

Bible Special 06-06-20b

Let's resume our study now. We're looking at the Bible and its uniqueness as compared to the holy books of other religions. We're looking at Christianity and our faith based on the Word of God as it compares to these faiths that are based on these other books.

And tonight we look at Islam. We've already seen the foundations for it as a quick review to remember what the basic fundamental pillars underneath Islam are. You have, first of all, the Quran.

Then you have the Hadith or the Sunnah, the traditions. Then you have the Ijma, I-J-M-A, which is the system of Muslim law, the legal precedent that is founded on the four great Imams, the four successors of Muhammad back in the eighth century A.D. And then you have the Qiyas, Q-I-Y-A-S, which is the analogy or the reasoning of only the most exceptionally learned and gifted scholars. And you've got to practically walk on water.

Speaking of walking on water, I saw the latest thing on debunking the Bible where somebody was saying, well, we've discovered that occasionally the Sea of Galilee freezes over. And so it's possible that when Jesus walked on water, he actually was on the ice. Anything but the truth, you know.

So we have those four pillars of Islam. We talked about how the Quran came into being. Muhammad said things and people took notes and memorized it.

But it wasn't until 20 years after his death that these scattered things were compiled and put together. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with that. We know that the sayings and the works of the Lord Jesus were not written down in the moment.

Those were recorded in the memories and in the hearts of the Apostles and under the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. Those were set down by the Gospel authors and by the Apostles later on. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with that.

We don't throw rocks at the Quran because it wasn't written during Muhammad's lifetime. Joseph Smith wrote his stuff down during his own lifetime and he's full of tennis shoes. So whether it's when it is written doesn't matter.

What did I say? Oh, well. So the language of the Quran, of course, is Arabic. And it's a sort of a sing song type of Arabic that is very appealing to the Arab speaking world.

The Quran is regarded as holy. It is divided into 114 surahs. A surah is a single one of these sections and there are a total of 114 of these surahs.

These are kind of like chapters. I think the word in Arabic actually means something along the lines of a row, R-O-W. So these rows or chapters are themselves composed of about 6,200 verses, 80,000 words, 330,000 letters.

You can see that they've analyzed the Quran the same way the Masoretes analyzed the Hebrew text. There's another arrangement that is sort of imposed on the Quran. It's arranged into 30 sections called Juz, J-U-Z, or Sipara, S-I-P-A-R-A.

So that a Muslim by dividing it into these 30 parts, that's one part per day. So in a month he can recite the whole Quran. And they do this during Ramadan.

We'll talk about Ramadan in a moment, but this is a major feast for Islam. And so there are other divisions called Ruku, R-U-K-U, which are about 10 verse sections. This would be sort of like maybe a long memory verse section, like maybe Psalm 23 or something, where every time they recite these, they'll recite 10 verses and then they bow and they recite 10 more verses and they make a bow.

Well, these little 10 verse sections are called Ruku, R-U-K-U. The Surahs are not chronological. When you read the Quran, they're not in the order that Muhammad spoke the words.

In fact, they're kind of in a reverse order. They put the longest ones first, and then they get gradually shorter as you go through. Well, Quranic scholars believe that the shorter ones are probably the earliest.

And so you can actually get more of a chronological view of what Muhammad thought and taught by starting at the back of the Quran and reading toward the front. So you have the opening prayer, which I mentioned to you earlier, you know, praise Allah and all the rest of that that I read to you. And then after that, you have the longer Surah and then the shorter Surah.

And they're in no real particular order. Eighteen of the Surahs are sort of poems that were composed by Muhammad, possibly before he realized that he had a quote unquote divine mission. And they're actually kind of secular.

They're not in the form of a message from Allah at all. They're just kind of rhapsodies. They're just kind of, wow, isn't the world great? One of the features of Islam, one of the features of the Quran, is that it celebrates God's work in creation and it sees the power of God and the sovereignty of God in creation, which, of course, is a valid thing as far as it goes.

