

Session 11

Development and Spread of Islam

Matt. 16:16-18 "...**“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Jesus answered ... **on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**"

The Mosque

Medina - Why?

Soon after he arrived in Medina Mohammed established the first mosque. Initially Mohammed was seen as a religious leader but he already had a strategy for achieving political power. In Mecca he had been too weak to attempt this. Following his military successes he emerged as a political and military leader and the mosque functioned as his seat of government and centre of military operations. **A prayer at Medina is worth 1,000 prayers elsewhere.**

Mosque activities include:

- Teaching Islamic doctrine and opposing non-Islamic religion (a Madrassa).
- Appointing leaders and planning jihad operations.
- Sending out and receiving delegations (from the adjacent tribes - and receiving pledges of their loyalty).
- The headquarters of the first Islamic state from which officials and tax collectors and commanders were sent out and where treaties were arranged.
- The development of shariah with its permissions and prohibitions.
- The superiority of Islam was proclaimed and manifested and the supremacy of men in relation to women and Muslims in relation to non-Muslims.
- Death sentences were issued on those who opposed or criticised Mohammed and their killers were honoured.
- Muslim armies were sent out to conquer the world for Islam. The mosque is at the core of achieving the ultimate goal of Islam when the whole world would essentially become a mosque, cleansed of kufr (apostasy), *H#31901*.

("The Mosque: S. Solomon & E. Alamaqdisi, p31-34 and quote from Sheikh Yousif Al Qardawi, p39-40).

Subsequent mosques follow the same pattern.

A mosque is not analogous to a synagogue or a church building - places of worship, education, and social interaction. **The mosque is central to the entire life of the Umma**, being the place of government and justice, and from where the faithful are sent out on mission and jihad.

The architecture of the mosque and the public call to prayer from the minaret are making statements about Islam in relation to the surrounding area - sacred space and the demand for submission. This lies behind the proposals to build large and imposing mosques in host communities and, where Islam is dominant, restrictions on building and even repair non-Muslim places of worship.

Islam is not "merely" a religion. It is a total way of life, a theocracy in which every aspect of life is prescribed by the Koran and Sunna, as interpreted by the ruling Ulama (the jurists/experts in sharia law). Muslims gather to prostrate themselves before Allah and hear what he requires of them, (Arabic for "mosque" is "Masjid" from a root meaning "to prostrate").

Democracy and theocracy are totally incompatible but democracy can be used to establish the theocracy, appealing to western values of religious freedom and expression and promising social or economic benefits.

Mecca (Ka'aba) - Why?

Mecca was the home town of the Quraish clan and central shrine for many pagan gods.

Following his conquest Mohammed created a mosque on the site of the Kabbah, thus proclaiming the supremacy of Islam over the pagan religions of Arabia and establishing the headquarters of Islam. The Koran appeals to Abraham as the initiator, *S22:26. And (remember) when We showed Ibrahim (Abraham) the site of the (Sacred) House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) (saying): "Associate not anything (in worship) with Me, [La ilaha ill-Allah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah - Islamic Monotheism), and sanctify My House for those*

who circumambulate it, and those who stand up for prayer, and those who bow (submit themselves with humility and obedience to Allah), and make prostration (in prayer, etc.);"27. And proclaim to mankind the Hajj (pilgrimage). They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep and distant (wide) mountain highway (to perform Hajj).

A prayer at Mecca Mosque is worth 100,000 prayers elsewhere.

Jerusalem (Al Aqsa) - Why?

This is largely based on "**the night journey**" from Mecca to Jerusalem; Islam also teaches that Jacob built the first mosque in Jerusalem, subsequently renewed by Solomon, as prophets of Islam. **A prayer here is worth 500 prayers elsewhere.**

(We will consider the implications of this later in the context of Islam's attitude to Jews, including the current situation in between Israel and the Muslim world).

Subsequent development of Islam.

