

**All material taken from Josh McDowell & Don Stewart's Handbook of Today's Religions and the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention's Interfaith Evangelism Belief Bulletin**

**ISLAM**

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# MISCELLANY

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- ✘ **Worldwide: Estimated 1 billion; 69% live in South and Southeast Asia; 27% in Africa; 4% other; United States: Estimated 5 to 8 million**
- ✘ **From the verb meaning “to surrender, submit, or commit”**
  - + **Islam is characterized by the act of submissive commitment**
  - + **Muslim: “one who submits”**

# HISTORY

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## × Muhammad

- + born 570 AD
- + 25 yrs. old when he married Khadijah, a 40 yr. old widow
- + Rejected polytheism of Mecca & embraced monotheism (debate whether or not this is due to the influence of surrounding Christianity or Judaism)
- + Final prophet

## × Visions

- + Begin at age 40 and continue for 22 yrs. until his death in 632
- + Divine or demonic? Khadijah advocated the former
- + His subsequent claims: “Gabriel’s appearances,” including “preventing” him from committing suicide

# HISTORY

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- ✘ **The Hijira**
  - + Teachings rejected in Mecca, so he fled to Medina on July 16, 622
  - + Islamic calendars begin with this date. So, today is July 6, 1385 AH
  - + Muhammad sympathetic towards Jews & Christians until they, too, rejected his teachings
  - + Center of Muslim worship no longer seen as Jerusalem, but Mecca, wherein was already enshrined the sacred stone called the Ka'aba
  - + Islam subsequently characterized by a zealous & militant fervor
- ✘ **Muhammad's succession: Caliph**
  - + Factions arise: Abu Bakr, then 'Umar ibn al Khattab
  - + Division: elected or hereditary?

# BRANCHES

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## × Sunnis

- + Conflict re: law & theology, giving rise to four recognized, orthodox schools
- + Majority branch
- + “followers of the prophet’s way”
- + Accept the four bases of Islamic Law (Shari’a):
  - × the Qur’an (Koran)
  - × The Hadith (traditions)
  - × The Ij’ma’ (consensus of the Muslim community)
  - × The Q’yas (use of analogical reason)
- + Process of decision making

# BRANCHES

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## × Shi'a

- + “the party (Shi'a) of Ali,” Muhammad's son-in-law, believe that they are the legitimate Caliphs
- + Seen as heretical by most Muslims, yet tolerated , given the history of the movement
- + Over time, idea developed that every legitimate leader of the 'Alids was an “imam mahdi” (divinely appointed leader)
- + Most notable gathering of Shi'ites: Iran

## × Sufis

- + Islamic mystics
- + Seek direct, personal experience of the divine
- + Most often at odds with legalists, though some Sufis are legalists themselves
- + Desire to be more like Muhammad
- + Dervish orders (e.g. “the whirling Dervish”)

# SHARI'A (THE LAW)

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- ✘ Faith (imam) & duty (din)
- ✘ Central role in all Islamic cultures
- ✘ Refers to the total way of life as explicitly or implicitly commanded by Allah
- ✘ Embraces all of human life, from prohibition of crime to the use of a toothpick, and from the organization of the State to the most sacred intimacies of family life
- ✘ Shari'a: theocracy vs. secular
- ✘ Role of Shari'a for Sunnis (four schools/ijma) & Shi'ites (Hidden Imam)

# QUR'AN

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- ✘ **Authoritative scripture, but only in Arabic; final authority; replaces earlier revealed books**
- ✘ **Theory of inspiration**
- ✘ **About 4/5 the length of the NT; divided into 114 surahs (chapters)**
- ✘ **Parts written by Muhammad; parts written by his disciples, from memory, based on his oral traditions, after his death**
- ✘ **Additional sayings of Muhammad & early disciples compiled: Hadith (traditions), the sayings of which are called the sunna (customs)**
- ✘ **Relationship between the Hadith & Qu'ran is like that between the Talmud and the Law in Judaism**

# FIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH

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- × **Main doctrines of Islam, which all Muslims are expected to believe:**
- × **1) God:**
  - + **“There is no god but God [i.e. Allah].”**
  - + **All-knowing, all-powerful, & sovereign judge**
  - + **Impersonal, because he is so far above humanity that he is unknowable**
  - + **Unaffected by his creatures’ attitudes or actions; his love overruled by his supreme attribute: justice**
  - + **he is the source of good and evil**

# FIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH

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## × 2) Angels

- + Gabriel is the lead angel who appeared to Muhammad
- + Jibril is the angel of inspiration
- + Al Shaytan is the devil and most likely a fallen angel or jinn
- + Jinn are creatures between angels and humans which can either be good or evil
- + Created of light, so no bodily functions
- + All have functions & different purposes
- + Each man or woman has two recording angels— one for good deeds, and one for bad deeds

# FIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH

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## × 3) Scripture

- + Four inspired books: Torah of Moses, Psalms (Zabin) of David, the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Injil), and the Qur'an
- + The former three books have been corrupted by Jews & Christians
- + Qur'an supersedes all other book, since it is Allah's most recent and final word

## × 4) Prophets

- + Six greatest prophets of Allah: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, with Muhammad being the greatest

# FIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH

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- ✘ **5) Last Days**
  - + Time of resurrection & judgment
  - + Those who follow Allah & Muhammad will go to Paradise, Islamic heaven, while those who oppose will be tormented in hell
  - + Day & hour is secret to all, though there will be 25 signs of its approach
  - + All will be raised, angels open the books, and Allah weighs our deeds on the balances
  - + Paradise: men & women's roles
  - + Almost all will enter the fire, but no true Muslim will remain there forever.
  
