

## Reconsidering Islam -Terrie Lambert, The Midnight Watch, November 7, 2020

We're going to begin our study this morning with another children's story.

You remember last week I told you of an experience I had many years ago when I was doing some work. We were working with a group of people. We were fencing and tree planting, helping the farmers with their problems with erosion and I got stuck in the middle of a mob of sheep. It was an awakening for me because I used to think that all sheep were the same. "Seen one sheep, seen them all." It was a real



revelation because, as I stood there in that mob of sheep, I realized that all sheep were not the same. There were many different sheep. They all had different faces, different expressions, different shapes of their faces. They all looked very much the individual and that really surprised me.

We were talking about how our mind likes to do shortcuts. How if we can just not



have to think too hard and too slow on everything, it makes life a bit easier. But sometimes that can be a dangerous thing, especially when we like to group things together like sheep. We say all sheep are the same. We could do that with people and that's not a very good thing to do. So even though people might belong to one country doesn't mean they're all the same. Though they might have all the same skin color, they can be very

diverse. Some people might all belong to one religion and we would call them sheep

because they are all following one leader and we'd say that makes them stupid. But what did Jesus say? He called his people sheep and that doesn't mean we're stupid.

So we had a good look at sheep. We saw that they're very intelligent and have great memories. They're very emotional. They love being smiled at. They don't like being frowned at. But they're just as intelligent as cattle and almost as intelligent as pigs. Pigs are very intelligent.

What I want to talk about today is their eyes. Here are pictures of eyes of different animals. Can you tell which eye belongs to a sheep? You're right it's the eye that is slanted horizontally. The eye that's directly underneath it is the eye of a cat and you can see that their pupil is slanted vertically.



Now what's the difference? A sheep has very, very good eyesight. Its eyes are on the side of its head and the pupils are slanted (horizontally), which means it can almost see right round its body, not quite, but nearly 360 degree peripheral vision. That's what we call it. It can't quite see all the way around, but nearly. The shape of the cat's pupil, shown in this picture, means it can see really good just straight in front of it. Now why would that be necessary? What's the difference between these two animals? A sheep is a prey animal. It's an animal that gets preyed on. It can be in very dangerous situations, so it needs to see all the way around it. The minute you walk into its paddock it knows you're there and it knows what color you are and what you're wearing. It can sense that you're there even from a distance

away. It might not see you 100% clearly, but it knows you're there and that's very good if you're an animal that can get preyed on. Whereas the animal that's got the vertical pupils, it's a predator, so it just needs to focus on what's in front of it. Jesus said that we're sheep so we need to have that vision that sees all the way around us to understand our environment and what the dangers are.

But the sheep do have a blind spot right at the back of their head. There's a spot where they can't see and they can't see it when they put their head up in the air. They put their head up, then they get a blind spot and that's when you can jump on the sheep. So if we're sheep, because Jesus said, "my sheep hear my voice," we hear the voice of Jesus and we follow him. Where's our blind spot? When we lift our heads up, when we think we're better than anybody else it creates a blind spot and that's when the enemy can come in and get us. We have to have our head down, we need humility and then, with our eyes on the side of our heads with our peripheral vision, we can see all the way around us.

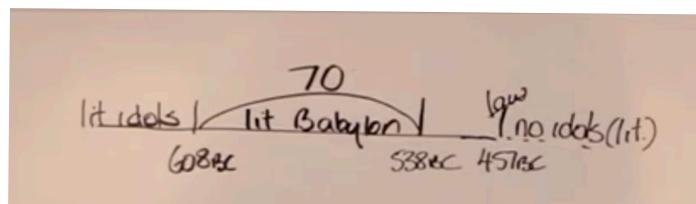
Sheep are very, very interesting... Sheep are like goats, too. They have similar eyes where they need to see everything that's in their environment and we're the same. That's why we look at world events. We look at what's happening in the church and what's happening out in the world because we are to be aware of everything that's happening around us. We are not prey or predator animals, that are just focused on one thing... We must never look at people or anything as being all the same. God's creation is very diverse whether it's in the animal kingdom or in the human world. We don't put people all in one box, just like we don't put animals all in one box. So that's our lesson for today and see if you can see what the relevance is to the study today as we continue to study on.

Thank you...children for listening.

Now, we're going to start our main study.

If you were to ask somebody in the movement what they thought of the civil rights movement back in the 1950s, what do you think their reaction would be? What would be our standard response? We'd like to think that, all things being equal, if we went back into that time in the 1950s, we'd be standing right there with our brothers and sisters fighting for equality, that we'd see the issues clearly. We have no trouble today looking back on the 1950s and seeing what those issues were and seeing right from wrong. We would support that civil rights movement. Come forward one decade into the 1960s and it's the feminist movement. What is our perception of that movement today? Do we look on the feminist movement of the 1960s the same way we look on the civil rights movement of the 1950s? We would like to think we would, but we tend to struggle a bit when we when we just come forward one decade. We don't quite look at it with the same eyesight. Would we have called ourselves feminists, whether we were male or female? So even if we'd say yes there tends to be a little bit of discomfort and unsettling with that thought. And why is that? What does 10 years difference make? It's because we've had trouble getting rid of our Protestant mindset. It's deeply ingrained in us. The Protestant thinking, the standard evangelical thought.

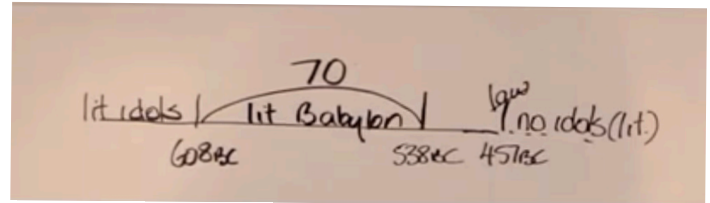
We're going to do a quick review of the study of the Apis Bull. ...we go back to the 70-year captivity. They were captive to literal Babylon from 608 BC to 538 BC.



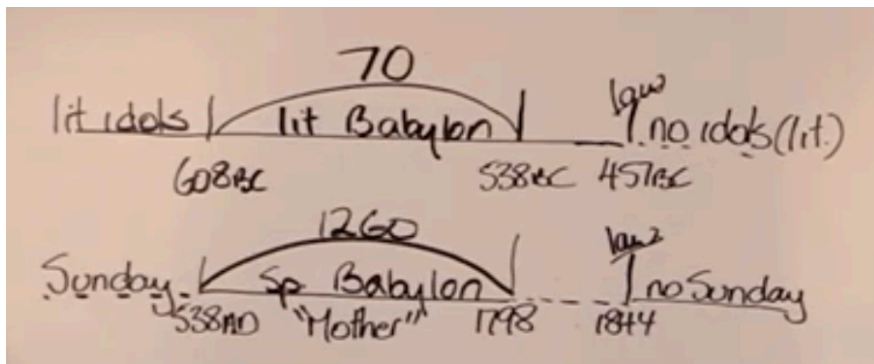
...before that God's people worshipped literal idols, namely the Apis Bull, among others. It was their chief idol. That 70-year captivity, where they were put into the hands of the Babylonians for that

period of time, where they were immersed in the idolatry, cured them of idolatry. When they came out the other end, they came out in three decrees, by the time you get to the third decree, 457 BC, what did that third decree allow them to do?

The first and the second (decree) was to go back and rebuild the temple. When they rebuilt the temple, there were no idols. Then in 457 they were allowed some autonomy of government. They could rule themselves to a certain degree, to the degree that they had some autonomy. They had their own laws and their own government, even though they were still under the control of the Medes and Persians. But, they had law...(God's Law) And now they've got no idols, no literal idols. But we understand that was only in form. They never got rid of the spirit of those idols. So these idols represented what? A powerful God, a God of war, a male patriarchal God. Once they came out of captivity, they still had that idea of God in their minds. They might not have fashioned him after a bull, but he was still what that bull represented.



