

Comparative Beliefs: Islam and Christianity

Islam

Root of Belief

- Abraham through his son Ishmael. Follows the line of Ishmael
- Esau (Son of Isaac) left his father Isaac and joined Ishmael and his descendants

God

- Monotheistic – believes in one God – Allah
- Allah is the personal name for the “One true God.” Has no plural or gender.
- In Arabic, the word “Allah” means “The One who deserves all worship.”
- Allah has 99 different names – ie: Merciful, Compassionate, One God, the Everlasting Refuge, Not begotten, equal to Himself and no other.
- Muslims claim the god of Islam is the same God as the Jews and Christians – Allah is the Arabic name for God.
- Muslims pray directly to Allah with no intermediary, seeking guidance from Him alone.
- Allah does not have any son, no father, no relative, and no associates, nor is there any god with Him.
- Rejects the Trinity – God can and will never be human like Jesus became

In order to become a real Muslim, one must believe and confess sincerely: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the apostle of Allah."

Predestination of Man

The word "Islam," means peace through the submission to the will of Allah. A Muslim, therefore, is one who submits, much as a slave submits to his master. The reason for this submission is found in the belief that everything, including good and evil, faith and unbelief, is preordained.

- As a religion, Islam is a code of political, ceremonial, civil, and criminal law, as well as moral and religious precepts, all promulgated in Allah's name, while leaving nothing to the believer's initiative.
- Muslims believe that Allah is in control of all of history. All who follow Allah accepts his:
 - doctrine of predestination
 - acceptance of destiny
 - resignation to fate.

Allah is sovereign; thus, anything that happens is the will of Allah.

Christianity

Root of Belief

- Abraham
- Isaac – follow his line – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Esau's twin brother)

God

- Monotheistic – believes on one God (God Almighty)
- God in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- God has hundreds of names which point out His attributes: Almighty, LORD, El Shadai, Jehovah (Jirah, Tsidkanu...), Everlasting, etc.
- Christians believe and pray to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Trinity)– the three in One.
- Jesus is the mediator between God and man.
- Jesus is God's Son, yet He is God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God active in Christians' lives on earth.
- Jews and Christians do NOT believe the god of Muslim is the same God as the Jews and Christians – different attributes, requires different things from His people, etc.

To be a Christian, one must believe and confess with their heart Jesus is Lord. The confession is a heart matter.

Predestination of Man

God's attributes are found in His holiness, grace and love (1 John 4:16). He is righteous and cannot look upon nor tolerate evil. Hab 1:13. He has a selfless love for His creation unable to create or accept evil.

The God of the Bible not only loves those who are good, but loves those who are sinners as well, even to the point of giving His life for them. (Rom 5:1-10) The biblical view of God is one who wants a personal relationship with His creation (John 1:11-14; 15:9-15).

- God does NOT seek total blind obedience from His creation. His love seeks the best for the others at His expense (Christ's death on the cross).
- This love, which God desires of us, both in our relationship with Him, and with others.

The Bible tells us that man was created in God's image (Gen

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- This kind of Kismet thinking leads to fatalism, passivity, loss of control, fanatically self-sacrificing in war, resigned in defeat, in bereavement and disaster, and inactive in the presence of preventable evil (epidemics).

Allah is not bound by any moral obligation – therefore, Allah is the author of evil. He does not have to be right, just, or merciful.

Allah is a distant God with whom no one can have a personal relationship.

Allah loves only those who do his will

The Scriptures

Muslim scriptures, called the Qur'an, is more commonly known to Westerners as the Koran.

