

# The History of Islam

A Special Class on March 22, 2010

## Introduction:

- I. A study of Islam is very timely. The truth is that we need to understand some things about Islam.
  - A. The religion of Islam is growing rapidly. The number of Muslims in the world is estimated to be more than one billion.
    1. Population demographics (specifically fertility rates and immigration) suggest that Europe will soon be a Muslim continent.
      - a. Despite their low fertility rates, the population of European countries is not declining. Since 1990, 90% of population growth in Europe has been Muslim.
      - b. There are currently 52 million Muslims in Europe, a total expected to double in the next 20 years to 104 million (an estimate suggested by the government of Germany).
    2. Islam is rapidly becoming more popular among certain segments of the population of the United States.
  - B. There is an increase in interest in Eastern religions in general in this country.
    1. The social disorder and abandonment of traditional moral values in western nations is causing some to look at the Islamic faith with favor.
    2. Illustration: At a population control conference, Albert Gore, former vice-president of a “Christian” nation, was strongly advocating abortion while Muslim nations were against abortion.
  - C. It is difficult to understand many of the current events in the Middle East without some knowledge of Islam.
    1. Illustration: The apocalyptic attitude of Iran toward the west is anchored in the history of Islam.
    2. Illustration: The attitude of Islamic nations toward Israel affects events in the Middle East.
  - D. It is good to understand the religion of our neighbors (and more of our neighbors are Muslims than in the past).
    1. We can be more efficient in evangelization if we understand the beliefs of those we are attempting to teach.
    2. We need to avoid “offensive” behavior if we want to continue to have the influence with Muslims necessary to teach them about the Bible (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

## Body:

- I. **The Life of Muhammad**
  - A. Dating the early life of Muhammad is very difficult. Most Islamic sources start with the assumption that he was 40 when he claimed to begin receiving revelations.<sup>1</sup>
  - B. He was born in Mecca in 570 AD.

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<sup>1</sup> Peters, Francis E. Muhammad and the origins of Islam. State Univ of New York Pr. July, 1994. P. 102.  
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1. His father died before he was born.
  2. His foster mom/nurse took care of him.
  3. His mother died when he was about 5.
- C. He married Khadijah at about the age of 25.
1. Muhammad's first marriage was to a 40-year-old widow named Khadijah. Her previous husband was a wealthy merchant and she took over the business. Muhammad was first hired by Khadijah before becoming her husband.
  2. Muhammad's experience as a merchant in a heavily Jewish area affected his life greatly. He learned that the Jews were expecting a Messiah and heard many Jewish stories during this time.
- D. He adopted Zayd.
1. Zayd was believed to be a slave from a tribal war in the area, purchased by Khadijah at Muhammad's request.
  2. According to tradition, Zayd was freed by Khadijah and Muhammad.
  3. Zayd was then adopted and became Zayd ibn Muhammad.
  4. This occurred prior to allegedly receiving any revelations.

## II. The Rise of Islam

### A. Muhammad's first revelation

1. Muhammad allegedly received his first revelation in the caves and hills of Mecca. He waited several years after receiving this revelation to tell anyone about it.
2. He claimed to have been visited by the angel Gabriel. Gabriel gave Muhammad the Qur'an, and said "read." Many historians consider Muhammad to have been illiterate, and in this case, Muhammad replied to Gabriel, "I cannot." After a few embraces and repeated instructions to "read," Gabriel began, over the next twenty-three years, to personally teach Muhammad the verses of the Qur'an.
3. Muhammad would then tell these verses to his followers who would memorize them and often write them down.

### B. Muhammad's first followers

1. Muhammad's wife and children were among the first converts. Of specific mention was his adopted son, Zayd.
2. By 615 AD, Muhammad had a small handful of followers. His ideas were very unpopular in Mecca, and by Islamic tradition, his followers were persecuted.
3. In 615 AD, tradition states that twelve men and twelve women fled to Abyssinia. This is known as the first migration.
4. In 616 AD, the Muslims in Abyssinia heard that Mecca was more tolerant. They traveled back to Mecca, found this report to be untrue, and then fled back to Abyssinia with their now eighty-three men and up to nineteen women. This is known as the second migration.

