

The Christian Response to Islamic Persecution

By Doug Hamilton

- In the early hours of Monday, February 23, Islamic State fighters attacked several Christian villages along the Khabur River in north eastern Syria. Four Christians enrolled in the Assyrian militia were killed and one young civilian child. One Christian woman was raped by the Islamic invaders before being slaughtered. As many as 400, including women and children—were taken hostage.
- On February 17th, 2015, Hussein bin Mahmoud, a jurist of Sharia law for the Islamic State, said in a published article and appearing in various jihadi websites that all Christian churches in Cairo must be demolished.
- On February 15, 2015, ISIS jihadists released showing the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians who had been captured by militants in Libya. They lined them up on the beach and beheaded them while the Coptic Christians cried out, “Jesus help us!”
- December 18th, 2014: U.S. friend-and-ally Saudi Arabia—the birthplace of Islam where not one single church is allowed to exist—has now decreed the death penalty for anyone caught trying to smuggle Bibles or any other “publications that have prejudice to any other religious belief other than Islam.”
- On December 12th, 2014, ISIS had killed ‘huge numbers’ of believers in Jesus. ‘Islamic State turned up and said to the children, “you say the words that you will follow Mohammad”’. The children, all under 15, four of them, said “no, we love Yesua; we have always loved Yesua; we have always followed Yesua; Yesua has always been with us”. They were all killed at the hands of the Jihadists.

Those are just some of the more major Islamic terrorist events to have occurred in the past few months. Over the past few decades there have been thousands of acts of terrorism committed against Christians by Muslims.

- 02/05/2015 –Damascus, Syria: The Army of Islam shoots rockets into a Christian neighborhood, killing 10 and wounding 50.
- 01/02/2015 –Nigeria: Muslim terrorists kill 15 and wound 40 in a Christian village.
- 12/27/2014 –Nigeria: Muslims kill 10 Christians.
- 12/17/2014 –Nigeria: Fulani terrorists kill ten Christians.
- 12/05/2014 –Central Africa Republic: Muslims kill 12, wound 13 Christian villagers.
- 12/03/2014 –Boko Haram burns down church in Nigeria, killing 11.
- 12/02/2014 –Muslim terrorist kill 36 Christians in Kenya.
- 11/29/2014 –Islamists shoot up a Christian village in Nigeria, murdering 40 Christians.
- 11/22/2014 –The Religion of Peace jihadists stopped a bus and killed 24 more.
- 11/02/2014 –Nigerian Muslims kill 12 more.
- 10/23/2014 –Central Africa Republic Muslims kill 30 more Christians.
- 10/19/2014 –Nigerian Muslims kill 31 more Christians, including 2 preachers.
- 09/24/2014 –Nigerian Muslims kill 20 more while burning ten church buildings.
- 09/06/2014 –Nigerian Boko Haram soldiers kill 100 while attacking a Bible college.
- 09/01/2014 –Boko Haram killed 350 more Christians from the villages.
- 08/30/2014 –Boko Haram chopped up 40 more Christians with their machetes.

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- 08/06/2014 –Nigeria Muslims killed another 997 more Christian villagers.

As Open Doors, a tracker of global Christian persecution stated last month, that in “every region of the world—Africa, Asia and even in the Americas—persecution of Christians is growing. There was not one country on the 2015 list that decreased its acts of violence and persecution from the previous year. The escalation of violence over the past year was so great that the threshold used to create the list had to be increased. With nearly twice the number of Christians persecuted over the previous year, it's clear why Christians should be very concerned.” Of the fifty nations in the world which are persecuting Christians, forty of them are from Islamic nations. Of the top ten, nine are Islamic countries. It is obvious that the Islamic nations of the world have some kind of grudge against Christians.

What do all Islamic terrorist groups, including Hamas, Hezbollah, LET, ISIS, Tehriki-Taliban, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Pakistani Taliban, Al-Qaeda and the many dozens of others have in common?

- 1) They all claim to be following true Islam as spelled out by their Prophet Muhamad.
- 2) They all quote the Koran and Islamic Hadiths for their authority.
- 3) They all have the goal to eliminate not only all Christians, but anyone who does not believe in Islamic rule of the world.

But wait, isn't Islam the religion of peace? The media and politicians have repeatedly proclaimed that religion of the prophet Muhammad is the religions of peace. There are also many peaceful Muslims in the world who claim their religion has been hijacked. Yet, the millions of Islamic terrorists continue to quote the historical documents of Islam and are willing to die for what they believe concerning their beliefs. What is it that the terrorist know that the media, some of our political leaders and the peaceful Muslims do not understand? Perhaps it would be good to take a journey back through time and see who is telling the truth. Are the Jihadist speaking the truth about their version of Islam?

We must understand the “peaceful” beginnings of Islam.

First of all, Muhammad and the people of the region are the descendants through the line of Ishmael, the son of Abraham's concubine Hagar. It says in Genesis 16:11-12, “*The angel of the LORD said to her further, ‘Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has given heed to your affliction. ¹² He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers.’*” From that prophecy of God we learn the following.

1. That the descendants of Ishmael would reside in the region.
2. That the descendants of Ishmael would be a stubborn and rebellious people.
3. That the descendants of Ishmael would always be at odds against their neighbors.

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It is true that Ishmael's descendants did take residence in the area East of Israel. It is also true according to the biblical record that they were a stubborn, stiff-necked people for the God of the Bible and that they were always warring with each other. Fast-forward a couple of thousand years.

Beginning of Islam

It was during the reign of Justinian of the Byzantine Empire around AD 560. They controlled Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. The Sasanid emperors of Persia were in command of the area west of present day Iran. Because of the differences in their cultures, the two empires warred greatly in the regions between India and the Mediterranean.

As a result of the Byzantine-Sasinid conflict, the normal trade routes were altered from the Persian Gulf, Euphrates Valley and Syria, taking them through Mecca, which is located in present day southeastern Saudi Arabia. Every time a trading caravan passed through the area, the Arabs made a profit, resulting in the rapid increase of the economy and opportunities for those who lived there.

AD 570

It was under those conditions that Muhammad was born in Mecca, being of one of the dominant tribes of the area, the Qu'raish tribe, specifically the Banu Hashim clan. He was considered a part of an elite group called the League of the Virtuous. Since Mecca was a great trade city and a stopping place for merchants and businessmen of all races, religions, and countries, it also brought with it the struggles of any boomtown, including a decline in the moral structure. Not much is known about this man during the first forty years of his life other than the fact that he married a rich widow.

AD 610

Muhammad claimed that after meditating in the desert, God had revealed many messages to him concerning life. These revelations came from the angel Gabriel, who Muhammad claimed God had used to call him to publish his religion. Muhammad's revelations were written shortly after his death and they are now called the Qur'an. After these experiences in the desert, Muhammad claimed to be a prophet of God with the great desire to guide others by God's message.

AD 617

So, he began to preach to those around him. Converts to Islam slowly came in the beginning. His first convert was his aging wife, the second was his cousin Ali, the third was his ex-servant Zaid and the fourth was Abu Bekr.

The people of Mecca at this time were involved in a religion called Ka'aba meaning "black stone," in which they literally worshipped a black stone believed to be a meteorite. Those following this religion believed that many objects possessed spirits and power. There were also a number of Christians and Jews living in the area. Therefore, Muhammad's message asserting the lordship of Allah was not well received at first. The people called him a sorcerer and false prophet and claimed that he was possessed.

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September 24, AD 622

He was condemned by Meccan authorities, forcing him to flee Mecca. This escape is now called the year of the Hegira ("the Flight") and marks the first year on the Muslim calendar. Muhammad found refuge in the rival city of Medina where he was accepted and gathered a fairly large following.

He eventually became a magistrate for the city and was able to successfully combine religion and politics. Demanding that the Jews and Christians worship under his rule, they refused and were bullied. Many left the city for other areas.

Many in Mecca chose to follow him in accepting his message. From Medina he issued a holy war (Jihad: meaning to struggle) against Mecca, robbing the caravans for his own personal gain.

[Note: There are many Muslims that claim the word *Jihad* is in reference to striving in your peaceful relationship with Allah. This does not line up with the facts.]

Muhammad originally applied the word “Jihad”, meaning to *struggle*, in description to a series of violent caravan raids executed against the trade routes in 623 CE. Firestone, Reuven (1999). *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam*. Oxford University Press.

Of the 199 times the word Jihad is used in the most accepted Hadith, *Bukhari*, all refer to warfare. Quoted in What Does Jihad Mean? by Douglas E. Streusand, *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1997, pp. 9–17

This is why the word is often accepted as the term “Holy War”. Lloyd Steffen, Lloyd (2007). *Holy War, Just War: Exploring the Moral Meaning of Religious Violence*. Rowman& Littlefield. p. 221.

By selling Jihad as a sacred duty, many joined Mohammad, for they wanted to personally benefit from the hijacked of treasures. It is recorded and well-known in the Islamic writings that Mohammad personally participated in at least nine of these *jihadist* raids in which people were actually killed.

Naturally the Jewish businessmen of the region were very upset with the disruption of their caravans. They decided to do something about it. Through a series of attacks against Mohammad and Medina. Being severely outnumbered, Mohammad requested the assistance of a local Jewish tribe, Banu Qurayzah, to fight alongside him. They decided it was not in their best interest to do so. Muhammad prevailed without their assistance and he punished them severely.

When the **Muslims** defeated the Jewish tribe of Bani Qurayzah, **Muhammad** had the 700 men beheaded in front of their wives and children, then enslaving them for the rest of their lives. (Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, Inner Traditions International, 1983, pg 232)

[The jihadist terrorist groups love to refer to this account when they behead their victims.]

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It was during this period that Muhammad reflected in the Koran his thought on those who did not side with him in his religious, political movement.

- **Surah 9.73** “*Prophet, make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal rigorously with them. Hell shall be their home: an evil fate*”
- **Surah 4.76** “*The true believers fight for the cause of God, but the infidels fight for the devil. Fight then against the friends of Satan.*”
- **Surah 47:4** “*When you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield, strike off their heads and, when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly.*”
- **Surah 9.29** “*Fight against such of those to whom the scriptures were given as believe neither in Allah nor the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Apostle have forbidden, and do not embrace the true Faith, until they pay tribute out of the hand and are utterly subdued.*”
- **Surah 48.29** “*Muhammad is God’s Apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another.*”
- **Surah 5.33** “*The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger [Muhammad], and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment in the hereafter.*”

Those are just a few of the hundreds of verses in the Koran that teach the Muslims to kill the infidel, the Jew, the Christians and anyone else who stands in the way.

AD 630

Muhammad captured Mecca and became the ruler. He implemented the divine orders he believed he was called to carry out and retained the pilgrimage to Mecca as part of his religious restoration. He ordered all relics of the other faiths, paintings, statues and other artwork to be destroyed. He instituted that Islam be the only religion as stated in Surah 110.

[Earlier this week, ISIS destroyed the rare archeological relics from museums across Iraq. They claimed they were only doing this because it was the pattern set forth by Muhammad.]

For the next couple of years, he led his army to conquest of the entire Arabian Peninsula. His strategy was to wage *jihad* against all who would oppose him. His actions led to the death of many and his violence was well-known in the land.

June 8, AD 632

Following a short illness, Muhammad died on with the majority of the Arabian Peninsula under Islam, a word which literally means "submission." He had successfully and violently warred his way into the history books. Exactly what God said had become true concerning the descendants of Ishmael.

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In Summary

Who is correct concerning the standard of the Islamic faith, the media and the politicians or the Islamic terrorist groups? Jesus said in *Matthew 7:15-16* “*Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*”¹⁶ “*You will know them by their fruits...*” Would you recognize a false prophet if you met one? The fruits of the most sincere traditionalists of the Islamic faith are not looking very good.

Our Responsibility

What do we do as Christians when dealing with all the Islamic persecution against Christians throughout the world?

- 1) Pray for them every day.
 - Ephesians 6:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,
- 2) Be willing to support Christian refugees.
 - 1 John 3:17 But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?
- 3) Call your government leaders.
 - Proverbs 31:9 Open your mouth, judge righteously, And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.
 - Call your congressman and let them know to reach out and help the people of faith. It can be through intervention, immigration and resources.
- 4) Don’t forget that God is in control.
 - Matthew 5:10-12 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”¹¹ “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”¹² “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
 - 1 Peter 3:14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,