- The Qur'an is the writings of the Prophet Mohammed and was sent as the perfection and culmination of all truth contained in the earlier Old and New Testament Scriptures. In other words, the Qur'an contains all truth, not the Old and New Testament.
- The Qur'an guards the previous revelations by restoring the eternal truth of Allah.
- The five tenets to which Muslims must adhere to is a belief in the four inspired books:
 - The Torah (Five books of Moses)
 - Zabur (the Psalms)
 - Injil (twisting of the gospels)
 - Qur'an
- The Qur'an teaches that Jews and Christians changed certain parts of the Scriptures, thus bringing on error and misunderstanding.
- The basic beliefs of Muslims fall into six main categories, which are known as the "Articles of Faith": 1) Faith in the unity of God, 2) Faith in angels, 3) Faith in prophets, 4) Faith in an afterlife, and 5) Faith in destiny/divine decree.
- The Qur'an was written in Arabic, not Hebrew or Greek.
- The Qur'an claims divine authorship (no human words) and inspiration - ultimate truth. Also claims the Bible is false when it is incomplete without the Qur'an or contradicts the Qur'an.
- The Qur'an denies that any words have been altered; however it contains many textual variants.
- The Qur'an is a religion of works – not faith

Prayer

Muslims must recite prayers to Allah five times daily while facing

Christianity

2:27) to be in perfect relationship with Him. This gives man the freedom of choice, in that man can accept to be in relationship with his creator or reject Him.

Sin is of man's own doing. God, however, has made a way by which sin can be forgiven, so that man can be brought back into relationship with God, as was intended from the very beginning with Adam and Eve.

Our fate, therefore, was and is never predestined. We can, by simply acknowledging Christ as our Lord and Savior, be assured that we will be united with God in heaven for all eternity.

The Scriptures

The Scriptures were written by prophets of God and eye witnesses of Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-2). The New Testament undeniably declares the inspiration of the Old Testament, of which the Qur'an denies.

- The Scriptures repeated claim that to add anything to its writings, such as the writings of the Qur'an, has serious consequences.
- The Old Testament was written in Hebrew with small portions in Aramaic and the New Testament was written in Greek.
- The Old Testament is based on a relationship with God, prophesying the Messiah to come. The New Testament reveals the coming of the Messiah through God's Son Jesus Christ. Believers in Jesus have a personal relationship with Him – able to come to Him at any time.
- The Bible came by inspiration of God and is without error.
- Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. It is not based on works, but faith, even though works follow the life of a Christian which comes from the heart out of a love for Christ.

Prayer

Prayer is a heart matter between Christian believers and God. Because the believer's body is a temple of the Holy

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Mecca, the city where Allah revealed the Koran to Muhammad.

- Prayer must be performed at prescribed hours and in a bowed knee/prostrated position saying particular words. The words are traditional and rote.
- A call to worship is rung at all mosques through the minaret.

Fasting

For a Muslim, beginning at the age of puberty, fasting means abstaining “completely” from foods, drinks, intimate intercourse & smoking.

- All Muslims MUST fast the month of Ramadan (9th month of Islamic year). It is voluntary at other times of year.
- Fasting begins at the break of dawn till sunset.
- No Muslim is to fast on Fridays, which are their worship days.

For a Muslim, fasting is done to please Allah. A variety of spiritual and physical disciplines can also be accomplished.

- Exemptions for fasting are children, elderly, sick, pregnant women, women menstruating, the mentally ill, and travelers. For some, fasting is to be postponed to a later date.

To break the fast deliberately during Ramadan is considered a major sin which only repentance can remove.

- Fasts can be broken each day after sunset. At its completion, prayers are recited, light food is to be eaten after sunset, and increased study and recitation of the Qur’an is required.

Most Muslims worldwide today do not regularly attend worship. Mosques are generally empty. Other than during Ramadan, most Muslims today also do not observe voluntary fasts.

Holidays/Holy Days

In the Year of the Hegira	<u>Muharram</u> (Islamic New Year)	<u>Mawlid al-Nabi</u> (Muhammad's Birthday)	<u>Ramadan</u> begins	<u>Eid al-Fitr</u> (Ramadan ends)	<u>Eid al-Adha</u> (Festival of Sacrifice)
A.H. 1432	Dec. 7, 2010	Feb. 15, 2011	Aug. 1, 2011	Aug. 30, 2011	Nov. 6, 2011
A.H. 1433	Nov. 26, 2011	Feb. 4, 2012	July 20, 2012	Aug. 19, 2012	Oct. 26, 2012
A.H. 1434	Nov. 15, 2012	Jan. 24, 2013	July 9, 2013	Aug. 8, 2013	Oct. 15, 2013
A.H. 1435	Nov. 4, 2013	Jan. 13, 2014	June 28, 2014	July 28, 2014	Oct. 4, 2014

Christianity

Spirit, prayer can be done anywhere, in any position, and any time.

Prayer is a two-way communication with God – praying to and listening to God.

Fasting

Fasting was commonplace for Old and New Testament saints. While it is not a biblical requirement for Christians, it is recommended for a variety of reasons.

Reasons for fasting:

- Draw closer to God
- Receive answers to prayer
- Become more attuned to the Holy Spirit
- Become more spiritually and physically disciplined

Fasting and prayer go hand in hand. When one fasts, one should take that time to pray.

- Fasting should not be a compulsory obligation, it should, instead, be done out of love to God from the heart.

Very few Christians fast today.

Holidays/Holy Days

Christians have two main holidays – or holy days.

Christmas – Christ’s birth

Easter – Christ’s death and resurrection

Most Christian denominations worship on Sunday, while Seventh Day Adventists observe the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) as their day of worship.

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All holidays/holy days are voluntary except Ramadan. Ramadan last around 30 days. Fasting is required during this time.

Weekly worship day is Friday when the call to worship is rung from atop the mosque minaret. Very few Muslims observe Friday worship.

Jesus

- Jesus was born an Arab sent to guide the Children of Israel
- Jesus was born to Mary as the result of virginal conception decreed by Allah.
- Jesus was a created being, never deity. Rejects that Jesus was God incarnate or the Son of God. States Jesus never claimed Himself to be God.
- Believes Jesus was simply one of 27 prophets.
- Believes in many prophets, such as: Moses, Noah, Abraham, David, Jesus, Mohammed.
- Jesus was a mortal human being who, like all other prophets, divinely chosen to spread God's message.
- Like all prophets in Islam, Jesus is considered to have been a Muslim – one who submits to the will of Allah as he preached to his followers the "straight path."
- Numerous titles are given to Jesus in the Qur'an and Islamic literature, the most common being al-Masth (the messiah). He is also called "Seal of the Israelite Prophets"
- Jesus was the last prophet sent by God to guide the Children of Israel and foretold the latter times. Jesus was the precursor to Mohammed.
- Rejects that Jesus was crucified, but bodily ascended up by God unto the heavens.
- Jesus will return to earth near the Day of Judgment to restore justice and to defeat the false messiah – the Antichrist.

Temple

- Muslims have one holy temple – Jerusalem, on the Temple Mount. Built in 691 A.D. after the Muslims conquest.
- Most holy place (mosque) – In Mecca (Saudi Arabia) – Largest mosque in the world. Mohammed's birthplace. Not listed as a temple, but a mosque. Has 9 minarets (towers). Muslims pray facing Mecca. Going on a pilgrimage to one of the three most holy places is required at least once in a Muslim person's life as part of the Five Pillars of Islam. Closed to non-Muslims.
- Second most holy place – Medina (mosque) (Saudi Arabia). The place where Muhammad was escaped to build his army of followers. Was the Muslim capital until 661 A.D. when it was moved to Damascus.

Christianity

Jesus

- Jesus, as God, is the Creator. He is Deity – the Son of God. He is the second person of the Trinity.
- Jesus was prophesied throughout the Old Testament as the Messiah – come to set men free.
- Jesus left His divinity and became human to become like man.
- Jesus was born a Jew to Mary as the result of virginal conception of the Holy Spirit of God
- Jesus is the mediator between God and man.
- Jesus came to draw all men to God through belief in Him.
- Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried.
- God raised Jesus from the dead
- Jesus sits up in heaven to intercede for His body – Christians.
- Jesus will one day soon return to bring His body unto Himself – the Rapture of the Church – to be together eternally.
- Jesus will return to earth on the Day of Judgment to defeat Satan and bring judgment and peace to the earth.

