

The Top 10 Things I Thought I Knew About Islam, But Was Wrong

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- 1 Mohammed was primarily a warrior.**
In fact, Mohammed was a champion for social justice and egalitarianism. You can read about the life of Mohammed in chapter 1 of *Why Do They Hate Us? (WDTHU)*
- 2 Islam oppresses women.**
In fact, in the time of Mohammed, women were oppressed by virtually all civilizations and cultures. Mohammed introduced the revolutionary idea that women were equal to men long before other civilizations.
- 3 Muslims consider Jews and Christians to be infidels.**
"Mohammed considered Islam to be a clarification of both Judaism and Christianity for the Arab peoples..." More than twenty Old Testament prophets are validated by the Quran, including Jesus of Nazareth. The story told in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke is virtually retold in the Quran." (Pg. 114 WDTHU)
- 4 Muslims are commanded by the Quran to slaughter all infidels.**
In fact, the Quran forbids wars of aggression and allows only self-defense. "Fight in God's path against those who fight you, but do not be aggressors, for God does not love the aggressors." (Quran 2:190) "What set the Muslims apart from the Hebrews, the Christians, and the Quraysh was the strict prohibition against initiating a conflict and the requirement to cease fighting the moment the enemy surrendered." (Pg. 50 WDTHU)
- 5 Islam opposes freedom of religion and spread using the "convert or die" philosophy.**
In fact, Mohammed taught that "there is no compulsion in religion." All are free to choose for themselves (*Quran 2:194*).
- 6 Islam is primarily a warlike religion.**
In fact, the Quranic teachings about war were exclusively in the context of self-defense of the Muslim community, who were under attack from the Quraysh tribal leaders of Mecca. There is nothing in the teaching of Islam even remotely close to a concept of killing all those who are not followers of Islam. (Pg. 46-56 WDTHU)
- 7 Sharia law is about violent forms of punishment for various infractions such as in Saudi Arabia, Iran, by ISIS and the Taliban.**
"I was shocked to learn that physical punishment is mentioned just five times in the entire Quran." (Pg. 45 WDTHU)
- 8 Mohammed was a conquering commander and a leader of the Islamic Empire.**
In fact, Mohammed had passed away before Islam's period of Imperial expansion, and this expansion had nothing to do with the religion of Islam but with the culture of empire. (Pg. 65 WDTHU)
- 9 Al Qaeda originated as a group of militant Islamic fundamentalists intent on slaughtering infidels.**
In fact, the CIA created terror in the name of Islam as a means to resist the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. "The United States all but created Al Qaeda: limitless cash and weapons, no accountability or oversight, training in explosives and detonation,...even US-provided schoolbooks to make sure the next generation grew up as jihadists, according to the *Washington Post*." (Pg. 161 WDTHU)
- 10 Suicide and terror attacks committed by Muslims are motivated by religious fervor.**
In fact, these attacks by Muslims nearly always have political motivation and nothing to do with religion. "The central fact is that overwhelmingly suicide terrorist attacks are not driven by religion as much as they are by a clear strategic objective: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from the territory that the terrorists view as their homeland." (Pg. 173 "Dying to Win: The Logic of Suicide Terrorism," by Robert Pape)

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