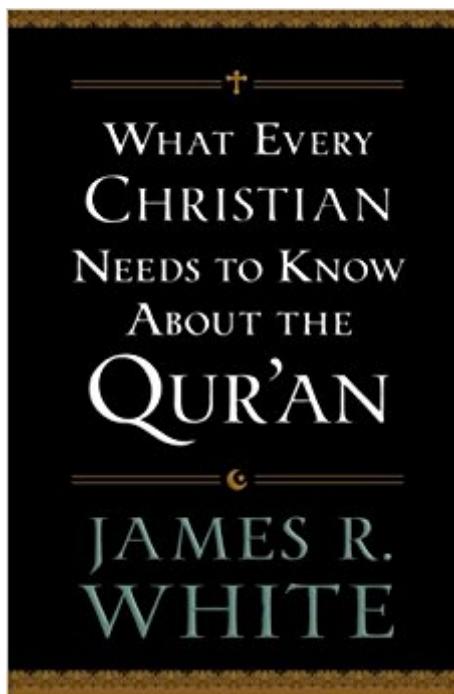


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What Every Christian Needs To Know About The Qur'an



Synopsis

A Look Inside the Sacred Book of One of the World's Fastest-Growing ReligionsWhat used to be an exotic religion of people halfway around the world is now the belief system of people living across the street. Through fair, contextual use of the Qur'an as the primary source text, apologist James R. White presents Islamic beliefs about Christ, salvation, the Trinity, the afterlife, and other important topics. White shows how the sacred text of Islam differs from the teachings of the Bible in order to help Christians engage in open, honest discussions with Muslims.

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Customer Reviews

Learn What Islam Really Teaches, Straight From Its Sacred Text Relying on the media and politicians to tell us what Muslims believe isn't going to cut it. Christians need to be better informed, whether the goal is to understand global politics or to talk to a Muslim neighbor across the street. Through fair and accurate use of the Qur'an and other documents, scholar and accomplished debater Dr. James White examines what Muslim sacred texts teach about Christ, salvation, the Trinity, the afterlife, and other crucial topics. This book provides the answers you've been looking for to engage in open, honest discussions about Islam with Muslims and others."An excellent introduction for Christians who want to be more informed about Islam than what they can learn from news reports and the Internet. Dealing not only with historical facts but also deep theological and prophetic questions, the book is valuable for all Christians who want to communicate intelligently with their Muslim friends and neighbors." --The Baptist Standard

James R. White is the author of several acclaimed books, including *The God Who Justifies* and *The Forgotten Trinity*. The director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization, he is an accomplished and respected debater and an elder of the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church. James also blogs at the Alpha and Omega Ministries site www.aomin.org. He and his family live in Phoenix, Arizona.

I haven't finished it yet. The information is important, but it's somewhat difficult to read. The excerpts from the Qur'an and Hadith are especially challenging to figure out what it is saying. Sometimes he pasted it in there and moved on to another topic immediately without summarizing or analyzing the text or telling me why it was important, as if the message of the passage was completely self explanatory. One might argue perhaps the author was trying to keep himself out of it and let the reader form his own opinions, but since the purpose of the book is to teach, I don't think it applies. He could do a better job communicating. I do appreciate how much work he did preparing for the book. I myself would prefer not to invest so much time to study the Qur'an and Hadith directly in order to learn its message and better understand where Muslims are coming from. I'd rather to read books like this. *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* was much easier for me to read and it contained a lot of great information (major doctrinal differences between Christianity and Islam), besides being a thrilling account of God patiently demonstrating His love for the author.

Greatly informative. Provides detailed differences between Christianity and the Quran. Author tries not to provide opinions and instead only fact based evidence. This is a must read for individuals who wish to learn more about the connections between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam and what differentiates these religions.