C. Muslims fled to Medina.

1. Between 618 and 620 AD, the Muslims in Mecca were persecuted and fled to Medina. The Meccans removed all Muslims from their land.
2. In 622 AD, Muhammad and his followers journeyed from Abyssinia (and any remnants in Mecca) to Medina. This is called the Hijra (beginning of Islamic calendar).

III. **The Spread of Islam**

A. Between 624 AD and 630 AD, the Muslims in Medina and the Meccans waged war.<sup>2</sup>

1. 624: Battle of Badr - Muslims defeated the Quraysh (members of Muhammad's own tribe).
2. 625: Battle of Uhud - Muslims were defeated.
3. 626: Muslims defeated the Jewish tribe of al-Nadir.
4. 627: "War of the Ditch" - Mecca attacked Muslims in Madina, but were repelled.
5. 628: Treaty of Hudaibiyya - truce with the Quraysh,
6. 629: Jews of Khaybar are slaughtered; Muhammad sent messengers and letters to the kings of Persia, Yemen, and Ethiopia, asking them to accept Islam.
7. 630: Muhammad's forces took Mecca.

B. Muhammad died in Medina in 632 AD.

1. Most (but not all) of the Arabian Peninsula had been converted to Islam.
2. Over the next century, Islam would continue to spread.
3. As the first caliph (meaning successor), Abu Bakr conquered the rest of the Arabian Peninsula.

IV. **The Ongoing Course of Islam**

A. The selection of successors to Muhammad eventually created division within Islam.

1. The caliphs (Sunnis)
2. The imams (Shiites)

B. There are a number of other groups within Islam. Some significant ones include:

1. Sufism – Islamic mysticism; Sufi brotherhoods (cutting across Sunni and Shiite lines) are aggressive missionary organizations.
2. Wahhabism – a "Muslim puritan movement"<sup>3</sup> founded by Al Wahhab (d. 1787) in Saudi Arabia. Literalists in their interpretation of the Qur'an, Wahhabism is aggressive in its condemnation of westernization and has been influential on other ultraconservative Islamic groups. Not surprisingly, this movement has no sympathy toward Sufism.
3. Nation of Islam (currently led by Louis Farrakhan) – not a particularly orthodox form of Islam, this group of American Muslims advocates separatist and racist views and programs.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://catholic-resources.org/Courses/Islam-History.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Braswell, p. 65. An interesting description of a Muslim group!

- C. Perhaps of more practical value for us would be the division of Muslims by Gabriel into three main groups, based on their conduct.<sup>4</sup>
1. Ordinary or secular Muslims
  2. Committed Muslims
  3. Fanatic Muslims
- D. With the expansion of Islam, the Crusades were the response of “Christianity.” In truth, there were probably several motives for pursuing the crusades.
1. The primary reason for the crusades was the liberation of the Holy Land.
    - a. The Holy Lands had come under Muslim control after approximately A.D. 700.
    - b. As the doctrine of penance became entrenched in the Catholic Church, pilgrimages to the Holy Land were encouraged.
    - c. At first, the Muslims allowed such pilgrimages, but, as time passed, these travelers began to be robbed or killed (note the nature of the Seljuk Turks). The response of the Catholic Church was to attempt to take back these lands so that free access could be had to Jerusalem and the surrounding areas.
  2. It is likely, however, that each of the “major players” in the First Crusade had other motivations also.<sup>5</sup>
    - a. The emperor of the Holy Roman Empire saw the opportunity to use the warriors of western Europe to protect his weak empire against the Muslims.
    - b. It has been suggested that the Roman pope, Urban II, used the crusade as a means of extending his authority among Christians in the Eastern Roman Empire.
    - c. Many of the lords who went on this crusade were interested in plunder and power.
  3. The seven principal crusades are as follows:
    - a. First Crusade (1095-1099)
      - 1) The principal leader of the crusade was Godfrey of Bouillion.
      - 2) The crusaders managed to take back nearly all of Palestine, including the city of Jerusalem, and a kingdom was set up.
    - b. Second Crusade (1147-1149)
      - 1) The principal leaders of the crusade were Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany. Also involved was Bernard of Clairvaux.
      - 2) Since the first crusade, the Muslims had been recapturing the outermost areas of the “kingdom of Jerusalem” and were actually threatening Jerusalem. The soldiers of this crusade managed to postpone the fall of Jerusalem, although they did not succeed in regaining the lost territory of Palestine.
    - c. Third Crusade (1188-1192)
      - 1) The principal leaders of the crusade were Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, Philip Augustus of France and Richard I (“the Lion-hearted”) of England.

