

MAJOR AREAS OF CONFLICT (Part 4)

In our last session, we said that there were at least 7 *Areas of Major Conflict* between Christianity and Islam. Let's review them quickly...

1. **CRUSADES (AD. 1095 – 1291 AD):** What we called the Reactionary Wars in the 11th and 12th Centuries against the hostile Muslim aggression against the then known world in general – and the Christian world in particular. That since the 7th Century, Islam had forcibly “taken by the sword” some 2/3's of the Christian world – including the capture of Jerusalem in 638 AD, the very birthplace and heartland of Christianity.
2. **COLONIALISM (AD 1450 – 1960):** The period of Empire Building by the Western nations – and 90% of it was the occupation of Muslim lands. From the perspective of the Islamic World, this was nothing more than “new Crusades” against the Muslim Religion by the Imperialistic West. But especially odious was the birth in 1948 of the Nation of Israel.
3. **CULTURE:** That there is a distinct “cultural war” against the worldview of Islam and that of the West in general and Christianity in particular. That in reality the “globalization of the world” is in reality the “Americanization of the world” – and our perceived moral decadence has resulted in us being named the “Great Satan” that must be destroyed.
4. **COMMUNITY:** That while Islam is by nature “community oriented,” the West tends to be “individualistic oriented” whereby we stress the “rights of the individual” over the rights of the community.
5. **CALIPHATE:** We saw that this word means “successor” and first had to do with the rightful successor of Muhammed after his death. But the wider implication is the establishment of an “Islamic theocracy,” or a worldwide Islamic State ruled by Shari'a Law.
6. **CHRIST:** As we pointed out, this is the single biggest area of conflict between the monotheistic faiths of Islam and Christianity – the “Person and Work of Jesus Christ.” So Christology is always the central mark that separates Christianity from every other World Religion, cult or heresy. And when it comes to Jesus Christ, the cardinal issues are two: (1). The *Incarnation* and, (2). The *crucifixion* and *resurrection*. We saw that while the Koran speaks of Jesus (Isa) some 93 times in 15 chapters, its teachings about Christ are either very incomplete or grossly incorrect.
 - That when Islam calls Jesus only an “Apostle of God” rather than the “Son of God,” they are totally *denying the Incarnation* – which is the very essence of Christianity:

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it...”

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-5, 14).

- **The Apostle John further emphasized the centrality of the *Incarnation* in his First Epistle as the cardinal distinguishing mark between the *Christ* and *anti-Christ*:**

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world” (1 John 4:1-3).

- **So not only does Islam deny the cardinal doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ, it also flatly denies the *crucifixion of Christ*.**
 - **Contrary to the clear teachings of the Four Gospels, Muslims do not believe that Jesus died on the cross by crucifixion – but was miraculously saved from this and was taken alive from the cross and is in heaven right now.**
 - **This is nothing but a variation of the ancient “swoon theory” where Jesus “swooned on the cross and did not really die;”**
 - **Or the “swap theory” whereby either Judas or Simon of Cyrene was crucified in Jesus’ place;**
 - **Sura 4:157 contains this famous denial. It talks about those who boast:**

“...we killed Christ Jesus the Son of Mary, the Apostle of God.” It goes on to say: “...the but they killed him not, nor crucified Him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no certain knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for a surety they killed him not.”

- This one verse in the Koran – if true, contradicts the whole basis of *Christian redemption* (I Corinthians 15).
- It was absolutely inconceivable to Mohammed that Allah would let one of his prophets be crucified and die an ignominious death on a cross.
- At this point, Muhammed’s belief is very similar to what the Jews believed about the Messiah.
- Therefore, the passion of the cross is to the Muslim world what it was to ancient Israel – a “stumbling block” (I Corinthians 1:23).
- However, the witness of the Bible is crystal clear in this central doctrine of redemption through Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross – which is the greatest expression of the *nature of God* which is the *love of God*:
 - *“God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).
 - (Jesus said of Himself) *“...the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many”* (Matthew 20:28).
 - *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men – the testimony given in its proper time”* (I Timothy 2:5-6).
 - *“For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant”* (Hebrews 9:15).
 - *“...you know that He appeared so that He might take away our sins. And in Him is no sin”* (I John 3:5).
 - *“We have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world”* (I John 4:14)
 - *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us”* (I John 3:16).
 - *“This is how God showed His love among us; He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.*

This is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (I John 4:9-10).

