



BIBLICAL TRAINING CENTER

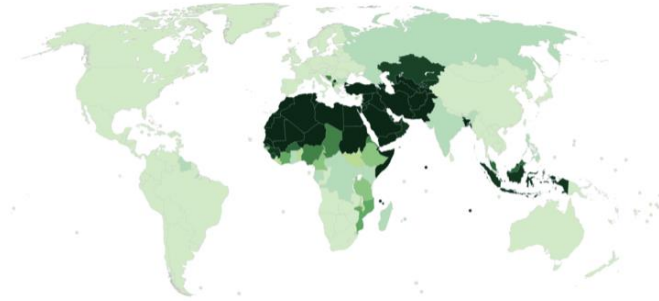
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Answering World Religions – Islam

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1. Overview

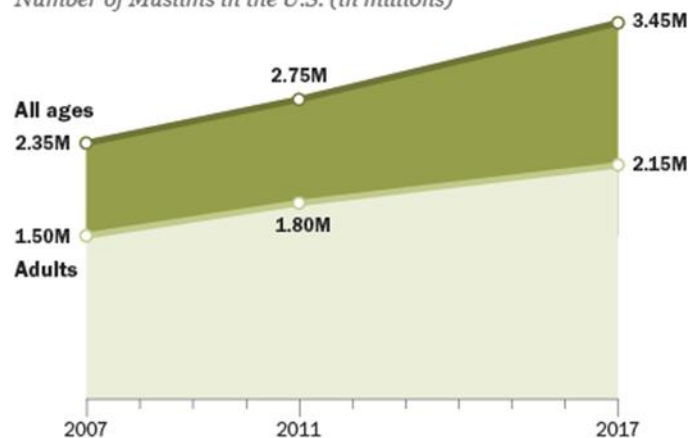
- Islam is the world's **second** largest religion
 - Christians 2.4 billion 31% world population¹
 - Muslims 1.8 billion 24% world population²



- There are **3.45 million** Muslims in **United States**.³

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

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



¹ Wikipedia, s.v. "Christian Population Growth," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_population_growth, 2015 study. Roughly 900 million of this number are Protestants.

² Wikipedia, s.v. "Islam by Country," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_by_country, 2015 study.

³ Basheer Mohamed, "New Estimates Show u.s. Muslim Population Continues to Grow," January 3, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/03/new-estimates-show-u-s-muslim-population-continues-to-grow/>.

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

2. 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 (just like different kinds of Christians).⁴
- Only a very, very small % of the 1.8 billion Muslims are extremists:⁵

Name	Area	Strength
Al-Qaeda	Afghanistan/Pakistan	300–3,000
Hamas	Gaza Strip	16,000+
Hezbollah	Lebanon	1,000+
ISIS	Syria	15,000–20,000
Taliban	Northwest Pakistan	25,000

- There are also extreme Christian sects who carry out acts of violence (e.g., Christian Identity, Eastern Lightning, Lord's Resistance Army, etc.)

The first step to telling them about **Jesus** is that we can't be afraid of them!

3. Origin of Islam

- Islam's founder was **Muhammad** who was born in Mecca in **AD 570** (**note: five centuries after Christ).
- He was very upset over the **polytheism** of his day.
- His tribe (the Quraysh) controlled the city of Mecca. Mecca was important economically because it was a resting place for travelling caravans.
- Mecca was religiously important because it had the **Ka'bah**—a cubical structure which was thought at that time to contain 360 deities. Each tribe had their own deity and every year Arabian tribes would go there to pay homage to their god.
- When Muhammad was 40 (AD 610), he claimed to receive his first revelation from the angel **Gabriel** in a cave.

⁴ Some of sects include Sunni, Shi'ite, Wahhabis, Druze, Alawites, Ahmadiyahs and Sufi.

⁵ *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Islamic extremism," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_extremism.

- There was a book in the cave and Muhammad was commanded to “Recite!”
- **The experience was not pleasant.** He thought he had been possessed by jinn (demons) but his wife, Khadijah, convinced him it was a divine encounter and encouraged him to share the revelation.
- He received further revelations which he eventually compiled into the Qur’an (lit. “recitations”).
- His message was **strict monotheism** and his tribe (the Quraysh) saw him as a threat because their livelihood was connected to the annual pilgrimages to the Ka’bah.
- His followers were forced to flee to Medina because of **persecution**.
- Muhammad took control of Mecca in 630 and destroyed the idols of the Ka’bah.
- Within one year the new religion dominated **Arabian Peninsula**.

4. Beliefs

Muslims summarize their doctrine in six articles of faith:

1. Belief in **Allah**, the only God.

- Allah is Arabic word for “God.”
- The most important concept in Islam is “oneness” (tawhid) of Allah.
- Muslims are strict **monotheists**: God is one and it is an unforgiveable sin (*shirk*) to associate any partner with God (i.e., Jesus).

2. Belief in **angels**

- Muslims believe in angels (e.g., Gabriel revealed Qur’an to Muhammad).
- All people have an angel to record their **good deeds** and another to record their **bad deeds**.
- Gabriel is at the highest rank.
- **Jinn** are the lowest. Jinn are usually bad and can possess people. (“genie” originates from this word.)

3. Belief in **prophets**

- Muslims believe God has sent a prophet into every nation who has preached the message of strict monotheism.
- Most of the **124,000 prophets** are unknown to us; but we do know of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jonah, John the Baptist and Jesus—again, all prophets. Other non-biblical ones are Hud, Salih and Suaib.

- **Muhammad** is by far the most important prophet because he was given for all time, while the others (including Jesus) were just for a particular age.
- Muhammad had great respect for Jesus.
- But Muslims believe Muhammad is **greater than Jesus**; Muhammad is considered the final and greatest prophet given for all time.