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Gabriel. *Islam and the Jews*, pp. 57-59.

<sup>5</sup> Mattox, pp. 197-9.

- 2) Very little was accomplished on this crusade except that Richard negotiated a treaty whereby pilgrims could visit Jerusalem unmolested.
- d. Fourth Crusade (1201-1204)
    - 1) This crusade was a complete failure in that the crusaders ended up capturing the city of Constantinople, capitol of the Eastern Roman Empire or the Greek Empire.
    - 2) Their rule over this empire lasted only 50 years.
  - e. Fifth Crusade (1228-1229)
    - 1) The principal leader of the crusade was Frederick II.
    - 2) He succeeded in having several cities, including Jerusalem, turned over to the Christians.
    - 3) Jerusalem was retaken by the Muslims in 1244 and remained in their control until 1917 when it was taken by the British.
  - f. Sixth Crusade (1248-1254)
    - 1) The principal leader of the crusade was Louis IX of France.
    - 2) Louis was captured by the Muslims and an enormous ransom was paid for his release. Little or nothing was accomplished in this crusade.
  - g. Seventh Crusade (1270-1272)
    - 1) The principal leaders of this crusade were Louis IX of France and Prince Edward Plantagenet (later King Edward I).
    - 2) This crusade likewise accomplished nothing.
4. In general, the crusaders met with limited success in accomplishing their religious objectives. There were, however, some important consequences of the crusades.<sup>6</sup>
    - a. The prestige of the papacy was enhanced during this period.
    - b. There was a rise in nationalism which would later detract from the papal power.
    - c. The Eastern Roman Empire was alienated from the west and weakened.
    - d. Western European feudalism was weakened because of the many knights and nobles who left on a crusade and never returned.
    - e. Trade between the west and the Near East increased as a result of people's exposure to the luxury items of the Near East.
    - f. Most importantly for our study, the crusades have never been forgotten by Muslims.
      - 1) "Muslims have viewed Christianity as a warring religion. They have believed that Christianity is a colonialistic, imperialistic, and political religion bent on dominating the world. Europe and the United States have been looked upon as Christian nations whose governments and foreign policies have been formulated to dominate Muslim societies politically, economically, culturally, and religiously... The nation of Israel is seen as a further extension of the crusading mentality of the 'Christian West' with its support of the

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<sup>6</sup> Earle E. Cairns, Christianity Through The Centuries (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), pp. 222-3.  
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United States and some European nations... Muslims still remember the Crusades, and they still distrust Western nations, Western cultures, and Christianity.”<sup>7</sup>

- 2) It is not difficult to understand why some Muslims refer to American soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan as “crusaders.”

#### E. Islam in Modern History

1. A list of “caliphates” and invaders:<sup>8</sup>
  - a. Umayyad (Sunni caliphate)
  - b. Abbasid (A.D. 750-1258)
  - c. Seljuk Turks (captured much of Syria from the Crusaders by 1258)
  - d. Mamluk Turks (A.D. 1261-1517?)
  - e. Ottoman Turks
2. The conclusion of the First World War saw the impending demise of the Ottoman Empire. The caliphate was disbanded in 1924.
  - a. In Turkey, Islam moved from orthodox to secularized under the guidance of Kemal Ataturk, known as the father of modernization.
  - b. The Shah of Iran likewise moved Shiite Islam toward westernization.
  - c. The imperialism of European nations led to the domination of Muslim populations.
  - d. The resurgence of conservatism has been seen in Islam. The overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini is a good example of this.

