**Lesson 3: Muhammad: the prophet of God?**

Pages you have include:

Timeline/notes pages…

Sura 43—your selected chapter. (don’t be afraid)

Page 28 from *Encountering the World of Islam* (good summary of concept)

Start with the four letters: J K M P

 Brought Lazarus back from the dead (J)

Was an orphan from age 6 (M)

Tried to decapitate one guy, missed, sliced off an ear (P)

 Once threw golf club in anger, breaking it (K)

 Killed on a cross (J, P)

 Argued with religious leaders of his day (all)

 Healed sick (J, P)

Defeated death (J) (Risen movie looks awesome to me)

 Coached sons and other kids in local youth sports (K, maybe P, M?)

 Cared for widows and orphans (all)

 Sometimes fought with Jews (J,P,M)

 Known to lose patience behind the wheel while driving (K)

 Teach lessons based on God’s revelation (all)

Beheaded several hundred (700-800) Jewish men who had surrendered (M)

 Walked on water (J, P)

 Walked on water without sinking (J)

 Had between 9 and 11 wives (M)

Keep that exercise for the end…

1) For Muslims, Muhammad is the most important person who ever lived. They place him higher than Jesus in their understanding of spiritual truth. They do not believe that Muhammad is divine, but he is at the apex of human perfectibility.

Website notation as follows; *God chose to send Muhammad (pbuh) to deliver His final message, which maintains the core teachings of all the previous revelations. The book sent to Muhammad (pbuh) was the Quran, which was revealed as guidance for all of humanity* (peace be upon him!)

2) Muhammad is the human agent through whom the Quran was revealed. (Most Muslims will not say that he wrote it, but is the recipient of it)

3) Muhammad is the model for proper obedience to God, many Muslims regard him as sinless. (not his claim, but!!) They examine his life story over and over and his sayings and actions became the basis of Islamic law. (Famous Islamic theologian al-Ghazali even said that one’s toenails should be cut on the basis of the example set by Muhammad.)

4) any negative attitude towards Muhammad is deeply offensive to Muslims.

Salman Rushdie and the Satanic Verses…

(satanic verses are Vs 19-20 of Sura 53…the Have ye thought upon [Al-Lat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-l%C4%81t) and [Al-‘Uzzá](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-%E2%80%98Uzz%C3%A1) and [Manāt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man%C4%81t), the third, the other? These are the exalted *gharāniq*, whose intercession is hoped for. (Allāt, al-'Uzzā and Manāt were three goddesses worshipped by the Meccans)

Well, can’t have that! Pagan goddesses? So the claim is that Satan tricked Muhammad, verses later re-interpreted as about sons and daughters?

Sura 2:106 “Any revelation We cause to be superseded or forgotten, We replace with something better or similar. Do you [Prophet] not know that God has power over everything?” (and 2 was chronologically late, so that provides coverage)

the Charlie Hebdo shootings in France.

Some suggest that Muslims can tolerate an attack on Allah moreso than one on Muhammad…

5) Regardless of what we may want, Muhammad has had an absolutely incredible impact on history and contemporary world realities…

Not trying to speculate what people think about him or what has been written after he died or what enemies suggest about him…the simple timeline of his life, what we all agree happened, he really did…what man emerges???

**Timeline of events:**

 570: Muhammad is born in Mecca. Father (Abd Allah) dies before he is born.

 576: Mother (Amina) dies., orphan cared for by grandfather.

 Old man soon dies, kind uncle Abu Tahib takes care of him.

 Tribe is powerful, yet poor.

 Muhammad a shepherd in the desert for a time

 582: (age 12) Accompanies uncle with a trading caravan to Syria

595: Man of ability and good character, age 25, works for Khadija (40 year old widow) on a caravan to Syria. He’s so successful she proposes marriage.

 Muhammad agrees and she gives love, wealth and an influential position

(compare with Jesus’ position of influential birth/heritage?—Nathaniel in John 1:46, *“Nazareth? Can anything good come from there?*)

 Married for 25 years until Khadija’s death. 2 sons and 2 daughters (2 sons die)

 During these years, associates with chief people, becomes familiar with religions and political situations.

 One Khadija’s relatives was a Christian—discussions??

 Muhammad knows that Jews and Christians did not worship images. Comes to realize images in the Ka’aba are not gods…

 From what we know, Muhammad was a sincere seeker of God.

