are not shared by Eastern religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism. However, even within these things they have in common, we find significant differences as to what is believed. We can make the following observations.

1. Each Believe In Absolute Truth

Contrary to religious pluralists, who accept no such thing as absolute truth, these three religions all believe that such truth does indeed exist. There are absolute standards of right and wrong that have been divinely revealed by God. These are truths that must be obeyed because they have been supernaturally revealed.

However, all three religions see absolute truth in a different way. For one thing, each has a different source as to where ultimate truth can be found. For the Jews it is the Old Testament, for the Christians the Old and New Testament, and for Islam the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Quran.

Because each of these religions has a different source of authority, we find that each of these three religions has beliefs and practices that are contradictory to the other two. In other words, at least two out of the three must be wrong. Indeed, there is no way to reconcile them. Any attempt to reconcile them does not take their claims seriously.

2. Each Believe Only One True God Exists

Judaism, Islam, and Christianity are monotheistic religions; they believe only one true God exists. This is in contrast to religions that accept the existence of multiple gods or faiths that do not accept the idea that a personal God exists.

In addition, none of these three faiths argue for God's existence. Instead, they assume it to be true. The first verse of the Bible says:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1 KJV).

God's existence is assumed throughout Scripture.

The basic testimony of Islam is called the "Shahadah." The first part makes the following claim:

There is no god but God.

This is certainly a statement that Christians and Jews would affirm; there is no God but God. The difference is how Christians, Jews, and Muslims understand the identity of the one God.

The God Of The Old Testament Is Yahweh, Not Allah

The God of the Old Testament cannot be equated with Allah. To the contrary, He is Yahweh. This God of the Old Testament is a personal God that is deeply concerned with the well-being of humanity. Allah, the God of Islam is a different type of deity. He is aloof from humanity and not personally involved in the daily lives of people.

Christians Recognize God Is Trinity

Christians, as opposed to Judaism and Islam, recognize God as a Trinity. In accord with the Old Testament, the New Testament also recognizes that only one God exists. The New Testament, however, gives further revelation concerning the personal loving God that is revealed in the Old Testament.

The God of the Bible is a Trinity. There are three distinct persons, or centers of consciousness, in the Godhead. They are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Judaism does not accept this fact neither does Islam. Muslims insist that there is no distinction within the Godhead.

Therefore, Islam rejects Christianity and its teaching of the doctrine of Trinity. Muslims have incorrectly accused Christians as tritheists, believing in three gods.

Thus, Muslims assume Christians are guilty of the unpardonable sin of “shirk,” which is, attributing an associate to Allah. However, this point of view is a misunderstanding of what Christians believe. Christians plainly assert the unity of the one God who exists; we do not believe in three gods!

Yet, within the nature of this one God are three distinct persons. This is what the God of the Bible teaches about His own character or being. Christians are merely reflecting the biblical teaching upon the subject.

The One True God Has Similar Attributes And Abilities

The God that is revealed in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism has certain attributes and powers that are similar. God is the Creator. He is also all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present. Each of these three faiths accepts this as true of God.

Yet again, the differences between Islam and Judaism and Christianity outweigh the similarities. For example, Islam and Christianity would have a different understanding of these attributes. The God of Islam is not the loving and caring God that is revealed in both testaments.

Rather he is aloof and impersonal.

3. Each Believe That God Has Acted In History

These three religions all believe that the living God has acted in history. However, the emphasis is different.

In Judaism, it is the Exodus from Egypt when the Lord delivered His people from slavery. This was God's great act in history.

For Christianity it is the fact that God became human in the Person of Jesus Christ. This was God's greatest act in history.

The Bible says:

So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father (John 1:14 NLT).

The coming of Christ into the world was the entrance of God in human form to our planet. No historical act could be greater than this. This truth is denied by both Judaism and Islam.

Islam accepts certain historical figures from both Judaism and Christianity. Muslims believe Moses was a prophet of God who gave God's law. Jesus further revealed truth about God. For Islam, Allah was given his final word through the prophet Muhammad. Again, we see that there are huge differences in these three faiths.

4. Each Has Abraham As A Human Founder

Interestingly, all three of these religions trace their human beginnings back to one man, Abraham. The Bible traces the promises of God back to Abraham. We read in Genesis:

Then the LORD told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:1-3 NLT).

Islam also sees Abraham as their human founder. The fact that Abraham is held in such high regard by all three faiths fulfills what God promised him.

God told Abraham that He would make him famous or make his name "great." This has been literally fulfilled.

5. Each Has A Holy Scripture

Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have holy books. Yet the holy books of these three religions are all different.

In Judaism, the Holy Scripture is the Hebrew Bible. It consists of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. However, ultimate authority is not in Scripture alone but rather is found within the various laws and traditions that have been handed down that explain Scripture.

For Christianity, it is the Bible, consisting of both the Old and New Testaments. While the Hebrew Old Testament is seen as the Word of God, Christians believe that God has given fuller revelation in the New Testament which is also God's Word to humanity.

For Islam it's the Quran. While Muslims also claim to accept the Bible as God's Word the ultimate revelation of God is found in the Quran.

However, the way in which Quran functions in Islam is different from the way the Bible functions in the Christian faith.

Christian And Jewish Scriptures Can Be Translated: The Quran Cannot

For one thing, the Bible can be authoritatively translated into any human language. The Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek a few centuries before the time of Christ. The New Testament was translated into other languages at an early date. Christians and Jews have no problem with this.

However, the Quran cannot be authoritatively translated. Muslims believe that over a period of about 23 years, the Quran was supernaturally given to the prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel.

In addition, it was revealed in Arabic, the same language of the original Quran in heaven. This makes the Quran a unique book; an exact duplicate of one in heaven.

The Quran Is Supposedly Divine: The Bible Is Divine And Human

The fact that the Quran cannot be authoritatively translated points out another important difference between it and the Bible. Muslims see the Quran as a book that is divine only. There is no human element in it. Muslims view the Quran in a similar way as Christians see Jesus Christ; He exactly represents God.

The Bible says that He is the express image of God, the Word of God. The writer to the Hebrews said:

The Son reflects God's own glory, and everything about him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of his command. After he died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven (Hebrews 1:3 NLT).

Muslims believe the Quran contains the expressed words of God, no more, no less. This is why the Quran cannot be authoritatively translated. While it has been translated into languages other than Arabic, no translation carries divine authority.

However, the Bible is a product of the human and the divine. It is God's word written in the words of humans. God supervised the human authors of Scripture in a mysterious way to record His truth. On the other hand, Muslims believe the Quran was dictated word-for-word by Allah from heaven.

6. Each Sees A Purpose For History

These three religions all believe that history is going somewhere. In other words, it has a purpose. History had a beginning, and it will have an end.

While each of these religions believes in a divine future, the viewpoint as to what will happen is different in all three faiths. Christians believe Jesus Christ will return and set up His eternal kingdom as the rightful King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Islam and Judaism reject this claim. They have different ideas as to how history will end.

There Are More Differences Than Things In Common

While there are things in common between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, it is important to realize that they are not saying the same thing. Judaism, with the Old Testament, is incomplete. Islam teaches an entirely different God than Judaism or Christianity.

The three faiths do not reveal the same God. They cannot all be true at the same time. At least two of them must be wrong. This has to be understood.

Summary To Question 8

What Does Muslims Christians And Jews Have In Common?

There are a number of things that Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have in common. This includes the belief in absolute truth. Each of these religions accepts the fact that there is an absolute standard of right and wrong.

Yet each faith disagrees as to where this perfect standard can be found. In addition, all three faiths are monotheistic, they believe and teach that only one God exists.

However, they disagree on the identity of the one God. Christianity is Trinitarian while Islam and Judaism reject the idea of the Trinity. All three faiths believe that this one God has similar attributes and abilities. Again, the attributes that Islam assumes God possesses is not the same as Judaism or Christianity. They are not talking about the same God.

All three faiths believe that God has acted in history. However, each of these faiths sees Him doing different things. Judaism would accept God's

actions in the Old Testament, Christianity in both testaments, while Islam in both testaments plus the Quran.

What they do agree upon is the human founder: Abraham as the human founder. They all see him as the “father of the faithful.”

In addition, each has a sacred Scripture. Yet the sacred Scripture of each religion is different. The Jews have the Hebrews Scriptures; what Christians and Muslims call the Old Testament. Christians have the Old Testament and New Testament, and Muslims have the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Quran.

Each religion believes that history is going somewhere. Again, their particular view of where it is going differs.

When all the evidence is considered, it will be clear that these religions have more differences than things they have in common.

Consequently, these three faiths cannot all be true at the same time. At least two of them must be wrong in their claims.

Question 9

Is The God Of Islam The Same As The Biblical God?

There are those who assume that Allah, the God of Islam, is just another name for Yahweh or Jehovah, the God of the Bible. However, it is clear that the God of Islam is not the same God as revealed in Scripture. This can be seen in two distinct areas.

First, the God of the Bible and the God of Islam have different attributes or characteristics. Second, the God of Scripture is a Trinity while the God of Islam is not.

1. The God Of The Bible And The God Of Islam Have Different Attributes

While the Bible and the Quran attribute similar powers are attributed to Yahweh and Allah, they are certainly not the same God. This can be seen in a number of ways.

Allah Is Not A God Of Love Yahweh Is A God Of Love

Muslims recite ninety-nine names of God, going three times through a prayer strand with thirty-three beads on it. Christians can agree with Muslims on almost every one of these attributes of God. The fourth attribute is that He is the Holy One, and the forty-seventh is that He is “the Loving One.” However, holiness and love are not driving passions in many Muslims’ understanding of God.

This is seen in a contrast between the God of Scripture and the God of Islam. Islam emphasizes Allah’s absolute power and control. Muslims submit to its many rules.

Yet they cannot have any assurance whatsoever about their standing before God, that is not until Judgment Day. Islam teaches that God is that is aloof in his majestic glory. He is a God who is detached from all else.

In contrast to this, the Bible depicts God a personal being whose love and compassion toward humanity was shone in the coming of Jesus Christ. The loving God showed His love for this world by sending His Son.

For example, the Bible speaks of God’s love for the entire world. In the most famous verse of the Bible we read the following:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16 NKJV)

God’s love for the world was demonstrated in sending the Messiah, the Christ.

God is also specifically called “love:”

God is love (1 John 4:8 KJV).

The God of the Bible is a God of love.

Yahweh Never Lies, Does Allah Deceive?

It has been observed that in three different places the Quran seems to teach that Allah actually intentionally deceives people. They are as follows:

And they planned and Allah (also) planned and Allah is the best of planners (Surah 3:54)

Elsewhere it says:

And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they might confine you or slay you or drive you away; and they devised plans and Allah too had arranged a plan; and Allah is the best of planners (Surah 8:30).

We also read the following in the Quran:

And when we make people taste of mercy after an affliction touches them, lo! they devise plans against Our communication. Say: Allah is quicker to plan; surely Our messengers write down what you plan (Surah 10:21).

Note that the English translations of these verses use words like “plan,” or “the best planner” when speaking of Allah. However, it has been argued that the Arabic word actually means “deceives.”

If this is the case, then the Quran teaches that Allah is a God of deception.

This is in contrast to the God of the Bible who does not lie and who cannot lie. Paul wrote the following truth to Titus:

This truth gives them the confidence of eternal life, which God promised them before the world began--and he cannot lie (Titus 1:2 NLT).

God cannot, and does not, lie. This is not part of His nature.

It says in the Book of Hebrews we are told the same thing. Indeed, Scripture says that there are two unchangeable things about God, His promise, and His oath. Consequently, it is not possible for Him to lie:

So God has given us both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can take new courage, for we can hold on to his promise with confidence (Hebrews 6:18 NLT).

Again, the God of the Bible is the God of truth.

2. The God Of Islam And The God Of The Bible Have A Different Nature: Unitarianism Versus Trinitarianism

The Quran portrays a different god than that of Christianity. The first duty of a Muslim is to publicly recite the Shahadah.

It is as follows:

There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his apostle.

This statement of faith is primary for the Muslim. Allah alone is God. Within his nature there is only one divine person. Islam rejects the Trinity and the New Testament teaching that Jesus Christ is the eternal God. They consider Him only a prophet. The Quran says:

Jesus Christ, the son of Mary was no more than an apostle of God (Surah 19:92).

In another place, it says:

And behold, God will say; "O Jesus the Son of Mary! Did you say unto men, "Worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of God?" (Surah 5:119).

The Quran assumed that the Trinity consisted of God the Father, God the Son Jesus, and Jesus' mother Mariam (Mary).

In no uncertain terms, Islam rejects the Trinity. The Quran says:

They do blaspheme who say: God is one of three in a Trinity, for there is no God except One God (5:76).

The Quran, therefore, contains direct attacks against the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Quran itself declares the following:

Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah is the third (person) of the three; and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve (Surah 5:73).

The following statement could not be clearer; Allah does not have a son:

O followers of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak lies against Allah, but speak the truth; the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary is only an apostle of Allah and his Word which he communicated to Mary and a spirit from him; believe therefore in Allah and his apostles, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allah is only one God; far be It from his glory that he should have a

son, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is his, and Allah is sufficient for a Protector (Surah 4:171)

The Quran assumes that Christians believe in three gods. Of course, this is blasphemy against Allah the only God who exists.

The Christian Response: The Bible Teaches God Is A Trinity

The Bible teaches that there is one eternal God who has revealed Himself in three eternal Persons, or three centers of consciousness. They are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three Persons are the one God. This is the doctrine of the Trinity.

Unfortunately, there were some Christians who were teaching false ideas of the Trinity in Mecca. One such distortion of the Trinity claimed that God actually has a wife named Mary. God and Mary produced a child whom they named Jesus.

This is the sort of distortion of the doctrine of the Trinity that Muhammad was acquainted with. He, along with many others, concluded that Christians believed in three gods; “tri-theists.”

The Importance Of The Trinity

The importance of the Trinity doctrine cannot be overestimated. There are a number of reasons as to why this is so.

This is how God has explained Himself. God has revealed Himself in Scripture as a Trinity. Scripture teaches that the one God exists in three eternal Persons, or centers of consciousness. They are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is what the one true God has said about Himself. He is the only God who exists, and He exists as a Trinity. This is His revelation to us, His claim. We are obligated to believe it, no doubt it or question it.

The Trinity is an example of the statement “God is love.” For all eternity, there has been love between the three members of the Trinity. Consequently, God has never needed anything or anybody because there was love and communication among the different members of the Trinity.

The conclusion is clear: the god of Islam is not the same God as in Christianity. Therefore, the explanation of God, in at least one of these two faiths, must be wrong.

Either God is a Trinity, or He is not. Islam and Christianity cannot both be true at the same time.

Indeed, they do not believe in the same God.