#### V. The Religion of Jihad

- A. On March 21, 2010, The Sunday Times<sup>9</sup> ran an article entitled “Iranians train Taliban to use roadside bombs.” It seems that every day there is a new story of an Islamic jihadist who has sacrificed himself or murdered others in the name of Islam.
  1. Jihad Jane
  2. Jihad Jamie
  3. Nadal Hassan
- B. In this portion of our study, we will
  1. *Define the appeal of jihad*
    - a. What makes someone desire to wage war for Islam?
  2. *Understand what the Qur’an and Hadith say about jihad*
    - a. What are Muslims supposed to be doing?

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<sup>7</sup> George W. Braswell, Jr., What You Need To Know About Islam & Muslims (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000), p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> A summary of this period can be found in Braswell, pp. 47-53 and

<sup>9</sup> Amooore, Miles. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article7069779.ece>

3. *Identify the true nature of Islam*

- a. Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh call the terrorism we've mentioned a warped representation of a peaceful religion. They say that these terrorists are trying to hijack the religion.
- b. Others, such as Neal Boortz, say that Islam is a deadly virus for which we won't develop a vaccine until it's too late. On July 19, 2006, he called Islam "a religion of vicious, violent, bloodthirsty cretins."

C. The Appeal of Jihad

1. The jihadist can't lose.

- a. When engaged in warfare, what are the possible outcomes? First, there may be victory over one's enemies. In other cases, it may mean death.
- b. When a place was raided, one fifth was given to Mohammed/Allah. Surah 8:41: "And know that out of all the booty that ye may acquire (in war), **a fifth share is assigned to Allah**, - and to the Messenger, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer, - if ye do believe in Allah and in the revelation We sent down to Our servant on the Day of Testing, - the Day of the meeting of the two forces. For Allah hath power over all things."

1) Interestingly, the Arabian area was full of a number of cult religions. One such religion was the Kuhhan.<sup>10</sup>

2) The Kuhhan were pagan in nature, but fought alongside Mohammed when he first migrated to Medina.

c. If the jihadist lives, he retains 4/5 of the spoil!

2. Martyrs attain complete forgiveness.

- a. Muslims define martyrdom as any death resulting from jihad.
- b. To die during jihad is to receive a free pass to paradise.
- c. From the hadith, (Sahih Bukhari), "Allah's Apostle said, 'Someone came to me from my Lord and gave me the news that if any of my followers dies worshipping none along with Allah, he will enter Paradise.' I asked, 'Even if he committed adultery and theft?' He replied, 'Even if he committed adultery and theft.'"

D. Understanding What the Qur'an and Hadith Say about Jihad

1. To understand how Muslims are supposed to wage holy war today, we need to see how it was done in the time of Mohammed.
2. The first stage of Muhammad's revelations occurred in Mecca. While there, he attracted very few followers.
  - a. Surrah 29:46 "And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, "We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah and your Allah is one; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam)."