Acts 19:1-4? There are those who were sincere, but wrong, only the baptism of John…

Acts 19:24-26? Apollos has to be better instructed by Priscilla and Aquila

Jesus in Matthew 7:21-23??

Either way, Muhammad now had money and time and leisure for travel, but never seems to make strong attempt to gain from Bible or it’s holders.

At some point in this progression Donald Trump’s rise comes to mind…what have to offer, how getting so many to listen???

610 Age 40, goes into cave to meditate…tradition says Gabriel told him to recite. But not told what to recite!

 96:1-5, “Read! In the name of your Lord who created: 2He created man from a clinging form. 3Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One 4who taught by the pen, 5who taught man what he did not know.

 Muhammad knew from the Jews of prophets to their people, but God had never sent a prophet to Arabs, was it him? Wife confirms it is!

 But for months, no other words…depression and even suicidal.

612 other revelations in various forms: Gabriel, only a voice, a bell sounding. Message in a dream, or his thoughts. Frame would become agitated, sweat, people would write down what he said. Convinced words were not his own…

 Starts giving message of only one God, man is a slave, submit. Mercy and grace so be grateful. Judgment will bring sensual paradise or hellfire for bad deeds (next week’s lesson and Sura for reading)

 Muslims insist this is divine revelation. We can see the one true God piece from his Jewish awareness and the resurrection from the Christian voices around…

Wife believes and so does young cousin, Ali (later son-in-law) and adopted son Zaid.

(What did Jesus’ family think of his claims initially? Mark 3;21, *When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”*)

Abu Bakr (honorable merchant, first convert)

humble people join, influential merchants and others mock…accused him of sorcery and fraud…

Men of Mecca begin to persecute his 100, but powerful uncle protects him.

Encourages followers with stories of ancient people facing suffering (which we still do with Revelation, etc)

Building the community not through blood ties, but by profession of faith. One who converts is called *Muslim* (Which means one who submits)

“From the first, Islam was conceived to be a church-state, a religion expressed in a political society, in which Muhammad was, under God, the ruler in both matters religious and civil. His position resembled that of Moses in Israel. The powers in Mecca realized that a state within their state was being created and they deeply resented its presence.

Jesus coming not as a political king—people have always wanted that!

Trump offering what? Position and power! money and prestige!

People want that, so they tolerate the person who’s offering it.

I don’t care for his tone or attitude, but I’ll ride with him because he has money and power…then I’ll do better!

620 Two great losses…uncle Talib died, then wife died…

Sought comfort by marrying a widow of a believer as well as the girl Aisha (7-9 year old daughter of Abu Bakr)

Later wives will include the wife of his adopted son. Arab law prohibited, but that’s okay, Muhammad received a revelation saying it was okay for him…

Each of his wives had a separate room and he made the rounds. it is not surprising that peace did not always prevail in the Prophet’s household…

(Joe Orr, no house is big enough for 2 women, let alone 9-11!)

“Most of his marriages were for political gain and for the spread of Islam.

In Arabia, no one could carry on the work of reform and uplifting unless he belonged to, or was related to some specific and respectable tribe. Thus, in the interest of his mission, the Prophet (pbuh) needed inter-tribal relationships. He wanted to weld the quarreling tribal and clannish factions into one Muslim body, as brethren in faith (Ikhwan fi’d-din).

For instance, his wife Juwayreeyah (ra) belonged to the Banu Mustaliq clan, which was very powerful. The entire clan was a bitter enemy of Islam from the start, and they were finally suppressed by military action. When the Prophet (pbuh) married Juwayreeyah (ra), the Muslims released all their prisoners, saying that they could not keep the prophet’s relatives in bondage. It was due to this marriage that the whole clan of Banu Mustaliq accepted Islam and became peaceful and obedient to the laws of the new Islaamic state.” (Quora.com)

33:50, “Prophet, we have made lawful for you the wives who’s bride gift you have paid, and any slaves God has assigned to you through war, and the daughters of your uncles and aunts on your father’s and mother’s sides, who migrated with you. Also any believing woman who has offered herself to the Prophet (waving any bride gift) and whom the prophet wishes to wed—this is only for you Prophet, and not the rest of the believers.”

33:52, You [Prophet] are not permitted to take any further wives, nor to exchange the wives you have for others, even if these attract you with their beauty. But this does not apply to your slave-girls: God is watchful over all.

