

Islam & Christianity, Cultures in Conflict: History

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[0 : 0 0] So, when we were invited to come back to Kenya to volunteer again, my husband at the hospital in Kajabi, I was in contact with the Bible college there. We had gotten to know people there before, and I contacted them and said, would you like me to teach a course while I'm there?

And it will only be a sort of half-semester course, the second half of the semester. And I gave them several options, and they chose this one, which was not my first choice, because I knew I'd have to do a lot of work for this one again, because it was some years since I had given a series of six talks on it at our other church years ago.

But I had first become interested in it just through teaching it in the high school setting of our homeschool cooperative, and just, again, researching. It was just a topic of real interest for me, partly because we know various people who have come out of Islam and, you know, personal friends, and people actually, our friends and renters in our basement right now are from Uzbekistan and are ex-Muslim.

So, anyway, I thought that probably the reason that they asked me to do this is because it's a hot topic, and in Kenya we receive regularly postings from a friend of ours on Facebook of, you know, the latest murder.

Sorry, do you want me to talk louder? Okay, the latest murders that have happened of Christians, especially in the northeastern area.

[1 : 4 1] And so, you know, I thought, well, they probably figure, well, you're coming in and you're going out again, but, you know, I will have to ask that they not post any pictures of me, you know, besides critical, you know, things that are critical of the prophet while I'm there.

And so we just really appreciate your prayers for our family's safety while we're there. So, we all, I think, recognize that we're in a global war, and we know that the history of the world is the history of the conflict between good and evil, between the kingdom, power, and people of heaven, and the kingdom's powers and peoples of this fallen world.

And any war boasts a number of different theaters and fronts, and to borrow from World War II terminology, the allied powers of God's people, the Church, must fight on many fronts, with the various axis powers of God's enemy, of human satanic systems of belief and behavior in their many forms.

We know that we have victory in Christ already, but, of course, we are still in the battle, and this involves, you know, every area of life, ideological, theological, religious, moral, ethical, cultural, political, legal, etc.

And we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers, over this present darkness and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. And this is true in everything that sets itself up against the truth of Christ.

[3 : 1 1] So what would you say have been the greatest opposing forces and conflicts faced by God's people in the past century, or in the past millennium and beyond?

In other words, what have been the most significant faces of the enemy? What are the human systems, philosophies, ideologies, and behaviors that set themselves up in rebellion against the kingdom of God?

Well, oops. The answer to that question is there are a lot of things that we could list, right? Some of them directly have to do with sin.

Some of them are more world things like political movements, various ideologies, even ignorance of the gospel, and the various human religions, including Islamism, which we'll talk about in a moment.

But even in the church, and this is something we cannot separate from it, is the problems in the church of anomalism, apathy, hypocrisy, bad theology, liberalism, syncretism.

[4 : 17] So I'm going to be trying to skip through three lectures in the next 10-15 minutes. And then we're going to try and get to talking about the life of Muhammad and go on with the history from there.

So, again, sin is universal and ubiquitous. It taints and corrupts every individual, every culture, every ethnicity, race, nation, religion, and belief system.

We all know that there are relatively nice, good people everywhere, and yet all are sinners and fall short of God's standard. Each one of us is, to a greater or lesser degree, unloving, idolatrous, selfish, proud, unkind, etc.

But, apart from the knowledge of Christ, people are that much more given to selfishness and godliness and idolatry. And there are always at least a few in any society who are inhumane, brutal, basial, murderous, and monstrous.

The question is, what is it in the ideology of that society that either holds back that evil or enables that evil to grow and thrive?

[5 : 27] So, what do we know about Islam? Maybe by a show of hands, can you tell me how many of you personally know a Muslim?

Someone who is currently a Muslim. Okay, that's a lot, actually. That's great. How many know a convert to Islam? Two. The guy in our church, Mohammed.

That guy, he's been 10 years ago. Okay, so, or from Islam, okay? Or from Islam. So, many of us, I think, know someone who was a Muslim, but who is no longer a Muslim, I think. The question is, how well do we actually know Islam itself?

Most of us don't really, haven't really read the Quran. I admit, I've still not read all the way through, but in my research, I've spent time reading through the surahs and becoming more and more familiar with those and with at least finding those verses which are pertinent to the study that we're going to have today.

It's true, of course, on the other side, that most Muslims don't really know what Christians believe, what the gospel is, what is in our scriptures, the large majority of them. But it's been said that we need to know our enemy and that we should keep our friends close and our enemies closer.

[6 : 43] So, if Jesus has called us to love our enemies, we must know them in order to love them, in order to pray for them, in order to share the good news with them. And, of course, we, too, were once God's enemies and he reconciled us by Jesus' death on the cross.

There are those who very misguidedly believe or consider Islam a compatible sister religion to Christianity and Judaism simply because they are monotheistic.

Some actually go so far as to claim that all three worship the same God, but I'm sure you all understand by now that there's a vast difference between the solitary, unitarian monotheism of Islam and the triune monotheism of Christianity.

And the question, you know, the first question to ask yourself is how, or, well, I guess in a sense or something you could bring up with someone who is a Muslim is how is it possible that the eternal attribute of love is possible for a God who has lived from eternity in isolation?

