

ISLAM SESSION 2: A RELIGION OF CONQUEST AND EMPIRE

I) Introduction

- A.) **Play S2.V** – Oxford Debate – Muslim apologist who makes claims that true followers of Islam are not violent nor a threat to the West – as we go through today's study think about how you would respond to her
- B.) Last week, we traced Islam's origins—its spiritual and cultural roots – back to Ishmael in roughly 2,000 B.C.
 - 1) Ishmael was the consequence of a misguided attempt by Abraham and Sarah to bring about God's promise of a son through whom would come many descendants who would be blessing to the world
 - 2) It was an act of the flesh, not faith, and resulted in the birth of a child who brought conflict into Abraham's household
- C.) The sixth-century Arab Muhammed of Mecca was a direct descendant of Ishmael and founded a religion, Islam, that renewed and invigorated the conflict with Abraham's physical and spiritual descendants, the Jewish and Christian peoples
- D.) In session 1, we saw that Muhammed's religious journey begins in 610 A.D. with a series of mystical revelations and significant borrowing from the teachings of Judaism and Christianity
 - 1) Three years later, he starts preaching publicly to his fellow Meccans

II) His ministry begins

- A.) Here's a summary of his earliest teachings from the Qur'an – **S3a-e**
 - 1) This seems to reflect someone genuinely interested in the plight of the poor, and who wanted to peace between warring tribes
 - 2) The Meccans generally didn't find Muhammed's preaching all that inspiring; in fact, they were downright offended

- 3) What do you mean our idols and gods are nothing? Who are you, orphaned merchant, to tell us our long-held beliefs and lifestyles are wrong?
- 4) I'm confident steam came out of their ears when he told them the souls of their idol-worshipping ancestors were in hell
- 5) They probably ground their teeth at the thought Muhammed would steal their influence and income if his preaching appealed to the tribes

B.) It all led to persecution of Muhammed and his few dozen followers, who had to run for their lives in 622 A.D. to the oasis town of Medina, about 250 miles north of Mecca – **S4**

- 1) There, Muhammed was a bit more subtle with his preaching to avoid offending his new hosts; over time, his message resonated with local Arabs who supported his rise to power
 - 2) He built political alliances through five marriages, brought peace between two warring tribes, and added a growing number of converts to an emerging force of religious warriors; in just three years, Muhammed was governing Medina and its surrounding villages
- c.) Now, here is where we'll see the beginnings of a significant shift in Muhammed's theology – from preacher of peace to religious warrior
- 1) Muhammed is offered political, religious and military power at Medina, and he embraces it; when these three are mixed, it often has a corrosive, toxic effect on a person's spiritual development
 - 2) Early on, Muhammed's others-centered monotheism is somewhat commendable; he wants people to be kind to one another
 - 3) However, it's not long before Muhammed adopts violent tactics to force his vision on unwilling pagan neighbors
 - 4) To sustain his growing power base, he organizes raiding parties to harass Meccan caravans carrying goods to and from Syria; reports indicate Muhammed at first was skittish and refrained from serious violence

- 5) Ironically, though, he makes the leap to killing during an Arab sacred month when all tribes agreed to abstain from warfare
 - a) Muhammed's small army attacked a caravan headed to Syria, killed one man, captured two, and carried away all its goods
 - 6) How did he justify this betrayal of longstanding Arab tradition, a betrayal that conflicted with the spirit of his earlier teachings? Here's how Muhammed justified it – S5
 - 7) You will see in a few moments these justifications, though seemingly logical, will serve as the foundation for what we call today “Holy War” on non-believers (explain the leap)
- D.) So here's what's happening: Muhammed is essentially adopting the old Arab ways of raiding, looting, tribal loyalty and blood feuds, but dressing it up in religious language
- 1) The reformer is now a political leader who will craft his theology to meet the needs of the moment
 - 2) In other words, he's evolving Islam to serve his expanding political power, which needs resources, influence and forced conformity to sustain and grow itself
 - 3) It was his success as a warrior that appealed to many of his Arab converts; in fact, some Medinans joined Muhammed only after he scored an impressive military victory over 1,000 Meccan fighters with his own force of just 300 in 624 A.D. at the Battle of Badr
- E.) Three years later, in 627, the Meccans said man we have to get rid of this guy or our wealth and regional dominance is going to fade away; so they 10,000 fighters to lay siege against Medina and its 3,000 defenders
- 1) To me, it seems clear there was some supernatural force working in Muhammed's favor; despite his forces being outnumbered 3 to 1, he successfully held off the invaders

