

ISLAM: INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid...” — 1 Corinthians 3:11

Islam is not only the major religion in Arab countries, but also the fastest growing world religion. This year, it is estimated to surpass the Christian population, as Christianity has been on a steady decline since the 1940s. With the Middle East dominating the news today, Islam has become one of the most sought after topics on our web site’s “Ask Your Bible Questions” page. Is *Allah* just another name for the Judeo/Christian God? Is the Quran another inspired book? How does Islam figure into God’s plan?

MOHAMMED, ALLAH AND THE QURAN

Islam’s founder, Mohammed (A.D. 570-632), was born into the Arabian tribe which was in control of the city of Mecca. At the age of forty, Mohammed declared that Gabriel appeared to him in a cave. In the name of *Allah*, Gabriel commanded him to preach *Islam* — meaning *full surrender to Allah*. Sura 2:91, 92; 81:19-21

Archaeologists point out that until the seventh century when Mohammed announced *Allah* as the *one* true God, *Allah* was the name of the widely worshipped moon god of ancient Mesopotamia. The oldest reference to *Allah* as a Babylonian deity can be found in the *Epic of Atrahasis* chiseled on several tablets dating to around B.C. 1700.

Mohammed claimed that, until he became Allah’s appointed prophet, the Arabs had no guide since their patriarch Ishmael, calling this time “*the days of ignorance*.” (Sura 36:1-5; 34:43) In these *days of ignorance*, pagans would come to worship at the *Ka’aba Stone* in Mecca. This stone was originally housed together with hundreds of tribal god icons. Legend says the stone (possibly a meteorite, about seven inches in diameter) was given to Adam on his being barred from Eden, and that it originally was white, but became black by absorbing the sins of those who kissed or handled it. The legend further claims that Adam first set up the *Ka’aba* to be worshiped, and that it was later reinstated by Abraham and Ishmael. Sura 22:27; 3: 91

It is commonly understood that Mohammed was afflicted with epileptic-type seizures, and these attacks became the means of Mohammed receiving these revelations, visions and dreams. Over the course of twenty-three years, Mohammed received these *revelations* which were written down, first by his wife, then by scribes who wrote on palm-leaves and various other substances. Eventually these were compiled into 114 Suras or Chapters with no particular chronological or subject order. Within these pages, Mohammed announced that he was the “*comforter*” Jesus promised to send to his faithful. See John 14:16

Mohammed appealed to the Jews by *claiming to be their Messiah*. At first, he made concessions to the Jews on celebrating the Sabbath and selecting Jerusalem as their point of direction in prayer. But, when they rejected his *messiahship*, he retaliated and charged the Jews with corrupting the Scriptures, killing the prophets and rejecting Allah’s chosen messenger.

Because Mohammed began to disdain the Jews when they refused his preaching, a sudden *revelation* bade him to turn his back away from Jerusalem and to face the *Ka’aba* in Mecca. Thus was instituted *Ramadan*, the ninth month, to replace the Jew’s *Day of Atonement*. Kissing the Black *Ka’aba Stone* was authorized, and Mohammed adapted this place as one of the *Five Pillars* (requirements) to which Muslims must make pilgrimage (also known as *Hajj*). “*We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Isma’il, that they*

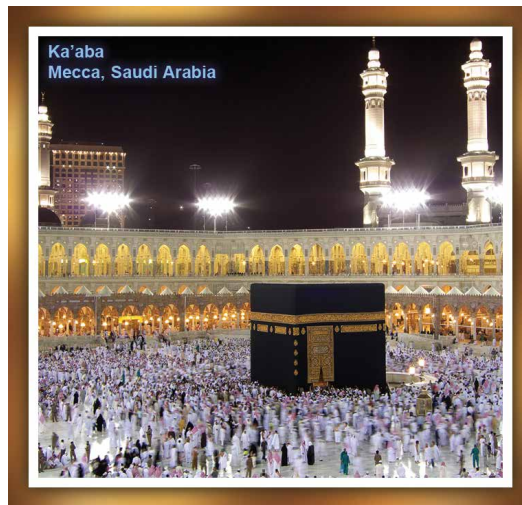
should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves.” Al-Baqara, 125

Soon Mohammed was no longer content to convert all of his adversaries by words or concessions — instead, he chose the sword. By attacking and looting caravans, Mohammed established his authority in Arabia and finally returned in triumph to rule Mecca. Within a century after Mohammed’s death, Muslim Arabs were ruling an empire stretching from Southern France through North Africa and the Middle East, and across Central Asia.

