

Course Two Curriculum

My Field

Understanding Islam and Muslims

Rev. Bassem Adranly

Note: This course is neither accredited by a university nor designed academically.

This course takes a close look at what Islam teaches about essential elements of the Muslim faith. Not only will you learn about the centrality of their faith in Allah and Muhammad and their faith in the Quran and other holy texts, you will also learn what the Qur'an teaches about Christianity, Christians and Jews, the Bible, main prophets and especially Jesus Christ.

Moreover, this course uniquely offers an in-depth study of the Six Pillars of Faith in Islam from the perspective of the theological writings of Ibn Taymiyyah, one of the most authoritative Sheikhs of Sunni Islam. This section will cover the study of his entire book in detail.

This course also provides a special lecture as an orientation to the Muslim people, teaching you how to relate to them easily. You will learn all the do's and don'ts Christians should know about how to behave when introducing a Muslim to Christ. The last couple lectures also explain the unique challenges Islam presents for a Western Culture.

Note: Everything taught in this course will be taught comparatively, in light of the biblical perspective, highlighting potential areas of dialogue.

Lecture 0 – Special Lecture: How to Relate to Muslims – an Orientation

- Muslims are warm and hospitable. Learn about **their culture and mindset**.
- Learn how to relate to them with **appropriate behavior**.
- Learn what to say and what not to say **when sharing the gospel** with them.
- Learn some **Arabic words** that will help you connect more easily with them.

Lecture 1 – Introduction to Islam – p1

- Is the word "**Allah**" a name? Is it right for Christians to use it to refer to God? What is the origin of the word and how is it used in the Arabic language?
- **The Five Pillars of Islam**
- **The Quran** is not all agreed upon. Learn about the two sections of the Quran and the confusion among Islamic sects.

Lecture 2 – Introduction to Islam – p2

- **The Hadith** (Sunnah) is a very complicated text source. Not only are there tens of thousands of them, there is an elaborate system for determining the grade of each "hadith," or saying.
- **The Shari'a Law** is based on Islamic Jurisprudence. Learn how this works.

Lecture 3 – The Prophets – p1

- Learn in what ways the Quranic version of the stories of the lives of **Adam and Noah** vary from the stories in the Bible.

Lecture 4 – The Prophets – p2

- Learn in what ways the Quranic version of the stories of the lives of **Abraham and Moses** vary from the stories in the Bible.

Lecture 5 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – Introduction

- Ibn Taymiyyah presents a total of **321 theological points** in his Wasitiyah Document
- Who is **Ibn Taymiyyah**?
- Why is Ibn Taymiyyah called the "**Sheikh of Islam**"? Why did he write the Wasitiyah Document?
- **The Basmala** explained and exposed. The Basmala is the opening Islamic phrase used before beginning any speech, prayer, reading or writing.
- Though the Profession of the Two Testimonies of Faith (a-Shahadatain) is the first of the 5 Pillars of Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah recognized its inability to **define who God is and declare him as your Lord**. As a result, he makes a valiant attempt at defining who Allah is throughout the Wasitiyah Document, but finds the Qur'an quite lacking in substance.

Lecture 6 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p1

- points **#2 - #15**
- A huge motivation behind much of what is highlighted in the document is to attack Christian theology. Consequently, there is a large emphasis by Ibn Taymiyyah on the fact that **God cannot have any human attributes**.
- **90% of Islamic texts are not considered a divine source** and are largely disputed among Muslims as to their legitimate authority. This forces Ibn Taymiyyah to distinguish between what God says about himself and what His messengers say about him, making it even more difficult for him to find enough material in the Quran to define who Allah really is.
- Bassem explains that **Muslims secretly recognize that they are lost** and 17 times a day ask God to lead them to the straight path.

Lecture 7 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p2

- points **#16 - #48**
- Learn **what the Qur'an teaches about Christianity**. The Qur'an is full of little side phrases meant to refute contemporary Christianity. However, once you learn what it is refuting it is actually quite absurd. It seems a pity they spend so much energy building up arguments to refute a belief that doesn't even exist!!
- **The attributes** attributed to God in the document regarding his omniscience, sovereign will, etc. are in essence quite shallow. They fall short of the greatness attributed to God in the Bible and **don't give him justice**.

Lecture 8 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p3

- points #49 - #71
- The attributes attributed to God in the document are very physical in nature, such as hands, legs, eyes, etc. Don't laugh, but **Muslims take these descriptions very literally.**
- Learn the beginning of **the Quran and how it was revealed to Muhammad.** Bassem explains that the way it begins actually presents a serious problem.

Lecture 9 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p4

- points #72 - #97
- **Allah is described as a devious plotter.** We would never describe God in such a manner; such attributes are not edifying or honorable.
- Muslims are very literal and only consider that which is spoken audibly. **The heart itself is completely overlooked,** even when considering idolatry or sin.
- When describing who God is NOT, there is a **major emphasis on refuting Christian teaching.**
- The document quotes a **Quranic verse that clearly says that Jesus will die.**

Lecture 10 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p5

- points #98 - #130
- **God never spoke to Mohammad directly,** though he did speak directly to Jesus, Moses and others. God will even speak directly to the unbelievers on the Day of Judgment.
- The document quotes **Quranic verses that attack the Bible** and claim that it has been changed and corrupted.
- Learn **the Quran's views about abrogation** and God's advice how to answer those who do not understand the canceling and changing of verses.

Lecture 11 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p6

- points #131 - #150
- See **examples from the Hadith** (the Sunnah) and learn how Ibn Taymiyah uses them.
- Though Ibn Taymiyah affirms **the omnipresence of God, the Sunnah** explains that God descends to our realm in order to hear the prayers.
- **The Lord's Prayer quoted in the Hadith** and taught by Ibn Taymiyah
- Learn a **beautiful prayer in the Hadith** that you can use when talking with Muslims. This prayer not only does justice to God's majesty, it also refers to the Torah and the Gospel, alongside the Quran.

Lecture 12 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p7

- points #151 - #166
- Learn about varied beliefs within the multiple **sects of Islam**.
- Regarding **God's omnipresence**: Ibn Taymiyah shows greater insight than the Quran and Sunnah put together when reconciling the nearness of the presence of God with us with the understanding that God is simultaneously enthroned in heaven and looking down upon us.
- Ibn Taymiyyah gives many points that are **powerful judeo-christian concepts** that we can use when defending the incarnation of Christ.

Lecture 13 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p8

- points #167 - #179
- **The Quran is a miracle**: It is eternal and was not created. Listen to a powerful Christian response.
- Ibn Taymiyah skips the 4th Pillar of Faith, Belief in His Messengers, which is **the prophets**. This raises many questions for discussion.
- **God torments the doubter** in the grave before Judgment Day.

Lecture 14 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p9

- points # 180 - #213
- Learn about **The Grave and its Horrors** and **Resurrection Day**
- Would you take a chance with **your Eternal Destiny**? Bassem poses the obvious question: Why follow a religion if the very reason for following it is not guaranteed?

Lecture 15 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p10

- points #214 - #238
- The teaching of **Fate and Providence** is so strong that even one's deeds, both good and bad, are predetermined by Allah; and even as a newborn baby God has already willed you to be damned or to be saved.

Lecture 16 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p11

- points #239 - #264
- Learn **how Islam calls Muslims to treat one another**. What does the Islamic brotherhood really mean and what actions are required to uphold it?
- The virtue of **the Companions of Mohammad** is calculated differently than other Muslims in the brotherhood. The required actions that qualify one as a true Muslim vary depending on the person concerned.
- **Violence among Muslims** themselves is deeply rooted. More Muslims have died at the hand of a fellow Muslim throughout history than at the hand of another people group. Quranic verses are so vague that fighting and violence among one another is often interpreted as Halal.

Lecture 17 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p12

- points #265 - #289
- There is **no basis for the Rule of Law**. Mohammad and his Companions are elite and above the rules. They are protected and can do no wrong. The Quran and Hadith create an elaborate cast system of grades and levels which will continue to exist in paradise.

Lecture 18 – al-‘Aqidah al-Wasitiyah – p13

- points #290 - #321
- Who is our example? Who should we follow? **Follow the virtue of Mohammad and his Companions**, but no mention of following God.
- **Mohammad quotes Paul** about the unity of the body; even though he rejects Paul's writings.

Lecture 19 – The Prophets – p3 – Jesus and Mohammad

- Learn what the Quran teaches about **Jesus**
- Besides being called "a prophet," there are at least **10 unique descriptions** of Jesus in the Quran that set him apart from other prophets, and in some cases even Mohammad.
- Learn the Quranic **verses that refute Jesus' death and redemption**.

Lecture 20 – The Prophets – p4 – Jesus and Mohammad

- Learn the Quranic **verses that refute Jesus' divinity and title as "the Son of God."**
- The Quran **elevates Mohammad to a similar status of a god**. Learn how the Quran demands that Mohammad be treated.
- Note: We will **not study** the life of Mohammad in this course.

Lecture 21 – Abrogated Verses and the 99 Names of Allah

- Most Quranic verses used to proselytize in the West have been canceled and replaced by more violent verses. Learn about **the theology of abrogation** and how to find out what verses have and have not been abrogated.
- Some of the **99 names of God in Islam** could never be attributed to our holy God.

Lecture 22 – Challenges Islam Presents for the West

- You will learn about the following challenges Islam presents for a western culture: -

1. **Deceitfulness in Islam**
2. **Treatment of Women**
3. **Forbidding the Wrong**
4. **War Verses**
5. **Anti-Semitism against Jews and Christians**
6. **Religion and State**
7. **Killing Muslims who leave Islam**