

Islam

Authoritative books: 4 inspired books are the Qur'an (Koran), the *Injil* (Gospels), the Torah, and the *Zebur* (Psalms of David). They believe Christians have corrupted the biblical books, so they only adhere to the Qur'an. Other influential books are the *Hadith* (conduct and life of Muhammad) and the *Shariah* (legal writings).

History: Islam as it is known today began in the 7th century A.D.; however, Muslims (people who believe in Islam) believe they are the true ancient religion founded in Abraham through the true promised son, Ishmael. Islam's founder was Muhammad who was believed to be a prophet of Allah. Allah is the Arabic name for the English word "God." From a Muslim's viewpoint, prophets were either "completely sinless or at least free from all major sins or faults."¹ Muhammad was born in A.D. 570 and presumably received a vision from the angel Gabriel in A.D. 610 while meditating in a cave near Mt. Hira. The angel gave Muhammad the command to "Recite in the name of the Lord, who created man from clots of blood" (Surah 96:2-5). "Qur'an" means "recite." Muhammad's prophetic message denounced all gods and idols and called people to worship Allah, the one true God.

Muhammad's message can be summarized this way: "There is no God but Allah, the One True God, who created heaven and earth and everything in them. Man is God slave, and it is his first duty to submit to God and obey him. God's goodness and mercy are seen and his provision for all the needs of men, and men must be grateful. A great and terrible Judgment Day is coming, and God will raise all the dead to life, and will judge them. He will reward with the pleasures of a sensual paradise those who worship Him and do good deeds, and will condemn to the fires of hell those who do evil deeds, the worst of which is associating other gods with God."²

Muhammad's first settled in Mecca with his wife Khadijah, but he was initially rejected as a prophet largely because of the denunciation of idol worship at the Ka'aba (a shrine that also housed the Black Stone), which brought much profit to the city. He left Mecca in 622 A.D. with many of his followers and traveled to Yathrib, which later became known as Medina. This *hija*, or migration, marked a monumental shift in the rise of Islam.

Muhammad was accepted as a true prophet by many in Medina, and his political power began to grow. Conversely, Muhammad separated himself from the Jews and Christians when they did not recognize his prophetic ministry. Muhammad had every intention of returning to Mecca to conquer the city, which was accomplished about A.D. 630-632, and the Ka'aba was purged and turned into a holy shrine to Allah. Muhammad died in 632, but Islam did not die with him. There was a power vacuum upon his death. Some thought the successor should be the lineage of Muhammad while others thought differently. This created two primary divisions among Muslims: Sunni and Shi'a. Sufism is also a smaller, but growing, branch that is more mystic in approach.

What is the origin of the Universe? ... Allah created everything to worship him.

What is Humanity?... Humanity is a creation of Allah and his slave designed to submit and obey. The term Islam mean "submission." The term Muslim mean "one who submits or follows Allah."

Who is God? ... Strict monotheists. Only Allah is God.

What is the problem in the World? ... Humans were originally innocent, but chose to sin against God, but sin did not break a relationship with God. People are born innocent and remain so until each makes him or herself guilty by sin. Islam does not believe in original sin from Adam. They view the fall as a symbolic event. Humans do not have a sinful nature, but they are weak and imperfect.

What is the solution to the problem?

¹ Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb. *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 53.

² William Miller, "How Islam Began" in *Encountering the World of Islam*, ed. Keith Swartley, 2nd Ed (Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2014), 20.

Humans are no more fallen than they are saved; so, humans do not need a savior. People are saved by following the 5 pillars of Islam, but they never know if Allah will accept or reject them.

Five pillars of Islamic faith:

1. *Shahada* (confession). “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.” Every Muslim must confess allegiance to Allah in much the same way that Christians must confess allegiance to Christ.
2. *Salat* (prayer). An orthodox Muslim traditionally prays a liturgical prayer five times per day posing in a variety of positions while facing toward the Ka’aba in Mecca.
3. *Zakat* (almsgiving). Muslims are obligated to give a certain amount to the poor or to a local mosque.
4. *Savum* (fasting). Every year in the month of Ramadan, Muslims are required to fast from dusk until dawn. This month is supposedly the same month which Muhammad received his first vision from the angel Gabriel.
5. *Haji* (pilgrimage). Every Muslim is expected to take a trip to the Ka’aba and the Holy Black Stone in city of Mecca if they are able within his or her lifetime. If one is not able, then another can be sent on their behalf.

Some also argue for a 6th pillar, which is *Jihad* or “holy war.” This can take the form of physical violence to advance Islam; ideological takeover; or even an internal jihad to submit oneself more to Allah.

What happens in the afterlife? ... All people will be judged, and Allah will decide who will go to Heaven (a place of sensual pleasure) and who will burn in the fires of Hell.

Other facts:

- Jesus was only a prophet, although they believe He performed miracles. They believe Jesus was not crucified nor resurrected. Jesus was switched with someone before the crucifixion.
- Muhammad was the last prophet whose source material we can trust. Muhammad was illiterate; others wrote for him. After His death much of the original source materials were destroyed by the 3rd Caliph Uthman. He claimed to be eliminating “conflicting versions” of the Qur’an, which he intended to standardize.
- They believe the Bible has been corrupted by Christians (although they have offered no proof).
- Western Islam is culturally different than Eastern Islam. Much of Eastern Islam are folk Muslims and are influenced by fear-power and honor-shame culture. Eastern Islam has no problem believing in the supernatural activity. They believe in *jinn* (spirit beings who can be good or evil). They live in fear of the *jinn*, demons, curses, and sorcery. Most religious leaders in Islamic countries believe that Islam can only be practiced correctly if *Shariah* law is adopted and politically enforced.
- Honor killings: if you denounce Islam, you can be killed, and it’s not considered murder (Eastern countries).
- Conversion to Christianity is the worst sin a Muslim can commit. It’s considered *shirk* (equivalent to blaspheme, attributing partners to Allah).
- They believe that Allah has predestined all things, and no one can change what he decrees.
- They do not know Allah as Father.
- They accuse Christians of being tri-theists because of the Trinity.

The Qur’anic Dilemma:

The Qur’an says that the Gospels and Torah are the Word of God (Surah 3:3-4). The Qur’an says no word of God can be corrupted (Surah 6:115; 18:27). However, the Gospels and the Qur’an conflict on several theological points, namely that Jesus is God, who died on the cross, and rose again. So, if the Qur’an is true, then the Gospels are true; but if the Gospels are true, then the Qur’an is false.