There are a number of Surahs that contain narratives that are based on the Gospels. And so what I want to talk about next is what are the sources? Where did Muhammad get his stuff for the Quran? Where did he get the ideas for the sayings that became the Quran? Well, Mr. Sharrash here, Dr. Sharrash has got a section about halfway through his book called Islam Unveiled. And he gives the sources for the Quran here.

A lot of other interesting chapters that we're skipping here, but he says the true sources of Islam. Muslims seem to believe that in the beginning was the word and the word became a book. It didn't become a man, as Christians believe, with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, the word was God, the word became

flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory. For Muslims, the word became a book and that book is the Quran. Allah reveals himself in the Quran, not in Muhammad per se, although you still have that hadith idea, the examples of Muhammad.

But Sharrash has gone through the Quran and according to his count, the word book occurs 259 times in the Quran. So it refers to itself a lot. So the Quran says that this is indeed a noble Quran in a book kept hidden, which none toucheth save the purified in a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

It is this statement that ye scorn. They say, if only he would bring us a miracle from his Lord, had there not come unto them the proof of what is in the former scriptures. Thou, Muhammad, was not a reader of any scripture before it, nor didst thou write it with thy right hand, for then might those have doubted which follow falsehood.

So the Quran records God talking to Muhammad saying, you've never read any other scriptures, everything you're writing down has come straight from Allah. Well, the Quran relies heavily on preceding holy books. Sharrash says, any reader of the Quran familiar with the Old Testament discovers that the names and events of Old Testament books and prophets are very definitely copied in the Quran.

However, often the stories in the Quran are garbled and confused. Muhammad must have heard these stories from his Jewish friends in Medina, where he lived during the time he said he received most of his revelations. His seventh wife, Raihana, and his ninth wife, Sophia, were Jewish.

So he had access to knowledge of the Jewish faith. His first wife, Khadijah, had a Christian background. His eighth wife, Maryam, was part of a Christian sect, so they probably shared with him things from the New Testament as well.

So he had access to both Old Testament and New Testament traditions and scriptures and so forth. So the Quran says that there are 28 legitimate prophets that have been in history. And nearly all of them are out of the Bible until you get down to Muhammad.

So you have Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Isaac, Jacob, Ishmael, Joseph, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah are all cited by the Quran as actual prophets. They are all actual legitimate prophets of God. And you can find many similarities between the Quran's sort of garbled versions and what scripture actually says.

So, just to give you an example, there are sections in the Quran that draw on Jewish folklore, like Targums of Esther, and little bits and scraps of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Pieces of the Apocrypha show up in there. Christian heresies show up in there.

Remember, Muhammad wrote this in the 600s A.D., so Christianity had been around a long time. The New Testament had been around a long time. So there are lots of sources, and we don't have time to look at all of them, but it is a hodgepodge of scriptures, and it contradicts

itself in a lot of places.

It has a lot of things to say about the Lord Jesus, but what it says about Christ is also garbled. For one thing, the Quran talks about Jesus, but it gives him a different name. He is called Esau, apostrophe I-S-A.

He is not called Yeshua, or Yesu, or any of the names from the Christian or Jewish traditions. Now, how did this happen? Why does Muhammad call Jesus Esau? Well, Muhammad used that after hearing it from unbelieving Jews who lived in Medina, the same place that he got a lot of these Jewish traditions, they were not Christians. And in their hatred, this is what Shiraj says, the Jews ridiculed Jesus by calling him Esau as a play on his name.

Instead of Yesu or Yeshua, they called him Esau, the rejected brother of Jacob who lost the blessing. They declared that the soul of Esau had been transformed into Jesus. Muhammad picked up this name and put it in his Arabic tongue and applied it to Jesus without realizing or intending to carry the negative connotation that these unbelieving Jews had put on it.

