

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A Biblical Perspective on Death, Terrorism, and the Middle East, Pt 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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On Tuesday we all saw the most deadly attack on America ever and the images are imbedded deeply in our minds at this time and probably will remain for a long time. Death and devastation of such monumental proportions that it makes the attack on Pearl Harbor the only comparison that we can think of. At Pearl Harbor there were just under 4,000 people killed, almost all of them military people. Tuesday we now know there were more than 4,000 people killed and all of them essentially civilians.

Pearl Harbor has long been the icon for assaults on this nation. No more, at least no more will it be that singular icon because in the future the terrorist attack on New York City and Washington D.C. on September 11 in the year 2001 is the new bench mark. And before we're through counting the dead, it may well double the dead or more at Pearl Harbor. And this not by a nation, not by an alliance of nations but a clandestine group of itinerant terrorists from the Middle East.

Now we all know what happened. In our immediate dominated age we don't lack for visual images or verbal explanations. Four hijacked American domestic airliners headed from the east coast to the west coast were hijacked and flown on a collision course to a specific target meant to kill people, cripple the nation, devastate the economy, damage the military. The idea was to send America a message that there was a greater force than America, a greater power than the super power America. An extremist, Islamic, suicidal group of murderers were asserting themselves as more powerful than this great nation.

Two of the planes flying with full fuel hit their targets with catastrophically destructive accuracy, flying full force into the World Trade Center towers in New York City and causing them to plummet to the ground. One airliner hit the Pentagon and several hundred people were killed. Another never reached its target, whatever that might have been. And we all know the details of what happened.

But our minds cry out to know why it happened. In fact, it seems to me in America we are obsessed with why things happen. Whenever there is an airplane crash, whenever there is a crime of newspaper proportions, we want to know why these things happen. We have all of these agencies and all of the analysts and psychologists and criminologists, people who study all of the details trying to find a motive for why these things happen. Why do people do these kinds of things?

I'm going to try to give you answers to that and I have so much swimming around in my mind, I'm going to try to bring some order and command to my thoughts. I will only be able to do that if I stick

pretty closely to what I've written.

We know why on a superficial level. We now know that there is a very highly developed, sophisticated group of terrorists in the Middle East who are the superficial, the immediate why. Intelligence sources indicate to us that it's not just one person, Osama bin Laden, who has come to be known to all of us by name is perhaps the pointman in the actual structure of the events that led to this disaster, but he seems to be backed up by people like Saddam Hussein(?) and who knows how many others in the Middle East are a part of this massive network.

This then immediately catapults us into the land of the Bible. These terrorists weren't Norwegian and they weren't Argentine and they weren't Mexican and they weren't German and they weren't Chinese, they were Middle Easterners from the land of the Bible. There was a writer's news release that I want to start with from London. It said, "Saudi dissident, Osama bin Laden, warned three weeks ago that he and his followers would carry out an unprecedented attack on the United States interest for its support of Israel." Abd Al-Bari Atwan editor of the London based Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper said, Islamic fundamentalists led by bin Laden was almost certainly behind the attack of the World Trade Center in New York. Quote: "It is most likely the work of Islamic fundamentalists. Osama bin Laden warned three weeks ago that he would attack American interests in an unprecedented attack, a very big one," Atwan told writers. "Personally...the article said...we received information that he planned very, very big attacks against American interests, we received several warnings like this. We did not take it so seriously preferring to see what would happen before reporting it."

Who is this man, Osama bin Laden? What is this force? What is this network of terrorists and what is it that motivates them to perpetrate such unthinkable atrocities. We all remember they tried this one other time. Not from the top of the tower but from the bottom, the previous effort to bomb the World Trade Center. We've been made very much aware in recent years of the rash of terrorist attacks against American bases, American barracks, American forces in the Middle East and other places. We've also become very much aware of suicide bombers blowing up pizza parlors, blowing themselves up frequently in Israel. We've been asking questions about what makes people do this and why does it happen, and now the question is more compelling than ever because it involves us. And not only does it involve us because of what happened Tuesday, it involves us because the possibility is that what happened Tuesday there could happen on any other day anywhere else. As our Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, said, "We cannot stop all of the tactics of all of the terrorists all of the time."

