



A Bible Study
for Christians

Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims

Participant Guide



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Developed by the
Outreach to Muslims Committee
to be used with the DVD
Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims

A Bible Study for Christians: Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims

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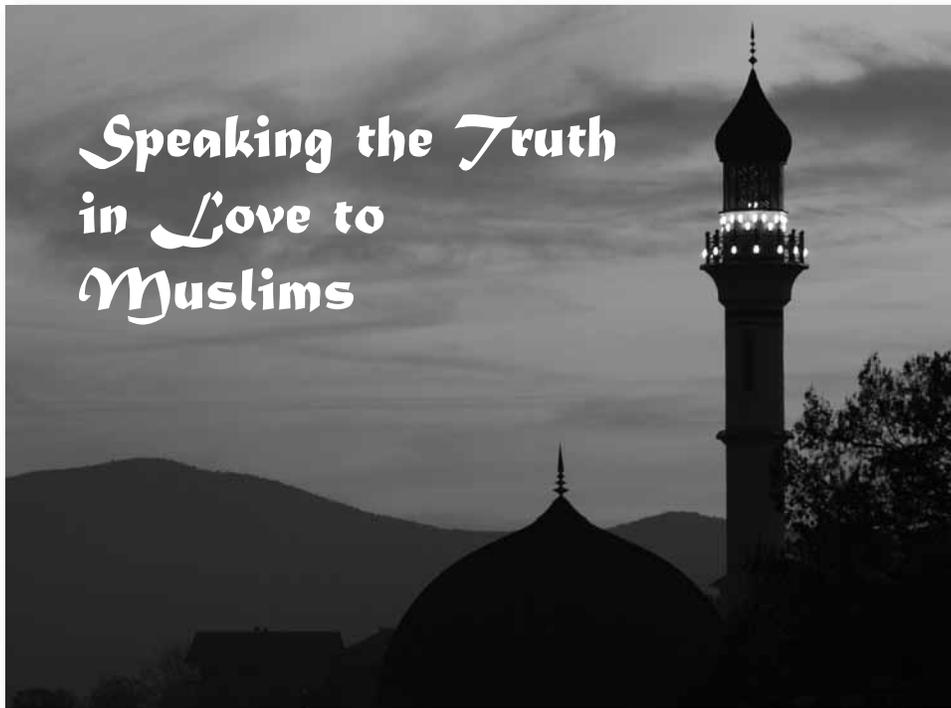
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Developed by the **Outreach to Muslims Committee**
www.truthinlovetomuslims.com

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Introduction

Islam and the world view of Muslims are powerful forces in the world today. They are frequently in the news, and the coverage is often alarming. What effect does this have on Christians?

Anything poorly or wrongly understood can generate negative emotions or fear.

Scripture, however, gives Christ's Church an uncommon attitude and aim. It says that although no one deserves to hear the Gospel, Jesus includes everyone in the scope of the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:19.

Men and women who are convinced of this can overcome the challenges raised by their fears and begin to build positive relationships with Muslims.

This Bible study and video are intended to introduce Christians to key aspects of Islam and Muslim life in order to enable and motivate outreach to Muslim people. Some of the information is drawn from and coordinates with the book [Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims](#). This book is recommended for additional insights.

There are four parts to the study. Each can be used separately or in sequence. The video provides brief, attention-getting introductions to each segment.

This study can be especially useful either preceding or following a series of in-person presentations conducted by a former Muslim who is now a Christian. Information on his topics and a Speaker Request Form are available at www.truthinlovetomuslims.com.



Questions and Answers about the Bible Study

What is the purpose of this Bible study?

“Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims—A Bible Study for Christians” is not intended to provide argumentation for debate with Muslims. Its goal is to encourage Christians to build relationships, to live their faith by showing love in helpful ways so that, first of all, Muslim people can see that we are not the enemy. Such “pre-evangelism” activity can take time.

As trust is built, we will become aware of the hopes and fears that a Muslim friend has, and we can respond in spiritually helpful ways. The Bible study prepares us for this by indicating one of the greatest fears that a Muslim has and by showing the powerful answer that God provides to remove that fear.

A Muslim, like any unbeliever, may voice contrary opinions. The Bible study indicates what some of them are likely to be. This is helpful background information. What we need to remember is that there are many, many Muslims who are curious and open to hearing what the Bible has to say.

Does it matter what Muslims believe?

Because of the influence of contemporary society, the first issue Christians must accept is that Muslims need the gospel of Christ—that being sincerely religious is not enough. The Bible study maintains that biblical approach.

What can we say that will cause doubt in a Muslim’s mind about the holiness of the Qur’an and the trustworthiness of Islam?

Criticism of the Qur’an or of Muhammad likely will lead to verbal warfare. The Bible study’s approach is to suggest that Christians begin with topics that resonate with both Christians and Muslims: We believe that God is holy. We believe that God expects people to be holy. But we are not. Muslims sense this. Their conscience makes them afraid of judgment day. When they express fear or doubt about their salvation, God is providing an excellent opportunity to share the peace and hope that he freely provides in Jesus. The Bible study unfolds God’s plan of salvation both to strengthen our own joy in Christ and to help us share that joy. We can be confident that as Muslims learn to love Jesus, they will also learn to trust the Bible and all that it says.

