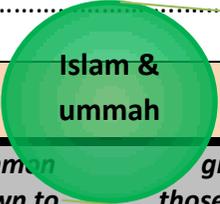
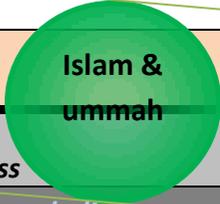


2012 BtD The 'nature of Islam' as perceived from various Christian theological perspectives

Let the 5 circles  below represent Islam. *i.e.* the way Christian see the entire *ummah* within the highly diverse *Koranische Weltanschauung*ⁱ, and this as seen from 5 Christian perspectives. The dark horizontal  line divides the theological realm of 'spiritual light' from 'spiritual darkness'.

Islam contains more <i>light</i> than <i>darkness</i>	Islam contains both <i>light</i> and <i>darkness</i>	Islam contains some <i>light</i> and much <i>darkness</i>	Islam contains mostly <i>darkness</i>	Islam contains total <i>Darkness</i>
.....The spiritual realm which Scripture speaks of as spiritual 'Light' <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Islam & ummah</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Islam & ummah</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Islam & ummah</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Islam & ummah</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Islam & ummah</p> </div> </div>				
<i>Special Revelation truth: unique to believers</i> <i>General Revelation: truth given to all</i>				
Common <i>grace</i> shown to <i>those in darkness</i>The spiritual realm which Scripture speaks of as spiritual 'Darkness' Demonic deception misleading unbelievers				
.... mostly <i>light</i>	... more <i>light</i> than <i>darkness</i>	...both <i>light</i> and <i>darkness</i> mostly <i>darkness</i>total <i>darkness</i>
possible explanation				
<p>Allah is the true God of Scripture Muhammad is a prophet like Moses Islam's Isa is Jesus the Messiah Qur'anic & Hadiths revelations are as special as the OT & NT Islamic laws and rituals are as meaningful to Muslims as they are to Jews & Christians Sincere Muslims and Muslim followers of Jesus are true believers Salvation is found in Islam as in Judaism & Christianity Islam is as rich in diversity as Judaism & Christianity</p>	<p>Allah is like the proto-Abrahamic portrayal of God as 'El' Muhammad is like an ancient Semitic patriarchal prophet Islam's Isa is an admiring alternate portrait of Jesus Christ Qur'an & Hadiths revelations contain both truths & legends Islamic laws and rituals are very legalistic but sincere rules Muslim followers of Jesus are sincere believers called to stay Salvation is found in Isa al-Masih the savior –as revealed in the NT Islam has a central core belief but is also very rich in diversity</p>	<p>Allah is Muhammad's version of the Arab's 'God of the Gentiles'ⁱⁱ Muhammad is a reformer-prophet lacking special revelation Islam's Isa is chiefly apocryphal with some truthful testimony. Qur'an & Hadiths are eclectic, apocryphal yet historic accounts Islamic laws and rituals are a poor imitation of Jewish legalism It is very hard for followers of Jesus to mature in the Muslim ummah Islam has no salvation but Jesus may use dreams or visions to call them. Islam is as spiritual bound together as it is filled with schisms</p>	<p>Allah is a deeply flawed portrayal of the 'God of the Gentiles' Satan deceived Muhammad to believe he was a prophet. Islam's Isa is Muhammad's own message scripted into a legendary apocryphal Jesus. Qur'an & Hadiths are apocryphal Islamic laws and rituals are vain legalistic human rules No followers of Jesus can stay long in the Muslim ummah Islam has no salvation but general revelation makes them seek. Islam is controlled by orthodox voices but schisms are rife.</p>	<p>Allah is a false God Muhammad is an evil, false prophet Islam's Isa is a fake Qur'an & Hadiths are false revelation Islamic laws and rituals are oppressive shackles No followers of Jesus stays Muslim There is no salvation at all in Islam Islam is monolithic in faith but with many internal schisms</p>

Disclaimers:

1. This is a purely theological/missiological chart on the nature of Islam, with no bearing on sociological or anthropological research of Muslims. It would also be nonsense to secular scholars in that it is predicated on the Scriptural reality of 'spiritual light' and 'spiritual darkness', as well as 'general' and 'special' revelation, and also the existence and activities of the devil and of God.
2. There are more than 5 possible explanations; this chart merely gives us the most frequently suggested Christian explanations. Indeed, there are four spaces between the five circles: suggesting these could be developed. Our purpose is served, however, to define the stages away from believing there is special and/or general revelation at all in Islam.
3. This is not an Evangelical chart: it covers the vast spectrum of views held within the Orthodox churches, Roman Catholicism, liberal Protestantism, mainline conservatism and evangelical/charismatic expressions. For example, while current Vatican theologians now champion the 'more light than darkness' posture, a significant number of alternate Catholic theologians can be found defending positions to the left and the right.
4. The chart has not inserted the IM (insider movements) or the HP (historical positions). That, indeed, is something to debate; as to where –if at all– they might be indicated.
5. Nor does the chart suggest how to align either the post-Lausanne (1974) debates of contextualisation or the post-Vatican II Councils (1963-65) debates on incarnational missiology. This too could be considered.
6. The explanations lack footnotes, citing authors or sources holding to these positions. The chart assumes the reader will have heard all of the above explanations and merely lists them under 5-possible ways to explain the 'nature of Islam' according to their convictions.
7. Since the first encounter with Muslims in the Christian nations of Abyssinia in 615 AD, Christians have largely responded to the nature of Islam in the five ways above. These 5-positions are as recent as they are historic.
8. The 5-perspectives have led to many different types of Christian rapprochements with Muslims, sometimes engendering several approaches within the same perspective. For example, the 5th posture of "Islam as total darkness" has engendered responses of dhimmi-silence, of militant crusading, of apocalyptic forewarning or of exposing heresy.
9. Defining the ummah begs for generalisations; Islam's internal orthodox voices function as the centre of gravity and seek to persecute all expressions of discontinuity when they are granted political power. That the vast majority of Muslims live their lives with very distinct and non-orthodox mind-sets is not lost on neither the Ulema nor on Christian missiologists but creative disunity in Islam is defined as the worst of heresies, and such variants are, therefore, such unstable persecuted forms of Islam that they do not constitute an alternate distinct ummah but rather a marginal aberration within. The exceptions to this premise would have to be the Ahmadiyyas, the Yazidis, the Nation of Islam, etc.
10. The chief value of this chart is to ascertain the spectrum in which the present Bridge the Divide community is having its debate and to avoid incorrectly attributing more extreme positions to one's opponents.

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ⁱ Qur'anic worldview

ⁱⁱ See Romans 3.29-30a: "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30. since God is one"