- So there is absolutely no Biblical ambiguity at all about the primary purpose for Christ’s coming into the world – to *“give His life a ransom for sin!”*
- So you may believe a lot of other good things about Jesus – as the Muslims do, but if you do not believe that truth, then you do not really understand Jesus at all!
- As we have already seen, Muslims also believe in the literal “Second Coming of Christ” whereby He will one day physically return to the earth. But His primary purpose in coming will be to slay all of the Anti-Christ who teach wrongly about Him – and lead the whole world back to Allah.
- Tragically then, the “good views” of the prophet Muhammed replaced the “Good News” of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- As a result, the crescent has become a substitute for the *cross*.
- The *Hadith*, or teachings and traditions of Muhammed, teaches that...
 - When Muhammed met Jesus in his “night visions” in Jerusalem, that He was of *“...red complexion, curly hair and a broad chest”* (Vol. 4, Book 55, Num. 648);
 - That Jesus said He was disqualified to intercede for people at the Judgment Day (Vol. 6, Book 60, Num. 105);
 - That the Christian doctrine of Jesus being the “Son of God” means that God had a wife (Vol. 6, Book 60, Num. 105);
- **Conclusions:** While Muslims affirm many true and wonderful things about Jesus – more than many “liberal Christians,” they fall far short of affirming His full deity. In the Koran, Jesus is portrayed as a prophet and servant of Allah. He is seen as virgin born and sinless. He is spoken of as a great miracle worker. But the Jesus of the Koran ends up being nothing more than a “forerunner of Muhammed” who pointed to his coming in John 16:7, as the “Comforter” who would lead all humanity “into all truth” – i.e, Islam. So the Islamic Jesus is little more than a false caricature of the true historic Jesus of history as revealed in the Bible. Therefore, the Jesus of the Koran is *“another Jesus”* that Paul clearly warned about who is revealed by

“another spirit” – the spirit of the evil one who is the arch-deceiver of mankind (II Corinthians 11:4).

Finally...

7. CHURCH:

- **The Christian Church is the counterpart to the Muslim Mosque. And just as most church buildings are recognized by a steeple and cross, almost all mosques are characterized by a minaret, or tall tower from which the “call to prayer” is given 5 times a day by the *Muezzin*, who is equivalent to the local pastor in a church. So the minaret is to the mosque what the bell tower used to be to churches.**
- **To Muslims worldwide, the church is seen as an *alien* and *hostile* building that is the gathering place of the “People of the Book” who are basically “infidels” because they have not become Muslims.**
- **It is totally a “Western” institution that is associated with both the *Crusades* and *Colonialism*.**
- **It is also seen as the bastion of the “white man’s religion” which is *racist* and against people of color around the world.**
- **It is the locus of the wrong teaching of the Bible which is a seriously “corrupted revelation” that can no longer be trusted as a spiritual guide.**
- **It is the focus of Jesus worship that believes that *Christ is divine* and was the Incarnate “Son of God” rather than just a great prophet of Allah.**
- **It is also the place where the great heresy of the Trinity is taught that there are 3 Gods: “God, Jesus and Mary.”**
- **The church is seen as the primary source of “Christian Zionism” that supports Israel – the chief enemy of Islam.**
- **The church is the source of “spiritual imperialism” whereby *evangelists* and *missionaries* are sent out to try and convert Muslims and oppose the advance of Islam worldwide.**
- **The church is basically seen as a front for continued *American globalization* against the world of Islam.**
- **It is because of this Islamic view of the Christian Church that it is seen as a “foreign institution” and a front for “American and Zionistic Imperialism” in Islamic countries.**

