

**JESUS & JIHAD**  
Or  
“Spiritual Warfare” vs. “Jihadist Warfare”  
(Session 7)

**INTRODUCTION:**

When we come to the subject of “jihad,” we come to one of the very **BIGGEST** areas of controversy between Christianity and Islam.

**BIG QUESTION:** “Is Islam primarily a ‘Religion of Peace’ or a ‘Religion of War?’”

This is a question that must be answered both *theologically* and *historically*. In other words, we must carefully look at both...

The *exegesis* of the Koran, as well as... The *experience* of history

I want to be very *careful* and *prayerful* as I seek to answer that question!

I do not want to fall into the extreme of “demonizing Islam” on the one hand, or “deifying Christianity” on the other.

I want to present a fair presentation of each – from their “Holy Books” – the *Bible* and the *Koran*.

We do not want to present Islam as a 100% “warring religion” – and all Moslems as “fighting fundamentalists” who are on a radical Islamic jihad for Allah.

Nor do I want to present Judaism or Christianity in such a way as to suggest a historic and theological solidarity when it comes to the issue of war.

Down through the centuries, both Christians and Jews have differed when it comes to the matter of war. While most have been willing to “go to war” if there is ‘just cause,’ many have remained staunch pacifists.

And both sides can justify their position through selective “proof-texting” of the Bible.

It is the same with Islam. Not all Moslems are “fighting fundamentalists” ... religious radicals...fanatical terrorists...or mujahideen jihadists.

The biggest enemy of modern Islam today is the same enemy of Judaism or Christianity – *money...materialism...things...upward mobility...luke-warmness...“middle-class mediocrity!”*

Therefore, millions of modern Muslims around the world are just as intoxicated with materialism as we Westerners are! And as they are able to enjoy more and

more of the material pleasures of life – the last thing they want to do is loose it all in a holy war!

So whether you are a Christian, Muslim or Jew, I would remind you of the timeless words of exhortation of the Apostle Paul to young Timothy about these very days we are living in – called the “*Last days.*”

“But realize this, that in the *last days* difficult times will come. For men will be *lovers of self, lovers of money...lovers of pleasure* rather than *lovers of God*; holding the *form of godliness*, although they have denied its power...” (II Tim. 3:1-5; NASV).

Having shared that warning, let’s turn now to this study of “jihad” from the Koran – the primary source of authority for every faithful Muslim, along with the *Hadith*, or the collection of over 3,000 different sayings by Mohammed – that are also considered authoritative to all Muslims.

## THE KORANIC VIEW OF JIHAD

There are a minimum of 164 verses in the Koran about Jihad – and I have read them all.

And without question, the majority of these verses are clearly mentioned in association with *literal warfare, military expedition, fighting and combat*.

Also, these jihads are also associated with the “eternal rewards” that are guaranteed by Allah for fighting his battles. There is also an often reference to the *distributing the spoils of war* for the victor.

So it is absolutely impossible to “spiritualize” or “allegorize” these Koranic verses – just as it is impossible to do so with the Biblical references to physical warfare recorded there.

However, before turning to the Koran to look at some of the many jihad verses, I want to remind you of what we pointed out in an earlier study. We saw 2 parallel concepts in Islam: *Da’wah* and *jihad*:

A. *Da’wah* = the equivalent of Christ’s “Great Commission.” It is to try and persuade people to become Muslims by peaceful means. Two Examples:

“Call men to the path of your Lord with *wisdom and kindly exhortation*” (Surah 16:125);

“There shall be *no compulsion in religion*” (Surah 2:256);

**B. *Jihad* = physical warfare, or “holy war” – not with words and wisdom – but with weapons of warfare;**

“Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers in battle, *smite at their necks* [i.e., “cut off their heads!” Thus the many “beheadings” in Islam] and when you have laid them low, bind your captive firmly” (Surah 47:4).

(So called ‘Sword verse’) “When the forbidden months are past, then *fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them*. And seize them, beleaguer them and lie in wait for them in every stratagem of war” (Surah 9:5).

