

Essentials of Islam

Dr. Timothy Tennent



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Essentials of Islam
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Overview

Title: Essentials of Islam

Speaker: Dr. Timothy Tennent, Asbury Theological Seminary

This course serves as a summary of the beliefs and practices of Islam by Dr. Timothy Tennent. There are seven messages that will introduce readers to the historical context, key tenets of the Muslim faith, distinctions and divisions found within Islam, and a basic strategy for engaging Muslims with the gospel.

GOALS

1. Ability to describe the historical context in which Islam was conceived.
2. Knowledge of and ability to summarize each of the Five Pillars of Islam.
3. Ability to identify the major sects of Islam and the differences between them.
4. Understand the origins of Islamic fundamentalism and ability to describe an effective response to this movement.

REQUIREMENTS

1. 7 sessions
2. 2 hours per week (lesson and discussion)

PREREQUISITES

None

FORMAT

Audio

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DISTINCTIVES

World class. All Bible classes are taught by world-class professors from major seminaries.

Holistic. We want to see students move through content to deep reflection and application.

Configurable. Ministries can use BT lectures as well as their own to design their educational program.

Accessible. BiblicalTraining is a web-based ministry whose content is provided at no cost.

Community-based. We encourage people to learn together, in mentor/apprentice relationships.

Broadly evangelical. Our materials are broadly evangelical, governed by our Statement of Faith, and are not tied to any one church, denomination or tradition.

Partners. We provide the content and delivery mechanisms, and our partner organizations provide the community and mentoring.

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Your Speaker

Dr. Timothy C. Tennent is President of Asbury Theological Seminary and Professor of World Christianity.

He previously served 11 years as Professor of World Missions and Indian Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass. Prior to his work in Massachusetts, Dr. Tennent taught missions at Toccoa Falls College in Georgia, where he was honored as teacher of the year in 1995. He also teaches annually at the Luther W. New Jr. Theological College of Dehra Dun, India, where he has served as an adjunct professor since 1989.

He has also ministered and taught in China, Thailand, Nigeria and Eastern Europe. Ordained in the United Methodist Church, he has pastored churches in Georgia, and preached regularly in churches throughout New England and across the country.

Dr. Tennent is the author of several books, including *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations*, (ISPCK, 2000); *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable*, (Baker Academic, 2002); and *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology*, (Zondervan, 2007). He is the co-author of *Revitalizing Practice*, which is about challenges to theological education in North America (Peter Lang, 2008). Dr. Tennent is also the author of a missiology textbook entitled *Invitation to World Missions: A Missiology for the 21st Century* (2010).

EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Th.M., Princeton Theological Seminary

M.Div., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

B.A., Oral Roberts University

Student's Guide

We are pleased that you have chosen to use materials from BiblicalTraining.org. We trust that you will find them to be of the highest quality and truly helpful in your own spiritual growth and that of your church. Please read through the following guidelines; they will help you make the best use of this guide.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Listen or watch the lesson. The lesson for each chapter is designed to be listened to outside of your meeting. Each lesson lasts for an hour. This is a crucial step. If the meeting time with your fellow students is going to be productive and encouraging, everyone in the group needs to have listened to and wrestled with the lesson.

Take notes. This guide has the outline for each lesson with a summary of the teaching for each major point. If you are unable to take notes while listening to the lesson, please work through the guide at some point before your meeting.

Questions. Each chapter closes with a series of questions. Some of the questions are data based, confirming that you understand the information. Other questions are more reflective, helping you move beyond the important accumulation of knowledge to challenging you to think through what you are learning about God, yourself and others, and finally to application. Our encouragement is to think through your answers before your meeting and then use the meeting to share your thoughts and interact with others.

Meeting. Meet together with your group.

MEETING TOGETHER

While some people may have to study on their own, we strongly recommend finding a group with which you can study.

A group provides encouragement to finish the class.

Interacting with others, their understanding and insight, is the most effective way to sharpen your own thoughts and beliefs.

Just as you will need the help of others from time to time, so also they will need your help.

Mentor's Guide

If you are leading the group or mentoring an individual, here are some suggestions that should help you.

Your role is to facilitate. This is not an opportunity for you to teach. In fact, the less visible role you take, the better. Your role is to listen and bring out the best in the other people.