- This is why Christians are always reduced to the status of being second class citizens in Islamic countries with little or no human rights or freedom of religion.
 - As a result, they have to either practice their faith secretly in “underground churches,” or meet for worship and fellowship under very scrutinized situations by the repressive Islamic governments.
 - Also, Christians are usually not permitted to build church buildings, or repair or expand existing ones.
 - And the pastors and Christian leaders are often harassed, threatened, persecuted and arrested for no reason. Likewise, Christians are often beaten, killed or detained in jail without legal protection.
 - All of this is designed to weaken and ultimately destroy the presence of the Christian Church in Muslim countries.
- In summary then, the church is seen as *anathema* to everything Islamic – and must not be allowed to take root in Muslim countries.
 - The church then, will always be the primary focal point of the *Islamic jihad!* That’s why churches continue to be attacked, defaced, burned and destroyed to this very day all over the world in predominantly Islamic countries.
 - Since the Christian Church is God’s spiritual outpost of the “Kingdom of God” within the ‘Kingdom of man’ – which is in reality the “Kingdom of Darkness,” the evil one will always fight it “tooth and toenail!” Since it is the *only* institution or organization/organism in this world that he does not control, he will either seek to *pervert it from within* or *persecute it from without*.
 - However, Jesus said this of the church: *“I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades/death will not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18).
 - And that also includes Islam – which will ultimately fail to destroy the church, and will one day *“bow the knee”* and *“confess with the tongue that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:11)!

Now, let’s turn from Major Areas of Conflict to the Major Beliefs of Islam...

BASIC ISLAMIC BELIEFS
Islam 101

1. The word *Islam* and *Muslim* come from the Arabic verbal root meaning “those who submit.” Therefore...
 - *Islam* = “Submit”
 - *Muslim* = “One who submits” (to Allah through the teachings of the Prophet Muhammed as recorded in the Koran).
2. The very word *Islam*, then, defines the heart of what this religion is all about. It means submission or resignation to the *will of Allah*.
3. So Islam is best understood by the picture of a “servant to his master.” And here is one of the GREAT differences between Islam and Christianity because there is no concept of a *relationship* between a “father and a son.”
4. That’s why the name “Abdullah” is a favorite Muslim name since it means a “servant of God.”
5. Islam therefore is essentially a “religion of law.” It is the “submission” to Allah through a detailed religious legal system known as *Shari’a Law*.
6. And even though Islam arose *after* both Judaism and Christianity, Muslims believe that in reality Islam is really the oldest religion because it *started with Adam*, the first man – not with Mohammed. So according to the Koran, the very first man was a Muslim because he was “submitted to Allah.”
7. But as we have already seen, Islam arose well *after* the founding of all of the other major World Religions. Therefore, it is both a historic and spiritual reality that Islam was grafted onto the spiritual roots of:
 - A. Pagan animism
 - B. Judaism
 - C. Christianity
8. That’s because the Arabian Peninsula was home to Christianity, Judaism and pagan traditions several hundred years before the birth of Mohammed.
9. Because a sizeable Jewish and Christian population lived on the Arabia Peninsula before Mohammed’s birth, *their teachings and traditions were well established before Islam*.
10. So let’s look then at the Duties of Islam (*Din*): “*The 5 Pillars of Islam*.” These are the *theological pillars* that hold up the “House of Islam.”

11. They are also the “door” through which anyone becomes a Muslim and enters the “House of Islam.”
12. The 5 Pillars are also the *unifying practices* of Muslims worldwide. Since the word *Islam* means “submission,” it is the “revelation” of these 5 Pillars given by Allah to Muhammed that every Muslim must submit to in order to be truly orthodox.

THE 5 PILLARS OF ISLAM

1. The Confession of Faith (*Shahadah*): *“I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammed is the prophet of God.”*

- The word *Shahadah* is a verb and means to witness or to testify.
- So the *Shahada* is the closest thing to a confession of faith, much like the *Apostles’ Creed* or *Nicean Creed* in Christianity.
- To confess the *Shahada* is to become a Muslim and enter into the *dar al-Islam* or the “House of Islam.”
- Conversely, to deny or renounce this confession is to *apostatize* and *qualify for the death sentence*.
- In some ways, it is similar to the Jewish *Shema*: *“Hear, O Israel: ‘The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength’”* (Deuteronomy 6:4).
- Or it might be compared to the most succinct early Christian confession: *“Jesus is Lord”* (I Corinthians 12:3).