Islam Demands Everyone Believe It Is The Same God

There is one final point which we need to emphasize. While it is obvious that Allah, the God of Islam is not the same Yahweh or Jehovah, the God that as revealed in the Bible, Muslims insist that it is so.

In fact, Islam not only demands that faithful Muslims believe this it also demands that Jews and Christians believe it also! This is consistent with their belief that the Quran is the divine revelation from Allah which supersedes the Bible.

Since Muslims acknowledge the Scriptures to be the Word of Allah they must, therefore, insist that the same God who has been revealed in the Old and New Testament is the same God as revealed in the Quran.

When the Bible and the Quran differ in their characterizations of God, it is the Quran which always provides the final word since it is Allah's later revelation to humanity.

Of course, Christians and Jews do not accept this line of argumentation since they do not believe the Quran to be the Word of God or Muhammad to be a prophet of God.

Consequently, the differences between the biblical view of God, and what the Quran teaches, are further evidence that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam cannot be harmonized.

Summary To Question 9 Is The God Of Islam The Same As The Biblical God?

Christianity and Islam each claim that there is only one God which exists. However, they do not believe in the same God. Indeed, the God of Christianity, as the Bible reveals, and the God of Islam, which the Quran speaks of, are entirely different.

For one thing, Islam believes and teaches about an impersonal God who does not love sinful humanity. He is not someone who can be known on a personal level.

This is in contrast to the God of the Bible who is a personal God. Moreover, the God of the Bible desires to have a personal relationship with each human being. These two conceptions of God could not be more different.

In addition, the nature of Allah, the God of Islam, is different that the God of the Bible. Allah is an absolute unity. In fact, Islam states that God cannot have a "son."

In contrast, the God of the Bible is a Trinity. He is a compound unity made up of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, at their very basic description of God the two religions are completely different.

Islam not only denies the Trinity, it has an inadequate understanding what the Bible teaches about this all-important subject.

Thus, it is impossible that the God of Islam and the God of Scripture are the same God. One of them does not exist. The evidence is clear that it is the God of Islam which has no genuine existence.

One final point that we should note is that Muslims insist that everyone accept the idea that the God of the Bible is the same God as they worship, Allah. Indeed, they demand that their followers, as well as Christians and Jews, acknowledge Allah as the one true God. This is the logical conclusion of believing that the Bible is the Word of God, but the Quran is a later revelation from the same God.

Therefore, the Quran would have to be consulted for the final word concerning the exact nature and characteristics of God.

Christians and Jews reject this claim. In fact, they insist that the differences between the biblical portrayal of God and the portrayal of Allah found in the Quran makes it evident to all that it is not the same God who is revealed in these different "Holy Books."

Somebody has an incorrect concept of God. The evidence leads us to believe that the Bible provides God's own description of Himself while the Quran gives a picture of a God who goes not exist.

Question 10

Why Do Muslims Accept The Authority Of The Gospel Of Barnabas Over The Four Gospels?

Islam accepts Jesus as the Messiah to the Jews but not to the entire world. In fact, it rejects the authority of the four gospels. Indeed, Islam does not believe the gospel accounts that say that Jesus died on a cross for the sins of the world. What it does accept as an accurate account of Jesus' life is a work known as the "Gospel of Barnabas."

What has caused this particular work to become accepted as the true account of Jesus rather than the four gospels? We can state the answer as follows.

What Is The Gospel Of Barnabas?

The Gospel of Barnabas is a document that claims to have been written by the New Testament character Barnabas. Muslims claim that this is the only written gospel that gives us authentic information about the life of Jesus Christ. They say that it was accepted by believers in Egypt as an authoritative gospel at an early date.

However, this work was lost to the world for a number of years and was suppressed by certain church authorities. It only came to light again in the 15th or 16th century.

Among other things, the Gospel of Barnabas says that Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah of the Jews. In addition, it claims that He did not die on the cross but rather Judas Iscariot was substituted in His place. This idea that Jesus was not crucified is almost universally believed by Muslims.

The Gospel of Barnabas is used as an authoritative source of Jesus' life and ministry in place of the four gospels. Should we believe it instead of the testimony of the four gospels?

Why Muslims Accept This Work

The reasons as to why Muslims would embrace this work instead of the four gospels are not hard to find. As the four gospels now stand, they refute the testimony of Muhammad and Islam. Jesus was the virgin-born Son of God who has existed for all eternity. He is the living God who became a human being. He lived a sinless life while here upon the earth.

Jesus was crucified for the sins of the world on Calvary's cross and rose from the dead three days later. He then ascended into heaven as the glorified and risen Christ. Islam denies each of these truths that are so clearly taught in the four gospels.

Consequently, if Islam is going to accept Jesus as some sort of prophet yet deny what the New Testament has to say about Him, then they must put

something in its place. The Gospel of Barnabas fits their needs. Yet the evidence says otherwise.

Problems With The Gospel Of Barnabas

While Muslims generally believe that the Gospel of Barnabas is an authentic account of the life and ministry of Jesus, all the evidence says otherwise. Simply put, the Gospel of Barnabas is a fraud. It is not an early, authentic account of the life of Jesus. This can be seen in a number of ways. They include the following.

All Scholars Conclude It Is A Fraud

The view of scholarship is unanimous when it comes to the authenticity of the Gospel of Barnabas; it is a fraud. The evidence is that this so-called gospel of Barnabas was composed in the 15th or 16th century and not by the first century character of that name. There is no evidence that it existed before this time.

For one thing, no one in the ancient church cites the work. There is nothing found in the writings of Christians, or non-Christians, that give any testimony to such a work existing. The work is not referred to by anyone. We would expect someone to cite this work had it existed. Yet, we find nothing.

While a Gospel of Barnabas is placed in a fifth century list of written works, the contents of this gospel are not stated. Thus, we have no way of knowing that this is the same work that presently bears its name.

In addition, the Gospel of Barnabas finds itself on this list of works that were rejected by all Christians as being authentic. So whatever this Gospel of Barnabas may have been, it was rejected by all as being an inauthentic account of the life of Christ.

Furthermore, there is total silence among the early Muslim writers as to the existence of such an alternative gospel to the authoritative four gospels. While there are a number of defenses of Islam, written from the seventh through the fourteenth century, none of them mention such a work.

Since the Gospel of Barnabas contains an Islamic explanation of Jesus' non-death on the cross, it is remarkable that it is never mentioned in any of the written works defending Islam against Christianity. It is first mentioned by Muslim writers in the 15th century. The only reason for this earlier silence is that it did not exist at this time.

The idea that it was somehow suppressed by religious authorities also does not make any sense. There were many gospels that were circulating among believers as well as unbelievers. They were well-known by those in the church and were rejected as authentic. However, there was no attempt to suppress the fact of their existence. To the contrary, they were listed so that believers could be aware of them.

The Earliest Manuscript Is From The Middle Ages

There is something else that all sides agree upon; the earliest manuscript of the Gospel of Barnabas which still exists is a 15th or 16th century Italian manuscript. Everyone recognizes this fact. There is no physical evidence that such a work existed before this time. None.

It Is Admitted To Be A Fraud By Some Muslim Scholars

There are some Muslim scholars who also realize that the evidence is unmistakable that the work is a fraud. They admit the fraudulent nature of the work. However, these are in the minority. Most Islamic scholars reject the obvious conclusion; the work is fraudulent.

It Is Not The Same As The Letter Of Barnabas Or The Acts Of Barnabas

The Gospel of Barnabas is often confused with two other ancient works that have the name “Barnabas” in the title. These are the letter, or epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas, and the Acts of Barnabas. Each of these works is entirely different from the so-called Gospel of Barnabas.

The letter of Pseudo-Barnabas was written in the first or second century. However, the contents of this work are known, and it is not the same as the Gospel of Barnabas. Furthermore, all agree that the writer was not the Barnabas of the New Testament.

The so-called Acts of Barnabas was written in the 5th century A.D. It is an apocryphal work. Interestingly, this writing mentions the Gospel according to Matthew but makes no mention of the Gospel of Barnabas. If such a work as the Gospel of Barnabas existed, we would expect this work that bears the name of Barnabas would at least mention it. Yet, instead it mentions the Gospel of Matthew as being used by Barnabas. This is another indication that this work was unknown in the 5th century.

There Are Internal Evidences That Show Its Late Date

When one reads the Gospel of Barnabas its fraudulent nature becomes apparent from a number of internal references. A few examples can be given.

For one thing, the setting for the Gospel of Barnabas is not first century Palestine, but rather life in Western Europe in medieval times. According to the Gospel of Barnabas, it quotes Jesus as saying that the year of Jubilee was observed every one hundred years.

However, the year of Jubilee was observed every fifty years until a papal declaration was issued in the year 1343. At that time, the Pope changed the time of observation from fifty years to one hundred years. The fact that the Gospel of Barnabas says the observation of Jubilees was every one hundred years demonstrates that it was written after this papal declaration.

Add to this the fact that this fraudulent work refers to wooden wine casks, something that was used in medieval Europe, rather than the wineskins that were employed in biblical times. This is another sign of its late composition.

When Scripture is cited in the Gospel of Barnabas, it is cited from the Latin Vulgate translation, the official Roman Catholic translation made in the fourth century. This is three hundred years after this book was supposedly written. This is a further example of the lateness of its composition. The list of problems goes on and on.

There Are Historical And Geographical Errors In This Work

There are historical and geographical errors in this work that make it impossible to have been composed by someone who lived in first century Palestine. It speaks of Jesus sailing to Nazareth. Yet Nazareth is not located on any body of water. Pontius Pilate is said to have been governor of Judea when Jesus was born.

However, Pilate did not actually assume that position until a few years before Jesus' death. No one who was familiar with the events of Jesus' life and ministry could make such obvious mistakes.

These types of obvious mistakes are not found in the four gospels. The writers of the gospels knew the geography of first-century Palestine as well as who served in which political office. They could do this because they were living at that time.

It Contradicts The Eyewitness Testimony Of The Four Gospels

Finally, and most devastating, is that this work is contradicted by the four independent works which do give us authentic information about the life of Jesus Christ, the four gospels. The four gospels are supported by early manuscript evidence.

Ancient testimony as to the authorship of these works is unanimous. Matthew was written by one of Jesus' disciples, a tax collector or customs official. Mark actually transcribed the spoken messages of Simon Peter who was one of Jesus leading disciples. Luke records eyewitness testimony to the life and ministry of Jesus and John wrote as one who was an eyewitness to the main events in the life and ministry of Jesus.

They all tell the same basic story as to what Jesus said and did. Their testimony refutes the fraudulent Gospel of Barnabas that Jesus did not die on Calvary's cross or that He did not come back from the dead. They also testify, as does the Quran, that Jesus was promised Messiah.

Furthermore, all of the historical evidence that exists, whether from believers and unbelievers, testifies to the historical accuracy of the gospel accounts. Everything we know about it encourages us to trust it. Its accuracy has been confirmed time and time again.

This is in contrast to the fraudulent Gospel of Barnabas. It provides no basis whatsoever for being any type of authoritative work on the life and ministry of Jesus. Consequently, any unbiased objective person will reject the testimony of this fraudulent work and accept the testimony of those who were actually there when the events transpired.

Summary To Question 10

Why Do Muslims Accept The Authority Of The Gospel Of Barnabas Over The Four Gospels?

The Islamic faith has a different view of Jesus Christ than is found in the New Testament. While they say they accept the testimony of the four gospels, in reality, they do not. They give more weight to a work called the Gospel of Barnabas. Among other things, this work claims that Jesus did not die upon the cross and that He did not claim to be the Messiah.

Muslims accept this work as being authentic because it fits their view of Jesus. If they accepted the four gospels at face value, they would have to believe that Jesus is the Messiah of not only Israel but also the Savior of the entire world. They would also have to confess Him as Lord and God. This is something they are not willing to die.

Yet, they do accept Him as some sort of prophet. The Gospel of Barnabas allows them to understand Jesus as an actual prophet without Him being whom the New Testament says that He is, God the Son.

While this work claims to be an authentic account of the life of Jesus from one who was there, all of the evidence speaks otherwise. It is obviously a fraudulent work written in Western Europe in the 15th or 16th century. There are a number of reasons as to why we can come to this conclusion.

Not once, do we find Christian, unbeliever, or Muslim citing this work before the 15th century. There is no evidence that it existed before this time.

The author does not know the geography or the customs of first century Palestine. He makes obvious mistakes in the area of geography and history. This shows that he did not live at that particular time in history.

This work is in direct contrast with the four gospels which give us a firsthand account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The evidence is that the writers of the four gospels were either eyewitnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus, or recorded eyewitness testimony.

Their testimony must be dealt with. It claims that Jesus Christ is God the Son and that the eternal destiny of each one of us depends upon how we view Him. This is the accurate portrayal of Jesus. The Gospel of Barnabas is not.

Question 11

How Does Islam View The Person Of Jesus Christ?

Islam accepts Jesus Christ as a prophet. Indeed, He is one of their prophets. We can summarize the Muslim view of Jesus Christ as follows.

1. Jesus Is An Important Figure In The Quran

To begin with, the Quran treats Jesus as a very important figure. Indeed, His name is found in ninety different verses scattered in fifteen Surahs in the Quran. Therefore, He is prominent in Islam's holy book.

2. Islam Gives Jesus A Number Of Honorable Titles

The Quran gives him a greater number of honorable titles. In fact, He is given more titles than any other figure in the past. For example, the Quran calls Jesus such things as a 'sign,' 'witness,' a 'mercy,' an 'example,' and 'one who is upright.'

There is more. The Quran gives Jesus the titles Messiah, Son of Mary, Messenger, Prophet, Servant, Word of God, and a Spirit from God. This give further evidence of His prominence.

3. Islam Teaches Jesus Was Born Of The Virgin Mary Without A Human Father

According to Islam, Jesus is the only prophet to have been born of a virgin. It says that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary without a human father. The Quran says:

Behold! the angels said: "O Mary! God sends you the glad tiding, through a word from Him, his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter and (shall be) of those nearest to God. And he shall speak to men in the cradle and maturity and be one of the righteous." She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has ever touched me?" An angel answered: "Even so; God creates what He wills; when he wills a thing to be, he but says unto it, 'BE'- and it is. And God will teach him the Book and wisdom, the (original) Torah and the Gospel and (will make him) an apostle to the children of Israel, (with this message): " 'I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the shape of bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's leave; and I heal those born blind and the lepers and revive the dead by God's leave; and I shall let you know what you may eat and what you should store up in you houses. Surely in that is a sign for you if you are believers. And (I have come) to confirm the truth of whatever still remains of the Torah that was revealed before, and make lawful to you some of the things which (before) were forbidden unto you. And I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord; so fear your

God and obey me.” Truly, God is my Lord and your Lord; Then worship Him (alone); this is a straight way” (Surah 3:45–51)

According to Islam, Jesus had a unique birth.

