

## Session 15

## How then shall we live?

## How not to respond

- **Surprise** 1Peter 4:12, Luke 21:12-17, John 15:20-21, 1John 3:13.
- **Fear**, John 16:33, Heb. 2:14-15, 1John 4:4,.
- **Indifference**, John 13:34-35, 1Cor. 12:26-27, 2Cor. 8:1-7
- **Hatred and violence** Matt. 5:43-45, Eph. 6:12, 1Peter 2:21-25, 3:9
- **Myopia** - don't be totally focussed on your local situation. We are part of a large family, the Body of Christ
- **Defeatism/Capitulation** - e.g. Sweden. Islam is fatalistic at an individual level but is active in pursuit of world conquest. (Western) Christians are in danger of the reverse - personal assurance combined with pessimism about events in the world.
- **Denial/Self-deception/Naivety** These are common among politicians and some church leaders and Christians. Explicit statements by those committing murder are discounted while peaceful ones and promises by Islamic leaders are taken at face value and violent ones dismissed as mere rhetoric, e.g. Iran. The doctrine of taqiyya is ignored.
- **Dialogue** - the emphasis for much of the church has changed from evangelism to "finding common ground", interfaith relationships, and community cohesion. Western governments encourage this and Muslims see a mirror image of their own theology of Islam as a religious/political movement, confirming their worldview of the "Christian West". Laws may also inhibit evangelism of Muslims as a threat to peace or even a "hate crime".

**Dialogue is frequently very one sided** - critical evaluation of Islamic doctrine and history and abuses is "off limits" and Muslims are characterised as oppressed victims (by the "Christian" West). The "Christian" response is often to maximise points of agreement (often oblivious to the quite different meaning of words, e.g. peace, tolerance, monotheism, neighbour etc.), avoid the central issues of the Gospel (the Person of Jesus, His atoning death on the cross, and His resurrection), and use language that suggests they accept Mohammed as a prophet and the Islamic scriptures as the Word of God. **This "gospel" that pleases men is under God's curse, Gal.1:6-10 and leaves people in their sins and under judgement, 1Cor. 15:12-17.**

## Some Good News

- **God is the Father and Jesus is His Son**, 1John 5:20, John 17:4-5.
- **God is in control**, 1Cor. 15:22-28, Rev. 19:6.
- **The martyrs triumph**, now and forever, 1Peter 3:13-17, Rev. 12:11, 15:2-3, 7:13-17, 6:9-11, 16:5-7.
- **The number of Jewish believers in Jesus is increasing in Israel - estimated at 25,000.** Jewish hearts are being softened through experiencing genuine Christian love - practical help and public support in the face of existential threats to their survival.
- **The Muslim world is seriously divided**, Mark 3:25.
- **Some Muslims are disturbed by current events** and are courageous enough to criticise and call for reformation. They face a steep uphill task as power, history, and theology are on the other side.
- **Many Muslims are turning to Jesus - some examples:**

**182,000 Yazidi Muslims fled Northern Iraq.** Many of those are converting to Christianity after seeing the difference between Islam and Christianity. (CBN)

**Africa.** Sheikh Ahmad Al Katani ( The President of The Companions Lighthouse for the Science of Islamic Law in Libya, which is an institution specializing in graduating imams and Islamic preachers). "Every day, 16,000 Muslims convert to Christianity. Every year, 6 million Muslims convert to Christianity."

**Indonesia.** Islamic authorities are concerned that 2,000,000 Muslims are converting to Christianity every year and that by 2035 Indonesia will no longer be a majority Muslim country.

**Iran. Increased persecution is a consequence of the growth in the unofficial church. There is huge demand for Bibles**

- **Events such as these precede the return of the Messiah Jesus.** We know the end of the story, .
- **Israel will survive, Jesus will return to Jerusalem, "All Israel will be saved",** Luke 13:34-35, Zech. 14:3-4, Acts 1:11

### How to respond

- **Be encouraged** - look up and rejoice, Luke 21:28, Matt. 5:10-12 .
- **Reaffirm your conviction that Jesus is the only way to the Father,** John 14:6. Islam and Judaism are not alternative parallel paths. Abandon the politically correct attitude that stifles evangelization and avoids the offence of the cross, 1Cor. 1:17-25, and the possibility of upsetting people, breaking secular law, and being persecuted or regarded as bigoted and intolerant, Acts 4:10-12, 17-20, Gal. 6:14.
- **Be informed** - access sources other than popular media and the recycled prejudices and opinions of other people. There are many sources on the Web - I have found Gatestone Institute and Honest Reporting particularly useful.
- **Challenge people** as to the veracity of their beliefs and opinions, even though most will not want to know.
- **Have some basic facts** in your head to correct misconceptions about Israel and Islam
- **Support and defend Israel in the face of unfair, biased, and grossly disproportionate criticism.** Sadly some Christians/Denominations/Aid Agencies have uncritically accepted the "prevailing narrative" ignoring major parts of Scripture, history, and the imperatives of Islamic theology. Visits to the "Holy Land" are tailored to reinforce this interpretation by means of selected situations and interactions, avoiding those that would give a different perspective and explanation.
- **Keep up to date and pray for our brothers and sisters in the fires of persecution** - obtain information from one or more source, e.g. Barnabas Fund, Release International, Open Doors, Voice of the Martyrs, by post or e mail. Did you know that the Palestinian Territories are listed among the places in the world where there is serious persecution, and that the huge decline in the Christian population of Bethlehem is a mainly a consequence of Islamic persecution? (e.g. see "In the Backyard of Jesus" by Stephen Khoury. When in Israel visit Bethlehem Baptist Church and find out more from Stephen's father, Pastor Naim Khoury).
- **Inform other Christians/churches about this situation - be a nuisance!**
- **Make the persecuted church a high priority** in your giving.

- **Study the Scriptures** - including the neglected "Old Testament" ones.
- **Pray for the fulfilment of God's stated purposes for Israel**
- **Pray for the salvation of Muslims** and show love and friendship towards those you meet
- **Pray for and encourage young people** who will face enormous pressures and challenges
- **Pray for the choice of the next US President**
- **Live in the light of Jesus' return**, Rom. 13:11-14