

**A Traveler's
Guide**

LU Serve



ISLAM



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Chapter 01

INTRODUCTION

Islam is a religion native to the land of Arabia, but its impact has truly been global, and to this day, it continues to grow through missionary expansion. The rich oil fields and beautiful desert terrains in the Middle East have attracted developed nations and world powers to interact with the Islamic world through global commerce and trade. Immigration, political unrest, and war have also contributed to a mass influx of Muslim migrants into Western countries. As these trends continue, Christians will need to be prepared to engage the people of Islam with love and grace. To effectively reach Muslims with the gospel, Christians must understand the Islamic faith's history, doctrine, and culture.

1.1 What is Islam?

Islam is a monotheistic religion founded by Muhammad (570–632 AD). It centers on the concept of “submission” to God, with its adherents, known as Muslims, embodying this principle. The term “Islam” itself means “submission,” and a “Muslim” is “one who submits to God.” In Islam, God is referred to as Allah, a single omnipotent god.

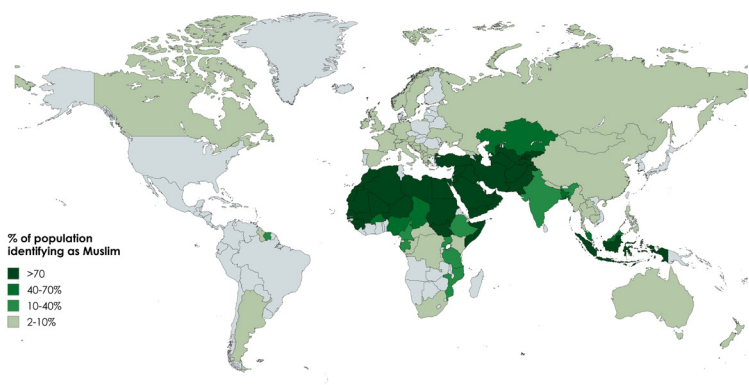
Quick Facts:

- Religion:** Islam
- Adherents:** Muslims
- Population:** 1.8 billion
- Founder:** Muhammad (570-632 AD)
- Began:** 610 AD
- Type:** Monotheistic
- God:** Allah
- Scriptures:** The Qur'an
- Primary Sects:** Sunni, Shia, Sufi

The Qur'an, meaning “the recitation,” is the holy book of Islam, composed of 114 surahs or chapters. Alongside the Qur'an, the Sunna and Hadith are crucial texts that provide traditions guiding Muslim behavior, often emulating the life and actions of Muhammad. Finally, in the realm of politics, Sharia, or Islamic law, varies in interpretation across different schools, ranging from liberal to restrictive applications. Additionally, the term “Jihad,” meaning “struggle” in Arabic, encompasses various forms of spiritual struggle within the Islamic faith.

1.2 Statistics and Regions

With 1.8 billion adherents, Islam is the world's second-largest religion and the fastest-growing major religious group. Although the Middle East is dominated by Muslim-majority countries, up to 62% of Muslims live in the Asia-Pacific region. By 2050, 10% of Europeans are predicted to be Muslim.¹



Chapter 02

THE HISTORY OF ISLAM

I 2.1 The Early Life of Muhammad

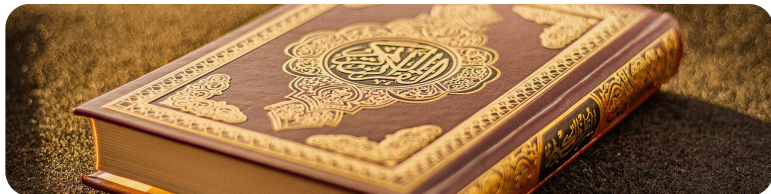
Muhammad was born in Arabia around 570 AD near Mecca, a major center of polytheism and animism. Orphaned early in life, Muhammad was raised by his uncle and had limited formal education, working as a camel driver. At age 25, he married a wealthy single woman, Khadijah, who supported him when he began receiving his visions.