4. Jesus Was A Created Being

While Jesus, in Islam, was born of a virgin, they also insist that He is a created being, not God the Son. The Quran says:

The similitude of Jesus before Allah is that of Adam. He created him from the dust, then said to him, “Be” and he was (Surah 3:59).

This verse has some ambiguity to it. Muslims says it refers to Allah creating Jesus. However, the “he” could refer to Adam whom the Scripture says was created from the dust.

5. He Was A Miracle Worker By Allah’s Permission

According to Islam, Jesus did indeed perform miracles while He was here upon the earth. The Quran says His miracles were possible because Allah allowed it. The Quran says:

“O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My favor unto you and unto your mother; how I strengthened you with the holy Spirit, so that you speak unto mankind in the cradle as in maturity; and how I taught you the Scripture and Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and how you did shape of clay as it were the likeness of a bird by My permission, and didst blow upon it and it was a bird by My permission, and you did heal him who was born blind and the leper by My permission; and how you did raise the dead, by My permission” (Surah 5:110).

Jesus is different from Muhammad who had no miracles attributed to him. Yet Jesus had to have Allah’s permission to work these miracles.

6. Jesus Was A Prophet But Not The Son Of God

Islam says that Jesus was a prophet of God but not the Son of God. In fact, according to Islam, He was a lesser prophet than Muhammad. Islam sees Muhammad as the last and greatest of the prophets. He is the “seal of the prophets.” The Quran says:

“They blasphemed who said: “Verily, God is the Christ, son of Mary.” - seeing that the Christ (himself) said: “O children of Israel! Worship God (alone), my Lord and your Lord.” Verily, whoever ascribes divinity to any being beside God, unto him will God deny paradise; and such evildoers will have no one to help them! They blasphemed who said: “Behold, God is one of three in a trinity” - whereas there is no god except One God. If they do not desist from what they say (in blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them. Will they not, then, turn towards God in repentance, and ask His forgiveness? For God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. The

Christ, son of Mary, was but an apostle; there were apostles who preceded him; and his mother was one who never deviated from the truth; and they both ate food (like other mortals). Behold how clear We make these messages unto them; and then behold how perverted are their minds! Say: "Would you worship, beside God, aught that has no power either to harm or to benefit you - when God alone is All-Hearing, All-Knowing?" (Quran 5:72-76).

The distinction is clearly made between Jesus and God. According to this passage, it is blasphemy to equate Jesus with God in any sense.

Elsewhere it says:

"And when God said, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say unto men, 'Take me and my mother as gods, apart from God?'" He said, 'To You be glory! It is not mine to say what I have no right to. If I indeed said it, You knew it, knowing what is within my soul, and I do not know what is within Your soul; You know the things unseen. I only said to them what You did command me: "Serve God, my Lord and your Lord." And I was a witness over them, while I remained among them; but when You did take me to Yourself the Watcher over them; You are the witness of everything' (Quran 5:116, 117).

Islam, as well as the Quran, makes it very clear that Jesus was not God's Son, but rather only a prophet of Allah.

7. Jesus Was An Islamic Prophet

Muslims believe Jesus was an Islamic prophet. He was a faithful Muslim, or follower of Allah. He is in a long line of prophets that are mentioned in Scripture. This includes Abraham, Moses, and David. Islam considers all of them to be Islamic prophets. Yet, Jesus is no more than a prophet. Indeed, He is not God the Son according to Islam. Their position is clear.

The Christian Response To Islam's View Of Jesus Christ

While the Quran gives a certain respect to Jesus, it denies the fundamental essentials of the historical Christian faith with regard to the Person of Jesus Christ. In so doing, Islam rejects his identity as the Savior and Lord of humanity. The Christian response is as follows.

1. Jesus Was The Virgin Born Son Of God

Islam teaches that Jesus was born without a human father. Although it sounds like they believe in the virgin birth of Jesus that is recorded in the New Testament they do not. Jesus' miraculous conception was a result of the Spirit of God, the Third Person of the Trinity, overshadowing Mary. The Bible explains it this way:

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of

King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin." The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she's already in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:26-37 NLT).

Jesus' conception was due to the miraculous work of God the Holy Spirit. The result was that God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became a human being. This is the biblical doctrine of the virgin conception, or virgin birth.

It is not the same doctrine that the Muslims hold of the conception of Jesus. This is important to understand. Islam does not believe in the biblical virgin birth of Jesus!

2. He Was A Miracle Worker By Yahweh's, Or Jehovah's Power

The Bible says that Jesus performed miracles by the power of the God of Scripture. His name is Yahweh, or Jehovah. It is not the same God, Allah, in whom Muslims believe. We read the following in the Gospel of Luke:

One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus (Luke 5:17 NLT).

The healing power of Jesus Christ was granted by the Lord, the God of Scripture, not Allah the God of Islam.

3. Jesus Is More Than A Prophet: He Is God The Son

Scripture teaches that Jesus is God the Son. He has the same nature or essence as God the Father.

The Bible says the following about Jesus' relationship to God:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1 KJV).

While Jesus was fully human, He was more than a human being. Indeed, He is Almighty God who became human. God the Father and God the Son have the same essence, but they are not the same Person.

4. Jesus' Teachings Are Not Islamic

The teachings of Islam, which came six centuries after the time of Christ, conflict with the teachings of Jesus in every major area. There is no way to reconcile the Quran and the four gospels.

Jesus made it clear where His teachings came from:

Jesus answered them, "My teaching isn't Mine but is from the One who sent Me" (John 7:16 CSB).

The source of His teaching was God the Father, not Islam. Therefore, since the teachings of Islam do not originate from God the Father, they should be rejected.

In sum, though Islam may give some respect to Jesus it is nowhere near what He deserves. He is not a mere prophet, and He is certainly not a lesser prophet than Muhammad. He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, God the Son!

Summary To Question 11

How Does Islam View The Person Of Jesus Christ?

Jesus is an important character in the Quran. In fact, here are a number of honorable titles given to Him. The Quran says that He was born of the Virgin Mary without a human father. However, they see Him as a created being.

Jesus is also viewed as a great prophet. He was supposedly the forerunner of Muhammad who was the last and greatest of the prophets. Islam soundly rejects the idea that Jesus is the Son of God. They consider it blasphemy to equate Jesus with Allah in any manner.

Clearly, the Bible and the Quran are at odds concerning the Person of Jesus.

Although it sounds like Islam believes in the virgin birth of Christ such is not the case. Scripture says that Jesus was the virgin born Son of God. He was conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. He was born the sinless Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He has been God for all eternity but became a human being at a certain point in history.

This is the biblical doctrine of the virgin birth. Islam does not accept this to be true. Furthermore, Jesus worked miracles by the power of Yahweh, not Allah. It is the God of the Old Testament who empowered Jesus, not the God of Islam.

While He was a prophet, He was more than a mere prophet; He was God Himself who became a human being. He cannot and should not be compared to any human prophet, especially Muhammad. Indeed, Christians do not even consider Muhammad a prophet of God.

Finally, the teachings of Jesus are not Islamic. In fact, they are contrary to just about everything for which Islam stands. There is no way to reconcile the view of Jesus as given in the Quran and the New Testament description of Him.

The correct portrait of Jesus is the one in which the eyewitnesses give. This can only be found in the New Testament, not the Quran.

Question 12

How Does Islam Understand The Death And Resurrection Of Jesus?

The central message of the New Testament is the death and resurrection of Jesus, the promised Messiah. Three days after His death on the cross, Jesus was alive forevermore.

While Muslims accept Jesus Christ as a great prophet, they do not believe the New Testament account about His death on the cross or His resurrection from the dead. Their view can be summed up as follows.

1. Jesus Did Not Die On The Cross

The Quran teaches that Jesus did not die on the cross. Muslims do not believe that Allah would allow one of their prophets to be killed in the manner Jesus was killed. Instead of dying on the cross, He was protected from a death of crucifixion. The Quran says:

And for their unbelief, and their uttering against Mary a mighty calumny, and for their saying, 'We slew the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of God'...yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them. Those who are at variance concerning him surely are in doubt regarding him, they have no knowledge of him, except the following of surmise; and they did not slay him of certainty...no indeed; God raised him up to Him; God is Almighty, All-Wise. There is not one of the People of the Book but will assuredly believe in him before his death, and on the Resurrection Day, he will be a witness against them (Quran 4:156–159).

It was not Jesus that was crucified, but only a likeness of Him. According to Islam, it was Judas or Simon the Cyrene, the man who carried Jesus' cross, which was actually crucified in His place. It was not Jesus that died on the cross. This is something which Islam insists upon.

2. Jesus Did Not Come Back From The Dead

Since, according to the Quran, and Muslim belief, that Jesus did not die on the cross, He certainly did not come back from the dead three days later. Muslims do not accept the New Testament teaching of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the key teachings of the New Testament, the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world and His resurrection three days later, are rejected by Islam.

The Christian Response

The Christian response to Islamic teachings concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is as follows.

1. Jesus Died On A Cross For The Sins Of The World

The Bible not only says that it was Jesus who died on the cross and not Simon or Judas, it says that He died on a cross for the sins of the world. In other words, He died in our place so that we could live.

Paul wrote the following to the Corinthians:

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19-21 NLT).

Therefore, not only did Jesus die, His death was of the utmost importance for the world. He died in our place so that we would not have to suffer for our own sins.

2. Jesus Was Raised Bodily From The Dead Three Days Later

Jesus did not stay dead. Three days later, He was raised from the dead. The Bible says that some forty days later He ascended to heaven after his death and resurrection. It also proclaims that He will return to earth as Savior and Judge. This is the gospel, or good news which believers are to preach.

The Apostle Paul explained the contents of the gospel, or good news, in this manner as he wrote to the Corinthians:

Brothers and sisters, I'm making known to you the Good News which I already told you, which you received, and on which your faith is based. In addition, you are saved by this Good News if you hold on to the doctrine I taught you, unless you believed it without thinking it over. I passed on to you the most important points of doctrine that I had received: Christ died to take away our sins as the Scriptures predicted. He was placed in a tomb. He was brought back to life on the third day as the Scriptures predicted (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 God's Word).

Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Without it there is no Christianity. It is the Christian message.

There Are Huge Differences Between Christianity And Islam

Here again we have another example of the differences between Christianity and Islam. Islam rejects the clear teaching of the New Testament with respect to Jesus' death and resurrection. Someone has to be wrong. Either Jesus was crucified in the city of Jerusalem and then raised bodily from the dead, as Christianity teaches, or He was not, as Islam teaches. There is no possibility to compromise between these two positions.

The firsthand evidence supports the Christian explanation. Indeed, it was the testimony of the eyewitnesses that Jesus was crucified and buried. Yet they saw Him alive three days later as He was raised bodily from the dead. The appearances of the risen Christ changed the lives of Jesus' disciples, and of Saul of Tarsus. This message of the resurrection has changed lives for the last two thousand years and it is still changing lives today. Why? Because it is true!

Summary To Question 12
How Does Islam Understand The Death
And Resurrection Of Jesus?

The cornerstone of the Christian faith is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, this is the gospel message; Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.

Muslims deny the death of Jesus Christ was for the sins of the world. In fact, they deny that Jesus, who they believe was one of their prophets, was actually crucified. Islam teaches that it either Judas, or Simon of Cyrene, and not Jesus who actually died on the cross. While they are unclear as to whom it was that actually died on the cross, they know it was not Jesus. They do not believe that a prophet of God would be killed in such a terrible way.

Since they do not believe He was crucified they reject the idea that came back from the dead three days later. A resurrection is not necessary if Jesus did not die. Therefore, Islam denies two of the main truths of the Christian faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament, however, is clear on this matter. Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world. It was not somebody else who died in His place. Indeed, He suffered and died in the place of sinful humanity. Three days later, He came back from the dead. This is the testimony of the eyewitnesses. They had seen Him dead, they had seen Him buried, and they had seen Him alive again. This is the central message of the New Testament; a message Islam rejects.

The lines are clearly drawn. Either Jesus Christ died on a cross, or He did not. Either He came back from the dead three days later or He did not. Christianity says He did to both of those questions while Islam says He did not to both of them. Someone is not telling the truth.

Question 13

How Does A Person Achieve Salvation In Islam?

The major beliefs of Christianity are at odds with the central beliefs of Islam. One of their main differences concerns the doctrine of salvation. The Bible says that a person is saved from their sins by trusting in Jesus Christ alone. Islam, on the other hand, teaches a different way to deal with the sin problem. We can make the following comparisons.

1. Salvation From Sin Is Not Necessary In Islam

It is important to realize that Islam does not believe it is necessary for a person to be saved from their sins. This is one of the main differences between it and Christianity. There are a number of reasons as to why this is so.

2. Islam Does Not Believe In Original Sin

To begin with, Islam does not accept the doctrine of original sin. Though humans are imperfect, they are not fallen through original sin. Islam teaches that Adam and Eve did not directly disobey God but rather forgot His commandment not to eat from the forbidden tree. After Adam sinned, God promised him “guidance,” and assured him he had “nothing to fear” provided he followed that guidance

3. The Fall Occurred In Heaven, Not Earth

According to Islam, the fall occurred not on earth in the Garden of Eden, but actually in heaven. There was no earthly fall of humanity, no original sin.

4. Jesus Death On The Cross Was Not Necessary For Salvation

Because humanity is not in a fallen, sinful state, there was no need for a Savior. Therefore, there it was not necessary for Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the world. Consequently, Islam rejects the idea that Jesus death had any significance whatsoever. On the contrary, they do not believe that it was Jesus who died upon the cross!

5. Salvation, As Islam Understands It, Is Based Upon A Person’s Good Works Outweighing Their Bad

Since Muslims do not recognize original sin, they see no need for salvation in the Christian sense. There is nothing to be saved from. Consequently, if there was no original sin, there is no need for a Savior. Salvation, in Islam, is based upon the deeds of a person. The Quran says:

They whose balances shall be heavy shall be blest. But they whose balances shall be light, they shall lose their soul, abiding in hell forever (Surah 13:102-104).

In Islam, people are saved by the will of Allah through obedience to his law, the Shariah. Consequently, in Islam, a person is to live a good life, pleasing God in all that they do. They are to submit to him and follow his commandments. Religion, to the Muslim, does not mean salvation from sin.

Instead, it means following the right path, or the Shariah which mapped out by Islamic law. Salvation in Islam is not understood in the same way as salvation in Christianity.

6. The Unpardonable Sin (Shirk) Is Saying Allah Has Equals

There is such a thing as an unpardonable sin in Islam. It is called shirk. This is a denial of the unity of Allah. Specifically, God cannot be three and one at the same time. Therefore, anyone who holds to the doctrine of the Trinity commits the unpardonable sin.

7. There Is No Assurance Of Salvation In This Life

Islam cannot offer anyone assurance of salvation in this life. It is only at the Judgment Day that people will discover whether they have been accepted by Allah. This of course, means that nobody can have any real security in this life as to where they will be in the next.

