

Other Religious Books – Notes from PowerPoint Slides

SLIDE 2 Islam - Muhammad

Muhammad proclaimed messenger of God from revelations from Gabriel

Purpose – Sent forth to confirm previous scriptures

Like Christianity and Judaism, one God, but Neo-Platonic idea of God (that is, very distant and removed from man)

Accuses Jews of corrupting the scriptures

Accuses Christians of worshiping Jesus as son of God, but God commanded them to worship only Him

Must return to the true religion preached by Abraham

SLIDE 3 Islam – “Five Pillars”

Testimony of faith – in the oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad

Daily prayer – Muslims are required to perform prayers five times a day at specified times and according to a particular ritual

Zakat – Muslims are obliged to give a portion from their income beyond their own needs to the poor

Fasting – During the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of their calendar, all Muslims are to fast from sunrise to sunset, taking neither food nor drink during that time

Pilgrimage – All Muslims who are physically and financially able to do so should make the pilgrimage to Mecca once during their lives, preferably during the six weeks following Ramadan

SLIDE 4 Sacred Mosque in Mecca

The Kaaba is Islam’s holiest building. Built by Abraham and Ishmael during one of Abraham’s visits. The Qur'an says it was the first house that was built for humanity to worship Allah.

The Black Stone was the cornerstone of the Kaaba and was brought to Abraham and Ishmael by the angel Gabriel. When it was rebuilt by the Quraysh tribe in AD 605, Muhammad placed it in the correct position.

Inside the Kaaba, *The Station of Abraham*, a glass and metal enclosure with what is said to be an imprint of Abraham's foot. Abraham is said to have stood on this stone during the construction of the upper parts of the Kaaba, raising Ishmael on his shoulders for the uppermost parts. The nearby well Zamzam was brought by God to Haggai and Ishmael when they were dying of thirst.

Five times each day, 1 billion Muslims worldwide, turn and face in the direction of the Kaaba and pray.

Once each year, two million Muslims perform Hajj and touch the Black Stone. Not because it is holy, but the Prophet Muhammad himself touched it. The five day ritual includes: purification at one of five cities, leaving the Kaaba, prayers, collect stones for “stoning the devil” ceremony, visit another city, return, more prayers, circle the Kaaba 7 times, drink from Zamzam well.

SLIDE 5 Islam – “Jihad”

Another religious duty often mentioned along with the five pillars is that of Jihad. The Arabic word "jihad" is often translated as "holy war," but in a purely linguistic sense, the word "jihad" means struggling or striving for moral perfection.

In a religious sense, as described by the Quran and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, "jihad" has many meanings. It can refer to internal as well as external efforts to be a good Muslim or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam.

If military jihad is required to protect the faith against others, it can be performed using anything from legal, diplomatic and economic to political means. If there is no peaceful alternative, Islam also allows the use of force, but there are strict rules of engagement. Innocents - such as women, children, or invalids - must never be harmed, and any peaceful overtures from the enemy must be accepted.

Military action is therefore only one means of jihad, and is very rare.

Islamic Fundamentalist – a term misused by the media to refer to terrorists who happen to be Muslim

Fundamentalist Islam – simply the conservative wing of Islam, just as Fundamentalist Christianity is the conservative wing of Christianity

Most Middle Eastern terrorists are probably Fundamentalist Muslims, but they are an extreme, radical wing of Fundamentalist Islam

SLIDE 6 Islam Scriptures – Qur’an

Manuscripts - Originally written on palm leaves, stones or any material available by professional remembrancers

Collection completed and authorized version established AD 644-656

114 Chapters (or Suras) arranged according to length; longest first and the shortest last
Kabira (big sins)—murder, adultery, drunkenness, disobeying parents, neglecting Ramadan or Friday prayers, gambling, dancing, shaving the beard, forgetting the Koran after reading it, usury...

Forgiveness with repentance

Saghira (little sins)—deceit, anger, lust. Forgiveness if greater sins are avoided and good deeds are performed

Shirk—idolatry or worship of other gods than Allah. No forgiveness.