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/Islam\\_In\\_Light\\_of\\_History.doc](http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/Islam_In_Light_of_History.doc)  
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3. After Muhammad had the hijrah to Medina, he formed many treaties and alliances with different nomadic tribes of the area. Then, he got busy performing raids.<sup>11</sup>
  - a. Already mentioned were his alliances with the Kuhhan.
  - b. THE RAID ON WADDAN WHICH WAS HIS FIRST RAID
  - c. THE RAID ON BUWAT: ...Then the apostle went raiding in the month of Rabiul-Awwal making for Quraish (285).
  - d. THE RAID ON SAFAWAN, WHICH IS THE FIRST RAID OF BADR: The apostle stayed less than ten nights in Medina when he came back from raiding Al-'Ushayra
  - e. THE RAID ON B.SULAYMAN IN AL-KUDR: The apostle stayed only seven nights in Medina before he himself made a raid against B.Sulayman
  - f. THE RAID OF DHU AMARR.
4. As Muhammad's forces gained strength and followers, a more offensive role was taken.
  - a. Any Pagan tribes that failed Muhammad in any way were not spared, and treaties were broken (but not alliances). Surah 9:3-4: "And an announcement from Allah and His Messenger, to the people (assembled) on the day of the Great Pilgrimage,- that Allah and His Messenger dissolve (treaty) obligations with the Pagans. If then, ye repent, it were best for you; but if ye turn away, know ye that ye cannot frustrate Allah. And proclaim a grievous penalty to those who reject Faith. {4} (But the treaties are) not dissolved with those Pagans with whom ye have entered into alliance and who have not subsequently failed you in aught, nor aided any one against you. So fulfil your engagements with them to the end of their term: for Allah loveth the righteous."
  - b. Pagans were given two choices: convert or die. Jews and Christians were allowed to submit to Muslim rule and pay the jizyah.
5. I'm going to read a few passages from the Koran. See if you can figure out during which stage in the life of Muhammad these were revealed:
  - a. "When the sacred months are over slay the idolaters wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush everywhere for them...Fight against such of those to whom the Scriptures were given as believe in neither God nor the Last Day..." (9:5a, 29). Surah 9:5 is known as "the verse of the sword."
  - b. "Fight for the sake of God those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love aggressors. Slay them wherever you find them. Drive them out of the places from which they drove you. Idolatry is more grievous than bloodshed. But do not fight them within the precincts of the Holy Mosque unless they attack you there; if they attack you put them to the sword. Thus shall the unbelievers be rewarded: but if they mend their ways, know that God is forgiving and merciful. Fight against them until idolatry is no more and God's religion reigns supreme. But if they desist, fight none except the evil-doers. A sacred month for a sacred month: sacred things too are subject to retaliation. If anyone attacks you, attack him as he attacked you. Have fear of God, and know that God is with the righteous." (2:191-194)

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.islam-watch.org/SherKhan/muhammad\\_profession\\_looting\\_booty.htm](http://www.islam-watch.org/SherKhan/muhammad_profession_looting_booty.htm)  
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- c. “Those who reject Islam must be killed. If they turn back (from Islam), take (hold of) them and kill them wherever you find them...” (4:89; The Noble Qur’an)
- d. “So, when you meet (in fight – Jihad in Allah’s Cause) those who disbelieve, smite (their) necks till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly (on them, i.e. take them as captives).” (47:4; The Noble Qur’an)

#### E. The True Nature of Islam

1. There are many contradictory passages in the Qur’an, hadith, and overall life of Muhammad.
  - a. Most Muslims pick and choose, depending on the strength of Islam in the area where they live.
  - b. For every verse demanding peace, there’s a verse demanding vengeance.
2. Jihad is required for Muslim believers
  - a. The Qur’an says over and over to fight in the way of Allah:
  - b. Surah 9:123 “O ye who believe! fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.”
  - c. Surah 9:29 “Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.
3. In summary, what is the true nature of Islam?
  - a. “I eventually came to the conclusion that jihad against America is binding upon myself just as it is binding on every other Muslim... To the Muslims in America I have this to say, how can your conscience allow you to live in peaceful coexistence with a nation responsible for the tyranny and crimes against your own brothers and sisters? How can you have loyalty to a government leading the war against Islam and Muslims?” -- Anwar al-Awlaki, imam in regular contact with Nidal Hasan<sup>12</sup>
  - b. “Islam is a revolutionary faith that comes to destroy any government made by man... The goal of Islam is to rule the entire world and submit all of mankind to the faith of Islam. Any nation or power in this world that tries to get in the way of that goal, Islam will fight and destroy. In order for Islam to fulfill that goal, Islam can use every power available every way it can be used to bring worldwide revolution. This is jihad.”<sup>13</sup> -- Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi, founder of Pakistan’s fundamentalist movement and well-known Islamic scholar

### **Conclusion**

This outline is a collaborative effort of Jonathan Hood and Allen Dvorak (March, 2010).

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Schemm, “Yemen-American imam calls for US Muslim revolt,” *Associated Press*, March 17, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Mark Gabriel, *Islam and Terrorism*, p. 82.