Right? And that's the difference between the two forms of monotheism. These produce very different ways of seeing the world, very different cultures, very different societies, and very different legal and political systems.

[8 : 00] There are plenty of Muslims who are seemingly innocuous and even good and peace-loving on an individual human level. However, the writings of Islam are nothing like the inspired word of God.

The Quran and Hadith convey certain moral, ethical teachings, but they do not reveal our almighty, triune creator God, sublime character and person and holy standards, or his loving, gracious plan of salvation.

Mere human moralism leads to self-righteousness and legalism, as we will see. The Muslim scriptures present Jesus as a great prophet, but one who is entirely human, though in reality most Muslims rarely would even acknowledge the existence of Christ.

Their scriptures do, and see him as a prophet who was superseded along with the rest of the previous revelations from God by the revelations that came through Muhammad.

What we will see is that there are certain statements in the surahs of the Quran that are consistent in a certain sense with scriptures. So if you look at this surah, kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity, followed by anything.

[9 : 12] And Allah is free of need and forbearing. Well, okay, kind speech and forgiveness, you know, are better than, you know, if you're nice and then you beat someone up, right? But I can't argue with that.

And God is free of need. He doesn't need anything. And he is forbearing, right? So there are lots of statements that we could say, well, that seems pretty consistent with Christian principles. However, oops, I'm sorry, the second quotation here is directed at Christians and Jews who at the time when these were delivered to the people and as we'll look at in the history in a moment, did not accept them.

And so it says, when it is said to them, people like us, believe in what Allah has revealed, they say, we believe in what was revealed to us already in the scriptures.

And they just believe in what came after it. While it is the truth confirming, the surahs, by the way, just means the revelations, the various revelations that came that formed the Quran. While it is the truth confirming that which is with them already, so the idea is that this is just confirming what they have and yet ultimately what they have was corrupted and it's not the original and sorry, we don't have the original, it's disappeared.

So, and then, so say to them, why did you kill the prophets of Allah, Old Testament prophets and even Jesus, if you were indeed believers, right? So this is the challenge to Christians from surah two.

[10 : 45] So the Islamic faith began is a fairly simple set of dogmas formulated and propagated by an illiterate Arab man born in relative obscurity around 570 AD.

It's a patchwork of scraps drawn from the old Arabian paganism together with elements of Hebraism, Christianity, Gnosticism and other influences woven together with some entirely novel threads into a distinct fabric that is somewhat erratic in pattern.

Muhammad and his followers claim that the Quran, however, is the eternal word of God, the final book of revelation to humans from the one true God that completes our knowledge and that is superior in authority to any other.

Where it stands, as I say, in contradiction to the Old and New Testaments, it's because the extent of the existing Hebrew and Christian scriptures were altered, the originals being lost forever, which means it's really hard to confirm that.

So, Gabriel, so this is again from Surah 2, Gabriel is he, Gabriel is the angel who delivered these messages to Muhammad, on Mount Hira.

[11 : 56] Gabriel is he who has brought the Quran down upon your heart, O Muhammad, by permission of Allah, confirming that which was before it and as guidance and good tidings. that means gospel for the believers.

So, Paul confronts, I'm going to skip through this, but Paul confronts the believers in Galatia for the fact that they are accepting new teachings that are contrary to the word of God that they had already been given, the gospel that they had received.

And he says, but even if we are an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached, let him be accursed. Perhaps Muhammad conceived of the surahs himself from his own human psyche and or with the assistance and input of others, whether during his own life or later, whether there was redaction of the texts at some point, which again is a really complex question, but we'll come to that later.

Perhaps he did receive the teachings of the Quran through some angelic being, for all I know. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon belief system, you know, claimed the same sort of thing.

There is more than one category of angels as we know. Either way, it is a new and different gospel and one contrary to the true gospel that Paul had preached, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[13 : 22] Okay, so we're going to talk about Muslim population. There are about 1.9 billion adherents in the world, which is 24.4% of the world's population.

They constitute the world's second largest religious group after Christians. and the, well, we'll talk about growth in here. Okay, so only about 20% of Muslims live in the 22 countries of the Middle East and North Africa region where things originated in the first 100 years.

Two of those, of course, are non-Arab nations. So here's the distribution. Here you can see where the darkest part is where Islam is almost completely the only religion of the area.

And then you can see, yeah, again, I'll just, I won't go into too many details. So there's actually only about 8% to 9% of the world's Muslims at this point in the Arabic nations.

The other over 90% is in the rest of the world. Interestingly, 12.7% of Muslims live in the single country of Indonesia. 11% of them live in Pakistan, 11% in India, 9% in Bangladesh.

[14 : 41] And then you can see Nigeria and Egypt and Iran and Turkey are all somewhere around the 5%. And it kind of goes from there. This is just another distribution of it showing the sizes of the country size here represented shows you the size of the population in terms of the percent.

fully. So, so here, there are almost 49 Muslim majority nations. And so there's a list here. You'll see, you know, 87.2% in Indonesia are Muslim.

In Pakistan, it's 96.5%. In India, it's only 15%. But of course, they're all in certain areas like Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal.

