



Session 9

Islam

Notes:

Questions

1. What insights do the definitions for Islam and Muslim give you into the Islamic faith?
2. Compare and contrast the five pillars of Islamic practices with Christian disciplines. In what ways are the motivations for the discipline different?
3. How would your faith be affected if you accepted the Muslim belief that God was unknowable in a personal way?
4. In what practical, respectful ways could you demonstrate your personal relationship with God to a Muslim friend?

Key differences between Islam and Christianity

	ISLAM	CHRISTIANITY
Garden of Eden	Not on earth (Sura 2:30-39; 7:19-25; 20:116-123). There was no direct relationship with man except via the Spirit (<i>Ruh</i>) or Gabriel.	On earth: Gen. 3:8-9 - God walks and talks with man. God limits Himself - Response expected- in a <u>relationship with man</u> .
God	Distant and transcendent, yet merciful to those who do His will; a master to be obeyed. He is the LORD – Ar-Rab.	He is the Lord, Personal, Yahweh, Abba, relational, and sacrificial. He is Just/Righteous (Ps. 77:13; 99:9; Heb. 1:13). He loves His enemies also and wants them to return to Him in fellowship through Jesus.
Trinity	<i>Wahid</i> , God is only one-dimensional <i>Tawhid</i> : the unity of God 'Do not say three' (Sura 4:171)	God is one in three persons – Father, Son, Holy Spirit – <i>Trinity</i> (Gen. 1:1, 26; 3:22; 11:7. Deut. 6:4; Matthew 28:18-20; John 8:58 ...). Best explained by: 'God is love.'
Humanity	Relation to God = <i>Taqwa</i> (fear of God). Muslim = one who obeys, born as a Muslim, no choice, slave. God is not our Father but Master, and we are his slaves – no more or no less.	Made in God's image (Gen. 2:27). Not born as a Christian, Freedom to choose. God is our Father and Lord.
Sin	Adam's disobedience was forgiven, but banished to earth. No relationship existed with God, so none was lost. Sin = just breaking God's law - no corruption, just weakness to Satan's seduction.	Adam was sinless (perfect) = in relationship with God. Adam sinned - (Imperfect) knew right from wrong, broke trust, hid, was thrown out of Eden, lost a relationship with God - no sin in God's presence.
Atonement	Consequence of Sin = punishment alone. Shedding of blood does not bring forgiveness (Sura 6:164; 53:38). The Innocent cannot take the place of the guilty. That is unjust. God must not die. It shows the inadequacy of God. Why <i>Eid</i> sacrifices? (Sura 37:112)	The consequence of sin is death (Eze. 18:20; Rom. 6:23). Thus, atonement is needed (Lev. 4:21, 26, 35). NT. Sin separates, and atonement redeems. Atonement needs blood (Hebrews 9:22). Demanded by Abraham (Gen. 22), fulfilled in Christ on the Cross (Heb 9:12, 14, 26, 27; 10:10).

Incarnation	Chasm, gap between God/man, no pollution. To believe that Jesus Christ is God is <i>Shirk</i> , blasphemy (Sura 4:48, 5:75-76; 41:6; 27:8-9?)	Best communication = Emmanuel - God with us; <i>Theophany</i> – The manifestation of the divine in human form (Philippians 2:7-8). Jesus came to eradicate sin and repair the relationship.
Revelation	Qur'an = <i>Nazil</i> = sent down via Gabriel to Muhammad. Inimitable (Sura 2:23, 10:37-38, 17:88). Although the Qur'an upholds the integrity of the Torah, the Psalms, the books of the Prophets, and the Gospel of Jesus, Muslims often state that the Bible is corrupted and also that it has many versions.	1. Progressive and authoritative. 2. General revelation = nature 3. Special revelation = prophets. 4. Personal revelation = Jesus Christ. 5. On-going revelation = Holy Spirit (Hebrews 1:1-2; John 14:16-26; 16:7:15; Acts 2:36-37, etc.).
Predestination	<i>Insh'allah</i> (Sura 9:51; 16:93-95). God leads astray and guides whom he chooses. No choice, destiny (<i>Qismet</i>)	God's foreknowledge (God seeks, we respond) Salvation = personal choice
Theocracy	<i>Khilafa</i> system, controlled by <i>Caliph</i> , <i>Ulama</i> who use Islamic law - <i>Shari'a</i> . <i>Jihad</i> (both spiritual and military struggle) is used to establish <i>Dar al-Islam</i> . Both State and the people's role is to do <i>Da'wa</i> (Islamic evangelism). Apostasy is treated as treason. Punishment is death	Sojourners, Kingdom of God in our hearts controlled by Holy Spirit. Rights for Caesar and God. Jesus will establish the perfect kingdom. Christians to reach humanity (Matt 28:19-20). Christians are to share the good news of assurance of salvation with others Apostates can be 'excommunicated' from fellowship. Punishment is left to God
Spirit World	Dualistic: Folk Islam, <i>Jinns</i>	Exists, controlled by Holy Spirit
Prayer	Verbatim and memorized, one way communication – recitation 5 Obligatory prayers only in Arabic	Communication with God, two-way, praise, request, responses. Reading (reciting) and praises – worship in any language
Paradise	Garden = carnal delights, river of wine, <i>houris</i> , for man's pleasure (Sura 55:56; 56:35-36). God absent.	Eden revisited, God centered, relationship with God realized eternally. God dwells among His people. God is glorified.
Assurance	No Assurance. Muhammad: 'I do not know ...' (Sura 46:9). The Qur'an gives assurance in this life to those who are killed as martyrs in <i>Jihad</i> - not 100 % sure.	Assurance: Yes. Jesus: 'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life' (John 3:36; 6:50-51; John 3:16; John 14:1-7; Acts 17:31; 1 Thessalonian 1:5; Revelation 1:17-18)

Reaching Muslim friends

Here are a few concise, Biblically rooted points you could share with your Muslim friend. These can open the door for deeper discussion while keeping the focus clear:

1. God's Love and Salvation

- **John 1:17** – God gave a law to abide by for people to recognize their failures. He gave His grace through Jesus, so that those who believe will have eternal life.
- Emphasize that salvation is a free gift, not earned by works, but received through faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9).

2. Jesus' Unique Role

- Jesus is more than a prophet—He is the Word of God made flesh (John 1:14).
- He lived a sinless life, performed miracles, and is the only one who could take away sins (2 Corinthians 5:21).

3. The Cross and Forgiveness

- The Qur'an and the Bible both affirm that God is holy and just. The Bible shows God's justice and mercy meet at the cross.
- **Romans 5:8** – “But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

4. Assurance of Eternal Life

- Unlike uncertainty about one's standing before God, the Bible offers assurance:
 - **1 John 5:11-13** – “Whoever has the Son has life.”

5. Invitation to Read the Scriptures

- Gently encourage them to read the Injil (Gospels) for themselves.
- **John 20:31** – These things “are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

You don't need to cover all at once—share prayerfully, humbly, and in love. Listening to their questions is just as important as presenting these points. Sometimes the clearest witness is not new information, but the steady reminder of:

- **Who Jesus is**
- **What He has done**
- **Why He is the only hope**