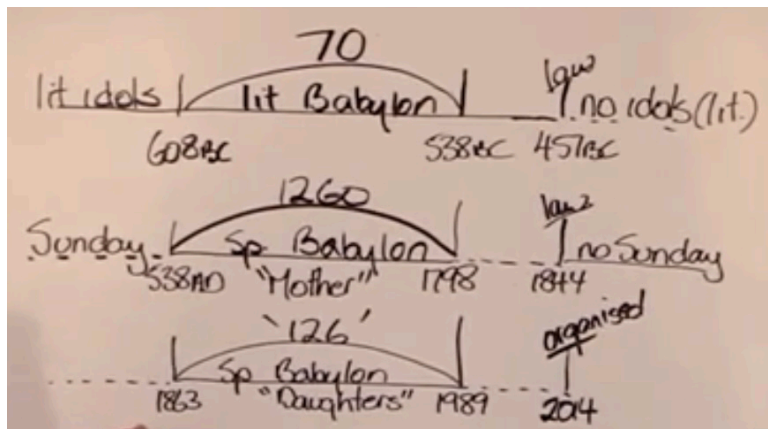
We come down to the other period of captivity, the 1260 years. And now they're in captivity to spiritual Babylon. What was it, in that period from 538 AD to 1798, that



God's people had wrong prior to this captivity? They had begun worshiping on Sunday. 1260 years of being immersed in the wine of Babylon that when they come out the other end, they're prepared to get rid of that Babylonian idol, that spiritual Babylon. They're in spiritual Babylon to the mother, captivity to the mother. So

when they come out, 46 years to build the temple, then in 1844 they've got law. And now no Sunday. Now it's the Sabbath.

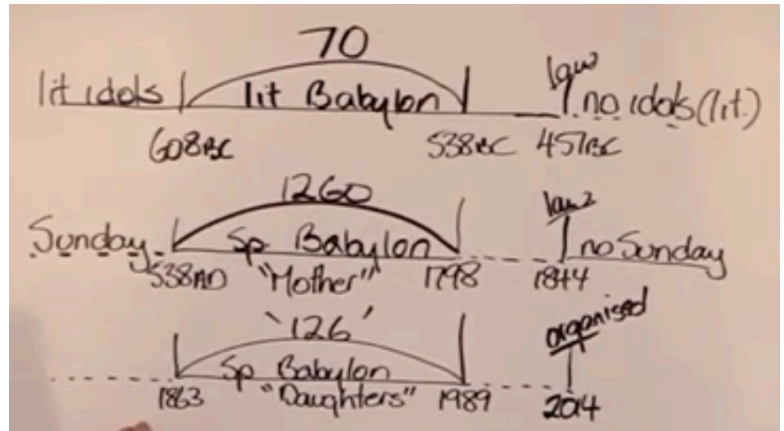
So we come down to our time. We realize that the church of God went into a Laodicean condition. They again go into captivity for 126 years to whom? Spiritual Babylon, but this time to the daughters. So what was it leading up to that time in



captivity from 1863 to 1989, when God is going to bring them out and start reforming them? What is it that they held on to here, that they have to be fully immersed in here, so that they can get rid of it? This kind of reminds me of the Cadbury chocolate factory in Tasmania. When you go there and you start to work... they say, "eat all the chocolates you

want.” You can have as much chocolate as you want and they know that after a couple of days...you're going to hate the sight of chocolate and you won't eat any more. This is kind of what's happened here. You get immersed in this wine of Babylon. At the end, you see the result of it doesn't make you feel very good, so you need to get rid of these, whatever this idol is, whatever this false doctrine is.

So leading up to 1863, the mindset that the Protestants had then, is what the church goes into captivity to, during this time period. What it has to come out of, or be reformed from, at the end of that. I'm going to write 2014 here, because in 2014 we begin to be organized, just like the church was reformed here (1844). So we want to understand, what was it we had to get rid of here (between 1863-2014), or what we've carried through this time period that has to be dealt with here (2014). As we've studied on, there's been a number of things.

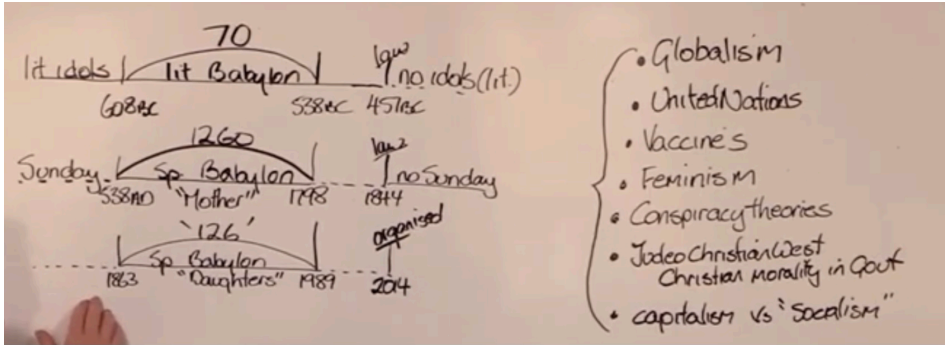


Let's list some of these things that we've had wrong that we've inherited from spiritual Babylon, from the daughters of spiritual Babylon, the Protestant churches: Globalism, with that a wrong understanding of the United Nations, Vaccines, Feminism, we'll just write Conspiracy Theories because there's many of them, the idea of a Judeo-Christian west that needs to have a christian government - Christian morality in government, the idea of Capitalism versus Socialism and we could probably add to the list. When we think of conspiracy theories, there's a lot involved there.

- Globalism
- United Nations
- Vaccines
- Feminism
- Conspiracy theories
- Judeo Christian West  
Christian morality in Govt
- capitalism vs "socialism"

So we look back at these lines we see that the problem with literal idols is a problem with understanding law (God's Law), namely,...the first and the second law—don't make any graven images (no idols). So the law has to be understood here (457 BC), but at a spiritual level, because they did away with the form, but they kept the spirit of the idol worship. Therefore they didn't keep the law, in its spirit.

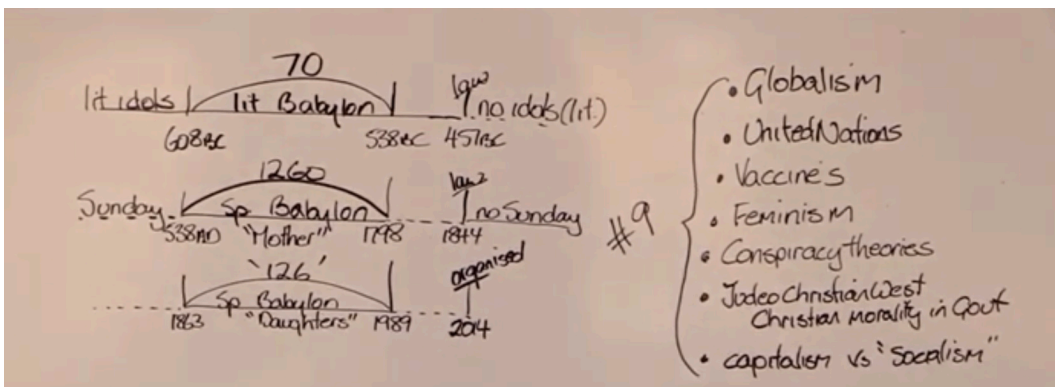
When we come down here, Sunday (1844), that's the law as well. That's number four commandment. When we come down here (1863), we could add all these up. And if there was one law that, if you broke down all of these problems into one law, which would it be? Usually we would say it represents the last six



and especially if you go down into this time period ('126'), we think of the last six commandments, about how we relate to our fellow man and how that led up to the Civil War and our attitude, as Protestants, to slavery.

So we think of the last six commandments, but I'm thinking of one commandment in particular. If we broke this down, which commandment really does it boil down to? I want to suggest it's number nine, "thou shalt not bear false witness against your neighbor."

Who is your neighbor? Your neighbor just means another person. You cannot bear



false witness against another person. That means, we're not only commanded to not bear false witness, that means we also must have a true witness of other people.

We should have an understanding of the world around us and the people around us, so that we do not bear false witness against them. In each of these things (on the list), whether we're against science, against governments, against doctors, we bear false witness of people. Conspiracy theories...whether it's Bill Gates...(or anyone else)... we cannot afford to be bearing a false witness of those people. Down here (1863) we bore false witness of our brothers. Just because they had a different skin color, they were thought to be inferior. That is a false witness. So this is the commandment (number nine) that had to be understood as we came into our time period. We are to accurately represent those around us. We can not and should not falsely, intentionally or unintentionally, represent people that are around us.

That is why, one of the reasons, last week we took a look at the people of Islam, at Muslims and the history surrounding Muslims and Muhammad. We understand that Islam is a subject of Bible prophecy and that there is a lot of Islamophobia at the end of the world. We need to have a correct understanding of Muslims and Islam so that we do not bear false witness. The study that I did last week and that I will be revising today, is not intended to do away with our prophetic understanding of Islam in Bible prophecy. Whether it's the three woes or the fifth, sixth and seventh trumpets, or the third woe and 9/11, it's not meant to do away with any of that. All this (study) is intended to do, is to open our eyes to our neighbors and to have a right understanding of them, so that we can represent them correctly and not bear a false witness.

When we are in ignorance of people, intentionally or unintentionally, it breeds fear and this is what Donald Trump works on. He breeds fear in people against minorities and against different religions and different colors and different nations. The idea is to keep people in ignorance. In order to come out of ignorance, you just need knowledge. Go back and, with peripheral vision, have a look at the whole situation. Understand things in their historical context, so that we can have a right understanding. Ignorance leads to fear, fear leads to having a wrong attitude towards all these things, especially conspiracy theories. It's the Protestant world, Apostate Protestantism, that creates a lot of this fear. It created fear back in this time period (1863-1989) and it's their world view that dehumanizes people. So part of the the purpose of this, is to stop that dehumanization of any group of people, but in particular Muslims. So again, the purpose of this study is to challenge Islamophobia.

We had a presidential debate on ...the 30th of September.... It'll go down in history for a lot of different reasons. It was a bit difficult to watch. One of the things that the commentators took note of, is what didn't (get said). Sometimes, what is not spoken of, speaks louder than what is spoken of. It was interesting in that debate that the word "terrorism" never came up once. They barely touched the issues of national security or of foreign policy. Mostly what they talked about was the virus, of course, and racial justice. They were the two issues, but not foreign policy or national security, which is very, very different from the debates, say in 2016. Pew Research Center did surveys back in that time. The second greatest issue on people's minds back in 2016 was Islamic terrorism, but in 2020 it didn't even make the list. That's very different from the last presidential debates since 2000. What changed? President Trump has tried to make an enemy of China, because you've got to have an enemy, you've got to divert attention to someone, some bad person. But largely, Islam has kind of gone off the radar. We know as students of Bible prophecy, that it hasn't (gone). It's still very real and there's a lot of things happening in the world today that aren't necessarily to do with U.S. politics. They're still very much a force and we will see that come up more in Bible prophecy, but certainly it didn't register in this last election.

What we want to do, is go back and have a look at the history of Islam. We're going to go to Genesis 16. If you turn in your Bibles to Genesis 16, we'll just read our familiar verses on the historical beginnings of the Muslim people.

Genesis 16, is the story of Hagar. Sarah couldn't bear a child so she suggested that Abraham sleep with her handmaid, sleep with a slave. Hagar was pregnant with Abraham's child and giving Sarah a bit of lip, so Sarah asks if she can send Hagar away.

...we can start at verse seven:

(7) And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

(8) And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

The first thing we want to note here is that the angel of the lord appears to this slave woman. We understand that angel of the lord is no less a person than Jesus Christ. He takes the time to come and talk to this frightened woman.

(9) And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

(10) And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

(11) And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

So again, "the angel of the lord spake." God took the time to speak to Hagar and this is the very first time in the Bible narrative that an unborn child is named. Ishmael has not been born and he is named. Not only is he named, but he's given one of the Abrahamic promises. The promise to Abraham is, that his seed would be as the stars, that they would be without number, can't be counted. So as the seed of Abraham, Ishmael could receive the literal blessings. He was an inheritor of the literal blessings, but he did not inherit the spiritual blessings. This is something to keep in mind as we look at Ishmael and his progeny. They did receive literal blessings and they go on to develop a religion that is very much based...on the literal... I shouldn't say, not the spiritual, but it is literal.

Verse (12): And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

So we understand this wild man to be the wild Arabian ass, the onager, untamable. We're told in Genesis 25, they're sent away to the East, into the East country. So this begins the tribes of the Arabian peninsula. "Hand against every man," so,



contentious, but “dwells in the presence of all his brethren.” So his brethren were who? You can include Isaac with them. These are the brothers of God's people, half brothers. They would dwell in their presence. So as brothers and, as just as another person, it's, again, so important that we do not bear false witness against our brothers. We have to be very careful that we do not stereotype every descendant of Ishmael. It's very easy to do. It's just easy for the brain to do that. But we have to take the time to think logically and to think as God thinks...look at a group of people as a large group of individuals. When we say large group, we're talking about a quarter of the world's population. It doesn't pay to misrepresent...1.8 billion people, So Ishmael is recognized by Muslims as the ancestor of several northern Arabian tribes.

What we want to do, is to go forward now, two and a half thousand years. We're going to go visit the nomadic tribes of the Arabian peninsula. It's very tribal. They fight amongst themselves. They look after their own tribe... Your protection is your tribe. Your tribe will look after you, because you'll probably be fighting other tribes. It will provide for you. So there's much protection, much care within a tribe, but they're quite contentious against other tribes. There's no real law, no real government that is overarching all these Arabian tribes. They have no formal government. It's a tribal world. It works on revenge and vendettas. Somebody does something wrong, so you pay him back and that just goes on forever.

They were polytheistic. They were idol worshipers. Their center of idolatry was in the city of Mecca. In the middle of Mecca, there was a big shrine, you would see pictures of it today, the big cube. (Pilgrimage to it)...is called the Hajj... They believe that Abraham and Ishmael built it. Surrounding that...were about 360 different idols, one of them was Jesus, one of them was Mary, (and) one of everything else that you can think of. Mecca was the equivalent of the Pantheon. Every god you could think of was there. Mecca was a hub of trade, in that time period, and so you provided for everybody. If somebody was coming from “Woot-Woot” they had the “Woot” god there. If somebody was coming from the East or the West or whatever, everything was there in that one place that you could worship. People made money out of that. Same story that is told in the New Testament, but a different town. This is what it was like in Mecca in the time when Muhammad was born.

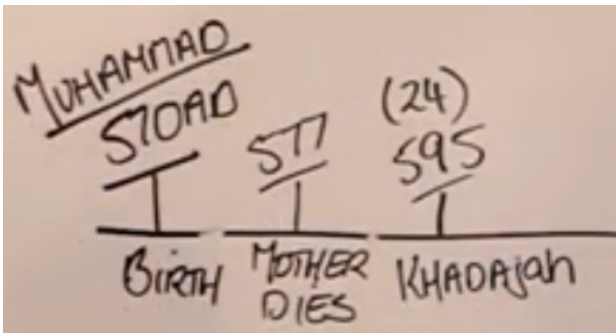
These Arabian tribes believed in the God of the Christians and the God of the Jews. They believed he was the greatest God and there was no idol for that God. They made idols for every other god, but they did not make an idol of the one true God. But they had many, so they were polytheistic. They didn't make pictures, so there were no pictures and no idols of the one true God.