622 No longer able to progress in Mecca, he moves to Yathrib (later Medina), (280 miles NE) more favorable climate.

 In the previous year (621) pilgrims from Mecca had come and sworn allegiance to him and Muhammad swore to protect them…way they made bonds and grew numbers!

 Been 13 years of struggle, but then has this night vision where he’s carried to Jerusalem and sees all the victory and progress

 Akin to Satan offering kingdoms to Jesus in Matthew 4:8

 Muhammad threatened the power players of Mecca, urged his followers to migrate north. he and Abu hid in a cave and then head up to join rest.

\*This migration is called the Hijra and all Muslim calendars and dates start from here as point 0.

During all years in Mecca Muhammad never claimed he could do any miracles to support claims. The Quran was its own/his miracle.

Constantly said I am a man like you, need forgiveness like you, a man of the people…

Rides into Yahtrib on camel, everyone wants him to stay with them, he lets his camel decide…where it lays down, he stays and builds first Mosque. Preached his first sermon on a Friday, hence its significance…

Becomes defacto civil leader, rules wisely, more peace in Medina, situation growns..

Some Jews in Medina accept, most say he’s not of David’s family, ergo…

He counters by saying you’ve erased references to me from your Scriptures.

 How many prophecies about Jesus?? (400+)

623 Next year, break with Jews is complete. Forget Day of Atonement, now we’ll have Ramadan (month of fasting)

\*In the midst of a meeting, turns from facing North, they had been facing Jerusalem…and faces South (towards Mecca)… can’t please the Jews, we’ll side with the Arabs!

Justifies by saying that’s where the Ka’aba that Abraham built first is any way!

 Now Islam is breaking and presenting as their own religio-political system.

624 During the second year, funds exhausted, people’s patience thin…

What choice? (militant) 9:73, “Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be tough with them. Hell is their final home— an evil destination!”

 Jesus weeps over Jerusalem…Muhammad starts raiding caravans.

Muhammad began to do what Bedouin chieftains usually did when in financial difficulties: raid the caravans of his enemies. He had tried for 13 years by peaceful means, now he would turn to the sword. hurt them and help self at same time. (party sent out during sacred months, but okayed by a revelation to Muhammad)

Great success at Badr made Muhammad believe God was with him. Convinced followers they were on the winning side and would profit from victory. Indicated that POWER was more effective than PERSUASION (still see in force today!!)

Seeing Jews as enemies, Muhammad determines to get rid of them, accuses a tribe of breaking treaty, besieges and takes their land.

625 Army of 1,000 come and kick his butt. He’s wounded, but they back off and go home…

Muhammad has revelations that blame the loss on the Muslim soldiers and tell them to take lessons from the suffering.

626 Defeats one Jewish tribe and allows them to flee on foot, carrying what they can.

627 Defeats a second Jewish tribe, but they are sold into slavery and the 800 men massacred…All Jews in and around Medina are eliminated..

Any of this sounding like the start of Christianity as Paul and Silas travel and preach???

Final attempt to destroy Muslims in Mecca, army of 10,000 stymied by the trench the Muslims dug…they left and never challenged again.

628 Muhammad still wants to go back home…

 Treaty is made, neither side will fight for 10 years…Muhammad and followers are allowed in the city unarmed…

 Disciples see as defeat, he claims victory.

48:28, *It was He who sent His Messenger, with guidance and the religion of Truth, to show that it is above all [other] religions. God suffices as a witness: 29Muhammad is the Messenger of God.*

630 Decides to overtake Mecca anyway, goes to Medina, gets 10,000 swords and comes home. His bitter rival sees resistance is useless, gives up Mecca without a fight and becomes a Muslim!

Conversions by force begin to take place…9:5, *Kill them where you encounter them”*

632 10th year of hirja, final pilgrimage, 100,000 followers…performs all the rites of the Ka’aba and enfolds them into the religion..

June 8th, now ill, has passed mantle to Abu Bakr and dies on wife’s lap…

 Bakr becomes first head (caliph) followed by 3 others, all assassinated by Muslims!!

 And so it grew from there!! (by the sword!)

See the measured and found wanting page (28) copy of the summary..

 Back to my four letters JKMP

Not denying Muhammad may have started out sincerely, done some good, helped some people, sought the Lord…lost sight along the way

(Solomon had same struggles!!)

