



ISLAM

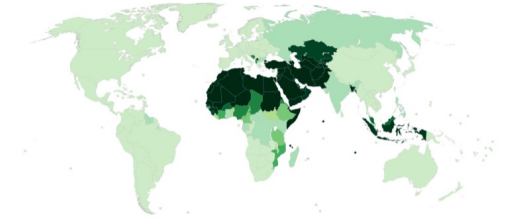
UNDERSTANDING + REACHING MUSLIMS

BY SHAWN NELSON



Growth

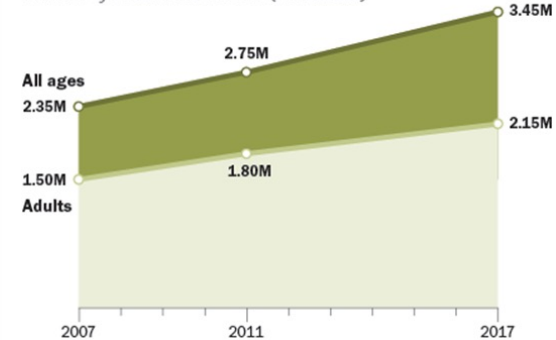
- Islam is the **second** largest religion.
Christians 2.4 billion 31% world population
Muslims 1.8 billion 24% world population



- There are **3.45 million** Muslims in United States.

Number of Muslims in the U.S. continues to grow

Number of Muslims in the U.S. (in millions)



- Islam is the **world's fastest growing religion** (by birth rate). Muslims will likely soon outnumber Christians.

Extremism

- **BIG ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM:**
Some people today are afraid of Muslims because they think all Muslims are terrorists who support holy war (*jihad*) against non-Muslims.
- There are different kinds of Muslims!
- Only very **small % of the 1.8 billion** are extremists (see chart)!
0.0051% to 0.0146%



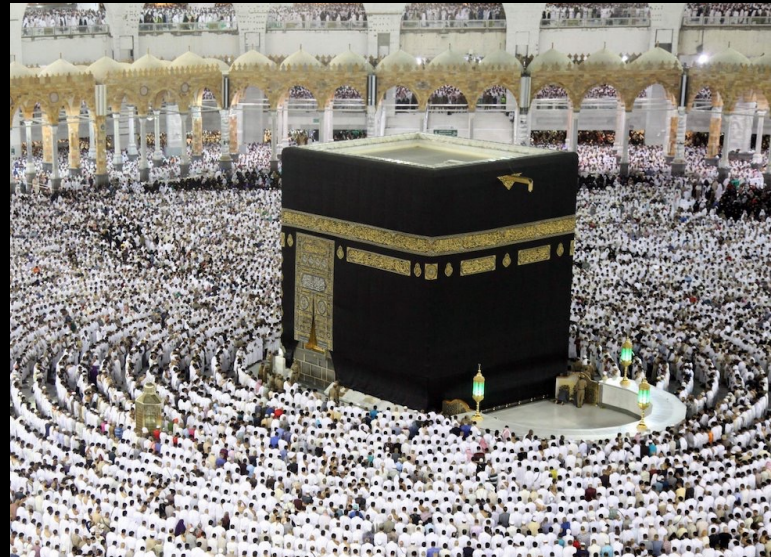
Name	Area	Strength
Al-Qaeda	Afghanistan/Pakistan/+	1,500 - 4,400
Hamas	Gaza Strip	16,000+
Hezbollah	Lebanon	1,000+
Islamic State	Iraq/Syria	40,000 - 200,000
Taliban	Northwest Pakistan	25,000
Other	Asia, Africa, Yemen	7,500 - 16,000
Grand Total		91,000 - 262,400

Understanding & Reaching Muslims

- 1. Origin of Islam**
2. Duties of Islam
3. Beliefs of Islam
4. Evaluation of Islam
5. Evangelism Tips

Origin of Islam

- Islam means “**submission**” to God.
A person who submits is called a “**Muslim.**”
- Islam’s founder was **Muhammad** (570 AD)
- Was very upset over the **polytheism** in Mecca.
- Tribes came to worship gods at the *Ka’bah* (a cube structure thought to contain the gods.)



Origin of Islam

- At age 40 (610AD) had a terrifying encounter with a **spiritual being** at a cave.



Mount Hira, near Mecca

Origin of Islam

- Being had a **book**; commanded him to “**Recite!**”
- At first, thought being was an **evil spirit** (jinn)
- Wife Khadija convinced him it was the **angel Gabriel** and to share the revelation.



Origin of Islam

- His message was **strict monotheism**: all people must “submit” to the one God (Allah).
- **Not well received** because of *Ka'bah* worship.
- Fled to Medina
- Returned to Mecca (630AD) with followers; took control of city; destroyed the idols.
- Within **one year** the new religion **dominated** Arabian Peninsula.



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Duties of Islam

Muslims must perform **five duties** to show submission to Allah

1. The Testimony of Faith

“I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger.”