More Information



Bible

The English version of the Bible that is quoted in this study is the New International Version (NIV), copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society

Qur'an

The English version of the *Qur'an* that is quoted in this Bible study is a 2001 translation titled The Holy Koran (The Mosque of the Internet Version 1.0) by Grand Shaykh (religious scholar) Professor Hasan Qaribullah, Dean of Umm Durman Islamic University, Cairo.

Web

<http://www.TruthinLovetoMuslims.com>

Scripture encourages Christians to distinguish maturely between truth and error and to let the truth about Jesus Christ be seen in their lives and heard from their lips (Ephesians 4:12-15).



With that goal, **Truth in Love to Muslims** provides a Web forum where Christians may learn things they may not know about Islam and encourage each other to share the love of Christ with their Muslim neighbors around the world.

The site features informative articles, reviews of books and movies on various aspects of Islam, and a Forum page that permits registered users to exchange ideas and share their experiences.

The RSS feed icons on the Home page enable users to be notified whenever there are new contributions by subscribing to the linked feed. There are three feeds available:

- Featured Articles
- Recent Reviews
- New Forum Topics

Truth in Love to Muslims is sponsored by Outreach to Muslims, an evangelism ministry begun in October 2004 to inform Christians about Islam and encourage outreach to Muslims. Since that time, hundreds of OTM presentations have been seen and heard by interested groups all across the United States.

To schedule one or more of these presentations use the Request a Speaker form that is available in the top menu of the Home page.

"My prayer is not for them (Christians) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." (John 17:20,21)



Evangelism Resources

The Promise is an excellent brochure to give to a Muslim friend who wants to know more about your Christian faith. Sixteen colorful pages present the basic biblical message from the fall into sin to life in heaven. An evangelism message is found at the close of the booklet.

The Promise is available in English as well as in many of the heart-languages of Muslims, including:

Albanian
Arabic
Farsi (Persian)
Kurdish
Pashto (Afghanistan/Iran)
Urdu (Pakistan/India)



For a complete list of all the languages available for this brochure, study guides to use with it, and many other helpful Christian materials, please visit **Multi-Language Publications** and browse through their Category and Language menus.

<http://online.nph.net/cgi-bin/site.pl?10435&categoryID=4027>

The book featured in this Bible study is Speaking The Truth In Love To Muslims
 Author: Roland Cap Ehlke



ISBN: 1234-5648

Pages: 221

Price: \$14.99

Publisher: Northwestern Publishing House

Synopsis: Across the globe, Islam is thriving; it is one of the fastest growing religions in America. Muslims can be your neighbors, coworkers, store owners, or friends. So how do you approach Muslims with the gospel? How are Islam and Christianity different? How do Muslims view the Bible and Christ? In this insightful book, learn more about Muslims and their religion, as well as how to witness to them.

The Road to Emmaus is a 30 minute video on DVD that dramatizes Jesus' conversation with two disciples on the afternoon of Easter Sunday. Clarifying the need for redemption, the video explains why salvation is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ. A Muslim who wishes to know more about Jesus may find in this story a compelling answer to his questions.

ISBN:1-931891-94-X

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www.roadtoemmausmovie.com

Lesson 1: Basics



Basics

Background

This lesson provides a starting point for Christians who want to share their faith with Muslims. It deals with preconceptions, that is, with the outward impressions that Christians have of Islam and with some of the basic differences that characterize the two religions.

Focus Questions

What comes to your mind when you think about Muslims and Islam?

Do you have a Muslim friend (Arab, Asian, African, Caucasian)?

How can we help the Muslim people we meet?



Video

Introduction

On 9-11, the world of Islam came sharply into focus. Or did it? What do we really know about Islam.... its beliefs.... its history... its followers. Is Islam compatible with Christianity... or bent on its destruction? Most importantly, how should we as Christians respond to the Muslim people we encounter.... and the Muslim world in general? Those are the questions we will address in this study.

Preconceptions

Suicide bombers.... why would any rational person kill himself... and innocent bystanders... in the name of god? The answer goes to the very core of the Muslim faith. Nearly all Muslim people believe they will one day be judged by their god.... Allah. And Allah makes no promise of forgiveness... offers no hope for the sinful. Instead, Allah judges people by their deeds... and that worries many Muslims.

That brings us to an “escape clause” of sorts. Their religion teaches that the sure way to heaven is to sacrifice one's life in warfare against infidels... known as jihad. Thus, suicide bombers—or the 9-11 hijackers—would have believed they were bypassing Allah's judgment and entering heaven the moment they died.