But the Quran says, Mary, daughter of Imran, whose body was chaste, therefore we breathe therein something of our spirit, and she put faith in the words of her Lord and his scriptures and was oddly obedient. He took hold of her sleeve, breathed into her side, it entered into her breast, she conceived. So, it basically affirms the virgin birth.

And there is a lot of detail, you can read the specific lines out of the Quran. Mary and the angel of the Lord in Surat Maryam, or the Surat of Mary, this is the exchange. He said, I am only a messenger of the Lord that I may bestow on thee a faultless son.

She said, how can I have a son when no mortal has touched me, neither have I been unchaste. He said, so it will be, thy Lord saith, it is easy for me and it will be that we may make of him a revelation for mankind and a mercy from us and it is a thing ordained. That's the Quran.

It's the virgin birth of Jesus. And miracles are attributed to Jesus in the Quran. No miracles are attributed to Muhammad in the Islamic faith.

Muhammad is never said to have done a miracle, but the Quran attributes miracles to Jesus. In fact, here are just some of the things, and I don't have time to give you the lines from the Quran, but let me just tell you some of the things the Quran affirms. It affirms his miraculous conception.

It affirms his miraculous birth. It says that Jesus spoke from the cradle at his birth. There were some visitors that came, kind of like the wise men according to the Quran, and they visited Mary and they said, how can we talk to one who is in the cradle, a young boy? He spake, lo, I am the slave of Allah.

He hath given me the scripture and hath appointed me a prophet. Jesus spoke this as a baby right out of the manger, I guess. The Quran affirms that Jesus had supernatural knowledge,

that he is a blessed one, that he is endowed with the Holy Spirit, that he is sinless, that he is the word of God.

This is interesting. In Surat al-Zumar, which is the Surat of the troops, the Quran confines the work of intercession to Allah alone. But extraordinarily, the Quran hints that intercession is also one of the privileges of the Messiah.

As in Surat al-Imran, which is the family of Imran, remember when the angel said, O Mary, lo, Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the hereafter, and one of those brought near unto Allah. Messiah, of course, is a significant word in Hebrew, and the Quran acknowledges Jesus as the only Messiah of God. It affirms that Jesus is like Adam, that Jesus is a servant, that Jesus creates, that Jesus heals and raises from the dead, that Jesus actually died, that Jesus ascended and will return.

If you want the details of this, you can get Shorash's book. But here's a comparison. I just want to give you, this is one of the ways that people can witness to Islam.

People have long thought, well, trying to convert a Muslim is just hopeless because they are so fervently dedicated to the Quran, but that's the best way to talk to them, is show them these things about the Lord Jesus in the Quran, and then note the difference. And there's a great section in Shorash's book here, right around page 100, that compares Jesus and Muhammad from the Quran. Jesus' name means Savior.

Muhammad's name means Praised One. Jesus had no earthly father, according to the Quran, where Muhammad, Abd Allah, was his father. Jesus attracted multitudes by his miracles and teachings.

Muhammad attracted multitudes by his teaching and his sword. Jesus had to move to Capernaum because of rejection by his townspeople. Muhammad had to move to Medina because of rejection by his townspeople.

Jesus was never married. Muhammad was married 15 times. Jesus lived a sinless life.

Muhammad prayed earnestly and frequently for forgiveness of his sins. Jesus waged no war. Muhammad waged war by fighting or leading 66 different battles.

Jesus ordered the death of no one. Muhammad ordered the death of many men and women. The very first person he executed was a lady who wrote poetry.

Jesus established a religion of mercy and love even for one's enemies. Muhammad established a religion of no mercy and the sword. Jesus establishes a spiritual kingdom.

Muhammad established an earthly empire. Jesus died by crucifixion in Jerusalem at age 33. Muhammad died in Medina due to pneumonia and poisoning at age 62.

Jesus arose the third day leaving an empty tomb behind. Muhammad lingers still in his grave awaiting the Day of Judgment. Jesus is mentioned in the Quran 97 times.

