

THE MUSLIM'S VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN

The Muslim's view of a Christian is beneficial to our study for a number of reasons. First, it will contribute to our efforts to understand the Muslim's worldview and judgment of those who follow Christ. There has already been a study showing that Muslim's view "Allah- Islam's god" (lesson 2) as equivalent to the God of the Bible. There has also been a study answering the question, "What do Muslims believe about Jesus" (lesson 4) and it was shown that He is viewed as only an apostle and not the Son of God. Furthermore, there has been a study revealing "The Islamic View of the Bible" (lesson 7) and how it has been validated by the Qur'an and, although contradicts the Bible, relies on the Bible for its existence. Considering this foundational material, how then does the Muslim view the Christian?

This study will also be beneficial as it will also provide some explanation as to why the Muslim world views what he believes are "Christians" as enemies. Make no mistake, when events such as 9-11 occurred and as Muslims wield terrorism throughout the globe against "western culture", it is not viewed as a battle against a nation or nations, but a battle of Islam against "Christianity." As the Muslim's understanding of "Christianity" is defined, it will help the child of God be able to appropriately react to any hostility shown him when interacting with a Muslim and could greatly impact the possibility of gaining credibility with the Muslim and even winning the his lost soul.

Finally, this study is beneficial because it prepares the child of God for Islamic efforts to convert him. Yes, Muslims want to convert and are doing so at a rapid rate. The religion has over 1 billion adherents and it continues to be the fastest growing religion today. Why is this the case and what can the child of God know before hand that will aid him in the Muslim's efforts to proselytize.

How does the Muslim View the Christian?

Those people that were thought of as "Christians" by Muhammad were endorsed and praised for their trust. The "Christians" who were standing fast by the Gospel were on the "right course"; therefore, Muhammad acknowledged them as devoted to learning, humble and apart from the world. However, the perception held by Muhammad was that the "Christians" would be quick to receive the message he preached and would become Muslims. When this ended up not being the case, they were then painted as transgressors.

"Christians" are trustworthy according to the Qur'an:

Among the People of the Book are some who, if entrusted with a hoard of gold, will (readily) pay it back; others, who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless thou constantly stookest demanding, because, they say, "there is no call on us (to keep faith) with these ignorant (Pagans)." but they tell a lie against Allah, and (well) they know it. (Surah 3:75)

Those “Christians” who stood fast by the Gospel were on the “right course”:

If only the People of the Book had believed and been righteous, We should indeed have blotted out their iniquities and admitted them to gardens of bliss. If only they had stood fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that was sent to them from their Lord, they would have enjoyed happiness from every side. There is from among them a party on the right course: but many of them follow a course that is evil. (Surah 5:65-66)

It was thought by Muhammad that the “Christians” would quickly receive his message:

Strongest among men in enmity to the believers wilt thou find the Jews and Pagans; and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, "We are Christians": because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant. And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognise the truth: they pray: "Our Lord! we believe; write us down among the witnesses. (Surah 5:82-84)

However, when obedience did not occur, it was because they did not have faith and were transgressors:

Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors. (Surah 3:110)

Today, the view of “Christians” by Muslims is similar. “Christians” are respected in one sense because the Christian tradition makes up the roots of Islam; however, by not conforming to Islamic law, they are seen as the opposition. This is viewed today primarily in the context of governments. Muslims see “western” governments as “Christian” and by not adopting Islamic law and by promoting world democracy, oppose Islam and are to blame for the Muslim’s struggle. Bottom line: they blame the “West” for their ills (Jones 125).

The Defining of Terms: What does the Muslim think of when he thinks “Christian?”

“The historical context of Islam places it in the years when most professed Christians had largely gone into apostasy. The charges Muhammad makes against Christians are really those who are adherents to the Roman Catholic and Byzantine Churches, and not against true disciples” (Rieber 188). The Qur’an clearly reveals that Catholicism is in mind during the time of Muhammad. It was only about a hundred years prior to Muhammad’s advancements that the veneration of Mary and images starting being promoted within the Catholic Church. This apostate body and demonization that was driven by men, was who Muhammad would have considered as “Christians.”

The Qur'an reveals the Islam was almost an attempt to "reform" the Catholic Church. Notice the rebuke given:

Nor would he instruct you to take angels and prophets for Lords and patrons. What! would he bid you to unbelief after ye have bowed your will (To Allah in Islam)? (Surah 3:80)

"Those who claimed to be Christians or Jews and abided by their Scriptures as the Muslims interpreted them, were respected and permitted to live in peace among the Muslims. They were even permitted self-governing communities. However, those who had introduced innovations and idolatry were not tolerated. This would preclude most of the Roman and Byzantine churches. The Islamic rule would not tolerate idolatry, but accepted sincere practitioners of the Scriptures as they judged them to be" (Rieber 188-189). Therefore, the concept of "Christian" in the eyes of a Muslim are those that are apostate and approve of unscriptural behavior (see Catholicism study via www.onlyhopepublications.com).

