

Theological Equipping Class

World Religions: Islam

May 31, 2020

Introduction to Islam

Questions:

1. Who was Muhammad?
2. What's the Quran?
3. Who is Allah?
4. Who is a Muslim?
5. What's the deal with Sunnis vs. Shi'ites?
6. What are the major Tenets of Islam?
7. What are the five pillars of Islam?
8. What's the deal with Islamic terrorism?
9. How does Islam compare to Christianity?

Who was Muhammad?

- Muhammad ibn Adullah born 570 AD in Arabia (“a land of traders & raiders”)
- The Night of Power and Excellence
 - *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. Galatians 1:8-9*
 - the promised child of Abraham
 - God is Father
 - the trinity
 - Jesus has died for our sins
 - man is depraved
 - justification by faith
- Mohammad: instrument and ideal
- History of Islam
 - Early days in Mecca
 - Move to Medina ("city of the Prophet") - 622 A.D.
 - March on Mecca – 630 A.D.
 - Death of Mohammad

What's the Quran?

- The Quran (literally meaning “the recitation”)
- Quranic chapters are called suras (114) and verses are called ayahs (6000)
- Islamic view of Old and New Testaments
 - We did not send before you (O Muhammad) any messenger but We revealed to him: ‘none has the right to be worshipped except I, therefore worship Me. (21:25)
 - "people of the book, now there has come to you Our messenger making clear to you many things you have been concealing of the Book, and effacing many things" (5:16)

Who is Allah?

- Allah: the Arabic word for God.
- In Islam, the word Allah isn't God's name.
- Monotheism
 - Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam is strongly monotheistic
 - "And your god is one god. There is no god but he" (2.163)
 - But intentionally contrasted with the God of the NT
 - Explicitly not a trinity (5.76)
 - God has no begotten son (2.116)
- Attributes: transcendent, all-powerful, all-knowing, Creator, Judge
- Allahu Akbar: "god is most great"
- Is Allah merciful and compassionate?

Who is a Muslim?

- Muslim vs. Arab: religious vs. ethnolinguistic
- What does the word Muslim mean?
 - sIm (muSLiM, iSLaM): submission, acceptance or surrender.
- a Muslim is anyone or anything that surrenders itself to the true will of God.
 - Abraham, Moses and other prophets as Muslim?
 - "We have, without doubt, sent down the Reminder, and we will assuredly preserve it" (15:9)
 - *No man can change the words of Allah*" (Q 6:34)
- How does one become a Muslim?
 - "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger."

What's the deal with Sunnis vs. Shi'ites?

- Of the 2 billion Muslims in the world today, about 85% Sunni, 15% Shi'ite or Shia
- Why are they called Sunni and Shia?
 - Sunni is derived from the phrase "Ahl al-Sunnah", or "People of the Tradition"
 - Shia is literally "Shiat Ali" or the "Party of Ali"
- History of succession
 - June 8, 632 A.D. - Mohammad dies and the question of succession loomed over the community.
 - According to Shi'ites the appointed successor was Ali ibn Abi Talib, Mohammad's cousin and son-in-law. According to Sunnis Abu Bakr, one of Mohammad's first converts and closest companions was the true leader by virtue of election.
- Sunnis, following the tradition of the period, thought the Caliph should be chosen by the community while Shi'ites believe the office should be passed down only to direct descendants of Muhammad.

What are the Major Tenets of Islam?

- deeds over doctrine
- Sharia law: the moral code and religious law of Islam

- Categories: fard (obligatory), mustahabb (recommended), mubah (neutral), makruh (discouraged), and haraam (forbidden)

What are The Five Pillars of Islam?

1. *Shahadah*: The Confession

- "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger."
- *Shirk* ("share"): an unforgivable sin.

2. *Salat*: Ritual Prayer

- Five times a day Muslims face Mecca (qibla: the direction) in prayer.
- "All praise belongs to God, Lord of the Universe, the Beneficent, the Merciful and Master of the Day of Judgment, You alone We do worship and from You alone we do seek assistance, guide us to the right path, the path of those to whom You have granted blessings, those who are neither subject to Your anger nor have gone astray." (1st Surah of the Quran)

3. *Hajj*: The Pilgrimage to Mecca

- All devout Muslims are expected to make the pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime.
- The kaaba: 50 feet high, based is 30x40 feet
 - the holiest site in Islam
 - what Muslims pray toward every day
- The hajj is officially ended by a three-day "Feast of Sacrifice," though many pilgrims then continue on to Medina to visit the mosque and tomb of Muhammad.