Look at where Muhammad finished…His example is like my example, like Peter’s example…

 Some good, hopefully much good…BUT STILL SOME BAD!

I try hard, I’ve also threatened fellow golfers with a 7 iron! You don’t want to give me or Peter too much lead/power or you end up with another Trump or Hitler!

There are people who support all of the candidates right now and they all have their defenders…this is what it sounds like!

“Human nature leads Christians to focus on Muhammad’s human failures and emphasize his weaknesses without recognizing his strengths. Can we identify Muhammad as a progressive reformer who dedicated himself to preaching against idolatry and the mistreatment of women and orphans? A leader who unified a feudal, tribal society into a community governed by laws? A fellow human being an sinner? Encountering, P. 9 (Well, yes, but that doesn’t make him Messiah worthy!)

Can we see him in light of his day/culture? Did David or Solomon have perfect records, marriages? (No) How about our spiritual leaders of today? (imperfect)… How do we respond when people oppose us?

”If we want to find an example of one who was tempted but did not sin, only the life of christ can be our model… EXACTLY!

Jesus!!

 Not only handled the power and fame better…

 There’s that little issue of handling life and death better!!

 David, Hitler, Presidents, all the rest of us die and then are no more!!

Reminder: In Acts 2 Luke makes a point to contrast the lives and deaths of Jesus and David. David was a great man for the Jews, still dead and buried! Jesus however, raised and reigns!

Acts 2:22-36, 22 *“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25 David said about him: “ ‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope,27because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. 28You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’*

*29 “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact…36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

These four cards—One of these things is not like the others! (Purple one!)

**Possible reasons why Muhammad did not become a Christian:**

From *Encountering the world of Islam* p.37,

1) No Bible in Arabic. (AD 837) Missionaries had translated into other tongues, Syriac and Chinese, but not Arabic? Not worth the time? (resented insinuation)

2) The sad spectacle of Christian disunity…he’s looking to unite warring Arab tribes and the Christian example won’t get the job done!

3) Negative effects of all of Christianity’s political ties with empires.

4) He’s self-proclaimed!! Self-authenticated. Greatest power and/or weakness

Jews didn’t seem to want to bother to share their faith, Christians seemed to lack the love, purity of life, and spiritual power needed to make them effective missionaries.

**Different Perspectives on Muhammad**

From a Muslim point of view, both the Quran and the traditions (*Hadith)*  make references to physical marks on Muhammad that are viewed as proof of his prophetic status…

“What is one to make of the claim that a mole on the back of Muhammad is evidence that he is a messenger from God?

The Muslim finds the question almost insulting…The Quran tells us that God gave this sign for people to believe…if the mole were not a sign, Muhammad would have told us so!

Robert Morey, critic, writes a pamphlet, “By their moles ye shall know them” and is utterly disgusted that Muslims could be so gullible…

Muslims respect their scriptures, their prophet, and the traditions about him. Morey has no respect for any of the three.

To Morey, they are making a mountain out of a mole, for Muslims, Morey will suffer eternal punishment for his unbelief (And there is a lot of that in the Quran!)

**Four contemporary views of Mohammad**

Orthodox Muslim: Muhammad is the Prophet of God, greatest human being, moral and spiritual exemplar of humanity.

Traditional Christian: Muhammad is a tool of Satan, totally wicked, agent of vice, illiterate dictator, deluded false prophet who is the enemy of the gospel.

current evangelical: fundamentally misunderstands the gospel, is not a prophet, but is not as evil as the traditional view makes him out to be.

liberal Christian: Though Muhammad misunderstood the gospel, he is in some sense a prophet of God who restored monotheism to a pagan culture and has brought much good to the world…

My own view: Intelligent persuasive mind who knew how to unite his own people for a common good, appealed to their desires to work themselves into salvation and offered tangible opportunities and rewards for doing so…

**The Life of Muhammad**

There are about 70,000 biographies about Jesus…countless thousands about Muhammad…

Beverly lists 25 key incidents in the life of Muhammad on pp. 36-38…

 Poor orphan himself.

 Became a trustworthy negotiator of disputes…

 Successful merchant…

He and his followers were brutally persecuted by their own people for stances.