Muhammad is mentioned in the Quran 25 times. Many of Jesus' followers are known for their dedication, love, and caring for others. Many of Muhammad's followers are known for their fanatical dedication to war, vengeance, and even killing of their fellow Muslims.

So, the bottom line here as you look at Islam and as you look at its primary characteristics is, once again, what are the characteristics of Orthodox Christianity? The person and work of Jesus Christ, the fallen and depraved nature of man, and the inherent infallible Word of God. When you look at Islam, despite all of the noise made in the Quran about what is good to do and what isn't good to do, it is a system of salvation. It has a lot to say about heaven and it has a lot to say about hell.

There are vivid descriptions of heaven as a place of sensual pleasure, as a place of great sensual gratification, sort of a materialistic, hedonistic place of sensory pleasure. And hell is an awful place of horrific torment and it's given in grisly detail as well. The path to heaven is works, good works.

Be obedient to the Quran. Serve Allah and Him only. That's the nature of the religion.

Belief and observance of rituals alone are not enough. You have to walk the straight path. You have to accept the doctrines of the faith.

You have to perform the required duties. So, you have daily prayers, five times a day, when you first get up in the morning, at noon, in mid-afternoon, in the evening at sundown, and right before you go to bed. Five times a day, you bow down and pray to Mecca.

You see the, you know, face toward Mecca and say these prayers. There are prescribed prayers that they say at this time. That first surat that I read to you and other selections from the Quran.

You have the call to prayer, where somebody stands, you've seen this in movies and things, where there's a minaret, there's this big tall tower and some guy stands up there and does all that funny Arabic yelling and that's the call to prayer. And everybody bows down on their little prayer carpets and does their thing, wherever they are. And Muhammad himself, according to Islamic tradition, hated bells, didn't like the sound of bells, and so he had the idea that somebody would stand up there and yell out to tell everybody to pray instead of ringing a bell like they do in churches.

Muslims have a Friday worship service, a Friday public service. But very few women attend these, and as with the Orthodox Jews, if they do attend, they are kept separate. Men worship in the central hall and women are either in the back of the hall or in a separate room.

They have ceremonial foot washing, hand washing and face washing prior to doing prayers.

They do this ritual washing, and this actually has its roots in the book of Exodus, chapter 30. If you remember the ritual washing for the Levitical priests, well, this sort of a corrupted version of this came down into the Islamic rituals.

During the month of Ramadan, one month a year, faithful Muslims fast from sunup to sundown. They eat nothing, they don't have any sort of sensual gratification, they don't have any food or any drink, no smoking, no fooling around with the opposite sex or anything from sunup to sundown. A lot of times they'll scale back to just two meals a day, they'll eat one meal right before the sun comes up and have their other meal just as soon as the sun goes down.

Another one of the duties is alms giving. Muslims are required to give one fortieth of their income to the poor. It doesn't matter who they give it to, as long as they're destitute.

There are rules and regulations for giving produce, cattle and other wealth along with free will offerings, but those who receive the alms, the poor who receive it, don't have to feel grateful or have any sort of sense of gratitude. They don't feel any sense of debt to the people who give to them. In fact, they feel like they're doing the people a favor because they're required to do this for their salvation, so they're like helping out the giver by receiving the alms.

And so they have almost a haughty attitude about it, like, well, you know, I'm providing you a service by accepting your alms because this is how I'm helping you get to heaven. And the giver should consider himself lucky that he has found somebody worthy to receive his alms. Every Muslim is expected to make a pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime to Mecca.

This is called the Hajj. It is essential to gaining salvation. There's a set of ceremonies and rituals.

We've talked about this in some detail. There was a great special on this on PBS or something not long ago. You know, among other things, they go and throw coins at the rocks and they have to cross a bridge.

And remember, the bridge collapsed and a bunch of people died. The first five are unquestioned. The very first one is the creed.

