Islam Part 1 Outline

Notes:

A) Islam's expansion presents both challenges and opportunities

1) Islam grew from its beginnings in Arabia into a major world religion with a growing presence in Western nations.

2) This series examines Islam's beginnings, teachings, and threat to the West.

3) Christians should courageously challenge Islamic beliefs, yet love Muslim people and reach out to them with the Gospel.

B) The story begins with Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac

1) Genesis 12–22 records God's promises to Abraham concerning descendants, land, and blessing to the nations.

2) After years of waiting, Sarah and Abraham attempted to secure an heir through Hagar (Genesis 16:1–4).

3) The decision brought conflict into the household, culminating in Hagar and Ishmael's departure (Genesis 21).

4) Ishmael became a father of many nations, but his spiritual heritage was Egyptian (of the flesh); he would be a "wild man" not easily subdued…a nature that was passed on to his descendants.

C) Muhammad grew up amid Mecca's religious and tribal traditions

1) Mecca was a trading and pilgrimage settlement centered on the Kaaba, where Arabian deities were honored.

2) Muslims call the era before Muhammed the "age of ignorance," a time when people had no transcendent moral code or system of ethics

4) He became involved in merchant life and later received support from Khadija, his wealthy wife.

5) Trade networks and communities in Arabia provided possible contact with Jewish and Christian peoples.

6) Muhammed may have sought religious reformation due the injustice, violence and poverty he observed in the Arabian world.

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D) Muhammad's search for religious meaning led him to the Cave of Hira

1) Islamic tradition places his first reported revelatory encounter near Mecca at the Cave of Hira.

2) Muhammed claims he had an intense, even violent, encounter with the angel Gabriel

3) Over time, the angel, directly contradicts both Old and New Testament prophecies about Jesus' divine identity

4) Islamic sources report Muhammed suffered lasting psychological trauma from these encounters and experienced strange physical and mental symptoms.

4) Muhammed's experiences differ significantly from those of biblical prophets who were overwhelmed by God's revelations, but were comforted and strengthened by the divine messenger

F) The Qur'an reflects and reinterprets earlier religious traditions

1) Jewish, Christian, Arabian, and Persian traditions were present in the wider world of late antique Arabia.

2) Scholars who specialize in Near East and Islamic studies demonstrate that the Qur'an borrows from multiple religions

3) Muhammed altered core beliefs of Judaism and Christianity to support his claim that Islam is the true Abrahamic religion, and Christ was merely a prophet

4) When constructing his message, Muhammed borrowed from oral stories that were Christian or Jewish in nature, but were not part of accepted, canonical Scripture

G) Conclusion

1) Islam's origins indicate Muhammed may have been sincerely reform-minded, but sought his own vision of reform, which made him vulnerable to spiritual deception