4. Belief in the **holy** books

- Torah (*Taurat*), Psalms (*Zabur*), Gospels (*Injil*) and Qur'an.
- Must believe Qur'an is the final and complete revelation.
- **Only the Qur'an is without corruption**—Muslims believe it alone has been preserved in an uncorrupted state. The Bible has been abrogated by the Qur'an.
- The Qur'an is roughly **half** the size of the New Testament. It contains 114 *surat* (what Christians might think of as chapters) made up of *ayat* (like Bible verses). It is not in order and can be difficult to read at first.

5. Belief in the Day of **Judgment**

- Trumpet will sound, followed by general resurrection.
- Each person's deed will be weighed in the balance. If a Muslim's good deeds outweigh their bad deeds they will be rewarded with Paradise; otherwise they are sent to hell.
- Only God knows if a person will make it to Paradise—the Muslim has no assurance at all that they will be accepted by God.

6. Belief in **predestination**

- Everything that has ever happened has been willed by Allah.
- *In shā' Allāh* – “expresses the belief that nothing happens unless God wills it and that his will supersedes all human will.”⁶

5. Obligations

Muslims must perform five duties to show submission to Allah:

1. The Testimony of Faith

- Reciting the *Shahada* is how somebody **becomes** a Muslim: “I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is His messenger.”

⁶ Wikipedia, s.v. “Inshallah,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inshallah>.

- A person who submits to God is called a Muslim. “Islam” means “**submission**” to God and, for Muslims, this starts with recognizing he alone is God.

2. Prayer

- Required to pray **five** times per day.
For example, prayer times for May 5, 2019 in Carlsbad, CA:
4:44 AM 12:50 PM 4:33 PM 7:41 PM 8:56 PM
- Muslims must **wash** in a prescribed manner before prayer.
- Must also face toward **Mecca**.
- Most Muslims pray roughly 30 to 50 minutes per day total.
- **Fridays** at noon, Muslims are expected to gather at the **mosque**.

3. Giving

- Muslims must give **2.5%** (one-fortieth) of their income to help the poor and needy.

4. Fasting

- Muslims must fast during the lunar month of **Ramadan** (starts May 5th this year) to commemorate Muhammad’s receiving of the Qur’an.
- This fast is only **during daylight**.
- During Ramadan, they must abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual relations.
- Once sundown occurs, they can partake until sunrise.

5. Pilgrimage (*hajj*)

- Anybody who is financially and physically able must make a trip to **Mecca** at least once in their lifetime.
- Must wear white garments on this pilgrimage.

6. Evaluation

SIMILARITIES WITH CHRISTIANITY:

- The God of Islam and Christianity are both:
 - One.
 - Transcendent **creators** of the universe.
 - Omnipotent (all powerful).
 - Sovereign (exerts his supreme power).

- Both believe in angels.
 - Even some with same names: Gabriel and **Michael**.
- Both believe in prophets.
- Both claim to believe God has given revelation (God has spoken).
 - God has spoken through prophets and angels.
 - This is recorded in Torah (*Taurat*), Psalms (*Zabur*), Gospels (*Injil*).
- Historicity of biblical people and **places**.
 - People like Adam & Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus (although details differ!).
- Both believe in future judgment.
- Both affirm paradise/heaven and a real hell.
- Both believe in a **physical** resurrection.

DIFFERENCES WITH CHRISTIANITY:

Christianity	Islam
God A Trinity (one in Essence, three in person).	God A singular unity. No partner is to be associated with God. God is not a Father and has not begotten a Son (<i>Surahs</i> 19:88-92; 112:3).
Humanity Sinful by nature.	Humanity Good 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.	Sin Sin is thought of in terms of rejecting right guidance. It can be forgiven through repentance. No atonement is necessary.
Salvation Based on resting in Christ's finished work (Matt. 11:29-30). Standard for righteousness is the absolute holiness of God (Rom. 3:23). Salvation can only be received through faith (Rom. 5:1).	Salvation Based on works . The standard for salvation is having one's good deeds outweigh the bad. Therefore, it is based on human effort.
Bible Authentic. Divinely inspired. The final authority in all matters of faith and truth.	Bible Corrupted. Corrected or abrogated by the Qur'an.

Christianity (Cont'd)	Islam (Cont'd)
<p>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).</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>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.</p>

7. Common Objections

“The Bible has been corrupted.”

- Could respond with evidence on reliability of Bible (i.e., manuscript evidence; see Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible*, 2012).
- Qur’an itself says previous revelation (in the Bible) is both authoritative and **authentic** revelation.
 - It urges people to believe in the previous Scriptures (Surah 2:136; 4:136).
 - It uses the Torah and the Gospel to authenticate Muhammad as the prophet (Surah 7:157)
 - Jews and Christians are to “observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord” (Surah 5:68).
 - It encourages those who doubt Muhammad’s teachings to “ask those who read the Book before thee” (Surah 10:94).
 - See also Surah 2:136; 4:136

The doctrine of the Trinity.

- Christians should affirm agreement with Muslims that there is only one God (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29-32; 1 Cor. 8:4).
- We should also explain the Trinity is not **three** gods in one but there is one essence.

God had physical relations with Mary.

- Muslims generally understand “God has a son” as saying that God has sexual relations with Mary. Christians should be ready to explain that this is not what we believe.
- The Qur’an itself speaks of the **virgin** birth (i.e., Jesus not from physical relations): “She [Mary] said: My Lord! when shall there be a son (born) to me, and man has not touched me? He said: Even so, Allah creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it, Be, and it is.” (Surah 3:47, 48).

8. 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.
- 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.

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