

What is the difference between the terms “Muslim” and “Islam”?

Islam is the name of the religion itself. It means, in Arabic, “submission to the will of Allah.” Muslim is a related word that can be roughly translated as “one who submits” to Allah and his will. A Muslims, then, is someone who believes in Islam.

What is the Koran?

The Koran (sometimes called the Qur’an in English) is the holy book of all Muslims. The word Koran means “recital” in Arabic, which comes from the purported visions of Mohammed where the angel had him recite after him the messages from God, which eventually became the composition of the Koran when it was written down many decades later by some of his followers.

The Koran as Muslims have it today is comprised of 114 chapters, which are often referred to in English by their Arabic designation, Sura. Each verse is called an Ayat, which means “sign” or “miracle”.

Muslims also refer to the various suras of the Koran by their titles. These titles are generally derived not so much from the overall subject matter of the chapter, which can be quite wide-ranging, but to one element mentioned in the chapter. For example: Sura 2 is titled “The Cow”; Sura 8, “The Spoils of War”; and Sura 29, “The Spider”.

Unlike the Bible, The Koran is not arranged chronologically or by subject matter. Instead, it is arranged according to the length of its chapters. The longest chapter appears first and the shortest chapter last. This organization was completed long after Mohammed’s death.

How old was Jesus when he died on the cross?

Traditionally, the age attributed to Jesus at the time of his death is thirty three. We know that St. Luke's Gospel states that Jesus was "about 30 years of age when he began his ministry" (LK 3:23). All four Gospel writers--- Matthew, Mark, Luke and John --- indicate that the public ministry of Jesus began with his baptism in the river Jordan by John the Baptist.

From this starting point, the Gospel of John indicates that Jesus' public ministry spanned the commemoration of three Jewish Passovers, a period of at least three years. From this fact, we can deduce that Jesus would have been about thirty- three years old at the time of His crucifixion. This figure has been widely accepted throughout the 2,000-year history of Christianity.

Email me or call me with any questions of faith for possible inclusion in the column. Deacon Mike

JMJ