Temple

- Christians do not have a physical temple anywhere on earth.
- Each individual Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.
- There are thousands of Christian churches worldwide where Christians go to worship the Lord; however, worship comes from within the heart of a believer.
- There is no one position to pray; however, many believers lift up or fold hands.
- The outward sign of Christianity is a cross, a fish, or a dove.

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- Third most holy place - Dome of the Rock – in Jerusalem. Belief is that Muhammad ascended into heaven from this spot.
- While there is only one Muslim temple, there are thousands of mosques worldwide.
- Worship is a physical command of obedience on their knees prostrated face-down.

Sects/Denominations

There are many sects or divisions of Islam; however, there are primarily four main branches. The two primary sects are Sunni and Shia. Each has their own divisions as well.

Sunni – 90% of all Muslims worldwide are Sunni

Algeria & Turkey - 99% ; Comoros – 98%; Libya – 97%; Jordan and certain islands like the Maldives – 92% ; Tajikistan – 85%; Afghanistan, Syria, Cocos Islands - 80%; Kuwait , Israel, Egypt, Somalia, Uzbekistan – 70%; Iraq – 50% - mostly in the central and northern parts of the country. Bahrain - 30%; Iran – 10%

Shia – 15% of Islam worldwide (154-200 million).

In Iran, 90% are Shia. Most Shias live in four countries: Iran, Pakistan, India and Iraq. There are over 300,000. Shi'ites in North America (10% of Muslim population).

Both Sunni and Shia Muslims share the most fundamental Islamic beliefs and articles of faith. The differences between these two main sub-groups initially stemmed not from spiritual differences, but political ones. Sunnis are based on religion and Shi'ites are political.

Most Muslims are peace-loving people. Not all Muslims are radical or politically motivated. When radical Islamics are politically motivated, the whole world is at risk. They are dedicated to the conquest of the world, by any means possible

- Iran and Hezbollah – Shia - Political

- Al Qaeda – Sunni – Religious (Acts on conviction-reason for being).

Al-Qaeda - Carried out six major terrorist attacks, four- jihad against America. In each case the leadership planned the attack years in advance, arranging for the shipment of weapons and explosives and using private businesses to provide safehouses and false identities.

- Today there are 1.5 billion Muslims around the world. Islam- strongest in Asia/Pacific region, Europe and Mideast

Christianity

Sects/Denominations

Christianity falls into three main branches – Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox.

- While Catholic and Orthodox have less division, Protestantism has over 33,000 denominations.

To be a Christian in any denominations, one must believe the five basic tenets to Christianity, as set down by the Apostles Creed.

- Jesus is the Son of God, yet He is God.
- Jesus died on the cross for the salvation of mankind
- God rose Jesus from the dead
- Jesus presently sits next to His Father God in heaven interceding for His body
- Jesus is coming again soon to gather His body unto Himself

Today there are 1.4 billion Christians around the world. Christianity is the strongest in the western world.

Comparative Beliefs: Islam and Christianity

Islam

Salvation

Islam rejects the doctrine of original sin (since the time of Adam – all are born into sin).

Mohammad said, "Every human being is born in a state of a pure nature; but through the influence of his parents, he may become non-Moslem."

- Salvation comes only through Allah. Only those who obey Allah and Mohammed his prophet can enter into Heaven.
- Islam denies the crucifixion of Jesus – Claims He never died. They only thought they killed Him. (Gnostic belief)

Salvation must be earned by:

- Good works
- By giving alms

The only sure way to make it to heaven is for a Muslim to die in a Jihad. (holy war)

Paradise/Heaven/Hell

Believes in an afterlife, resurrection of the dead; however, different from Christianity.