So the Koran teaches BOTH *war* and *peace*. That means that *Da’wah* is to precede *jihad*...words are to go before *warfare*. Therefore, *Da’wah* can be the use of the... Mouth = A “war of words” in behalf of Islam – like ‘s boast about the “*Mother of all Battles*” against the invading American forces;

Pen = “Writing in behalf of Islam” – like Christian Apologetics”;

Hands = Doing “good deeds” in the name of Islam;

However, the strongest evidence of both Koranic theology and historical evidence is that *jihad* has been used against *pagans*, *Jews* and *Christians* far more than *Da’wah*. It has been the sword that has been more often used to *extend* and *defend* Islam than either word or deed.

(1). This form of Jihad is often associate with fighting or “gital,” in behalf of Islam – especially against unbelievers in Islam;

(2). According to the Encyclopedia of Islam, a jihad is defined as “...an act of pure devotion; it is one of the gates to Paradise; rich heavenly rewards are guaranteed for those who devote themselves to it; those who fall in the jihad are the martyrs of the faith.”

(3). Obviously then, this form of Jihad dominates Islamic history;

Therefore, let me read directly from the Koran, a few representatives of the many jihadist passages... (READ KORANIC VERSES)

After hearing those clear verses from the Koran, it is also important to point out – as moderate Muslims constantly do – that “Jihad” can also clearly mean a “struggle” or “exertion” – as in a personal “private spiritual struggle” against the flesh or evil.

This is what we may properly refer to as “Spiritual Jihad” or a “Jihad of the heart.”

In its religious context, it means a “fight against evil” – much like Christians are exhorted to “fight against the flesh” and wage constant warfare against the “trinity of evil” that forever attacks us – the “*world, flesh and devil.*”

However, one of the BIG difference here is that Islam has no Holy Spirit to aid them in this “spiritual jihad” against evil. Their own human will is all the faithful Muslim can bring to bear against the ever-present “evil within and evil without.”

Also, you cannot begin to comprehend the Islamic concept of “jihad” without understanding how they divide the world into two spheres:

*Dar as-Salaam* or “House of Peace”

*Dar al-Harb* or “House of War”

14. Islam therefore believes that *all men were created to live in submission to Allah, as prescribed by Islamic law.* So Muslims believe that it is their destiny to extend its control until the whole of humanity comes into the household of Islam – even if by force, or jihad. So the world will continue to be in the “House of War” until it ultimately comes under total Islamic rule. Only then will the world become a “House of Peace.

15. It is also a clear fact of history that Mohammed often engaged in “military jihad” – and commanded his followers to do the same. He first rode into Mecca on a stallion with a sword in hand to conquer by force.

16. However, it does seem clear that Mohammed’s doctrine of Jihad evolved over time from the “word” to the “sword”...from “defense” to “offense”...from the use of persuasion to coercion.

17. How could this not be the case when the Koran clearly teaches this kind of military Jihad – which is beloved by Allah:

“Truly Allah loves those who fight in His cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure” (Surah 61:4).

18. Is it any wonder then that the people who fight in jihad are called *Mujahideen*, or “holy warriors.” And the Muslims who die in a jihad are considered martyrs, or *shahidin*.

19. But there is also in Islam an opposite concept known as *hirabah* or “unholy war.” We might call this “Expansionist Jihad,” which has become the norm for radical Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalists throughout the world over the past decade. Thus the popular rhetoric that says: “Islam is a peaceable religion that has just been high-jacked by a few radical fanatics!”

20. It is also important to note that some Muslims draw parallels between a Jihad or “Holy War” and Augustine’s concept of a “Just War,” which taught:

The war must be conducted by proper Governmental authorities;

The fighting must not harm non-combatants;

The victory must not harm hostages, prisoners and property – especially trees and landscape;

Its ultimate goal must be to secure *justice* and *peace*.

21. But the problem with this equation is this: In “justice” and “peace” are seen as synonymous with the advance of a Muslim State, or an “Islamic Theocracy” whereby the world is under the complete domination of Allah and Islam.

22. By contrast, neither Christianity nor the “Just War Theory” teaches the idea of forcing God’s Kingdom on the earth by forced conversion or by “Christianizing” people. As we saw in an earlier study in this series, we Christians believe that we are to *evangelize* the world – but not *Christianize* the world. That can only be done when Christ comes to set up His earthly Kingdom that we pray for in the “Lord’s Prayer.” So there is no place for force or coercion in Christianity or in the mission of the church.