This book is a scholarly work about the Qur'an that does not pull punches. It may be too technical for some, but for others looking for more than an elementary study of comparative religions, this book is for them. I found it fascinating, accurate, and eye-opening. There is a general and popular misconception that the Christian Bible and the Muslim Qur'an are essentially the same book with a different cover. This could not be further from the truth, and to be intellectually honest, one must study the differences to make such a claim. "*What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Qur'an*" is not only for Christians, but for anyone wanting to know about what the Qur'an says and how it was written.

Fantastic book. Solid, biblical teaching. No apologies from the Author. Dr James White fulfills the greatest of the commandments and teaches his reader the same. Like a hunter who seeks his prey, Dr White gives practical explanations about the Quran so we can be ready to give an answer by letting the Muslims know that we understand who they are and what their book teaches.

Excellent and deep coverage of the Quran from a Christian point of view. He uses external historical sources and also covers the Quranic verses as they are. Dr. White takes a respectful approach towards untangling confusing passages. As a Former Muslim, I found the book to be a fair representation of what I used to believe and he also added information that most Muslims have no clue about (via historical data). If you are interested in reading more from a former Muslim (now Christian), check out this blog: monaearnest.wordpress.com

I have been involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue and debate for about four years at this point. I've heard a lot debates, read a lot of books, listened to a lot of speakers and engaged in a lot of firsthand conversations with Muslims about the issues that divide us, and what the truth really is. The quest for truth leads us to listen ever more closely to what the other side has to say, try to read their literature, understand their language and get into their mindset to see what they really think and how to formulate a proper response to them. With that regard, I think Dr. James White has exemplified how Christians should speak to Muslims in accordance with their respective worldviews. What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an is not just another in a long line of polemical works designed to aid Christian evangelists and missionaries in reaching out to Muslims. Granted, it is that, but at the same time, it is so much more than that. This new book lays out many of the pertinent issues concerning the Qur'an. White has gone out of his way in learning Arabic, studying secondary Islamic sources such as the ahadith and tafaasir (if you don't know what those words mean, don't worry, the book comes with a glossary), and listening to lectures by Islamic scholars in order to figure out how Muslims regard their own holy text, as well as how they interact with the Christian Bible. White expands upon many of the arguments that Muslims and Christians have long thrown at each other in their polemic discussions from as far back as the earliest encounters between the two faiths. In addition, he also utilizes new information, based on academic works that have come out in the past few years, in order to update our knowledge of Islam, and bring new arguments and evidence onto the table. The first couple of chapters of the book provide the basic background information necessary to understand the Qur'an. White begins in chapter 1 by tracing the early years of Islam, during the lifetime of its founder, Muhammad. He takes it for granted that

Muhammad is a real historical figure, and that much of what is contained in the Islamic tradition regarding him is reliable, although he does note in passing the publication of recent works that challenge that consensus (pg. 20). A lot of the material is based on direct quotations from sira (biographical) literature, and White does note varying accounts of the same anecdotes as found in different sources (such as the contradictory accounts of the reasons behind Muhammad's death in pp. 46-47). This is followed by a discussion of the Islamic view of the Qur'an in chapter 2, which goes into how the book is arranged, as well as the theology behind its origins. The main thing to be noted from this section is how the Qur'an is considered the direct speech of God as dictated from an eternally pre-existent heavenly tablet to Muhammad, who acts merely as a passive recipient and reciter of the revelation. This is in stark contrast from the Christian view of revelation where multiple authors write the various books of the Bible under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Granted, this view of the Qur'an is not universally held by all Muslims, but it is the orthodox viewpoint in Sunni Islam, which cannot be challenged without grave consequences. The rest of chapters go into the various topics that frequently come up in Christian-Muslim dialogues. White goes into the Islamic doctrine of God, discussing the Qur'anic view of God's oneness (tawheed) in chapter 3, and how the Qur'an accuses of Christians of shirk (idolatry) for their belief in the Trinity. Critically important to this discussion is chapter 4, where White goes through the relevant Qur'anic texts, and shows that its author did not understand the Christian doctrine of God, and frequently misrepresents it (a stunning thing if this was, in fact, the direct speech of God as opposed to the fallible ideas of Muhammad). Chapter 5 goes into the Qur'anic references to Jesus, where White shows that the Qur'anic person of Isa ibn Maryam is completely different from the Jesus of the New Testament, such that we could only conclude that the former is not a real person, but an argument. As White notes, none of Jesus' statements in the Qur'an (with one exception) have any identifiable historical context, rendering them completely divorced from reality (p. 107). This discussion is continued in chapter 6, which discusses the Islamic denial of the crucifixion, a denial that is based on a single verse (Surah 4:157), which is far from clear in its context, contradicts other verses in the Qur'an, has no unanimous interpretation among Muslim exegetes, and contradicts everything that we know from both Christian and non-Christian historical sources regarding Jesus' death. The Islamic viewpoint at this point is essentially reduced to fideism, as all the contemporary accounts are nullified by a source coming six centuries later that claims that these eyewitnesses were in fact deceived by Allah into thinking that Jesus died (which has some very troubling implications for the nature of God in Islam that we do not have time to get into here). Chapter 7 is also important to consider for those who want to discuss the Gospel with Muslims. White talks about the Islamic view of salvation. While