Well first of all let me dive into one category that we have to begin with and that is there is a natural reason for this...a natural reason. Sociologists in modern days in psychology have been trying to convince us that man is basically good but he is not. Man is basically evil, he is basically wicked. The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked...the Bible says...and who can know it? That is who can figure it out, it is so desperately wicked?

Romans chapter 3 verses 10 and following describe man as a poisonous snake, describe man as a murderer whose feet are swift to shed blood. One only needs to look at human history, it is an veritable bloodbath and it is nonetheless a bloodbath today. All over the face of the earth on every continent there is the shedding of blood. Not only in individual acts of criminality but in corporate acts of criminality, national acts of criminality. Man is by nature a killer. We see it in the wars of the world. We see it in the terrorists actions of the world. We see it in the tribal battles. We see it everywhere. We see it on the streets of the cities of the world. Man is a killer.

The first crime recorded in the Bible is recorded in the book of Genesis chapter 4, Cain murdered his brother and he launched human life with that ignoble beginning.

Why does this happen? Let's turn to James chapter 4. James is an epistle in the New Testament. The Bible inspired by God comes to us in a series of books, 66 of them. Human authors writing under the inspiration of God recorded for us a true understanding of those things God wanted us to know. We come into the fourth chapter of the book of James and the question is posed to us, it's the very same question that we are asking, that our culture is asking, that our world is asking. The chapter begins like this, "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?" Why do these things happen? Why is there murder? Why is there war? Why are there quarrels and conflicts at every level?

The answer comes, "Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?" Members simply refers to your person, your body, your nature. It is the pleasures inside of you that generate war. What is the source of quarrels? That's the Greek word *polemos*, it means a prolonged state of conflict. What is the source of conflict? That's *mache*, separate individual fights. What causes wars? What causes those separate fights and conflicts?

It comes down to this. It is your pleasures. The word *hedone* in the Greek from which we get Hedonism, what is Hedonism? It is the yearning of self-love, it is the yearning to fulfill what you want. A heedness to someone who lives for the fulfillment of his own self-love, he lives to satisfy himself, to get what he wants, to take what fulfills him. That's why wars happen because people want things and somebody stands in the way.

Verse 2 further develops it. "You lust and you don't have." That's the problem. You want it, you have this Hedonistic compulsion, this drive and it's thwarted. You want it. It's a war inside of you, that's how much you want it. And something is in the way and that something is a someone because you want it so badly and you can't have it, you commit murder. That's the reason, that's the natural reason...personal gratification out of control, unsatisfied so you commit murder. That's why people kill. They're not basically good, they're basically evil and if we didn't have laws and law enforcement, the whole of humanity would be killing itself wholesale all the time. People are driven by their own selfish desire, they're driven by their own need to fulfill their self-love. They're driven by a consuming Hedonism. They're driven by the desire for pleasure and satisfaction and fulfillment. And anyone in

the way may have to be sacrificed to that desire.

You ask yourself, why does a mother drown her five children? Because they're in the way of her fulfillment. They're in the way of her satisfaction. Why did those people in Jedwabne in Poland in one day massacre 1600 Jews in their village that they had lived with for a period of 300 years they had been living together, they worked together, they went to school together. In a two-week period they determined to move from being neighbors to being murderers, they killed all 1600 in one day. Why? Was it race? Was it the hatred of the Jewish race? No, they never were so propagandized, all that happened was the Germans came into the town and said you can kill them if you want and take their land and take their possession and take their farms...and they did it. Just give them permission. That's the human heart.

Why does a Russian young man in Sacramento kill his family? Because they stood in the way of his fulfillment. They stood in the way of his satisfaction. That's why people kill. Why does Hitler massacre the Jews? Because he saw them standing in the way of his Aryan supremacy. Why does Joseph Stalin massacre millions more? Because they stood in the way of his world empire. It may be as vast as that, it may be as simple as a mother who kills her children because she can't find satisfaction, they're in the way of it.

You can't have what you want...he goes on to say...and so verse 2 says, "You fight and you quarrel because you do not have something you want." And then he adds that amazing statement, "And you don't have what you want because you don't ask." Or you ask and you don't receive it because you ask with wrong motives that you can spend it on your own Hedonistic self-love.

That's why people kill because they want something and somebody stands in the way. Whether you kill on a small scale or you kill on a large scale, the wicked hearts of passionate people who will not be denied their pleasure kill to get it. That is the natural pathology of the human heart. Driven to extreme acts of murder by passions that are so consuming as to be on the border of madness.

So there's a natural motivation here. There's secondly a historical motivation. This introduces us to another category. In order to get to the heart of this we have to go back to the Middle East again, back to the Bible, back to the very origins of the nations and that puts us right back in the book of Genesis. So let's go there.

Genesis is the book of origins. Genesis means beginnings. It's the book of origins. And in Genesis 10 and 11 we have what we call the table of nations. If you look down through just as a glance at Genesis 10 you see all kinds of names, they're names of people and families and nations, tribes. You look in to chapter 11 starting in verse 10 and you find more genealogies of individuals who fathered families and people groups. This is early society as it developed from Noah. You remember God drowned the entire world, as recorded in chapters 6 through 9 of Genesis, and only saved eight

people...Noah, his wife, his three sons and their three wives. Eight people came off the ark, repopulated the world. So you have in chapter 10 the generations that flowed from Noah through his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Japheth, the oldest son, fathered what are now known as the Indo-European people. From Japheth came those who live in Europe and all the way across to India and even across Russia and across the Bering Sea and in to North America and South America, the native peoples. And then Ham, we learn, fathered families in Africa and the Far East, the Asian world as well as some regions of the Middle East. And then that most well-known of the sons of Noah, Shem from whom came the Semitic people of the Mesopotamian valley, the Middle East as we know it, the Jewish people and the Arabic people. Shem's people lived north, south, east of the land of Israel. I don't want to over-simplify because Israel also came from Shem and so did these other Arabic peoples. I don't want to over-simplify it because there are complexities and complications in understanding the history of the Middle East but I'm going to try to give you an understanding that is clear enough for you to get a grasp of what is going on.

Let's back up a little bit. When God created, He put Adam and Eve in a garden called the Garden of Eden. That garden was located in the Tigris/Euphrates valley which is the Mesopotamian valley, the heart of the Middle East. That is the original paradise of God, the very place where God walked and talked with Adam in the cool of the day, the very place where God put the Tree of Life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Today that is the center of the Arabic/Muslim world...the very place of Eden. It was there that the Tower of Babel was built, which invented world religions. It was there that later on the city of Babylon was built which is today in modern Iraq. It was there that Noah lived. It was there that Noah preached. It's very historic land. But when Abraham came along, God gave it all to him and his family. God gave to Abraham all the land from the Mediterranean coast through the depths of the Babylonian valley, gave it all to them, the entire Mesopotamian region.

Abraham was a son of a man named Terah. Terah was a moon god worshiper and the worship of the moon god was THE most popular form of idolatry apparently in the day of Abraham. There were two great centers of the worship of the moon god, one was a place called Ur down in the Persian Gulf in what is now Kuwait. And the other was Heron, way up in the north in the area of Iraq. And Abraham was born into a family of worshipers of the moon god in a place called Ur.

So this is a historical area, the land of the Middle East, the land of the Mesopotamian valley, the land of the 21 Arab states is the land of the beginnings of human history. It will also be important in the end. The prophets of the Bible tell us that the world is going to come to an end in a great conflagration and a great battle in that same place. Powers from the north are going to come. Powers from the south are going to come. A vast army of 200 million coming from the east and the power from the west all converging under the rule of Antichrist on the land of Israel, the focal point the Valley of Megiddo, but blood spilled clear across the entire land of Israel until Jesus comes and establishes

His own Kingdom and destroys all the wicked and takes the righteous into His Kingdom. That is a very important piece of earth, none is more strategic.

Abraham fathered the Jewish people. In chapter 12 of Genesis God said to Abram, then called Abram, later called Abraham, "Go forth from your country, from your relatives, from your father's house to the land that I'll show you. I'll make you a great nation. I'll bless you, make your name great. So shall you be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you, I'll curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." God said...you're My man, out of you is going to come My nation and that nation is going to bring about blessing on those who bless them and cursing on those who curse them. God gave to Abraham the promise that He would give him the land. Turn to chapter 15 verse 18, "On the day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, He said, 'To your descendants I have given this land from the river of Egypt...that's from the Nile in the south...as far as the great river, the Euphrates...that's east...through that fertile crescent, through that Mesopotamian valley, all the land of the Kenite, the Kenizzite, the Kadmonite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Rephaim, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Girgashite, the Jebusite, everything from the Mediterranean coast deep into the Middle East. It's your land, I give it to you.'"