8. There Is No Forgiveness For Personal Sin In Islam

The Quran does not have much to say about the topic of forgiveness. Forgiveness is something that Allah gives as he wishes. The Quran says:

(As for) those who disbelieve, they shall have a severe punishment, and (as for) those who believe and do good, they shall have forgiveness and a great reward (Surah 35:7).

There is no offer of forgiveness based upon repentance. The Quran says elsewhere:

Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin (Surah 4:48).

Forgiveness is not something that is offered to everyone in Islam. Only those whom Allah is pleased to forgive can be forgiven.

The Christian Response

Christians have the following response to the beliefs of Islam.

1. The Bible Teaches The Doctrine Or Original Sin

Contrary to Islam, the Bible teaches the doctrine of original sin. Adam and Eve were actual characters who were placed in a perfect environment. Their sin caused separation between them and God. This sinful nature has been passed on to all of us. Each human being, born with their sin, is born separated from God.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Rome explaining this important truth. He stated:

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned (Romans 5:12 RSV).

The reality of original sin is clearly taught in the Bible. Indeed, the rebellion of Adam of Eve brought sin into the world which was passed on to all of us.

2. The Bible Teaches Original Sin Occurred Here On The Earth

Scripture says that original sin is a reality. Moreover, it took place here upon the earth in the Garden of Eden:

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had created (Genesis 2:8 NLT).

The Bible teaches that Eden was an actual place on the newly created earth. Scripture gives known geographical references to identify the site. It is always treated in the Bible as a definite place which was populated with two real human beings: Adam and Eve.

It was in this garden where Adam and Eve sinned against God. Their sin separated humanity from God. This brought about the need for a Savior.

3. Salvation From Sin Is Absolutely Necessary

The Bible could not be clearer on the matter. Salvation from sin is absolutely necessary. Every human being is born with a sin nature that causes us to disobey God. By nature, we are sinners. We need to be saved from the penalty of sin.

The Bible says that all of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory or His perfect standard. Paul wrote the following to the Romans:

Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23 RSV)

This includes everyone. Paul also wrote about sin and its wages:

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23 NRSV)

The fact that all of us are in a sinful state shows that we need a Savior.

4. The Bible Says Good Works Cannot Please God

All of us have fallen short of God's perfect standard. This means that all of us, no matter who we are, need a Savior. Our good works cannot achieve salvation for us. This is taught in both testaments. We read about what the Lord thinks of our good works from the prophet Isaiah:

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away (Isaiah 64:6 NIV).

The New Living Translation says:

We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away (Isaiah 64:6 NLT).

Paul wrote the following to Titus:

He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5 NLT).

The Bible says that our good works cannot please God. We need a Savior. Jesus Christ is the one who died to save us from our sins. We must accept the forgiveness He offers by faith because we cannot earn our salvation. The Bible is clear on this issue.

Islam rejects the salvation that is offered by Jesus Christ. They do not believe that He is the one way to the one God because they do not believe salvation from sin is necessary.

5. The Unpardonable Sin Is Rejecting Jesus

Sin can be forgiven. In fact, there is only sin God will not forgive is the rejection of Jesus Christ. Jesus said:

I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he (John 8:24 NRSV).

Unless a person believes in Jesus Christ, there is no hope for them whatsoever. We read in John's Gospel how the world is divided into two classes of people, the saved and the lost:

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him (John 3:36 NASB).

Those who have believed in Christ are saved while those who reject Him are lost. There is no third category.

6. One Can Know That They Have Eternal Life

Believers can also know whether or not they have eternal life.

In his first letter to the believers, John wrote:

So whoever has God's Son has life; whoever does not have his Son does not have life. I write this to you who believe in the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life (1 John 5:12,13 NLT).

There is no hope for those who reject Jesus as their Savior. None whatsoever.

As is true with all other crucial beliefs, Islam and Christianity are at odds. Therefore, both of them cannot be true at the same time. Somebody must have the wrong doctrine about salvation and the need for it.

Summary To Question 13

How Does A Person Achieve Salvation In Islam?

In Islam, salvation from sin is not necessary. This is because they deny the doctrine of original sin. Indeed, they do not believe that the sin of Adam and Eve affected the entire human race. In Islam, humans are not sinners in the biblical sense. Thus, they do not believe that humanity is in need of a Savior. Salvation, therefore, has a different meaning to the Muslim than to the Christian. It is not the salvation from sins but rather the need to submit to the will of Allah. This is how they understand the meaning of salvation.

Islam's way of salvation from sin consists of works/righteousness. It is living a life that is in total submission to Allah and his commandments. Then, at judgment day, if the good works have outweighed the bad, then Allah will accept the person into heaven.

The Bible teaches something totally different. Original sin is a reality. The Bible teaches that God created two actual people, Adam and Eve, and placed them in a real place, Eden. At that time, He gave them specific commandments and told them, the consequences for disobedience. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and to bring sin into our world.

Humanity now has a fallen nature due to sin. Because our sin has separated us from God, we need a Savior. Since God demands a standard of perfection, we can do absolutely nothing to please Him. This is the reason Jesus Christ came to earth, to save us from our sins. All of our good works are not sufficient to save ourselves.

Therefore, Christianity stresses right belief, not so much right works. While it is important for a believer to live a life like Christ, this has nothing to do with their standing before God. A person is saved by believing in Jesus.

Thus, Islam and Christianity have completely different views of what it means to be saved. Consequently, one of these religions must have the wrong belief on this subject.

Question 14

Is The God Of Islam Personally Knowable?

The God of the Bible is a Person. Not only can we know certain facts about Him, He can be personally known by those who believe in Him. What about the God of Islam? Can he be personally known?

The Islamic View Of God

There are a number of observations that we can make about Islam's view of God. We can sum them up in the following manner.

1. Allah Is Impersonal

The God of Islam is not knowable in this sense that a person can have a relationship with him. Allah is a distant and impersonal God. Thus, Muslims do not have a relationship with Allah as Christians have with Yahweh or Jehovah, the God of the Bible.

2. Allah Is In Complete Control Of Every Detail: Humans Have No Choice

In Islam, Allah has complete power over every detail of a person's life. He is all-powerful in such a way that people are not able get close to him. Allah with his own will makes his own decisions. He does what he wants, and no one can question this.

Allah wills one to go to heaven and another to go to hell. Allah wills one to live and another to die. Allah wills who in the womb will live and who will die. His control is over everything.

3. Allah Does Not Love Those Who Are Not His

There is nothing in the teachings of Islam about Allah's love for sinners. Allah loves only those who obey him.

In fact, the love of Allah is not a central theme in the Quran.

4. Allah Is Merciful In The Sense That He Provides For Humanity Not That He Withholds Punishment For Sin

At the beginning of every Surah of the Quran, all 114, with the exception of Surah 9, are the words, "In the name of God, the gracious, the merciful." Hence, the mercy of Allah is stressed in the Quran.

To Muslims, the concept of mercy is not Allah's refusing to give people the punishment they deserve, but rather the fact that he provides humanity with such things as rain and food.

The Christian Response

Christianity responds to Islam's doctrine of God in the following manner.

1. God Is Personal

The God of the Bible is a personal God. He has the attributes, or characteristics, of a person. His personal nature is something which is stressed in Scripture.

In addition, He takes a personal interest in the lives of each believer. Rather than being a God who is "far off," and doesn't care, the God of the Bible is intimately concerned about the lives of those who are His. Peter wrote:

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7 NIV).

He cares for us.

While the God of the Bible is to be respected, He is not to be trifled with. He is an awesome God, a majestic God. Though He is awesome and majestic the God of the Bible has made a way in which humans can know Him in a personal way. Jesus called those who believe in Him, His "friends."

We read in John's gospel:

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you (John 15:15 RSV)

No such concept exists in Islam. There is nothing in Islam where Allah would consider his followers as his friends. Thus, we find huge contrasts between Christianity and Islam when it comes to the relational aspect of God. In Christianity, there is a relationship while in Islam, there is none.

2. Humans Have Legitimate Choice

Contrary to Islam, humans can actually choose or reject God. The Bible teaches that we humans can, and do, make free choices. In the Book of Joshua we read about this:

And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed" (Joshua 24:15-17 NKJV).

The people of the nation of Israel were given a choice as to whom they would serve. When given a choice in this instance, they chose to serve the Lord. This theme is found throughout the Bible. God gives humans a choice and holds them responsible for the choices they make.

3. God Loves Sinful Humanity

Contrary to Islam, the Bible teaches that God does indeed love sinners.

Paul wrote to the Romans and explained how Jesus Christ died for us while we were still sinful:

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8 ESV).

The New Living Translations puts it this way:

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, no one is likely to die for a good person, though someone might be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:6-8 NLT).

Jesus Christ loves lost sinners and He died for lost sinners. This is in contrast to Allah, who does not love sinful humanity.

4. God Shows Mercy To Sinners

There is also a difference when it comes to showing mercy. God of the Bible shows His mercy in that He offers sinners something we do not deserve, salvation from sin. Paul wrote to Titus about the wonderful mercy which the Lord offers:

He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5 NLT).

Paul wrote about the richness and mercy that God has showed to lost sinner. He put it this way in his letter to the Ephesians:

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms--all because we are one with Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6 NLT).

The God of the Bible is rich in mercy. The God of Islam is not merciful in the same sense as the God who revealed Himself in the New Testament

through Jesus Christ. Although Allah is called “the merciful,” He is not the merciful God of the Bible. These two conceptions of God could not be more different.

In sum, we again find that the Christian position and the Islamic position are completely at odds. The God of the Bible is knowable; the God of Islam is not.

Summary To Question 14 Is The God Of Islam Personally Knowable?

The God of Islam is not the same God as found in Scripture. Indeed, their differences are legion.

When we compare the two, we find that Allah is an impersonal God who has predestined everything that occurs. He is called “the merciful,” not in the sense that he refuses to punish those who deserve it, but rather in the sense that he provides for the existence of humanity. He cannot be approached on a personal level by humans. He is an impersonal, aloof God who is to be feared, not loved.

This is in contrast to the God of Scripture. He is a personal God who has given people actual choice. Each of us is responsible for the choices that we make, we are not puppets.

Furthermore, He is intimately involved in every aspect of our lives. The God of Scripture cares for us and thus we care for Him.

In addition, the God of Christianity has shown mercy to sinful humanity. The Bible stresses the fact of the great mercy of God. Jesus Christ took upon Himself the judgment we all deserve. Indeed, He has died as a substitute for each of us so that we do not receive the punishment which we so richly deserve. This act shows the depth of mercy that God has shown to the human race.

The love of God is another theme found throughout the Bible. Though the human race has rebelled against Him, and is in a sinful state. Yet, He still loves us. We respond to His love by showing our love for Him.

While the God of the Bible is an awesome God who deserves the utmost respect, He can also be personally known. We begin a relationship with Him the moment we believe. This relationship is developed throughout our lives. This is in direct contrast to the teachings of Islam of a God who is unknowable to humans.

Therefore, when we compare to the concept of God in Islam and Christianity, we again find that they could not be more diverse.

Question 15

What Does Islam Believe About Resurrection, Judgment, And The Afterlife? (Heaven And Hell)

Like Christians, Muslims believe in the afterlife. They have a concept of a final judgment, heaven for true believers as well as hell for unbelievers. However, unlike Christians, they see these things differently. We can make the following observations.

The Islamic View Of The Afterlife

The Islamic doctrine of the afterlife can be summarized as follows.

1. There Will Be A Final Judgment

According to Islam, there will be a final judgment of all of humanity. This is a major emphasis in Islam. The Quran says:

And when the stars darken, And when the mountains are made to pass away, And when the camels are left untended, And when the wild animals are made to go forth, And when the seas are set on fire, And when souls are united, And when the female infant buried alive is asked For what sin she was killed. And when the books are spread, And when the heaven has its covering removed, And when the hell is kindled up, And when the garden is brought nigh, Every soul shall (then) know what it has prepared (Surah 81:2-14).

Every human being will participate in this judgment. There will be no exceptions.

2. The Islamic View Of Heaven

Islam's view of heaven emphasizes sensual pleasures. The Quran says:

Other faces on that day shall be happy, Well-pleased because of their striving, in a lofty garden, wherein you shall not hear vain talk. Therein is a fountain flowing, therein are thrones raised high, and drinking-cups ready placed, and cushions set in a row, and carpets spread out (Surah 88:8-16).

The stress is on the pleasures humans receive in the next life, not in this one. This is a major emphasis in Islam.

3. The Islamic View Of Hell

Islam teaches there is a place of judgment for those who do not accept the true faith. It is a place of fiery punishment. We read the following in the Quran:

And what will make you realize what hell is? It leaves naught nor does it spare aught. It scorches the mortal (Surah 74:27-29).

Hell is seen as a place of fiery torment.

This summarizes some of the basic beliefs that Islam holds about the afterlife.

What Will Happen To People Of Other Faiths?

As is true with many things in Islamic teaching, there is vagueness as to exactly what it is saying about the afterlife. For example, it is not apparent what will have to those who belong to other faiths. The eternal destiny of Jews and Christians is not clearly stated.

While the Quran says that Jews and Christians are enemies of Islam because they deny Muhammad is a prophet, some believe the Quran to teach that anyone whose good deeds outweigh their bad deeds will be allowed into heaven. This means Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, etc. will be heaven bound if their good works outweigh the bad. Uncertainty among Muslims remains on this issue.

The Christian Response To Islamic Belief

Christianity also has its own teachings on the afterlife. The Christian response to the Islamic view of judgments, heaven and hell is as follows.

1. Jesus Christ Will Return To The Earth

The Bible says that Jesus will return to the earth and set up His eternal kingdom. After Jesus ascended into heaven, two angels said the following words to His disciples who were watching what had transpired:

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10-11 ESV).

The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus will return in the same manner as He left this world as well as at the same place, the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Christ has promised to return. The Book of Revelation says He will return in the following manner:

Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen (Revelation 1:7 NRSV).

There will be no doubt about His return. Every eye will see Him.

2. The World Will Be Judged By Jesus

There will be a judgment of humanity by Jesus Christ, not Allah. In a parable by Jesus about the end times, He had the king saying the following to those who were evil:

Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matthew 25:41 RSV).

Jesus Christ will return to the world to judge the nations. He will separate the believers from the unbelievers. The evil ones, the cursed, will be sent away into everlasting punishment.

3. The Christian View Of Heaven

The biblical view of heaven does not emphasize the sensual pleasures that are found in Islam. Heaven consists of worship of the true and living God. There is no emphasis of the sensual pleasures as found in the Quran. The emphasis is that we will be with the living God. He will be our focus. The Bible says:

Don't be troubled. Believe in God, and believe in me. My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not true, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you? If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again. Then I will bring you into my presence so that you will be where I am (John 14:1-3 God's Word)

This is what heaven is all about, being with Jesus Christ. Paul wrote of believers being with Christ forevermore:

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. So comfort and encourage each other with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 NLT).