4. *Sawm*: Fasting

- Ramadan: the ninth month of the Islamic calendar
- "Feast of the Breaking of the Fast" (Id al-Fitr)

5. *Zakat*: The Giving of Alms

- tithe of accumulated wealth and assets (not merely income) is expected

6. Jihad

- Many maintain that the Islamic duty of jihad is a sixth pillar of the religion.
- "struggle"

- 3 uses: holy war, internal struggle to submit to Allah's will, communal struggle to improve the society.

What's the deal with Islamic terrorism?

Is terrorism an essential implication of Islam or is it a perversion of Islamic tradition? Is Islam inherently a religion of peace or of war? Is jihad merely internal or also external?

Three groups within Islam.

- Fundamentalists: a vocal minority
- Modernists: the overwhelming majority
- Progressives

Lack of consistency: Sword and mercy texts

Three options:

1. Orthodox Islamic teaching prescribes holy war and those who deny it are thus inconsistent.
2. Such teaching is not prescribed and so those who engage in such activities are inconsistent.
3. There is no orthodox interpretation because Islam, by virtue of being a false religion, is inherently inconsistent.

Mercy and Peace:

- Muhammad: "we return from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad"
- Defensive: "fight in the way of Allah with those who fight you, but aggress not: Allah loves not the aggressors." (2.190)
 - But what is aggression?

Sword:

- Mainstream Islamic jurisprudence continues to maintain that the so-called "sword verses" (9:5 and 9:29) have "abrogated, canceled, and replaced" those verses in the Quran that call for "tolerance, compassion, and peace."
- So let them fight in the way of God who sell the present life for the world to come; and whosoever fights in the way of God and is slain, or conquers, we shall bring him a mighty wage. (4.74)
- The believers fight in the way of Allah, and the unbelievers fight in the idol's way. Fight you therefore against the friends of Satan. (4.76)
- Allah has preferred in rank those who struggle and fight with their possessions and their selves over the ones who sit at home. (4.95)
- "to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know." (8.60)
- "Fight those who believe neither in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold the religion of truth [even if they are] of the people of the book." (9.29)..."until they pay the tax with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."
 - Mercy: early options: convert, accept Muslim rule and pay taxes, fight

- But when these months, prohibited (for fighting), are over, slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them, and take them captive or besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every likely place. But if they repent and fulfill their devotional obligations and pay the zakat, then let them go their way, for God is forgiving and kind. (Surah 9.5)

Argument from Mohammad's example (remember he is not only vessel, but model)

- As for the example of Mohammed, Sahih Muslim, one of the six major authoritative Hadith collections, claims the Prophet Mohammed undertook no fewer than 19 military expeditions, personally fighting in eight of them. In the aftermath of the 627 Battle of the Trench, "Mohammed felt free to deal harshly with the Banu Qurayza, executing their men and selling their women and children into slavery," according to Yale Professor of Religious Studies Gerhard Bowering in his book *Islamic Political Thought*. As the Princeton scholar Michael Cook observed in his book *Ancient Religions, Modern Politics*, "the historical salience of warfare against unbelievers ... was thus written into the foundational texts" of Islam.

How does Islam Compare to Christianity?

Similarities:

Dissimilarities:

- Bibliology: Bible corrupted
- Theology proper: not triune
- Christology
 - Not the Son of God
 - Never crucified
 - Never resurrected
 - *Islam affirms that Jesus was born of a virgin, that he lived a sinless life, that he performed mighty miracles, and that he will come again at the end of history. It even calls him a word from God. However, it explicitly denies the deity of Christ and repudiates the title "Son of God" as blasphemous. It also (according to the majority view) denies he died on the cross, claiming that Jesus' visage was imposed on someone else, who was then crucified, and that Jesus was taken up into heaven without tasting death. Islam explicitly denies the possibility of substitutionary atonement.*
 - [Jesus] was not killed, nor was he crucified, but so it was made to appear. . . . Allah took him up to himself. (4.157-8)
 - Peace is on me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I rise alive."
- Hamartiology: no original sin
 - deficient doctrine of sin always results in a deformed doctrine of salvation
- Soteriology
 - No death and resurrection
 - Justification by works not faith

*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. **Galatians 1:8-9***