Again, your Muslim neighbors are likely just as opposed to suicide bombing as you are. We shouldn't fear Muslims in our midst—generally they are productive members of society who want to live in peace. The point here is that all Muslims do have one thing in common: they are unsure of what will happen to them after death. In fact, many are terrified of judgment day. They know it is coming. They struggle to escape their god's wrath. Have they been good enough? How will Allah judge their lives? They have no idea. The result is a constant state of unease.

Even the founder of Islam... Muhammad... admitted he had no idea what future he faced after death.

Islam offers no comfort to these worried people, no divine gift that removes the fear of God's punishment, no true hope of life in heaven, no Savior. That's why it's urgent for us to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with Muslims.... so they may enjoy real peace with God, not through their own efforts but through the gift of faith in the saving work of Christ.

Worldwide Growth

Islam is growing more rapidly than any other major religion. Increasingly, Islam isn't just a religion, in many countries it's the religion. That is, Islam seeks to create nations that are ruled by Islamic law. You may have heard of “Sharia” which is the system of rules that govern every aspect of daily life... spelling out the foods than can be eaten, approved dress codes, the role of women, etc. In many counties, Sharia law is the law—there is no secular government as we know it....instead, Islam rules, and Muslim

Muslims in the World

North America

United States	(3%)
9,114,739	
Canada	(2%)
631,041	

Africa

Somalia	(100%)
9,558,666	
Nigeria	(75%)
109,691,484	

The Middle East

Afghanistan	(99%)
32,410,992	
Egypt	(94%)
76,810,709	
Gaza Strip	(99%)
1,489,701	
Iran	(98%)
64,557,720	
Iraq	(97%)
27,374,545	
Pakistan	(95%)
164,160,046	
Saudi Arabia	(100%)
28,146,656	
Turkey	(99%)
71,749,022	

Muslims in Europe

France	(10%)
6,215,078	
Germany	(3.7%)
3,047,673	
Netherlands	(5.8%)
965,428	
United Kingdom	(2.7%)
1,645,486	

Other

Indonesia	(86%)
204,498,135	
Russia	(18%)
25,326,377	

This table is developed from The CIA World's Facts Book estimate of 2008.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

leaders are the government.

Today, Islamic nations include Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and many others in the Middle East and North Africa. And Islam's influence is on the rise. It is the second-largest religion in Europe and soon will rank second in North America.

That's partly because Muslims tend to have large families. Another factor is oil revenue... which is used to build mosques... and provide economic aid to lower-income Muslims.

Historical Background

Islam dates back to around AD 600, when a man named Muhammad said he began to receive revelations from the angel Gabriel. The result of these revelations is the *Qur'an*, Islam's holy book. But Muslims believe their faith predates Muhammad... and actually extends back to a much earlier time. According to the *Quran*, the religion of Islam goes back to the beginning of the world.

While Islam claims to accept the Old Testament, it puts a very different spin on nearly every Bible story. This radical difference is especially clear in the story of Abraham and his sons Isaac and Ishmael.... which really gets to the foundation of the two faiths. By contrasting what the Bible and the *Qur'an* say about these figures, we can begin to understand the roots of the two largest world religions.

Thinking about the Video

Why is Islam growing more rapidly than any other religion?

Of what are Muslim people very afraid?

What does Islam tend to do with Scripture when the Qur'an refers to biblical people and the events that occurred in their lives?



The calendar used by Islam is not the same as the Christian calendar. Instead of starting with the birth of Christ, the Muslim calendar begins with the day that Muhammad and his followers secretly fled to Medina after being persecuted by idol worshippers in Mecca who rejected the idea that there is only one God. On the Christian calendar that date is July 16 in the year 622 A.D.

Although the hejira (flight) begins the Muslim calendar, no one considers this event to be the beginning of Islam.

Twelve years earlier, according to tradition, Muhammad began to receive the *Qur'an*. This was in 610 A.D. Since the *Qur'an* is the source of Muhammad's teachings, 610 A.D. typically is used by non-Muslims as the date for the start of Islam.

However, according to the *Qur'an*, the religion of Islam goes back to the beginning, to the time of Adam and Eve. It claims that Adam is the first in a long line of an estimated 124,000 Muslim prophets (nabi). The *Qur'an* identifies 25 of them, including Noah (Nuh), Abraham (Ibrahim), Ishmael (Isma'il), Moses (Musa), David (Dawud), Jesus ('Isa), and Muhammad, the "final prophet" of Allah.



Bible Study

Lesson 1 reveals the roots of the Christian faith, that is, the Old Testament promises of a Savior, and the roots of Islam, namely the mistaken belief that people must save themselves from hell. In addition, the lesson illustrates how Islam alters the Bible's message.

Abraham's Two Sons and the Roots of Two Religions

We begin with the outstanding promise that God gave to Abraham¹ and Sarah, a promise that God would repeat several times in the Old Testament and again in the New Testament. This promise foretold the birth of a Savior for the world who is Jesus Christ.

God's Promise to Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3

¹ *The LORD said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. ²"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**"*

Many people honor Abraham because of his unusual, obedient behavior. When Abraham was 75 years old, he followed God's call, left the idolatry of his homeland, and moved to a country far away. Why did he do this? What was his motivation? Scripture honors him as the "*father of all who believe.*" Does this mean that Abraham believed in himself? Did he go on the road in response to God's call because he believed that he could obey God perfectly? This seems to be the point of view that *Islam*² takes when it identifies Abraham as a *Muslim*³ prophet. In effect, *Islam* is saying that Abraham submitted to the will of Allah in order to escape his judgment.

Scripture, however, tells us something different when it calls Abraham "*the father of all who believe.*" It tells us that he believed the promise God gave him: "*Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.*"⁴ This was an echo of a promise that God had made soon after the fall into sin. That was when a remorseful Adam and Eve heard God promise that a Savior would come to crush the Devil's power.⁵ Now the Lord was repeating this promise to Abraham, and the result was powerful. It turned Abraham into a new man, a believer eager to show his gratitude for the Messiah who would bless him and all people.

How would you explain the promise God gave to Abraham: "*all peoples on earth will be blessed through you*"? (v.3)

¹ Discussion of the names Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 17:3-8, 15-16) will occur later in this lesson. These names rather than Abram and Sarai are used here and throughout the commentary for the sake of simplicity.

² *Islam*, the name of the Muslim religion, means "submission."

³ Muslim means "one who submits." A Muslim is a follower of Islam.

⁴ Genesis 22:18

⁵ "...I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

Islam supports many programs to gain followers for Muhammad. A number of them use the Internet or student groups on large university campuses. The Muslim Student Association (MSA) practices da'wah or the "inviting" of others to Islam. Propagators of Islam include well-educated speakers and authors who are adept at providing logical arguments to "disprove" the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the inerrancy of the Bible. Their lectures are intended to draw young students into Islam's claim that the Qur'an has divine revelation in its pure form.

Lesson 1 - Basics

In the New Testament the apostles often commented on the gospel promise given to Abraham, making it clear that its blessing belongs to everyone who repents and believes in Jesus as the promised Savior.



Acts 3:25,26

The apostle Peter, speaking to a crowd in Jerusalem not long after Pentecost testified this about God's promise to Abraham telling the Jewish people that it referred to Jesus Christ:

And you (Jewish people) are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant (Jesus), he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.

Galatians 3:8,9

The apostle Paul pleaded with the Gentile Christians of Galatia, urging them to trust Christ as their Savior, as Abraham did, rather than trusting their personal attempts to be good enough for heaven:

*The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and **announced the gospel** in advance to Abraham: "**All nations will be blessed through you.** So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."*

Romans 4:11

The apostle Paul assured the Roman Christians that Abraham was saved by faith in the Savior God promised:

*...he (Abraham) is **the father of all who believe....***

To whom did the apostle Peter quote this promise of a Savior so they would repent and believe in Jesus Christ? (Acts 3:25)

To whom did the apostle Paul apply this promise so they would stop relying on themselves and return to faith in Jesus as their Savior? (Galatians 3:8)

What wonderful title did Abraham receive because he trusted God's promise of a Savior? (Romans 4:11)



Abraham's faith passed many tests. One of the first was childlessness—the fact that he and his wife were getting on in years and had no children. This certainly made the two of them wonder how Abraham's offspring could bless all nations on earth.

Sarah's solution to this was to follow a custom that may have been favored by other wealthy couples of the time who were childless—let a personal servant produce a child for the family.

The Birth of Ishmael

Genesis 16:1-16

¹ Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an **Egyptian maidservant** named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, "The **LORD** has **kept me from having children**. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abraham agreed to this suggestion, and Hagar became pregnant. But any joy they felt soon turned sour because of Hagar's insolent behavior.

*When she knew she was pregnant, she began to **despise** her mistress. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the **LORD** judge between you and me."*

Abraham loved Sarah and sympathized with her complaint. He gave Sarah permission to deal with Hagar's impertinence in whatever way she felt was best. So Sarah began to treat her servant roughly. And Hagar, desperate to find relief from the anger of her mistress, fled into the desert even though she was expecting a child.

⁷ **The angel of the LORD** found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur.

The angel of the Lord asked Hagar where she coming from and where she thought she was going. When Hagar said that she was running away from her mistress, the angel put a stop to this. He turned her around, sent her back to Sarah, and told Hagar to serve her mistress more respectfully. Then he also gave Hagar a glimpse of her future.

¹⁰ *The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too **numerous** to count."*

¹¹ *The angel of the LORD also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him **Ishmael**, for **the LORD** has **heard** of your misery. ¹² He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in **hostility** toward all his brothers."*

¹³ *She gave this name to **the LORD** who spoke to her: "You are the **God** who sees me,"...*

¹⁵ *So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. ¹⁶ Abram was **eighty-six** years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.*

Why did Sarah suggest that Abraham marry Hagar? (v.2)



What was Hagar's nationality and social status? (v.1)

Why did pregnant Hagar flee to the desert? (vv.4-6)

Who spoke to Hagar in the desert? (v.7 and v.13)

**What is the meaning of the name "Ishmael" that God gave Hagar's baby?
(v.11)**

**What two predictions did God make about Ishmael and his descendants?
(v.10 and v.12)**

Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, has become a significant person in the world of Islam. He is the ancestor of some of the over one billion Muslims in the world today.⁶ Mohammed traced his ancestry back to Ishmael, and, as we will see, Islam gives Ishmael a very special place in the development of that religion.