And then Laxradiv Islands down here are 96% as well. But most of them are, you know, up along the borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh, right? The large part of the Muslim population.

And because it's distributed among so many, you know, 1.4 billion people, it comes out as 15%. But in this area up here, you're talking 50% to 100% depending on the region you're in.

[16 : 03] So we'll read that. And just, you know, we'll read in Genesis 17, As for Ishmael, I've heard you. Behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him greatly.

He shall father twelve princes and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac. And ultimately, that covenant is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. And we see also that Esau intermarried with Ishmael.

So Islam, as we've mentioned, is the fastest growing religion. Why? Because of higher birth rates, migration, proselytism, military jihad and forced or pressured conversion.

Again, 12.3% of the world's population was Muslim in 1900 and it is now 24.4% in, it was in 2019. So we went from in 1900, one in eight people in the world was Muslim and it is now one in four.

So that's doubled. And the numbers are increasing. Here you can see just the, again, the distribution of things from 20% in 1990 of the population to 26.6% here.

[17 : 18] Yeah, and so, but I don't have the 1900 in this one. 1900, it is, you know, it is much lower. So, according to Pew research statistics, by 2050, the Muslim population in Europe is projected to rise as follows.

Now, there are three projections. One is low, which is if all migration influx is stopped right now. If they didn't let one more believer in Islam in, this is what would happen just because of the fact that the Muslim population is much younger while the European population is tending to age out and because of the fact that they have much higher birth rates.

And in Europe, they are even lower than here and in some cases, literally, their population is disappearing. So, mid is if all refugee influx was to be stopped but regular immigration were to continue and high as if everything just goes on as it is.

So, I can't go through these with you but you can see this is what things would look like in the high scenario.

But we're going to go to some numbers that are easy to read. So, in Europe, in 1900, 2.3% of the population was Muslim. By 2000, 4.3%, 2016, 4.6%.

[18 : 37] By 2050, the high projection is 14% of the population. Sweden, 30.6%. So, almost one in three people would be Muslim.

France, 18. United Kingdom, 17. Belgium, 18. Norway, 17. Germany, almost 20. Austria, 20. At the same time, the Christian population is experiencing attrition.

So, it dropped from 34.5% in 1900 to 33% in 2000. 2000. So, it's not huge, but, of course, at the same time, the numbers of nominalists or of theistic evolutionists or of multiculturalists syncretists have risen so greatly that really these numbers don't have the same meaning as they once did.

Right? So, I'm just going to skip through that section because there's just too much. So, and I think you're pretty aware of that. And those are older statistics in Kenya.

In Kenya where we're going, it's only 11%, but again, it's very concentrated in the northeast, and there's a significant population in Kenya, sorry, in Nairobi. So, it tends to be, you know, you've heard of Garisa in the news, right?

[20 : 05] That was where the Christian Bible College, that's what I want, some slangs happened. Terror attack. So, okay, so we'll briefly mention the threats of Islam.

Is anyone familiar with George Grant? So, these are some of his qualifications here. where am I? Okay. So, I won't go through those, but George Grant says, the greatest conflict of the 20th century, and the last millennium, has undoubtedly been between Islam and civilization, freedom, progress, and hope for the future.

This is Gert Wilders, I can't say his name, probably, Gert, or something like that. He's a Dutch politician, he travels with an entourage of bodyguard because he has spoken out in Europe, and he comes and speaks in North America as well, about the concerns with the influx of Islam into Europe, and so he has to sleep, he has to move from place to place of the bodyguard, and yet he continues to speak out boldly and say our immigration policies are suicidal, and we're losing our society.

So, anyway, I have this slide in here because he's kind of an interesting looking character, and I thought the students would enjoy it. He says, today I come before you to warn of a great threat, it's called Islam.

It poses as a religion, but its goals are very worldly, world domination, holy war, Sharia law, the end of separation of church and state, slavery of women, the end of democracy. It's not a religion, it's a political ideology.

[21 : 45] Now, I disagree with him, it's both, right? But he's looking at it from that perspective, and I think trying to distance himself from the perception of being discriminatory or racist or anything else like that, but the reality is it is both.

Winston Churchill said, when Muslims are in the minority, they're very concerned with minority rights. When they're in the majority, there are no minority rights. He also said, he also commented on the dreadful curse of Mohammedanism in his 1899 book, The River Wars.

Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyzes the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. So, again, I'm not going to go through the details of what Islamic states look like and the threat they can pose to the countries around them and to world's stability.

There's a lot of politics that one could discuss in that regard, but of course, also in the treatment of their own people, many of whom are trying to get away from it, interestingly.

So, yeah, we're just going to keep moving. So, you know, five phases of the spread of Islam include incubation, recognition, infiltration, confrontation, and imposition is how one person has described it.

[23 : 16] and the reality is that in Europe they're in, you know, anywhere from stage, you know, all the way to stage five at this point. So, you know, again, we tend to be behind Europe in fashion and in everything else and, you know, but we're usually about ten seconds behind or ten years behind.

So here are just a couple of excerpts from the crime here. indeed those who have believed and those who have emigrated and fought in the cause of Allah, those may expect the mercy of Allah.

And an injunction or imperative here and fight in the cause of Allah and know that Allah is hearing and knowing. And there's many others we can look at.