We're going to draw a timeline and we're going to talk about Muhammad. 570 AD Muhammad is born. Muhammad's father died a couple of months before he was born, so he was wet nursed out to one of the Bedouin tribes, which was kind of a

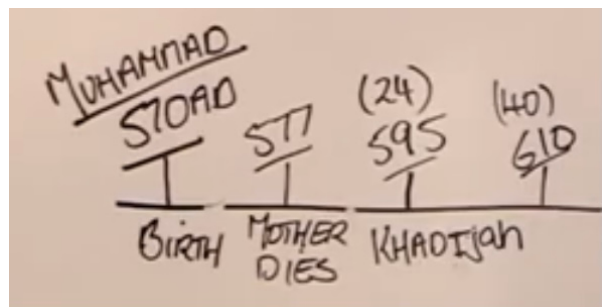
done thing. It was seen to be healthier and safer for a child to be brought up, for the first couple of years, outside the city. Cities tended to be diseased, not clean places, so you could send your child out to be wet nursed by the Bedouins and usually you would be returned when you were two. Muhammad stayed out there until he was five. He's finally returned to his mother and his mother has not remarried. That's unusual. It's unusual for a child to be wet nursed for five years and it's unusual for a widowed woman to not remarry. Usually within the tribes, how they looked after one another was, that your brother or the brother of the deceased or somebody, would marry the widow. But this hasn't happened in Muhammad's case, so he's returned. After two years his mother dies. In 577...his grandfather takes him. His grandfather doesn't live very long. His grandfather dies and his uncle takes him.

Muhammad belonged to the Quraysh tribe, which was one of the more powerful wealthy tribes. Even though he was of humble origin, he was still within the Quraysh tribe. So he had a fair bit of protection, especially from his uncle, who was a trader. His uncle got him working on the camels, caravanning, and taught him how to trade. Muhammad worked himself up slowly and got himself a really good reputation. He had some nicknames. He would be known as "the trusted one" or "the truthful one." He was a very pious person and earned himself a very good reputation.

In 595, he's 24 years old. He's employed by a wealthy widowed merchant called Khadijah, who employs him to take a caravan to Syria. He returns and he's done really well. He brings her back the profit and she's taken quite a liking to him, so she asks him to marry her. She's 15 years his senior, but Muhammad agrees. She proposes to Muhammad and they are married for 24 years in a monogamous relationship, very happy. He continues to work for Khadijah.

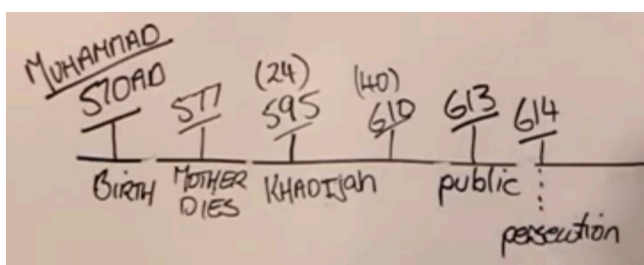


Mecca is getting rich and the values are decreasing, even the values that they had within their tribe are lowering, because of the wealth of Mecca. Everybody's focused on moneymaking. It's not as it was earlier. He's 40 now. We're going to come down to where Muhammad is 40 and this is the year 610. In between here (24 and 40) he's had a number of daughters. He had four daughters and he had a young son that died at birth. So there were only four daughters that survived. Apparently he had a very good relationship with his youngest daughter, Fatima.



In 610, he goes up into the mountains for his yearly pilgrimage to pray and to fast, which he did regularly. When we think of the Hajj, when we think of Ramadan and things like that, we should understand that they were cultural practices before the introduction of Islam. So Islam just really reformed their normal cultural practices. So he went up into this mountain to pray, something he did regularly. As he's up there, the story goes that the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and Gabriel said to him "recite." He's terrified and he says "recite what?" The angel keeps repeating to him "recite," "recite" and he's saying "I don't know what to recite." Then the angel gives to him the very first words of the Quran. Quran really just means "recitation." He's frightened. He's told to recite these words and he goes back down, goes home, runs straight to his wife, puts his head on her lap and says "cover me with your shawl." She does and then he tells her what happened and she says, "I think you might be the prophet for this people." He's really struggling to come to terms with that. He goes to his wife's Christian cousin and tells him. Again, it gets confirmed by this Christian, "Your God is speaking through you. These are revelations of God. You're a prophet." He struggles with that for a number of years, because they're telling him he's a prophet, but no more revelations come. He just keeps it to his family and then after two years he actually feels quite like God has abandoned him. Muhammad understands what abandonment is. The story about Ishmael is something that is deep-rooted in them, that feeling of abandonment. Even amongst the Arabian tribes they were told by Jews and Christians that they were a lost people. "You don't have a prophet, you don't have scriptures, you know you're just nobodies." So Muhammad feels abandoned. Again, this Angel Gabriel, this revelation appears to him and says, "No, we have not forgotten you Muhammad." Then the revelations continue and he continues to have many of them from that time period.

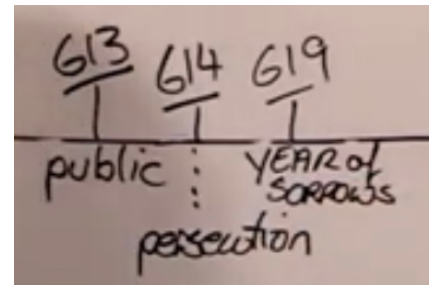
It takes him about three years to start going public with these revelations. Understand, he is told to recite. In this Arabian world there is no art, they don't draw, there aren't paintings, they don't have architecture. Their art is their poetry. It is in their writing. Even before there was Islam, the Arabian tribes were known for their poetry. You would sit around the campfire or the oasis and recite poetry. The Quran is lost to us in the English language. In the Arabic language, it is seen as very beautiful prose, but it's something we can't really appreciate in our language. It's much the same as taking Shakespeare and putting it into French. It just doesn't make sense. The same with the Quran. When you put it into English, we don't see the beauty of it. Much as why people probably wouldn't see the beauty of the King James Version, which we love. So their art is their poetry. How he spread this message was going around reciting. He would recite the Quran, the verses that were given to him by the Angel Gabriel. That's how he evangelized.



In 613, he starts to go public. In 614, there's persecution. Because what is he taking public? What is the message that he's giving to them? There is only one God,

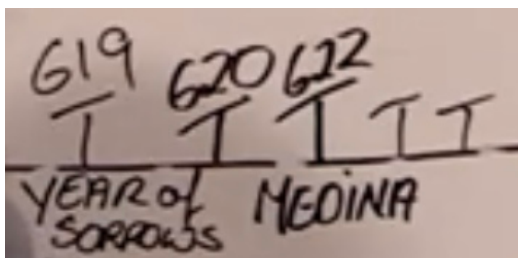
only, one true God. And what is in Mecca? Many gods, they're polytheistic. So what he's doing is striking at the very heart of their economy, of their nationalism, of who they were. He's threatening their livelihoods and their jobs, so he starts to get persecution. He also starts to get a following. He's got a rather small following, but these people as they grow, they start getting heavily persecuted. They're beaten. Some are crucified. Crucifixion wasn't just something the Romans did. He was beaten. He was jailed about a year later and a lot of them fled to Ethiopia. This is harsh persecution by the Meccan.

619 is called his “year of sorrows,” because it's the year that Khadijah dies. Not only does Khadijah die, but his uncle dies. Now he's in trouble. ...his uncle was his protector, because he belonged to this powerful tribe. Having his uncle alive gave him a certain amount of protection. Khadijah was providing for him during his persecution. People had stopped actually working for him and giving Muhammad business, so his livelihood was lost. His message is one, not just of ridding the city of idols, but it's also one of social justice, which is why he attracted a lot of the poor and the underclasses, people that weren't of the Quraysh tribe. It didn't make him popular. He was arguing against greed, corruption and the basic running of the city. He was encouraging them to care for the needy, for the orphaned, for the widows—the things that they used to do as tribes that they had stopped doing.



