Islam Session 3: Islam's Assault on Christian Theology

I) Introduction.

A.) I closed last week with discussion of the four-stage strategy today's Islamists are using to gain ascendancy in the West – S2

1) **Infiltration** - enlarge their presence in non-Muslim lands through immigration, demand special rights and claim the desire to coexist with other beliefs

2) **Consolidation of Power** – claim victimhood to silence opponents, undermine local customs and laws, recruit people to the cause, change institutions

3) **Heightened aggression against hosts** - Defy of host nation laws, demand Sharia Law for Muslim zones, gain political, economic and cultural ascendency

4) **Enforce an Islamic theocracy**

5) Here's Congressional testimony that addresses this strategy - S3V - Cruz

B.) Before moving on to this week's topic, I want to follow up on a few other things from last week's message

1) First, when I contrasted Christian and Muslim approaches to violence, I referred to Jesus' conversation with the Roman governor Pilate

2) In John 18:36, Jesus responds to Pilate's question, "Are you a king?" the governor asks because the Jews accused the Lord of trying to set up an earthly kingdom in Israel; this would put him at odds with Rome's emperor

3) Jesus slaps down this accusation with these profound words: *"My kingdom is not of this world; if it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is not of this realm."*

C.) Jesus said something similar to Peter after the fisherman sliced off a man's ear while trying to prevent the Lord's arrest. In Matthew 26: 50-53, we read:

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus, and arrested Him. At this, one of Jesus' companions drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him. "For all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Are you not aware that I can call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

1) The Lord came among men to first establish a spiritual Kingdom, one comprised of people who believe on the Lord Jesus, are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and experience a change on the inside that leads to doing good

2) And that good is to live sacrificially on behalf of others so that we may add as many as are called to God's kingdom

3) This is a kingdom built on truth, faith, courage and love...never force, coercion, extortion, or deception

D.) For the first 300 years after the Lord's coming - in the era of the Church fathers, there was zero militant action by the Christian community

1) And in that time, millions of people came to follow Christ despite Roman persecutions that killed thousands of believers and drove many into poverty

2) The faithful did not pick up the sword to defend themselves nor did they attempt to install a worldly Kingdom; they offered up their lives to inherit a new Kingdom to come.

3) It wasn't until the 4th Century, when Constantine institutionalized the faith, infusing it with political power, that supposed Christian "powers" began to use the sword to enforce religious conformity

4) And as I said before, any supposed leader who used Christianity as a tool for power was not doing the work of Christ

5) Jesus said I came to bear witness to the truth; the Gospel goes forth as Christians speak the truth of God's word and live it without hypocrisy

E.) Violence in Islam, however, was used and justified by its founder, and it was its chief tool in expanding across the Mediterranean world

1) What about the Old Testament, some critics, may ask; the Bible has plenty of its own violence, right? Yes, but its purpose was very different…it was God using the Hebrews to bring righteous judgement upon an evil people

F.) Finally, last week, I mentioned the Word "abrogation," which means to cancel or abolish; the context was that certain Quranic verses that called for warfare against non-Muslims canceled out the "peaceful "verses"

1) Early in his ministry, Muhammed reached out to Jews and Christians by affirming their beliefs as godly; but when a large part of these communities rejected his message, he instituted a major theological shift:

   a) He called for war on any Christian or Jew who wouldn't convert or pay a tax; and he condemned both to Hell if they didn't accept him as prophet

2) Again, this was a major change in "revelation;" a direct contradiction to earlier orders to leave Jews and Christians to the teachings of their own book.

3) It would be like Peter early in his ministry stating that faithful keepers of the Jewish law and virtuous Romans would be accepted by the Father; but when they fail to get on Team Peter, he later condemns them to Hell

4) Here's how Muhammed justified his shift: from Qur'an 13:39: *Allah doth blot out or confirm what he pleases....*

5) In other words, Allah's willingness to change his decrees seems to give Muhammad license to modify his teachings to accommodate the needs and desires of the moment

6) For example, when Muhammad faced increasing numbers of marriage proposals, potentially upsetting his existing wives, he received a revelation granting him special privileges concerning marriage and relationships with women—freedoms not extended to other Muslim men.