By divine right from the mouth of God Himself, the region belongs to Abraham and his seed. Unfortunately...unfortunately, Abraham brought massive confusion into that promise by having a legitimate son, Isaac, and an illegitimate son, Ishmael. We'll say more about that in a few moments.

At the time of Abraham, all those people that I just read to you were already existing in that land. They already occupied that land. So even though God gave it to Abraham, it was in the possession of those people. And in chapter 10, as I mentioned to you, of the book of Genesis you have all kinds of other people who were the sons of Shem, starting in chapter 10 verse 21, you have a whole listing of people and family groups and tribes and nations that existed as descendants of Shem that would have been around as well. So there were tribes and families and groups of people all over that part of the world. That was the most densely populated part of the world. In fact, at first it was the only populated part of the world because when the Flood was over there were only eight people and they started populating right there.

It wasn't long before Mizraim, it's an old name for Egypt, came into existence, before Aram, an old name for Syria, came into existence, before Asher, an old name for Assyria, came into existence. So there were all these tribes and families and clans and groups of people. They were all idolatrous. They were all rejecters of the true and living God, the Creator God. And when God gave the promise to Abraham that all of this land was his, there was a collision course established. In order for that land to belong to Abraham, God was going to have to give it to him and Abraham was going to have to be true to God. And if Abraham was true to God and obedient, God would give him the land. But if the descendants of Abraham were disobedient to God, they were going to have an endless battle trying to claim what was really theirs.

Was it just to judge those nations that had the land? Yes, because God is just in judging idol worship. The commandments begin, "You shall have no other...what?...gods before Me." Idolatry is to be judged by God always in every era. It is a just judgment for God to take away that precious land from those who turned their backs on Him and give it to a people who would love Him and serve Him. It just so happens too that the Middle East region is the richest land on the face of the earth. If you take it all together from the coastal riches of the Sharon Valley in Israel through to their immense riches that go right down the very spine of Israel, on in to the riches of the Dead Sea, on in to the massive riches of the oil treasures of the Middle East, the great riches to the north in the mountains of Lebanon, valuable timber, fertile plains of the Jordan Valley, unequalled productivity, incredible chemical wealth, as I said, in the Dead Sea, vast black gold of oil that stretches across the sands in the Babylonian valley, God gave it all to them. If they would be obedient to Him they would have that land.

So, the idolatrous people, as I said, if that land were set on a collision course with Israel, and the reason Israel has never really been able to possess the land they were given is because Israel has not been faithful to God...some day they will be. Some day they will look on Him whom they've pierced, they'll mourn for Him as an only Son and they'll embrace Jesus as their Messiah, they will come to salvation and in the day they come to salvation, the Messiah Himself will come and give them the land. But in the meantime they continue to lay claim to that land and they were given that by God and because they lay claim to that land the Egyptians and the Syrians and the Assyrians, everybody else is their vowed enemy to one degree or another.

And then Abraham did such a terrible thing. God said...I'm going to give you a son, trust Me, I'm going to give you a son. He was 100 and Sarah was 90, they were barren. He said, "How can I have a whole nation, how can I be the father of people, how can I be the father of a nation if I don't even have a son? If I'm barren?" And so his wife came to him and she had a really great idea, she said, "Well, I can't bear you a son so here's my servant named Hagar, you go in and have relationships with her and she'll be like a surrogate wife to you and she'll produce a son." In an act of distrust toward God, he did that and she became pregnant and she brought forth a son whose name is Ishmael, an illegitimate son, not the son of God's promise, not the son of the covenant. God said in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, "I will make out of Ishmael's family a great nation but...verse 21...My covenant will I establish with Isaac whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year. Ishmael is not the son of My covenant, Isaac is through Sarah and she will bear a son." And she did and through Isaac came the Jewish people, but through Ishmael came more enemies. Out of Ishmael came the Hagarites, mentioned in 1 Chronicles chapter 5. To make matters worse, there was a rejected son of Isaac by the name of Esau and out of Esau came more people who were not in the covenant, producing more enemies, more enemies.