This type of knowledge can be beneficial when studying with a Muslim. If the Muslim can be shown that the child of God likewise rebukes the veneration of Mary, "saints," and images, the violent forms of "evangelizing" (such as the Catholic crusades), and the Roman hierarchy and pope, then maybe some credibility can be gained and some clarity regarding "church history" can be studied. Truly, the rebuke of Catholicism and the error that has been revealed throughout history, can be a great place to meet on common ground with a Muslim.

How the Muslim Seeks to Convert Christians to Islam

The Muslim may say when approaching a Christian, "Muslims believe in Jesus too." Such a claim is true, but only partly. Muslims do not believe Jesus is God (see "What do Muslims Believe about Jesus" (lesson 4)), but they do believe that he was an "apostle" and one of God's chosen. Therefore, this proclamation made by Muslims is aimed toward the uncommitted child of God or the lackadaisical Bible student in an effort to find common ground and gain a proselyte. Muhammad used the same approach by connecting himself to Biblical persons and claiming a belief in their receipt of an inspired message.

Say: "We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets, from their Lord: We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam)." (Surah 3:84)

Another way in which Islam seeks to "convert" Christianity is by penetrating its society and culture. Remember that Muslims do not just see individuals as "Christian," but may view western governments as "Christian" and therefore opposed to Islam. "Islam promotes values that conflict with those of Western societies. While Western societies have developed the idea that government is a human undertaking which endeavors to keep religion completely separate, Islam places all political authority in the writings of the Qur'an. Additionally, Islam dictates that all

people should submit to Islamic teachings” (Jones 96). Therefore, efforts to convert “Christians” include the overtaking of entire nations and governing bodies to conform to that which is Islamic. This has been and is taking place today. “The United Kingdom now has its first official Shar’ia courts, giving them full power to rule on civil cases ranging from divorce and financial disputes to those involving domestic violence” (Jones 121).

He it is who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it conqueror of all religion however much idolaters may be averse. (Surah 61:9 Picktall)

Review Questions

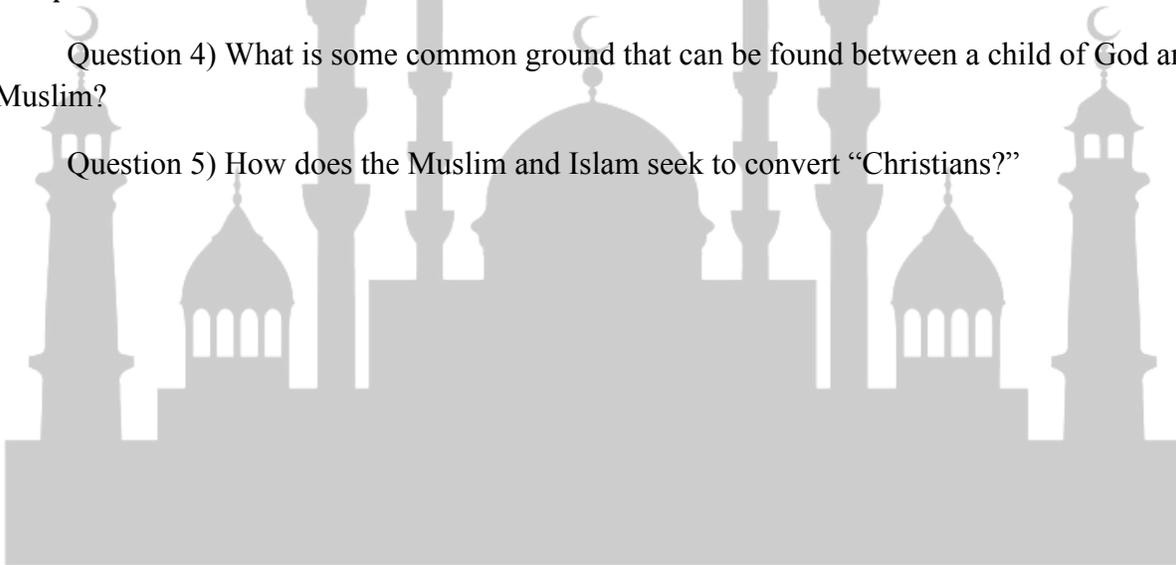
Question 1) Why study this lesson?

Question 2) How does the Muslim view the Christian?

Question 3) What does the Muslim actually think of when he uses the term “Christian?” Why is this the case and what doctrines began to be introduced prior to the time of Muhammad that would have caused him to view Christians as those who were apostate and a part of Catholicism?

Question 4) What is some common ground that can be found between a child of God and a Muslim?

Question 5) How does the Muslim and Islam seek to convert “Christians?”



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