Arabia was a commercial hub with extensive cross-cultural interactions. Although Islam is not simply an adaptation of previous religions, Muhammad's spiritual development was influenced by the monotheistic beliefs he encountered in Arabia, particularly Jewish, Christian, and Zoroastrian influences.²

I 2.2 Muhammad's revelations and ministry

Muhammad's first revelation came at age 40 while meditating in the Hira cave near Mecca in 610 A.D. A spirit appeared to him and commanded him to "Recite!" At first, Muhammad believed a jinn (i.e., demon) had visited him, but later, his wife, Khadijah, convinced him it was the angel Gabriel and that the revelation was from Allah. Muhammad memorized and recited this revelation, which was later written down and called the Qur'an (lit. "the recitation").

The Qur'an was assembled after Muhammad's death by his cousin, Uthman, who sorted out all pieces of writing produced by Muhammad's followers, keeping the authentic copies and destroying the rest.³

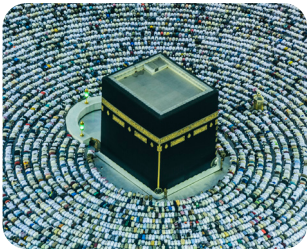


I 2.3 The Growth of Islam

Muhammad faced skepticism and hostility from many in Mecca, but Khadijah (his wife) and some close associates supported his new religion. As Muham-

mad's following grew, Meccan leaders opposed his message because they saw it as divisive and threatening, which eventually led to the physical persecution of Muhammad and his followers and expulsion from Mecca. To escape persecution, Muhammad and his followers migrated to Yathrib (later called Medina) in 622 AD. This migration is known today as the Hijra and marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.⁴

In Medina, Muhammad established a cohesive community and continued receiving revelations. Over time, Muhammad's power and influence grew, and the Muslim community grew significantly as well. They eventually re-conquered Mecca and the surrounding regions. Islam's political power also grew as Muhammad and his followers gained control of territories through military conquest. Over several centuries, Muslims conquered most of the Middle East, North Africa, central Asia, and regions in southern Europe (in Spain, Portugal, and France).⁵



Mecca was renowned for its idols and religious sites, including the Ka'aba shrine dedicated to Hubal and a sacred meteorite, the "black stone." Pilgrimages to Mecca were significant, making the city prosperous through religious tourism. The Ka'aba was filled with 360 idols marking the days of the lunar calendar. When Muhammad conquered Mecca, he destroyed the idols inside the Ka'aba, but he kept the famous "black stone" which formed the core of ritual worship.

Muhammad accused Christians and Jews of corrupting the Bible, and he claimed that his revelations were authoritative. He outlawed idolatry, changed the "sabbath" from Saturday to Friday, and mandated that prayer and worship be directed toward Mecca (instead of Jerusalem). Jews were eventually expelled from the region of Mecca.

Chapter 03

MAJOR BRANCHES OF ISLAM

When Muhammad died in A.D. 632, several successors called caliphs emerged. However, due to division over who should be the rightful successor, Islam split into two major factions, Sunni (the majority) and Shia (the minority). Sunnis supported Muhammad's father-in-law, Abu Bakr, while Shiites supported Muhammad's cousin, Ali Talib. Both groups had their own way of organizing later successors, which were marked by blood and more divisions.

Today, Sunnis make up the majority of the Muslim world and are found in most Muslim countries. Shiites are much smaller in number and are mostly located in Iraq, Iran, and surrounding regions. Following the split between Sunnis and Shiites, a third, smaller group emerged called the Sufis. Sufism is a mystical form of Islam commonly found in present-day Turkiye, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶



Mystical Islam

Sufism is known for its eccentric and mystical practices. Its adherents seek personal union with Allah through meditation, asceticism, and ritualistic dances and chants. Sufis are well-known for the "whirling dervishes," a unique form of Sufism found in Turkey.

Other sects of Islam include Kharijites, Druze, Salafism, Alevism, and the Nation of Islam. These groups tend to be much smaller and less prominent among Muslim adherents.⁷



Chapter 04

MAJOR BELIEFS AND TEACHINGS

I 4.1 Oneness and Transcendence of Allah

The pre-Islamic people of Arabia already believed in a supreme deity called Allah, whom they identified as the moon god and worshipped in the Kaaba. The highest deity in the Kaaba, however, was named Hubal, and he was also the chief god of Muhammad's Quraysh tribe. Hubal was considered an astral deity, much like Baal (the storm god) of the Old Testament. The symbol of Hubal worship was the crescent moon, which Muhammad carried over into the founding of Islam. When Muhammad came to power, he instituted a strict worship of Allah and destroyed all idols in the Kaaba except for the Black Stone.

