

Appendix 0 — World Religions: Islam

THE HISTORY OF ISLAM

1. Muhammad was born in 570 in Mecca in modern Saudi Arabia, the only child of a young widow named Amina.
2. When he was twenty-five, he married a wealthy widow fifteen years older than he was.
3. When he was 40 (610), he believed the angel Gabriel appeared to him while he was in a trance.
 - Gabriel told Muhammad to warn his countrymen to escape judgment by forsaking idolatry and worshipping Allah, one of the many gods worshipped at Mecca.
4. Muhammad's monotheistic message received much opposition in Mecca, forcing him and his followers to flee to Medina on July 16, 622. This is called the Hegira ("Flight") and is the official beginning of Islam.
5. In 630, Muhammad and his followers conquered Mecca and devoted the temple of Ka'ba to Allah alone.
 - Muhammad could not read or write so he dictated all his revelations to his disciples. After his death they recorded his words in the Qur'an ("reciting"). It is approximately 4/5 the length of the NT and the holiest book in Islam.
6. Muhammad's forces progressively dominated all of the Arabian Peninsula for the cause of Allah.
 - They attacked and conquered Jerusalem in 636, Alexandria in 640, and Spain by 717. (They were eventually driven out 700 years later.) Within a century, Islam dominated most of the Middle East, Northern Africa, Near East, and parts of Asia.

THE DOCTRINES OF ISLAM

1. God is the all-powerful creator named Allah akbar ("God is greater than everything").
 - Muslims have 99 names for Allah, and each one describes one of Allah's characteristics. However, love is absent from the list. His character is defined more in terms of judgment and power than grace and mercy.
 - Allah is transcendent but not immanent. He cannot be comprehended and cannot be known personally. Allah does not reveal *himself*, he reveals his desire and wishes.
2. Angels – Each person has two recording angels, one for good deeds and one for bad deeds.
3. Scripture – the Koran, the Torah, the Zabur (Psalms), and the Injil (Gospel of Jesus).
4. Prophets – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, the "Seal of the Prophets."
5. Judgment – You can never know your fate until the final day of Judgment when your good deeds are weighed against your bad.
6. Kismet – Allah is in control and human effort cannot change his determined course of events.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

1. Accepting the creed, “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.”
2. Praying five times a day toward Mecca: dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, after sunset, and at night.
3. Giving alms for charitable purposes.
4. Fasting from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan.
5. Making at least one pilgrimage to Mecca.

Seven General Guidelines

1. Ask a lot of questions.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Avoid theological arguments .
4. Use personal stories about sin, forgiveness, and the love of God.
5. Be patient and pray for them.
6. Always aim for the heart, and not just the mind.
7. Trust the Holy Spirit to touch their heart with God’s Word.

Specific Guidelines for Witnessing to a Muslim

1. Emphasize that Christianity is a relationship with God and not just a religion.
2. Do not mock their prophet Muhammad, or their holy book the Koran.
3. Be careful in referring to Jesus as the Son of God. Muslims do not believe Allah has a son, and so the reference can be very offensive to them.
4. Define the term “Trinity.” Muslims are strict monotheists and are offended by the idea of a “Trinity” because they think it means three gods.