- Believes in heaven – There are 7 heavens
- Believes in the Muslim concept of hell

Those who kill or are killed by unbelievers (any person who is not a Muslim) will return to the garden of Paradise.

- In Paradise they will enjoy many lustful pleasures – sex with virgins, pleasant food and drink, etc.

Those who believe in another god other than Allah not only will be punished in this world, but the penalty on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to them.

- Non-believers will go to hell and drink boiling water.

Angels

- Muslims believe that Allah created a host of angels, all of whom are sinless, do not eat or drink, and have no determining sex. They, like humans, will die and be resurrected.

There are four differing ranks of archangels, along with others.

Christianity

Salvation

The Bible teaches man is born into sin. (For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom 3:23)

Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12

- Salvation does not come by works – but by God's grace through faith. Eph 2:8-9. Faith is:
 1. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God, yet He is God
 2. Believe that He died on the cross for our sins (individually)
 3. Believe that God rose Jesus from the dead
 4. Believe that Jesus is up in heaven next to His Father interceding for His body – the saints.
 5. Believe that Jesus is coming back soon to gather His body unto Himself for all eternity.

Man has a free will

Paradise/Heaven/Hell

Believes in an afterlife, resurrection of the dead.

- Believes in heaven – 3 heavens
- Believes in hell

Those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and submitted their lives to his Lordship will enjoy eternal bliss in heaven for an eternity with Jesus where there will be no pain or sorrow, no disease or death.

Those who reject Jesus Christ will suffer eternal torment in hell – the eternal lake of fire.

Angels

In the Bible there are many references to angels. They are God's messengers sent to make His will known to the prophets and to help believers.

There are several ranks of angels; however, the Bible only gives names to two angels – Michael and Gabriel.

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Four ranks of archangels:

1. Gabriel, Allah's chief messenger, or intermediary, who is referred to as the "Holy Spirit" in the Qur'an;
2. Michael;
3. Izrail, the Angel of Death; and
4. Israfil, who will blow the trumpet on the last day to awake the dead.

Satan was an angel who was disobedient to God by not bowing down to Adam. Understanding of him is similar to that of Christianity.

Many Muslims believe that all individuals on earth have two angels who are positioned above each shoulder as 'recording angels'; one to record the good deeds and the other to record his sins.

- At the time of death, two fierce black angels visit each corpse in the grave and ask him, "Who is thy Lord? What is thy religion?" and "Who is thy Prophet?" If his response is that of Islam, the angels send him/her across the razor sharp bridge to paradise. If the response is not of Islam, the angels takes that soul to a place where they fall into the fiery pit of hell.

Angels can take on different forms, including human.

Also, there are a number of angels being wardens - guarding hell.

Morals

Muhammad had 11 wives and allowed others to be married up to four wives (Koran 33:51)

- Islam allows sexual intercourse with one's slave, maids or as many captive women as one desires (Koran 4:3) even if they are married.
- Fornication and adultery, however, are a sin. (Koran 17:32)

Gambling and drunkenness are prohibited (Koran 5:90,91)

Women

Men have authority over women.

Christianity

Angels are never to be worshipped.

In addition to the holy angels who are obedient to God, the Scriptures tell of other angels who were disobedient - enemies of God - the chief (Lucifer) of whom is now called Satan, the Devil, the dragon and serpent.

- Lucifer (Satan) was created good, but because of pride disobeyed God. As a result, he, and the spirits who followed him, fell from their high and holy position in heaven. They are now doing all they can to destroy God's work on earth.

Satan deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden, and ever since he has been trying to turn people away from the living God. He even tried to persuade Jesus Christ to disobey God three times (in the wilderness), but failed.

- Satan has great power, but not equal to God, and is limited by God. Thus, Christians do not need to fear him or his evil spirits who harm so many people, because Satan was defeated on the cross.
- Because of the cross, all believers have the strength, given by Christ, through the Holy Spirit, to resist and repel Satan and all his cohorts.