7) This may explain why he willingly married a six-year-old and when he had a hankering for his adopted son's wife, the young man gave her up

a) One of his wives, Aishia, remarked: “I feel that your Lord hastens in fulfilling your wishes and desires;” in other words, Allah seems awfully quick to do Muhammed’s will (Sahih al-Bukhari 4788, Book 65, Hadith 310)

G.) Contrast this with what the Bible says in Malachi 3:6 – *“I am the Lord, I change not…!”*

1) Or Numbers 23:19 - *"God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind."*

2) Jesus' message was entirely consistent throughout his ministry: his claim to be the Savior, his journey to the cross, and his moral teaching were all in keeping with God’s timeless, unchanging revelation

3) Some might say, "Hey, wait a minute here! In the Old Testament, people were made right by keeping the Mosaic Law, but in the New Testament, the Law is done away with

4) So, today you’re made right with God by faith and not the Law; See! God changed his mind; the New Testament abrogates the old

5) Hold on there, Bubba! Let's look at both Old and New Testament passages that tell us what it takes to be righteous before God – S4 to S7

H.) The biblical record provides consistent and detailed narratives of God's revelation to man; a record written over a span of roughly 1,500 years in 66 books by 44 authors on three continents in three languages

1) It answers all major questions of life; its prophecies have proven 100 percent accurate; it offers science far ahead of its time; and, as I keep saying, it’s message remains constant – S8

2) The Quran, in contrast, is one book, whose contents are revealed by one man over a period of roughly 20 years; it contains no miracles or original fulfilled prophecies to validate it

3) Worse yet, it utterly contradicts the Bible in core theological areas: (see chart in outline)

a) Believes God is not personal, nor offers relationship with man

b) Rejects the Trinity and Jesus as the eternal Son of God

c) Says that man is essentially good and needs no savior

d) Jesus was not crucified, didn't die, didn't not secure our salvation, and did not rise from the dead

e) Man can earn a place in Heaven by his good works

f) One must become a Muslim to be accepted by God.

I.) Given this, isn't it interesting the Catholic Church published a 1965 declaration support interfaith cooperation with Islam; the document states:

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,(5) who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

1) What we have here is the Catholic Church offering the hand of fellowship to a faith that worships a different God than do Christians; a god who cannot be known personally, one who advocates expansion by violence, and one who did not offer up a Son to die for our sins – S9

J.) This is ironic because in his outreach to Christians and Jews, Muhammed stated emphatically that the Qur'an affirms the message of their Scriptures; this was his selling point to them

1) His claim leads to what is called the "Islamic Dilemma;" it goes like this:

2) The Qur'an affirms earlier Scriptures – S10; these describe the Torah and Gospel as revelations from Allah and speak of the Qur'an confirming them

3) The problem starts with the fact Christian Scriptures predate Muhammad; biblical manuscripts existing centuries before Islam already contained teachings about Jesus' deity, his crucifixion, and his resurrection

4) The Qur'an contradicts or alters these teachings; for example, Surah 4:157 denies that Jesus was crucified in the way the New Testament describes, while Surah 5:72 rejects identifying Christ with God

5) Here's the dilemma: If the Christian Scriptures were trustworthy, why does the Qur'an contradict them? If they were corrupted, why does the Qur'an affirm them and direct Christians to follow the revelation given to them?

K.) The only way to escape the dilemma is to claim that Muhammed referred to earlier, original revelations that Jews and Christians altered over time

1) This is a spectacularly weak argument because: (1) Islam's revelations come 600 to 2,600 years after the original record…it is much further removed from the events than is the Torah or Gospel

2) Secondly, there are no original or earlier manuscripts available to Muslims to support their claim; their only evidence is essentially "because Muhammed said so," which is circular reasoning

3) Thirdly, such a claim ignores the vast manuscript evidence for the Bible's preservation; there are multiple thousands of ancient manuscripts that scholars can compare to track the Bible's transmission over time

4) For example, scholars compared the Great Isaiah Scroll dated at 125 BC, with medieval Hebrew manuscripts copied more than 1,000 years later.

5) One prominent Old Testament scholar estimated that over 95% of the wording was identical, with most remaining differences involving relatively minor variations

6) Scholars have identified approximately 20,000 to 25,000 ancient handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament in Greek and other languages, including some Greek fragments dating to the second century—within decades of the traditional date of the Apostle John's death.