The promise of heaven is the promise of being with Jesus.

4. The Christian View Of Hell

The Christian view of hell, or final judgment, is different from that of Islam. The people that go to hell, or the lake of fire, are those who have rejected Jesus Christ, not Allah.

Jesus said to the religious leaders of His day that they would die in their sins if they did not accept Him for whom He claimed to be:

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins (John 8:24 NKJV)

It is the rejection of Him that will cause their eternal suffering.

The Bible speaks of this final judgment as follows:

Then the Devil, who betrayed them, was thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and I saw the one who was sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books, according to what they had done. The sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the grave gave up the dead in them. They were all judged according to their deeds. And death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death - the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10 NLT).

This passage explains the destiny of those who reject Jesus Christ as their Savior. It is a terrible fate which awaits them, but it is a fate of their own doing, their own choice.

Thus, according to the Bible, hell is for those who reject the God of the Bible, not the God of Islam. In addition, the Bible does not dwell on the nature of the torments of those suffering in hell as we find in Islam. It merely says that those in hell, or the lake of fire, will be punished.

5. There Is No Doubt As To The Fate Of Those Who Reject Jesus

While Islam has no clear teaching about what will happen to those of other religions in the next world the same does not hold true for Christianity. What a person does with Jesus Christ will decide their eternal destiny. Good works have nothing to do with it. Belief, or non-belief, in Jesus Christ will determine where they will spend eternity. There is no ambiguity here.

Again, we find numerous differences between Christianity and Islam with respect to the afterlife. It is impossible for both of them to be true at the same time. Somebody has to have the wrong idea of what awaits us after death.

Summary To Question 15 What Does Islam Believe About Resurrection, Judgment, And The Afterlife? (Heaven And Hell)

Islam, like Christianity, has a view of final judgment, heaven and hell. However, it is quite unlike the Christian view. Indeed, there are a number of obvious differences. In Islam, judgment will occur on "the last day." The works of all humans will be put on a balance scale. The ones whose good works outweigh the bad will be allowed into heaven. Heaven in Islam

consists of sensual pleasures. The emphasis is what human beings, particularly males, can benefit. On the other hand, hell is a place of fiery torment for those whose good works do not match their evil works. It is based upon ones performance.

Islam is unclear as to what will happen to those of other religions. The Quran is vague on this issue. Some feel it teaches that all Jews and Christians will go to hell because of their rejection of Muhammad as the prophet, while others contend all good people will end up in heaven. The matter has not been resolved.

In Christianity, there is no such problem. Judgment will be based upon how one views the Person of Jesus Christ. Upon His return, Jesus will judge the nations. Those who have believed in Him will go to heaven, while those who reject His message will go to hell. Our good works have nothing to do with our final destiny. It is belief or unbelief in Him that will determine our destiny. Nothing else matters.

Heaven is described as being with Christ. It is in His presence where the believer finds his or her reward. Hell is described as a place of conscious punishment where unbelievers are separated from God. It is a place of everlasting conscious suffering, an awful place to be. Therefore, a close examination of the views of Islam and Christianity, with respect to the afterlife, shows a wide difference between them. As is true with all of the other major beliefs, both of them cannot be true at the same time. Either Islam or Christianity is wrong.

Question 16

Is Muhammad A Genuine Prophet Of God?

At the heart of Islam is “the prophet” Muhammad. It is claimed that the living God, the only God, Allah, spoke to him in a unique way. The final revelation to humanity was given to this “prophet.” He, therefore, is the last and greatest of the prophets. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that we examine his claims.

The Claims Of Islam

Islam makes a number of claims about the prophet Muhammad. They include the following.

1. Muhammad Claimed To Receive Direct Revelation From Allah

The claim of Islam is that Muhammad received direct revelation from Allah. He was the chosen prophet to bring the message of Allah to the world. Muslims believe this is more amazing since Muhammad could not read or write. His life is the example for all Muslims to follow.

2. Muslims Are Not Mohammedans; They Do Not Worship Muhammad

While Muhammad has a special place in the hearts of Muslims, they recognize that he is only a man. Sometime Muslims are wrongly referred to as Mohammedans. This gives the impression they worship Muhammad. But this is not true. They worship Allah. Muhammad is their prophet who points people to Allah.

3. Muhammad’s Coming Is Foretold In Scripture

Muslims believe that the coming of Muhammad was foretold in both the Old and the New Testament. The references usually cited are as follows.

4. The Prophet Who Is To Come (Deuteronomy 18)

In the Old Testament, Moses wrote about a prophet who was to come. Scripture predicts the following:

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account (Deuteronomy 18:18-19 NIV)

Muslims believe this refers to Muhammad. Thus, his coming is predicted.

5. He Is The Paraclete (John 14:26; 16:12).

Jesus said that God the Father would send “another Counselor” after He left this world. John records his saying the following:

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (John 14:26 RSV)

Elsewhere Jesus spoke further of this person. We read:

Oh, there is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future (John 16:12,13 NLT).

Muslims believe Jesus was talking not about the Holy Spirit but about Muhammad. The Greek word, *paraklaytos*, which is translated “Counselor” is said to refer to Muhammad. Therefore, Jesus predicted the coming of this “prophet.”

6. Muhammad Is A Greater Prophet Than Jesus

While Jesus is accepted in Islam as a former prophet, he is beneath Muhammad and has no supreme part to play in the future. Muhammad is the last and greatest of the prophets. Therefore, since his words are the latest revelation from God, they should be accepted as the final authority. Nothing supersedes his words.

This basically sums up how the Muslims view Muhammad.

The Christian Response

The Christian response to the claims of Islam, with respect to Muhammad, is as follows.

Why Should Anyone Believe Muhammad's Claims?

The first point that is raised is the obvious question, “Why should anyone believe the claims of Muhammad?” The mere making of a claim does not make it true. There has to be some reason to believe the claims that are recorded by him and about him.

Yet, Muhammad offered no evidence apart from his own claims that Allah, or God, spoke to him. This is not enough to cause us to believe.

Furthermore, Muhammad claimed to be the last and greatest of the prophets. This being the case, the standard of proof we should expect to see should be very high.

It should not be lower than any of the prophets of Holy Scripture which went before him. This includes Jesus. Muhammad should demonstrate that he was greater than Jesus. Yet the proof is just not there.

However, there are many reasons why we should not believe his claims. They can be summarized as follows.

There Are No Miraculous Elements In Islam

Islam contains no miraculous elements as we find in the Bible. There is nothing in the Quran that would have us believe any supernatural hand was behind Muhammad. Indeed, there are no genuine miracles attributed to him.

This is in contrast to the Bible that contains numerous accounts of the miraculous. These accounts were written by people who were eyewitnesses to the events, such as the apostles of Jesus. They were not merely telling us stories. Peter wrote:

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain (2 Peter 1:16-18 ESV).

Peter makes it clear that those who lived with Jesus during His public ministry saw His miracles firsthand. They were actual witnesses to the events. They are not passing down to us something that someone else told them. Indeed, they saw it with their own eyes.

In addition, Peter also clearly states that they knew the difference between mythology and fact. The miracle stories about Jesus were factual, they were not myths.

John wrote about the eyewitness testimony the disciples provided:

The Word of life existed from the beginning. We have heard it. We have seen it. We observed and touched it. This life was revealed to us. We have seen it, and we testify about it. We are reporting to you about this eternal life that was in the presence of the Father and was revealed to us. This is the life we have seen and heard. We are reporting about it to you also so that you, too, can have a relationship with us. Our relationship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-3 God’s Word)

According to John, the disciples saw what Jesus did, heard what He had said, and have actually touched Him with their hands. In other words, Jesus was a real person who lived at a definite time in history who performed genuine miracles. No mythology here.

Thus, in the life of Christ we have objective miracles which could be authenticated by those living at the time. In Islam, we have nothing.

There Is No Fulfilled Prophecy In Islam

While the Bible, in both testaments, records prophecies that have been fulfilled, such is not the case in Islam. This is strange since Islam says that the Quran is allegedly the final revelation from God or Allah. They admit that the previous revelations, the Old and New Testament, were divinely given.

However, in each of these testaments we have specific prophecies that have been given and have been miraculously fulfilled. Why, then, do we not find this occurring in the Quran?

On the other hand, we can document numerous prophecies that Jesus Himself made and that have been literally fulfilled. If Muhammad was a greater prophet than Jesus, then we should expect to find him making at least as many predictions about the future as Jesus that have been fulfilled.

Yet we find none. This is another indication of the status of Muhammad. He is not the prophet which Islam makes him out to be.

Muhammad's Teachings Contradict Scripture

There is something else. The teachings of Muhammad contradict the Scripture in numerous places. This is hardly consistent with the claim that he is the last and greatest of the prophets.

The Bible has strong things to say about those who prophesy falsely in the name of the Lord.

Jesus Himself gave the following warning:

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? (Matthew 7:15-16 ESV).

The warnings in Scripture make it clear. God's prophets always tell the truth while false prophets are liars and should not be trusted. Muhammad is a false prophet.

His Coming Is Not Foretold In Scripture

The passages used by Muslims to foretell the coming of Muhammad have nothing to do with him. Deuteronomy 18 was speaking of Jesus, not Muhammad. He was the Prophet that Moses spoke about.

Furthermore, the prophet who is to come is going to be one of their own, someone from the chosen nation of Israel. Jesus had the correct ancestry, but Muhammad did not, he was not a Jew.

There is something else we must consider. The passage in Deuteronomy warns against people like Muhammad. Indeed, strong words are said against those who prophesy falsely in the name of the Lord. We are told that we are not to be afraid of them.

The Lord has said:

I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf. But any prophet who claims to give a message from another god or who falsely claims to speak for me must die (Deuteronomy 18:19-20 NLT).

Muhammad fits into this category. He was a false prophet.

Furthermore, the passages in John's gospel with reference to the "Paraclete" or "Counselor" refer to the Holy Spirit.

This was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus referred to His coming as "the promise of the Father."

Shortly before He ascended into heaven, Jesus told His disciples:

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:4-5 ESV)

The fulfillment of this promise is recorded in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. It states that the following occurred:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance (Acts 2:1-4 NASB).

It is clear from the Scripture that Jesus was speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit. It has absolutely nothing to do with the coming of Muhammad.

Jesus Is Greater Than All The Prophets: He Is God The Son

Finally, there is no real comparison between Jesus Christ and any other prophet. According to Scripture, Jesus is God the Son, Second Person of the Holy Trinity. As Almighty God who became a human being.

Consequently, it is blasphemous to compare Him to any human being. This is especially true of Muhammad who clearly shows himself to be a false prophet.

The Influence Of Jesus Has Been Greater Than That Of Muhammad

There is one more thing which we should mention. Jesus Christ has had a greater influence in the world than has Muhammad. Indeed, almost every major religion has felt the need to include Jesus as some sort of prophet, as does Islam. Jesus is seen as an “enlightened one” or some type of prophet. In other words, they give Him some status.

Yet apart from Islam, there is no other major religion which gives Muhammad any similar status. Indeed, apart from Islam, no major religion feels the need to give him any standing whatsoever.

While this, by itself, does not prove that Jesus is superior to Muhammad, it does make it plain that Muhammad is certainly not the “last and greatest of the prophets” with more influence than Jesus.

In fact, on a worldwide basis, Muhammad does not have near the respect as does Jesus. Indeed, the Person of Jesus Christ transcends all boundaries. It seems that everyone recognizes Him as someone special. The same cannot be said for Muhammad.

Therefore, when the evidence is examined, we find no basis to believe the claims that Muhammad was “the last and greatest” of the prophets, or for that matter, a prophet of God.

No matter what his motives may have been, he is in the long line of false prophets Scripture warns us about.

Summary To Question 16 Is Muhammad A Genuine Prophet Of God?

According to Islam, Muhammad is the last and the greatest of the prophets. He is the one chosen by Allah to bring the final revelation to humanity. Muslims believe his coming is foretold in both testaments.

However, the evidence is clear that Muhammad is not God’s prophet. There is no supernatural evidence for his claims His teaching contradicts the Scripture; his coming is not foretold in Scripture.

Finally, to compare Muhammad, or any other human being to Jesus, is blasphemous. Jesus is the eternal God who became a human being. He cannot be compared to any human being; particularly a false prophet like Muhammad.

Question 17

What Is Jihad Or Holy War? (Violence In Islam)

One term that has been identified with Islam that has become popular in the West is “jihad.” What exactly is meant by this term? It has been equated with violence as well as with terrorism. Is this something that all Muslims are commanded to practice? If so, then under what circumstances are Muslims ordered to be violent?

Jihad Defined

Jihad is defined as “struggle.” This can be either by “the word” or by “the sword.” Often this struggle has been a violent one. We will look at violence in the Quran, the Hadith, and in the biography of Muhammad to get an idea of how jihad has been part of Islam from the beginning.

Violence In The Quran

The Quran has a number of passages that either encourage or command its followers to be violent. Some of them are as follows.

The Idea Of Jihad: In The Quran: The Command To Fight

Jihad sometimes demands defense of Muslim territory by military aggression. The Quran says:

O you who believe! what is the matter with you, that, when you are asked to go forth in the cause of Allah, you cling heavily to the earth? Do you prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the Hereafter. Unless you go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty, and put others in your place; but Him you would not harm in the least. For Allah has power over all things. Unless you go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty, and put others in your place; but Him you would not harm in the least. For Allah has power over all things (Surah 9:38–39).

Elsewhere it promises paradise to those who are killed while participating in Jihad:

As for those who are slain in the cause of God, He will not allow their works to perish...He will admit them to the Paradise He has made known to them (Surah 47:8)

In Islam, war is the last resort. It is only waged to establish supremacy of Allah when every other argument has failed.

The following verses in the Quran show that Islam is in a state of perpetual struggle against the non-Muslims. It reads as follows:

Let those who would exchange the life of this world for the hereafter, fight for the cause of God; whether he dies or triumphs, We shall richly reward him. ... The true believers fight for the cause of God, but the infidels fight for the devil. Fight then against the friends of Satan (Surah 4:74,76).

Notice the true believers are fighting for Allah while the infidels are fighting for the devil. The contrast is clear. Islam represents the only God who exists while all others are fighting for Satan.

The Quran also says that those who fight for the cause are greater in the eyes of Allah than those who stay at home. We read:

The believers who stay at home—apart from those that suffer a grave impediment—are not the equals of those who fight for the cause of God with their goods and their persons. God has given those that fight with their goods and their persons a higher rank than those who stay at home (Surah 4:95,96).

In another Surah, we read about the penalty due those who fight against Islam, they will be put to death. It says:

Those that make war against God and His apostle and spread disorder in the land shall be put to death or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, or be banished from the land. They shall be held up to shame in this world and sternly punished in the hereafter: except those that repent before you reduce them (Surah 5:34,35).

Those who oppose Islam will be put to shame in the hereafter.

In a very clear statement, we read about the need for fighting:

Make war on them until idolatry shall cease and God's religion shall reign supreme (Surah 8:39).

War against the enemies of Allah is certainly sanctioned by the Quran.

Later, in it says in the same Surah:

Prophet, rouse the faithful to arms. If there are twenty steadfast men among you, they shall vanquish two hundred; and if there are a hundred, they shall rout a thousand unbelievers, for they are devoid of understanding (Surah 8:65).

Obviously, the Quran contains a number of verses supporting the idea of making war on its enemies. The enemies of Islam must be destroyed.

An Offer Of Peace, Then War

Under Islamic teaching, before Islam can make war against the infidel with the blessings of Allah, the unbelievers, or infidels, must first be offered an opportunity to submit to the true faith, Islam. In fact, the Quran tells the

faithful what should be their attitude at the end of this sacred feast of Ramadan:

So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush (Quran, Surah 9.5)

In other words, Islam is telling the infidels to make peace with us now, or eventually we will have to kill you! This is the teaching of the Quran on the subject of jihad.

The Practice Of Jihad

We also find jihad practiced in history. When Muhammad was uniting the various tribes of Arabia, his followers were called upon to fight. Those who were defeated had a choice. They could either accept Islam or die. Therefore, the idea of forced conversion has historical precedent in Islam.

There Is Violence In The Hadith

The teaching of jihad or violent struggle is not merely something theoretical. We also find violence connected with Muhammad, which is documented in the hadith, the oral traditions of Islam which were later put into writing. The most authoritative collection of the hadith is that of Bukhari. Its authority is only second to the Quran. In these traditions, we find Muhammad encouraging such things as the killing of people who left the Islamic faith.

Indeed, he also gave his blessing about attacking a certain camp of infidels at night even though the women and children may be killed. These are not isolated references. It is clear that Muhammad had no problem killing anyone who did not accept the faith he proclaimed. Capital punishment was also given to those who left the faith. Insulting the prophet, whether by a Jew or Muslim, also called for the death sentence. Muhammad was not shy about using violence to achieve his goals.

There Is Violence In Muhammad's Biography

The earliest biographies of Muhammad were written by Muslims who were sympathetic to him and Islam. They testify to the violent way in which he acted toward those who were outside of the faith. This is consistent with what we know of Muhammad from the Quran and the hadith.

Conclusion On Violence In Islam

From its beginning, Islam has been a violent religion. As we have noted, the Quran has a number of commands about dealing violently with those who are unbelievers. Muhammad practiced what he preached. Indeed, he conquered his enemies by the sword. Those who did not believe his message were executed. The authoritative collections of sayings in the hadith also document his violent tendencies toward unbelievers, toward

those who leave the faith, and toward those who insult him. His biography tells the same violent story.

Thus, from the three earliest and most authoritative sources of Islam we find violence taught and practiced. These examples are not exceptions to the rule as some modern-day Muslims would like us to believe.

Therefore, we should not think it strange when people commit violent acts in the name of Islam. They are merely following the example and the teaching of the prophet. While this type of behavior may be condemned by the majority of Muslims, it is certainly consistent with what the faith has taught and practiced from its outset. Islam is certainly not a religion of peace though many Muslims are peaceful.

The Christian Response To Jihad

What a contrast we find between the teachings and practice of Islam and the teachings of Jesus Christ with respect to violence. Christians respond to the idea of jihad, or violent struggle, in the following ways.

1. We Are To Love Our Enemies

To begin with, the Bible teaches us to love our enemies, not harm them. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said the following to His disciples:

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44 NASB).

This is in complete contrast with Islam and its God who commands his followers to kill their enemies. Jesus told us to love those who hate us.

2. Conversion Cannot Be Forced

One of the main truths we find in the New Testament is that Christian conversion cannot be forced. The gospel, or good news, about Jesus Christ was preached by the early Christians to the unbelievers, not forced upon anyone.

In fact, Jesus Himself told us to walk away, or leave, those who reject the message. We read the following words of Jesus:

And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet (Matthew 10:14 NKJV).

There was no physical punishment, or even the threat of physical punishment, for those who rejected the message of Jesus. Jesus compared listening to His words to opening a door that He is knocking on. He said:

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me (Revelation 3:20 RSV).

While this is written to believers, the principle is still the same. Jesus does not force Himself into the life of anyone. He must be invited in. In Christianity, there is no such thing as a forced conversion.

Paul wrote:

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved (Romans 10:9,10 NIV).

Forced conversion is contrary to everything Jesus taught or stood for. A person either willingly accepts Christ or they willingly reject Him.

Again, we find the opposite being taught in the Quran. Indeed, if an unbeliever, or infidel, rejects Islam the Quran commands the faithful to, "fight against them until them submit." If they continue to reject the message of Islam, then they are put to death.

3. Jihad Is Not Comparable To The Crusades

Unhappily, many people have been killed in the "name of Christ." Thus, the Islamic idea of Jihad is often compared to the crusades in Christian history. The unbelievers were killed for not accepting the new religion.

However, these comparisons are not valid. The idea of the Crusades was contrary to the teachings of Christianity. Jesus Christ never taught to His followers to spread His Word by means of the sword.

However, the "prophet" Muhammad is the one who led the first jihad for Muslims. Consequently, there is no comparison between the two.

4. God Is The One Who Will Take Vengeance On Our Enemies

The Bible says that God is the One who takes vengeance. Paul wrote to the Romans about who should mete out ultimate justice:

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Romans 12:19 RSV).

It is not for Christians to seek revenge. This is something which the Lord alone does.

Therefore, Islam and Christianity have a completely different view of this issue of violence. Islam has been a violent religion because its founder practiced violence. In Christianity, violence was practiced toward its founder. Indeed, Christ suffered a violent death.

**5. There Is No Eternal Reward In Christianity
For Killing Ones Enemies**

In Islam, it is taught that there is eternal reward for those who kill their enemies. This is jihad. It must be stressed that jihad is purely an Islamic concept. Indeed, there is no identical belief in either Christianity or Judaism which offers special spiritual benefits to those who die in combat with its enemies. As a matter of fact, there is no doctrine whatsoever of rewards for religious or spiritual combat.

In the Old Testament, we read of the nation Israel going to war with their enemies. However, this is to protect and defend the land which God gave them; it was not to extend their borders beyond that limited territory. There was no idea or plan to force their religion on the neighboring nations through conquest. This is not how their religion was to expand.

Islam, on the other hand, is attempting worldwide conquest. If necessary, it will be through force. This is completely at odds with Christianity. The Bible teaches that conversion is not accomplished through military force but rather through the work of God the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals. The Bible-believing Christian does not threaten potential converts with physical harm if they reject the gospel of Christ.

Again, we find the opposite being taught in the Quran. Indeed, if an unbeliever, or infidel, rejects Islam the Quran commands the faithful to, “fight against them until they submit.” If they continue to reject the message of Islam, then they are put to death.

In sum, there is complete contrast to the idea of conversion in Christianity and Islam. Indeed, they could not be more different.

**Summary To Question 17
What Is Jihad Or Holy War? (Violence In Islam)**

Islam has a concept of Jihad, or holy war. The idea is that if infidels will not listen to reason, then as a last resort, Muslims must resort to Jihad or holy war to convert them. Muhammad himself forced people to convert by means of the sword. This is consistent with the commands set down in the Quran, the holy book of Islam.

The practice of violence is also documented in the authoritative traditions of Islam, the hadith. According to this authoritative Islamic source, Muhammad encouraged violence even toward the women and children of unbelievers. The references are not isolated.

The earliest biographies that were written about Muhammad also come from Islamic sources. They are considered as accurate accounts of his deeds. These biographies chronicle the violence that was a continuing part of his life and ministry until the very end.

This consistent history of violence explains why certain people today will commit terrorist acts in the name of Islam. They believe they are following

in the footsteps of the prophet towards those who are oppressing Muslims. This is in contrast to Jesus Christ. Instead of killing our enemies, He said that we are to love them.

The Bible portrays Jesus as knocking on the door of our hearts, not trying to force Himself in. Indeed, as we search the New Testament, we find no such thing as forced conversions. If a person believes in Jesus Christ, it is because they choose to believe not because they are forced to believe. Those who are Christians are those who have willingly trusted Christ.

Furthermore, Jihad cannot be compared to the Crusades. Muhammad set the example of Jihad while the Crusades went against the teachings of Christ when it comes to exacting violence on our enemies. Vengeance, therefore, is something that the Lord does, not His people.

In sum, the two faiths, Christianity and Islam, could not be more different when it comes to actions toward our enemies. One religion encourages violence in certain situations while the other tells us to “turn the other cheek.”

Question 18

What Is Islamic Law (Shariah)

Islam is a religion that attempts to exercise complete control over the behavior of its people. This can especially be seen in the laws that have been developed over time.

How Islamic Laws Are Made

When there is no direct word from the Quran or the hadith, rules for Muslims are then derived from the teachings of a consensus of religious leaders as well as by what is called “analogous reasoning.” The combination of the Quran, the hadith, the teachings of religious leaders, as well as analogous reasoning have been combined to create a detailed group of rules and regulations for Muslims. This is known as Shariah, or Islamic Law.

To become a Muslim is not difficult. They must recite the creed: There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God. However, once a person becomes a Muslim, there are an entire host of rules follows for the faithful to keep.

Some Examples Of Islamic Law

While Shariah is very detailed, there are a couple of matters that should be noted. They include the treatment of Jews and Christians in Muslim counties, and the treatment of Muslims who leave the faith, as well as penalties for various offences.

1. The Treatment Of Christians And Jews

Islamic law says that non-Muslims who live within Muslim societies are to be treated as second-class citizens. This is especially true of Jews and Christians. They are called dhimmi. There are a number of petty laws which are intended to restrict and humiliate these non-Muslims. Every aspect of their lives is restricted by these laws.

They also have to pay a special tax called the jizya. Islam does not make it easy for non-Muslims who live in Islamic countries.

2. The Treatment Of Those Who Leave Islam

There is also the issue of those Muslims who leave the faith. This can be for another religion, or for the mere rejection of Islam. Shari’ah has some strong rules for them. Indeed, they are to be put to death.

Even today, it is the state law in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Iran that those who leave Islam are to be executed.

3. The Penalty For Various Offenses

Islamic law lists severe penalties for criminal offences. This includes cutting off of the hands for offenses such as stealing. Execution is the penalty for murderers and adulterers.

Observations On The Shariah

There are a number of observations that need to be made concerning the Shariah. They include the following.

The Penalties Have Remained Unchanged For Eleven Centuries

The penalties for violating the Shariah have remained unchanged for eleven centuries. Since it is believed the laws, as well as the penalties have been divinely sanctioned, there is no need to change them.

Shariah Is To Be Introduced Everywhere In The World

It is important to understand that Muslims desire to put the entire world under Shariah. The goal is to create an Islamic state wherever possible in the world. It is believed that this is the divine order of Allah.

The Christian Response To Shariah

There is no such thing as Shariah in Christianity. Christians can respond to such laws in the following manner.

1. The Old Testament People Had God-Given Laws

In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself to a certain race of people, the Hebrews, and placed them in a strategic geographical position, the Promised Land. They were to be His witness to the world. Consequently, God gave a number of laws by which the people were to obey. These laws dealt with these specific people at a specific time in history. The laws were limited to that time and that place.

2. There Is No Holy Land For Christians

The New Testament has a different focus. Christians were to go out into the entire world and preach the message of Jesus Christ, a message of freedom. Jesus said:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age (Matthew 28:19-20 RSV).

The message of freedom from sin that Jesus Christ offers is in contrast to the bondage that a person is placed under when they become a Muslim.

3. The Treatment Of Those Who Leave The Faith

The New Testament does have things to say about those who leave the faith. For those who are genuine believers, the goal is restoration. The idea is that the sinful world will cause the believer to return to the fellowship of other believers.

The Apostle Paul told the church of Corinth how to deal with a sinning brother:

When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (1 Corinthians 5:4-5 ESV).

Notice that the goal was that his spirit might be saved. Instead of eternal damnation, the idea is to bring that person back into a relationship with the Lord and with fellow believers.

4. Christians Are To Obey The Laws Of The Land

Because the church has no physical center, or specific land in which it is to govern, there are no laws with respect to how to regulate behavior. To the contrary, the believer is to obey the laws of the land that he or she finds himself under. Paul wrote to the Romans:

Obey the government, for God is the one who put it there. All governments have been placed in power by God. So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow. For the authorities do not frighten people who are doing right, but they frighten those who do wrong. So do what they say, and you will get along well. The authorities are sent by God to help you. But if you are doing something wrong, of course you should be afraid, for you will be punished. The authorities are established by God for that very purpose, to punish those who do wrong. So you must obey the government for two reasons: to keep from being punished and to keep a clear conscience (Romans 13:1-5 NLT).

The Christian is to obey the powers that are in control. They are not to rise up against their oppressors as is commanded in Islam. In other words, we are not attempting to “Christianize” the world.

Indeed, this world is not our home. A new world is coming where the Lord Jesus Christ will rule in righteousness.

The contrasts between Christianity and Islam are again evident as far as the “law” is concerned. With Jesus Christ there is freedom while with Islam there is only bondage.

Summary To Question 18
What Is Islamic Law? (Shari'ah)

Islamic law, or Shariah, guides the behavior of all Muslims. These laws are derived from the Quran, the hadith, and the decisions of Muslim leaders. There is a multitude of laws that have been given that regulate every area of life for believers.

This includes laws for the treatment non-Muslims living in Muslim countries, adult males who convert from Islam, and penalties for criminal offenses. The penalties for violating these laws have remained unchanged for some eleven centuries. The ultimate goal of Muslims is to put the entire world under Islamic law.

The Christian has no equivalent to Shariah. In the Old Testament, the people were placed in a specific land, and were expected to obey the various laws that God had set up. There were penalties for disobedience but certainly not the same type of punishments that are found in Islamic law.

In the New Testament, there is no commandment to set up a Christian state or govern the entire world by Christian law. To the contrary, believers are commanded to obey the governments in the various lands in which the believers find themselves.

Furthermore, there are no physical punishments commanded for those who leave the Christian faith. Sinning believers are to repent of their ungodly behavior before rejoining the community of believers. However, the goal is always restoration.

There are obviously great differences between Islam and Christianity when it comes the types of laws the followers are expected to obey as well as the penalties for disobeying them.

The difference is indeed clear: bondage in Islam or freedom in Christ.

Question 19

What Is The Role Of Women In Islam?

