

So What's The Difference?

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Chapter Five: Islam: Allah Is One, and Christ Was Just A Prophet

PLUMB LINE: 1 Cor. 15:3-4

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...he was buried...he was Raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

Introduction

Islam:

- Has gained thousands of converts in **North America**.
- Is the youngest among major world religions but is one of the largest
- Is so missionary minded that its goal is to convert Western countries, not just African and Asian countries.
- Has approximately **1 billion** followers in countries throughout the world.
- Indonesia has the most Muslims of any country with about 120 million converts.
- One out of every six people in the world professes to be Muslim.
- Islam originated in what is now **Saudi Arabia** and expanded along the trade routes to Africa and Asia.
- The word "Islam" means "**submission**" (to Allah).
- Mohammed founded the religion Islam and the believers of Islam are called "**Muslim**," meaning "one who lives his life according to God's will."

How Mohammed Became A Prophet

- Mohammed was born in the Arabian city of **Mecca** in A.D. 570. Mohammed came from a prominent and highly respected family.
- Mohammed was raised primarily by his uncle, Abu Talid, who herded flocks.
- Later in life, Mohammed got into the caravan trade and accompanied his uncle on trips to Syria and Persia.
- During his travels, Mohammed was exposed to several concepts of **monotheism** (one god) by the Monophysites: (those who believed that Christ had only a divine nature), and Nestorians: (those who divided the Incarnate Christ into two separate natures, divine and

human, in one person yet denying that the man Jesus of Nazareth was both fully God and fully man).

- Mohammed was also exposed to Jewish teaching and was introduced to the **Talmud**.
- Mohammed did not appear to have a good understanding or belief of the Jewish Scriptures since these theological concepts are not found in the **Qur'an** (Koran-developed by Mohammed).
- At the age of 25, Mohammed married his employer, a wealthy widow named Khadija, who was 40 years of age.
- After his marriage, Mohammed spend much of his time in solitary meditation during the next **15** years.
- At the age of 40, Mohammed received his first revelation while contemplating in a cave on Mount Hira near **Mecca**.
- Mohammed said the Angel **Gabriel** came to him in a dream and brought him the following command of God:
 - “Read in the name of thy Lord who created, who created man of blood coagulated. Read! Thy Lord is the most beneficent, who taught by the pen, taught that what they knew not unto men.”
- From the command “read” comes the word “**Qur'an**” which means “the reciting” or “the reading.”
- Since Mohammed could not read or write, the Qur'an is his reciting of **revelations**.
- Through encouragement, Mohammed began to preach in the streets and marketplaces in Mecca.
- Mohammed never proclaimed to be divine but did believe Allah called him to be a **prophet**.
- Mohammed hated the idolatry and **immorality** of the Arabs who lived in Mecca and of those who came to trade their goods. Mohammed was grieved over the treatment of the poor and was met by bitter opposition.
- On July 16, 622 A.D., Mohammed was forced to flee to Yathrib. This flight was called the “hegira” and marks the beginning of the Islamic **calendar**.
- Yathrib was eventually renamed “**Medina**” and Mohammed eventually became the religious and political of the city.
- After a fight between the Meccans and Mohammed and his followers, Mohammed entered Mecca victorious and destroyed every idol in the “Kaaba” (the main temple). Since that time, **Kaaba** has been the spot toward which all devout Muslims direct their prayers.

- During the next two years, Mohammed became the leading prophet and ruler of **Arabia**. Mohammed united the tribes into a vast army to conquer the world for Allah.
- Mohammed died in 632 A.D. but his followers continued spreading the message of Islam.

The Teachings of Islam

- The Qur'an is the sacred **scriptures** of Islam. While the Qur'an is credited to God, Mohammed dictated parts of it while the rest came from the writings of disciples who remembered his oral teachings after he died.
- Muslims believe the Qur'an is copied from the original in Arabic and now resides in **Heaven**.
- In addition to the Qur'an, Mohammed developed teachings and sayings called "**Sunnah**" (literally, "path").
- The Sunnah became the foundational base for traditions built on Mohammed's conduct as a prophet as well as how he managed things while being a guide, judge and ruler of his Muslim followers.
- The Sunnah were gathered into one body of work called the "**Hadith**" which supplements the Qur'an.
- The "**Shariah**" is another important source of Islamic teaching. The "Sharia" is a combination of legal interpretations of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Shariah means "law," and sets the parameters for a strict lifestyle of Muslim living.
- The Shariah sets guidelines against eating pork and drinking alcoholic beverages. The Shariah also sets **punishments** for stealing, adultery, apostasy (denying Islam) and blasphemy (saying anything derogatory about Islam or Mohammed).