So one of the biggest concerns, of course, is immigration without assimilation, that they tend, as most immigrants, tend to congregate in certain areas and have homogenous communities and so to propagate their cultural beliefs and ways of doing things, including ultimately Sharia law, which is an extremely broad legal system that regulates not private behavior but also private behavior and beliefs.

It prioritizes punishment over rehabilitation and favors corporal and capital punishment over incarceration. So here are just some examples of the thing that the I'm easily distracted.

[24 : 52] So you've got theft is punishable by amputation and then all this list of things that are punishable by death, including anti-criticism of the Quran, Muhammad or Allah, apostasy by conversion, or sharing the gospel with someone, evangelism, a woman found guilty of adultery, a non-Muslim man marrying a Muslim woman, and homosexuality of course.

Here's the rub. A raped girl cannot testify in court against her rapists. She needs the testimony of four male witnesses to prove rape of a female. So hang on, so you're telling me four men stood by and watched her get raped, and then they're going to testify in court on her behalf?

How does this work? However, a woman who alleges rape without producing four male witnesses is guilty of adultery. So if you say, I was raped, well, you must have consented or put yourself in that situation.

You are actually yourself guilty of adultery, and we know what the penalty for that is. And a man who's convicted of rape can have his conviction dismissed by simply marrying his victim. So if some girl catches his eye and he can catch her alone, this is a great way to find your wife.

I'm not saying this happens in every case. I'm saying that it is legally sanctioned, that it is in the Sharia law. Muslim men have sexual rights to any woman not wearing a hijab in conservative Muslim contacts or communities.

[26 : 28] Mostly this would be something that someone might get away with in the Arab Islamic states. A woman can have one husband, a man can have up to four, although four wives, Muhammad had ten, he kind of, I guess God granted him an exception.

A man can marry an infant girl even and consummate when she is nine years old. Then there's female genital unulation.

A man can beat his wife for insubordination. He can unilaterally divorce his wife. She loses custody to all children, six plus or when they reach that age that they're taken away.

A woman's testimony in court carries half the weight of a man's. She inherits half of what a male inherits. She can't speak alone to a man who isn't her husband and relative. And Muslims are free to engage in taqiyya lying to non-Muslims in order to advance Islam.

So there are countries in which Sharia law already is pretty much the law of the land. It forms the basis of it. And others where it's present regionally or unofficially practiced in certain communities in their own separate courts privately, quietly, under the radar.

[27 : 45] So the reality is Muhammad's views on women were actually quite liberal and progressive for his societal context. We have to give him that. And if you look, you know, if you read some of the sources, you'll see that, you know, he actually was elevating the status of women and actually giving them more safeguards in society.

And he was also promoting modesty and trying to guard against the sexual promiscuity that was going on.

But of course, one way of dealing with that that continues to be legitimate was just marry, you know, well, at least up to four women at any rate. In his case, it was ten. Today, the more devout, radical, or radical in Islamic family communities, the more repressive and oppressive life is to the women in their midst.

And we're just going to skip by the rest of that. And there's hijab coverings. Again, I don't really, I don't get into the body of things.

So, you know, here are the images. We sometimes see that, you know, okay, she looks happy enough and we've got, you know, something very haute couture and, you know, happy people in just a headscarf.

[28 : 58] But the reality is much of the face of Islam looks more like the hijab and the niqab and the burqa. Sorry, not the hijab, the niqab and the burqa. And we can't really cover that.

So, to evaluate whether a religion engenders love and peace, we have to look beyond its adherents, who may be false and are certainly faulty and imperfect, whether they're Muslim or Christian, to the founders and teachers.

Jesus, the Bible, versus Muhammad, the Quran, and the Hadith. And this is a particularly ironic slide. So, again, just Jesus, of course, as we know, eschewed the attempts to get him to reveal himself in his full glory and proclaim himself king either in a human way or in a divine way.

And he, obviously, he could have called 10,000 angels, but instead he healed the one who was disciplined, cut with the sword.

So, here's another quote by Geert Wilders. It's difficult to be an optimist in the face of the growing Islamization of Europe. All the tides are against us. On all fronts, we're losing. Demographically, the momentum is with Islam.

[30 : 18] Muslim immigration is a source of pride within the ruling liberal parties. The entire establishment is sided with the enemy. Leftists, liberals, and Christian Democrats are all in bed with Islam.

He also said there might be moderate Muslims, but there's no moderate Islam. So, let's get into the body of our historical research here.

So, descendants of Islam. I don't want to think about how I was going to hold this. It might be easier if I just do this. Hang on. So, ancient pre-Islam Arabia was ruled by a mixture of Babylonians, Persians, Romans, and Jews.

The peninsula of Arabia has always been a center of trade, sitting between three continents, Africa, Europe, and Asia. It's surrounded by water, but consists of more than one-third scorching desert.

And the word Arab means arid or dry. Islam was born into the context of the Arab peoples of the region. They're descendants of Ishmael, nearly five, six of whom were Bedouins.

[31 : 33] So, here's... I could not find very clear maps put here of ancient Arabia. This one is supposedly around 500 AD with the Rehobo Kingdom, the Persian Empire, the Roman Empire here.