See, the Middle East is just filled with the descendants of all of these people who are in conflict with Israel's stated right to the Abrahamic promise. God wanted to remove those people, those wicked idolatrous, adulterous people. He wanted to do it when He led Israel out of Egypt. They had been 400 years in the captivity of Egypt. You remember, God raised up Moses to lead them out. He led them out into the wilderness. They were faithless. The whole generation had to die in the wilderness because they committed idolatry. When there finally was a new generation raised up and God took them into the promised land, into the land of Canaan, He said, "It's all going to be yours, I want to give it all to you. Now go in there and destroy those inhabitants, those idolaters." God had already demonstrated in history that He would destroy the ungodly. He drowned the whole world in the flood. And now not water but Israel was to be His weapon to rid the earth of idolatry.

They saw victory over Egypt. The whole Egyptian army drowned and the great plagues that came on Egypt caused a massive amount of death. They conquered the tribes on the upper side of the Jordan, according to Deuteronomy chapter 3, and they stood ready to go into the land of Canaan and conquer. Instead they went into the land of Canaan and were defeated. Remember that? At a place called Ai, they were defeated because there was sin in the camp. And they never did what God told them to do, never became that sword of Jehovah, as it were, and so there they sit in the middle of the conflict, endlessly threatened by the neighbors around them.

There should be a warning, however. God's covenant with Israel has not been broken and it is still true that the nation that blesses Israel is blessed and a nation that curses Israel is cursed. Any nation that threatens the existence of Israel will come under God's judgment. That is repeated in the Scripture. Just read Psalm 121, then read Psalm 125, then read Psalm 129, then read Isaiah 43, etc.

So you're looking for a historic reason here, the conflict goes way back between Arabic people, descendants of all those people that I identified who today speak Arabic, who accept Arab culture. Two hundred and fifty million of them surrounding five million Jews...Jews believe it is a divine right to have the land but they can't take the land, they can't have the land because God won't give them the land until they turn from their sin and embrace their Messiah. But everybody is against Israel in the Middle East, even Satan. If you question that, read Revelation chapter 12 where you see a description of Satan trying to destroy Israel. He works on the side of those who would destroy Israel.

So Scripture says Ishmael's descendants will, Genesis 16:12, dwell in the presence of all his brethren. They're all trying to co-exist in the Middle East, and little Israel, the covenant people, unbelieving, apostate, but still the covenant people, unsaved but still the covenant people, surround it and everybody around them has destruction on their minds.

In Bible times these various groups of people were separated...this family, that family, this tribe, all the "ites" you know that you read in the Bible. That helps keep the peace. It helps keep the peace, it's a checks and balances. That's why I told you when everybody was of one language and one mind in

battle, God scattered them and, remember, separated their languages and sent them out all over the world because when everybody gets together and you have one great force among ungodly people, you have one great force for evil...unmitigated and unrestrained. And just on a human level, God separates the world into nations because it prevents monolithic evil. Twenty-one, I think, 21 Arab countries in the Middle East, however, not really 21 countries anymore because the borders have been obliterated, the boundaries have been obliterated and the national identities have been obliterated by one great power and that is the religion of Islam which engulfs the whole of that world.

The Arab empire became one vast empire because of a man named Muhammad which means in Arabic, "Highly Praised." He was born in the Middle East in 570 A.D., almost 600 years...or 500 years after Christ. He was born to a tribe in Mecca. He claimed to be a descendant of Ishmael. That fits. This Muhammad became the source of the Koran, which is the holy book of Islam. In 622 he made his home in Medina and it became that date sort of an official date as the start of the Muslim era. I'll say a little more about Islam in a few moments. But to suffice it to say, in the first 100 years after Muhammad there was a massive unification of that part of the world as they succumbed to the power of Islam, mostly by the sword. And all war is to bring infidels into submission to Islam were considered to be Jihad, holy wars. Muhammad himself killed and robbed in the name of Allah. Convert or die.