- 2) Running out of food and water, the Meccans had to beat a shameful retreat back to their city; not only were they humiliated, but their loss moved thousands of Arab tribesmen to abandon their alliances with Mecca and join the Muslim movement in Medina
- F.) Muhammed had his final and most complete revenge in 630 A.D. when he and his army, now swollen to 10,000 fighters, assaulted Mecca and easily overwhelmed it
- 1) Muhammed had certain enemies executed - likely people who personally offended him and publicly denounced his beliefs - and forced loans from wealthy Meccans
 - 2) But a worse fate awaited a Jewish clan near Medina that refused to take part in the defense of the town
 - 3) Muhammed had 800 men there beheaded and enslaved the entire population of women and children; he also cast two other Jewish tribes out of Medina for rejecting his teachings
 - 4) Do you see here what Islam is becoming; though Muhammed may have preached a religion of peace, Islam quickly became a religion of choice: join the team or lose your stuff, your freedom or even your head
- G.) Muhammed enjoyed his newfound power for just two years; he died in 632 A.D. Not long before his death, however, he marched an army of 30,000 north to Tabuk in response to rumors of an invading Byzantine force – S6
- 1) There was no battle, but the march allowed Muhammed to expand his reach northward with new alliances and basing of his army closer to Christian lands in Syria and Greece

III) Conquests and expansion

- A.) Following Muhammed's death, a series of Muslim caliphs fueled by religious zeal and a hunger for power carried Islam's message via the sword across much of the formerly Persian and Roman world

- 1) In less than 200 years, the armies of Islam spread across three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa— **S7**
 - 2) The only force keeping them from swallowing up most European Christian lands was the Byzantine army centered in Constantinople
 - 3) The Byzantines held until 1453, when the Ottoman Turks, the heirs of Muhammed's religious empire, overwhelmed their capital city and absorbed all of Greece and most of Southern Europe — **S8, Today - S9**
 - 4) In the process of Islam's expansion, significant centers of Christian activity were swept away or marginalized: Antioch, Alexandria, churches in Corinth and Thessalonica, Jerusalem and the seven churches of revelation
- B.) In Islam's march to power, estimates its adherents killed at least 30 million and as many as 80 million people and consigned upwards of 28 million people to slavery
- 1) How can this be? How can this religion of peace justify a centuries-long, violent march across history — **S10, S11**
 - 2) Historian and scholar Raymond Ibrahim states: *"Muslim scholars, such as Ibn Salama, agree that Surah 9:5, known as ayat as-sayaf or the sword verse, has **abrogated (explain)** some 124 of the more peaceful Meccan verses, including every other verse in the Qur'an, which commands or implies anything less than a total offensive against the nonbelievers." In fact, all four schools of Sunni jurisprudence agree that **'jihad** is when Muslims wage war on infidels, after having called on them to embrace Islam or at least pay tribute and live in submission, and the infidels refuse."*
 - 3) So essentially, it's like this: *"You're not a Muslim, and don't want to be a Muslim; that's fine...you know what this is a nice home you have here; would be a shame if something happened to it. I can guarantee its safety and yours for a payment of say 10 gold pieces a year*
 - a) In essence, convert, be extorted or suffer execution; it is a religion of power, that expands by military force and threats

- C.) How is this different from Nazi Germany invading its neighbors to inflict its supposed superior ideology on unwilling populations
- 1) In the process, the Nazis killed as many as 17 million people through systematic executions and forced labor; they were the ultimate cause of 40 million war-related deaths in Europe
- D.) For nearly a thousand years, Roman soldiers marched across Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East destroying cities, drenching populations in blood, looting their cities, and amassing legions of slaves
- 1) And they forced conquered peoples to worship the Roman state and its emperor...forced worship, forced conformity
 - 2) How was Rome's strategy to spread different from Islam's? Rome may have been pagan, yes, but they believed their culture and religion was superior to any other
- E.) Now, I believe this is a good point to address the accusation that Christians are equally guilty of violent expansion
- 1) I respond to this accusation in several ways: first, true Christians do not force the Gospel on people through violence...EVER!
 - 2) There is no precedence for it in Christian Scripture – Jesus taught that we should love our enemies, not kill them, and to do good to those who persecute us
 - 3) Further, the Apostles, and generations of Christians spread the faith by living out the teachings of Christ in terms of doing good in the world and speaking the truth in love
 - 4) Anyone who uses an association with Christianity to justify empire building, persecution of non-believers, spreading the faith by violence, and raiding and looting enemies is not a follower of Christ. Period!
 - a) Crusaders who killed in the interest of acquiring land, wealth or power were wrong; even if pope or priests blessed such acts

- b) Priests and politicians who burned witches and heretics were wrong and their acts were evil
- c) Supposed Christian powers who attempted to force religious conformity were not obedient to God
- d) Why? Because they all violated the words and deeds of Jesus Christ; you cannot consistently violate his moral principles and claim to represent Him...you are either deceived or an apostate