2. Prayer

(Five times per day)

3. Giving

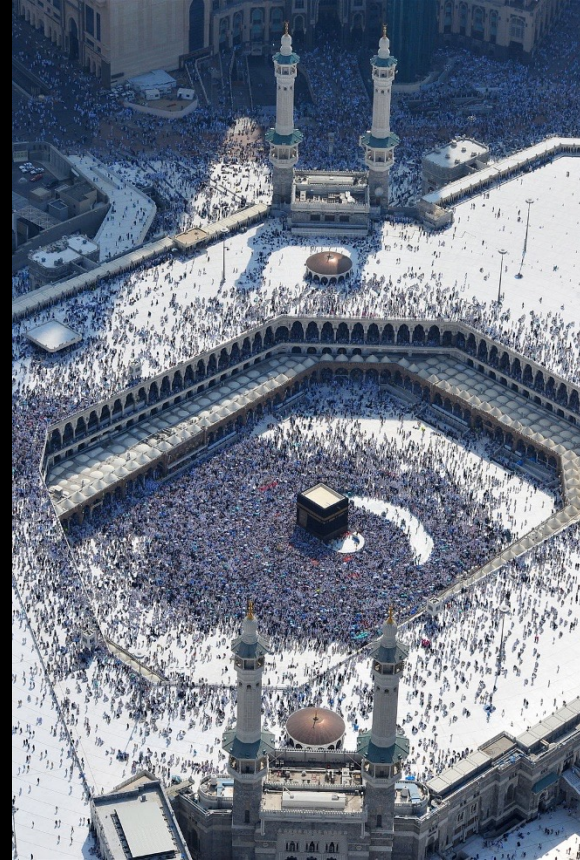
(2.5% to poor, needy)

4. Fasting

(entire month Ramadan)

5. Pilgrimage

(once to Mecca)



Muslim Life

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Similarities between Islam & Christianity

Who God is:

- Both claim there is only **one God**
- Both say He is the **transcendent creator** of the universe
- Both believe God is **omnipotent** (all powerful)
- Both believe God is **sovereign** (exerts his supreme power)

What God *does*:

- Both say **God has spoken** to humanity (through messengers/prophets, angels)
- Both say **God knows the intimate thoughts** and details of each person
- Both believe God **will judge** the wicked

Differences between Islam & Christianity

ISLAM

God

- A singular unity. No partner is to be associated with God.

CHRISTIANITY

God

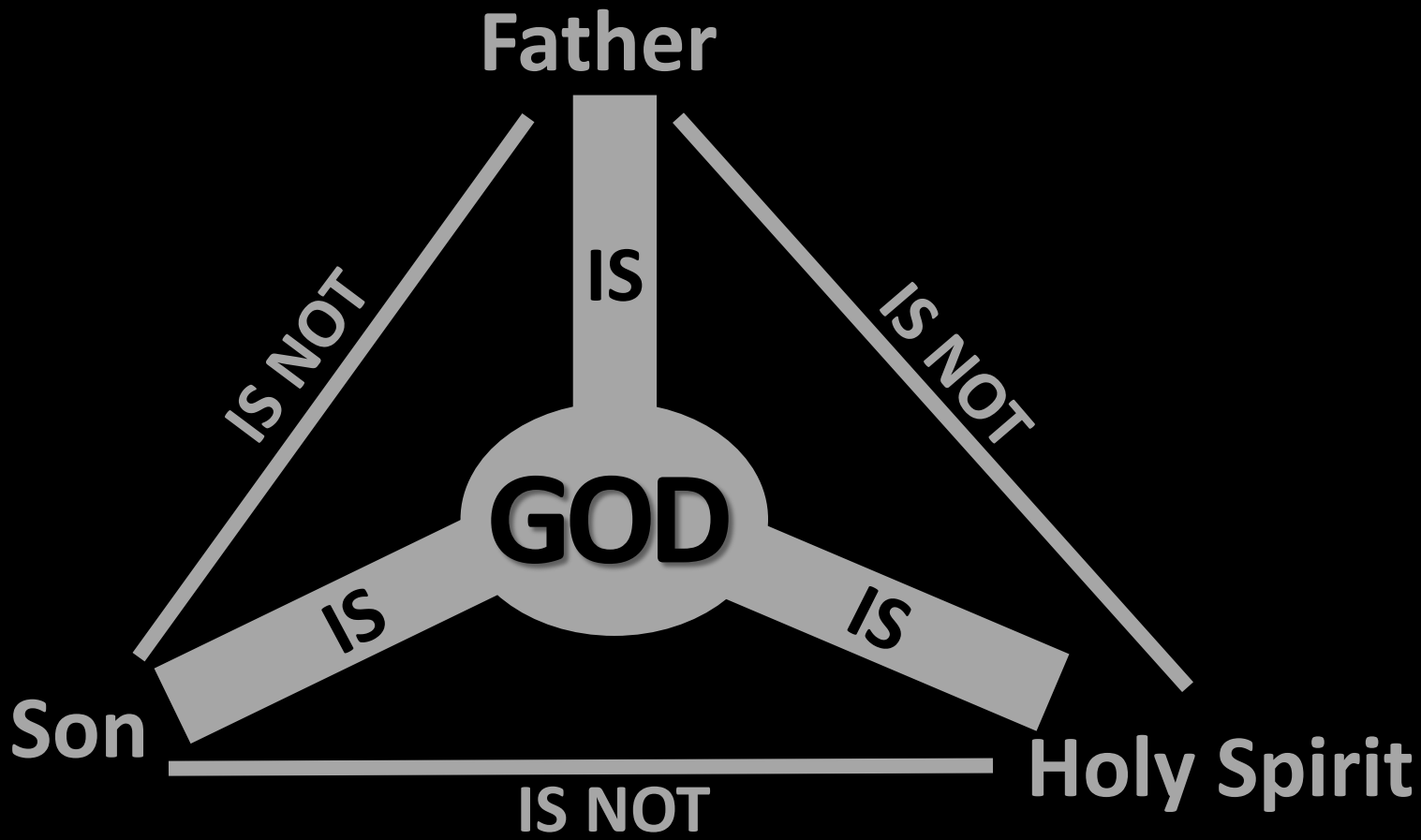
- A tri-unity; one in essence, three in person.