For Muslims, true monotheism only makes sense if God is one, so they consider the idea of the trinity to be heretical. According to Islam, Allah does not reveal himself, but only his will. Allah is unknowable and absolutely transcendent (Surah 42:11).⁸



I 4.2 Humanity

Humans are essentially good but are also weak. Sin is considered a form of weakness. Human beings are not born with original sin as Christianity teaches, nor is it the case that sin separates us from Allah. Rather, Allah's transcendence, not human sin, is what ultimately separates humans from Allah's presence (Surah 4:28; 20:115).

■ 4.3 Angels and Spirits

They believe that there are angels and archangels but also evil spirits called “jinn” (genies), which are led by the devil and cause trouble on the earth. Muslims are highly spiritual people who view the world as very spiritually active with the devil, angels, and jinn. While all Muslims believe in these entities, they see them as spiritually inferior to Allah and not worthy of worship; various forms of folk Islam (in tribal regions) may contain aspects of animism in which spirit beings are seen as powerful forces to manipulate or interact with.⁹

■ 4.4 Prophets

The Qur'an accounts for 22 prophets mentioned in the Bible, but there are six preeminent prophets in Islam: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Muslims have great respect for Jesus, who they consider to be a prophet born of a virgin and who performed miracles during His life. However, Muhammad is considered the last great prophet to whom Allah gave his authoritative revelation to the world. Muslims do not think that Muhammad started a new religion; rather, Allah used Muhammad to revive the one true religion.

The first pillar of Islam is called the Shahada. It affirms Muhammad's unique status as Allah's prophet. It says, “I bear witness that there is no deity but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”



■ 4.5 Judgment

Islam refers to the judgment day as the day of separation, the day of resurrection, or the day of reckoning. At an appointed time, a trumpet will sound, and every person will be judged according to a book that has recorded all their deeds. Good and bad deeds are weighed out, and evildoers are cast into hell. Those who do good enter paradise. The judgment is based on sincere submission to Allah's will, and he may be gracious and merciful to whoever he chooses. Muslims do not have full assurance of salvation in this life since Allah may choose not to have mercy on them.

■ 4.6 Sovereignty

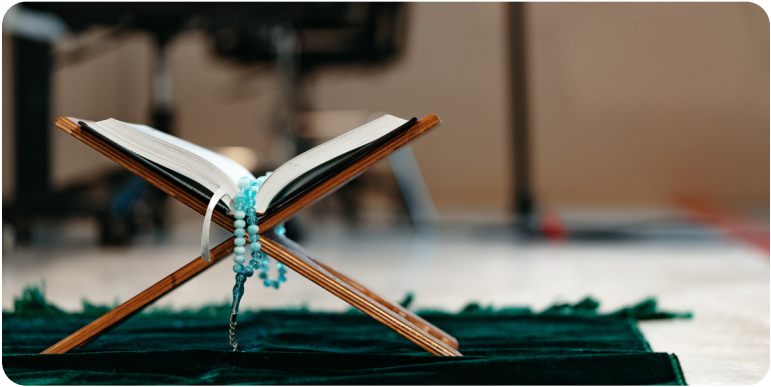
Allah's will is absolute. Anything that comes to pass (or doesn't come to pass) is a result of Allah's divine decrees. Islam's emphasis on the infallible decrees of Allah and his meticulous providence (or control) over all things leads many Muslims to a belief in determinism. Not all Muslims believe in determinism, but this is a strong inclination within Islam, much more than in Christianity. In Islam, Allah is the author of evil because, if he wills it, he will bring about evil for his purposes. By contrast, Christianity denies that God is the author of evil. Instead, Christians distinguish between what God decrees to happen (His providential will) and what He allows to happen (His dispositional will).