The Six Doctrines of Islam

The following are doctrines every Muslim is required to believe:

- **God**-There is only one true God and His name is **Allah**. Allah is all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful.
- **Angels**-Gabriel is the chief angel; Shaitan (from the Hebrew "Satan"); and Jinns (demons).
- **Scripture**-There four holy books Muslims believe are God-inspired: the Torah of Moses (what Christians call the **Pentateuch**), the "Zabur" (Psalms of David), the "Injil" (Gospel) of Jesus, and the Qur'an. Muslims believe the Jews and Christians corrupted their Scriptures and therefore believe the Qur'an is Allah's final word to mankind.
- **Mohammed**-Mohammed is the last and **greatest** of 28 prophets which include: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah, and Jesus.

- **The End Times**-The dead will be resurrected on the “**last day**.” Allah will judge each person who then will be sent to heaven or hell. Heaven will be a place of sensual pleasure and Hell will be for those who oppose Allah and his prophet Mohammed.
- **Predestination**-God has determined what He pleases, and no one can change what He has decreed. This is also known as “kismet,” the doctrine of **fate**. From this doctrine, Muslims state the most common Islamic phrase, “If it is Allah’s will.”

The Five Pillars of the Faith

- **Statement of belief**-To become a Muslim, one has to publicly repeat the “**Shahadah**:” “There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah.”
- **Prayer**-Muslims must pray **five** times a day: at daybreak, noon, midafternoon, after sunset, and early evening. Muslims must kneel and bow in the prescribed manner in the direction of the holy city, Mecca.
- **Alms**-Muslims must give one-fortieth of their profit (**2.5** percent). The offering goes to widows, orphans, the sick, and others in need.
- **Ramadan**-Ramadan is the **ninth** month of the Islamic lunar year. This is the highest of Muslim holy seasons. Muslims must fast the entire month from sunrise to sunset.
- **Pilgrimage to Mecca**-This pilgrimage is called the “**Haji**” and must be performed at least once in a Muslim’s lifetime. If, however, the pilgrimage is too difficult or dangerous, they can send someone in their place.

How the Qur’an Contradicts the Bible

Similarities between the Qur’an and the Bible

- Muslims trace their ancestry to **Ishmael**, a son of Abraham.
- Muslim beliefs about the nature of God, the resurrection of the body and judgment are similar to the Bible.

Differences between the Qur’an and the Bible

- The Qur’an teaches God is one and does not allow for the **Trinity**. They feel anyone who ascribes “partners” to God is committing the sin of *shirk* (blasphemy).
- Muslims believe Allah is transcendent (all-powerful) and relatively impersonal.
- Muslims do not ascribe the name of “**father**” to God since this would convey a Father and Son relationship.
- The Bible and Jesus’ teaching states God is our personal heavenly Father.
- Muslims refer to God as “**the Merciful**,” but He is not viewed primarily as a dispenser of love and grace but more as a righteous judge to whom the Muslim must give account.

- The Bible teaches God’s greatness: Psalm 77:10-15 and Isaiah 43:13
- The Bible teaches God’s love: Deuteronomy 7:8; Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 2:4; 1 John 3:1; 4:7.
- The Qur’an denies Jesus is the **Son of God** but does describe the virgin birth in a passage similar to Luke 1:26-38 (see Surah 3:45-47).
- The Qur’an refers to Jesus as a **prophet** similar to Abraham, Jonah, and others. However, Muslims place Jesus below Mohammed (Surah 4:171).
- The Muslims do not recognize what the New Testament says about Jesus’ **divinity** (Matthew 8:29; 17:5; John 1:1-5; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; 20:28; Colossians 1:15-17; 2:9).
- Muslims feel Christians have changed the Bible to add the above references.
- The Qur’an states Christ never really died on the cross but that God took Him to Heaven before the **crucifixion** (Surah 4:157).
- Muslims say **Judas** died on the cross or possibly Simon of Cyrene and was made up to fool Jesus’ followers.
- Some Muslims feel Jesus was taken from the cross before death and was later revived.
- To a Christian, the cross is the central point of **salvation**. There were eyewitness accounts of Jesus crucifixion: 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:2; 15:3, 4; Galatians 2:20; 6:12, 14; Ephesians 2:16.
- Jesus predicted His death many times: Matthew 16:21. Jesus died as a “**ransom** for many” (Mark 10:45) so His blood would bring the “forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28).
- Matthew 27:5 states Judas died by a rope, not on a cross.
- Muslims believe in order to earn salvation from sin, one must follow the Five Pillars of the Faith.
- The Bible teaches that one obtains salvation and the forgiveness of sins through **faith** in Jesus Christ: John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23-26; Ephesians 2:4-9.
- Christianity does not place undue **burdens** on a person. Matthew 11:28, 30 states “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest....For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Loving in the West, Oppressive in the East