- ✘ **Kismet (6<sup>th</sup> article?): fate**
  - + All good and evil proceeds from Allah's will
  - + "It is Allah's will."

# FIVE PILLARS OF FAITH

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- ✘ **Foundational practices for every Muslim**
- ✘ **1) The Creed (Kalima)**
  - + “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah.
  - + Must be stated publicly to be a Muslim, and then repeated constantly by the faithful
- ✘ **2) Prayer (Salat)**
  - + Call to prayer from a tower on a mosque
  - + Hadith prescribes standing, kneeling, hands and face on the ground, etc.
  - + Recite prescribed prayers from Koran in Arabic while facing the Ka’aba in Mecca
  - + 5x/day (upon rising, noon, mid-afternoon, after sunset, before going to bed)

# FIVE PILLARS OF FAITH

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- × **3) Almsgiving (Zakat)**
  - + Legally required to give one-fortieth of income for the poor
  - + Other regulations for produce, cattle, etc.
  - + Freewill offerings allowed
  - + No sense of indebtedness for the recipient (helping giver reach salvation); giver feels lucky he has someone to give to (for salvation)
  
- × **4) Fasting (Ramadan)**
  - + from sunup to sundown each day during this month
  - + Self-control, devotion to Allah, identity with poor
  - + No food, drink, sex, or smoking during the day

# FIVE PILLARS OF FAITH

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- × **5) The Pilgrimage (Hajj)**
  - + Expected of all Muslims (elderly or ill by proxy ok) at least once in their lifetime
  - + Essential in gaining salvation
  - + Ceremonies & rituals centered around Ka'aba
  - + Tradition of Ka'aba
- × **Jihad (6<sup>th</sup> pillar?): Holy War**
  - + If warranted, men required to go to war to spread Islam to, or defend it against, infidels
  - + One who dies in jihad is guaranteed eternal life in Paradise
  - + Internal vs. external

# GOD

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- ✘ **Unity of Allah's essence and personality, explicitly excluding the Trinity**
- ✘ **God so unified with himself that he cannot be associated with creation**
- ✘ **He acts impersonally, due to his great transcendence**
- ✘ **God is capricious, the author of both good and evil. Whatever he chooses is right, making any true standard of righteousness virtually impossible to establish.**
- ✘ **Contrast this with the righteousness of the God of the Bible. The word "righteous" means "standard."**
- ✘ **"father" cannot be divorced from physical realm, so it is blasphemous to call God your Father. This would be saying that God had intercourse with your mother to produce you.**
- ✘ **Strictness of Muslim fatherhood; bound by duty**
- ✘ **Allah is deficient in such attributes as love, holiness, and grace, whereas the true God has a character rooted in grace (Eph. 2).**

# CHRIST

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- ✘ **Jesus**
  - + is not the only begotten, fully incarnate Son of God. Contrast with John 1:14, 34; 10:30
  - + was not crucified (either Judas, or Jesus did not die), and He did not rise from the dead. Contrast with 2 Cor. 15:3-6, 17
- ✘ **These are essential tenets of the Christian faith**
- ✘ **Jesus was a sinless prophet, though lesser than Muhammad**
- ✘ **Surah 3:45-47 speaks of Jesus' virgin birth, though differently than Scripture's version. Koran: Jesus is not the only begotten Son of God, and an angel—rather than the Holy Spirit—was the agency of God's power in the conception.**
- ✘ **Even with this view, the idea that Allah had a son is anathema**

# CHRIST

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- ✘ **Called the Messiah (though a vacuous term)**
- ✘ **Lived a sinless life (Surah 19:19)**
- ✘ **Accomplished many miracles (Surah 3:49)**
- ✘ **Will return again as judge, the one who will establish Islam throughout the earth.**
- ✘ **Called the “Word of God” (Surah 3:45), and “the Spirit from God” (Surah 4:171)**
- ✘ **High regard, but He is not the Savior**

# **SIN & SALVATION**

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- × Legalistic system requiring works for salvation**
- × Holding to the Articles of Faith and following the Pillars of Faith**
- × Sin is a lack of obedience to Allah**
- × Humans are sinful by act only, and not by nature. Contrast with Rom. 3:23**
- × Islam makes no provision for sin, and one's salvation is never assured, since it is based on complete surrender ("Islam") to Allah's will, along with Allah's attitude at death**