613 614 619  
public : YEAR of sorrows  
persecution

So in 620, he has the famous vision he purports to have had, where he is taken up to heaven. He gets to meet all the other prophets and liaisons with Moses. That's in



619 620 622  
YEAR of sorrows MEDINA

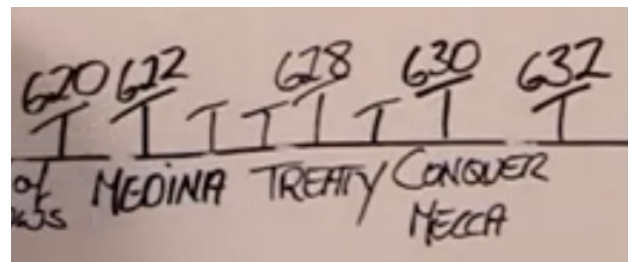
620 and, again, the persecution continues. In 622, about 600 kilometers northwest of Mecca is a town called Yathrib. Yathrib is basically an oasis, but the tribes around there were really in turmoil. They were fighting amongst each other. A lot of bad stuff was going on in Yathrib. A couple of the people from there were pilgrims having a pilgrimage to Mecca and during that pilgrimage they came across

Muhammad. He's sharing his message and they are entranced by this message. They tell him, “you better come back to our place. There's some problems that you could sort out for us.” They said. “you come back, we'll protect you.” So he decides he will flee Mecca. It's not an easy thing to do because the Meccan don't trust him. He sends his family and his friends and his followers out in the middle of the night. He stays behind. When they're safe, then he goes. He flees to Yathrib, which today is Medina. This is the night flight to Medina. Once he's there, he starts preaching or “reciting” his message of social justice. They make him governor. So now he's not just a religious leader, he is a civil leader. He's a governor of this town and he sorts

out all their problems. Not only do all the tribes convert to Islam, but the surrounding tribes and a lot of the tribes around Arabia also convert. So he has many followers. That's a problem, because the people in Mecca think he's just amassing a great army and he's going to come to wipe them out. They just see him as trouble that they need to get rid of. And so...in 623-624, there's these wars where Mecca keeps coming against Medina to try and fight against them. They call them battles, but really they're just skirmishes.

All the time that Muhammad is in Mecca, the revelations that are coming to him are saying, "take your persecution. do not fight back, do not retaliate." Once he is ruler in Medina, the revelations change and now he is told that, "Yes, you can fight, but there are conditions." So violence was not mandated, but it was allowed under certain conditions. The messages change and clerics and Muslim academics and theologians understand that to understand the Quran, you have to take it in historical context. They look at his early recitations and understand its context. They understand the difference between when he was in Mecca and when he was in Medina. Context is very important to an Islamic theologian.

In Medina, he's looking after these people, he's got huge responsibility, so now violence is permitted. There is a need to go to Mecca on pilgrimage. In 628, Muhammad and 1,400 converts march toward Mecca. They are just going for pilgrimage. Because they have never been able to conquer Medina, the Meccan leaders come out to meet them to make a treaty. It's a 10-year truce called the Pact of Al-Hudaybiyah. However, the Muslims are to wait until the next year for pilgrimage. They agreed. The next year in 629, the Muslims were able to pilgrimage, but shortly afterward, the terms of the treaty were broken through continued skirmishes. Because there was still a need to go to Mecca on pilgrimage, Muhammad and his companions decide to show their strength of numbers. So, this time they go to Mecca with 10,000 followers. By January, 630, Mecca is conquered. The Meccan basically surrender. It is conquered with very little blood shed. Muhammad declared a general amnesty. He goes in and cleans up all the idols. He reorganizes the city. Those that were his bitterest enemies he replaces in positions of authority, in administrative positions. He sets it all in order and everybody converts to Islam and he goes back to Medina, where he dies two years later in 632.



So what we see here is what Muhammad does best and that was he negotiated. He was a politician. Nobody wanted war, nobody wanted to fight. Understand, under the old tribal laws he had every right to have gone into Mecca and just kill them all. That's what they were expecting and he did the very opposite. It's interesting when the Meccan surrendered, one of his followers said, as they were about to march into

Mecca, “not everybody is welcoming us in Mecca, what if they attack us.” Muhammad said, “you may kill the unbelievers.” This must be read in context. This is one of those Quranic verses that gets quoted a lot. Understand in an historical context what an unbeliever was. An unbeliever was a polytheistic Meccan, an unbeliever was not a Jew or a Christian. So in Medina, there were Jews and there were Christians. Nobody was forced, there were no forced conversions. You were allowed to be whatever religion you wanted to be. Understand that if you lived in Medina, you had to pay a tax if you weren’t Muslim, but you were allowed to keep your own religion. Muhammad was pluralistic, because what they believed was that Jews and Christians were people of the Book and that in the Quran, these revelations were just an extension of the Old Testament and then the New Testament and these were further revelations. You understand I’m giving you their understanding. I think the best way to understand a people is to, not project our understanding on them, but the way they see it, so this is the way they see it. It is that they are an extension of the people of the Book. So Jews and Christians were never considered unbelievers. Polytheistic Meccan were unbelievers. So Muhammad says, “you can kill unbelievers” and then he says, “but, only if they attack you first and only if they stop you reaching the shrine and only if the truce we now have falls through and only if no other truce is in place or can be negotiated, then you may.” So basically it was, ‘yes, you can. but it's better if you don’t’ and that is the subtext of that mandate.

He marches into Mecca, he doesn't take the throne. What he does is, he sets it in order and then he goes back to Medina. And as I said, he dies a couple of years later. He was a master negotiator. In 22 years, he pretty much conquered all of the Arabian peninsula. Everybody there was now Muslim. We talked last week about what the word “Islam” means. What does the word “Islam” mean? It means “submit” or “surrender.” A Muslim is just somebody who has “submitted” or “surrendered” to the one true God. That's the main force of their message, that there is only one God and you must surrender to that one God.

We understand that every religion has a perception of what is wrong with the world and provides what they think is the answer or the solution to what is wrong with the world and what Muhammad perceived as being wrong with the world is, that people weren't surrendered to God. People were self-sufficient. This is what had happened in Mecca. As long as you had a job and your money, you didn't really need God. God was on the periphery. He wanted God to be number one. It has to be number one in your life. When God isn't number one in your life, you replace it with an idol. That's why they are against idol worship, worshipers or worshipping. No idols, because you are submitted to one God. So whether that idol is your wealth or something, a graven image, anything. The whole purpose of Islam was to take you back to worship God as a priority in your life.

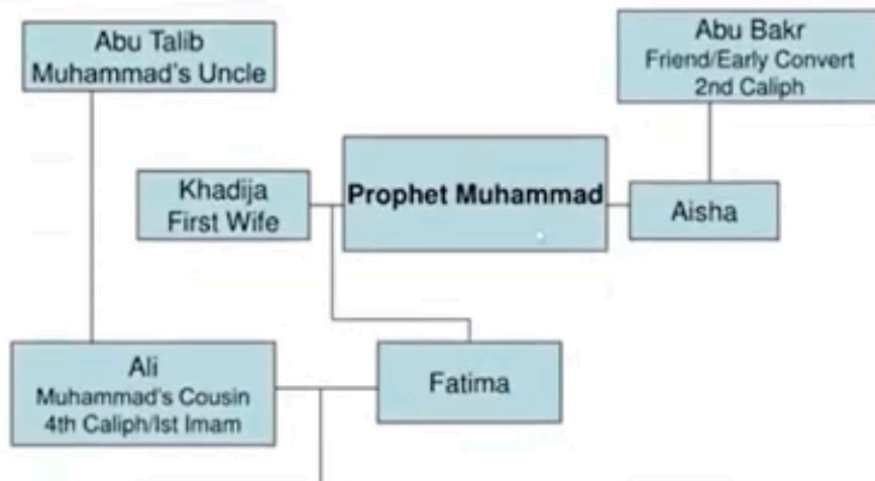
I just want to take a minute to talk about Muhammad's wives. He was married to Khadijah for 24 years. He had his children from Khadijah when she passed away. He then remarried Aisha, who was the young daughter of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was one of his companions. You remember Abu Bakr from Revelation chapter nine. He was the one who made the decree about "don't touch those that have the seal of God." Muhammad married his daughter very young. He married other wives. He had 11 wives in total, but the other nine wives were widows. He had no children from them and this is what you did at that time. You took in widows, you brought them into your household. That is the way they were provided for.

