

“Islam for Christians”

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**“Life together: What
Christians Can Learn from
Muslims, and How We Can
Live in Harmony.”**

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Christian Bible Interpretation

- We interpret the Bible to fit our time and place
 - Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed
 - Book of Common Prayer
 - Church practice (Sunday services, sacraments)
 - Church forms (Anglicanism, Catholicism, Protestant denominations)

The Qur'an as Bible Interpretation

- Qur'an is based on the Bible
- Qur'an reinterprets the Bible for a particular generation

Psalm 1

- ▶ Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, **or take the path that sinners tread**, or sit in the seat of scoffers; ² but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. ³ **They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.** ⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶ **for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.**

Qur'an 1

- ▶ In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. It is You we worship, and upon You we call for help. **Guide us to the straight path.** The path of those You have blessed, not of those against whom there is anger, nor of those who are misguided.

Qur'an 1 and Psalm 1

- ▶ Central messages are similar
- ▶ Psalm 1 introduces the Psalms; Qur'an 1 introduces the entire Qur'an
- ▶ Qur'an 1 orients reader to the contents of the entire Qur'an
 - ▶ Genesis 1 does *not* orient Christians or Jews to the Old and New Testaments

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make idols.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet.

Ten Commandments: Qur'an (6:151-153 and 17:22-38)

1. Associate nothing with God
2. Honor your parents
3. Do not kill your children because of poverty
4. Avoid both external and internal indecencies
5. Do not kill people, except in the cause of justice
6. Do not approach the property of an orphan
7. Give full weight and full measure
8. Be fair in your speech, even with relatives
9. Keep your promises to God
10. Follow God's path, and avoid all others

Qur'anic revision of the Ten Commandments

- ▶ Commandments are very similar
- ▶ #3 - “New” command is overtly anti-abortion
- ▶ Commands more overtly stress justice
 - ▶ Fair weights and measures
 - ▶ Special protection for the powerless
 - ▶ Muhammad was an orphan
- ▶ Command regarding killing permits the death penalty
- ▶ Coveting, adultery commands are missing

“The Love of God,” stanza 3 - Frederick M. Lehman

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

“The Love of God,” stanza 3 - Frederick M. Lehman

- ▶ Words taken from the Aramaic poem *akdamut*, written c. 1050 by Rabbi Meyer ben Nehorai (Worms, Germany)
- ▶ Qur’an 31:27 - *If all the trees on earth were pens, filled by the ocean, with seven more oceans besides, the Words of God would not run out. God is Majestic and Wise.*

Jesus in the Qur'an

- ▶ Born of the virgin Mary
- ▶ ***Not*** God's son; ***not*** divine
- ▶ Strengthened by God's spirit
- ▶ Performed miracles
- ▶ Received and taught true message from God
- ▶ Taught people to follow God
- ▶ Executed, but not by crucifixion
- ▶ Taken bodily to heaven

Where Christians and Muslims Disagree

- ▶ Authority of Muhammad, the Qur'an, and *hadith*
 - ▶ Muslims teach that Muhammad was the greatest of the prophets and that the Qur'an and *hadith* are our most authoritative texts
- ▶ Divinity of Christ
 - ▶ Christians teach that Christ is both God and human; Muslims insist that he was human only
- ▶ Nature of God
 - ▶ Muslims deny God's "triune" nature

Where Christians and Muslims Agree

- ▶ Ethical Monotheism
 - ▶ There is only one God, creator of the universe, and God is perfectly powerful, loving, and just
- ▶ God loves all people
- ▶ All people are equal in God's eyes
- ▶ Human beings should obey God alone
- ▶ Human beings should be genuinely kind to everyone (even those of other religions)

Where Christians and Muslims can Work Together

- ▶ Honor the one true God together
- ▶ Build a just, fair society
 - ▶ Make (Keep) America Great (again?)
- ▶ Fight evil and injustice in all its forms
 - ▶ Racism
 - ▶ Terrorism
 - ▶ Abuse of the poor and powerless

Getting Along with Muslims: *Intentionality*

- ▶ Christian responsibility to “reach out” to those in the minority
 - ▶ Seek association and friendships
 - ▶ Care for those who may be abused
 - ▶ Encourage other Christians to interact with Muslims before making judgments

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