

Jihad in History

During Muhammad's ten years in Medina he participated personally in 29 campaigns of aggression and supervised 57 others, for an average of about nine conflicts per year. His earliest biographer, Ibn Ishaq, summarized Muhammad's life in this short sentence: "God sent Muhammad with this religion and he strove for it until people accepted it voluntarily or by force."

Before his death in 632 AD he orchestrated the elimination of every Jew in Arabia, either through exile or extermination. In 627 AD he personally beheaded 800 Jewish men and took as captive slaves their wives and children at the Battle of the Trench.

In the first 100 years after his death, his followers continued with the goal of spreading Islam by persuasion or force. The map above shows the areas (red, orange, green) of the progressive spread of Islam by way of jihad through 732 AD.

Islamic aggression continued through the 17th century, capturing a significant part of the world. It has abated somewhat since then but is once again on the rise.

Today jihad is accomplished by warfare in some nations such as Egypt, Somalia, Nigeria, and others. It is also accomplished through more subversive or stealthy means, such as economic, political, and educational in our schools and universities.



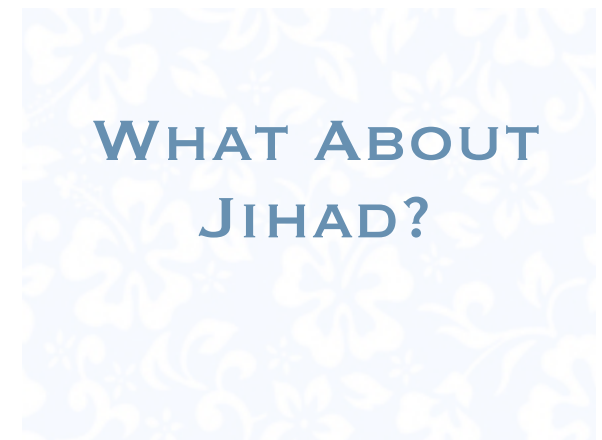
Jihad Vs. The Crusades

One objection raised by Muslims when faced with the historical reality of Jihad is the Crusades. This argument is without merit.

- **Scope:** The crusades lasted less than 200 years while Islamic jihad has been ongoing for 1,400 years and continues
- **Response:** The Crusades were a defensive response to 400 years of prior Islamic aggression where large portions of formerly Christian and Jewish lands were captured. Jihad was and always has been purely offensive, not defensive.
- **Jesus vs. Muhammad:** Jesus taught a message of love and compassion. He said to pray for those who persecute you and spitefully use you. Jesus never advocated killing anyone, least of all one's enemies. Muhammad told his followers to eliminate anyone who refuses to worship Allah as God and acknowledge him as God's messenger. He had those who mocked him put to death.

Scholar Paul Fregosi: "Muslims who kill are following the commands of Muhammad, but Christians who kill—and there are many—are ignoring the words of Christ. Therein perhaps lies one of the basic philosophical differences between Islam and Christianity."

Jihad and the Crusades – there is no comparison.





Jihad defined

Although jihad comes from the Arabic word meaning “struggle” it has almost universally been understood to mean warfare to spread Islam.

- **Encyclopedia of Islam:** “According to general doctrine and in historical tradition, the jihad consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam and, if need be, its defense.”
- **Umdat al-Salik** (manual of Islamic law): “The means to war against non-Muslims, and is etymologically derived from mujahada, signifying warfare to establish the religion.”
- **Hadith of Al-Bukhari** (footnote): “Al-Jihad (Holy Fighting) in Allah’s cause (with full force of numbers and weaponry), is given the utmost importance in Islam, and is one of the pillars (on which it stands). By Jihad Islam is established, Allah’s Word is made superior, and His religion (Islam) is propagated.”
- **Hadith of Abu Dawud:** ““The Apostle of Allah said ‘I am commanded to fight with men till they testify that there is no god but Allah; when they do that they will keep their life and their property safe from me.’”

The hadith of al-Bukhari has an entire section devoted to jihad, where the word is used literally dozens of times, always in the context of armed conflict to propagate and spread Islam.

Separating Sheep from Goats

In the Bible, Jesus tells a parable in Matthew 25 in which he contrasts his true followers from those who say they follow him but do not demonstrate it in their actions. We know it as the parable of the sheep and goats.

In the same way, the Qur’an describes those who are the true followers of Allah as those who fight for the cause of Allah. Jihad is Allah’s way of separating his sheep from goats.

- “Did ye think that ye would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (In His Cause) and remained steadfast?” (Sura 3:142)
- “Do you think that you shall be left alone while Allah has not yet tested those among you who have striven hard and fought...” (Sura 9:16). In his commentary, Ibn Kathir states, “The purpose Allah revealing this aya [verse] was to distinguish ’between those who obey him and those who disobey him.’”
- “ ... if it had been Allah’s Will, He Himself could certainly have punished them (without you). But (He lets you fight) in order to test some of you with others.” (Sura 47:4)

With these verses in mind, along with supporting commentary from a respected 14th century Islamic scholar, how can anyone assert that those who wage offensive war on behalf of Islam do so in contradiction to the Qur’an?

Evolution of Jihad: Peace to Violence

Because the Qur’an was given to Muhammad over a 23 year period, we can look at its verses to see if a pattern emerges regarding the evolution from peace to violence in his teaching. Indeed, when one takes this approach, an interesting pattern can be discerned.

- **Stage 1: Early Mecca.** Muhammad is an insignificant figure with no military and little clout in society. He preached purely a message of peace and tolerance: Sura 73:10-11; 16:125-126; 23:96; 20:129-130; 52:45-48
- **Stage 2: Late Mecca.** Muhammad gains more followers, begins encountering persecution by the Meccans. The Qur’an authorizes voluntary defensive fighting. Sura 22:39-41.
- **Stage 3: Early Medina.** With a growing group of followers, and growing political influence in Medina, Muhammad now orders an obligation to fight in defense of Islam. Sura 2:190-194; 47:4-6; 8:67-69.
- **Stage 4: Late Medina.** Muhammad has gained a large group of loyal followers of over 10,000, and has unmatched political and military clout. He now orders Muslims to fight offensively for the advance of Islam. Sura 5:36-38; 9:19-22; 9:29-31; 9:38-41.

It is abundantly clear that when Muslims were the minority with no clout, Muhammad preached peace, and when they gained more influence, they preached warfare, as it is today.