

MOPC Sunday School - 2010-2011 - The Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q45: Which is the First Commandment?

A45: The First Commandment is. Thou shall have no other gods before Me.

Q46: What is required in the First Commandment?

A46: The First Commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify Him accordingly.

Q47: What is forbidden in the First Commandment?

A47: The First Commandment forbids the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God, and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to Him alone.

Q48: What are we specially taught by these words, before me in the First Commandment?

A48: These words before me in the First Commandment, teach us, that God who sees all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

Islam in the 21st Century

I. The Start of Islam

Muhammad (c. A.D. 570-632)-the founder of Islam.

A.D. 610 - Muhammad claims to have received first revelation from Gabriel in Mecca.

A.D. 622 - As he was ridiculed and disregarded in Mecca, Muhammad left and went to al-Madina with his followers (about 200 in all). In al-Medina he became the statesman, legislator, and judge and an Islamic theocracy was born. His view towards Jews and Christians during this time was originally very positive, but as they did not listen Muhammad's posture changed. Discrepancies between the OT accounts and Muhammad's accounts were ridiculed by the Jews.

A.D. 630 - Muhammad returns to Mecca, triumphs over the city, and establishes Islam there.

A.D. 632 - Muhammad dies.

II. The System of Islam

Beliefs

Authority

1. The Qur'an (the "recitation") - a collection of supposed revelations that Muhammad claimed to have received from the angel Gabriel from A.D. 610-632. The Qur'an was codified approximately twenty years after the death of Muhammad and contains 114 chapters (surahs). It is arranged according to the size of the surah from longest to shortest (not according to chronology). Its entire length is about the size of the New Testament. It contains both striking similarities and striking differences with the Bible.
2. The law of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ - Islam recognizes that Allah raised up many prophets in history, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus, the virgin born sinless son of Mary. However, Islam believes (1) that the Qur'an, as Allah's full and final revelation, supersedes the Old and New Testaments, and (2) that the Old and New Testaments have been corrupted by the Jews and the Christians. Hence there is a tacit rejection of the Bible.
3. The Hadith (the collected traditions) - authoritative traditions about Muhammad.

God

1. Islam teaches absolute monotheism/unitarianism (tawhid).
2. Islam rejects the biblical teaching of the Trinity and the deity of Jesus Christ. It would seem that the Qur'an's understanding of the Trinity is the Father, Mary, and Jesus. Jesus (Isa) was a sinless human prophet who was not crucified on the cross.
3. Islam = the Arabic term for "submission." Muslim = the Arabic for "one who submits." This is very important for understanding Allah/Islam. Allah is to be submitted to, not known, or loved. Hence, the idea of approaching Allah in any sort of intimate way is out of the question. Thus Allah can only be known through a progression of angels and prophets.
4. Allah is all-sovereign - everything depends on his absolute will.

Angels

1. He who denies the existence of angels is an infidel.
2. Two angels attend every person in this world to record both their good deeds and bad.

Jinn

1. These are creatures between angels and men.
2. There are both good and bad jinn.
3. The devil is a fallen angel or bad jinn.

Mankind

1. Is not fallen or depraved in nature. Men have an innate capacity to believe and submit to Islamic revelation, though they have an inclination to do evil.
2. Islam classifies mankind into four categories:
 - a. Those in a state of ignorance (jahiliyyah) who have never heard.
 - b. The people of the Book (ahl al-kitab) - those who are monotheistic but have not embraced the Qur'an.
 - c. The Muslim
 - d. The unbeliever or infidel (kafir) - those who have heard the message of Islam and rejected it.

The Last Day/Day of Judgment

1. A final day of judgment is coming, followed by heaven for the faithful and hell for the lost.
2. Salvation is seen in terms of this day - where Allah will weigh each one's deeds in the balances.

Law

1. Law = Shari'ah. "It embraces every detail of human life, from the prohibition of crime to the use of the toothpick, and from the organization of the State to the most sacred intimacies...of family life" (p. 114, N. Anderson). "Islam has historically envisioned the unity of civil and religious life under the all encompassing guidance of Shari'ah" (2630, ESV Study Bible).
2. WWMD - What would Muhammad do? i.e. watermelons.

Practices

"The Five Pillars"

1. The confession of faith, the shahadah - "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah."
2. The prayers, the salat - ritual prayers said five times per day towards Mecca.
3. The fasting, the sawm - fasting from food, drink, and sex during daylight hours for the month of Ramadan.
4. The almsgiving, the zakat - one fortieth of one's income to the needy.
5. The pilgrimage, the Hnjj - every adult Muslim who is able must make pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in lifetime. This pilgrimage is to the Ka 'ba, a black meteorite stone in Mecca. It should be noted that this yearly pilgrimage to the Ka 'ba predates Islam by many years and was an established part of the paganism of the Arabian Peninsula with significant economic overtones for the region.

The Jihad

1. *Jihad* = struggle.

2. Many Muslims in the West attempt to downplay this as the non-violent internal personal struggle to live in purity.
3. But it cannot be denied that it is incumbent upon all Muslims who are adult, male, and free to answer any legally valid summons to war against the infidels (kafir). He who dies a martyr in Jihad is assured of paradise.
4. "The matter is complicated, however, by the question as to when such a summons can be regarded as legally valid" (120, N. Anderson).

Family Law

1. "A Muslim may have as many as, but not more than, four wives at any one time; and he may also cohabit with as many slave concubines as he may possess" (p. 121, N. Anderson).
2. "Temporary marriage" among the Shi'a
3. Divorce by the husband for any reason and at any time. The wife does not have the right to divorce.

Other Miscellany

1. Prohibition of pork, blood, alcohol, gambling, usury
2. The practice of circumcision (both male and female)
3. Criminal sanctions - eye for an eye with certain inequalities (i.e. the thief)
4. The use of "counter magic" to ward off evil (i.e. spells, amulets, etc.)

III. The Size of Islam Today (source: Wikipedia)

Christianity = 2.1 billion

Agnostic/irreligious = 1.1 billion

Buddhism = 376 million

Islam = 1.5 billion

Hinduism = 900 million

Judaism = 14 million

IV. The S_____ of Islam Today

A. Sunni Islam (four different schools): Makes up about 80-85 of Islam. "The main body of Islam who, in contrast to the Shi'ites, believe that the true line of succession from Muhammad is found in the four Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman, and Ali" (p. 315).

B. Shi'a Islam: Makes up about 10-15 of Islam. "The major Islamic sect that believes, in contrast to Sunnis, that Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, was the true successor to Muhammad in the leadership of the Islamic community" (p. 315). This caliph (successor) held the office of the Imam ("a kind of Muslim pope" who was infallible). In about A.D. 872 the Imam disappeared. He is believed to still be alive and will someday reappear as the Mahdi, the guided one, who will lead the world into righteousness.

C. Islamic "Extremism": Comprises about 15 of Islam - including both Sunni and Shi'a which tallies to about 225,000,000 strong. "It must be acknowledged that the minority of Muslims who are engaged in acts of terrorism do have religious justification for their actions based on the teachings of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, and based on the examples from the prophet of Islam, Muhammad" (p. 84). Is this just the same as atrocities done in the name of Christianity in times past (i.e. the Crusades, the Inquisition, KKK, etc.)? No. See p.89-90...

See the map available at:

<http://pewforum.org/Mapping-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx>