

Islam ...Is Allah Really God?

Part 3 in the series Counterfeits at Your Door

Part 1

July 30, 2011

Is Allah the same as God? Is Mohammad really a prophet? Is jihad the rhetoric of the extremist? Is the Koran a holy book on par with or superior to the Bible? Islam the 2nd largest religion now dominates 52 countries of the world and is at the fulcrum of discussion of Middle East politics, the war on terrorism and issues of religious freedom across the world.

I. Fast Facts

A. Its History

1. Muhammad ("highly praised")

- He was born in Mecca in 570 AD. His father died shortly before his birth, and he lost his mother at the age of six. The young orphan was then raised primarily by his uncle, for whom he worked as a shepherd. At age 9 (some sources say 12), he joined his uncle on a caravan to Syria.
- At age 25, Muhammad was employed by Khadija, a wealthy Meccan widow 15 years his senior. The two were married, and enjoyed a loving and happy marriage. Although polygamy was common practice at the time, Muhammad took no other wife than Khadija until her death 24 years later...and then had up 15!
- In his late 30s Muhammad started visiting a cave in Mount Hira, on the outskirts of Mecca, to seek solitude and contemplation. In 610, at the age of 40, Muhammad returned from one such visit telling his wife he had either gone mad or become a prophet, for he had been visited by an

angel. Initially startled Khadija eventually became his first convert.

2. Gabriel's revelation:

- Muhammad reported that while in a trance-like state, the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and said "Proclaim!" But like Moses, Muhammad was a reluctant prophet. After receiving support from his wife, he challenged his countrymen to convert from pagan polytheism, immorality and materialism, repent from evil and worship Allah, the only true God. He was always careful to clarify his role in God's work - he was only a prophet. He was not an angel, he did not know the mind of God, and he did not work miracles. He simply preached what he had received.
- In the first three years of his ministry, Muhammad gained only 40 followers. He and his followers experienced heavy persecution that soon turned into open violence. Members of the small movement were stoned, covered in dirt as they prayed, beat with sticks, thrown into prison and refused service by merchants.
- The breakthrough in Islam happened when he gained some followers in Yathrib, 280 miles north of Mecca and they asked him to be their leader. His escape from Mecca is celebrated by Muslims as the *Hijira*. Thus **July 16, 622**, is the date at which the Muslim calendar begins. Yathrib was eventually renamed Medina "the City of the Prophet".
- In 628 AD (4 years before he died), Muhammad received a revelation that Islam was to be exalted above all other religions including Christianity and Judaism. This began a series of battles between Medina and Mecca.

3. The battles:

- Finally, in 630, Muhammad and his forces marched to Mecca and defeated it. The Prophet rededicated the Ka'ba temple to Allah, witnessed the conversion of nearly the entire Meccan population to Islam, and then returned to Medina. Muhammad died in 632, having conquered nearly all of Arabia for Islam.
- By 634, Islam had taken over the entire Arabian peninsula. Within 100 years of Muhammad's death, it had reached the Atlantic in one direction and borders of China in the other. This success was due in large part to the military and political abilities of Muhammad's successors, the caliphs.

B. The Five Pillars

1. **Affirmation or Confession of Faith** (Shahada)

- Their creed: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger (prophet).
- This chant is recited constantly by devout Muslims.
- Islam: submission in Arabic. Men are slaves to God.

2. **Prayer** (As-Salah)

- They are required to pray 5x a day, kneeling and facing Mecca.

3. **Almsgiving** (Zakah)

- Devout Muslims give 2.5% of their income to the poor. This is considered a tax or obligation.

4. **The Fast** (Siyam or Saym)

- Faithful Muslims fast from dawn to dusk every day during Ramadan (the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar).

- In 2011 it begins at sunset July 31 and goes for 30 days. They fast only during the day...they get to eat at night! [Illustration: Minnesota Vikings safety Husain Abdullah fasting during Ramadan \(Aug.9, 2010\).](#)

5. **The Pilgrimage** (Al-Haji)

- They are expected to go to Mecca at least once in their adult lifetime.
- This was adopted from pagan rituals (which were widely practiced) long before Muhammad was born!

C. Its Influence

1. Islam is the 2nd largest religion (Christianity is 2 billion) in the world claiming at least 1.5 billion followers, which is approximately 21% of the world's population (or 1 out of 5 people).
2. It's growth in the USA
 - There are not "official" statistics but as of 2009 there is estimated to be 6-8 million Muslims in the USA. (M.M. Ali reports that there are 6 to 8 million Muslims in America in *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, May-June 1996, p. 13).
 - That is more than all the Mormons, JW's and Christian Scientists combined (Carlson, *Fast Facts on False Teachings*, p.109)
 - The Pew Research Center (2009) claims 2.5 million, whereas the Council on American-Islamic Relations (2011) claims there are 7 million which would represent 2.2% of our current population. They say the numbers are greatly deflated because of prejudice and hostility.
 - Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions in the U.S. It has surpassed Judaism as number 2

depending on whose stats you read! Jewish population stands at 5.2-6.5 million as of 2010.