Here's a map of Saudi Arabia where you can see where Mecca is. Medina is just slightly northwest of Mecca. He united all of those Arabian tribes within 22 years.

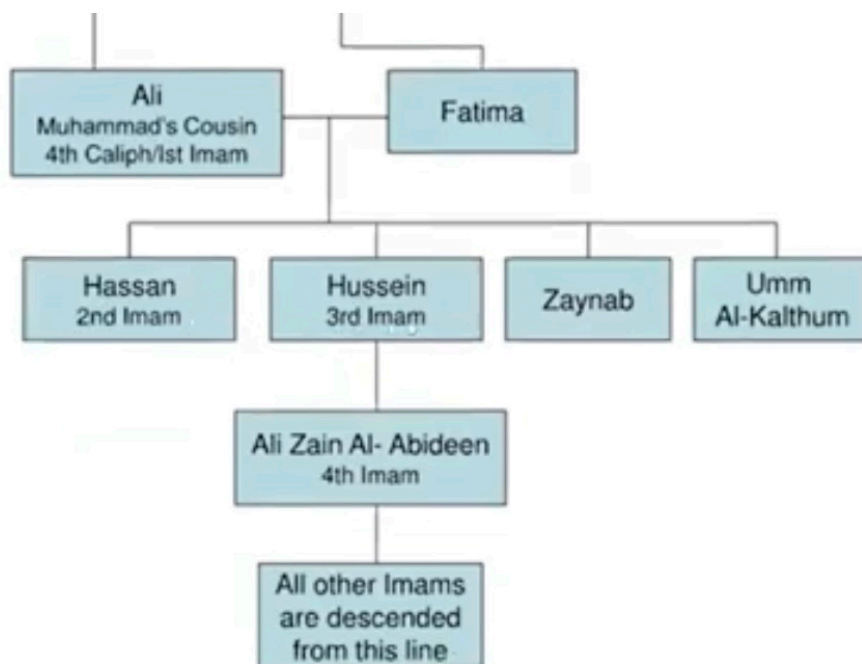


This is his family tree. You can see Khadijah, his first wife, and Aisha, his second wife, who was a daughter of Abu Bakr. The point of this graph is to show you that his youngest daughter Fatima married his cousin Ali. Ali was the son of this uncle that took Muhammad on and trained him and helped him and provided for and protected him. So Ali was his cousin and his cousin married his youngest daughter Fatima.

### A Brief Family Tree for the Prophet Muhammad



They had these children. Hassan and Hussein become very important in the history, as does Ali. Ali is considered a blood relative of Muhammad and his progeny is considered very important in Islamic history.





There are five main pillars or core beliefs in the practices of Islam. The first is their profession of faith called the “shahada.” This is where they say there is no God, but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God. This is central to Islam. So if you converted to Islam, you would walk into a mosque with your friends, you would recite this in somebody's presence, then you were considered a convert. This is your profession of faith. The next pillar is prayer, (salat), the praying to God of five

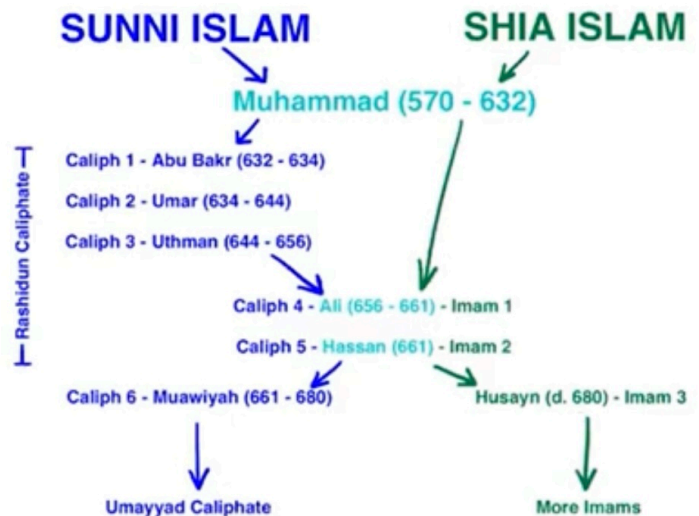
times a day. Again it's because they want you to prioritize God in your life, surrender to god, so you actually stop to put God first at those particular times of day. Alms (charity), they have to pay 2.5% of their total wealth to charity to the poor. That's the “zakat” and that is not of your income, that is of your total wealth. You would add up your house and your car and everything

**The Five Pillars are the core beliefs and practices of Islam:**

- . Profession of **Faith (shahada)**. The belief that "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God" is central to Islam. ...
- . **Prayer (salat)**. ...
- . **Alms (zakat)**. ...
- . **Fasting (sawm)**. ...
- . **Pilgrimage (hajj)**.

and that goes directly to the poor. It doesn't go to an imam, it doesn't go to a mosque, it doesn't pay for carpet on a church floor. It goes straight to the poor. You can hand it straight to the poor, you can give it to any charity. It can go to any religion. It doesn't matter about the religion, doesn't matter about the country, as long as it goes to the poor. Then there is the fasting (sawm), which is in Ramadan, which we talked about. Again the idea is that you prioritize God. Then the pilgrimage to Mecca, the Hajj. Everybody is expected to get to Mecca once in a lifetime, if you are physically able to do it, if you are financially able to do it. So there are conditions on that need to go on pilgrimage. If you're not well enough, if you're not financially able enough, if you cannot provide for your family while you go on pilgrimage, you are not to go.

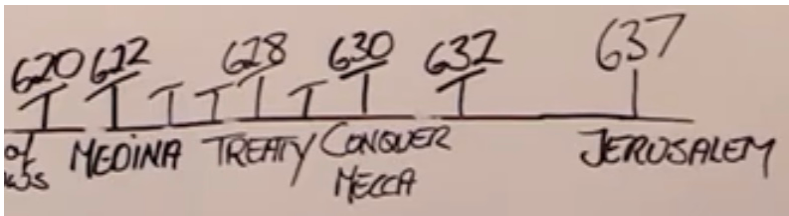
On our next slide, I want to show you the difference between Sunni Islam and Shia Islam. When Muhammad was on his death bed, his family were off organizing ...in preparation for the funeral. They knew he was going to die. While the family were away, his companions got together and decided who would replace him as political leader. Not as a religious leader, but as a political leader. The first replacement was this Abu Bakr, that we know well of from Revelation, chapter nine. So Abu Bakr replaces him and then he only lives two more years. Umar



(Omar) replaces him and is assassinated. Uthman or Osman replaces him and is assassinated. He is replaced by Ali. Ali is Muhammad's blood cousin. So the difference between Sunni and Shia Islam is that they disagree over who should have replaced Muhammad. The Sunni Islam says it should have been his companions, these four first caliphs are called the Rashidun Caliphs, so they are honored. With Shia Islam, they see these first three as usurpers and that they were not legal followers of Muhammad and that the first caliph, the first replacement should have been Ali. This is where the split between Sunni and Shia Islam comes from.

There was some war in that time. It is known as the first fitna or first civil war. A fitna is a time of distress and sorrow because nobody's happy to be warring over this. It gets settled and pretty much Sunni and Shia Islam live together peacefully. They work it out for hundreds of years until 1979. Then we see Iran and Saudi Arabia, who were once allies, become rivals. We see this Sunni and Shia split again, but for many hundreds of years they lived quite happily together. We'll come back to that.

The other date I want to put up is 637. This is when they take Jerusalem. After the life of Muhammad, the religion of Islam spreads. It's only a few short years before they've got, not only the whole peninsula, but the Levant, and the whole Middle East.



They've got Jerusalem in 637. Now understand, that in Jerusalem there are Jews and Christians and Muslims. They all live together. It's not Shangri-la, it's not paradise, but everybody's getting on. You could live in Jerusalem, you could go to pilgrimage to Jerusalem if you were a Christian, as long as you paid your taxes. So they live together. Islam is not a pacifist religion. It doesn't condone violence, but it allows violence. Muhammad himself was not considered a violent man.