SLIDE 7 Qur’an vs Bible - differences

Others

Pharaoh’s magicians repent (Sura 20:70)

Created man from a clot of blood, then a lump, then bones, then flesh (Sura 23:14)

“Traveling west, he reached the setting place of the sun, in a muddy spring” (Sura 18:86)

Sun and stars orbit the earth (Sura 21:33). Agrees with Greek concept of that day

11 planets (Sura 12)

“Surely good deeds take away evil deeds” (Sura 11:114)

SLIDE 8 Mormonism – Joseph Smith

1823 A visit by the angel Moroni, “You will be given golden plates on the hill Cumorah”

1827 Dug up golden plates. Written in “Reformed Egyptian.”

Used the “Urim and the Thummim” with his head in a hat to translate the Book of Mormon (Exodus 28 on High Priest’s breastplate to determine God’s will).

My testimony: “Joseph Smith is a prophet and the Book of Mormon is the Word of God.”

“His translation complete, Joseph had one further use for the golden plates. To assure skeptics that the plates did, indeed exist, he showed them to several trusted witnesses, who signed statements affirming that they had beheld the plates. In preparation for viewing the plates, the chosen witnesses prayed for several hours. After lengthy praying, one witness reported that he saw only an empty box. Joseph sent him out for additional prayer, after which the golden plates were fully visible to the witness.”

Later, all these witnesses became apostate to Mormonism. Conveniently, God took the golden plates back to heaven.

In the early 1840s, Smith established a new city called Nauvoo, Illinois, where he served as mayor and militia commander. In 1844, Smith and the Nauvoo City Council angered non-Mormons by destroying a printing press after it was used to publish an expose critical of Smith's power and practice of polygamy. During the ensuing turmoil, Smith was imprisoned in Carthage, Illinois, and killed when a mob stormed the jailhouse.

SLIDE 9 Salt Lake City Temple

Mormons also called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

SLIDE 10 The Book of Mormon

A grade B religious fantasy about the Jaredites and the Nephites (neither are mentioned in Bible)

"Neither representatives of the National Geographic Society nor, to my knowledge, archaeologists connected with any other institution or equal prestige has ever used the Book of Mormon in locating historic ruins in Middle America or elsewhere." Dr. Neal Judd (archaeologist)

"The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide.

Smithsonian archaeologists see no connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the Book." Official Statement, 1979

Nothing on the western hemisphere has been found that even remotely resembles Egyptian.

Officially "reformed Egyptian" doesn't exist.

SLIDE 11 Other Mormon Books

Joseph Smith Translation (JST) or Inspired Version (IV)

King James Version with significant revisions and additions

Intended to restore what Smith described as “many important points touching the salvation of men, that had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled.” Such as Book of Abraham, visions of Moses and Enoch.

Not a literal translation from ancient documents. He reported that he was forced to “study it out in his mind” as part of the revelatory process.

The Pearl of Great Price (1851)

Selections from JST

First person narrative of Joseph Smith’s life

Articles of Faith (13 fundamental doctrines of Mormonism)

Doctrine and the Covenants (1835)

Lectures defining basic church doctrine

Compilation of important revelations or “covenants”

SLIDE 12 Mormonism vs Bible - differences

From Joseph Smith’s most famous sermon: “God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil so that you may see... He was once a man like us; yea that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did.

When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, the Ancient of Days! About whom holy men have written and spoken—He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do.” *Journal of Discourses* volume 1, p 50.

“The grand reason why the Gentiles and philosophers of his school persecuted Jesus Christ, was because he had so many wives; there were Elizabeth, and Mary, and a host of others who followed him.”

Father, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit are three separate gods (*Teachings of Joseph Smith*, p. 370)

Polytheism (more than one god)

Polygamy - Joseph Smith had at least 30 wives, some less than 15 yrs. old and took many other women as well. A new revelation against polygamy by the church 1890.

Racism

“Indians are dark, filthy and loathsome.” (Mormons 5:15)

“dark people are sinful.” (1 Nephi 11:13)

“Dark skin are loathsome. Those who marry dark skinned are cursed.” (2 Nephi 5:21)

Officially renounced by new revelation in 1978.

Baptism for the dead; Baptism in the name of Jesus preached to the Nephites several hundred years BC.

SLIDE 13 Buddhism - Buddha

Born into a wealthy family

Hinduism – a rigid, priestly system

Middle path between asceticism (abstinence from worldly pleasures) and sensuality

Four Noble Truths – or perspective on life

- (1) Suffering is not getting what one wants
- (2) The cause of suffering is desire, which leads to rebirth
- (3) The way to end suffering is to end desire
- (4) The way to end desire and suffering is the 8-fold path

Eight Fold Path – to enlightenment or nirvana (reincarnation)

- (1) Right viewpoint (the four noble truths)
- (2) Right values
- (3) Right speech
- (4) Right actions
- (5) Right livelihood
- (6) Right effort
- (7) Right mindfulness
- (8) Right meditation

Dispassion – not influenced by strong feeling, not affected by personal or emotional involvement

Pantheistic – universe or nature is identical with divinity. Arguably non-theistic or a philosophy.

SLIDE 15 Buddhism Scriptures - Tripitaka

“Three Baskets” – Three sets of the supposedly original sayings, teachings and philosophy of Buddha
Only oral for ~400 years.

Written down ~500 years after Buddha lived

Basket of Discipline – rules of discipline and conduct for monks and nuns

Basket of Sutras – thousands of sermons and discourses attributed to Buddha and a few of his disciples

Basket of Special Teachings – commentaries and analysis of the sutras

Disputes over the contents of the Tripitaka led to different sects

SLIDE 17 Hinduism

Animism – natural, physical entities including animals, plants and even inanimate objects possess a spiritual essence or soul

Polytheism – more than one god

Pantheism – everything composes an all-encompassing God. The universe or nature is identical with divinity

Began as animism/polytheism, then evolved into polytheism/pantheism

It is syncretistic, which means combining differing systems of belief

Hinduism is not really a single religion

Worldview – Physical world is evil and an illusion. Suffering is an illusion.

Goal – Escape cycle of karma and reincarnation

SLIDE 18 Hinduism Scriptures

Vedas Poems – Ritualistic and priestly. Created BC 1500-1200.

Rig Veda – mythology of the Hindu gods

Sama Veda or “knowledge of chants” or basic hymns recited at sacrifices

Yajur Veda or “knowledge of rites” showing how to make sacrifices

Athara Veda or knowledge given by Athara who was a sage

Originally passed on orally, then written down BC 700

Brahmanas – explains the relationship of the Vedas to the sacrificial ceremonies

Upanishads – philosophical texts which form the theoretical basis for the Hindu religion. Written BC 800-600

Epics – Mythic adventures of many Hindu gods or deities

Puranas – Largely local legends or myths of local deities. Written AD 400-1000. This is the “scripture” of most local Hindus

Tantras – Religious discussions or teachings

SLIDE 20 Christian Science

“She was subject from infancy to convulsive attacks of a hysterical nature and had many nervous fits.”

Clairvoyance (the ability to gain information about an object, person, location or physical event through means other than the known human senses. It is a form of extra-sensory perception)

Spiritualism and Occult

“Cured” by Quimby (but symptoms soon returned)

“The works I have written on Christian Science contain absolute Truth.”

New York Sun Dec 19, 1898, Eddy “challenged the world to disprove” that she had healed a variety of serious illnesses, including cancer

Dr Charles A. Reed (later president of AMA) offered to present similar cases for her to heal, which she politely declined. “If she by her Christian Science, shall cure any one of them, I shall proclaim her omnipotence from the housetops; and, if she shall cure all or even half of them, I shall cheerfully crawl upon my hands and knees that I may but touch the hem of her walking dress.”

Quimby: God is “Universal Wisdom and Intelligence.” God is “Presence.” God is “Loving Principle.” Emphasis on disease, spiritualism. Disease is an “error, created not by God, but by man.” No false beliefs = no disease. The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief of conviction of the necessity and power of ill health.

Salvation is release from ignorance

1990’s 18 documented cases of children suffering preventable death because parents refused to take them to a doctor. Convictions of child endangerment and even manslaughter.

Zero scientific verification

SLIDE 21 Christian Science Scriptures

One must use “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures” to properly interpret the Bible

Interpreted the Bible esoterically (designed for or understood by a restricted small group)

Cannot take the miracles, resurrection and so forth literally.

SLIDE 22 Christian Science vs Bible - differences

Jesus – a mere human with a “divine mind”; an embodiment of the “Christ Principle”; “the highest possible Inner consciousness”

Jesus did not die on the cross