There's still that in Islam. You read about it. Still that penchant for death. Islam conquered by the sword. And Islam actually took over the land of Israel and they held it until...do you know what year?...1948. Now that takes us to a third issue here. We see a natural reason why this happens, we see historic reason this happens, there's such profound animosity toward Israel and why do they hit us? Because we are the supporter of Israel. In fact, you should know this, in the literature I've read I've seen it in a number of places, these radical Muslims call Israel "the small Satan," and America "the great Satan." We are the greater force and therefore the greater threat as we stand behind Israel.

But that brings us to a third reason and that's a religious one. We go beyond the conflict of the people groups to religion itself. And I hear all kinds of numbers, I don't know how you could know anything from half a billion to a billion believers in Islam, I don't know where you would mark it. Some would put it closer to the billion than half a billion. Islam is a word that means "surrender." It means "submission." And the idea is that Islam is surrendered to the will of Allah and the will of Allah is revealed. It's not an unknown thing, the will of Allah is revealed through his prophet Muhammad and the revelation from Allah is written down in the holy book called the Koran. A Muslim is one who submits to the will of Allah.

Now without getting into all of the theology of Islam, let me just give you some things to think about so you'll understand the theological underpinnings. There are six basic articles of faith in Islam. If we were going to put an Islamic doctrinal statement together it would look like this:

1. Allah is the one true God. Allah is the one true God. He is not a trinity. He is not the God of the Old

Testament and he's not the God of Christians. He is Allah, the one true God.

2. The Koran is the most holy book. There are other holy books, holy to some degree, but the Koran is the most holy book.

3. Muhammad is his greatest prophet. Allah sent...according to Islamic literature...124 thousand prophets, Jesus being one, but Muhammad is the greatest prophet.

Number 4. There are many angels, there are many demons and there is a Satan called Iblis or Shaytan.

Number 5. Allah has predetermined all things by unchangeable decree. Allah is absolutely sovereign and everyone's destiny is predetermined by Allah.

And number 6. There will be a day of judgment when all will find out whether they go to heaven or to hell. And the criteria for that is the absolute decision of Allah which may or may not be influenced at all by human beings, but you ought to do good works because they might help. No guarantee...absolutely none.

No Muslim, no Muslim knows for sure in this life where he's going, it's all predetermined by Allah. And on the scale of life, good things weigh heavy and bad things weigh light and it doesn't hurt to weigh heavy on Allah's decision. But there are no guarantees. Those are the six basic articles of faith.

Then there are five duties, they are called the pillars of Islam. These are required religious practices.

Number 1. Reciting the creed many times a day. And the creed is this, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet." You recite that many times a day.

The second duty. Prayer five times a day and these are prescribed prayers, written prayers, memorized prayers. And the five times a day are identified. If you live in the range of mosque, if you've been to the Middle East, as I have many times, you see Mosques and there is rising from the Mosque what is called a minaret. You've seen that? And on the top of the minaret is a muezzin who calls at the exact times during the day for the five prayers.

Third duty is to give to the poor and all Muslims are taxed 2.5 percent of their income and their property, one-fortieth of what they have for the poor.

Number four is a month of fasting called Ramadan. Have you heard that word? That's a month of fasting. You say, "That's enough to wipe out a whole population, fasting for an entire month. How do they do it?" The fast is you eat at night, you can't eat in daylight. And Ramadan commemorates the first revelation that came to Muhammad in the year 610 A.D. When Muhammad was 40 years old he received his first supposed revelation from god that is commemorated by Ramadan, eating is allowed only at night and in the morning before dawn.

And fifth, every Muslim must once in his life, unless it is utterly impossible by some restraint, make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

That's essentially the practice and the theology. Now let me just talk about that a little bit. You could sum up their theology in this way...God is one, not three. The Koran says Christians who believe in the trinity are infidels. Also, Allah only loves good people, he does not love sinners. Also they teach

that Allah is unknowable, he cannot be known. They teach that Jesus Christ was a man, he was not God the Son, and anyone who says Jesus is God, according to the Koran, is an infidel. Quote, "Any Muslim who believes that Jesus Christ is God has committed the one unforgivable sin called shirk, a sin that will send him to hell forever." You wonder why it's hard for a Muslim to come to Christ? Because he's been programmed his entire life that if you ever acknowledge Jesus as God, you're going to hell forever. That's spelled out.