He was actually quite progressive. When it came to women, he mandated that women should be educated. His second wife, Aisha, was very highly trained and took leadership positions, not only in religious matters, but also in state matters. He believed in the education of girls. He brought in laws that stopped infanticide for girls, because they were still killing girl babies if they just wanted boys. He put a stop to that. What he brought in was that women should receive an inheritance. He made it legal for them to receive an inheritance which meant that they could go on and own property and run their own businesses.

In the Quran there are verses that are not pro-women, in much the same way as verses in the New Testament or the Old Testament. They're still hemmed in by their 6th and 7th century patriarchal ideas, but there was some progressiveness. The idea of the hijab and the burqa came in many generations later. It's Persian culture that

imposed itself on the Islam religion. It was not considered Islamic in the time of Muhammad. You won't find it in the Quran.

So Jerusalem was taken by Islam in 637 AD. We're going to come down from the year 637 to the year 1099. The year 1099 is the year of the first crusade, when Pope Urban II in France gave a speech and said, "let's go over to the Holy Land and let's get the Holy City and the Holy Land back for God."

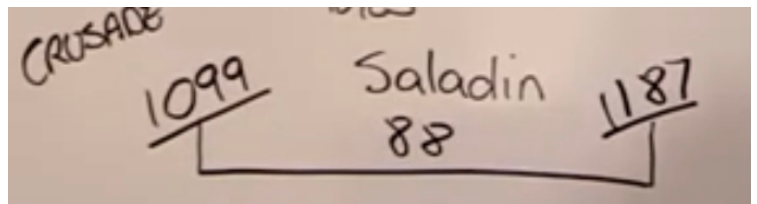
Here's a map of Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East. All that olive green is in the time of the first crusade. It is what is conquered by Islam. It's got the bottom of Spain and Portugal, North Africa and all the Middle East. Yellow is what is known as the Latin Church, the Church of Rome. The pink is the Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church. There's been a split in the Latin Church, so you've got the Church of Rome and you've got the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church has sent word over to



their western brothers and said, "can you give us a hand because we've got some trouble here on our east." And this is where Pope Urban II says, "okay we're not only going to give you a hand, but we're going to get back all that territory." So he has a few reasons why he decides to call for this holy war to get back all this territory. One of them is also that he's not doing too well over where he is and this is a distraction. "Let's get everybody focused on war over there, so you can't see the problems I've got here." It was a major distraction and he sent everybody warring. The problem is some of them left a bit too early, so they're arriving in that area around spring. There's nothing to eat, so they're just pillaging villages, killing Jews on the way. People are going, but they're not necessarily soldiers. They're poor people, they're not organized. It's really a mess, these early crusades.

Eventually the first army arrives in Jerusalem in 1099 and basically what they did was kill everybody. In two days they are said to have killed 30,000 people. Up to 70,000 people were killed in that first war against Jerusalem in 1099 by these so-called Christian crusaders. They killed Jews, they killed Muslims. Apparently the city stunk for months. They took over this area. Then 88 years later, the Muslims start to get a bit more organized as armies and decide that they're going to fight back. They actually didn't fight back for quite some time.

We come down to the year 1187 and there is a sultan called Saladin. I spoke of him last week, but a brother sent me some more information on him. I thought this was a really good read, so I'm just going to share this with you quickly about Saladin.



Saladin was known for his generosity, his piety, he was devoid of fanaticism. During the European conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, the European Christian crusaders slaughtered Muslims, Jews and fellow Christians who were not European like them. So they slaughtered the Christians, too, if they weren't white Europeans. They raped women and smashed babies against walls in a brutal and barbaric raid over the holy lands. Eighty-eight years later when sultan Salahuddin defeated the crusaders and entered Jerusalem, the city's Christians feared for their lives and were absolutely certain that the Muslims would avenge the injustices suffered upon them when the Christian crusaders captured the city. Monks began to conceal their treasures and holy scriptures for fear of looting, while terrified Christian mothers shaved their daughters heads in an attempt to disguise them as boys, so that they would not be raped as had been the case with Muslim girls when the Christians took over Jerusalem. They were projecting their mentality onto the Muslim army that came to liberate the Holy City. If we did that to them, they will definitely do that same to us. When sultan Saladin entered Jerusalem as the victor, he ordered that no Christians should be killed in retaliation. Children, widows and the elderly were, not only spared their lives, but Saladin ordered that they should not be taken into captivity and sold as slaves, which would have been perfectly justified considering the fact that taking captives into slavery was the universal convention of the day. Instead, he let them continue with their lives and did not inflict their families with any cause for concern. Additionally, the sultan granted all Christians, pilgrims and merchants from foreign lands the opportunity to return home safely and without fear of being harmed or taken captive by his forces. They were also permitted to take all their property with them. As there were some women and children among these people, Saladin made sure that they were reunited with their male relatives, so that they would not be harassed or harmed on the journey home. As for eastern Christians, who were native to the city, Saladin granted them permanent rights to stay in their homes and neighborhoods, while also reinstating the right of every Jew to visit and resettle in Jerusalem, after they were banished and persecuted by the Christian crusaders. He conquered Jerusalem on a Saturday and ordered that the churches be open on Sunday for services. He then ordered for the places of worship to be purified as the crusaders had left feces and filth all over the place, while converting some places of worship into horse stables. Saladin participated in this task by taking rose water and scrubbing the floor of the mosque with his own hands. His soldiers followed his example and they spent an entire week washing and cleaning the filth that was left on Jerusalem streets and buildings. When they were done, Jerusalem was purified and the sweet aroma of roses could be smelled everywhere.

That just paints a totally different picture of the barbaric Muslims that the Christian crusaders were rising up to fight against in this time period. Where we get these caricatured stereotypes of Muslims being barbarians and child killers and even the Jews as being child killers, is propaganda that all came out of these crusades. There were many crusades. History kind of gives us, basically, four but for about two, three hundred years there were lots of crusades.

Those crusades were not just against Muslims, they were against Jews, they were against other Christians. Wars even in the West that were against the Albigenses were considered a crusade as well. They (the Popes) went after anybody and in doing that they gathered the people for these armies based on propaganda and projection that they were placing on these foreign people, whether it was Jews or Muslims. They kind of boxed them all together. History tells us there was good and bad on both sides, but it's not all as we see. There's many good reports and even during these crusades, they still did a lot of trading and working together. Sometimes Muslims actually went and were mercenaries and fought on the side of the Christians and vice versa. So it was really quite a messy time period. The crusades aren't that easy to understand.

When we think of these crusades, we come down to 2001. George Bush stood on the front lawn of the Whitehouse and said, "we are now starting a crusade." ....

...(By way of contrast) I'll just read a portion of a speech delivered on June 4, 2009 by President Obama. He says:

"I am honored to be in the timeless city of Cairo, and to be hosted by two remarkable institutions. For over a thousand years, Al-Azhar has stood as a beacon of Islamic learning, and for over a century, Cairo University has been a source of Egypt's advancement. Together, you represent the harmony between tradition and progress. I am grateful for your hospitality, and the hospitality of the people of Egypt. I am also proud to carry with me the goodwill of the American people, and a greeting of peace from Muslim communities in my country: assalaamu alaykum.

We meet at a time of tension between the United States and Muslims around the world – tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate. The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of co-existence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars. More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations. Moreover, the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalization led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam.

Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims. The attacks of September 11th, 2001 and the continued efforts of these extremists to engage in violence against civilians has led some in my country to view Islam as inevitably hostile not only to America and Western countries, but also to human rights. This has bred more fear and mistrust.

So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, and who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. This cycle of suspicion and discord must end.

I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world..."

This speech was entitled "A New Beginning" and this set the tone for Obama's work with the Middle East at the beginning of his presidency. This is his first year.

Then we see in 2012, Obama now stands before the United Nations General Assembly and he gives a speech on September 25. I'll just read the portion of the speech that most upset the Protestant Christians in America.