7) By comparing these manuscripts, textual scholars have identified hundreds of thousands of variations (**and Muslim apologists will point this out**)

8) However, New Testament scholar Dr. Daniel B. Wallace estimates that more than 99.75% of these textual variants make virtually no difference to the meaning of the text; most involve spelling, word order, or other minor copying differences – S11

   a) The .25% that reflect fairly significant differences, such as an added passage in a later manuscript that doesn't appear in an earlier one, still do not change any core doctrines

   b) Comparison of manuscripts over time provides substantial evidence for the preservation of the New Testament message across the centuries

9) The Bible is the most well-supported ancient book in terms of number and quality of manuscripts, and their closeness to the actual events – S12

   a) NOTE: The 5,800 number includes Greek-language manuscripts of whole books, collections of books and fragments – S13, S14 Quotes

   b) Further, the process of copying Scriptures has been painstakingly careful with incredible attention to detail – S15

   c) It's clear that anyone who will take the time to examine the evidence will find the Bible a credible, reliable, consistent, and logical source of divinely inspired history and truth!

II) Now, let's turn our attention to Muslim criticisms of the Trinity and Divine Nature of Jesus

A.) Take a look at this video…run S16.V to 1:35 and pause

1) This is well-known Muslim apologist Dr. Shabir Ally making a common Islamic claim: that the Old Testament makes no reference to a Trinity and by extension does not ascribe divinity to Jesus

2) Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, a former Muslim, mounts a defense of the Christian position on the Trinity and Jesus…run S16.V to end

3) I want to deal with these two questions: does the Old Testament imply a Trinity and does it support a divine Messiah, a Son of God? Absolutely, yes!

B.) There are at least 95 distinct OT verses that imply the Trinitarian nature of God in different ways; further, in pointing to a Trinity, they also often point to an individual called Son, Messiah and King who must be God on earth

1) First, let's walk through some grammatical clues in the OT – S17 to S19

2) Secondly, let's look at a being that appears in the OT several times who is described as "The Angel of the Lord;" this is different than the phrase "an angel of the Lord, which describes lesser beings, such as Michael or Gabriel

3) "The Angel of the Lord" is unique and has no name given; the way he speaks and acts gives us a clue he is something more than a heavenly messenger like previously named angels

Let's look at Judges 13:3-23 - *A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son.*

In verses 4-15, Manoah asks the angel to return and give guidance on how to raise the promised child; the angel returns, gives the counsel and then Manoah asks an interesting question:

Starting in verse 17, *Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?" He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding." 19 Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched:*

As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD. "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!" But his wife answered, "If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this."

4) In Genesis 31:11-13, we read:

"And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred."

a) What you see in these passages and others like them is four key identifying attributes of The Angel of the Lord – S20

5) Keep in mind that God in His full glory cannot visit man, lest we be consumed by fire in His presence; thus, this person who speaks to man face-to-face must be his Eternal Living Word, who is God's revealer

6) And who is this Living Word? – S21; Muslims say wait a minute; God has no Son; how about this: S22 to S23

C.) Finally, I want to address one more accusation from Islamic apologists; that over the centuries, Christians elevated Jesus to divine Son status and formally recognized his divinity only at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.

1) Let's look at the reality – S24 to S26 (Mention dates)

2) Finally, let's look at the early church fathers, those who took the mantle of leadership from the apostles in the second century

3) Ignatius of Antioch in 100 A.D., tradition has him associated with the Apostle John; in his letters to the Ephesians and Romans, he refers to Jesus Christ, our God.

4) In his writing, Polycarp of Smyrna, also an associate of John, referred to Jesus as the Son of God and everlasting high priest

5) 2nd Clement, written between 120 and 150 A.D., states, "Bretheren, it is fitting that you should think of Jesus Christ as of God…

6) Justin Martyr, who wrote between 150 and 160 A.D., stated in his apologetic work *Dialogue with Trypho* that Jesus is the divine person who appeared to the OT patriarchs, such as Abraham, Jacob and Moses

III) Conclusion

A.) There are many other strategies Muslims and other skeptics will use to try and disprove Christianity; I can't deal with all of them in one session

1) However, given what we've already discussed, it's clear their criticisms are rooted in bias; they misinterpret Scripture, misrepresent Christian history, and fail to consider context to present a very flawed case against our faith

2) In contrast, we have many examples of truth-seekers who set out to disprove the Bible, but allowed the overwhelming evidence for its credible truth claims to overcome their bias

3) S28 – Journalists, Lawyers, Scientists, Historians, Philosophers and former Muslim Nabeel Querashi

B.) Pray for the Muslim people; Jesus is moving among them with many coming to the Lord through visions and dreams; pray that the Lord with equip us to stand and speak the truth boldly with compassion and love, never hate

C.) Be bold, be prayerful, be Jesus to the one billion Muslims who need Him to inherit eternal life; and be ready to give anyone a reason for the hope that is in you!!