What is the Trinity?

What is the Trinity?

There is **ONE** God,
eternally manifested in **THREE** persons.

These three persons are
EQUAL in substance, essence and attributes
but **DISTINCT** in role and revelation toward
humanity.



3 “who”s
or persons

Father

1 “what”
or essence/nature

Son

Human
Nature*

Holy Spirit

* The Son has 2 natures: divine and human.
These were united in one person forever at incarnation.

Differences between Islam & Christianity

ISLAM

God

- A singular unity. No partner is to be associated with God.

Humanity

- Good by nature.

Sin

- Sin is thought of in terms of rejecting right guidance. It can be forgiven through repentance. No atonement is necessary.

CHRISTIANITY

God

- A tri-unity; one in essence, three in person.

Humanity

- Sinful by nature.

Sin

- Sin is serious (Rom. 6:23, Eph. 2:1). It reflects an attitude of moral rebellion against the holy God, which causes us to be alienated from Him. An atonement is necessary.

Differences between Islam & Christianity

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Salvation

- Based on works. The standard for salvation is having one's good deeds outweigh the bad. Therefore, it is based on human effort.

The Bible

- Corrupted. Abrogated by the *Qur'an*.

CHRISTIANITY

Salvation

- Based on resting in Christ's finished work (Matt. 11:29-30). Standard for righteousness is absolute holiness of God (Ro. 3:23). Salvation can only be received through faith (Ro. 5:1).

The Bible

- Authentic. Divinely inspired. The final authority in all matters of faith and truth.

Differences between Islam & Christianity

ISLAM

Jesus

- One of the major prophets. To associate Jesus with God (i.e., to call Him the Son of God) is blasphemy. Muslims affirm the virgin birth of Jesus and the miracles that He performed.

CHRISTIANITY

Jesus

- The one and only Son of God. John wrote, “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (Jn. 20:31).

Differences between Islam & Christianity

ISLAM

Death of Christ

- According to Islamic tradition, Jesus did not die on the cross. Instead, He went to heaven, and Judas died in His place on the cross. Muslims believe that it is disrespectful to believe that God would allow one of his prophets—and especially one of the most honored of the prophets—to be crucified.

CHRISTIANITY

Death of Christ

- Jesus died a physical death as a substitute for our sins. He then rose from the dead in a physical but immortal body and appeared to hundreds of witnesses (1 Cor. 15). God's specific purpose for sending Jesus into the world was for Him to be crucified and to die for our sins (Mt. 20:28; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:19-20). Jesus voluntarily gave His life for us (Jn. 6:51; 10:11-17). The end was not that of dishonor but that of the highest exaltation (Acts 2:29-33; 5:30-31; Phil. 2:8-11).

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Evangelism Tips

- **Love and respect** Muslim friends. Don't be critical of Islam, the Qur'an or Muhammad. Try to avoid criticizing and emphasize the gospel instead.
- **Don't argue** since they are not supposed to lose an argument about Islam.
- Avoid witnessing to Muslims in groups—**meet individually** instead. They are obligated to defend their religion in front of other Muslims.
- **Refer often to the Bible.** Muslims do place some value on it. When appropriate offer to study the gospel of John with them.

Evangelism Tips

- **Point to Jesus** often **without being offensive**. It is very important for Muslims to see Christianity as a **living relationship** with God, not an external religion.
- **Stories are more influential** than logical arguments to Muslims so use Jesus' parables.
- Become **acquainted with the Qur'an** by reading some of it (e.g., Surah 3)
- **Be patient**—Muslims are **notoriously slow** in turning to Jesus for salvation.
- Don't take Muslims to church until they are ready. They would see things that they find dishonoring like men and women sitting together and perhaps touching. Consider taking them to an **informal Bible-study** instead.

Questions

1. Romans 10:1-4 is not talking about Muslims. But in what ways do you think this passage could also apply?
2. What's the warning found in Galatians 1:8-9? What can this tell us about the origin of Islam?
3. What are some shared beliefs between Islam and Christianity?
4. What are some key differences?
5. What's one thing you can take away from this study that will help you in the future?

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