The role of women in Islam is spelled out in the Quran, the Hadith and in Islamic law. It will be clear from examining these sources that Islam does not see the sexes as equal. We can summarize their position in society in the following categories.

1. Women Have An Inferior Legal Status In Islam

In Islamic law, women are not considered equal to men. For example, in an Islamic court, the testimony of two female witnesses carries the same weight as only one male witness. If a male and a female sustain the exact same injury the woman receives only half the compensation. In addition, the daughter usually only receives about one half of the inheritance that a son would receive.

This inferior status is seen in a statement in the Quran where the mother of Mary is disappointed that she had a daughter and not a son:

Lord, I have given birth to her, a female- (And God knew very well what she had given birth to; the male is not as the female) (Sura 3:36).

Inequality between the sexes is a theme found throughout Islam.

2. Islamic Women Must Wear Certain Clothing

There are rules for Islamic women as to what they are to wear. They are supposed to dress modestly. The woman must be covered from the neck to the wrist and ankle. In addition, there is a covering for her hair. Some parts of the Islamic world take these restrictions further by insisting the feet, hands, and face are to be covered.

3. There Are Spiritual Duties For Women

There are specific spiritual duties that women must perform. Like men, they are to practice the five pillars of Islam: confession of faith, prayer, giving of money, fasting at Ramadan, and a pilgrimage to Mecca. When praying publicly, they are separated from the men.

Women are promised a heavenly reward. The Quran says:

Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and we will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did (Surah 16:97)

However, the rewards in heaven are not as enticing for women as they are for men. They are promised a paradise that is filled with beautiful virgins. The Quran says:

Thus (shall it be), and We will wed them with . . . pure, beautiful ones (Surah 44:54)

To make matters worse, there are certain traditions in Islam that say only one in a hundred women go to heaven while most men will go there! Because of the difficult situation in which Muslim women find themselves, they often turn to superstitious practices.

4. Islamic Women Are Protected By Muslim Men

In Islam, men are the protector of women. The Quran says:

Men are the managers of women for that God has preferred in bounty one of them over another, and for that they have expended of their property (Surah 4:34).

Women are always protected by a male relative whether it be father, brother, husband, uncle, or son. The restrictions placed upon women are to preserve her honor. It is important for Islamic women to be virgins when they are married.

5. Marriage

The normal condition for a Muslim is marriage. The Quran says the following concerning this institution:

And whoever among you has not within his power amplexness of means to marry free believing women, then (he may marry) of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens; and Allah knows best your faith: you are (sprung) the one from the other; so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours; and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency, they shall suffer half the punishment which is (inflicted) upon free women. This is for him among you who fears falling into evil; and that you abstain is better for you, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (Surah 4:25)

Marriage keeps people from falling into sin. Thus, singleness is frowned upon. However, celibacy for religious reasons may meet with approval.

In Islam, marriage is seen as a gift from Allah. We also read in the Quran:

And Allah has made wives for you from among yourselves, and has given you sons and grandchildren from your wives, and has given you of the good things; is it then in the falsehood that they believe while it is in the favor of Allah that they disbelieve? (Surah 16:72).

The idea of marriage in Islam is more of the joining of families rather than individuals. Thus, marriages are almost always arranged. This may mean there is no actual discussion with the bride and groom as to whom they

will marry. Once arranged, it is difficult for either party to reject the decision of the family.

Interestingly, a Muslim male may marry a Jewish or Christian woman. In that case, the woman will be considered a Muslim. However, the reverse is not true. A Muslim woman is not permitted to marry a Jewish or Christian man.

6. The Place Of Women In The Family

In Islam, the place of women is in the home. They have a specific role to fulfill within the family structure. She is to do the housework, raise the children, prepare the meals, and produce sons for her husband. If the family is in financial need, the woman may have a job outside of the home. However, even if she has a fulltime job, the responsibilities of housework are still hers. Rarely, will the husband help her in this regard.

7. Divorce

Like marriage, divorce in Islam favors the man, not the woman. A Muslim man may divorce his wife by simply saying, "I divorce you" three times in front of witnesses. That is all that it takes. However, it is very difficult for a Muslim woman to divorce her Muslim husband.

There is something else. The children from any Muslim divorce belong to the man and his family, not the woman. This means if the Muslim woman is widowed the children, over the age of two, they do not stay with her but rather with the family of the man.

8. Polygamy

After the wife of Muhammad died, he married again. In fact, Allah gave "the prophet" permission to have "twelve" wives. In doing so, Allah sanctioned polygamy. However, the reverse is not true. It is not permitted for a Muslim woman to have more than one husband. Again, the rules favor the man.

This gives us a picture of how women are to act according to the Islamic faith. As can be observed the situation for them is not nearly as beneficial as it is to the man.

The Biblical View Of Women

As with every other doctrine, the view of Islam toward women is in direct contrast to what the Bible has to say. We can summarize the view of the New Testament toward women as follows.

1. There Is Equality In Jesus Christ

The Bible says that there is equality among males and females in Jesus Christ.

When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he stressed that unity:

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:27 NRSV).

The New Living Translation puts it this way:

And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like him. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians--you are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:27 NLT).

The distinction between men and women, as far as their standing before God, has been taken away in Christ Jesus. Indeed, we are “one” in Christ.

2. Men And Women Have Different Roles

According to Scripture, there are different roles that God has assigned to men and women. There is a division of the work that they are to do. The Apostle Paul wrote the following to the believers in Corinth:

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God (1 Corinthians 11:3-12 ESV)

There is a definite chain of command. Women have a submissive role to men. However, the analogy given is with God the Father and God the Son. God the Son willingly submitted to God the Father but was never considered inferior in character. The same holds true for men and women. While the woman is to submit to the man this says nothing about who is inferior or superior. Indeed, we are equals when it comes to our character or our worth.

3. Christians Are Not To Practice Polygamy

While polygamy was practiced in the ancient world by some of the biblical characters, this has never been God’s ideal. The New Testament speaks out against the idea that a man can have more than one wife. When Paul

wrote to Timothy, he listed the qualities of an elder or overseer. One of them was to be the husband of one wife:

An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher (1 Timothy 3:2 CSB).

Polygamy was not allowed to be practiced among believers in Christ. A man was to marry only one woman and to remain faithful to her during the entire marriage.

4. There Is No Commandment That Men Are To Keep The Children In A Divorce

Contrary to Islam, there is nothing in the Bible that orders the children to stay with the father rather than the mother. There is no presumption in favor of the man over the woman. The Bible actually does not speak to this issue of where the children should go. However, it certainly does not teach that men have all the rights as does Islam.

Conclusion: Islam And Christianity Have Completely Different Views Of Women

The conclusion is that Christianity and Islam have completely different views of women. The Bible treats with women with the proper respect while Islam sees them as inferior to men. The contrasts could not be greater.

Summary To Question 19 What Is The Role Of Women In Islam?

From an examination of the authoritative sources, we find that Islam views women as being inferior to men. This can be seen in a number of ways.

Their legal standing is about half that of the male. In a court of the law the presumption is always in favor of the man. There are restrictions as to how women must dress while the men are not so restricted. There are penalties for not following these restrictions.

While Islamic women must perform similar spiritual duties as men, their hope of heaven is severely restricted. Indeed, men are given a much better chance of entering heaven than women.

Marriage favors the man. Indeed, marriage is arranged for them. Once married, their duty is to make their husband happy. In divorce or the death of the husband, all children over the age of two go to the husband's family. Furthermore, polygamy is sanctioned for the husband, based upon the example of Muhammad but not for the female. Obviously, Islam is a religion that favors the male in everything.

In contrast, Christianity has a view of women that acknowledges them as equal before God. There is no idea that males are superior to females or

that the main purpose of females is to serve males. The Bible does say that there is a chain of command, or an order, that God has sovereignly placed.

However, this has nothing to do with the worth of one over the other. All are equal in the sight of God. Indeed, the example or pattern of the woman submitting to the man is Jesus Christ, God the Son, submitting to God the Father. We know that the Son was not inferior in character to the Father.

Therefore, His submission to Him had nothing to do with One being greater in nature or character than the other. Consequently, the wife submitting to the husband does not mean that she should be considered inferior in any way. She is not.

There is also the fact that males are not allowed to have more than one wife. Polygamy was not allowed in the New Testament. The marriage laws did not favor the husband like what we find in Islam. Finally, there is no command, as is found in the Shariah, which children of divorced couples must stay with the father rather than the mother. Women are treated as equals to men.

The conclusion is obvious. Women are treated as inferiors in the Islamic system while the Bible gives them equal protection.

Question 20

What Is The Law Of Abrogation In Islam? (Later Passages In The Quran Can Contradict Earlier Ones)

One important concept of Islam is what has known as “the law of abrogation.” It is called *naskh*. It is vital that this be understood. The following observations need to be made about this practice.

Understanding The Law Of Abrogation

Islam teaches that in the Quran there are some verses that “abrogate,” or “cancel out,” other verses. Certain verses are rendered null and void by later verses. Consequently, they are no longer applicable. Thus, one passage is replaced, or cancelled out, by another. What we have left in the Quran are statements that conflict.

However, Muslims do not consider these abrogations as contradictions by their God Allah. Instead, they seem them as improvements that better suited the changing circumstances, or needs, of the early Muslims. Things changed during the twenty-three-year period in which Muhammad spoke the Quran.

As the historical circumstances changed, Muhammad’s teachings, which are found in the Quran, changed accordingly. Thus, we find that the Quran abrogates, or cancels itself, in various passages.

Examples Of The Law In Practice

There are a number of important examples of the law of abrogation. They include the original acceptance of Christianity and Judaism, the original direction of prayer was toward Jerusalem, and the command for Muslims to allow freedom of worship for all.

These three practices were later abrogated, or cancelled out. The evidence is as follows.

Judaism And Christianity Were Once Accepted By Muslims

While there is no universally accepted chronology of the revelations of the Quran, the broad outlines of Muhammad’s life make it clear that the belligerent verses were revealed later than the peaceful ones. In his early career in Mecca, his tone was more pacifying. The prophet hoped to convert Jews and Christians.

However, it later became apparent that neither Jews nor Christians would accept him as a prophet of the true God. At that time, the message of Allah began to change. While at Medina, these later revelations were much more belligerent. Thus, according to the doctrine of abrogation, or *naskh*, the peaceful verses are not in effect any longer while the violent ones are still in effect.

Unfortunately, Muslim extremists are aware of this. This is why they can feel free to quote the Quran in support of their violent actions. They clearly believe that when they do so, they are using the word of Allah as it was meant to be used, and as it was used by Muhammad. He practiced what he preached in his treatment of non-Muslims.

Prayer Was Originally Toward Jerusalem

In his early days as a prophet, Muhammad had some degree of acceptance among Jews and Christians. Consequently, prayer was originally to be made toward the city of Jerusalem, the holy city of Christians and Jews. However, this also changed when the Jews and Christians would not accept Muhammad as their prophet or Islam as their faith. When this occurred the direction of prayer was changed or abrogated. Prayer was now to be directed toward the new holy city, Mecca.

Freedom Of Worship For All Was Originally Commanded

Defenders of Islam like to point out certain verses in the Quran that make it seem like it is peaceful religion and tolerant religion. The Quran says.

There is no compulsion in religion (Surah 2:256).

However, this citation is misleading. This verse is from the earlier teaching of Muhammad. In his later career, he said just the opposite:

So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush, then if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free to them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (Surah 9:5)

The following is also said in Surah nine:

O Prophet! strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be unyielding to them; and their abode is hell, and evil is the destination (Surah 9:73).

Thus, the earlier teaching is cancelled out by this later teaching. It is believed that the verse in Surah two was spoken by Muhammad about seven to eight years earlier than the one spoken in Surah nine. Therefore, the one in Surah nine is the authoritative one. The statement in Surah two has been abrogated.

The following is how the Quran sees the pagans, the Christians, and the Jews. Again, we read from Surah nine. It says:

O you who believe! The idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year; and if you fear poverty then Allah will enrich you out of His grace if He please; surely Allah is Knowing Wise. Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Apostle have

prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection. And the Jews say: Uzair is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; may Allah destroy them; how they are turned away! They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allah, and (also) the Messiah son of Mary and they were enjoined that they should serve one God only, there is no god but He; far from His glory be what they set up (with Him). They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, and Allah will not consent save to perfect His light, though the unbelievers are averse. He it is Who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse (Surah 9:28-33).

Sura 9 is considered to be one of the last, if not the last, of the “revelations” of Muhammad that became of the Quran. It is important to note that it is in Surah 9 that some of the most violent verses with respect to Jihad are revealed. Thus, the revelation from Allah to Muhammad ended on a violent note.

According to this part of the Quran, the Muslims are supposed to fight the Jews and Christians until these two groups submit to Muslim rule and agree to pay special higher taxes aimed at them. This is explicitly specified in the Quran.

Some Do Not Think There Are Contradictions

Some Muslims do not think that these are cases of abrogation or contradictions between one passage and another. Rather, these verses provide examples of delaying or postponing the command to fight the infidels. The command to fight the infidels was delayed until the Muslims become strong. When they were weak, they were commanded to endure and be patient.

Muslims say that Allah revealed to Muhammad in his weak condition what suited the situation at the time, because of his mercy to him and his followers. If Allah gave them the command to fight while they were weak, the result would have been embarrassing and difficult for them. However, when the Allah made Islam victorious, he then commanded Muhammad with what suited the new situation. Indeed, Allah said that the Jews and Christians had to become Muslims or to pay the levied tax. Infidels had to become Muslims or face death. Therefore, Allah withheld his true intentions toward Jews and Christians until the time Muslims had sufficient ability to overcome them.

The same thing holds true today in countries where Muslims are a minority. They will act peacefully toward the “powers that be” until they are in control. At that time, the non-Muslims are penalized for not being part of “the faith.”

This gives a brief look at the “law of abrogation.”

The Christian Response To The Law Of Abrogation

In response, we note that there is no such thing in Christianity as the Law of Abrogation. A few observations need to be made.

1. God Does Not Contradict Himself

The God of the Bible does not contradict Himself. In fact, He cannot contradict Himself. We read the Lord saying of Himself:

I am the LORD, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already completely destroyed (Malachi 3:6 NLT).

The Lord, the God of the Bible does not change.

2. Progressive Revelation Versus The Law Of Abrogation

What we do find in Scripture is progressive revelation. That is, God progressively reveals doctrines to people over time. However, these later doctrines do not abrogate the earlier ones in the same way as Islam changed its doctrines. Progressive revelation means that God has revealed more complete truth rather than contradictory truths as in Islam.

Furthermore, the God of the Bible does not let the situation dictate His actions. He controls all situations; they do not control Him!

3. There Is No Command To Obey Old Testament Laws

For example, the Old Testament commands certain behavior of all believes such as the observation of the Sabbath.

We read in the Ten Commandments:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Exodus 20:8-11 ESV).