⁶ Currently, about 20 percent of Muslims are of Arab ancestry.

However, Ishmael, the son of the slave woman, is not the child that God had in mind when he promised to provide a Savior for the world through Abraham's offspring. The Lord for whom nothing is impossible had other plans.



The Promise Begins its Fulfillment in Isaac

Genesis 17:1-6

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him again and reaffirmed his promise, giving him and his wife the new names by which we know them best. The names Abraham and Sarah signified not only parenthood, but that they would be the parents of a great number of descendants, some of them very prominent.

³ *Abram fell facedown, and God said to him,* ⁴ *“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be **Abraham**, for I have made you a **father of many nations**. ⁶ I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, **and kings** will come from you.*

Genesis 17:15-21

¹⁵ *God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the **mother of nations**; **kings** of peoples will come from her.”*

¹⁷ *Abraham fell facedown; he **laughed** and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a **hundred** years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”*

¹⁹ *Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him **Isaac**. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; ... ²¹ But **my covenant I will establish with Isaac**, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.”*

How many years after the birth of Ishmael did God repeat his promise to Abraham? (compare 16:16 and 17:1)

What was the meaning of the new names God gave Abraham and Sarah?
(v.5 and v.15)

What was the significance of the name “Isaac” that God gave to Sarah’s child? (v.17 and v.19)

What distinction did God make between Ishmael and Isaac? (v.20,21)

The important message here is that God was promising to bless all people on earth through a king who would come into the world as a descendant of Abraham and Isaac. That king is our Savior, Jesus Christ.



The *Qur'an* does not provide that message. Instead, Islamic tradition shifts the focus away from Isaac. It tells a unique story about Abraham and his other son, Ishmael, in order to elevate the importance of Ishmael and of Mecca in the history of Islam.

But before we look into that, let's learn about Ishmael from the Bible's account. Ishmael's life changed soon after Isaac was born.

The Exile of Hagar and Ishmael **Genesis 21:1-21**

¹ Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

Sarah now had reason to laugh, not with doubt as she had done earlier, but with joy because she, at the age of ninety, and her husband Abraham, who was one hundred years old, finally had been blessed with a child of their own, a son. But once again, the joy in their household was only temporary.

⁸ The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. ⁹ But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was **mocking**, ¹⁰ and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

The thought of driving Hagar and Ishmael out of the family was deeply upsetting to Abraham. But God calmed him down, telling him that Sarah was right...

¹² ...because **it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned**. ¹³ I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

So the very next day, early in the morning, Abraham said his good-byes to Hagar and their teen-age son Ishmael, sending her away with a container of water and supply of food.

¹⁴ ...She went on her way and wandered in the **desert of Beersheba**.

¹⁵ When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob.

Once again the angel of God graciously approached Hagar in her distress and comforted her.

¹⁹ Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.





²⁰ *God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer.*

²¹ *While he was living in the **Desert of Paran**, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.*

Genesis 25:12-18

Ishmael lived one hundred thirty-seven years and became the father of twelve sons. They, in turn, became the rulers of twelve separate tribes of their descendants. The large nation that came from Ishmael settled in the arid region near the border of Egypt.

¹⁸ *...And they lived in **hostility** toward all their brothers.*

Why did Abraham send away Ishmael and his mother? (21:9,10,12)

Where did Hagar and Ishmael go? (21:14,21)

Describe the character of Ishmael's descendants (25:18)

⁷ Another tradition says that the angel Gibril (Gabriel) heard her cries and came to the aid of Hagar and Ishmael, using his wings to uncover water in the sand to refresh them. Later, a well dug in that spot was called Zamzam.

⁸ Some traditions say that angels built the original Ka'ba as a place for Adam and Eve to worship Allah, and that later it fell into disrepair because of idolatry. The Qur'an calls it "the Ancient House" (22:33). The Black Stone in one corner of the Ka'ba originally was white, according to tradition, and became black because of the touch of humanity. One tradition says that the Black Stone came from the place where the angels worship Allah in heaven. Pilgrims touch the stone during Hajj.

⁹ The Qur'an (37:101-107) does not identify the son of Abraham who was sacrificed. This is established by Islamic tradition.

¹⁰ The Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) is one of the five "pillars" of Islam.

Now let's listen to the unusual story that Islam tells about Abraham's son Ishmael.

Islam says that the story of Abraham and Ishmael took place, not in Palestine, but far to the south, in Arabia. There, according to Islam, Hagar gave birth to Ishmael and there they were expelled from the family by Abraham and Sarah. It is said that Hagar wandered back and forth in the Arabian Desert near Mecca looking for water. Finding none, she returned to the place where she had laid down the baby Ishmael and saw that he had uncovered a spring of water by kicking his feet in the sand.⁷ After many years when Ishmael grew older, Islam says that he and Abraham built (or rebuilt⁸) the *Ka'ba* in Mecca as a house for the worship of Allah, and it was there that Abraham was ordered to sacrifice Ishmael⁹ not far from the *Ka'ba*. But Allah intervened and provided an animal sacrifice instead. As a result, Islamic belief requires all capable Muslims to travel to Mecca at least once in their lifetime in order to remember and imitate the things that allegedly happened there.¹⁰

The Bible reports none of this. Instead, it tells us that God sent Abraham and his youngest son Isaac to Mount Moriah, the site of present-day Jerusalem. There God tested and trained Abraham to believe his promise that he would bless the world through Isaac by sending a Savior who would die as a substitute for mankind.

The Biblical Details of the Sacrifice of Isaac

Genesis 22:1-19

¹ *Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!”*

“Here I am,” he replied.

² *Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”*

Abraham did not question God’s unusual command. The next morning he and Isaac left home with two of their servants, a donkey, and a small supply of firewood. On the third day, they could see Mount Moriah in the distance. Abraham looked toward the mountain and said to his servants:

⁵... *“Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then **we will come back** to you.”*

Then Abraham and Isaac walked on alone. Isaac carried the wood on his back. Abraham brought the knife and fire to light the sacrifice. Along the way Isaac asked his father where they would find a lamb for the burnt offering. Abraham simply said, “God will provide the lamb.”

⁹ *When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and **took the knife to slay his son.** ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”*

With that, God ended the test of Abraham’s faith. Clearly, he feared, loved, and trusted God more than anything or anyone else. Immediately, God released Abraham from the obligation to sacrifice his son.

¹³ *Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the **ram** and **sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.***

¹⁴ *So Abraham called that place **The LORD Will Provide.** And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”*

Following the sacrifice of the ram that substituted for Isaac, the angel of the LORD spoke to Abraham once more and repeated the promise of a Savior for the world who would be a descendant of Abraham and Isaac. Echoing the words spoken many times before, God said, “*through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.*”

¹⁹ *Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.*

Hebrews 11:17-19

The letter to the Hebrews comments on Abraham’s remarkable faith, giving the following as the reason why he was ready to sacrifice Isaac even though Isaac was the son who carried forward the promise.

¹⁹ *Abraham reasoned that **God could raise the dead**, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.*





What revealing comments do Genesis 22:5 and Hebrews 11:17-19 make about Abraham's faith?

How did the substitution of a ram for Isaac picture the work of Jesus? (v.13; compare John 1:29¹¹)

¹¹ John 1:29 "...John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"

¹² 2 Chronicles 3:1 "...Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah"

¹³ Muslims have a different story. They say that this stone marks the spot where Muhammad stepped to or from the back of Berak (or Buraq – a winged, white mule) to ascend to the seven levels of heaven with Gibril (Gabriel) as his guide (the Night Journey).

¹⁴ "...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

¹⁵ John 3:16

¹⁶ Romans 8:32

¹⁷ Galatians 3:16

¹⁸ Galatians 4:22-31

¹⁹ Romans 3:22 "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe..."

²⁰ "he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:15)

Where is the "region of Moriah"? (see 2 Chronicles 3:1¹²)



Today Mount Moriah, the site where King Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, is topped by the Dome of the Rock, an impressive Muslim structure built in 691 A.D. Inside that sanctuary there is a large outcropping of rock which, according to Jewish tradition, is the site of the sacrifice of Isaac¹³.

The sacrifice of one life for another is the theme of Genesis chapter 22 quoted above. A substitution took place on Mount Moriah that pointed ahead to Christ. As the ram died in Isaac's place, so Jesus would give his life as a ransom "for" (literally "in the place of") all people.¹⁴ Abraham's proven love was a prophetic preview of God's perfect love for us in Christ "...God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."¹⁵ "He...did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all."¹⁶

The messianic promise God gave to Abraham is not grasped by Islam. Islam teaches that these words do not refer to a coming Savior, but to a coming prophet, meaning Muhammad. Muslims need to understand and believe that the promise given to Abraham refers to Jesus Christ and his rescue of the world's people. Scripture says, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed...meaning one person, who is Christ."¹⁷

For Christians, this promise of a Savior reveals the self-giving love of God who would not and did not withhold his only Son from us. The sacrifice of his perfect life brought an end to the judgment that all human sin deserves. Like Abraham, we rejoice at the news of our salvation, overjoyed that by faith in Jesus we are "sons of the free woman" not of the slave.¹⁸ This means that through faith in Jesus we do not need to earn our salvation. We have become new people, heirs of heaven dressed in the righteousness of Christ.¹⁹ God's love in bringing us into his family changes us to live, not for ourselves, but for Him who died for us and was raised again.²⁰

The good news that God's forgiveness has been earned for all people by Jesus Christ is a message Muslims desperately need to hear. In future studies we'll look more closely at how to reach them with the gospel.