Whereas the Quran begins with the words, “*In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful,*” the terrors of seven levels of hell were stressed for the unbelievers and the wicked. Who are the unbelievers? “*The unbelievers among the People of the book [Jews and Christians] and the pagans shall burn forever in the fire of Hell. They are the vilest of all creatures.*” (Sura 93:1) “*...Hell shall be their couch, and sheets of fire shall cover them.*” Sura 7:41

THE RISE OF RADICAL ISLAM

In February, the militant Islamic group ISIS beheaded twenty-one members of Egypt’s Coptic Christian minority. And, ISIS continues to not only terrorize Arab Christians, but, also, those whom they term “*bad Muslims*” — Islamic moderates. What has caused this radicalization of a Muslim minority? Islamic scholars state that discontent over oppressive, Westernized governments, Arab materialism and Western support of Israel have fueled radical



Islamic Fundamentalism. Belief that Allah has commanded Islamic law—*sharia*—the ultimate objective of extremists is to conform all governments to a religious-political system under Islam.

ISIS is successfully destabilizing the entire Arab world. The county of Jordan, horrified by the burning alive of their pilot captured by ISIS, has retaliated with force, but this has only served to strengthen the resolve of ISIS. The entire Middle East is vexed by this radical Islamic force. One recent claim by ISIS is that, if they capture Mecca, they will destroy the holy place of the Ka'aba, calling it a place of pagan worship. If this occurs, the Islamic world will be in turmoil, as this is *the* holy site of nearly all Muslims.

It is important to understand that the majority of Muslims are peace-loving. These *moderate* Muslims caution against quoting verses from the Quran out of context. For this reason, they are seeking to educate Muslims on a more peaceful perspective of their faith. They admit that Mohammed did preach *jihad* —a holy crusade in the name of Allah—but they emphasize that the *real* meaning of *jihad* is “*striving for moral and religious perfection*” encompassing one’s life and community. They point out that the Quran teaches that “*There shall be no compulsion in religion...*” “*...do not aggress. God does not love the aggressors.*” Al-Baqara 2:256; 2:190

Radical Islamism denies this more peaceful perspective, drawing inspiration from other passages in the Quran and in Mohammed’s militant example. “*Those that make war against Allah...shall be put to death or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides or be banished from the country.*” (Al-Ma’ida 5:36) “*God may know the true believers and choose martyrs from among you...that God may test the faithful and annihilate the infidels.*” Sura 3:140, 141

Sadly, history reveals that the Christian world also had a distorted view of their Scriptures, and used violence and torture of every demonic sort on unbelievers—the inquisition, the crusades, anti-semitic persecutions, etc. Even today there are radical Christians who resort to insults and persecutions against people of other faiths. By contrast to militaristic Christians and Muslims, Jesus never taught or used physical violence to force people to believe his message or accept him as the Messiah. When Peter took out his sword, Jesus told him to put it back into its sheath. Matthew 26:51-54; See also *End Times* Issue 41, *Weapons of a Holy Nation*

ISLAMIC PROPHECY — THE ETERNAL CAPITAL OF ISRAEL

Although Mohammed extended his vast empire, his Quran clearly identified the Land of Israel as belonging to the Jewish people forever. Muslim scholar on Islam, Shaykh Professor Abdul Hadi Palazzi has been an advocate for reason on the subject of Israel’s right to their homeland: “*...God through His chosen servant Moses decided to free the offspring of Jacob from slavery in Egypt and to make them the inheritors of the Promised Land. The Quran cites the exact words with which Moses ordered the Israelites to conquer the Land... ‘O my people, enter the Holy Land which God has assigned unto you, and turn not back...’*” (Quran, Sura 5:22-23, *The Table*) Palazzi continues: “*The Holy Quran also quite openly refers to the reinstatement of the Children of Israel in the Land before the Last Judgment, where it says... ‘Dwell securely in the Promised Land. And when the last warning will come to pass, We will gather you together in a mingled crowd.’*” Quran, Sura 17:104, “*The Night Journey*”

Ali Salim, also a Muslim and an expert on Islam and Middle Eastern affairs, explains the view of many peace-loving Muslim people toward the Jews. “*Jerusalem is the capital of the Children of Israel... and it is forbidden for Muslims to demand it, just as a married woman belongs only to her husband. Is it possible that Allah, who on His infinite mercy, calls them the Chosen People, and promises them the Holy Land, also plans to murder them, using the Muslims in Palestine as His intermediary? ...as it is written in Al-Baqara, Verse 47, ‘O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds.’ According to the prophecy of Mahommed, the Children of Israel would come from all the corners of the earth into the land of Israel: ‘And we caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the eastern regions of the land and western ones, which We had blessed.*

And the good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of what they had patiently endured.’” Al-A’raf, Verse 137

No doubt Mahommed consulted the Old Testament Hebrew texts as to these amazing prophecies. What was written in the Quran about the *Children of Israel* was a prophetic promise, and, according to Mahommed, Allah does not change His mind or break His promises.