23. However, the Islamic concept of Jihad unapologetically does so!

24. Authentic Christianity regrets the fact our Faith has often been associated with war down through the centuries. For the first 3 centuries of her history, the church basically kept herself separated from secular power. But when the Roman Emperor, Constantine, was “converted” to Christianity everything changed. When he embraced Christianity and made it the official religion of the Roman Empire, he associated it with his wars. So around A.D. 312, Constantine went forth as the “Christian Emperor, using the symbol of the cross on the shields of his soldiers. From that time forward, Christianity has often been associated with various wars.

25. Tragically, Mohammed was aware through his lifetime of the long struggle between the Persians and the Christians. The Christians were known as the “Eastern Roman Empire” or the Byzantines by their foes. In the same year that Mohammed made his faithful emigration from Mecca to Medina (A.D. 622), the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius launched a seven-year “holy war” against the Persians – and the Christian church was identified with these wars. So tragically, Mohammed saw in the Byzantines a model of wedding the sword to the faith – rather than the true example of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

26. So while authentic Christianity is apologetic and repentant over the times in history when “Christians” have engaged in things like the *Crusades... Inquisitions...wars* in the “Name of God,” Islam glories and takes pride in her past military conquests and Jihads in the name of Allah!

27. So while Christianity has often apologized for the fact that the Crusades were carried out in the name of our Faith; Islam has NEVER apologized for any of their military expansions through jihad! That's because it is an essential part of their spiritual DNA as a religion. Warfare and violence is literally breathed into Islam from the Koran!

28. That's why many Moslems look back with great pride at the first 3 Centuries of Islamic expansionism as the "Golden Years of Islam." And that's also why the Islamic fundamentalists and radicals around the world are seeking to expand Islam at any cost.

## JESUS & WARFARE

All of this theological and historical warfare in Islam is in stark contrast to Jesus who never engaged in ANY military conflict. Nor did he instruct His followers to do so.

Jesus clearly instructed His Disciples:

"If any place will not welcome you or listen to you, *shake the dust off their feet* when you leave as a testimony against them" (Mk. 6:11).

So what a difference between "shaking the dust off" – and "cutting the heads off" – of those who do not receive you and your message!

While Mohammed rode into Mecca on a war horse brandishing a sword; Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as God's "Suffering Servant" to die for the sins of the world. Consider...

In His "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus taught: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:44).

Doctor Luke's account further says: "...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THEM, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:27-36).

And Jesus did not preach one thing and practice another. The great example of this was when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:47-56); READ

But the supreme example of loving one’s enemies was demonstrated when Jesus was on the cross when He prayed for those who crucified Him: *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:34).

The Apostle Paul, formerly known as “Saul of Tarsus,” was in reality the “Osma bin Laden” of his day. As a “fighting fundamentalist,” Saul was waging a “holy war” or jihad against the Infidels known as “Followers of the Way.” But this “religious radical” was “radically changed” when he met the risen Lord on the Damascus Road – after which the “antagonist” became the “Apostle” and “Apologists” for Christianity. Note these words:

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but have room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. (\*) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:17-21).

(\*) **Note:** Paul quotes a portion of the wisdom of Proverbs here which says: *“...In doing this you will heap burning coals on his head, and THE LORD WILL REWARD YOU.”* (Proverbs 25:21-22).

Also note what the Old Testament taught about the treatment of your enemy’s property:

“If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it” (Exodus 23:4-5).

## CONCLUSIONS

While Islam is clearly BOTH a “Religion of Peace” and a “Religion of Violence,” authentic Christianity is first and foremost a faith of spiritual, emotional and political peace.

That’s because we follow the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6)...the “God of Peace” (Hebrews 13:20) and are called to be “peace-makers” (Matthew 5:4).

There is no record where Jesus every fought. However, Mohammed fought many times. Likewise there is no account where Jesus every harmed anyone – much took someone’s life. Mohammed on the other hand, killed many people in his lifetime.