Discussion Points

What differences does this lesson show you between events recorded in Bible history and the same events as they are recorded by Islam?



What similarities can you recall between the biblical events in this lesson and the story that Muslims believe?

What way of salvation is taught by the gospel of Christ and what way is taught by Islam? One of them leads to uncertainty and the other to thankful faith.

What are some of the reasons for the rapid expansion of Islam, and why is this important?

What examples of Christian/Muslim hostility and friendliness are in the news today?

How does understanding the basic differences between Christianity and Islam help you as a witness?



Taking the Lesson Home

In this lesson we have taken a close look at something familiar, the biblical account of Abraham and Isaac, and we have seen how Islam tries to change the Bible and its promises of a Savior. Muslim tradition substitutes its own account of Abraham and Ishmael in order to link Islam historically with Old Testament Scripture and to teach Muslims that salvation is through obedient submission.

Since Islam puts its own slant on some important events recorded in the Bible, what do you need to ask Muslim people in order to better understand their thinking?

Islam is growing rapidly through expansion efforts that are fueled by oil revenue, the dedication of its followers, and its goal to dominate the world. What greater goal, power, and motivation does Jesus give to Christians?



Prayer

Help us to share with Muslims the Christ whom they have missed. May our friendship efforts and prayers reflect the love of Abraham who prayed, *“If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”* (Genesis 17:18)

Further Reading



Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims
Pages 1-53 *Muslim Backgrounds*

Lesson One

Imagine Judgment Day without a Savior...
That's the predicament Muslims face.

Islam cites the Old Testament,
But changes the message.

Christianity is about the Savior—Jesus.
Islam is about obedience to Allah.

Lesson 2: Who is God?



Who is God?

Background

Our study of how to reach out to Muslims now puts the spotlight on two very important questions: What is the Muslim view of God, and what does the Qur'an teach about Jesus Christ? Watch especially for what Islam and Christianity say about Jesus Christ our Savior.

Focus Questions

As Christians we believe that Jesus is the central person in the Bible. Why do we say this?

Christians believe in one way of salvation, and Muslims trust a different way. In your own words, what would you say those two ways of salvation are?



Video

God's Nature

Who is God? It might seem like an odd question, but it points to a critical difference between Christianity and Islam. The Bible teaches that God is all-loving and just... merciful, yet righteous. He has to punish sinners, yet is willing to save them by punishing his Son instead.

But the god of Islam.... Allah... has a very different nature. While Allah can be compassionate or loving... his love is never guaranteed. In fact, he might exhibit the opposite characteristics. Muslims would say Allah is free from limitations or moral obligations... thus he can act any way at any time. This creates great unease for many Muslims, because they have no idea how Allah feels about them. He might be loving.... he might not care... or he might condemn them to hell on a whim.

In contrast, when the Bible says that God is love, it is describing an eternal truth. And, from the very beginning, the entire Bible reveals God's unchanging commitment to mankind—the loving promise of a Savior who would set things right.... and restore the perfect relationship between God and man.

“This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

Jesus

It is important to recognize that Islam is not silent on the topic of Jesus. Muslims have heard his name. And like Christianity, Islam agrees that Jesus is the sinless, virgin-born son of Mary and that his birth is a miracle. But that's where the similarity ends. According to Islam, Allah has no son, and therefore Jesus of Nazareth was only a great Muslim prophet, nothing more. To emphasize this, the Qur'an says that moments after His birth, the baby Jesus actually spoke, saying, “I am the worshiper of Allah.”

While Islam acknowledges that Jesus performed many miracles, it denies that he was both God and man. Islam claims that His mission was only to set an obedient example... and to teach that people are accountable to Allah and must submit to his will.

The details of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection—so familiar to Christians—are facts that most Muslims might never come across. Islamic teachers—called Imams—consider the story false.... and irrelevant. That's because Muslims don't see themselves as inherently sinful. Instead, they each hope to do enough good works to earn their place in heaven. So the idea of a Savior who pays the price for their sin... is foreign to their theology. The notion that they can be assured peace with God... is good news Muslims have not heard.

Yet there is increasing evidence that average Muslims are interested in hearing about Jesus. The stories about Jesus in the Qur'an fascinate many

Islam's word “Allah” is used as the translation for “God” in Arabic versions of the Bible.

Why is this? Does it mean that Christians and Muslims worship the same God?

Consider the following:

- The Arabic word “Allah” (the God) is older than Islam. Arab people used it long before Muhammad's time.
- “Al” is similar to the ancient word for God in Hebrew, “El.”
- Theologically, the meaning of a word is determined by its context.

The Bible reveals a God who is Triune and who is the Savior of the world through Jesus. The Qur'an asserts that Allah is neither Triune nor a Savior. The two religions teach opposite things about God.

