

Is Islam a Religion of Peace?

Introduction. We're more than two decades past 9/11, and the world has continued to struggle with peace, mostly because of one fanatical religion — Islam. Recent protests in Iran over political repression and human rights abuses, along with dozens of terrorist attacks over the last 40 years, have demonstrated that Islam isn't a religion of peace.

While it may be true that many Muslims espouse peace and pursue their religion without killing other people, that doesn't change the fundamental facts about what Islam is and what it wants to be. The ultimate goal of Islam is a worldwide caliphate. Islamic leaders envision a world completely dominated by Islam with Christianity wiped off the map.

There will never be peace in the Middle East as long as Islam exists. The only way peace could prevail is for Islam to be wiped out. That may sound harsh and unfeeling, but it's true. Let's look at the differences between Islam and Christ's church, and then see why Islam can't be a religion of peace.

I. The Nature of the New Testament Church

A. The New Testament church:

1. Established in the first century on Pentecost (Acts 2:47).
2. Jesus Christ is the builder of His church (Matthew 16:18).
3. Jesus Christ is head over all things to the church (Ephesians 1:22-23).
4. No other foundation can any man lay than Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).
5. It was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20).
6. The church is subject to Christ in everything (Ephesians 4:24).
7. The church is the house of God (1 Timothy 3:15).

B. The New Testament church was established by peace:

1. The church was established in the 1st century, not the 7th (Daniel 2:44).
2. The church was established by preaching, not warfare (Acts 2:16-36).
3. The church isn't a corruption, but is what God wanted established on Pentecost (Acts 2:47).
4. The gospel is spread and converts are made by peaceful preaching.
 - a) No one is bludgeoned into submission to Christ. People are cut to the heart and believe the gospel (Acts 2:37; Romans 10:14-15).
 - b) The gospel calls men to obey Christ, but it doesn't force anyone to do so. Men are urged to choose obedience, rather than being compelled on threat of murder to follow Jesus (Matthew 11:28-29). We believe and follow a "gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15).
 - c) The "gospel of peace" is strongly linked to love:
 - (1) God is love (1 John 4:8, 10, 16).
 - (2) Love is of God (1 John 4:7).
 - (3) God so loved the world that He sent His only Son (John 3:16).
 - (4) God is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4-5).
 - (5) We can and should know the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:19).
 - (6) Love one another (1 Peter 1:22).

- (7) Love your enemies (Matthew 5:43-48).
- (8) Be at peace with all men (Romans 12:18).

II. Islam Isn't a "Religion of Peace"

- A. We constantly hear from political leaders and news media that Islam is a beautiful religion of peace.
 - 1. However, an ocean of whitewash can't make the bloody history of Islam a peaceful white.
 - 2. The history of Islam began with blood. Muhammad converted people by the sword, not by the truth from God.
 - 3. The medieval history of Islam is soaked in blood. The warfare between Catholics and Muslims as they fought over Jerusalem proves it isn't a religion of peace.
- B. The concept of "holy war."
 - 1. This is known as jihad (struggle or strive). It can refer to personal struggle within oneself to gain mastery (cp. Paul and the Law of Moses, Romans 7:13-14), or to physical struggle with non-Muslims (like when a Muslim faces what he believes is a false religion in debate).
 - 2. Christians understand a struggle or striving in the metaphorical sense (see below), but this isn't the only way in which Islam has promoted and continues to promote jihad.
 - a) Islam commands its adherents to fight and kill those who oppose Allah, and a significant number of Muslims around the world obey these dictates.
 - (1) Muslim clerics call for fatwas (death sentences) for those who discredit Muhammad or Islam.
 - (a) Salman Rushdie faced intense global controversy surrounding his 1988 novel, *The Satanic Verses*, which led to a 1989 fatwa calling for his death.
 - (b) The offices of Charlie Hebdo, a French satirical newspaper, were attacked in 2015 and 12 people were killed, including cartoonists and police, due to the publication's depictions of Muhammed.
 - (2) Dozens of terrorist attacks around the world (the latest in Bondi Beach, Australia during December 2025 in which 15 were killed) argue against the peaceful nature of Islam.
 - b) On the other hand, no passage in the Bible requires one to start or join a physical war against unbelievers.
- C. Muslim leaders may claim that we misquote and misapply the Quran's teachings, but, there's simply no way a Muslim could interpret many of the Quran's exhortations as peaceful. Perhaps they really don't read it critically!
 - 1. The Quran is the collection of Muhammad's revelations. "Quran" literally means "a reading, recitation," and it consists of 114 chapters of unequal length called surahs.
 - 2. There are 109 verses in the Quran that specifically command Muslims to fight against infidels (those who aren't Muslims). Here are a few examples:

- a) Surah 2:191: “And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. And [disbelief] is worse than killing.”
 - b) Surah 2:216: “Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not.”
 - c) Surah 4:89: “They but wish that ye should reject Faith, as they do, and thus be on the same footing (as they): But take not friends from their ranks until they flee in the way of Allah (From what is forbidden). But if they turn renegades, seize them and slay them wherever ye find them; and (in any case) take no friends or helpers from their ranks.”
 - d) Surah 5:33: “The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only his, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement”
 - e) Surah 8:12: “I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them”
 - f) Surah 8:57: “If thou comest on them in the war, deal with them so as to strike fear in those who are behind them, that haply they may remember.”
 - g) Surah 9:29: “Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.” Note: “People of the book” refer to Christians and Jews.
 - h) Surah 33:60-62 If the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and the alarmists in the city do not cease, We verily shall urge thee on against them, then they will be your neighbors in it but a little while. Accursed, they will be seized wherever found and slain with a (fierce) slaughter.” Note: “hypocrites” in Islamic teaching are those who are Muslims, but who do not engage in such warfare.
3. I know there are Bible passages which speak of Christians fighting (1 Corinthians 9:26; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7; James 4:2).
- a) But these passages are figurative. Not only that, but other Bible believers understand them as figurative, and condemn anyone who uses violence in the name of God’s cause.
 - b) To be fair, the vast majority of Muslims do not support terrorism under any circumstances. But the low percentage points of those who do equate to millions of people around the world who support what we’ve just shown the Quran to say.

Conclusion. We don’t want to be at war with anyone. We want to love our neighbors as ourselves and bless those who curse us. While we may want to wish away the existence of radical Islam, we accept that Jesus Christ and the gospel will

always have enemies. May God bless us to stand by the principles of the New Testament faith and to use every chance to convert Muslims to be faithful saints.

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