Preparation. Be sure to have done your homework thoroughly. Have listened to the lesson and think carefully through the questions. Have an answer for each question that will get the conversation going. A great question is, "What is the Lord teaching you this week?"

Creativity. What works to help one person understand may not help another. So listen to the conversation and pray that the Lord help you bring out the greatest interaction among all the people.

Correct error. This is difficult. If someone says something that isn't right, you don't want to come down on them, telling them they are wrong and shutting down their participation. On the other hand, if you let an obvious error pass, the rest of the group may think you agree and what was said was correct. So look for gracious ways to suggest that perhaps the person's comment was incorrect.

Focus. Stay focused on Jesus and the Bible, not on church or religious traditions.

Lead the discussion. People don't want to listen to a sharing of common ignorance. Lead by asking questions that will prompt others to think.

Silence. Don't be afraid of silence. It may mean nothing more than people are thinking. But if the conversation lags, then ask thought-provoking questions to get the discussion started, and then step out of the way.

Discipleship. Be acutely aware of how you can mentor the people in the group. Meet with them for coffee. Share some life with them. Jesus' Great Commission is to teach people to obey, and the only way this happens is in relationship.

Men and women. Be aware that men and women tend to learn differently. Don't ask the men to become women in how they answer.

Privacy. All discussions are private, not to be shared outside the group unless otherwise specified.

Goal. The goal of this study is not just increased knowledge; it is transformation. Don't be content with people getting the "right" answers. The Pharisees got the "right" answer, and many of them never made it to heaven (Matt 5:20).

Relationships. Share everyone's name, email and phone number so people can communicate during the week and follow up on prayer requests. You may want to set up a way to share throughout the week using Slack or WhatsApp.

Finish well. Encourage the people to make the necessary commitment to do the work, think reflectively over the questions, and complete the class.

Prayer. Begin and end every meeting with prayer. Please don't do the quick "one-prayer-covers-all" approach. Manage the time so all of you can pray over what you have learned and with what you have been challenged. Pray regularly for each individual in the meeting.

1

Historical Context of Islam

LESSON OVERVIEW

The geography and cultural influences in Arabia during the 6th century A.D. had a significant influence on the beginning and development of the religion of Islam. Muhammad's early life was normal. When he was 40, he claimed to have a revelation from the angel Gabriel about worshiping the one "true" God, Allah. He receives further revelations that he records in what has become known as the Qur'an. Because of his revelation, Muhammad destroyed the family idols and then fled to Medina with a group of his supporters. There were significant military battles in which Muhammad and his followers defended themselves even though they were greatly outnumbered. Some of the Muslim mosques that were built have great religious and historical significance.

ARABIA IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

“The land of traders and raiders.”

1. Inhabitants

Known as Arabs, the inhabitants were bound together by a very loose tribal structure and were dependent on caravan routes for survival.

2. Mecca and the Ka’ba

Mecca is the most important place in the Arabian Peninsula because it had a very large oasis and housed the Ka’ba, a cube like building which contained the Black Stone and 360 images that stood around the stone.

MUHAMMAD

1. Early life

Born in Mecca and lead a very ordinary life eventually marrying a woman named Khadijah who was fifteen years his elder who owned several important caravans.

2. Call to public ministry

When Muhammad was 40 years old, the angel Gabriel appeared to him during the month of Ramadan while meditating in the cave and called him to rise up and warn the peoples of Arabia that they are facing eternal damnation unless they turn from their idolatry and worship the one true God.

3. Revelations

Muhammad receives regular revelations from Gabriel from the years A.D. 610 to 632, which become what is known today as the Qur'an.

4. The Qur'an

Made up of 114 Surahs, the Qur'an is believed by Muslims to be the exact duplication of a heavenly transcript of the word of Allah located in heaven; Muhammad is said to have been completely passive in the recording of the Qur'an.

5. Early Christian influences

Muhammad and 75 Muslims take refuge with the Christians in modern day Ethiopia in A.D. 615, but the Christians there were less than orthodox thus the early Muslims were exposed to a wide range of heretical views of Christianity.

6. The Hegira (622)

Meaning “the Exodus”, the Hegira is when Muhammad and his followers head north to Medina and is very important theologically for Muslims because it marks the beginning of the Islamic era.

A. Powerful corporate movement

Muhammad’s individual visions are united with a corporate movement of Arabs.

B. Birth of a new religion

From the time of Muhammad's flight over to Abyssinia until the time of the Hegira there was increasing animosity between the Arabs and the Jews and the Christians because growing theological differences.

C. Emergence of a new political authority

The emergence of Islam creates the possibility of the Arabs being united into a singular civilization.

7. Battles

Muhammad returns to Medina and unites it religiously, socially, politically, and militarily.

A. Badr (624)

Known as "the mother of all battles", 319 Muslims overcame unbelievable odds defeating over 1,000 Meccan soldiers.

B. Uhud (625)

Muhammad and his followers are badly defeated and Muhammad explains the reason they were defeated was not because of Allah's inability to help them, but because of the lack of faith and the need for spiritual purity in the lives of the fighters; value of martyrdom.

C. Return to Mecca (630)

With enough followers now Muhammad decides to return to Mecca and expects a huge battle, only to find that everyone lays their swords down in surrender; Muhammad cleanses the Ka'ba leaving only the Black Stone as a sign of monotheism.

MOSQUES

1. The Prophet's Mosque

The second-most sacred mosque in the world located in Medina, where Muhammad was buried.

2. The Grand Mosque

The most sacred mosque in the entire world which houses the Ka'ba and the Black Stone; it is to this mosque that all Muslims go on pilgrimage and toward which they all pray.

3. The Prophet's Prayer Mosque

Supposedly the first place the prophet prayed after the Hegira on his way from Mecca to Yathrib.

4. The Dome of the Rock

Located in Jerusalem on what is believed to be the rock upon which the temple was built and Abraham placed Ishmael/Isaac upon the wood to be sacrificed, and Muslims believe that Muhammad ascended into Heaven and received various revelations directly in the presence of Allah

RECOMMENDED READING FOR THE COURSE

The Koran, N.J. Dawood, trans., Penguin Books, 1983

Islam: The Straight Path, 3rd edition, John L. Esposito, Oxford University Press, 1998

The Word of Islam, by J. Alden Williams, University of Texas Press, 1984

Christianity at the Religious Roundtable: Evangelicalism in Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, by Timothy Tennent, Baker Books, 2002

2

Qur'an and the Five Pillars

LESSON OVERVIEW

The Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a divine revelation from God given directly to Muhammad beginning in about A.D. 610. The Five Pillars of the Islamic religion are the confession of faith, ritual prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage.

THE QUR'AN

1. Background

Over a period of time from 610 when he received his first revelation to his death in 632, Muhammad had a number of revelations which today compose the 114 chapters or Surahs known as the Qur'an.

2. Arrangement of the Surahs

The Qur'an is organized according to the longest Surahs to the shortest Surahs without any particular reference to the time frame in which they're given.

3. Abrogation

An earlier revelation can be abrogated, or overturned, by a later revelation, which creates difficulty when reading the Qur'an because it's arrangement is not chronological.

4. The first Surah

Composed of only seven verses and is viewed as a kind of summary of the entire Qur'an

5. The people of the Book

Elevation of the Arab people from the people with no book to the people of the Book, the Qur'an.

THE FIVE PILLARS

While there are many particular beliefs that divide Muslims, the Five Pillars of Islam unify all Muslims together.

1. Confession of faith (Shahadah)

Shahadah means “to witness” or “to testify” and is recited as “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah”; to make this confession with sincerity is to become a Muslim.

A. Allah’s sovereignty and unrivaled providence

Qur’an emphasizes the existence and the unrivaled sovereignty of Allah with parallels between the Shahadah and the Hebrew Shema.

B. Muhammad as the final “seal” of the prophets

Muhammad affirmed as the perfect vessel through whom Allah chose to deliver his word.

2. Ritual prayer (Salat)

A very special kind of prayer that is a ritualized prayer that is said at particular times and in particular ways.

A. Call to prayer (Adhan) by the Muezzin

Five times a day a Muezzin issues a call to prayer from atop the minaret, a very tall narrow tower next to the dome of the mosque.

B. Four aspects of Salat

1) Ablution

Ritual washing to prepare one's self to approach the divine presence.

2) Direction (qiblah)

In every mosque there is a niche in the wall which will demonstrate the direction of Mecca, the direction toward which one must pray.

3) Movements (rak'ah)

Standing before Allah, bowing, prostrating, and kneeling while praying and reciting portions of the Qur'an.

4) Times

Five times a day: morning prayer where you perform two cycles of rak'ah; the noonday prayer where you perform four cycles of rak'ah; third is the late afternoon prayer where you perform four cycles of rak'ah; the fourth prayer is the sunset prayer where you perform three cycles of rak'ah; and finally, the nighttime prayer where you perform four cycles of rak'ah.

3. Almsgiving (Zakat)

How the social and religious responsibilities are met in the Islamic community.

A. Minister to the poor

Providing relief to the poor and the needy, especially the widows, orphans, and destitute and involves the going out to issue the Da'wah, or "The Call" to faith.

B. Support Islamic missions

An obligatory 2½ percent tax for the purpose of Zakat that is legislated by the legal structures of Muslim societies.

4. Fasting (Sawm)

A fast that takes place during a particular month of the Islamic year.

A. Ninth month of Ramadan

Muslims fast for twenty-eight days during Ramadan, a sacred month for reflection because that was the month, according to Muslims, that Allah first gave the initial revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad; Muslims fast from food, drink, sex, and smoking from sun up until sun down.

B. Feast of 'id al Fitr (Breaking of the Fast)

The most important feast on the Islamic calendar and is celebrated in a similar manor as Christmas is in the West, with people exchanging gifts and visiting relatives and friends.

5. Pilgrimage (Hajj)

A special obligation for every Muslim sometime during his or her lifetime to go on an actual, physical pilgrimage to the Holy Ka'ba in Mecca.

A. Time of the Hajj

Occurring three months after Ramadan, the Hajj takes place during the twelfth month.

B. First day

No outsiders are allowed to enter the city and everyone must have a letter from your mosque which verifies you are a Muslim in good standing.

1) Ihram (consecration)

Pilgrims will put on simple white robes which symbolize the equality of all humans before God.

2) Tawaf (circumambulation of Ka'ba)

Next, Pilgrims travel to the actual mosque and make seven circumambulations around the Ka'aba.

3) Saai (hastening between Safa and Marwa)

The pilgrim runs seven times between the two small hills in Mecca of Safa and Marwa, recalling the time when Hagar frantically searched for water for young Ishmael.

4) Plains of Arafat

Pilgrims travel thirteen miles to Arafat to listen to sermons on the site of Muhammad's last sermon and participate in ritual prayer.

C. Second day - Mina - throwing stones at the Devil

Travel to Mina where Muslims believe Ishmael's sacrifice was to have taken place and Pilgrims throw stones at the pillars just as Ishmael is believed to have thrown stones at Satan

3

Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi Islam

LESSON OVERVIEW

Muhammad's successors were called caliphs. From the beginning, there was disagreement about what characteristics would qualify someone to be a caliph. The four "Rightly Guided Caliphs" were in power in successive years from 632 to 661. The two major divisions in Islam are the Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. One of the major differences between these two movements was over how the successors to Muhammad would be determined. A third movement in Islam is known as Sufi.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Islam is a very fractured community that goes back to the very beginning with a number of distinct traditions.

1. Historical recap to 632 – key historical events

A. A.D. 570.

Muhammad is born.

B. A.D. 610

“Night of Power and Excellence” where Muhammad receives his first revelation of the Qur’an.

C. A.D. 622 - Hegira

Muhammad leaves Mecca and enters triumphantly into Yathrib, later renamed Medina, and marks the origin of the Islamic calendar.

D. A.D. 630 - Triumphant return to Mecca

Mecca was given up without a struggle, and Muhammad destroys the idols and the Ka’ba with the exception of the Black Stone.

E. A.D. 632

Muhammad's death

F. A.D. 632-721 - "100 Glorious Years"

Both the Byzantine empire and the Persian empire fall at the feet of Islamic armies; Christian and Jews are offered dhimmi status if they pay a tax, all others who refuse conversion to Islam are executed.

2. The four "Rightly Guided Caliphs"

A. Muhammad's successors

The Caliph, or Caliphate, represents a title for the successor of Muhammad; there was division on what a Caliph ought to be: is it a military role, a prophetic role or an office and how should it function in the ongoing life of the Muslim community?

B. Survey of four “Rightly Guided Caliphs” and the Caliphate

1) Abu Bakr (632-634)

A very close friend of Muhammad and the father of his favorite wife, making him a relative of Muhammad; the first Caliph and an excellent military leader.

2) Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644)

Umar leads a time of tremendous period of expansion of the Muslim community and is assassinated in A.D. 644 while reading the Qur’an.

3) Uthman ibn Affan (644-656)

A weak leader; a lot of division and internal strife during his Caliphate; assassinated in 656 while reading the Qur’an; credited with finalizing the Qur’an and destroying all variant copies.

4) Ali (657-661)

Muhammad's cousin who was also married to Muhammad's daughter; during Ali's time major civil wars break out in the Muslim community; first case of Muslims fighting Muslims and the Caliphate is put up to arbitration.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GROUPS

1. Shi'a

"The party of Ali"

A. Believe that the Caliph should be a descendant of Ali

Only the blood descendants of Ali could become the Caliph because Ali was the only one related by blood, not just marriage, to Muhammad.

B. Doctrine of Imamism which looks to certain divinely appointed leaders who arise in the direct succession of Muhammad

Imam would actually be able to take on the prophethood of Muhammad, not just the moral or military or political role, but actually be the recipient of revelation.

C. Emergence of a Mahdi figure in times of distress to restore the faithful and protect the Prophetic message

Will come to destroy the faithless and to restore the faithful and to protect the message of Muhammad

D. Emphasis on human freedom

Predestination is far less pronounced with the Shi'a than their Sunni counterparts.

E. Found in vast majority in Iran and S. Iraq.

Shi'a tend to be the Persian Muslims.

F. Add to the Shahadah

"There is no God, but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God, *and Ali is the friend of God.*"

2. Sunni (normative party)

Sunni means the normative, as in the normative practice of Muslims, representing mainstream Muslims.

A. Believe that the Caliph should be chosen in a rational way by the Council, regardless of his blood descent

Anybody of any ethnicity could conceivably lead the Muslim community

B. Believe the “imam” is simply the leader of the Islamic assembly on Fridays (preacher)

The person who stands in the prayer niche and leads the Muslims in ritual prayer on their ritual prayer day on Friday.

C. Reject any notion of a final Mahdi

D. Emphasize divine sovereignty - predestination

Everything is rooted in predetermination – every event, every thought, every development.

E. Easily the majority world-wide, with five times the adherents of Shi’a

Roughly 85% to 89% of Muslims belong to the Sunni community, which means only between roughly 11% and 15 % belong to the Shi’ite community.

F. Reject any changes or additions to the Shahadah

3. Sufi

Having developed in a major way in the 10th and 11th centuries, the Sufi refers to a mystical movement within Islam which follows various paths to spiritual enlightenment and intimacy with Allah.

SCHOOLS OF LAW IN SUNNI AND SHI'A ISLAM

1. Sunni tradition

Certain traditions are established which interpret the Qur'an in certain ways and these have created various traditions and the four most important of these schools are known as the Hanifi, the Shafites, the Malakites, and the Hanbalites.

A. Hanifi

A more liberal school that accepts an “analogy” principle where they take the Qur’an by analogy and apply it to a wide range of areas; this is the largest school found throughout Asia, Asia minor, and Turkey.

B. Shafites

Emphasizes the importance of solidarity in the Muslim community, does not like innovation, and is very strict about Muslims not marrying non-Muslims; found in lower Egypt, parts of Arabia, East Africa, Indonesia, and Philippines.

C. Malakites

Emphasize the Hadith, the traditions that have arisen about Islam and what the Muslim community actually represents in terms of Muhammad’s practice.

D. Hanbalites

The most conservative of the schools which abides to very literal interpretation of the Qur'an being very strict about how they interpret each verse; fundamentalists that are found in southern Arabia, Qatar, and other places in the Middle East.

2. Shi'a Tradition

Division based on various attitudes regarding the Imams.

A. Imamites

Recognize twelve Imams - they're often called the "twelvers."

B. Ismailis

Often call the "seveners", they recognize seven Imams throughout history.

C. Zaydis

People who have various social ideas that have become distinctive and are closer to conservative Sunnis than some Shi'ites.

D. Alawites

More liberal social views and a strong emphasis on the final Mahdi figure

SUFISM

1. Contemplative and Mystical

2. Non-legalistic

More reactive against legalism than other Muslims.

3. Individualistic

Far more individualistic than most Muslims

4. Syncretistic

Syncretistic of practices they find in Africa, Indonesia and other places, amalgamating them into their own practice of Islam.

5. Esotericisms in Qur'an and Hadith

They tend to say "well, this verse actually symbolically means something completely different."

6. Role of the Pir

Belief in Pirs who mediate between Allah and humanity, and they accept the idea of spiritual mediation.

5. What are the main beliefs of the Shiites?

6. What are the main beliefs of the Sunni's

7. What are the main beliefs of the Sufi's

4

Authority and Revelation

LESSON OVERVIEW

Along with the Qur'an, the Hadith is another source of revelation for the Muslim religion. The Hadith addresses many social and economic issues that come up in daily life. The Sunna is a collection of oral tradition about Muhammad, and the Hadith is a collection of narratives about Muhammad that are written. The Sunnis also have a provision for the community coming to a consensus about something new being agreed to as having equal authority with the Qur'an and Hadith. In the Shi'a community an Imam can declare something as revelatory truth. These components combine to make up Sharia law, which governs the Muslim community.

HADITH AS A SOURCE OF ISLAMIC REVELATION

1. Sunna

Meaning “custom” or “normative practice”, Sunna is the oral tradition surrounding the custom of Muhammad; what Muhammad said about this or that, how he acted in this or that situation, how he ate, how he dressed, etc.

2. Hadith

A written narrative stating something that Muhammad said or did which over time became a source of revelation, along with the Qur’an; both the civic community and the Shiite community accept the concept of Hadith.

Divisions regarding what Muhammad did, what he commended, what he allowed, what is obligatory for all Muslims, and what is simply informative.

SHARIA STRUCTURE IN SUNNI AND SHI'A

Sharia law is simply the legal system by which Muslims govern their communities and is derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and either Ijma or Imam and is used to give direction and guidance to the Muslim community.

1. Sunni - Ijma

Where the community as a whole can reach a new consensus about something that could possibly have been addressed by Muhammad.

2. Shi'a - Imam

Shi'a do not hold to Ijma because of their doctrine of the Imam; Imams can speak authoritatively and actually carry the mantle of Muhammad.

3. Lesser Components of Sharia

A. Fatwa - legal opinion

Legal rulings that arise out of Sharia law.

3. What is the role of the Imam in the Shi'a community?

4. What is a fatwa and qiya and how are they used in the Muslim community?

5

Is Islam a Religion of Peace?

LESSON OVERVIEW

If we look at this as an exegetical statement, we can see that from looking at the teachings of the Qur'an, Islam is not a religion that at its root, advocates peaceful propagation. If we look at this as a historical statement, Islam has not historically been a religion of peace, even though some of its followers may advocate living at peace with others. The two contradictory principles that exist in tension in the Muslim religion are Da'wah and Jihad.

TWO CONTRADICTIONARY PRINCIPLES

The Qur'an embraces the concept of peace and peaceful propagation of Islam, but it also embraces warfare and very vigorous, violent attacks on unbelievers and idolators.

1. Da'wah

The Muslim equivalent to the Great Commission underscoring the necessity of exhorting people to come into the house of Islam, but to do it with kindness.

2. Jihad

The call for Muslims to actually make war on their enemies because enemies actually represent idolatry

RECONCILIATION OF DA'WAH AND JIHAD

There's a sequence of events that must take place; first Muslims must give people the peaceful opportunity to repent and believe in the Islamic message, but for those who are resistant the more violent response, Jihad, ensues.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Islam has violence inbred in its text that is not present in Christianity, and historically Islam has operated with methods that are consistent with Islam.

MODERN PERIOD

Modern day Muslim scholars have made an attempt to reinterpret the Jihad passages of the Qur'an, passages about warfare and slaying your enemy, as essentially being about internal Jihad, that is, Jihad of the heart; emphasis is then slaying sin in your heart, slaying evil thoughts in your mind, and should not be applied to unbelievers.

MARTYRDOM

The Qur'an does say that martyrdom is an ideal, and if someone gives themselves to the cause of Islam, then they are doing a righteous thing and they will go to heaven; however, this is referring to passive martyrdom where one is killed as a byproduct of obedience, not active obedience in the case of actively taking ones own life, which is condemned in the Hadith.

QUESTIONS

1. What are some reasons that people make the statement that Islam is a, "religion of peace?"

6

Islamic Fundamentalism

LESSON OVERVIEW

It is timely to explore the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and how that has resulted in the rise of Osama bin Laden and recent terrorist activities. An effective response to this movement will require a Christian presence among Muslims around the world.

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the September 11 attacks, the eyes of the world are on Islam and Christians have grown far more interested in and aware of Islam.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism; Islamic fundamentalism refers to a movement which seeks to go back to the original documents and reclaim an original fervor and original spirituality that perhaps was not present in a later movement.

1. 1924 - Abolishment of the Caliphate by Ataturk

In Islam the mosque and state must work hand in glove, and Ataturk made a major break with that by abolishing the Caliphate thereby making the country politically secular and relegating Islam to a personal religion.

2. 1928 - The Muslim Brotherhood

Founded by Ahsan Albana, the purpose of this movement was to unite Muslims around the world into a single movement, under a common banner, which could create political power.

3. 1954 - Nasser becomes president of Egypt

A very powerful pro-Islamic nationalist who put the squeeze on Israel

4. 1965 - Signposts on the Road by Sayid Qutb

Qutb argues that any Muslim who is not under Sharia law is living in *Tehillah*, or ignorance, therefore these Muslim states should be attacked and a movement of fundamentalism should be created to restore Islam to its original purity.

5. 1967 - Six Day War

Egypt, Jordan, and Syria collectively launch an attack on Israel; Israel completely humiliated and defeated, in only six days, all three of these forces; this humiliation becomes a rallying point for fundamentalism as the reason for defeat is believed to be because Muslims were not faithful to the true principles of Islam.

6. 1979 - Iranian Revolution

Overthrow of the Shah of Iran who was supported by the West, and the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini with his cries of death to America; sparked fundamentalist movements in all Muslim countries.

7. 1979 - Invasion of Afghanistan by U.S.S.R.

Muslims in the very backward country of Afghanistan were able to unite and defeat one of the powerful military machines in the world; Bin Laden refers to this quite a bit in his writings.

8. 1980 - The Neglected Duty by Faraj

A recapitulation of the doctrine of Jihad, trying to go back to the violent themes of the Qur'an.

9. 1981 - Sadat signs peace treaty with Israel

Islamic fundamentalism sees this as Sadat tolerating Jewish presence on what they believed was Islamic soil.

10. 1981 - Sadat is assassinated

In response to the treaty with Israel, Sadat was assassinated on October 6, 1981.

11. 1983 - Attack on Marine barracks in Beirut

Two hundred and forty-one Marines are killed and it's at this point that it begins to hit the consciousness of Americans that fundamentalists could become dangerous to American presence around the world.

12. 1989 - U.S.S.R. leaves Afghanistan

Russians were forced to leave Afghanistan, which is a huge victory for Muslims.

13. 1991 - Gulf War

The oil fields of Saudi Arabia were clearly under threat by Saddam Hussein, a Muslim leader whom the fundamentalists viewed as an infidel; In response to Iraq invading Kuwait, the royal family in Saudi Arabia allow for U.S. troops to be present right there in Saudi Arabia, which was a major source of anger for Osama bin Laden.

14. 1993 - Bombing of the World Trade Towers

First major reaction to the American presence in Saudi Arabia is the bombing of the World Trade Towers

15. 1996 - Rise of the Taliban

Taliban gained control of most of Afghanistan

16. 1998 - Bombing of embassies in Kenya and Tanzania

The simultaneous bombings of the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 213 individuals.

17. 2001 - Bombing of World Trade Towers and Pentagon

Thousands of civilians are killed, including people from around the world, who worked in the World Trade Towers.

THE LADENESE EPISTLES - FIVE THEMES

Osama bin Laden's writings are known as the Ladenese Epistles and are composed of five major themes, providing answers to why he is angry and hates the United States.

1. Defeat of Arabs in Six Day War

Anger directed at Muslims whom he feels are not faithful to the true tenets of Islam, but have been influenced by Western ideals, Western democracy, and Western egalitarianism.

2. Bitterness toward the royal family of Saudi Arabia

He feels like the royal family has sold out to the West, particularly by making deals with the U.S. military, failing to live up to their title "Guardians of the Holy Mosques."

3. Iranian Revolution

He is very encouraged by the power of the Iranian Revolution to overthrow the Western puppet leaders and establish fundamentalist governments which will reinstitute Islamic law.

4. Lesson of the invasion of Afghanistan

He exults in how the Muslims were able to single-handedly cast out the Russian invaders and even though their response is violent, it's necessary to restore the world to its purity.

5. The U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia

Asserts the purpose of the U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia is to divide Saudi Arabia into two countries, or two areas, one of which would be given to Israel to give them more land, and one of which would be controlled by the U.S. in the heart of the Middle East.

A CHRISTIAN STRATEGY

Christians must model love and sacrificial kinds of ministry to Muslims who are in need around the world.

QUESTIONS

1. What is Islamic Fundamentalism?
2. What happened when the Caliphate was abolished?
3. When Nasser became the leader of Egypt, what was his attitude toward Israel? What did he do in 1956 that affected Israel and the attitudes of Muslims toward Israel?

7

Islam and Christianity

LESSON OVERVIEW

Islam and Christianity have major theological differences including their view of Scripture, the nature of God, who Jesus is and what is required for salvation. There are specific strategies that can help us witness to Muslims genuinely and effectively.

MAJOR THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

1. Islam rejects the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Qur'an is full of misunderstandings of the Trinity and indicates the Trinity refers to the Father having sexual intercourse with Mary, resulting in the birth of Jesus, who was adopted into the Godhead, which is rightly rejected.

2. Islam rejects the deity of Jesus Christ.

While Muslims affirm many of the attributes of Jesus, they do not believe that Christ is divine; they also believe that Christ only points to Muhammad.

3. Islam rejects the incarnation.

Muslims find the doctrine of the incarnation to be very troubling, but fail to reconcile that Jesus is both fully God and fully man when rejecting Jesus as God.

4. Islam rejects the centrality of the death and resurrection of Christ.

The Qur'an offers several explanations about the death of Christ, the most prominent being that Christ did not actually die up on the cross, a sort of swoon theory; by rejecting the centrality and the necessity of His death, Muslims have cut once again into the heart of Christianity.

5. Islam rejects the reliability of the Bible.

The Bible is viewed as an inferior document to the Qur'an, is believe that it's been corrupted, that it's been misinterpreted by Christians, and that the current text we have is not a reliable text.

6. Islam teaches salvation by works.

Each person will come before God for judgment and one's good works will be put on one side of a scale and bad works on the other side and if one's good works outweighs the bad then they will enter heaven; some Muslims believe that Muhammad may intercede for them.

7. Islam teaches God cannot reveal himself, only his will.

The Qur'an repeatedly points out the glory and the majesty and the might of Allah, but Allah is unreachable and unknowable.

WITNESSING TO MUSLIMS

1. Build genuine relationships.

Get to know the Muslims, spend time with them, learn to love them as people, and then the opportunity will arise to show your faith.

2. Ask thought-provoking questions.

It's easy to get into an argument with a Muslim over doctrine and theology, the Qur'an and the Bible, or Muhammad's life, or whatever, but instead ask thought-provoking questions.

3. Read the Qur'an.

There's no better way to really get an insight into Islamic thinking than to read the Qur'an and to read it thoroughly; then you can ask them, and have the authority to ask them, to read the New Testament.

4. Present your faith candidly and in love.

Talk about your relationship with Christ; tell them what He has done in your life; share your testimony.

5. Pray with your Muslim friend.

Muslims, from birth up, have been told the importance of prayer and are thrilled and so impressed with an offer to pray with or for them.

QUESTIONS

1. Contrast the relational essence of the Trinity with the Muslim concept of Allah.

2. Summarize the Muslim view of the relationship between Jesus and Muhammad.

3. Summarize the syllogistic thinking that prevents Muslims from viewing Jesus as God.

4. How do Muslims explain the death of Christ?

5. How do Muslims view the Bible? How do we know the original version wasn't changed later to give it an anti-Islamic bias?

6. Summarize Islam's teaching of final judgment.

