



# TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT 'ISLAM'



## A Brief History and General Facts

- In the year 610 A.D. at the age of 40, Muhammad received his first revelation from the angel Gabriel.
- The series of revelations to Muhammad were compiled into a book called the Qur'an.
- Muhammad is said to have doubted initially the origin of these new revelations. He thought that perhaps jinn, or demons had possessed him. His wife Khadijah, however, reassured him that his visions were of divine origin, and she encouraged him to teach that which had been revealed to him.
- Within the first 3 years of Muhammad's ministry, he had only 14 converts. (Raun, Fall of 2001)
- The word Islam literally means "submission" and a Muslim is "one who submits."
- Islam makes up around 20% of the world's population. It is the second largest religion in the world, trailing only to Christianity.

## Beliefs on Allah (Note: God is the English translation of the Arabic word 'Allah')

- Associating someone with God is to commit the sin of shirk. The Qur'an offers no forgiveness for such a belief (Surah 4:48) and because of this, the doctrine of Christ's Divinity is very offensive to Muslims.
- The Muslim monotheistic view of God is probably the greatest similarity between Islam and Christianity. Yet, the Muslim monotheistic view of God lacks various elements such as: their God is not loving, their God is unknowable, and there is no harmony in their God's attributes. Throughout the Qur'an you are able to find approximately 20 contradictions about/concerning God. (Raun, 11-15-01)

## Beliefs on Salvation

- The religion of Islam can be divided into beliefs (iman) and obligations (deen)... aka: faith and works.
- Muslims believe that humankind is essentially good and pure. Humanity is good by nature and in a normal state.
- Muslims don't believe in the fall of man (Genesis 3), and they don't believe in original sin.
- For Muslims, sin is thought of in terms of rejecting right guidance. It can be forgiven through repentance. No atonement is necessary.
- Muslims believe that each person has two angels, one to record the good deeds and the other to record the bad deeds. (Qur'an 82:10) (Saal, 34) This contributes to the standard of salvation. If one's good deeds outweigh one's bad deeds, salvation is possible.
- Due to the unknown status of their good and bad deeds, the Muslim has no assurance that God will accept him or her.
- On the Day of Judgment a record book will be opened up. Good and evil deeds will be brought forward and placed on a scale to determine which one prevails. (Qur'an 18:50)
- To become a Muslim one must sincerely recite the Shahadah to two or more witnesses. The Shahadah is a confession of Faith and is regularly repeated by Muslims. The Shahadah... "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger."

## Beliefs on Jesus

- Muslims believe that Jesus was virgin born, sinless, is coming again, is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Greatest Prophet, and is living.
- Muslims have no problem accepting Christ's miracles, achievements and sinless nature (*easy to accept Christ as sinless due to their understanding of sin*). However, they reject that he was crucified and that He is God in the flesh, because this would be committing the sin of shirk.
- Four of the highest-ranking prophets were given books of divine revelation. Those four are: Moses, who was given the Tawrat (Torah), David, who was given the Zabur (Psalms), Jesus, who was given the Injil (Gospel), and Muhammad, who was given the Qur'an. Of those four books, Muslims contend that only the Qur'an has been preserved in an uncorrupted state.

## Muslim Acts of Worship

- Prayer: Required** to say seventeen cycles of prayer each day. **Must** wash themselves in a prescribed manner before praying. **Must** face toward Mecca when they pray.
- To Fast: Expected** to fast during the daylight hours of Ramadhan. **Must** abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual relations during the fast of Ramadhan. **Allowed** to partake of all those things again until sunrise.
- To Give Alms: Commanded** to give 1/40 of their income to the poor and needy.
- To Make the Pilgrimage (Hajj): Must** make the trip to Mecca at least once during a lifetime, provided he or she is able with respect to health and finances. **Must** wear the white garments called ihram during the Hajj.

## The Qur'an and the Bible

- Muslims say that we can't trust the Torah and Gospel texts because the Christians altered the texts of the Bible!
- Qur'anic passages speak of misinterpreting Scripture and of passing something off as Scripture that is not Scripture, but they do not speak of altering the actual biblical manuscripts themselves.
- It would be inconsistent for the Qur'an to, on the one hand, advise people to consult the previous Scriptures and to believe in them, and then, on the other hand, teach that those Scriptures are corrupted and therefore untrustworthy.
- The Qur'an attests to the presence of true Christian believers at the time of 300-350 A.D. It seems correct to assume that those true believers did not change their own Gospel or the Qur'an would have called them false believers. (Campbell, 52)
- The accuracy and dependability of the Bible presents a massive problem for Islamic doctrine.
- It is hypocritical for a Muslim to recognize the Qur'an as accurate based on a set of standards and then disregard sections of the Christian Bible as tampered on a totally different set of standards. (M. R. Richard)

<sup>1</sup> All Teaching Sheet Information has been taken from (Unless otherwise noted): Dean C. Halverson, *The Compact Guide to World Religions* (Bethany House Publishers, 1996)

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Donald Raun, *World Religions WM 758* (Lutheran Brethren Seminary, Fall of 2001)

<sup>3</sup> William J. Saal, *Reaching Muslims for Christ* (Moody Press, 1991)

<sup>4</sup> William F. Campbell M.D., *The Qur'an and the Bible: in the light of history and science* (Voice of Preaching the Gospel, 1985)