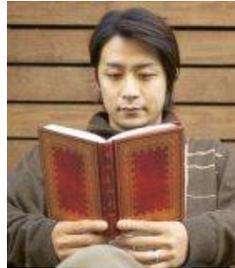


Should Christians Read the *Quran*?

By Daryl Wingerd

I was recently asked if I had read *The Quran*, the foundational book of the religion known as Islam. The person asking was a Muslim (i.e., an adherent to Islam), and was concerned that I should check out Islam as another way to God before settling on Jesus Christ as the only way.

Much good can come when strong believers learn what deceived people perceive as truth so that the only real source of truth about God—the Bible—can be skillfully used to expose the errors of the false prophets. But it is not always necessary, helpful, or even safe, for Christians to study non-Christian religious literature.



In general, Christians are taught to avoid false teaching, not to study it. “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matt. 7:15). “I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them” (Rom. 16:17). “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1). “For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers . . . who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach” (Titus 1:10-11).

These warnings were not only designed to keep believers from *buying into* the lies of the false teachers, but also to keep them from *listening to* them. Yet, when you sit down to read or listen to false, anti-Christian literature or teaching, you are supplying your mind with these very lies. You are absorbing thoughts and information and opinions and supposed facts and speculations that have caused many people—even many who were once professing Christians—to be sucked into the black hole of apostasy. You would not be the first person who thought his faith in Christ was strong, yet was proven weak. How hopeful Satan must be when he sees a zealous but naïve Christian crack open these pages of misinformation.

It has even become popular for Christians to invite non-Christian religious experts, or even atheists, to attend their meetings and explain the tenets of their belief systems. Sometimes this is for the purpose of debating the issues that divide, with the hope that the audience will be convinced of the superiority of the Bible. In liberal circles it is often motivated by the politically correct yet carnal desire to “gain appreciation” for the other person’s religion so that all concerned can have a more profitable “inter-faith dialogue.” In either case, this is to invite the wolf into the sheepfold. Even debates that are organized by well-meaning Christians do not always go as planned. I have known of cases where the non-Christian expert came across as a better debater than the Christian, and the potential for real spiritual harm being done to those in attendance was strong. I would not want to be the pastor whose well-intentioned debate or “inter-faith dialogue” led to a weak believer doubting the Bible or renouncing Christ as the only way to God.

If you still think you have good reasons to read *The Quran*, or any other non-Christian religious literature, please take the following precautions:

- 1. First, know your Bible well.** Be sure that you are solidly grounded in the only truth that saves—the gospel of Jesus Christ. This will not only protect you, but will also be the best way to help the non-Christians you hope to witness to. Your thorough knowledge of the truth will be much more useful in refuting error than your study of the error itself. Furthermore, if you have not taken the time to read the whole Bible, *more than once*, what makes you think you have time to study the lie that opposes it?
- 2. Be accountable to a pastor or another strong Christian.** Let someone trustworthy know what you are reading, and why you are reading it. Ask them to help you remember that you are not reading out of mere curiosity, or trying to find the way to God (since you have already found it in Christ). Ask for their help in sorting out any doubts or difficult issues you encounter.
- 3. Pray for spiritual protection.** Don’t be too proud to admit that on your own, you could be lured away from the truth. No matter how strong you think you are, humbly acknowledge your spiritual vulnerability and ask God to protect you as you study.