

“Islam for Christians”

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“Muhammad and Jesus; the Qur’an and the Bible”

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According to Christians, Who is Jesus?

- 1) God on earth
- 2) Means by which humankind finds peace with God
- 3) Model of human behavior (“exemplar”)
- 4) Most important human Teacher
 - Inspiration behind the New Testament

According to Muslims, Who is Muhammad?

- 1) Model of human behavior (“exemplar”)
- 2) Most important human teacher
 - Hears and recites the entire Qur’an
 - The main character in most *hadith*

Muhammad as exemplar

- ▶ Husband
- ▶ Father
- ▶ Employee
- ▶ Statesman
- ▶ Military Leader
- ▶ Teacher

Muhammad's Biography: the *Sira*

- ▶ Main source of information about Muhammad's life
- ▶ Compilation of stories told by others

Muhammad and Islamic Teaching

- Listened to, then spoke the words of the Qur'an
- Spoke (most of) the words of the *hadith*
- All Muslim teaching goes back to Muhammad

Muhammad: 570-632 C.E.

- 595 - Marries Khadija (first wife)
- 610 - First revelations from God
- 613 - Begins public preaching
- (618?) - *Miraj* (“Night Journey”)
- 622 - “Hegira” - migration to Medina
 - Sets up Muslim community
- 630 - Return to Mecca

The Bible: Principles of Christian Interpretation

- New Testament Supersedes the Old Testament
- Old Testament Promises to Abraham and his descendants are applied to the Church
- Old Testament “Ritual” Law Does not Apply
- Some passages (Old and New Testament) must be read within historical context

The Qur'an: Three Periods

- 610-613: Early Meccan Period
 - General statements about God and humankind
- 613-622: Late Meccan Period
 - Reinterpretation of Bible teaching
- 622-632: Medinan Period
 - Rules and Regulations for the Community

Qur'an: Main Ideas

- There is only one God, who created the world and is perfectly powerful, loving, and just
- The primary duty of Human beings is to submit to God
- Human beings are often distracted from their primary duty
- God is merciful, and so has sent prophets and scriptures to steer humans back to worshiping God
- Those who submit to God go to heaven; those who do not will suffer in hell

Creeds: From the Bible to Christianity

- Many Christian doctrines are not clearly stated in the Bible
- Creeds and confessions explain what Christians should believe

Hadith: Explaining Islam

- Words of Muhammad and his close associates, written down a few centuries after his death
- Authenticity measured according to the *chain of transmission*
- The most authentic *hadith* are equal in authority to the Qur'an

Hadith of Gabriel: Pillars of Practice

Umar ibn al-Khattab said: One day when we were with God's messenger, a man with very white clothing and very black hair came up to us. No mark of travel was visible on him, and none of us recognized him. Sitting down before the Prophet, leaning his knees against his, and placing his hands on his thighs, he said, "Tell me, Muhammad, about submission."

He replied, 'Submission means that you should bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is God's messenger, that you should perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms tax, fast during Ramadan, and make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to go there.'

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