



ISLAM 101

- What do they believe and why?
- How do we answer their claims?
- How do we relate to them?
- How can we effectively live out the Gospel with them?
- What can we learn from them?

What is Islam and Who are Muslims?

- “ISLAM” is an Arabic word meaning “surrender” or “submission”
- It is a religion embraced by 1/5 of the world’s population.
- A person who follows the religion of Islam is called a Muslim.

Becoming a Muslim

- A person becomes a Muslim by reciting the following creed:
- “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”

IS ALLAH GOD?

- The main difficulty with this questions is that it is really two questions.
- The first is linguistic.
- The second is theological.

Linguistically

- The word “Allah” comes from the Arabic *Al-Ilah*, meaning “The God”
- It has the Semitic root, *ilah*, corresponding to the Hebrew *eloah* (singular form of the more familiar plural *Elohim*)
- “Allah” is the word for God currently used in the Arabic Bible and has been used by millions of Arab Christians for hundreds of years.

Theological Similarities

- God is creator of heaven and earth.
- He is all powerful and all knowing.
- He communicates through His spoken and written word.
- Angels, prophets.
- A final day of judgment and a literal heaven and hell.

Theological Differences

- Islam's Allah is totally "other" and uniquely "one".
- He is unknowable and free from any bounds including: rules, covenants, or even his own words.
- In Islam, Allah has 99 names but not one of them is sacrificial agape love.

Theological Differences

- Muslims recognize sin but not the concept of original sin.
- Forgiveness exists, but is based on Allah's unpredictable decree and not on any absolute standard.
- Because sin does not need to be paid for, there is no need for atonement, a savior, or a cross.

In relating to Muslims, it is not the word for God (or Allah) that needs to be changed, but their concept of who God is.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

- The Witness (Shahada)
- Prayer (Salat)
- Giving Alms/Charity (Zakat)
- Fasting (Soum/Siyam)
- Pilgrimage (Hajj)
- Jihadd

The Witness: Shahada

- Shahada- sha-HAA-da
- Meaningful saying (in Arabic)
- “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah”
- Spoken daily during prayers and other times.
- First thing whispered into the ear of a newborn Muslim baby and the last thing heard and spoken at death.

Prayer: Salat

- Salat- sa-LAAT
- Muslims pray facing Mecca five times a day.
- Mecca is in southwestern Saudi Arabia.
- Five times a day: dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and late evening.
- Before they pray they must ritually cleanse certain parts of their bodies. (wuthu-wuu-DTHUU)
- Special prayer positions.
- Finish with Muslim greeting, “Peace be upon you” (as-sa-LAAM-uu-a-LAY-kuum)
- Men and women do not pray together.

Giving Alms/Charity: Zakat

- Zakat- za-KAAT
- Muslims are expected to give two-and-a-half percent of their income to charity.

Fasting: Soum/Siyam

- Soum/Siyam- SOWM, see-YAAM
- When physically possible, every adult Muslim is expected to fast from dawn until dusk during the entire ninth lunar Islamic month of Ramadam.
- Fast: abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, and even swallowing saliva.
- 11 days earlier each year due to the lunar year being 11 days shorter. Sept 1-Sept 30, 2008
- This is the month Muslims believe Allah caused the Qur'an to descend from heaven and given verbally to Muhammad.

Pilgrimage: Hajj

- Hajj
- Once in his/her lifetime, every Muslim is expected, if physically and financially able, to make a pilgrimage to Mecca.
- This includes a set of rituals as they reenact Muhammad's flight from Mecca to the nearby city of Medina.

Jihad: jee-HAAD

- Jihad is sometimes included as a sixth pillar.
- It is often misunderstood, especially by Westerners.
- Jihad simply means “struggle” but can have various interpretations.
- An inner struggle with bad habits or to be more religious.
- A struggle within Islam to better the community.
- An external struggle outside of Islam, against anyone who threatens the safety of Islam or Muslims.

The Life of Muhammad

- Born A.D. 570 into family of Banu Hashim clan of the larger Quraish tribe, believed to be descended from Abraham's son Ishmael.
- Raised by grandfather and then uncle Abu-Talib, head of the clan.
- Muhammad lead a caravan for a wealthy older widow named Khadija.

The Life of Muhammad

- Muhammad married Khadija when he was 25 and she was 40. They had 6 children but only the girls survived.
- Khadija died in AD 619.
- Muhammad was appalled at idol worship
- Muslims believe in AD 610 while he meditated in a cave outside of Mecca the angel (Jibreel) Gabriel visited him.

The Qur'an

- Muhammad was commanded to recite what the angel told him.
- He memorized it then repeated the messages to family and friends.
- Rest of his life he received numerous other revelations.
- They were later compiled into the Qur'an-
“recitation”

The Life of Muhammad

- By AD 613 Muhammad was preaching his message from Allah in Mecca.
- In AD 622 with growing opposition Muhammad fled from Mecca to Medina, 200 miles to the north. This is the beginning of the Islamic calendar.
- AD 632 Muhammad died.
- AH 1429 = 2008 AD

The Life of Muhammad

- Most Muslims believe Muhammad instructed Abu-Bakr to take over leadership as the first caliph (ka-LEEF).
- Others supported Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law as closest male relative. Also his cousin
- Party of Ali. Arabic for party is "*shia*" (SHEE-aa)
- Followers of Abu-Bakr became known as Sunnis (SUUN-neeZ)

Today

- Iran is 93% Shiite.
- Iraq is half Sunni and half Shiite
- Most others are Sunni.
- Aga Khan-7thers
- As a rule, the groups mistrust each other and do not intermix.
- 120,000-150,000 Muslim in greater Vancouver area
- 800,000+ in Canada