“after 12 years of persecution, fled to Yathrib (later Medina). Muhammad came to see persecution and suffering as abhorrent, the pursuit of success as his path, and that success was a sign of God’s blessing” (P. 7 Encountering the World of Islam)

When grew in power, began to show signs of corruption… Faithful to his first wife, Khadija, until her death, later married between 9-11 women. Most were widows of his early followers. Political marriages, one was a young girl, several were slaves, one the wife of his adopted son.

Sought to ID with Jews, but they opposed and he killed 800 men. Sold women and kids into slavery.

He and people raided caravans, accused of breaking treaties.

Large percentage being political, especially military and persuasions to unite a warring people… (no real miracles nor deity claims)

We must neither overstate nor understate the reality of the sword in the life of Muhammad. He was primarily a religious leader, but he believed in holy war (*jihad)*. He could be gentle and compassionate with his family and friends but the bloody conquests of his enemies make it impossible to call him “the prince of peace”. He could be forgiving to those he conquered, but it was on his terms as the victor”

**Common claims about Muhammad** (Make and use “Agree” (green) or “Disagree” (red) cards…

1) He was illiterate:

Orthodox Muslims believe this and use as a proof of the divine nature of the Quran… Quotes from Encountering the World of Islam “I do not know how to read”…

Western scholars say he had to have some writing skills as merchant and political leader…some room for debate…

2) Muhammad was stupid…

 In reality, extreme intelligence in political, economic and military strategies.

He was one of the people of the world who was more shrewd than people of the Bible when dealing with the world?

3) Muhammad was an idolater…

In reality, he grew up in that pagan culture, but had a radical assertion of monotheism and a contempt for idol worship…

4) Creature of lust who used women as sexual objects…

Evidence suggests a decent husband in most aspects. Did have access to concubines...runs counter to Christian idea… In the Islamic tradition, where Muhammad can do no wrong, there are stories about his sexual prowess…

Special cases only for the Prophet—more than four wives?

5) Muhammad was against freedom.

generally speaking, this is a fair criticism…some space for some Christians and Jews, but no tolerance for Muslims who abandoned their faith… He was very harsh on anyone who made fun of his prophetic claims.. (fear dictator) Muhammad became more intolerant as he faced opposition and gained more political power.

6) He was racist…

there is some involvement in the slave trade to be noted, but first convert was a black slave…

Some disdain for Christians and Jews, but over religious issues, not ethnic ones.

7) Muhammad was anti-women…

Was close to many women in his family. He did believe that women were in some respects, inferior to men. Very chauvinistic attitude in regards to law, religious position, and husband-wife relations… *These are very divisive issues in the Islamic world today.*

When we pull out the “hit them once” passages, bear in mind that someone will pull out the “Beat and kill slaves and put out eyes and teeth passages”

8) He had many bizarre beliefs…

There are some traditions about some superstitions and claims about demonic powers…strange beliefs about proper bathroom etiquette.

9) Cold-blooded killer…

Was the leader of a military power/army that did sometimes overstep? (his killing the Jewish men of Qurayzah and his approval of the death of some of his critics set him apart from Jesus…

10) Muhammad was a hypocrite who simply wanted power…

In reality he endured a lot of criticism and animosity for his claims (even from family) No evidence at all that he was insincere in his religious beliefs.. (devil has worked wonders through people who are sincerely wrong!)

He was generous and did not live in luxury…

11) Believed his faith because he hoped for a carnal heaven where sinful pleasures abound.. (all the 72 virgins talk)

There are verses in the Quran that speak of wine and women for faithful men. Also believe in that for women as well… (amplified in later traditions, but not believed to be sinful in heaven, but gift of Allah)

12) Muhammad forced people to convert…

Not true. But there were times when tribal leaders converted and there was more pressure on the people (Like Constantine the emperor to Christianity). And there were times when it was financially advantageous to convert…

13) Muhammad is the anti-Christ.

Islam represents the most serious threat to Christianity in our lifetime. Muhammad did not know the gospel well, fragmentary knowledge of the Bible that he distorted. He missed many of the fundamental truths of Jesus.

Any summary of the life of Muhammad shows an emphasis on the sword and military battle. While this may be somewhat consistent with Old Testament warring, it is hard to reconcile Muhammad’s life with that of Christ in the gospels.

in the end, the lack of symmetry between Muhammad and Jesus is our most telling objection to the suggestion that Muhammad was a prophet.

Remember our four letters: J K M P…who would you take cues from? (probably all) but who would you go “all in” with? (only 1!!)