And you can see... I can't remember. This is Mecca. And it's also, sorry, in French. This is the best one I could find, I think, is in French. But, so, and then...

Yeah, so anyway, that'll be Mecca and we'll leave it at that. So, you can see the Arabian Desert covers a large portion of that. So, and here we have this one's a little bit better.

So, here you have both Mecca and Yathrib, which became Medina. Right there. And trade routes. So, the story of Islam begins in Mecca, a well-established trade center near the shores of the Red Sea, an eclectic mix of residents, traders, and visitors.

So, there was a lot of nomadic peoples and traders and merchant caravans that were moving through all the time. The city was at the center of Arabian pagan culture, which revolved around an important temple consisting of a giant obelisk called the Ka'aba.

[32 : 51] It contained shrines to the many gods, hundreds of gods, of the Arabian Desert, including the djinn, who were sort of ghosts or spirits. Some would say devils. One of whom was named Allah, by the way.

Okay. Worshippers would march around the Ka'aba in crowded circles. Where's my... Oh, I'm not there yet. Okay, well, we'll come to that. In crowded circles, chanting and praying, much as they do today.

They believed that Abraham and Ishmael had established the Ka'aba as a site for true worship of the one true God, but that there had been a gradual religious decline and descent into idolatry.

And now, what Muhammad did was to call them back to the monotheism of their ancestors, Abraham and Ishmael, who was the true son, the actual line of promise in their view.

So Muslims refer to the time before the spread of Islam as the age of ignorance, or al-jahiliya. With so many hours spent around campfires, Bedouins became master storytellers.

[33 : 56] They produced works of poetry. The greatest Arabic poems were described on Egyptian silk and golden letters and hung on the walls of the Ka'aba. Seven of these still remain intact.

At the same time, Bedouin girls were married as young as eight or nine. That was just a common thing. It didn't mean all of them were, but certainly by 15 or 16. They were valued for their beauty, their ability to labor, and for their ability to provide warrior sons to their husbands.

Still, baby girls were sometimes buried alive and left to die if they seemed, if they were deemed superfluous. This age of, and this was one of the things that Muhammad wanted to correct.

This period of a jahiliya, ignorance, idolatry, and immorality, continued to the days of Muhammad, who having overcome opposition and taking control of the Mecca, as we will see, purged the Ka'aba of its idols and re-established the monotheistic worship, as he saw it.

So here's just an image of an artist, a representation of Abraham sending out Hagar and Ishmael.

[35 : 04] Okay. So, among Mecca's residents were the Kureash tribe.

And there are two ways of spelling everything. It can be with the Q-U or the K-O. And I, in my presentation, I'm going with the Q-U kind of luck, you'll see. But, so you've got, so Kureash could be spelled Q-U-A-I-R-E-A-S-H, or the K-O-R-I-E-S-H.

So I'm just letting you know that mostly I went with the Q, but here I actually use the K. So, if you just sort of wonder about the stonies. So, this was a caravanning, trading merchant family that controlled one of the great oases along their trade route in the heart of the Arabian Hejaz.

So he came from a somewhat prominent family. But he was orphaned by age six. And at age eight, he was taken in by an influential uncle, Abu Talib, and also cared for by his grandfather.

He spent his early years as a shepherd. And like any other young person of the time, probably instead of TV, you sat around and listened to the stories of the various storytellers around the campfire that night.

[36 : 20] As part of the area's ruling family, he had certain freedoms, including access to resources and opportunities to travel with the caravans into the region of Syria. Otherwise, his childhood was pretty unremarkable.

And here are just some images that are, of course, from the last century of Bedouin tribes and some artist renderings just to give us an idea of what life looked like and continued to look like for thousands of years.

So, he was exposed to, you know, many different influences from the Nestorian East, the Byzantine realm, and perhaps even the Roman Imperium.

He also became familiar with the stories and teachings of the Arabs, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians of varying sects, including Gnostics and others who passed through the region.

Obviously, some of the accounts that he heard would have reflected this storyteller's own innovativeness or limited knowledge or partial ignorance. Doubtless, some of what he heard was accurate, while some was distorted, embellished, or fictive.

[37 : 24] Although he was bright, like most listeners, he wasn't always able to tell the difference, I'm sure, between fact and fiction. Some of what he learned was perhaps misunderstanding and misperception, because when you read through the surahs, you go, well, okay, where did he get that?

And that's one of the big questions. Again, we'll come back to that. But because there are various references, for example, to biblical stories or characters, but they just kind of hang there.

So, it's just sort of a quick reference to some character or situation that is quasi-biblical. But, again, the original texts, which are not what we have, are gone.

So, you can't go back and confirm anything. So, of course, also, what he heard was shaped in his own mind by his own personal biases and his limits of memory.

As he matured, according to Muslim tradition, again, much of what we know about him, and you'll hear this and you'll hear that, because it depends on what source you read, because within Islam there are many hadiths, many writings that are about his life and about what he said and what he did, and the Sunnah as well, that might disagree or give different kinds of details, and depending on which faction you're in or which sect, whether Sunni or Shia or one of the others, you may accept certain details and not other details.