Mohammed was succeeded by the four "rightly-guided caliphs" (successors and "commanders of the faithful"). The last three were assassinated. **Ali** was killed in a civil war between his followers and those of the son of Uthman (the 3rd and previous caliph), resulting in the split into **Shias** (10-20%) and **Sunnis** (>80%).

These divisions persist and are very bitter.

Many Sunnis do not recognize Shias as being Muslims; Shias are being murdered by Islamic State for this reason.

It also **causes confusion in the West in relation to wars in the Middle East** - who are suitable allies/which side do you support? America and (Shia) Iran are sworn enemies but now have a common enemy in (Sunni) Islamic State. The West has been supporting the (Sunni) rebels in Syria against the (Shiite) Assad government and arms and equipment are being transferred to IS. (Sunni, Wahabi) Saudi Arabia is in opposition to (Sunni) IS out of fear that IS could overthrow the House of Saud. Similarly Jordan is Sunni but is fighting IS out of concern for its security. Hezbollah is Shiite and Hamas is Sunni but they have a common enemy in Israel and both have been supported by Iran,

Luke 11:17-18 "... Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?"

In the "**first jihad**" Islam continued to spread by means of military conquest and immigration and **by 750 AD the Islamic state stretched from Spain and Morocco on the west to India and China on the east.** This confirmed the belief that Islam was destined to rule the world. It also defined the essential character and purpose of Islam - a religious/political/military movement aiming at bringing the world into submission to Allah, in obedience to the teaching and example of his prophet/messenger Mohammed. As areas were conquered and Islamized by conversion and migration they changed from being "House of War" to being "House of Peace". Pagans were eliminated by conversion or death.

"People of the Book" could convert, flee, or accept Dhimmi status, as second class citizens who acknowledged the supremacy of Islam and paid the jiza tax under humiliating circumstances. Dhimmi Jews and Christians contributed their knowledge science and learning and were a valuable asset. Because of their usefulness they sometimes occupied high positions but were in an insecure position as they were "tolerated" and the situation could change by choice of their rulers. There were centuries of war between "Christian Europe" and Islam, including the fluctuating position during the Crusades.

The "second jihad" began in 1453 when Islam captured Constantinople and set out on further conquest. Muslims were **expelled from Spain in 1492 but conquered territory deep into the northern half of Africa and the south eastern part of Europe.** A crucial battle took place at **Vienna in 1683** when the Ottoman invaders were driven back, later regaining control of parts of the Balkans (another legacy with modern consequences).

All conquered lands remain Allah's till the end of time - Arabs still call Spain "Andalus". As Spaniards celebrated the 500th anniversary of the expulsion there were counter demonstrations in Cairo claiming Spain for Islam on the basis of history. There is an imperative to recover such lands. The proposed mega mosque near "**Ground Zero**" in New York was to be named the **Cordova Mosque** after the mosque built in Spain following the Islamic conquest.

During the past few centuries Islamic lands were overshadowed by "Christian" power and wealth and technology and much of the world came under the control of western powers. The last caliph/sultan ruled over a decaying and weak empire at the time of the 1st WW. The empire was dismantled and **new nation states were formed in the Middle East under the supervision of Britain and France.**

A **"disaster" took place in Turkey** in the form of a **secular government** led by Ataturk. It seemed that Islam was in terminal decline, overwhelmed by the "Christian" West.

Worst of all the despised and **hated Jews were populating the land of Palestine**, culminating in **the great disaster (Nakba) in 1948**, when **the new nation of Israel** was proclaimed and then triumphed over five invading Muslim armies. All of this constituted a reversal of history!

But - other things were happening in the background.

The "third jihad" began quietly during the first half of the 20th century. A fresh movement arose to challenge the status quo and restore Islam to its former ("destined") position in the world. It was led by **Mawlana Mawdudi** in Pakistan through **Jamaat-i-Islami**, and **Hasan al-Banna** in Egypt with **The Muslim Brotherhood**, taken to a more radical level by **Sayyid Qutb**, also from Egypt. The repression of the Brotherhood by President Nasser led to increasingly radical jihad organizations.

These movements, ignored by Western nations, lie at the foundation of the current activities of radical Islam.

They emphasize **the oneness of the Islamic nation (the Umma)** rather than the nation state and **the need for jihad** - first of all to call Muslims to obedience to sharia and then to call unbelievers to submit to Islam and establish a new world order where Islam is supreme.

There must be a return to the pattern of early Islam, while making use of modern science and technology in the service of Islam as well as the culture of democracy and freedom of expression at the core of western civilization.

Emigration from colonies and former colonies - particularly the Indian subcontinent in the case of Britain, and N. Africa in the case of France - involved large numbers of Muslims. They tended to congregate in areas of cities, rather than integrating into the new society, thus **creating communities largely separate from the host cultures.** This was facilitated by the political doctrine of **multiculturalism.**

The migrants often came for personal reasons but were encouraged by religious leaders to **maintain primary loyalty to the Muslim Umma** and to **support the cause of Islam.** This has effectively resulted in **"mini states"** that represent the **claiming of territory for Islam** and where Islamic religion, culture, and law to a large extent replace those of the host nation.

These areas have the potential to expand and become dominant - e.g. Marseilles is now more than 50% Muslim and it is predicted that Brussels will be in a similar situation within a few years. Within a few decades, with anticipated growth patterns, many parts of Europe are likely to have a Muslim majorities.

Territorial expansion and claiming public space is fundamental to Islam - building large (and tall) mosques, intrusive call to prayer, demands for special privileges for Islam (e.g. silencing criticism even when based on fact). On the one hand they **claim freedom of speech** to preach the message of radical Islam and on the other to **suppress criticism of Islam** or Christian evangelism by describing them as "Islamophobia" or hate crime. **Aspects of sharia law** may function within these areas, a particular issue for women, and they can effectively, although not in law, become "no go areas" for non Muslims.

Life for Muslims in a minority situation is abnormal; the mosque plays a critical and central role in addressing this:

Muslims are in a confusing and alien society, where all (men and women, Muslim and non-Muslim) are equal before the (secular) law, where there are competing religious beliefs and practices, and relaxed attitudes to relationships and modes of dress and expression.

The mosque is a place of belonging and primary identity and emphasis on Muslim superiority.

Shariah can be followed in family matters. There is pressure to recognize this within British law.

Different ethnic groups can find identity in the Umma and the many Islamic sects can be united in common purpose.

Converts can be made and taught.

Islam can be portrayed to outsiders in a favourable light. "It is permissible for the unbeliever to be given permission to enter mosques if that is useful and beneficial and in favour of the Muslim community" Fatwa #26104 2002 A.H. Christians are not permitted to pray in a mosque

Response can be made to criticism or perceived offence - the message to outsiders is designed according to need.

The mosque is the centre of strategy for the Islamization of society, correcting the abnormal situation

There are parallels to Jewish and Christian beliefs but within a very different world view.

Israel was a theocracy and a segregated people with combined religious, social, family, and judicial laws. This was a unique arrangement and never intended to be a model for world government.

Christians are a special community scattered in many areas and countries - God's family.

We are also a theocracy, but of a spiritual kind and one which we join in a voluntary way. State Christianity is a contradiction in terms and there is no compulsion or coercion. It is kingdom founded on grace and love.

What is God's Kingdom like? Matt. 5:1-11

The Apostle Paul is a vivid example of this Kingdom to put alongside Islam.

- Like Mohammed Paul was a man of violence fuelled by a false understanding of God and His Messiah, but was transformed by his encounter with Jesus as Lord.
- Mohammed claimed supernatural revelations (and probably had them but from the dark side); Paul had supernatural revelations from the Living God, 2Cor. 12.
- Mohammed promoted a very legalistic religion without grace or love. Paul did the opposite.
- That legalistic religion of Islam brought death. Paul's Gospel brought the life of the Spirit.
- Mohammed acted in pride and domination. Paul acted as a humble servant of God and as an older brother/father in His family.
- Mohammed beheaded his opponents. Paul probably died in this way as a martyr.