# **OTHER REMARKS**

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**“There are historical roots which tie Islam to Christianity, yet this is where the similarity ends. Islam rejects the key doctrines of the Christian faith—the Trinity, the deity of Christ, Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, and the sin of man and his salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ.**

**“They also reject the Bible as the only authoritative book on which to base all matters of doctrine, faith and practice. When Islam rejects the truth of the written Word of God, they are left not only different from Christianity, but opposite from Christianity on all counts. Islam was founded by a dead prophet; Christianity was founded by the risen Savior.”**

# EVANGELISM

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- ✘ **1. Be courteous and loving.**
- ✘ **2. Reflect interest in their beliefs. Allow them time to articulate their views.**
- ✘ **3. Be acquainted with their basic beliefs.**
- ✘ **4. Be willing to examine passages of the Qur'an concerning their beliefs.**
- ✘ **5. Stick to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith but also take time to respond to all sincere questions.**

# EVANGELISM

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- ✘ **6. Point out the centrality of the Person and work of Jesus Christ for salvation.**
- ✘ **7. Stress that because of Jesus, His cross, and resurrection, one may have the full assurance of salvation, both now and for eternity (see 1 John 5:13).**
- ✘ **8. Share the plan of salvation with the Muslim. Point out that salvation is a gift and not to be earned.**
- ✘ **9. Pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Trust Him to provide wisdom and grace.**
- ✘ **10. Be willing to become a friend and a personal evangelist to Muslims.**

# ANSWERING MUSLIM OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

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- ✘ **Christians and Jews are acknowledged as “people of the book,” although their failure to conform to the confession of Islam labels them as unbelievers. Following are several questions that Muslims have about Christianity.**
- ✘ **Is the Trinity a belief in three gods?**
- ✘ **Christians are monotheistic and believe that God is one. But both in His work in accomplishing salvation through the Person of Jesus Christ and through biblical study it has become clear that His oneness in fact comprises three Persons—Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and the third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Mary is not part of the Godhead. The notion of God, who is three-in-one, is part of both the mystery and greatness of God. God is in essence one while in Persons three. This truth helps us understand God as truly personal and having the capacity to relate to other persons. As well, Christians confirm the holiness, sovereignty, and greatness of God.**

# ANSWERING MUSLIM OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

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- ✘ **How can Jesus be the Son of God?**
- ✘ **Scripture affirms that Jesus was conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. It does not in any way claim that Jesus was directly God the Father's biological and physical son. It rejects the notion of the Arabic word for son walad, meaning physical son, for the word ibin, which is the title of relationship. Jesus is the Son in a symbolic manner designating that He was God the Word who became man in order to save humankind from its sin. The virgin birth was supernatural as God the Holy Spirit conceived in Mary, without physical relations, Jesus the Messiah. In this manner even the Qur'an affirms the miraculous birth of Christ (see Surah 19:16-21). Jesus was in this sense "God's unique Son." During His earthly ministry He carried out the will of the Father. Notably the Qur'an affirms Jesus' supernatural birth, life of miracles, His compassion, and ascension to heaven. (see Surah 19:16-21,29-31; 3:37-47, 5:110.)**

# **ANSWERING MUSLIM OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY**

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- ✘ **How could Jesus have died on the cross, especially if He's God's Son?**
- ✘ **The testimony of history and of the Injil or the four Gospels is that Jesus died on the cross. If it is understood that God is love, and that humankind is lost in sin, then is it not likely that God would have provided a sacrifice for sin? Jesus is God's sacrifice for all the sins of the world and is a bridge from a holy God to fallen and sinful humans...Muslims believe that God took Jesus from the cross and substituted Judas in His place, or at least someone who looked like Jesus. He was then taken to heaven where He is alive and from where one day He will return.**

# **ANSWERING MUSLIMS' QUESTIONS TO CHRISTIANS ABOUT ISLAM**

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- ✘ **What do you think about the prophet Muhammad?**
- ✘ **Muhammad was apparently a well-meaning man who sought to oppose paganism and evil in his day. While he succeeded in uniting the Arabian peninsula and upheld several important virtues, we do not believe he received a fresh revelation from God. Jesus Christ fulfilled not only the final prophetic role from God, but He is the Savior of the world and God the Son. While Islam believes that some Bible passages refer to Muhammad (see Deut. 18:18-19; John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7), that is clearly not the meaning of the texts. Other passages may help in understanding and interpreting the previous texts (see Matthew 21:11; Luke 24:19; John 6:14; 7:40; Acts 1:8-16; 7:37).**

# **ANSWERING MUSLIMS' QUESTIONS TO CHRISTIANS ABOUT ISLAM**

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- ✘ **What is your opinion of the Qur'an?**
- ✘ **It is a greatly valued book for the Muslim. It is not received or believed to be a divine book by the Christian. The statements of the Qur'an are accepted only where they agree with the Bible.**
  
- ✘ **What is your opinion about the five pillars?**
- ✘ **Salvation is from God and comes only through the saving work of Jesus Christ. When we put our faith in Him, we will be saved (see John 3:16-21,31-36).**