[38 : 57] And, yeah, we'll come back to that as well. All right, so, by age 20, he had wed a well-to-do Khadija, about 15 years his senior. They had four children together, including an adopted son.

Gradually, he gained, as I say, a place as a leader in his tribe and clan. But otherwise, he led a pretty normal life for an Arab merchant of the 6th century, but he was troubled, it would seem, by the polytheistic worship in his culture.

So, as the story goes, he enjoyed wandering around the mountains outside Mecca, seeking wisdom and truth, so he was something of a philosopher or, what's the word I want?

Not mystic. Mystic, thank you. That's the word, thank you very much, mystic. In his 30s, he began to retire for times of contemplation and meditation in a cave on Mount Hira. And when he was about 40 years old, so he was, you know, born probably around 570s, about 610 is what it's believed, at the end of the month of Ramadan, he experienced this supernatural visitation, which was a disembodied voice.

He didn't see an angel. He definitely didn't claim to have seen God. At first, he didn't know what it was. He thought it was maybe a desert inn. Maybe he was going crazy. Maybe he just spent too much time in the hot sun.

[40 : 14] And so, again, according to some accounts, his wife convinced him, ultimately based on what he shared with her, no, no, no, no, I think you're hearing from God or from a god.

And so, it would seem that he initially wasn't sure what he was hearing, but at any rate, ultimately, he decided it was the angel Jibriel or Gabriel bringing him messages from God.

So, so, so, so, so, this is Mount Hira here, and there's a cave up there still.

this is just, again, an old, ancient rendering of Jibriel giving the message to Muhammad. So, whence Allah?

According to Muhammad, Allah was the eternal, but forgotten name of God, now revealed to him in Gabriel's revelations. One source suggests, however, that Allah was, in fact, originally the name of an Arabian desert jinn, while another source asserts that Allah Ta'ala was the name of one of the gods worshipped at the Ka'aba, until then, thought to be ruler of the universe.

[41 : 26] He was, you know, a fairly significant god, but hadn't been, he'd been somewhat deistic and not very interested in men. A third source suggests that Allah means the god, or god referring to the moon god, one of the ancient pagan, or sorry, one of the, where am I?

Yeah. One of the, the gods of ancient pagan Arabia, and the latter would seem more likely, because, of course, Muslims reject these claims, but the Muslim month of Ramadan begins at the sighting of the new crescent moon.

Um, the image, or symbol, perched atop every mosque, is the, um, crescent moon. Um, the Ka'aba houses a meteorite, and is a stone that, in, in, the ancient peoples believed came from heaven, perhaps from the moon, right?

Um, Muslims bow towards this, um, the, the, the stone is still there, in, in, housed in the, let me see, no, we're still not there to the image, but, of what the Ka'aba looks like today, but maybe you know.

Um, it is still there, um, and they still continue, obviously, to pray, and, um, walk and, make pilgrimage there, and to walk around and worship at the Ka'aba.

[42 : 45] Okay, so let's talk about the surahs. Um, a series of surahs, revelations, dreams, visions, um, uh, holy utterances, came, 114 in all, over a period of more than 20 years, about 22, 23 years, between 610 and 632.

As the story goes, the revelations, delivered to him, he learned to recite, um, so the angel would say it, and he would recite it back, until he could say it perfectly, and then he was able to then recite that, to his initial followers, and then, everyone memorized it, and passed it along, as oral tradition, which wasn't uncommon in the day, to be able to, to memorize and recite, um, in a way that we can't even really, relate to at this point, in our culture.

Um, so, the word, but again, there's a lot of discussion over, how it all really happened, when it was written down, uh, was it during his time, that, um, parts of it at least, were written down, certainly was not collected, until after his death, and, well, if we have time, we'll get to that later.

So, the word, Islam, actually means, to make a recitation. Classical belief, or legend, is that the eternal word, the Quran, in its entirety, was actually sent down from heaven, in one night, uh, Laylat al-Qadr, the night of power, but that Muhammad, received it piecemeal, in a series of surahs, over 20 years.

So, it was sent down from heaven, and then the angel was sent there, to sort of give it to him, in pieces, over the current, 22 years, for whatever reason, and sometimes, it were long periods, of silence, and then, suddenly he'd get some more surahs.

[44 : 25] Um, so, Muhammad, uh, supposedly, memorized all of these, very miraculously, um, because, it is about, ultimately, about two-thirds, of the length, of the New Testament.

Now, there are people, who have memorized, the whole New Testament, so that is possible, but, however, they are memorizing these, with a written text, to look at, and memorize. Um, this was, supposedly, delivered to him.

Um, and, the complicated, thing is, that, um, while he, supposedly, had followers, who memorized, everything completely, um, there's, uh, tradition is, that, when, uh, many of them, were killed in battle, later, who had memorized it completely, they were worried, and thought, we've, we've gotta, we've gotta collect, the various fragments, that have been written down, and, you know, uh, codify these, into a, a, a canon, a body of, of, um, the surahs, right?

And, this happened after he was, had died, but, it would seem that, if there were also still people, many others, not just the warriors, who, who were alive, who had it memorized, in its entirety, it, the story just doesn't quite add up, but, there's a lot of details like that, that again, we can't go into.