Chapter 05

MAJOR TEXTS

I 5.1 The Qur'an

The Qur'an is Allah's revelation to Muhammad and is considered the sacred and authoritative scripture of Islam. The Qur'an is a collection of 114 surahs (or chapters) about laws, legends, prayers, curses, and stories that were memorized and recited by Muhammad. These "recitations" were preserved through oral tradition until being codified in writing by his followers.



I 5.2 The Sunna (Hadith)

The Sunna is a secondary source primarily focused on the life of Muhammad and Islamic law. These texts are collected into hadith, or writings about Muhammad. The Hadith is a collection of traditions about Muhammad's life and teachings. These were recorded by Muhammad's companions and passed down until an official collection was brought together and approved in the 10th century. The Hadith are not considered divine scripture but are given great weight and importance in Islamic teachings.¹⁰

Muhammad sympathized with groups that followed other holy books, such as Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. These groups were known as "people of the book" and were not viewed as pagans during the time of Muhammad. They even received special privileges, including the possibility of receiving mercy from Allah to enter heaven. However, the Qur'an was Allah's true word given through Muhammad as a final revelation that supersedes all others.

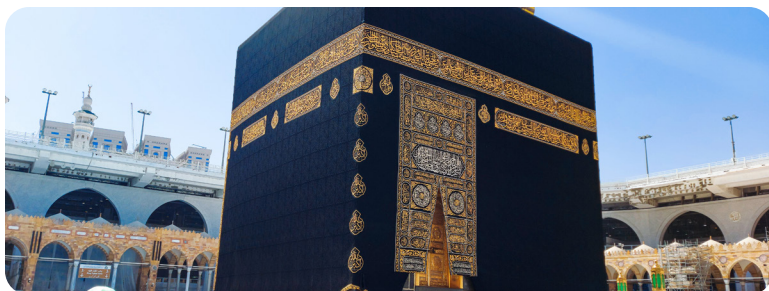
Chapter 06

COMMON PRACTICES AND CUSTOMS

I 6.1 The Five Pillars

The Five Pillars are the core beliefs and practices of Islam and are considered the fundamental religious duties of every Muslim.¹¹

1. **Confession (shahada):** To confess that the words of Muhammad are the words of God is the beginning of the road to salvation. By the shahada, a Muslim declares, “I bear witness that there is no deity but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”
2. **Prayer (salat):** Muslims are required to pray 5 times a day (sunrise, noon, midafternoon, sunset, and one hour after sunset) in the direction of Mecca. There are some adaptations to these requirements depending on the gender, location, and seasons. Muslim men are known for carrying a prayer rug that can be used in many situations. Every prayer rug has a niche at the top, signifying the top of a mosque. This niche must be pointed in the direction of Mecca when praying.
3. **Fasting (sawm):** To commemorate Muhammad’s revelations, Muslims must fast from eating and drinking during daylight hours during Ramadan.
4. **Almsgiving (zakat):** Regular charity based on one’s net profit (not gross income). The amount is usually 2.5%.
5. **Pilgrimage (hajj):** Every believer, both men and women, must visit the holy city of Mecca at least once in their lifetime and walk around the Kaaba seven times. A Muslim who completes the hajj is called a haji.



I 6.2 Jihad

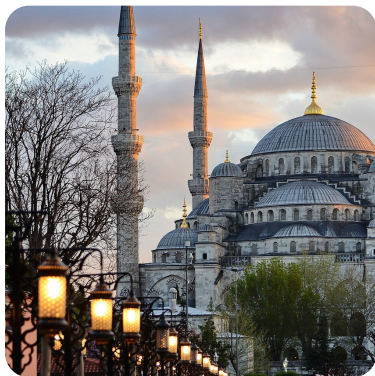
Sometimes referred to as the “sixth pillar” of Islam, jihad means “holy war” or “fighting for the faith.” Its basic meaning is “struggle,” which Muslims have interpreted in several ways. The most basic view is a subjective, internal struggle of

all Muslims to follow the ways of Allah. It is a struggle for personal holiness and obedience. Another view sees jihad as a struggle for the faith against unbelievers (Surah 2:190-193) and a Muslim's duty to be a witness for the faith. In recent years, a more militant interpretation has sprung up in parts of the Middle East that harkens back to the earlier periods of “holy war” against Christians and Jews. Modern Islamic terror organizations commonly hold to this militant version of jihad.¹²