(Sources: [American Jewish Historical Society](#), *American Jewish Desk Reference*, (The Philip Leff Group, Inc., 1999), p. 35. American Jew Year Book 2006 (NY: American Jewish Committee, 2006

- 1915, what is most likely the first American mosque was founded by Albanian Muslims in Biddeford, MN. A Muslim cemetery still exists there. The building of the Al-Sadique mosque was built in 1921, but it wasn't until 1934 that the first building built specifically to be a mosque is established in Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Today there are nearly 2000 mosques nationwide as well as numerous Islamic day schools and Sunday and weekend schools (Omar Khalidi, "Mosque," In Wade Clark Roof, *Contemporary American Religion*. (New York: Macmillan, 2000). Also, Yvonne Haddad, "Islam in the United States: A Tentative Ascent; A Conversation," *U.S. Society and Values: The Religious Landscape of the United States*, March 1997.
- Only 22% are born in the USA as compared to the 78% that are immigrants (Zogby International, August 2000, Survey commissioned by the American Muslim Council).
- Some of the most famous are, Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay), Kareem Abdul Jabbar (Lew Alcindor), Michael Jackson (JW or Muslim?), Mike Tyson, and Cat Stevens, etc.

D. The Top 10 Muslim populated countries (see chart in PP). Note: in millions...

1. Indonesia: 170
2. Pakistan: 136
3. China: 120 (some say as few as 37 million)
4. Bangladesh: 106
5. India: 103
6. Turkey: 62
7. Iran: 61
8. Egypt: 54
9. Nigeria: 48

II. Their Focus...8 beliefs

A. God

1. Allah is a generic Mideast name for God. Allah the moon god (represented by a black stone which came from heaven) was married to the sun god. They produced 3 goddesses called the daughters of Allah. They are at the top of the 360 idols in the *Kaaba* at Mecca.
 - When Mohammad conquered Mecca, he destroyed all the city's stone idols except for Allah. Muslims believe He is the one "true" god.
 - In pre-Islamic culture, the symbol for Allah was a crescent moon. This crescent moon is now found on the flag of every Islamic nation.
2. Differences between Allah and Jehovah God:

Allah	Jehovah God
Chose Hagar and Ishmael	Chose Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 17:18-22)
Is unloving and judgmental	God is love (John 3:16; I john 4:7-8).
Can't know him personally. It is a form of agnosticism, where you don't know God but rather obey God!	God seeks the lost (Luke 19:20), knew you before you were born (Ps.139:13-16) and he shows his mercy (Titus 3:4-7).
Salvation through total obedience and works	Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9)

- Similarities: Both are monotheistic. Both believe in His absolute unity, sovereignty, and justice. As some extreme Calvinists teach: double predestination or extreme determinism.
 - However, they cannot accept the Trinity, nor do they believe you can know Him personally; he is unapproachable!
3. **Coming Aug. 14: Part 2**

Comparison Chart of Islam and Christianity

	Islam	Christianity
Founder	Mohammad (born 570 AD)	Jesus Christ (born 5 BC)
Death of Jesus	Jesus did not die, but ascended bodily into heaven (a disciple (Judas) died in his place)	Died by crucifixion and then raised from the dead on the 3 rd day.
Place and Time of origin	Saudi Arabia (622 AD)	Palestine 33 A.D.
Original Language	Arabic	Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
Scriptures	Koran (Qur'an)	The Bible (II Tim. 3:16-17)
Branches	Sunni: 90% Shia or Shiite 10% *Twelvers: Majority; reveres the 12 imams. *Seveners: Minority; believes that the legitimate line of imams ended with the 7 th .	Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox.
House of Worship	Mosque	Church
Religious leaders	sheikh; imam (Shi'ite)	Pastors, elders, deacons (I Pet. 5:1-3)
Population	1.5 billion	2 billion
Purpose in life	Submit to the will of Allah and attain paradise after death	To gain eternal salvation and to live in such a way that God is glorified.
Symbol	Crescent moon and star	The cross
Human Nature	Born in a state of purity, imperfect yet capable of seeking God and doing good. Equal ability to do good or evil.	Man has inherited "original sin" from Adam. He is enslaved to sin. All have sinned by nature and choice (Rom.3:23; 6:23).
Who is God	Strict Monotheistic; Claims that Allah is the same God revealed (imperfectly) in the Jewish Torah and Christian Bible.	One God: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in 3 persons (Trinity). God is personal and knowable (Ps. 139).

<p>Means of salvation</p>	<p>Please Allah to gain “paradise” after death. The Qur'an teaches the necessity of both faith and good works for salvation.</p>	<p>Man needs God and is empty without Him. Salvation is a completely free gift from God and comes by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9; John 1:12).</p>
<p>Life after death</p>	<p>Resurrection of body and soul followed by eternal paradise or hell. Unbelievers (<i>kuffar</i>, "those who are ungrateful") will be condemned, but genuine repentance results in Allah's forgiveness and entrance into Paradise upon death.</p>	<p>Believers will spend eternity in heaven John 3:16) and unbelievers eternity in hell (Rev. 21:1-5).</p>
<p>Religious Law</p>	<p><i>Sharia</i> (Islamic law) dictates all of life and observes no distinction between secular and religious law. It is found in the Koran but has been updated and extended by <i>fatwa</i> (legal opinion), consensus and custom.</p>	<p>Moral law is based on the 10 commandments (Ex. 20). Christians no longer live under the law but under grace (Gal.5:13-14).</p>

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