

SHORT ANSWER

10 minutes for these questions (4 points each)

1. Islam began in the seventh century A.D. Its first prophet was Muhammad.
2. Islam means “submission” in Arabic, and Muslim means “a person who submits to the teachings of Islam.”
3. What does “Qur’an” (or “Koran”) mean?
“Recitation”
4. Name two countries or regions that are primarily Muslim today.
Any two of these would be correct:
 - Middle East
 - North Africa
 - Iraq
 - Iran
 - Afghanistan
 - Indonesia
 - Bangladesh
 - Pakistan
 - Turkey
 - Albania (NOTE: Resources may differ regarding Albania.)
5. Muhammad fled to Medina in the year 622. Muslims call this emigration Hijra (or Hegira).
6. What does the word *jihad* mean?
Jihad means “holy war.”
7. Name one way in which God used Muslim culture for the good of mankind in general.
Any one of these would be correct:
 - Muslims established an impressive civilization in Iraq, Persia (now Iran), Palestine, North Africa, Spain, India, and Syria.
 - Muslims transmitted much of the classical knowledge of the ancient world.
 - Muslims made many advances in science, mathematics, and medicine.
 - Muslims developed intricate geometric art.
8. What does “Moorish” mean?
“Moorish” was the name given to Islamic art in Spain, from a Muslim group that first inhabited that country in the 700’s.
9. What was the principal reason that Islamic art developed as it did?
Muhammad forbade any artistic representation of God, animals, or people for fear of idolatry and offending Allah, the creator of life. Therefore, Muslim artists developed intricate patterns, using floral or geometric patterns.
10. What does “arabesque” mean in relation to Islamic art?
Muslim artists developed a special type of decoration consisting of winding stems with abstract leaves. This scrollwork, called arabesque, became common in Islamic art in all Muslim countries beginning in the 900’s.

ESSAY QUESTION

20 minutes for one of these questions (60 points)

1. In a well-structured essay, compare and contrast Muslim and Christian beliefs about Moses, Jesus, and the Trinity.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Islam

- Moses:
 - Moses is revered.
 - Moses' words were sometimes flawed.
 - Moses is not necessarily a lawgiver or "establisher" of the Jewish faith.
- Jesus:
 - Jesus is revered.
 - Jesus is the "messiah," but God is not a father and He does not beget; thus, neither Jesus nor we could be God's children.
 - Jesus was a great prophet.
- The Trinity:
 - God is one, and that means that He cannot have three Persons. He has only one Person.
 - Christians are polytheists because they believe that God is three.

Christianity

- Moses:
 - Moses is revered.
 - The books of the Bible which Moses wrote are accurate and infallible, since they were inspired by the Holy Spirit and are part of Scripture, which is inerrant.
- Jesus:
 - Jesus is worshipped.
 - Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, sharing fully in God's nature, essence, and deity.
 - Jesus is the Christ, who has come into the world to restore the relationship between God and mankind through his perfect sacrifice on the cross.
- The Trinity:
 - God is three-in-one (one in essence but three in Person).
 - Christians are monotheists, not polytheists.

Sample Answer

Although Christian and Muslim beliefs share some startling similarities, they diverge on key points of doctrine. These are clear in their different views of Moses, Jesus, and the Trinity.

Muslims revere Moses, just as Christians do. However, Muslims believe that Moses' words were sometimes flawed, and they do not see him as an "establisher" of the Jewish faith in the same way that Christians do. Christians believe that the books of the Bible written by Moses are inerrant, because they are part of Scripture and were inspired by the Holy Spirit. They also view Moses as a lawgiver and "establisher" of the Jewish faith.

Muslims revere Jesus, but only as a great prophet. They do not worship Him as Christians do. To them, Jesus is the "messiah," but God is not a father and He does not beget; thus, neither Jesus nor we could be God's "children." Christians believe that Jesus was more than a great prophet, that he was the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, sharing fully in God's nature, essence, and deity. Christians further believe that Jesus came into the world to restore the relationship between God and mankind through His perfect sacrifice on the cross.

Muslims and Christians both hold that monotheism is right, but Muslims teach that Christians are actually polytheists, since they believe in the Trinity. Muslims hold that God is one, and that this means He cannot have three Persons. Christians assert that they are monotheists, since they believe in God as three-in-one, a Holy Trinity.

In conclusion, though Muslims and Christians share some similarities, they hold different views on key doctrines.