Further, their theology teaches Jesus didn't die on the cross because Jesus was a prophet of Allah and Allah would never let that happen to one of his prophets. He didn't die on the cross, therefore he didn't rise from the dead...nor is he ever coming back. They further teach that no one can have salvation but a Muslim. Even though a Muslim can't know he has it, he can have it in the end, god's going to send some to heaven but no one who is not a Muslim is going to heaven.

And this is so heartbreaking. Islam has no savior...no savior. They die not knowing where they're going. There is in the Muslim theology no atonement for sin, no sacrifice for sin, no propitiatory basis for forgiveness.

I'll never forget a conversation with a man on an airplane who was a Muslim and I said, "Do you sin?" And he said, "Of course, all the time."

And I said, "What's going to happen to people who sin?"

"They could go to hell."

I said, "Why do you keep doing it?"

He said, "I can't stop."

And I said, "Do you have any hope?"

And this is what he said, "I hope THE god," that's what Allah means, THE god, definite article, Allah, Elah, Allah, The god, "I hope THE god will forgive me."

And I said, "Why would he do that?"

He said, "I don't know."

No atonement, no basis of forgiveness, no savior. We have a great message for them, there is a Savior.

Where did all this come from? Where did all this stuff come from? Right out of hell, doctrines of demons, right? Muhammad grew up in Mecca. He was a member of a tribe called Quarish(?). And in Mecca they worshiped 360 idols and also a prominent black stone supposedly given by Gabriel to Abraham. It was said in the Koran that at the age of three Muhammad had an amazing event take place. Gabriel did some surgery, the archangel Gabriel, split open his chest, reached in and squeezed all the sin out of his heart so that Muhammad was sinless. Now here was Muhammad growing up in Mecca with 360 gods but Satan was working on him to invent a religion that would end the division and pull everyone together in one great powerful massive effort to undo the covenant promise of God. And Muhammad would be the agent.

The main idol, however, of the 360 was Allah, THE god, Al Elah. Guess what? Allah was the moon god. If you see any muslimic symbols you would see a crescent moon. Allah was the moon god, some form of the very god that Abraham's family worshiped, that Abraham's father who was an idolater worshiped, the children in the family were named after, even Terah is a name that connects with the name of the moon god.

So, what Muhammad did under the influence of the powers of darkness was take all the elements from the 360 different forms of idol worship, piece them all together into a form of religion making only one change, he demanded that there was only one god, Allah the moon god. Where did he get this information? In 610 A.D. he began receiving...and I'm reading from the source material...he began receiving frightening revelations accompanied by violent seizures. I've read enough about mediums and demon-possessed people to know that that often accompanies that phenomenon. He was not sure whether the visions were divine or whether they were demonic. He didn't know. But his wife told him to submit to the revelations because they were from Gabriel. So for the next 22 years, from 610 to his death in 632 he continued to get these visions and these revelations. And later on, first they were passed down orally and later on they were written by his followers from memory, making the Koran. And later adding to the Koran was the Hadif(?) which is other teaching and tradition. Muhammad built his whole system of religion on all these demonic forms of idolatry, adapting all the forms and features of idol worship with one new thing, and that was only the moon god Allah was true god and all the others were not and worship of all the other gods was forbidden and they were going to bring people into submission to that or kill them.

And I want to remind you, Satan is happy as a polytheist and he's also happy as a monotheist, as long as it's the wrong god. Islam is monotheistic Hedonism. Now I want to make a footnote here. You hear about American Black Muslim Movement, might wonder how that fits in, true Islam will tell you that is not Islam, that is not true Islam. What is the American Black Muslim Movement that was begun by Elijah Muhammad? It is a strange hybrid. Elijah Muhammad came across a teaching of a bizarre person named Wallace Fard, F-a-r-d. And he took this bizarre teaching of this man, Wallace Fard, and he mingled it with--get this--teaching from the Watchtower Society of the Jehovah Witnesses and he created a hybrid which is called the Black Muslim faith, here they call it The Black Nation of Islam. It is not true Islam.

And he said that this Wallace Fard was Allah and Louis Farrakhan who is the leader of that Movement, says he is the fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6, he is the mighty god, the ever-lasting father and the prince of peace. That is to Islam what the Jehovah's Witness cult is to Christianity. So I just want you to understand that. We're talking here about the true historic Islam.

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