F.) In contrast, when Muslims kill or extort in the name of Islam, they are following the words and deeds of their founder – **answer to young woman who claimed true Muslims are not a threat**

- 1) The fundamental difference between Christianity and Islam can be seen in the contrasting examples of Jesus and Muhammad concerning how people and societies are changed
- 2) Christianity emphasizes transformation through God's grace rather than conformity imposed through political or military power
- 3) Jesus declared, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36); His mission was not to establish an earthly kingdom through force
- 4) Instead, Christianity teaches that salvation comes through grace; the Gospel seeks to transform the human heart, producing obedience through faith and love rather than coercion
- 5) Government can force a man to put down his sword, but only God can transform his heart, so he no longer desires to use it against his neighbor.
- 6) Although Islam teaches mercy, charity, forgiveness, and spiritual devotion, Muhammad incorporated political and military authority to compel such behavior – **S12V Ayaan Hirsi Ali with Hoover Institute Rep, include lack of integration in host nations**
 - a) Islam a works-based system that relies solely on human effort...there is no talk of a Holy Spirit that cleans, justifies and empowers

- b) This is why a Muslim never knows if he or she will go to Heaven; this leaves a void in the heart, which leads to the same type of anger Cain had toward Able who was accepted by, God, and Ishmael had toward Isaac who was elected by God
- c) This anger works itself out in rage toward the people of God; a rage, in the case of Islam stoked and steered toward violent expansion

IV) A new expansion

- A.) I believe Islam is a slave to the spirit of Babylon, the power behind all despotic rulers and the force behind the future one-world government of the Antichrist
- B.) This spirit compels Muslims to continue to seek global domination
- C.) Several years ago, a former member of Hamas spoke at CC Komo Mai and proclaimed Islam would be the one-world religion in the last day
 - 1) I didn't believe it; I thought back then there was no way modern, free, democratic societies would embrace a historically oppressive, violent worldview
 - 2) Yet here we are today: England has seen its Muslim population nearly triple to over 4 million since 2001; Muslims make up 15 percent of London's population.
 - 3) Likewise, in Germany, Muslims have nearly tripled their numbers growing from 2.5 million to 7 million.
 - 4) In the U.S., 1 in 9 people of the 9 million residents in New York City identify with Islam; the population has tripled in Texas and grown significantly in other U.S. cities
- D.) In several American states, particularly Michigan, Minnesota, and Texas, substantial Muslim communities have developed in particular neighborhoods and municipalities.

- 1) Some communities have also gained significant political representation. Hamtramck, Michigan, provides a notable example: it became widely recognized as a Muslim-majority city and elected an entirely Muslim city council and a Muslim mayor in 2021.
 - 2) Other communities, including Dearborn, Michigan, and parts of Minneapolis, have large Muslim populations and established Islamic institutions.
 - 3) As I mentioned last week, Muslims will likely become the largest people group by in this century
 - 4) How are they expanding?
- E.) They're using a 4-stage long-term strategy to gain a foothold in target nations; its guiding principle is called Da'awa – **S13 Stages**
- 1) The first stage is infiltration
 - a) Mass migration to non-Muslim nations
 - b) Appeal for “humanitarian” tolerance from hosts
 - c) Portray Islam as peaceful and its opponents as racist
 - d) High birth rates to increase the Muslim population
 - e) Play the victim and demand special rights to protect Muslims
 - 2) Second stage is consolidating power by undermining the host nation's culture, laws and national identity (**Concept of lying to infidel**)
 - a) Penetrate, influence and reshape major institutions to favor Islam
 - b) Recruit the disaffected and easily corrupted to the cause
 - c) Use large foreign funding streams to spread propaganda that elevates Islam and diminishes the host nation

- d) Create Islamic zones where Sharia Law is observed and “outsiders” are intimidated and silenced
- 3) The third stage is heightened aggression against native government and peoples
 - a) Rejection of and defiance against host laws
 - b) Protests against non-Islamic law and culture
 - c) Acts of violence against opponents
 - d) Demands to change laws to accommodate Islam
 - e) Gain political, economic and cultural ascendancy
- 4) The final stage is imposition of an Islamic Theocracy
 - a) All opponents jailed or executed
 - b) Islamic law governs all aspects of life
 - c) Destruction of all evidence of previous non-Muslim culture – S14V

V) Conclusion

- A.) None of this should come as a surprise; we’ve seen God’s judgement work often through the violent conquest of ungodly forces; and the West is under judgment make no mistake about it
- B.) Not all Muslims are part of this movement
- C.) Our role as Christians: love the Lord and love people (including Muslims), and as Peter said, “be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you; know what is true and be ready to share it so that we may rescue some from the darkness that is present with us and is growing...we are children of the light, let us shine and dispel the darkness where you stand!