2. “The Iconoclast Controversy raised important questions about the nature of Christian worship.” In an expository essay, defend or oppose this statement, outlining the history of the Iconoclast Controversy, summarizing the conflicting points of view, and explaining how the controversy was finally resolved.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Definitions

- Icons are pictures or images that represent a spiritual reality and are used in some kinds of Christian worship.
- Iconoclasm literally means the breaking of icons or images.
- The Iconoclast Controversy revolved around a policy of destroying the icons within the church and forbidding their veneration.

History

- Byzantine Emperor Leo III initiated the controversy by banning icons in 726 in order to uphold the scriptural mandate of Exodus 20:4-5 against idolatry.
- Leo III's son Constantine V rigorously enforced the ban, breaking icons, persecuting monks who supported icons, and turning monasteries into secular buildings.
- Many monks and supporters of icons (iconophiles) took refuge in Rome.
- In 787, Empress Irene called an ecumenical council at Nicaea, which overturned the iconoclast policy.
- In 815, Leo V and a council convened at the Hagia Sophia, reversing the Nicene council's decision.
- New iconoclast policies seemed restricted to Constantinople and its immediate surroundings.
- Many monks and supporters of icons (iconophiles) took refuge in Rome.

Controversy

- People who supported iconoclasm saw the church's use of icons in worship as a return to pre-Christian idolatry.
- Scriptures against idolatry include Exodus 20:4-5, Leviticus 26:1, Deuteronomy 4:16-19, 23, Jeremiah 10:14-15, Habakkuk 2:18.
- People who wished to continue to venerate icons argued based on Christ's incarnation, the traditions of the church, and other philosophical considerations.
- Just as Christ, who was divine, took on human flesh and entered the created world, so icons are meant to unite the physical and spiritual realms. Icons transfigure material symbols of worship, and because they do so, they should be venerated.
- Iconoclasts responded by claiming that icons promoted the heresies of Nestorianism (separating Christ's human and divine natures) and Monophysitism (conflating Christ's human and divine natures).
- The *Synodikon* claimed that icons are not only appropriate but necessary for Christian worship.

Resolution

- Iconoclastic policies ended in 843, now celebrated as the Triumph of Orthodoxy.
- The Eastern Orthodox Church embraced icon veneration.
- The Western Church supported religious imagery but considered it as useful for education, not worship. Icons could serve as symbols or representations, but not objects of worship.
- This difference, among others, led to the eventual schism between the Eastern and Western Churches.

Sample Answer

Few issues are more important to the Christian faith than the question of how to worship God. The truth of this is seen in the Iconoclast Controversy, which began in the Byzantine Empire in 726 and raised important questions about Christian worship. Iconoclastic policies, including the destruction of icons within the church and the command that people not venerate them, stemmed from concerns about idolatry and the nature of the Incarnation—concerns that were not officially resolved until over a century later.

The many fluctuations in the history of the Iconoclast Controversy show the importance of the issue. Encouraged by supporters in the church, Emperor Leo III banned icons and icon veneration in 726 in order to uphold the scriptural mandate of Exodus 20:4-5 against idolatry. Leo III's son Constantine V rigorously enforced his father's policies, even persecuting monks who defended icon veneration and turning their monasteries into secular buildings. In 787, Empress Irene was able to remove the ban on icons by calling a council at Nicea, but this reprieve was short-lived since Leo V reinstated iconoclastic policies in 815.

The controversy over icons centered on two theological issues, that of idolatry and that of the nature of Christ's incarnation. Those who opposed icons cited the many biblical passages against images and idols, such as Exodus 20:4-5 which says, "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God..." Those in favor of icons argued that icons had long been part of church practice and that icons are important because of the incarnation. Just as Christ, who is divine, came in the flesh and entered the created world, so icons are physical images of spiritual realities. Icons should be venerated, they argued, or else Christ's incarnation is undermined. This claim that the veneration of icons is not only acceptable but necessary for Christian worship was a new argument put forward in the Synodikon, and it marked a differentiation between the Eastern and Western Church's approach to icons.

The Iconoclast Controversy was finally resolved in 843, when iconoclasm was rejected by the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Eastern Church celebrates this decision as the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Although the issue was officially resolved, the Western and Eastern Churches had begun to diverge in their understanding of icons, and this separation would contribute to the later schism.

The history of the Iconoclast Controversy, the nature of its disagreement, and its resolution clearly relates to important questions about Christian worship. These questions are not only significant in church history but are also essential for believers today to consider, since we worship a holy God who deserves to be glorified as He has directed in His Word.