Every Muslim, the first and foremost thing you have to do is say the little creed. There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. We've generally heard a shortened form of that.

There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet. But in Arabic it actually says there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. And there's a little Arabic version of that that they repeat constantly.

So that's number one of the five required things. You have to believe that and say it and affirm it. That's how you become a Muslim is by saying that thing.

Then you have your daily prayers. You have Ramadan. That's your third thing.

You have your almsgiving. That's the fourth thing. And then your pilgrimage to Mecca.

That's number five. Now there is a sixth thing that is debated because it's unpopular. But it is the jihad.

And this is the holy war. There is a sect or a denomination, if you will, of Muslims called the Karaites, K-H-A-R-J-I-T-E-S, K-H-A-R-J-I-T-E-S. They raised jihad to the sixth pillar of Islam back in the early days of Islam.

When the situation warrants, men are required to go to war to spread Islam or defend it against infidels. If you die in a jihad, you are guaranteed eternal life. So, your jihad groups are, for example, the Mujahideen.

You may have heard of those over in the Middle East. The Mujahideen are fanatical terrorist fighters. They had a flyer back in the mid-eighties that was published in England that said, to struggle in the path of Allah with the pen, speech and the sword is jihad.

Hizballah. That was originally two words in Arabic. H-I-Z-B and then Allah.

Hizballah or Hezbollah. That's the party of God. They also believe in jihad.

Remember Khomeini in Iran? And men of that ilk are proponents and have been proponents of jihad. Now, real quickly, let's cover the sects of Islam and we'll have finished our coverage. Muhammad predicted that his followers would become divided into 73 different sects.

Every one of those divisions would go to hell except one. There would only be one sect of true believers and the rest of them would be reprobates. Well, the number of Islamic sects is now well over 150.

So, they've exceeded his prediction of 73. But the most prominent, the largest sect of Muslims are the Sunnis. They take the title of the Najia or those who are being saved.

They acknowledge those first four imams, those first four successors of Muhammad as the caliphs or the rightful successors of Muhammad. They receive the six correct books which were authored and put together by those guys. And so they believe in those schools of legal precedent that came from those.

Those are your Sunnis. The Shia mean followers. And so between the Sunnis and the Shiites or the Shia, that's where you get most of your Muslims fall into one of those two camps.

If you look at your folder, you get a little bit of additional illumination on this. It says the Shiites believe that religious leaders should also be political rulers. Whereas the majority of Muslims, the Sunnites or Sunni believe in a separation of the two realms.

And then the Sufis are the mystical branch of Islam teaching an arduous path of self-denial. But the Shia, the Shiites believe that you've got your Mullahs and your Ayatollahs. And that they can

be both religious leaders and civil leaders and can form the actual government of a nation.

Where the Sunnis believe in a separation of that. And that's why you can have people like the former leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. He's Sunni and he didn't see his dictatorship as a Muslim rule.

He kept that separate. The Shiite, Shiite means follower. They're the followers of Ali, who was a single successor that was singled out from the four or five successors of Muhammad.

And that he's the true Caliph and Imam, the successor to the Prophet. Another name for the Shiites is followers of the twelve. Which the Sunnis derisively call the Rafidi or forsakers of the truth.

There's bitter contention. It's like the Protestants and the Catholics sort of in Islam. And of course you see this borne out in Iran and Iraq and so forth.

So Shiites are numerous in Iran. They're the ones who deposed the Shah of Iran and installed the Ayatollah Khomeini. And they enforced Islamic law as the rule of government.

So you've got some other, you've got the Wahhabis and the Sufis and some of the others. But those are your main proponents. It is a system of salvation by works.

It is inflexible and it recognizes Christ as simply a prophet. Nothing more. Well we're out of time for tonight.

We'll pick up our study next week. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father thank you for the role of your Holy Spirit and the place of your word in our souls.

To lead us into all truth. To reveal your plan and purpose for history. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress the truth of your word on our hearts.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.