He said, "the future must not belong to those who slander the prophet of Islam." now i'm just going to also read that in context. He says,

"It is time to leave the call of violence and the politics of division behind. On so many issues, we face a choice between the promise of the future or the prisons of the past, and we cannot afford to get it wrong. We must seize this moment, and America stands ready to work with all who are willing to embrace a better future.

The future must not belong to those who target Coptic Christians in Egypt. It must be claimed by those in Tahrir Square who chanted, "Muslims, Christians, we are one." The future must not belong to those who bully women. It must be shaped by girls who go to school and those who stand for a world where our daughters can live their dreams just like our sons."

At that point, the Assembly rose and applauded him.

"The future must not belong to those corrupt few who steal a country's resources. It must be won by the students and entrepreneurs, the workers and business owners who seek a broader prosperity for all people. Those are the women and men that America stands with. Their's is the vision we will support.

The future must not belong to those who slander the prophet of Islam. But to be credible, those who condemn that slander must also condemn the hate we see in the images of Jesus Christ that are desecrated or churches that are destroyed, or the Holocaust that is denied.”

So I just wanted to place that. He also says,

“Let us condemn incitement against Sufi Muslims and Shia pilgrims.”

And then he goes on to quote Gandhi about tolerance.

(“It's time to heed the words of Gandhi, "Intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit." )

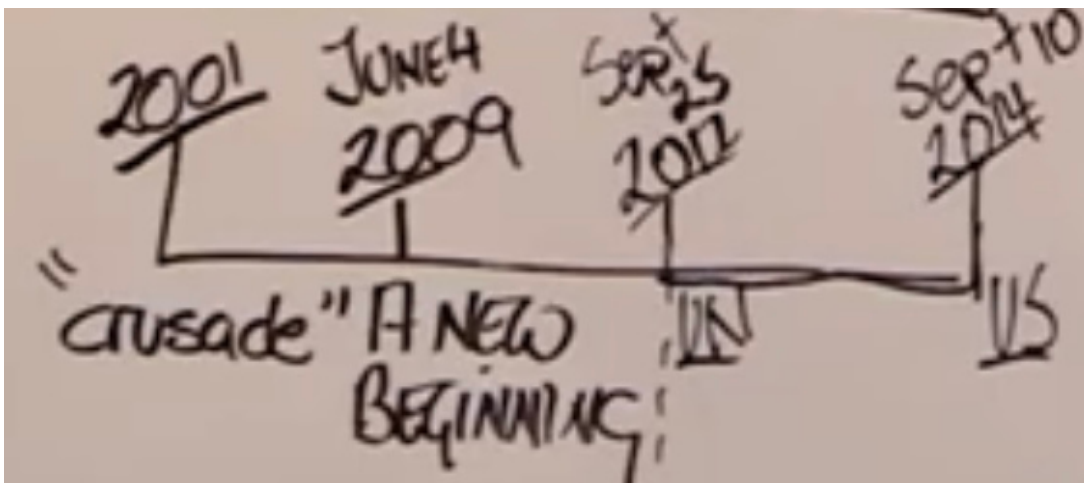
The next speech that I want to refer to is a press statement that he released in 2014, on September 10. For time I won't read much of it, but in paragraph four he says.

“Now let's make two things clear: ISIL is not “Islamic.” No religion condones the killing of innocents, and the vast majority of ISIL's victims have been Muslim. And ISIL is certainly not a state. It was formerly al Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq, and has taken advantage of sectarian strife and Syria's civil war to gain territory on both sides of the Iraq-Syrian border.”

He goes on to talk about Iraq.

Obama's 2012 speech was to the UN, his 2014 speech was to the U.S.

The statement, that ISIL is not Islamic, had the Fox News and the Protestant world foaming at the mouth. The point of this, is that during this time period here, between 2001 and 2014, which we know had our increase of knowledge internally. For us, it



was a message that was going to give us time. During this time period, we know that the world isn't being plowed. When we line up our lines...when we look at the line of the Nethimins during 2001 to 2014, this is a period that we

should have been learning from as well, that we could have been listening to, that

Barack Obama is also speaking to us to make sure that when we understood the prophecy of 2001 and what happened at 9/11, that we have that and ...connect that the right way...with our understanding of the Muslim people.

So we have much to learn from just considering these speeches of Barack Obama. When we look at our line here (line of 126), what Adventism took from Protestant thinking. What they've immersed themselves in for 126 years and we now have to come out of that thinking. It's been a progressive work to come out of those prejudiced, bigoted thoughts. Whether it's racism, sexism, homophobia or xenophobia. All these thoughts that we've had, the misconceptions that we may have had towards Muslims and Islam also need to be corrected. We need to be able to not bear false witness against our brethren, against another person.

That does not mean that we look at their religion as being legitimate. We understand that these are counterfeit religions. But we need to look at each person as an individual and at the caricatures or what misunderstandings we may have held of just what their religion represented. Christianity has some things wrong with it. That's what has developed extreme right-wing Christian views, but we understand it has the core of truth. The reform line is about bringing out that truth, letting go of the error and letting truth...light come in and dispel any darkness. As that light dispels darkness, it should also dispel our erroneous thinkings on other human beings.

When we think that there are 1.8 billion Muslims in the world, it's the second largest religion, and that the majority of the people that are going to make up the great mountain at the end of the world will not be only those of the Seventh-day Adventist church, but that many will come out of greater darkness, ...we need to have these people in a correct view.

So we'll finish there for time. There's much more that could be said about Islam. It is a fascinating history to look into. Just to have an overview of how they developed and who they are and what the majority of the people believe. One thing I'd like to add is that they, when they look at the Quran, much the same as when we look at the Bible, they believe that there's certain rules that have to be used, that there's a methodology. Their methodology involves historical context and also bringing in all the verses that speak to a particular subject. So if somebody like Ayatollah Khomeini issues a fatwa like he did in 1989 on Salman Rushdie, it is seen as an illegal fatwa, because in order to be legal, it has to have the consensus of the whole Muslim world. They do not have an overriding cleric like a pope for them to issue that fatwa. It has to be a consensus of the whole Muslim world. So academics and theologians and lawyers will get together and come to a decision together. No one individual, whether it was Ayatollah Khomeini or Osama bin Laden, can issue a fatwa. Those are extreme positions by a minority group. There are certain things we should understand about how their religion works. It just doesn't work like, one person can come out and issue a fatwa like that.



Also the understanding of jihad...jihad does not mean Holy War, it means struggle. Muhammad talked about the lesser jihad and the greater jihad. The greater jihad is our struggle with sin. It's an inward struggle. The lesser jihad is the outward struggle. It can involve violence, but not always. That's not the norm. It involves anything where we come into contact with our external world and we're struggling. It can be financial struggle, it can be a physical struggle, but he emphasized the greater jihad over the lesser jihad. As Christians, we should be able to relate to that as well. Internal struggle is the greater struggle than the external struggle.

So many things that he taught, that as a counterfeit, we understand that it comes from somewhere, you know these are borrowed thoughts, but at the same time they're not necessarily wrong thoughts, unless you deny the one Jesus Christ as your God. That's the downfall of the the Muslim religion.

On that note we'll finish and we'll close with prayer.

Dear Father in heaven, we thank you, dear God, that you see men not as we see, but you see every soul made in your creation and in your image, Lord. We pray for your mind,..that we would esteem others better than ourselves. Lord, we have a great work to do for people of all persuasions, so please help us to rid our minds of any false witness. We pray for an understanding of this increase of knowledge as it's coming to us through our leaders that whatever it is that we need to put aside, may we be prepared to do that so that we can face the final test and not fall. I thank you, Lord, for your wonderful love in sending your son. We understand that he is the son of God...that his life and his death and his resurrection and his ministry offers us so much more and others are missing out on that wonderful revelation. Pray that we would be able to share that, that it would be made manifest not only in how we speak it, but how we live that surrendered life to you and to your son. And so as we leave now and prepare for the rest of the Sabbath day, we ask that you continue to be with us and that you would bless those that aren't with us this morning...  
...And, Father, do not leave us until you bless us. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

Overview of board work is on the last page

This is a composite that shows the board work.