- A distinction needs to be made between the friendly image Islam projects in the **West** and the uncompromising and political nature of Islam in the **East**.
- Islam of Islamic countries by and large believe if Islam is to be practiced correctly, then all of society must submit to Islamic law (Shariah). Because of this belief, everyone in an

Islamic society, including non-Muslims, must either conform to Islamic laws, economics, politics, and customs or suffer heavy consequences. This is **contrary** to what the Qur'an teaches as the Qur'an states there should be, "no compulsion in religion" (Surah 10:99).

- Islamic law is very strict in **Saudi Arabia**, Pakistan, and Afghanistan while others are more tolerant like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.
- Islam in the West is very different from Islam in Muslim-dominated countries.
 - Muslims who live in the Western **democratic** countries are entitled to all the benefits and privileges of freedom and democracy.
 - Muslims in the West are protected as a minority religious group, their civil liberties are secure, and they may practice their religion **freely**.

The Black Muslims are American in Origin

- An American adaptation of Islam is found in the **Black Muslim** movement.
- Timothy Drew, in 1913, taught that Blacks were originally from Morocco (not Ethiopia) and they have been enslaved by the "Caucasian Devil." Drew changed his name to Noble Drew Ali and called for the overthrow of the tyranny of the White culture.
- In 1919, after Ali died, Wallace Fard Mohammed claimed to be "Ali reincarnated" and formed the **Nation of Islam** in Detroit in 1930.
- After 1935, **Elijah Mohammed** assumed leadership of the movement. Elijah Mohammed taught that a mad Black scientist had created Whites and they would rule the earth for 6,000 years.
- Apparently Elijah felt **1914** had ended that 6,000 year rule and Blacks were now supposed to unite and bring sanity to the world.
- During the 1960s and 1970s, The Nation of Islam grew rapidly as Elijah focused on strict discipline and on bettering the education of Black people, while improving their **economic** and political conditions.
- During the 1950s and 1960s, **Malcolm X**, a leader in The Nation of Islam, began moving away from Elijah Mohammed's positions and teachings.
- Elijah Mohammed followed the multiracial characteristics of orthodox (Sunni) Islam but was assassinated by Black Muslims in 1965.
- By the 1970s, Black nationalism was disavowed by key Black Muslim leaders and non-Black members were admitted.
- Elijah's son Wallace D. Mohammed, took over after Elijah died and changed the groups' name to the **American Muslim Mission**. This movement relaxed the strict discipline and harsh rhetoric of the Black Muslim movements.

- Other Black Muslim's objected to Wallace Mohammed's policies and **Louis Farrakhan** resurrected the Nation of Islam in 1978 and taught the principles of Black separatism. Farrakhan's racist statements are considered "un-Islamic" by orthodox Muslims.
- Reasons for the Western Tolerance of Islam
- A major reason why Islam is tolerated in the West is due to the West's **Judeo-Christian** heritage which provides a theological foundation for the dignity of each individual's freedom of conscience.

Summing up Major Differences Between Muslims and Christians

Regarding God

- Muslims believe there is no God but **Allah** while Christians believe God is revealed in Scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **three** persons who are coeternally God (Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Regarding Jesus Christ

- Muslims believe Jesus was **only** a man, who being only a man was below Mohammed in importance and did not die for man's sins.
- Christians believe Christ is the **Son of God** who died and rose again for mankind (John 1:13-14; 1 Peter 3:18).

Regarding Sin

- Muslims believe humans are born **without** sin. If a person sins, the sin can be overcome by acts of the will.
- Christians believe we are born **corrupted** by sin, spiritually dead apart from God's grace, and that no one does good apart from faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:12; Ephesians 5:8-10).

Regarding Salvation

- Muslims say Allah does not love those who do wrong and each person must **earn** their own salvation.
- Christians believe a loving God sent His Son to **die** for our sins (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).