THE BASIS OF TRUE RELIGION

Like the Quran, each religion has its Holy Books describing its system of faith. But the Judeo-Christian Bible is unique in that it contains several built-in touchstones to prove its God is the only true God and that its Book is the only true Book.

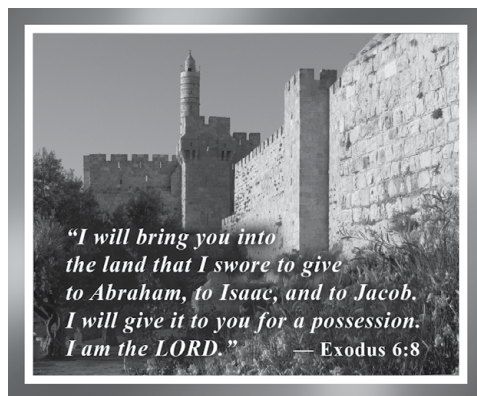
Prophecy *fulfilled* is a simple, but powerful proof that the Bible is the inspired word of the only true God. Outside of a few vague statements, no other writings of world religion contain such detailed prophecy. The following are but a few of the over 300 prophecies documented as fulfilled in the extraordinary life of Jesus:

- Born in Bethlehem—Micah 5:2 (fulfilled: Matt. 2:1)
- Betrayed by a friend—Psalm 41:9 (fulfilled: Matt. 10:4)
- Crucified with thieves—Isaiah 53:12 (fulfilled: Matt. 27:38)
- Lots cast for garments—Psalm 22:18 (fulfilled: John 19:23, 24)
- Offered gall and vinegar—Psalm 69:21 (fulfilled: Matt. 27:34)
- Side was pierced—Zechariah 12:10 (fulfilled: John 19:34, 37)
- Bones not broken—Psalm 34:20 (fulfilled: John 19:33, 36)
- Buried in rich man’s tomb—Isaiah 53:9 (fulfilled: Matt. 27:57-60)

Other striking Old and New Testament prophecies are those relating to Israel’s final restoration. The rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948 was a miracle of history. (Ezekiel 37:1-11; Luke 21:29, 30) Never before has a nation been destroyed, its people dispersed to the ends of the earth, and then, nearly two thousand years later, regathered to their homeland and reestablished as a nation—never to be removed again. Prophecies being fulfilled in Israel alone are the strongest proof that the Judeo-Christian Bible is inspired by the only *true* God. Jeremiah 31:38-40; Amos 9:14,15; Zechariah 12:2-6

In addition to the hundreds of prophetic fulfillments, the *scientific statements* of Scripture agree with the facts of science today. Only the true God could cause scientific facts to be accurately recorded thousands of years before scientists could verify them.

Until recently, people thought the ocean floor was sandy and saucer shaped. But in 1875 oceanographers began to explore the depths of the Marianas Trench. By the mid 1900s, it was discovered



that, if Mt. Everest (29,000 feet high) was dropped into it, the peak would still be a mile below the water's surface. The Bible spoke of the valleys and mountains of the sea thousands of years before scientists discovered them. In Psalm 18:15 (NIV) David wrote of God being the Creator of *"the valleys of the sea."* God asked Job (38:16 NIV): *"Have you walked in the recesses [valleys] of the sea?"* The prophet Jonah was thrown off a ship and spoke of falling to the bottom of the *mountains* in the sea. Jonah 2:6

In the 1800s, Matthew Maury, an officer in the United States Navy, read Psalm 8:8 where ocean creatures swam in the *"paths of the sea."* This led Maury to discover that the oceans have many *paths* or currents, which were like rivers flowing through the sea.