6.3 Places of Worship

An Islamic center of worship is called a mosque. Mosques have four main components: the mihrab (niche), minarets (towers), qubba (dome), and sahn (courtyard). The mihrab is the front of the mosque that faces toward Mecca. The minarets are small towers on the outside that broadcast the call to prayer. Inside a mosque, men and women are separated into different places of worship. Before prayer, Muslims wash their hands, face, arms, ears, nostrils, and feet. This cleansing ritual is called Wudu.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque (bottom right), known as the “Dome of the Rock,” is located on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where the Jewish temple once stood. Hagia Sophia (bottom left) was a Christian cathedral built in Constantinople in 537 AD (modern-day Turkey). When Constantinople fell in 1453 AD, the Muslim Ottomans renamed the city to Istanbul and converted the Hagia Sophia to a mosque, renaming it the Grand Mosque.



6.4 Dietary Customs

Currently, many countries are controlled by Islamic governments and have populations that follow Muhammad's teachings vigorously. Of the 193 countries in the world, around 57 are part of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, showing how great Islamic influence is.

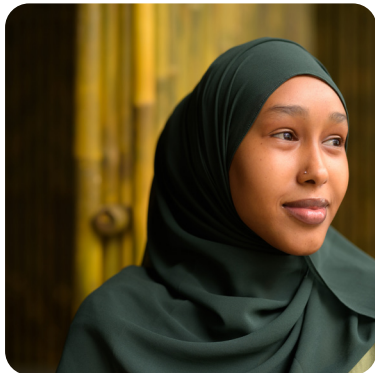
When traveling to a country with an Islamic background, it is important to understand the religious source of local customs and traditions. One important cultural tradition that affects everyday life is dietary customs. For example, consuming pork and derived products is prohibited in Islam since pork is considered an unclean animal by the Qur'an. When traveling to places where Islamic culture is prevalent, Westerners should not expect to find products like bacon, ham, or sausage. Also, Islamic stores and shops frequently have signs that say "Halal," which is an Arabic word meaning "permissible" or "lawful." It refers to food and drink that are acceptable for Muslims to consume.¹³



6.5 Marriage and Gender Roles

Another important and well-known practice is the way people dress, especially women. Muslims are expected to be modest in dress. There isn't a special garment requirement for either gender. Still, the Qur'an expects women to dress in a way that does not call attention to their physical beauty (Surah 24:31). When visiting Islamic countries, it is important to carefully select your clothing choices, since the wrong piece of clothing might bring unwanted attention, especially for women. Two well-known garments are the burka, a long-loose garment that covers the whole body, and the hijab, a traditional woman's head covering worn in public. The hijab is much more commonly worn than the burka.

Gender roles and expectations in marriage differ greatly from individualistic Western cultures. In Islam, men are considered superior to women. Consequently, women are usually accompanied by men or walk in groups when visiting public places. It is usually inappropriate for a woman to speak alone with a man who is not her husband. Husbands may also discipline their wives in cases of sexual immorality or the squandering of the husband's earnings (Surah 4:34). On the other hand, men are also considered protectors and maintainers of women, and Muslim men are permitted to marry up to four wives.¹⁴



■ 6.6 Holidays and Festivals

Ramadan occurs during the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and commemorates Muhammad's revelation. During this month, Muslims fast from food and water from sunrise to sunset, then break their fast every evening with a large meal. During Ramadan, Muslims believe prayer and fasting are more powerful, and they will often add extra prayer times and rituals during this month. Many Muslims even pray to receive visions during the month of Ramadan. Because the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle, which is 11-12 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar, the dates of Ramadan shift every year. Non-Muslims are not expected to fast during Ramadan. However, when visiting a Muslim community that is observing Ramadan, it is polite to either refrain from eating and drinking in their presence or to eat and drink in moderation.

Friday is considered the holy day of the week and is called Jumu'ah. It is similar to the Jewish Sabbath day. Traditionally, Muslims do not work on Fridays and take time to visit the local mosque for prayer. Many shops and businesses may be closed on Fridays as well.



■ 6.7 Shari'a Law

Shari'a Law is the institutionalization of the Qur'an and Hadith to politics and society, essentially demanding theocracy through the application of Islamic beliefs to the forms and systems of national and local governments. Shari'a Law takes different forms in various countries, ranging from moderate to extreme depending on the ruling sect's interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Chapter 07

BARRIERS TO THE GOSPEL

I 7.1 The Reliability of the Bible

Tensions between Christianity and Islam stem largely from theological and historical differences, with a significant focus on their sacred texts. Christians regard the Bible as the divinely inspired word of God. At the same time, Muslims believe the Quran is the final and most accurate revelation, often viewing the Bible as corrupted over time. This fundamental disagreement over religious authority creates significant barriers. Muhammad charged Jews and Christians with corrupting the Bible and rendering it unreliable. In spite of this, Muhammad still instructs his followers to read the Bible, to believe it, and to use it to validate his own message (Surah 2:53; 2:23; 2:136; 4:163; 5:46; 10:94; 16:43).

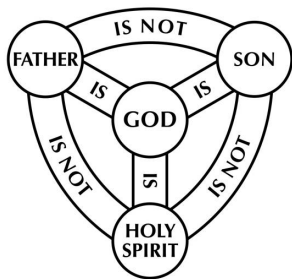
Christian scholars have responded to such claims with archeological and manuscript evidence demonstrating the Bible's reliability, integrity, and preservation. Moreover, the Qur'an contains unfounded stories about biblical figures, some of which are only found in heretical, pseudepigraphal Christian documents written several centuries after Jesus (Surah 19:29; 27:15-20; 3:19).



I 7.2 The Trinity

Muslims reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity because they believe it affirms three separate deities. Part of this confusion stems from Muhammad's mistaken belief that Mary was a part of the Trinity (Surah 5:116) and that Jesus, as the son of God, was the offspring of a union between God and Mary. This is why the Qur'an states, "Allah should not take to Himself a son" (Surah 19:34).

Christians can counter this argument by stressing the core doctrine of God’s oneness (Dt. 6:4; Mk 12:29-32; 1 Cor. 8:4; 1 Tim. 2:5), while simultaneously affirming the plurality of personhood in God’s oneness (Ex. 24:3; Judg. 20:1, 8, 11; Rom. 12:5; Matt. 28:19). Moreover, the Bible does not teach that Jesus is the offspring of God and Mary, but that he was born of a virgin, which the Qur’an affirms (Surah 3:46), and that Jesus’ “sonship” is a way of showing his identification, equality, and relationship with the Father.



7.3 The Crucifixion

Islam rejects the historical claims that Jesus was crucified on the cross because Allah would not allow one of his prophets to receive such a humiliating and painful death (Surah 4:157-158). Thus, Muslims believe that Jesus either suffered on the cross but did not die, or they hold that someone else was made to look like Jesus (e.g., Judas Iscariot) and was crucified in his place.

Christians can respond to these claims by pointing to historical sources attesting to Jesus’ death on the cross. They can also use this as an opportunity to show the important reasons why, according to the Bible, God would allow Jesus to die in our place (Isa. 53:4-11; Matt. 12:39-40; Mk. 10:33-34; Lk. 9:22,44; Jn. 12:32-33; Rom. 8:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:18-20).



■ 7.4. History and Politics

Historical events like the Crusades have deepened mistrust between Muslims and Christians, as they are remembered by Muslims as an act of Christian aggression. Geopolitical conflicts further complicate relations, intertwining religious identities with political struggles, which hinders efforts to share the gospel in Muslim-majority regions. It is wise for Christians to avoid debates about the crusades and current geo-political issues if possible, as these may only detract from one's ability to share the gospel with a Muslim.



Chapter 08

BRIDGES TO THE GOSPEL

When dealing with a religion that has so many similarities with Christianity, it is important to understand that some of the terms used may have different meanings. When sharing the Gospel with a Muslim, clarify concepts like sin, judgment, God, and Jesus. There are many biblical truths that appeal to Muslims, such as:

1. The unity of God
2. Divine omnipotence and goodness
3. The miracles of Christ
4. The moral teachings and parables of Jesus
5. Jesus Christ as mediator
6. Psalms and Proverbs
7. The importance of prayer
8. The importance of purity and righteousness
9. A future hope

I 8.1 The Concept of Sin

For a Muslim, the definition of sin is quite loose, depending on the context and intent of one's heart. For example, though adultery is forbidden, prostitution and temporary marriages are permissible (Surah 4:24, 4:33). Though lying is a sin, it is permitted because Allah is the greatest of deceivers. Muslims are encouraged to lie for self-preservation and to convert others. Even “greater sins” (for Christians), like murder, may be permissible if committed against an unbeliever (Surah 33:5; Hadith 498).



In Islam, the origin of sin is Allah. Therefore, people are born sinless, and Allah might guide or send them astray (Surah 7:178). Because Allah may decree for some people to sin, when they ask him for forgiveness, he may not grant them forgiveness (Surah 4:116).¹⁵

■ 8.2 The Final Judgement

Islam rejects any notion that one can have certainty of salvation. Only Allah decides who enters paradise, and this is entirely up to His will. The teachings of Islam offer guidance, and belief in Allah's mercy offers some assurance, but the Muslim never has total certainty. Muslims must seek to obey all of Allah's commands perfectly, but this is impossible.

Christians can counter this uncertainty by showing how God promises assurance of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Christians can agree with Muslims that it is impossible to live up to God's perfect standard, but instead of trying to earn one's way into heaven (which they admit is impossible) and hoping for God's mercy after death (which is not guaranteed), they can receive God's mercy now through accepting Jesus Christ's sacrifice for their sins. In this way, all those whose faith is in Jesus have the assurance of God's peace, love, and mercy both now and in the judgment.

■ 8.3 The Greatness of God

It can be confusing to Christians to understand that Islam believes they serve the same God who is presented in the Old Testament. For them, Allah is One person, the creator of all things. He controls both good and evil actions of human beings, and all people are slaves to His will (Surah 4:172).¹⁶ Muslims do not believe Allah is a "God of Love" or a "Father" as the New Testament describes God. Rather, Allah is a sovereign who exercises total control over his subjects. He does not seek a personal relationship with humans but demands obedience.

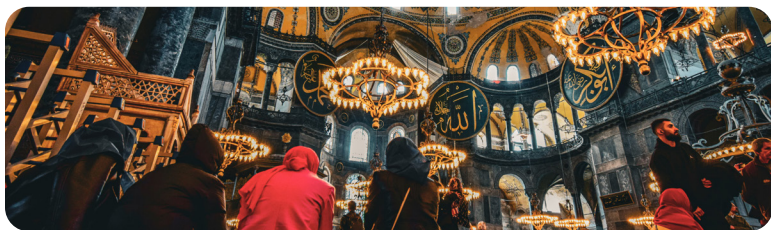
Christians can agree with Muslims about God's sovereignty and control of all things, as well as His absolute righteousness and distinctiveness from creation. However, it is important to the distinctness of God's love for humanity, his Fatherhood, and His desire to invite all people into His family. In the Christian worldview, God does not merely demand obedience from human beings; He seeks a relationship with them. The Bible says that human beings are created in God's image; they are called God's children; they are objects of His love and grace; and He desires to redeem them from their sin through Jesus Christ.¹⁷

8.4 The Person of Jesus

Many of the core teachings about Jesus's life are shared by Muslims. Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God but is a special prophet.¹⁸ They believe that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jewish people and that he was born of the virgin Mary (Surah 3:45-47, 21:91, 66:12). They also believe that Jesus was sinless, performed miracles, and is in heaven with God (Surah 19:31, 19:19, 3:36, 19:31, 3:55).¹⁹ Jesus is so highly viewed in Islam that they believe he will come back to judge the world with righteousness. These shared beliefs about Jesus between Christians and Muslims can be used as a starting point when sharing the gospel.²⁰



8.5 The Importance of Purity



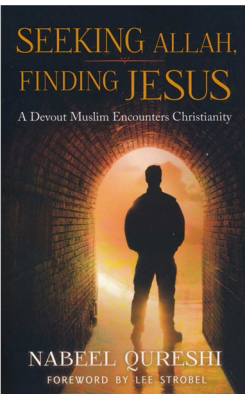
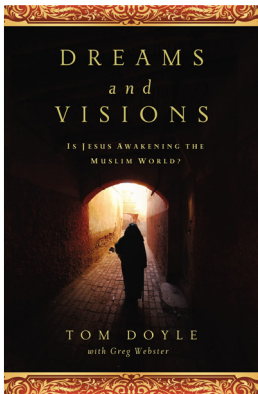
Muslims take seriously the demand for ritual purity, especially before offering prayers to Allah. Christians can affirm the need for purity in God's presence and show Muslims that the Bible also teaches that every person must be pure in God's sight. The difference in Christianity is Jesus Christ's role in making us pure before God and the freedom it offers those who choose to follow Him.

Muslims often have a skewed view of Christianity based on what they see in Western media. They often equate all Westerners with Christianity and see all Christians as sexually immoral people. It is important to dispel these caricatures of Christianity when engaging a Muslim and to demonstrate through one's life-style a model of biblical holiness.

■ 8.6 Dreams and Visions

Muslims are highly religious people who believe the world is imbued with spirituality and spiritual beings such as angels and demons (jinn) who can interact with people while awake or sleeping. Muslims place great value on dreams and visions, and even prayer to receive dreams and visions from Allah.

Many Muslims have converted to Christianity after reporting that they met Jesus in a dream or vision. Today, Muslims throughout the world are converting to Christianity based on their experiences in dreams and visions.



While not every report of a dream or vision may be credible, Christians should take these reports seriously and point Muslims who are seeking the truth toward the biblical picture of who Jesus is and the salvation He offers to all who believe. Christians can also pray that God continues to reveal Himself to Muslims through dreams, visions, and conviction by the Holy Spirit.

■ 8.7 Apologetics

Most Muslims will be well versed in the Qur'an, so answering questions with passages from the Qur'an can be really helpful. It is easy to enter into debates because there are many theological and conceptual differences between Islam and Christianity. While apologetics is a valuable tool when conversing with Muslims, be mindful not to insult Muhammad, Islam, or Allah. Also, be prepared to discuss topics such as the reliability of the Bible and the person and work of Jesus Christ. Muslims raise many common objections against Christianity, but nothing that cannot be answered with an adequate defense.²¹

■ 8.8 Stories

Many Muslims grow up with a preference for oral traditions. They are more likely to learn, trust, and memorize important truths when told in story form. They value truth delivered through narratives more than what they hear through propositional statements.²² Even though this cultural difference adds a layer of complexity to evangelism among Muslims, the power of story in Islamic communities is not totally foreign to western audiences. Christians will certainly be familiar with sermon illustrations and “Sunday school” stories that convey theological truth. The same tools can be contextualized when engaging Muslims with the gospel.



■ 8.9 Family

Islamic communities tend to be collectivistic and community-oriented. In contrast to Western societies, which tend to be highly individualistic, Middle Eastern cultures share a great emphasis on family structure and loyalty. Many Muslims who convert to Christianity are ostracized from their family and community and, therefore, require strong family-like support from Christians and the church. Building trust and ensuring support for these new converts is incredibly important, especially during the beginning of their faith in Christ.²³



■ 8.10 Prayer

Another crucial step is to pray for the person you're sharing with because the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, and only God can open their hearts to believe. Show respect for the people you are sharing the Gospel with; most of them grow up in a culture where those beliefs are constantly enforced and questioning them could be dangerous. Pray that they will understand the Gospel and turn to Jesus Christ as the way to God.

Appendix

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I Books and Articles

1. “7 Practical Tips for Engaging Muslims with the Gospel.” International Mission Board. Accessed: February, 25, 2025. <https://www.imb.org/2018/01/02/engaging-muslims-with-the-gospel/>.
2. “Islam.” Britannica. Accessed: February, 25, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam>.
3. “Islam.” History.com. Accessed: February, 25, 2025. <https://www.history.com/topics/religion/islam>
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