Islam stresses the mercy of God, White notes in this chapter how Islam fails to harmonize God's mercy with God's justice, leaving the conflict between the two attributes hanging in mid-air. This is, of course, contrasted with the Christian perspective, where these attributes are magnificently brought together at the cross of Christ. These differences (along with the aforementioned denial of the crucifixion and atonement) must always be kept at the forefront when discussing the differences in viewpoint on salvation, in order to clear up the barriers of communication that presently exist between the two faiths. Chapter 8 is, I would argue, the most significant chapter in the entire book from an apologetic perspective. Christians must note that every appeal to the Bible is quickly short-circuited by the fact that Muslims regard the Bible as having been corrupted. This is an accusation that, funny enough, is nowhere to be found in the Qur'an. On the contrary, the Qur'an and the earliest Muslim commentators on it took it for granted that the text of the Bible, while misunderstood and neglected, had not been altered textually. The viewpoint that the text of the Bible had been corrupted wholesale came somewhat later, became popular through the polemics of Ibn Hazm during the tenth century, and is now standard fare in almost all Muslim polemics against Christianity, even though some Muslim scholars to this day (such as Mahmoud Ayoub) challenge this and assert that the Qur'an merely accuses the Jews and Christians of misinterpreting the text, not corrupting it. White here makes copious use of the research put forward by Gordon Nickel, whose recent book is perhaps the most scholarly and comprehensive work out on this topic to date (see below). Once the integrity of the Biblical text can be established, there is not much left standing in the way towards vindicating every other doctrine of the Christian faith over against the Islamic claims to the contrary. Chapter 9 discusses the Islamic claim that Muhammad is found in the Bible. This claim comes to many Christians as a surprise, yet Muslims the world over take it for granted that the Bible contains references to Muhammad, whether they've actually read the Bible or not. The common texts put forward by polemicists such as Ahmed Deedat are examined and shown to be quite contrary to the Islamic claims, as they cannot be utilized in support of Islam without completely mangling them out of their context. The Qur'an's claim that Muhammad in the Bible is shown to be one of the most blatant errors found in its text, and stands as a witness to its fallibility. The last two chapters deal with the common claims Muslims make about the Qur'an's perfection. Chapter 10 talks about the parallel texts found within the Qur'an, showing that they are consistent with a human author reciting to different audiences, but are inconsistent with a divine recitation coming from an eternally pre-existent heavenly tablet. There are also clear parallels between it and apocryphal texts such as the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, as well as Jewish sources such as the Babylonian Talmud. White shows that the author of Qur'an clearly did not know the difference between the biblical

stories and later post-biblical legends. Finally, chapter 11 talks about textual variants in the Qur'an, showing how Islamic tradition itself testifies against the claim of a uniform Qur'anic text, and makes use of the most recent published works on Qur'anic textual criticism such as Stephen Powers and Keith Smalls on Qur'anic textual criticism (again, see below) to finally put this claim to rest. One note I should make note of about this book is that while it is detailed, it is not exhaustive. The book's title is *What Every Christian NEEDS to Know About the Qur'an*, meaning that there are many other issues that, while germane to the discussion of Islam, are not essential to know. For example, White stays out of the contemporary political debates. Although brief references to the dhimma system are made (such as in p. 120), he largely avoids the question of whether or not Islam is a peaceful and tolerant religion. This is for the better, not only because there are already a flood of books on this topic out in the market, but also because discussing it does little to advance the cause of Christian-Muslim theological debate. There are many other topics that he could have discussed, but chose only to mention in passing, if at all. No mention is made, for example, of Islam's substandard view of women, or of the troubling implications of the doctrine of *taqiyyah* and the view that Allah is the "Greatest of Deceivers" (*Khair-ul-Makireen*). White had an opportunity to discuss this doctrine when he touched upon Surah 3:54, but instead chose to pass over it and move on (pp. 114-115). While I'm not faulting him for this, *per se*, I do think it is pertinent to take the doctrine of *taqiyyah* into account when discussing the tactics of Muslim missionaries, both here in the west and around the world. Another thing that I should note about this book is that it is not the kind of book one would read casually if one does not already have some prior experience in dealing with Muslims. In fact, if you are learning about Islam for the first time, I would suggest reading a shorter book first (such as Mateen Elass's *Understanding the Qur'an: A Quick Christian Guide to the Muslim Holy Book*) before diving into this one. While the first couple of chapters begin smoothly enough, the learning curve tends to become a bit steeper from chapter 3 onwards, as White uses a lot of his academic tools in analyzing the Qur'anic texts, quoting from many secondary Islamic sources, exegeting the Arabic text and applying a classic Van Tillian presuppositional methodology in internally critiquing the Islamic perspective. For those who do not already have a basic grasp of Islamic terminology, expect to turn the page towards the glossary at the back quite often. For those who are in the front lines of Christian-Muslim dialogue and debate, however, this book is an extremely valuable resource. This is where White's scholarship shines the brightest. Dividing Line junkies such as myself are aware of Dr. White's "reading habits" (for the uninitiated, Dr. White is a bicyclist who listens to audio books during his morning exercises), and we see the result of that in this book. The endnotes are especially valuable for the academically-inclined, as there are copious references that one could

follow to obtain more information there. Other than the references to the primary hadith collections such as Sahih al Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, White quotes some very important scholarly works, such as the recently published book by Dr. Gordon Nickel, entitled, Narratives of Tampering in the Earliest Commentaries on the Qur'an, as well as Keith E. Small's Textual Criticism and Qur'an Manuscripts. These are the types of works which Christians need to utilize in future discussions with Muslims, and by presenting the materials in a more accessible format, White makes it easier to bring these evidences to a popular level. In his endorsement of Dr. White's book, pastor Thabiti Anyabwile calls What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an "a game-changer for Muslim-Christian dialogues about the Qur'an, the Bible and our claims to truth." I am inclined to agree with pastor Anyabwile on this. This book is a necessary part of every Christian evangelist and apologist's library, especially given the accelerating efforts by Muslims to propagate Islam in the west through da'wah. I also highly recommend this to every Muslim, as White shows how a Christian, armed with all the tools and knowledge that a religious scholar may have on the two faiths, can provide a fair yet compelling critique of the Islamic worldview.

An excellent book for knowing how to compare the Truths of Christianity to false beliefs.

Dr. White delivers a fair, but sharp critique of Islam as expressed in the Qur'an. As an evangelical Christian I was very interested to learn more about what the Qur'an teaches about Christians. Dr. White carefully and methodically exegetes the Qur'an and the result is what I must say is tantamount to a death blow against Islam. Dr. White's debating skills are legendary and he exposes the deception found in the Qur'an with the skill of a surgeon! All churches should have this book on their church library. I also recommend that you give this book as a gift to Muslims who have expressed interest in Christianity.

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