

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH- Red Bud, Illinois**  
**Adult Bible Class “Islam: A Religion of Peace or a Life of Fear?” (Session Seven)**

A. History: The Gunpowder Empires and the Fall and Rise of Islam

*Safavids* (AD 1501-1732)- Persia (Iran) (Shi'ites)

*Mughals* (AD 1526-1858)- India (built the Taj Mahal in Agra, India)

*Ottomans* (AD 1281-1924)- In 1453 they captured Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire and center of the Eastern Orthodox Church. They renamed it Istanbul. In 1529 under the Sultan Suleyman I they reached the gates of Vienna, Austria and laid siege to the city. This occupied the time and resources of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, so that he could not deal militarily with the “Protestants” and their reformation of the church under Martin Luther. In “On the War Against the Turk,” Luther urged the emperor to defend his subjects. He said that Islam included “much glorification of the sword.” In 1541 Luther wrote in “An Appeal for Prayer Against the Turk” that Islam is God’s schoolmaster “to discipline and teach us to fear God and pray” and called them “Satan’s army,” and said what an “abominable religion Muhammad’s belief is.”

European expansion into the New World and Africa caused many military defeats for Muslims in the late 1600s. They went into two centuries of decline which was sealed when the Ottoman’s sided with the Axis powers in WWI. The 1917 Balfour Declaration declared that the Jews should have a state in Palestine. This really upset Middle Eastern Muslims. **What happened in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to restore the “fortunes” of Islam in the Middle East?**

B. Numbers and Growth

“Islamization begins when there are sufficient Muslims in a country to agitate for their religious privileges...After 80%, expect daily intimidation and violent jihad, some State-run ethnic cleansing, and even some genocide, as these nations drive out the infidels and move toward 100% Muslim. 100% will usher in the peace of ‘Dar-es-Salaam,’ the Islamic House of Peace. Here there is supposed to be peace, because everyone is a Muslim, the madrasses are the only schools, and the Quran is the only word...Unfortunately, peace is never achieved. In these 100% states the most radical Muslims intimidate and spew hatred, and satisfy their blood lust by killing less radical Muslims, for a variety of reasons” (Peter Hammond, Slavery, Terrorism and Islam: The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat).

Right now one in five Russians are Muslim. Islam is the fastest growing religion in Canada. Based on future demographics, by 2025 one in three children born in Europe will be in a Muslim family. By 2030 there will be enough Muslim voters in the United States to elect the president by themselves. By 2050 both France and Germany will be Muslim republics. France has a 1.8 reproduction rate (something that has never been reversed); it is 8.1 among Muslims in France. Muslims will be the majority in Europe. If current trends continue, by the end of this century Muslims will exceed 50% of the world’s population.

C. Sources

“A careful study reveals that the Qur’an is the word of man and not the word of God...Instead of arguing with Muslims regarding the authority of the Bible versus the Qur’an, it is best to use the truths of the Bible to lead to knowledge of sin and pointing to Jesus Christ as the only Savior. In other words, God’s Word does God’s work of leading people to repentance and faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior.” (Robert Day McAmis, “What Do Christians Need to Know About Islam and Muslims?”, Missio Apostolica, Vo. X, No. 2, page 67)

D. Teaching

The Muslim View of Women- “When it comes to Muslim practices, one of the touchiest issues is that of the treatment of women” (Ehlke, p. 98 [no pun intended]). Muhammad’s example was a bad start. He married a nine-year old girl. He also had his adopted son Zayd divorce his wife so that Muhammad could then marry her. He had 12 wives and many concubines (far from breaking Solomon’s “record”). The Qur’an calls for modest apparel for women, but does not specify the extent or size of veils. The husband is in complete control of his wife. Muslim men can have up to four wives if they can afford them, but a Muslim woman can have only one husband. A Muslim man

can divorce a wife simply by saying “I divorce you” three times in a row. A Muslim woman cannot obtain a divorce. Shi’ite Muslims allow temporary marriage for a man at his discretion. To prove rape, a Muslim woman must have four male witnesses.

#### E. Divisions (Sunnis, Shi’ites, and others)

ISIS- “The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham follows a distinctive variety of Islam whose beliefs about the path to the Day of Judgment matter to its strategy. The Islamic State is committed to purifying the world by killing large numbers of people. Muslim ‘apostates’ are the most common victim. When a masked executioner says *Allahu akbar* while beheading an apostate, sometimes he’s doing so for religious reasons. The ranks of the Islamic State are deeply infused with religious vigor. The fighters of the Islamic State are authentic throwbacks to early Islam and are faithfully reproducing its norms of war. This behavior includes a number of practices that modern Muslims tend to prefer not to acknowledge as integral to their sacred texts. The Islamic State may have medieval-style punishments for moral crimes, but its social-welfare program is progressive. Health care is free. This provision of social welfare is not a policy of choice of the Islamic State, but a policy obligation inherent in God’s law. Islamic law permits only temporary peace treaties, lasting no longer than a decade. Similarly, accepting any border is anathema. Properly contained, the Islamic State is likely to be its own undoing.” (Graeme Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants,” The Atlantic, March 2015, pages 79—94).

#### F. Correspondence and Contrasts Between Islam and Christianity

The Means of Salvation- Islam denies original sin. It rejects the substitutionary death of Jesus (who was replaced by Judas on the cross). Islam offers a system of salvation by works. Judgment Day will consist of Allah weighing one’s works on a set of scales to determine one’s worth and merit for salvation. A Muslim’s only certainty of paradise is to die in Allah’s cause by fighting in  *jihad* . “The Muslim’s salvation, always portrayed as an event in the future in the form of an escape from hell and entry into the Garden, is thus the reward of his merit, which he has accumulated from his correct belief and good works” (Ernest Hahn, How to Respond: Islam, CPH, St. Louis, 1995, page 46).

Islam also speaks about faith and deeds. But the relationship between the two is entirely different. (In Islam) Faith is not a response to God’s grace—His undeserved love for sinners, which He showed by giving His Son Jesus Christ as the sacrifice for our sins. Rather, faith or belief in Allah is a way of earning Allah’s favor. It is simply another good work. Christian works flow from a thankful heart; Muslim works are done to curry Allah’s favor. Muslim life centers around deeds. The Qur’an, hadith, and the numerous laws of Islam treat every aspect of life. Although there is talk of motives in Islam, the emphasis in the Muslim’s life of works is external, beginning and ending with outward rituals.” (Roland Ehlke, Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims, Northwestern, 2004, page 102)

#### G. Christian Witness to Muslims (Focus on Jesus!)

**1 Peter 3:15 But in your \_\_\_\_\_ set apart \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_. Always be \_\_\_\_\_ to give the \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ that you \_\_\_\_\_. But do this with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

For Christians, the point is not to win an argument, but to share the love of Christ. While we cannot do mission work in most Muslim countries, Muslims are coming to our country in record numbers. We can speak God’s Law and God’s Gospel to them in love. They are looking for peace. We have the One who makes the peace we need. *John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.”* *Ephesians 2:14 and 17 For He Himself is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility...And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.*

World mission-minded Christians need to know that God loves Muslims, that they too are human beings and, like us, sinners in need of God’s forgiveness and new life, that Christians cannot dismiss Muslims as too resistant to the Gospel and mission among Muslims as unproductive. We need congregations to invite them to Jesus as Savior and Lord, to nourish inquirers, to care for converts, especially the persecuted among them! Thank God for all missions now carried on among Muslims. Pray God for their increase here and abroad. (Ernest Hahn, “What Do Christians Need to Know About Islam and Muslims?”, Missio Apostolica, Vo. X, No. 2, page 57)