God will finally cast Satan out of the earth and into the eternal fire, where he will never bother man or God again.

Morals

Adultery and fornication are forbidden throughout the Old and New Testaments, listed as immoral and evil. It displeases God and provokes Him to anger.

Gambling and drunkenness are also a sin.

Jesus give us one additional commandment beyond the 1st commandment.

Matt 22:37-40 ...You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. NKJV

Women

Spiritually, there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus.

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In the home:

- "Men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the others, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them.
- Mothers shall suckle their children two years completely, for such as desire to fulfill the suckling....But if the couple desire by mutual consent and consultation to wean, then it is no fault in them.
- Women who disobey their husband will go to hell. "Thou mayest decline for the present whom thou wilt of them, and thou mayest take to thy bed her whom thou wilt, and whomsoever thou shalt long for of those thou shalt have before neglected; and this shall not be a crime in thee. Thus will it be easier to give them the desire of their eyes... and to satisfy them with what thou shalt accord to each of them."

In society:

- Women do not have equal right to their inheritance
Women receive half of the male share for an equivalent degree of kinship.

Women who disobey should be beaten:

Good women are obedient.... As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them.

War/Murder/Violence

Islam both allows and forbids murder and violence, depending on who is the recipient of the act.

Allows:

- War is permitted on unbelievers until Allah's religion reigns supreme.
- Do not make friendship with Jews and Christians, but war against them. If they repent and observe prayer and pay alms let them go their way.
- Fight against those who believe different than Muslim – kill them wherever you find them. Lie in wait – murder them and treat them harshly. Do not give them any food. Strike off their heads – make wide slaughter among them. Instill terror in their hearts.
- Cut off their heads, finger tips and feet. Pour fire or boiling water over their heads.

Christianity

"The head of the woman is the man" ...Head=Gr/Heb – "Source or origin" (woman came from the rib [source or origin] of man). Therefore, women are equal to men. Each, however, have their own function.

In the home, Scripture outlines the divinely established order.

- Husbands are responsible to maintain proper order and government in the family. The husband answers to God for that responsibility.
- The husband's primary obligation is to love his wife - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her... So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church...
- Respect, cherish, and encourage each other's gifts and talents.
- The woman is a helpmate to the man – walk alongside – work together with the gifts and talents God gave you.
- Wives are exhorted to respect and obey (meaning give willingly) to their husband. Wives, submit (yield willingly) yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Submit yourselves one to another.

War/Murder/Violence

Murder forbidden:

- Thou shalt not kill (murder)." (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17)...murders... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:21)
- ...no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. (1 John 3:15)
- ...murderers... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)
- For without [are] dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters... (Revelation 22:15)

Jesus and Paul both reiterated the Old Testament prohibition against murder:

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- Punish them with hooked iron rods.
- Allah is really the one slaying them.
- Their abode is hell.

Forbidden:

- For those who are Muslim, do not kill in retaliation. Make not mischief on the Earth – We are peacemakers.
- Kill not any old man nor young boy, nor child, nor woman. Be good doers for Allah.
- Fight for the sake of Allah those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. Allah does not love the aggressors.
- The Prophet Mohammad said to his army before going to a fight "Depart in the name of Allah, and by his help. Be good doers, for Allah loves those who do good.

Christianity

- Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. (Matthew 5:21)
- ...Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill.... (Romans 13:9)
- Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings..." (Galatians 5:21)
- Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. (Revelation 9:21)
- ...murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars... (Revelation 21:8)

Violence:

God destroyed the earth with a flood because of the extent *violence* had spread:

- ...the earth was filled with violence... Then God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence... behold, I am about to destroy them...'" (Genesis 6:13).

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven...(Matthew 5:43, 45)

Oppression of the innocent is condemned throughout Scripture: