TITLE: Christianity vs. Islam

TEXT: Ro. 13:2-4; Ps. 72:1-4, 82:3-4; Jude 1:23; Ro. 12:9-21: Ephe. 6:12; 2 co. 10:3-4; Ephe. 6:10-18

INTRODUCTIUON: There is much in the news today about Islam, as there has been since 09/11/2001 when Islamic terrorist flew airplanes into the World Trade Center in NYC, the Pentagon in Washington DC and a thwarted flight that crashed in a field in rural Pennsylvania, in total killing almost 3000 Americans.

 At first it was Osama Bib Laden and Al-Qaida and now a group of Islamist radicals called ISIS or ISIL is the culprit.

 In English ISIS stands for “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria”, but that’s not what it stands for in Arabic: ad-Dawlat al-Islamiyya fī’l-‘Iraq wa’sh-Sham: The Islamic State in Iraq and Ash-Sham.

What is Ash-Sham? One thing Ash-Sham does NOT mean is the condensed Syria that was created by the French in 1922. Rather, it means the “North,” the “Greater Syria” that encompasses not only Cyprus and part of southern Turkey, but also the artificial states the British and the French carved out of the Ottoman Empire after World War One: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Palestine – and subsequently Israel.

 These are the countries that ISIS has set their sights on to reclaim for their form of Islam.

 So an often asked question today is Islam itself a peaceful religion that is just been given a bad name by radical terrorist who have used it as a cover for their evil ambitions?

 The Quran is to Muslims what the Bible is to Christians.

Quran (2:191-193) - "And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. And Al-Fitnah [disbelief] is worse than killing...
but if they desist, then lo! Allah is forgiving and merciful. And fight them until there is no more Fitnah [disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah] and worship is for Allah alone. But if they cease, let there be no transgression except against Az-Zalimun (the polytheists, and wrong-doers, etc.)"

 The historical context of this passage is not defensive warfare, since Muhammad and his Muslims had just relocated to Medina and were not under attack by their Meccan adversaries. In fact, the verses urge offensive warfare, in that Muslims are to drive Meccans out of their own city (which they later did). The use of the word "persecution" by some Muslim translators is thus disingenuous (the actual Muslim words for persecution - "idtihad" - and oppression - a variation of "z-l-m" - do not appear in the verse). The actual Arabic comes from "fitna" which can mean disbelief, or the disorder that results from unbelief or temptation. Taken as a whole, the context makes clear that violence is being authorized until "religion is for Allah" - ie. Unbelievers desist in their unbelief.

 Let me give you just a few quotes from the Qur’an

**Sura 2:98 KORAN commands to kill infidels:** **Allah is an enemy to unbelievers. -**

**Sura 2:161 On unbelievers is the curse of Allah.**

 **2:191- Slay them wherever ye find them and drive them out of the places whence - they drove you out, for persecution** (disbelief) **is worse than slaughter. -**

**2:193 and 8:39 Fight against them until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme.**

**(different translation: ) Fight them until there is no persecution and the religion is God's entirely. -**

**2:216 Fighting is obligatory for you, much as you dislike it. -
(different translation: ) Prescribed for you is fighting, though it is hateful to you. - 33:60**

**4:76 Those who believe fight in the cause of God, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil.**

**4:89 But if they turn renegades, seize them and slay them wherever you find them.**

**33:60 Allah has cursed the unbelievers and proposed for them a blazing hell.**

**47:4 When you meet the unbelievers, smite their necks, then when you have made wide slaughter among them, tie fast the bonds, then set them free, either by grace or ransom, until the war lays down its burdens. (different translation: ) When you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield, strike off their heads, and when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly.**

**66:9 Prophet! Make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal sternly with them. Hell shall be their home, evil their fate. -**

**- 98:51The unbelievers among the People of the Book and the pagans shall burn forever in the fire of hell. They are the vilest of all creatures.**

**Fight them so that Allah may punish them at your hands, and put them to shame.**

(verse cited in Newsweek 2/11/02)

The beheadings that we see happening overseas and now in the United State are not merely supreme acts of barbarism but beheading of ones enemies is actually proscribed in the Qur’an.

 Mohammed, the Islamic prophet is said to have beheaded as many as 800 Jews at Medina.

There were 600 to 800 surrendered Jews after the city was taken, though some put the figure as high as 900. Apparently Muhammad himself worked on the digging of the trench into which the massacred Jews were to be thrown. But he did not only take part in those preparations, he sent for them and STRUCK OFF their heads.

Whether this is the primary reason for Islamic radical terrorist action today is because of Mohammad’s example I don’t know but it does seem suspect.

So is Islam a peaceful religion?

 Let me ask you a question this morning?

 Can you be a good Christian without obeying the teachings God has given us in the Bible? (NO)

 Do you think a Muslim would be considered a good Muslim if they did not hold to and obey what is written in their holy book the Qur’an?

 Can they be a Good Muslim if they don’t hold to the teaching of Mohammad?

So is Islam truly a religion of peace?

Let’s compare the teaching of Jesus with the teachings of Mohammad….

One can examine the life of Jesus from the four Gospels.
One can examine the life of Muhammad from the Quran, Hadith and sources like the Sirat Rasul Allah.

**\* Jesus was a religious leader.
\* Muhammad was a religious leader and a military leader.

\* Jesus never killed anyone.
\* Muhammad killed an estimated 3,000 people, including beheading 700 or more Jews in Medina, A.D. 627:**
**\* Jesus never owned slaves.
\* Muhammad received a fifth of the prisoners taken in battle, including women.**

**\* Jesus never married.
\* Muhammad had many wives.**

**\* Jesus never forced followers to continue believing.**

**\* Muhammad forced followers to continue believing,** "Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him." (Hadith al-Bukhari, Vol. 9, Bk. 84, No. 57) **\* Jesus taught God was our Father (Matthew 6:10).
\* Muhammad taught it was blasphemy to call Allah your father (Sura 5:18)**

**\* Jesus taught man was made in God's image. (Matthew 22:20, ref. Gen. 1:26-27)
\* Muhammad taught Allah has no image. (Sura 42:11, Sura 112:4)

\* Jesus taught "forgive those who trespass against you." (Matthew 6:10-15)
\* Muhammad taught to avenge trespasses against your honor, family or religion.**

**\* Jesus never tortured anyone.
\* Muhammad tortured the chief of a Jewish tribe.**

**\* Jesus did not retaliate when violence was committed against him, saying "Father, forgive them." (Luke 23:34)
\* Muhammad retaliated when violence was committed against him, ordering the death of his enemies**.

**\* Following Jesus was voluntary, from the inside out.
\* Following Muhammad could be coerced, from the outside in.**

**\* A martyr in Christian and Jewish thought is one who dies for his faith.
\* A martyr in Islamic thought is one who dies for his faith while killing infidels.**

**\* Christianity teaches God wants a personal relationship with each individual.
\* Islam teaches individuals cannot have a personal relationship with Allah, as he is transcendent and unknowable.**

**\* Jesus' religion is known for forgiveness and love.
\* Muhammad's religion is known for obedience and fear.**

**\*None of Jesus' Apostles led armies\***

 **All of the caliphs who followed Muhammad led armies.** (Caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Muawiyya, the Umayyads, the Abbasids, etc.)

**Jesus' teaching on how to treat enemies:**
\* Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you (Matthew 5:44).
\* If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to them the other (Matthew 5:39).
\* If someone takes your coat, give them your shirt (Matthew 5:40).
\* If someone make you carry something one mile, carry it two (Matthew 5:41).
\* Forgive and you shall be forgiven (Matthew 6:14).
\* Blessed are the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).
\* Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7).
\* Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not kill, but I say who ever is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment (Matthew 5:21-22).
\* Treat others the same way you want them to treat you (Luke 6:27-36).
\* Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, whatever you do to the very least you have done unto me (Matthew 25:40).

**Muhammad's teaching on how to treat enemies:**
\* Infidels are your sworn enemies (Sura 4:101).
\* Be ruthless to the infidels (Sura 48:29).
\* Make war on the infidels who dwell around you (Sura 9:123, 66:9).
\* Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day (Sura 9:29).
\* Strike off the heads of infidels in battle (Sura 47:4).
\* If someone stops believing in Allah, kill him (al-Bukhari 9:84:57).
\* Take neither the Jews nor the Christians for your friends (Sura 5:51, 60:13).
\* Never be a helper to the disbelievers (Sura 28:86).
\* Kill the disbelievers wherever we find them (Sura 2:191).
\* No Muslim should be killed for killing an infidel (al-Bukhari 1:3:111).
\* The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His messenger will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land (5:33).

That is quite a contrast in how to deal with ones enemies isn’t it?

As the Devil is an opposite of Christ so Islam is an opposite to Christianity in its belief structure….

What motivates fundamental Muslims to violence?

Where Jesus was a religious leader, Muhammad was a religious leader and a military leader, thus the effort to separate the militant aspect of Islam from the religious aspect is an attempt to split Muhammad.

The closer one follows the example of Jesus, the more peaceful is one's motivation.The closer one follows the example of Muhammad, the more militant is one's motivation.

So how do we deal with the threat of radical Islamic terror in our world today from a Christian perspective?

The answer I believe is twofold….

1. How we respond as a Nation that contains a majority of Christians

2. And how do we respond individually as Christians….

 How does a Christian nation respond to the evil of Islamic radicalization and terror?

**Romans 13:2-4 (NIV)
3  For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.
4  For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.**

Rulers of Christian Nations have a God given authority, I believe, to stand up against evil in our world when is threatens innocent people.

**Psalm 72:1-4 (NIV)
1 (NIV)  Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.**

**2  He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.
4  He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor.**

**Psalm 82:3-4 (NIV)
3 (NIV)  Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.
4  Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.**

**Jude 1:23 (CEV)
23 (CEV)  Rescue any who need to be saved, as you would rescue someone from a fire. Then with fear in your own hearts, have mercy on everyone who needs it. But hate even the clothes of those who have been made dirty by their filthy deeds.**

Christian Nations, Christian governments, have been given the sword to defend the cause of the weak and the oppressed.

**They are God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.**

 ISIS is not only beheading innocent American citizens but also men, women and even children in their own populations.

 It is an evil that I don’t think Christian governments should turn their heads from especially when ISIS goal is to implement Sharia law even in America and other western countries.

 Christian authorities, civil governments, have been commissioned by God to: **Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.
4  Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.**

 When any evil such as ISIS and other radical Islamic terrorist groups start killing innocent civilians I believe it is the duty of Christian governments to respond if they have the resources to do so.

 Just as Christians nations came against the evil of Adolf Hitler in WW2.

 But what should be our response to the evil of Islamic terrorist as an individual Christian? How should we respond to the apathy of the larger Muslim population that is sitting silent as those of their faith are committing such barbaric acts…..

**Romans 12:9-21 (NIV)
9 (NIV)  Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.
10  Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.
11  Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.
12  Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
13  Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
14  Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
15  Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.
16  Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.
17  Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.
18  If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
19  Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.
20  On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."
21  Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

We are to hate that which is evil but cling to that which is good!

What is evil is the evil spirits that are entering the hearts of men within Islam and causing all these wicked acts.

 As a Christian we need to see where the real battle lies…

**Ephesians 6:12 (NIV2011)
12 (NIV2011)  For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

**Ephesians 6:12 (TLB)
12 (TLB)  For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies—the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.**

For the Church the real battle is and has always been a spiritual one.

**2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (NIV)
3 (NIV)  For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.
4  The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.**

What are our Spiritual weapons thathave divine power to demolish strongholds.?

**Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV) 10 (NIV)  Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
11  Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.
12  For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
13  Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.**

 **14  Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,
15  and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
16  In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
17  Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
18  And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.**

 Spiritual warfare need to be fought with spiritual weapons…Truth, righteousness, The Gospel, Faith,

The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and with Prayer….

The best way to make Islam peaceful is to introduce them to Jesus….I believe it is the only way to make Islam peaceful….

 To show the Muslim that God is not just a God of fear that demands obedience and has no desire to know them in a personal way but that God is a God of great love and mercy who loved them so much that He sent His own Son to die on a cross for their sins and He wants to be a Father to them and they His children….

 Show them that Heaven is not all about fulfilling the lust of our sinful natures, choice food and 72 virgins at our disposal, but it is the place where God will reside with us and we with Him!

A place where God will wipe away every tear from our eyes and there will be no more mourning or crying or sickness or pain and even death will exist no more.

A place where we will spend an eternity in intimate relationship with Him forever discovering the wonders of the universe and beyond..

 It is really sad to me to think that a Muslim believes that the only sure way they have of getting into their idea of Heaven is by killing those who are not of their faith and when they get there they only have the promise of earthly pleasures…..

 Most of their populations have grown up in severe poverty so even just this may sound good to them but how pitiful a view of Heaven….

The Muslim needs to meet Jesus!

This is the last great mission field for the Church to fulfill our calling to bring the Gospel of Christ to all of our world….

How will we respond to that calling?

 Are we fervently praying for them to meet Jesus and be saved?

 Are we arming ourselves with the Spiritual weapons God has given us for that task?

Standing firm, with the belt of truth buckled around our waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with our feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. Taking up the shield of faith, with which we can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
 Taking the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And praying in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying …..

 Sometimes, many times, it is hard for us to see the person behind the evil. That behind their evil deeds there is a soul that is headed for an eternity separated from the love of God in hell.

 A soul that is trapped in a belief system that is void of any real hope.

 A soul that desperately needs to hear about Jesus and God’s love for them.

 A soul that we have been called to strive to reach with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ….

 We need to be praying to the Lord of the harvest that He give us spiritual eyes to see beyond the evil and see the soul trapped inside and that He raise up workers to go into this particular harvest field. That He give us a burden to send them and support them….

How will you and I respond? Will our heart go out to a people who are trapped in a belief system that offers no real hope? Will it be our desire to see them reached for Jesus?