Hebrews 11

1. Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

2. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

3. Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.
Faith is basic to every thing and every one

NOT whether there is faith
BUT which faith?
whose faith?

‘Worldview’
A People’s Faith

Worldviews
They are not primarily intellectual or academic
They are our default setting – how we live and behave automatically, even when we are not thinking!

Every worldview tells a story

Three worldview stories
• Western Secularism
• Christianity
• Islam (Islamism)

The greatest danger is from within – from our own Western Secularism

Os Guinness
(b 1941)

Os Guinness
“I don’t believe there is any question about the earlier menace of the Nazis and Communists, and now Islamic extremists, but in the end the ultimate threat to the American republic will be Americans. The problem is not wolves at the door but termites in the floor.” (Guinness 2012: 36-37)
The Story of Islam

- Secular Story
- Muslim Story
- Christian Story

There is no Neutral Position
Every Story is shaped by a worldview
Key terms have different meanings in different worldview contexts (e.g.: ‘peace’ ‘justice’ ‘freedom’)
Keep your worldview-sensing antennae ready at all times!

We need the right evidence
We also need the right worldview context to understand the evidence
Knowing the truth of the worldview is as important as knowing the truth of the evidence and arguments

Secular Story

Materialism

Materialism1
- Material world is all there is

Materialism2
- Enjoying material possessions is all that matters

The Story of Progress
Secularists will exclude from the story they tell...
- God,
- faith,
- miracles,
- ultimate purpose,
- objective moral order,
- ultimate meaning.

Os Guinness
“Islam is not a monolith and Islam as a whole is not fighting either the West or the Christian faith. But ... the Islamists are self-consciously fighting a religious war. So when the West, which ... no longer recognizes the heart of the conflict as religious, insists instead that the roots of the war lie in poverty, lack of education, the results of foreign policy, and the impact of globalization, it is ... prone to misunderstandings and blunders.”

(Guinness 2008: 32-33)

They will begin the story of Islam... with Muhammad ... and explain the history solely in terms of...
- environmental,
- biological,
- psychological,
- social, and
- economic factors.

Os Guinness
(b 1941)
HarperOne, 2008)

Where will Muslims begin the story of Islam?
- with Allah (God),
- with Adam.
Many of the OT saints are in the Qur’an as Muslim prophets
• Noah,
• Abraham,
• Moses,
• David,
• etc.

There is no neutral Abraham – his identity is understood as it is revealed in the relevant worldview story.

Christian Story

Recommended Books

Where should Christians begin the story of Islam?
• with God,
• with Abraham.

Abraham

Hagar & Ishmael

(Reduced 16:1-16 & 21:8-21)

Hagar & Ishmael
• Hagar is the first person in the Bible visited by an angel
• God addresses her by name
• She is the only person in the Bible who gives a name to God
• the announcement from heaven of Ishmael’s birth is the first of its kind in Biblical history.

Hagar & Ishmael
• She is the only woman to receive a divine promise of descendants
• Ishmael is the object of special care from God, including saving him from death
• God gives Ishmael promises of blessing in the wilderness
Acts 17:26-27

“From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.”

Acts 17:26-27

... God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.”

Leviticus 19:18, 34

“love your neighbour as yourself ... The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

Deuteronomy 10:17-18

“the LORD your God ... loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.”

Jesus

“I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Revelation 7:9-10

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing ...
Islam: a short history

Beginnings
570 – An Arab, Muhammad, is born in Mecca, Arabia
595 – Employed by and married a wealthy widow, Khadija

610 – Receives first revelations
615 – Sent some of his followers to the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia (Ethiopia)

AD 570 – 622
619 – Khadija and his uncle, Abu Talib, die

Al-Hijrah
622 – Took his followers 250 miles north to Medina
Hijrah – the beginning of the Muslim calendar, AH1)

up to 622 – Muhammad lived as a prophet of peace bringing the truths he learnt from Jews and Christians to the pagan (polytheistic) Arabians
after 622 – Muhammad’s emphasis shifted to political and military domination

AD 622 – 750
630 – All Arabia under Muhammad’s control
632 – Death of Muhammad
636 – Syria falls to Islam

Christian Lands c 600 AD
638 – Jerusalem captured
656 – Arabs rule from Afghanistan (east), to Libya (west), and to the Caucasus mountains (north)
750 – Arab armies enter China
By 1700 Islam had dominated the known world for 1000 years

- Greatest military power on Earth
- Controlled world trade
- Wealthier than its neighbours
- Cities more glorious
- Buildings more splendid
- Literature and art subtle and powerful

The Glorious Past

This is what the Qur’an foretold and history taught

- Philosophers and lawyers skilled and brilliant
- The bridge between the ancient East and the modern West

The Empires Crumble

1492 – Last Muslim kingdom in Spain (Granada) defeated by Ferdinand and Isabella
1683 – Muslim eastern advance into Europe finally halted at Vienna on September 12th
1912 – All of North Africa under European rule
1918 – Islam lost all control in Europe

By 1918

- More than 90% of the Muslim world was under European ‘Christian’ rule.
- Only Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan & Saudi Arabia were independent.

In the 20th century (between 1947 and 1991) Muslim countries regained their independence.
Muslim World

But – politically, militarily, economically and culturally – Muslim countries remain under Western 'Christian' domination

How could this be?

What happened to the expectation of one global civil and religious Islamic caliphate?

The present parlous state is due to the infidelity of Muslims

Restore Islam to its original purity at the time of Muhammad and his companions

Five Milestones of the past century

2) 1945-1948 Establishment of the State of Israel

The defeat of the Arab armies in 1967 is seen by Muslims and Arabs as the lowest point ever reached by the Muslim world.

Five Milestones of the past century

3) 1979 Iranian Revolution
Reintegration of religion and politics

Five Milestones of the past century

3) 1979 Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan
Muslims from around the world mobilised for jihad, including a Saudi national, Osama bin Laden
Five Milestones of the past century
3) 1979
Siege of Mecca
Grand Mosque held by jihadists for almost two weeks

4) 1988
Soviets Withdraw from Afghanistan
bin Laden and his mujahidin believed they had defeated a superpower, which collapsed just three years later

5) 1990-1991
Fall of the USSR
Gulf War 1 Saudis ask USA to protect the two holy sites (Mecca & Medina)

Infidels in the Holy Land
Since 1990 US soldiers have been stationed in Saudi Arabia
“one of the worst catastrophes to befall the Muslims since the death of the Prophet … the occupation of the land of the two holy mosques … by Christian armies of the Americans and their allies.” (bin Laden, 1996)

Muslims in the UK
1915 – 10,000
1951 – 23,000
1961 – 82,000
1971 – 369,000
1981 – 600,000
1991 – 1,000,000
1995 – 1,100,000
2001 – 1,600,000
2011 – 2,700,000

South Asians in the UK
95% Indians
98.9% Pakistanis
99.5% Bangladeshis

Muslims in the UK
92% Muslim
1% Christian
1.1% Hindu
12% Sikh
5% Christian
45%
30%
12%
5%

Jihadists are not motivated primarily by particular events, but by their religion

bin Laden created al Qaeda and within two years (1993) the first World Trade Center attack occurred in New York

South Asians in the UK
India
Pakistan
Bangladesh

do not know Jesus Christ
Muslims in Bradford
2001 Census
• 6%
• 16%
• 26%
• 36%
• 46%

Muslims in Bradford
2001 Census
• 6%
• 16%
• 26%
• 36%
• 46%

Muslims in Bradford
2011 Census
• 15%
• 25%
• 35%
• 45%
• 55%

4th highest proportion in England
1st is Tower Hamlets, London – 35%

Pakistanis in Bradford
2011 Census
• 5%
• 10%
• 15%
• 20%
• 25%

The highest proportion in England

Muslims in Bradford Wards
• Manningham 80%
• City 53%
• Toller 45%
• Bradford Moor 37%
• Little Horton 21%

Muslim Perceptions in the UK:
Two Challenges to Christians

Challenge 1
“British Christianity is largely a private
Sunday diversion for those who are
otherwise indistinguishable from their
pagan and materialistic neighbours.”
Challenge 2
“If I become a Christian, I will lose a community, but gain only meetings.”

Responses
• Public witness
• Prayer

Public Witness
• A secular state is not neutral.
• We must expose and challenge its truth-claims.
• Witness to the truth both individually and corporately.
• Be a gospel / kingdom alternative

The Power of Love
I
Sincerely
Love
All
Muslims

Andrew van de Bijl
(Brother Andrew, b 1928)
Reported to have formed ‘ISLAM’ as an acronym from ‘I Sincerely Love All Muslims’ in the late 1990s

‘The gift of the gospel must come wrapped in us.’
• Our own life
• The life of our Christian Community

Hebrews 12: 2-3
“Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Pray
• for Christian revival,
• for Muslim renewal,
• for friendship evangelism,
• for how God will use Muslims.

Hebrews 12: 2-3
“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”