So, um, supposedly, however, according to, um, tradition, this word was enshrined in heaven, for eternity past, but was now, just now being imparted, to humankind, starting with Muhammad.

[45 : 57] The other issue is, that when you, read them, they're very earthy, very temporal, very situational, contextual, and you think, so, so God went, okay, so, this is what, you know, needs to be said, to these Jews, who won't believe over here, and that was sort of, in heaven from eternity, and yet it seems very much, more like someone, who's responding to, things that are going on, around him, right?

You know, whether, cultural issues, or, or historical, um, situations, um, right? And so, it really doesn't come across, as something, that would make sense, in that sense.

Some of it is very poetic, and very, you know, a little, um, there's, I'm not saying there's no, beauty in some of it, but, it really, if you read it, it does not hold a candle, to the word of God.

I mean, it doesn't, it's not something that, it's hard for me to relate to, and understand, why people go, oh, this is so wonderful, because, when I read it, I think, but, you know, the beauty of God's word, is, is so incredible, compared to this, but, because it's very much, um, yeah, anyway.

Okay, so, um, Muhammad was, um, admittedly, by, uh, their belief was that he was illiterate, and a simple man, but this was regarded as having, made him a pure vehicle, through which the message could be transmitted, right?

[47 : 19] So, that he was just a simple man, just taking God's word, and passing it on, and, um, and yet he became much more than this, in the years ahead. So, his first few followers, um, as he shared these revelations, with family and friends, there were a number who believed him, and who accepted this as the word of God, including his wife, Kijja, um, his son, Ali, his cousin, Ali, and his servant, Zayd, um, or Z-A-Y-D, sometimes spelled that way, his friend and father-in-law, Abu Bakr, convinced five other men, to convert to the new teachings, and they became known as, Muhammad's six companions.

um, sadly, neither Muhammad, nor his followers, heeded the words of John's epistle, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets, have gone out into the world.

um, so what was the message? Again, we're going to focus on this next week, so I'm not going to spend much time on this, um, but it was one of pure monotheism, so Tawid, is the word they used to refer to Allah's, oneness and unity.

um, and in some ways, it sounds a little bit, here Israel, the Lord thy God is one God, right? um, there's, again, you can see this connection. um, the ideas that Muhammad, um, conveyed to his followers, because I'm going to, you know, take the assumption, that they came from him, um, whether, you know, whatever other influences were involved, um, excuse me, definitely show influence of, um, Christian and Hebrew teachings, um, as well as other things, and pagan teachings, et cetera, all mixed together, um, and so they're very eclectic, very kind of, um, uh, but then ultimately, becoming their own unique, um, idea of, or ideology.

Um, so there's a sense of future judgment, when all will answer to Allah for their actions, there's an idea of resurrection of the dead, with joys of paradise, for those, again, we'd go, well, we can kind of relate to this in, in Christian theology, eternal punishment for those with light scales, but ultimately, of course, this is a, uh, teaching of works righteousness, so, um, and again, we see both, um, salvation by faith, but also that we will be judged by our works, in the Christian scriptures, but, but it's flipped on its head here, yes, you have to have faith in Allah, yes, you have to worship him, but ultimately, well, how are you saved or not saved?

[49 : 52] Allah goes, yeah, you're in, I think your good deeds are enough, versus, there's no sense of redemption, there's no, when, paying the penalty for your sins, you just got to make sure that you've given enough alms, and done other good things, that will, um, tip the balances in your favor, um, things like prayer, and fasting, and almsgiving, um, as well as various, keeping various laws, and, and, uh, festivals, and, um, food laws, like Old Testament, so, back to Old Testament, um, covenant, of, um, uh, law.

So, so, Muhammad, um, so Muhammad, um, asserted that what he was teaching was not, uh, new faith, but the ancient true faith, that had been, uh, the faith of Abraham and Ishmael, that simply he was reestablishing, that was how he, um, conveyed it, and, and probably believed that, but again, our accounts of his life come from, um, the, the earliest, um, uh, biography of him, is actually a hundred years after, by a great, great grandson, and, um, even that comes secondarily, others who sort of, uh, it was not, there was not just one intact, um, text that was preserved of his thing, and then later on, there's all sorts of other details about his life, in later biographers, and you're like, well, where the heck did they get those, right, how, and so it's, it's very difficult to say what is original, but of course the, the best source is by this one grandson, but, or great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, grandson, um, so, we don't have time here, so, the Quran was dictated, as I say, over a 22 year, um, span of his life, it was one man, one language, one place, one time period, no eyewitnesses to confirm the testimony, it was just him, and the, the voice of Jabril, right, and so, again, if you compare that to the New Testament scriptures, and the, the confidence we can have, um, in their historicity, and in their, um, authenticity, um, so, the 90 surahs, that came from the first 13 years in Mecca, contained no instructions about fighting, and they tend to urge peaceful coexistence, with intolerance of unbelievers, because, because at this time, they were actually being persecuted themselves, um, the merchant traders, who were dealing in, you know, idolatry, and, um, who, you know, were not, you know, too warm to the message of, you guys are, are pagans, and, and idolaters, and you better repent, or Allah is going to, uh, get you, and so, they, uh, didn't respond too kindly to that, um, however, the 24 surahs, that, from the period that followed the move to Medina, when he, after he was driven out, where, um, they sort of basically, um, went into exile, um, they demonstrate an evolution of thought, to, through violence and self-defense, toward obligatory, aggressive jihad against non-Muslims, now the thing is, these things are interspersed, within, uh, what exists in the Quran today, because, um, when it was codified by Uthman, the third Khalid, and, uh, about, um, it's about 40 or 50 years after, his death,

