

“Islam for Christians”

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**“Islam Today: What is
Islam, and How can
Christians Learn what
Muslims Really Think?”**

September 21, 2017

Islam for *Christians*: How Christians should think about those who practice Islam

Key Words of Jesus:

Matthew 7:1-2: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

The standards that we use to judge Muslims are the standards that God will use to judge us.

Matthew 7:12: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

We Christians must treat Muslims as we want Muslims to treat us!

First Things First: How can Christians learn about what Muslims believe?

- Apply Matthew 7 (judging Muslims as we want to be judged): How would we want Muslims to learn about what we (Christians) believe?

Applying Matthew 7: How can Muslims learn about what Christians believe?

- Some bad answers....
 - Read the Bible directly
 - Talk to someone who grew up Christian, but is now a Muslim (“the insider view of Christianity”)
 - Watch news about what happens in “Christian” countries

Applying Matthew 7: How can Muslims learn about what Christians believe?

- Some good answers....
 - Read the Bible with Christian guidance
 - Talk to practicing Christians
 - Watch and read things created by practicing Christians

How can Christians learn what Muslims believe?

- Talk to *practicing* Muslims
- Read the Qur'an *with Muslim guidance*
- Look for news of *practicing* Muslims

How to learn about Islam from non-Muslims

- Make sure that the data on Islam comes from practicing Muslims
- Consider the bias of “experts” who compare religions
- Understand that *all religions change* over time and distance

How do we know who is and is not a “true” Muslim?

- Look for Muslims who represent the majority - “Mainstream” Muslims
- Allow the “Mainstream” to explain who is and is not a “Muslim”
- (all mosques in Hampton Roads and most mosques in the USA are “Mainstream”)

“What is Islam?”

- ▶ Based on Old Testament *Judaism*
- ▶ Influenced by New Testament *Christianity*
- ▶ Islam is a “religion,” *not* a “faith”

Islam - Orthopraxy *above* Orthodoxy

Orthopraxy - “Right Behavior” - Judaism (Deut 6:1-3), Islam

Orthodoxy - “Right Belief” - Christianity (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The Goal of Islam

- ▶ Create and Support a **Just Society**
 - ▶ All human beings are equal;
 - ▶ All human beings should follow God's will.

Muslim Ritual: Making Society Just

- ▶ The Five Pillars of Muslim Practice - Promoting Justice

First Pillar of Practice: The *Shahada*

“There is no God but God, and Muhammad is God’s Prophet”

- ▶ Revises the *Shema* (“Confession”) of Judaism
 - “Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone”
(Deuteronomy 6:4).

Why didn't Muslims just accept the *Shema*?

- ▶ Addressed to the Jewish people only;
- ▶ Moses is the authority.

The *Shahada* - “There is No God but God...”

- ▶ - Strict Monotheism
 - ▶ Rejects Christian “Trinity”
 - ▶ God and humans are separate (i.e., rejects divinity of Christ)

The *Shahada* - “...and Muhammad is God’s Prophet.”

- ▶ - We should follow the teachings of Muhammad, the last and greatest of God’s prophets.
- ▶ What is a “prophet”?

“...Muhammad is God’s Prophet.”

- ▶ **Deuteronomy 18:15** The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.
- ▶ Moses predicted the coming of another prophet. (Who is Moses talking about?)

New Testament: Jesus is the Prophet

- ▶ **Matthew 17:1-5** Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

Qur'an - *Isra* and *Mi'raj* - “Night Journey”: Muhammad is God’s Prophet

- ▶ In one night,
 - ▶ Muhammad travels to Jerusalem (*Isra*);
 - ▶ Muhammad ascends to heaven (*Mi'raj*);
 - ▶ Jesus and Moses (and other Biblical figures) acknowledge Muhammad as the final prophet.

“...Muhammad is God’s Prophet”

- ▶ Therefore, we must follow the teaching of Muhammad
 - ▶ Qur’an
 - ▶ Hadith Literature

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