The Gospel According to Islam
Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:4
Code: A289

Ever since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the already ecumenical climate in America has reached new heights. In an effort to distinguish between the extremist Muslim terrorists and the mainstream Muslim population, the media has called for an even higher level of tolerance and acceptance of the religion of Islam than usual.

In a 2002 issue of *Newsweek*, for instance, religion editor Kenneth Woodward asserts that "mere tolerance of other religions is not enough" and that "even the acceptance of other religions as valid paths to God is insufficient" ("How Should We Think About Islam?" *Newsweek*, December 31, 2001 / January 7, 2002, p. 104). According to Woodward, "the most important theological agenda of the new millennium" is for committed Christians, Jews, and Muslims to "find within their own traditions sound theological reasons for valuing other faiths without compromising their own" (ibid., pp. 104-05).

Sadly, the influence of this sentiment can be seen even in the church. In fact, in a relatively recent *Christianity Today* article, Wheaton College professor James Lewis recommends that Christians "seek Muslim prayer partners and together beseech the true, one and only God to have mercy on us" ("Does God Hear Muslims' Prayers?" *Christianity Today*, February 4, 2002, p. 31).

When evangelicals capitulate and attempt to soften the offense of the gospel in this way, they blur the lines between the god of Islam and the God of the Bible. But now is not the time for blurring lines. Now is the time to draw lines—lines between truth and error, and between the one path to heaven and the many paths to hell.

Islam rejects the Trinity and the God of the Bible, insisting instead that Allah alone is the one true deity. It denies that Jesus is God, that He died on the cross, and that He was raised from the dead. Instead, say Muslims, Jesus was but one of thousands of prophets sent by Allah, the greatest of them being Mohammed. In other words, Jesus was merely a man.

Islam rejects the salvation of forgiveness through Christ, teaching that only Muslims can be saved. According to the Koran, if a person follows Islam and does enough good deeds to outweigh the bad, Allah may allow him to enter paradise, but even then he can't be certain. The only sure pathway to heaven is killing and being killed in jihad, a holy war.

Islam gives lip service to the Bible as a holy book, but it undermines and denies every fundamental doctrine about sin and salvation taught in the Bible. In fact, Islam today is the most powerful system on earth for the destruction of biblical truth and Christianity—thousands of Christians are dying under Islamic persecution, especially in the Middle East, Africa, Indonesia, and other parts of Asia.

Clearly, Islam and Christianity are mutually exclusive. Both claim to be the only true way to God, but both cannot be right. There is no atonement in Islam, no forgiveness, no savior, and no assurance of

eternal life. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of hope; Islam is a religion of hopelessness.

Making these kinds of distinctions may not be politically correct, but it is critical if the purity of the gospel is to be protected. Put simply, there is no salvation outside of Christ. When this truth is compromised, the gospel is abandoned—and so is the only hope that we can offer to those who are not our enemies, but rather our mission field.

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