The Israelites were obligated to obey the Sabbath.

However, the New Testament specifically says that believers are not to obey any of these laws. Paul wrote to the Colossians:

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These

are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ (Colossians 2:16-17 ESV)

The New Living Translation puts it this way:

So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new-moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules were only shadows of the real thing, Christ himself (Colossians 2:16-17 NLT).

The Christian is no longer obligated to celebrate the Sabbath or any of the other Old Testament ceremonial laws. These have been done away with.

Indeed, God is not working today through one people, Israel, or through one land, the Promised Land. Instead, New Testament believers are to go out into the entire world and preach the good news about Jesus Christ.

This truth was not known in the Old Testament. It was only revealed in the New Testament. This is progressive revelation.

4. Violence Is Not To Be Practiced Toward Unbelievers

Something else needs to be noted. There is no violence associated toward those who reject the Christian faith. They are to be evangelized and prayed for but certainly not threatened or harmed physically.

The gospel is never to be equated with physical force. People personally choose whether to believe or not to believe. Violence should never be equated with spreading the message of Christ. Anyone who does this is acting contrary to the teachings of the Lord Himself.

Indeed, as Jesus was being betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane Simon Peter drew out his sword to defend his Lord. Jesus rebuked this type of behavior. We read Him saying the following:

“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Matthew 26:52 NIV).

The message of Jesus is not spread by the sword.

In sum, the Law of Abrogation has nothing similar in Christianity. The newer revelation does not contradict the older. The God of Scripture does not let situation dictate what He will reveal to His people. He is in complete control.

Summary To Question 20

What Is The Law Of Abrogation In Islam? (Later Passages In The Quran Can Contradict Earlier Ones)

Islam has what it known as the law of abrogation. It basically says that later doctrines may contradict earlier ones. This is important since some sections of the Quran clearly contradict other sections. Indeed, there are a number

of beliefs that changed in Muhammad's lifetime. This includes the direction of prayer, the extent of his message, and the command to put to death those who reject his message.

Some Muslims do not actually consider these passages as contradictions. They say that the initial commands were given while Islam was weak. Once it was in control, then the real commands were given. This way the idea that Allah could have contradicted himself is avoided.

There is no such thing as the Law of Abrogation as far as Scripture is concerned. God certainly does not, and cannot, contradict Himself. He does not change in His character or His promises. Furthermore, He does not let the situation control His actions. Indeed, He controls all situations.

In the Old Testament, there were a number of laws that were later made null and void under the New Covenant. For example, in the Old Testament believers were commanded to observe certain holy days, including the Sabbath. There is no such commandment for New Testament believers. There is no obligation to observe the ceremonial laws.

This, however, is not the law of abrogation but rather "progressive revelation." God did not reveal everything to His people at once. Instead, He progressively revealed His truth over a long period of time. The later revelation did not contradict the earlier revelation but rather superseded it. Jesus Christ came to the earth and fulfilled predictions which were written about the coming Messiah.

Thus, we again have another conflict between Islam and Christianity. The God of Islam either contradicts himself or waits until certain situations occur before making a move. The God of the Bible does not contradict Himself nor does He allow situations to dictate what He will reveal to His people. The differences are again striking.

Question 21

What Should Be The Proper Attitude Of Christians Toward The Belief System Of Islam?

It is important that Christians have the correct attitude toward the religion of Islam. What should our response be when Islam is proclaimed? How should Christians respond?

As far as the religion of Islam, and the proper Christian response, there are a number of points that need to be made. They can be summed up as follows.

1. We Must Realize That Islam And Christianity Cannot Both Be True At The Same Time

To begin with, it must be understood that Islam and Christianity cannot both be true at the same time. Both faiths can be wrong in their claims, but both cannot be true. Somebody has to be wrong. The following points need to be emphasized.

2. There Is A Different Source Of Authority In Each Religion

Christianity believes that God revealed Himself through a number of sacred books. These books were written by over forty different human authors. They were eventually collected and put into one Book, the Bible.

God gave humanity His revelation in order to redeem the world, to save us from our sins and to lead us to a life pleasing to Him. His Word teaches us how we can be free from the bondage of sin both in this world and in the world to come.

Christianity believes and teaches that there has been no more divine revelation to humanity since the time of Christ and His apostles. All written revelation has ceased.

This is in contrast to Islam. They believe God, Allah, has given his final revelation to the human race through the “prophet” Muhammad. Instead of a book composed by many different authors over a long period of time, the Quran which was recited by one man, Muhammad.

Furthermore, in Islam, revelation is not for the purpose of redemption or saving one from their sins, but for the sake of guidance. The Quran was given provide guidance for living in this world.

In Christianity, revelation was given by God but written down by human beings. God did not dictate His Word to the various writers but rather He used their words and personalities to record His truth.

The situation is different In Islam. Islam stresses very strongly that in receiving his revelation Muhammad was illiterate and hence completely

passive. He simply recited what was put into his mouth, without any input of his own.

Thus, while Christianity has the Bible, Islam has a different source of authority, the Quran. In addition, the means of communication of this word to humanity was completely different.

3. There Are Different View Of The Nature Of God

Not only do Islam and Christianity have a different source of spiritual authority, their sacred books reveal a completely different God.

The God in Islam is aloof from humanity. He is to be feared rather than loved. There is no personal relationship that a human can have with Allah.

Contrast this to the loving God of the Bible. Those who believe in Him are His children. The Bible is full of passages where God's love for His children is expressed. Again, we have tremendous differences between the two.

4. There Are Differing Views Of Jesus Christ

Islam presents a different Jesus than the one who is found in the New Testament. In Islam, Jesus is merely a prophet. He is one in a long line of prophets. Muhammad is supposedly the last and greatest of the prophets or the seal of the prophets.

In Christianity, Jesus is God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He has been God for all eternity.

The issue is clear: Jesus is either Lord of all or not Lord at all. He cannot be placed into the category of a prophet. A great prophet would not have made the sort of claims that Jesus made. He is either more than a prophet, God the Son, or a liar or lunatic.

Either Islam or Christianity is wrong about the Person of Jesus Christ.

5. There Is Different Understanding Of Salvation

The doctrine of sin and salvation are central to Christian belief. It is because of our sins that Jesus Christ died in our place. The Bible teaches that humanity is in desperate need of a Savior.

However, Islam does not see things the same way. They do not believe in original sin, neither do they see the need for sacrifice. Consequently, they do not see the need for a Savior.

Instead, they view Jesus as an Islamic prophet and not as the Savior of the world.

6. Each Has A Different View Of What Will Happen In The Future

Both Christianity and Islam believe in a final judgment for humanity and then an eternal separation of the human race to one of two places, heaven, or hell. However, the judgment is different in Islam than in Christianity. Heaven is described differently in both religions. In Islam, the emphasis is on the pleasures humans will receive. In Christianity, the emphasis is upon the God whom we worship.

In Islam those who reach heaven will go there because their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds. Christianity says our deeds are not the issue when it comes to entrance to heaven. The only issue is how people reacted to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Him will enter heaven. Those who do not believe will not go to heaven; no matter how good they may have been in this life.

7. Islam Has A Violent Side

While Christianity emphasizes peace, Islam is a religion that is both peaceful and violent. While it is often said that “peace” is the main characteristic of religion of Islam this is simply not true. Neither is it true that the Arabic word “Islam” means “peace,” as it is so often claimed. The word Islam means “submission.”

As a religion, Islam emphasizes the necessity of Muslims submitting to their God Allah. There is also the necessity for non-Muslims to submit to Muslims. We read the following in the Quran about the proper attitude toward unbelievers:

Fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war) (Surah 9:5).

While there are some Muslims that say this verse need not be understood literally, the majority believe that the Quran is the unchanging word of Allah. Problems like these make Islam the complex faith that it is. It cannot be simply categorized as either a “peaceful religion” or a “violent religion.” It is both.

The Quran does contain some verses that urge tolerance of non-Muslims. However, these verses were written before the more confrontational ones. Islamic scholars have developed a simple rule to deal with such contradictions in the Quran. This is the law of abrogation. This means that the later verses take precedence over the earlier ones, and it is these later verses which preach violence.

Another verse from the Quran which is not often quoted in non-Islamic contexts runs:

You shall be summoned to fight against a people given to vehement war: then shall you fight or they shall submit (Surah 48:16).

This verse commands Muslims to fight against their opponents until embrace Islam.

There is no doubt that in the early days of Islam, the faith was spread by means of the sword. Those who would not submit to Islam were killed. All of our early sources confirm this.

Therefore, we find two views in contemporary Islam about violence. There are the peaceable Muslims and then we find the violent war-like individuals. It is important to realize that Islam is not one or the other. It is both of these at the same time.

This warlike teaching of Islam is totally opposed to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Any atrocities that have been committed in the name of Jesus have not been sanctioned by the His teachings or practices. Indeed, Jesus Himself is called, “The Prince of Peace”

While atrocities committed in the name of Islam may be condemned by many individual Muslims, it cannot be denied that they are justified by the clear teaching of the Quran which is the supposed word of Allah. Therefore, we may rightly conclude that while some Muslims are peaceful the religion of Islam certainly is not.

8. In Speaking Out Against Islam, Christians Are Responding To Their Attacks

It must be emphasized that when Christians speak out against Islam it is not an attack on their faith. To the contrary, Islam has attacked Christianity. Islam arose six centuries after the life of Christ. It reinterpreted or denied every main point of the Christian gospel.

In doing so, the Quran claimed to be the final revelation of the same God which is revealed in the Bible. Christians cannot let those charges get by. We are responding to them.

Therefore, when Christians speak out against the belief system of Islam it is not “hate speech.” Rather it is responding to their false claims which they have made against us.

9. We Cannot Compromise Our Beliefs About Jesus

While we approach Muslims with the love of Jesus Christ, we cannot compromise the message that He commanded us to give. While we may express love for the individual Muslim, we cannot pretend that we are working together with them in spiritual matters.

The message to Muslims must be clear. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. He is God the Son. Muhammad presents a different Jesus. Therefore, he and his message should be rejected.

Summary To Question 21
What Should Be The Proper Attitude Of Christians Toward
The Belief System Of Islam?

Christians need to have the proper response to the beliefs of Islam. To begin with, we must realize that Christianity and Islam cannot both be true at the same time. The differences between the two faiths are great.

They have a different source of authority. Christianity accepts the Old and New Testament while Islam gives lip service to accepting the Old and New Testaments but, in actuality, sees the Quran as the final source of authority.

The two faiths present a different God. The God of the Bible is not the God of Islam. The God of the Bible is a personal loving God who cares about His people while the God of Islam is an aloof being who does not love his people.

Jesus Christ is viewed differently in both faiths. To Muslims, He is an Islamic prophet. While a great prophet He is lesser than Muhammad who is supposed to be the last and greatest of prophets.

In Christianity, Jesus is not a mere prophet but rather God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. It is blasphemous to compare Jesus to any human prophet. This is especially true of Muhammad whom Christians view as a false prophet.

There is also a different understanding of how a person is saved or enters into a right relationship with God. Salvation in Islam is not from original sin because they do not believe in original sin. Consequently, they see no need for a Savior.

There is also a different view of the afterlife, of heaven and hell. Heaven is full of sensual pleasures for the Muslim while for Christians the emphasis is God Himself. To get to heaven one must believe in Jesus Christ. Heaven for Muslims is based upon good works outweighing the bad works.

In addition, Islam, as opposed to Christianity, has a violent side in its teachings. Muhammad encouraged violence and practiced violence while Jesus practiced and encouraged non-violence. It also must be remembered that Islam has attacked Christianity. They claim to have the final truth about God which goes beyond what is taught in the Bible. Therefore, Christianity is responding to their attacks.

Above all, Christians cannot compromise our beliefs about Jesus Christ. The Christian faith and Islam cannot both be correct at the same time. We must make this clear to everyone. It is Jesus who is "the truth." It is not found in Muhammad or the Quran.

Question 22

What Should Be The Proper Attitude Of Christians Toward The Muslim People?

While the religion of Islam is an enemy of Christianity, the Muslim people are not. There are a number of important things we need to understand in our dealings with the people of Islam.

1. Muslims Are Not The Enemies Of Christians

It must always be remembered that the Muslim people are not the enemies of Christians. Muslims are souls for whom Jesus Christ died. Many of them will be converted to Christ. We need to see them as God sees them. Indeed, they are people who are spiritually lost and need a Savior.

2. Our Battle Is With The Teachings Not The People

Our battle is with the religion of Islam. It is the teachings that we reject. It is not the people who accept these teachings. Again, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that we are responding to the claims of Islam. They have made claims about being the “true” faith.

3. They Should Be Treated With Respect Not Antagonism

It is important that we treat people of the Islamic faith with respect. The Bible makes it clear how we are to treat those outside of the faith:

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one (Colossians 4:6 RSV).

Many Muslims come to faith in Jesus Christ.

4. They Should Be Shown The Love Of Jesus Christ

The Bible commands believers to preach the gospel to everyone. This includes Muslims. Paul said that it was the love of Jesus Christ that compelled him to reach the lost. He wrote:

Whatever we do, it is because Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live (2 Corinthians 5:14 NLT)

Christians have an obligation to demonstrate the love of Jesus for Muslims.

5. Above All, Realize It Is A Spiritual Battle

We must keep in mind that Islam is a non-Christian religion which has gained about a billion adherents. In responding to it, we must at all times realize that we are in a spiritual battle. Paul wrote:

For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens (Ephesians 6:12 CSB).

Islam is a spiritual power. This being the case, believers are to prepare to fight the battle with the spiritual weapons, the Word of God and prayer. This is where our struggle exists.

Summary To Question 22

**What Should Be The Proper Attitude Of Christians
Toward The Muslim People?**

It is important the Christians have the right attitude toward Muslims. Indeed, in dealing with Muslims there are a number of things which must be kept in mind. First, we need to make the distinction between the religion of Islam and those who accept the faith. It is their belief system that we are opposed to. Our battle is with what it teaches. Our struggle is not with individual Muslim people. Christ had died for them. We need to reach out to them with His love.

Consequently, Muslims are to be treated with respect, not antagonism. They should be shown the love of Jesus Christ by our words and by our deeds. They are not the enemy. Above all, we must realize that in dealing with Muslims the battle we are fighting is spiritual and that the weapons of our warfare are spiritual, not physical. This is where the battle is being fought and this is where the battle is won.

About The Author

Don Stewart is a graduate of Biola University and Talbot Theological Seminary (with the highest honors).

Don is a best-selling and award-winning author having authored, or co-authored, over seventy books. This includes the best-selling *Answers to Tough Questions*, with Josh McDowell, as well as the award-winning book *Family Handbook of Christian Knowledge: The Bible*. His various writings have been translated into over thirty different languages and have sold over a million copies. His available books can be found on his website www.educatingourworld.com.

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