2. Daily Prayers (*Salat*): These are ritualized prayers that are recited *5 times a day*.

- These prayers are begun by the “call to prayer” by the *Muezzin* from the high minaret at the mosque. In beautiful Arabic, the “call to prayer” says:
 - *“Allah is most great. Allah is most great. Allah is most great.”*
 - (Shahadah) *“I testify there is no god but Allah. I testify that Muhammed is the prophet of Allah.”*
 - *“Come to prayer.”*

- (Morning Prayer) ***“Come to prayer. Prayer is better than sleep. Come to success in this life and the hereafter. Come to success.”***
 - ***“God is great. God is great.”***
 - (Ends with) ***“Lah Illah, Illah, Illah.”*** (***“There is no god but Allah”***)
- The prayers must be recited in *Arabic* like Muhammed recited them since this was his native language. Therefore *Arabic* is the “sacred language” in Islam just as Hebrew is to the Jew.
 - These prayers are the single most important symbol of Islam.
 - It is important to note that they are not “personal prayers” as Christians think of prayer. They are more like “liturgical prayers” that are read or recited by rote memory.
 - These prayers are recited in prescribed *postures* and *movements* which symbolically represent one’s submission to Allah and Islam.
 - Prayer primarily involves the confession of sin and begins with the *purification* or *washing of the body*. It then ends with the purification of the soul.
 - The prayer times are:
 - (1). Before daybreak
 - (2). Noon
 - (3). Midday
 - (4). Sunset
 - (5). After sunset
- It is interesting to note that nowhere in the Koran are these specific 5 daily prayers commanded. However, it is repeated in Islamic tradition.
 - The Koran does parallel the praying 3 times a day as both the Jews and Christians practiced during this time:
 - Psalm 55:17;
 - Daniel 6:10;
 - Acts 3:1;
 - Acts 10:9;
 - Acts 16:16;

3. Alms Giving (*Zakat*):

- **A percentage of every Muslim’s earnings must go to this – generally 2%, and it is obligatory for every faithful Muslim.**
 - **Obviously the Zakat is a parallel to the *Jewish tithe* of 10% or to the “proportional giving” to Christians.**
 - **Therefore, the Islamic Zakat is legalistically required of Muslims, just as the Jewish tithe was.**
 - **Interestingly, many American Christians would make good Muslims because the average tithe among Christians is between 2.5% and 3.2%!**
- **These moneys are used to meet the needs in both the *social* and *religious* areas of Islamic life.**
- **According to the Koran, the primary purpose of the Zakat is to give relief to the *poor* and *needy* among them – especially for the *widows* and *orphans*. Once again, this is a parallel to the Command of God to both the Jews and Christians (Deuteronomy 14:29; James 1:27).**
- **The Zakat is also for *Da’wah*, or the “Call to Faith” (from the verb “call”) – another very important concept in Islam.**
 - **It is for the funding of the propagation of the message of Islam to the entire world.**
 - **So the *Da’wah* is to Muslims what the Great Commission is to Christians (Matthew 28:19-20).**
 - **And later in our study we will see the other side of the *Da’wah*, which is *jihad*.**

4. 30 Day Fast (*Sawm*):

- **This is not just a general or personal fast that Muslims do at their whims. It is a very specific fast, and central to Islamic life.**
- **This fast is done during the lunar month of Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar (11 days earlier each year).**
- **This fast is specifically commanded in the Koran (2:185, 187).**
- **The fast is from sunrise to sunset – so only during the daylight hours.**

- During the fast there must be a total abstinence from anything entering your body: eating, drinking, smoking and sexual contact – during daylight hours.
- The purpose of this is to promote *spiritual renewal* among Muslims;
- This 28 day fast is broken by the “Feast of id al Fitr,” or the “Feast of the Breaking of the Fast.” This is the single biggest feast and celebration in the Islamic year. So the “Feast of id” is very similar to the Christian celebration of Christmas with feasting, visiting family and friends and the exchange of presents.