I'm trying to remember what year it is again, and, he, they put it from longest surah, to shortest surah, right, so it's, it's not in any particular order, of how they were received, or anything, and so they, if you rearrange them, into a chronological order, you get quite a different picture, but it becomes clear that, um, the large part of the surahs, that came from earlier on, um, didn't have anything about, you know, fighting the name of Allah, but the later surahs, once he began to grow in power, because suddenly, he just had this explosion, of, um, power, and of, of converts, and, they began to, um, engage in conquest, of the areas around them, and suddenly, the tone changes, um, and, there's been a pattern, of that happening, in, in Islam, in terms of the spread, of Islam, over history, um, okay, so let's talk about the conquest, of Arabia, as he shared his teachings, with family and friends, he gradually began, to accumulate a band, of faithful disciples, um, but as I say, the merchants of Mecca, uh, were not too pleased with him, and his fellow Quresh, tribesmen, became increasingly angry, because of his condemnation, of their idolatry, and, began to persecute them, they placed a trade embargo, on them, and ridiculed him in public, some of the slaves, who followed him, were beaten, and even tortured, by their pagan masters, um, he continued to gain followers, but, as they became more, and more unwelcome, some of the converts, fled to nearby cities, and, um, he at various times, sort of left, and came back to Mecca, but ultimately, um, had to leave permanently, or not permanently, but, um, for a longer period, in 622, um, because the Quresh, tribe, and commercial traders, had had enough of him, and, actually, hatched a plot, to secretly murder him, um, because they were afraid, to openly assassinate him, because, he did have a significant number, of followers, by that point, so they, relocated to,

Yathrib, 200 miles north, or, now named, Medina, the city of the prophet, um, at the time, it was a mix of, Jewish tribes, and various Arab clans, who made them welcome, in exile, some even treating him, as a hero, and this, hejira, the great exile, and pilgrimage, of Muhammad, and his followers, became one of the, Islamic history's, most important events, during this time, he began to dictate plans, based on the surahs of the Quran, um, or, or, or, or, expressed in the surahs of the Quran, and partly on the restructuring, his followers, the ummah, into a sort of fighting band, um, he began a systematic cleansing, and conquest of the Hejaz, the, the Arabian Peninsula, including slaughter of the Jews, as I've mentioned, the teaching about, outward jihad, or fighting in the way of Allah, began to develop, in those 24 surahs, uh, delivered at Medina, um, I only, have a couple more minutes, with Medina as his base, over the next decade, he consolidated his political power, and his position as the prophet, um, in addition to fighting bands of citizens, who opposed him, he sent his followers out, to raid, and raid, and pillage, the merchant caravans, of the pagan Arabs, who passed through, or near the city, now this is, this is enshrined in Islamic history, it's not like they're, they're, um, embarrassed of this, because, the reality is, that wasn't uncommon at the time, for someone to do this, like, a, a leader, to, uh, pillage other groups, other clans, in order to, um, promote their own, and, and provide for their own, um, in response, the pagans began guarding their caravans, with armed soldiers, and eventually, full-scale conflicts ensued,

Muhammad's major battles, figure prominently, in the chronic revelations, received during these early years, um, entire, yeah, okay, so, three, blah, blah, blah, blah, um, uh, so, as Muhammad's power and influence, um, grew, relations with the three Jewish tribes in Medina, who were not interested in converting, began to deteriorate, and he solved it by expelling two of the tribes, and, um, oh, sorry, that's fine, massacred the remaining tribe, these actions were supported by the teachings that came in the surahs, strangely enough, um, at this point, his sect was swiftly growing in power numbers, and he was using that power to conquer an ever wider domain, and I'm just going to finish with, um, oh, here, so here is, um, see the little green part there, so that's, that's kind of what was accomplished initially, and it doesn't seem like a whole lot, but, um, we'll see that grow, and I think next week I'll probably just have to continue with history, because there's a lot left, um, so, let's just consider that, by contrast,

[58 : 31] Jesus laid his life down willingly for his friends and followers, friends and even his enemies, uh, the New Testament makes it clear that coveters, thieves, and murderers will not inherit the kingdom of God, and to purport to do things such as these in God's name, or for the sake of expending his kingdom, of course, is, is damnable, we're called to follow in Jesus' footsteps, to take up our crosses, to patiently endure suffering and persecution at the hands of unbelievers, and to lay down our lives for the sake of the gospel, to return good for evil, and bless those who persecute us, so just to remind us of, of, um, how great the contrast is between what Jesus has called us to, and what we have to share with, um, those who do not know, yet know that, so, I'm going to just leave it there, and, um, we'll continue next week, sorry, it's the best I could do to condense it down, to pray.

Thank you.