So neither the Old or New Testaments teach a “Jihadist mentality.” While there were periods of warfare as the Children of Israel conquered the Promised Land, it was God’s judgment upon certain select people groups whose abominations had become intolerable to His holiness and righteousness. These wars were therefore ones of limited engagement” with a focused target and timetable. They were never “generalized” against ALL people except the Jews.

Certainly neither Jews nor Christians have always been good examples of the clear exhortations of the Bible about how to relate to our enemies.

Nor have they always been good models of Christ’s words and personal example.

Neither have Christians always carefully followed the guidelines of a “Just War” in times of military conflict.

However, there can be no doubt about the stark contrast between what Mohammed and Jesus taught – and practiced, in this area. There can be no doubt from both their theology and history that the “vision of violence” looms large in Islam, along with their “martyr motif,” as Dr. Tim Tennent has called it. That means that martyrdom is seen as one of the very highest ideals of Islam. Certainly Christianity also honors our martyrs (Luke 11:49-50; Revelation 2:9-10; 13-14; 12:11; 16:6; 18:24). But Christians do not seek martyrdom as a means of salvation. They experience martyrdom as a result of their faithfulness to the Lord “...unto death” (Revelation 2:10). They had “...been slain *because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained*” (Revelation 6:9).

While Jesus gave us the “Great Commission” to take His Gospel to the whole world – He never instructed us to do so through “Jihad” or “holy war.” Nor did He ever tell His disciples to “seek martyrdom.” There would be enough persecution and martyrdom just from their obedience to the Gospel and the message of the cross! They would not have to seek it out.

So in the process of world evangelization we are to constantly conduct “spiritual warfare” against every vestige of the “kingdom of darkness” – which includes Islam, but we are not to “take up physical arms” to do so. As Paul instructed Timothy, we are to “...fight the *good fight* of the faith” (I Timothy 1:18; 6:12).

So we Christians are often exhorted to *spiritual warfare* clothed in the “...whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6:10-16).

But since the “...weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world” (II Corinthians 10:4), we ONLY fight through the authority of the “Spirit” and the “Word.”

As Paul said, we fight “...with *weapons of righteousness* in the right hand and in the left” (II Corinthians 6:7) – but never with the sword! The only sword we use is the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 4:12).

So while Islam has generally always spread by the sword, Christianity has spread by the “...sword of the Spirit.”

By contrast, Mohammed personally led multiple “jihad” in his day. That’s why one writer called Mohammed “the personification of a militaristic theologian” (*Unveiling Islam*, by Caner & Caner, p. 185).

So Mohammed personally set the example of leading jihad in his own life – and he instructed his followers to do the same as one of the primary ways that Islam is to be advanced in the world.

And twice Allah guarantees entrance into Paradise for the Muslim who dies in Jihad (Hadith 9.93.549; Hadith 9.93.555).

So while the “Just War” concept has no place in the role of the global advance of Christianity, “jihad” has been at the very heart and soul of Islam’s global expansionism from the very earliest days until now. And while outsiders may be confused, the Islamist fundamentalists who are leading the worldwide “War of Terrorism” – are clearly doing so from a jihadist conviction. They are being totally consistent and faithful to the teachings of the Koran.

And finally, because Jihad guarantees direct and immediate admission into the “Garden of Paradise” where there is abundance of food and sex – it makes Islam highly appealing and attractive!

Therefore, since Islam is a “religion of works,” it is only “death by jihad” that offers an assurance of salvation found nowhere else in Islam or the Koran – it will always be one of the great spiritual motivations of that religion.

But as Christians, we echo the song writer when he wrote:

**“Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war,  
With the CROSS of Jesus going on before!”**

**We fight and overcome our enemies through LOVE. And the only bloodshed we focus on is the “blood of the Lamb!”**

**His defeat was our victory...His death was our life...His hell was our heaven!**

**That’s why we proclaim with Paul:**

**“God forbid that I should ever boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...”  
(Galatians 6:4);**

**“For I the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing; but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God” (I Corinthians 1:18).**

**“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (I Corinthians 2:2).**

**“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the *power of God* for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew; then for the Gentile” (Romans 1:18) – as well as for the Muslim!**