5. Pilgrimage ((*Hajj*):

- The word *Hajj* literally means pilgrimage, similar to the Swahili word *Safari* which means journey, trip, or travel.
- This is required for every able bodied Muslim who can afford it once in his lifetime (Sura 3:97).
- The Hajj lasts from 3 days up to 12 days, depending upon whether or not it includes a visit to Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock.
- In Mecca they walk around the *Kaaba*, or “House of God” 7 times, stone the devil, say their prayers at the “Station of Abraham”; and drink water from the well of Zamzam in memory of Hagar and Ishmael;
- During the Hajj, everyone wears a simple white robe, whether they are a king or peasant. This symbolizes their full equality before Allah – which has great appeal to Muslims worldwide.

(6). Striving in the Way of God (*Jihad*):

- Many Muslims see this as the “6th Pillar of Islam.”
- It basically means striving.
- It can also be interpreted as “holy war” – which was clearly practiced by Muhammed and practiced by faithful Muslims down through the centuries.
- It is the solemn duty of every Muslim to help conquer the world for Islam by any and every means possible – starting with the *Da’wah*:

“the call to faith” through *preaching, persuasion, economic inducement, etc.*

- **But if that fails, then there is the more forceful approach of *jihad: coercion, intimidation, persecution, war.***
- **Therefore, every Muslim is obligated to participate in this “striving for Allah” until Islam becomes the religion of every person on earth.**

CONCLUSIONS

1. **The “5 Pillars of Islam” are the basis of one’s acceptance with Allah. But they are also the basis for his *hope* – but not *certainty*, of salvation at the Judgment Day.**
2. **Without a doubt, all of these “5 Pillars of Islam” – or 6, were clearly *copied by Muhammed from the Judaism and Christianity of his day!* So these are not unique “revelations” but rather “spiritual plagiarisms” from Judaism and Christianity. Consider these clear parallels:**
 - ***Shahadah* (Confession): Deuteronomy 6:4; I Corinthians 12:3;**
 - ***Salat* (Ritual Prayers): Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10; Acts 3:1**
 - ***Zakot* (Almsgiving & Tithing): Lev. 27:30; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 6:4; Acts 24:17; Galatians 2:10**
 - ***Zawm* (Fasting): Psalm 35:13; Isaiah 58:5-9; Matthew 6:16; Acts 13:2**
 - ***Hajj* (Pilgrimage): Ex. 23:14-19; Deuteronomy 16:16; Acts 20:16; I Corinthians 16:8**
 - ***Jihad* (Warfare): Deuteronomy 20:1-20; Ephesians 6:10-19; II Corinthians 10:3-6**
3. **As Dr. Tim Tennent concluded: “...the Five Pillars are clearly drawn from Jewish and Christian practices that were prevalent in Arabia and in Muhammad’s contact with Jews on the peninsula during his lifetime. I think it is fair to say that the genius of Islam is not in its originality, either in its ideas or in its practice, but its...creative assimilation of explicitly Jewish and Christian practices into a new religion which does carry distinctively new tones and new expressions” (Teaching notes on Islam).**
4. **So whether one considers these 5 Pillars of Islam to be direct “revelations” to Muhammed from Allah; or “spiritual plagiarisms” from Judaism and Christianity, they reveal Islam to be totally a “religion of**

works righteousness” whereby one earns his salvation by following these 5 prescribed practices.

- 5. As a result, there is no assurance of salvation in Islam since one can never be sure in this life if he or she has faithfully met Allah’s standards of judgment.**
 - **The only exception to this is death through jihad which guarantees the martyr immediate and direct access into Paradise.**
 - **It is only when one “dies in jihad” that he or she is guaranteed immediate and direct access into Paradise.**
- 6. In the end, however, since Allah is totally *sovereign* and *transcendent*, one can never be sure of his or her salvation! This is only revealed in finality at the Judgment Day.**
- 7. By glorious contrast, the Christian can rest in the spiritual security of knowing that his or her salvation is not based upon their “good works” – but on Christ’s “perfect work” done on the cross of Calvary in their behalf!**
- 8. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (II Corinthians 5:21);**
- 9. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (II Corinthians 8:9).**