Nearly 3000 years ago some astonishing scientific insights were recorded in the book of Job. Concerning the wonders of His creation, God poses three questions to Job (38:31, 32): ***"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades..."*** Photographs now reveal that 250 blazing suns in the Pleiades are all traveling together in one common direction. Dr. Robert Trumpler from Lick Observatory announced that the stars in the Pleiades are all bound together as a family of birds on their journey through space — a *sweet influence* indeed. *"The Pleiades stars may thus be compared to a swarm of birds, flying together to a distant goal... a system in which the stars are bound together by a close kinship."*

Can you *"...loose the bands of Orion?"* The noted astronomer, Garrett P. Serviss, wrote in his book *Curiosities of the Sky* that, at the present time, Orion's bands consist of an almost perfect straight line (*band*) of stars about equally spaced. Every star in Orion is traveling its own course, each bound for different parts of the universe, so that the bands will one day be dissolved and Orion will be unrecognizable as it is now. ***"Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?"*** Serviss also wrote: *"Arcturus, one of the greatest suns in the universe, is a runaway whose speed of flight is 257 miles per second. Arcturus... possesses thousands of times the mass of our sun. Think of it! Our sun is traveling only 12.5 miles a second, but Arcturus is traveling 257 miles a second..."* As God told Job, Arcturus is speeding through space without crashing into any other celestial objects.

Charles Burckhalter, of the Chabot Observatory, added an interesting note regarding Arcturus: *"Arcturus is a runaway. Newton gives the velocity of a star under control as not more than 25 miles a second, and Arcturus is going 257 miles a second. Therefore, combined attraction of all the stars we know cannot stop him or even turn him in his path."* When Mr. Burckhalter later saw the text in the book of Job, he made this incredible statement: *"The study of the Book of Job and its comparison with the latest scientific discoveries has brought me to the matured conviction that the Bible is an inspired book and was written by the One who made the stars."*

The Hindu writings consider that *"all the objects and phenomena of nature by which man is surrounded, are animate and divine."* This includes the sun, moon, earth, rivers, seas and rocks as being alive. Buddhist, Shinto and Confucian writers also ascribe life to numerous non-living objects. The Quran speaks of seven literal heavens which are solid. Mohammed wrote that the sun sets *"in a spring of murky water."* (Al-Kahf 18:86) By contrast, Judeo-Christian Scripture anticipated scientific discovery by 3,000 years — truly inspired by the Creator of the Universe.

The one true God of the Bible challenges false gods to declare the end from the beginning. *"For I am God, and there is no other... declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times which have not been done..."* Isaiah 46: 9, 10

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD MUSLIMS

Over 50% of *"born-again"* Christians believe that non-Christians are lost eternally unless they accept Jesus before they die — quoting Acts 4:12: *"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* When we consider that most non-Christians have died without ever hearing about Jesus, does this mean these billions are lost? The answer to this perplexing question is found in 1 Timothy 2:3-6: God *"...will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."* The *"due time"* for the true Church to learn of Jesus' ransom for ALL is now, during the Christian age, but the *"due time"* for the rest of mankind to understand the ransom is future.

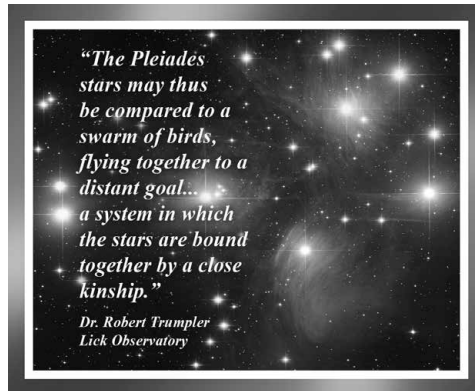
Consider, as well, the Apostle Peter's statement in Acts 15:14-17: *"God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name... after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, ...that the residue of men might seek after the Lord..."* Notice, God does not immediately

attempt to convert all the Gentiles, but first selects a small group — the Church of Christ — a *"little flock."* (Luke 12:32) This *little flock* is *first* called out of the nations so that *afterwards*, by the Church united with Christ, *"the residue of men"* — the unbelieving vast majority — may *"seek after the Lord."* This *residue* will not have responsive hearts to God's offer of salvation through Jesus until they come forth from the grave to then learn truth and righteousness in God's Kingdom. (Isaiah 26:9; 35:10) Until God establishes His Kingdom among all the families of the earth, we should *do good unto all men*, that they might witness the grace of God in our lives.

Radical Islamic extremists are waging a war of fear. Fear begets hatred and hatred begets violence. We as Christians must not succumb to the hysteria that is generated by fear of our Muslim neighbors — most of whom are peaceful and reasonable. Remember Jesus' admonition: *"Love thy neighbor as thyself."*

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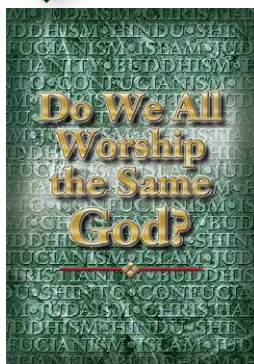
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