Since the meaning of the word “Allah” in the context of the Bible and its meaning in the context of the Qur'an are very different, Arab Christians and Arab Muslims are not worshiping the same God even though they may use the same word for God.

Muslims.... and this sketchy knowledge can open the door to discussing Him further. And the fact that Christians have peace with God is especially appealing to Muslims.



Thinking about the Video

What is the difference between the God of the Bible and Allah whom Muslims worship?

What does Islam teach about Jesus Christ?

What is missing from the message that Muslims have heard about Jesus?



Bible Study

There are many differences between Christianity and Islam, but the most important difference comes down to one question. What do these two religions say about Jesus Christ?

How do the Bible and Islam Identify Jesus Christ?

We begin our study by reading the Bible's account of the birth of Jesus.

The Birth of Jesus Our Savior, God's Son

Matthew 1:18-23

¹⁸*This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child **through the Holy Spirit**.* ¹⁹*Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

²⁰*But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is **from the Holy Spirit**."* ²¹*She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because **he will save his people from their sins**."*

²²*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:* ²³*"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel**"—which means, "**God with us**."*

By whose power was Jesus conceived? (v.18,20; compare Luke 1:35 "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*")

What does the name "Jesus" mean? (v.21)

How did the prophet Isaiah identify Mary's son? (v.23)

What did the apostle John call Jesus: "*...we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*" (1 John 4:14)

An important question that Jesus once asked his followers was, “*Who do you say I am?*”¹ The way people answer this question reveals a great deal about their religious faith. It’s true that Islam accepts the virgin-birth of Jesus and recognizes that he was a sinless prophet. However, the *Qur’an* diminishes him by denying the Bible’s teaching that he is both God and man, and by rejecting the fact that he died to pay for the sin of all people with his holy blood. Islam teaches that people do not need a personal Savior. It claims that Allah is able to forgive and save genuinely repentant Muslims without the help of a mediator if he wants. In the *Qur’an*, Jesus is simply a Muslim prophet, a teacher who proclaimed salvation through obedience to Allah.

One of our goals as Christians, therefore, is to encourage any Muslim who is looking for more information about Jesus to “*come and see*” him in the Bible.

The *Qur’an* also vigorously denies the fact that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one, unchanging, triune God.² To be more exact, when the *Qur’an* rejects the Trinity, it actually rejects a gross misrepresentation of the Trinity—a belief that Christians worship three *separate* gods, namely Allah, Mary, and Jesus.³

We don’t. We are not polytheists. We worship one God,⁴ a God who in both the Old and New Testaments of Scripture reveals his mysterious, triune nature. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit graciously determined to save all people through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Since Muslims are not taught to see Jesus as he really is – a light shining into their darkness to assure them of peace with God—they have no peace. Like everyone else, they have sinful natures, but they cannot benefit from what Jesus has done for them as long as they do not trust in him as Savior. He says: “*I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.... My Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*”⁵

‘Believe in me,’ Jesus says to us and to our Muslim neighbors. ‘Trust what I did when I fulfilled my Father’s will.’ What was the great work of God that Jesus did and that Muslims need to believe?

Romans 5:8

*...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, **Christ died for us.***

1 John 4:10

*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent **his Son** as an **atonement sacrifice**⁶ for our sins.*

1 John 2:2

*He is the atonement sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also **for the sins of the whole world.***



¹ Mark 8:29

² [4.171] People of the Book, do not exaggerate your religion. Do not say about Allah except the truth. Indeed, the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only a Messenger (and Prophet) of Allah, and His Word which He gave to Mary, and a (created) spirit by Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers and do not say, 'Trinity.' Refrain, it is better for you. Allah is only One God.'

³ [5.116] And when Allah said, '(Prophet) Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to the people, "Take me and my mother for two gods, other than Allah?" 'Exaltations to You,' he (Jesus) said, 'how could I say that to which I have no right? If I had said that, You would have surely known. You know what is in myself, but I do not know what is in Yours.

⁴ Mark 12:29 “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.”

⁵ John 6:38,40

⁶ “atonement sacrifice” – the word used here and in 1 John 4:10 is meant to remind Bible readers of the golden covering on the Ark of the Covenant which held the Law of God. (That law, also known as the moral law, was the human side of a covenant between God and man that neither Israel nor any other people have been able to keep). God required the High Priest to sprinkle sacrificial blood on the Ark’s cover every year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). The blood-stained cover symbolized the payment for sin that the blood of Jesus would make once for all, in order to “atone,” or make all people at-one, with God.



What did Jesus do as true man? (Romans 5:8)

What did Jesus accomplish as true God? (1 John 4:10, 1 John 2:2)

⁷ Mark 14:36

The saving mission Jesus came to fulfill as the Lamb of God was an excruciating, distressing assignment. It involved his taking the nature of servant, humbling himself, and submitting to death—even to the point of dying on a cross. As Jesus agonized over the ordeal ahead of him, his forehead beaded with drops of blood, and he cried out...“*Abba, Father, ...everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.*”⁷ It was terrifying for him to prepare to carry the weight of mankind’s wickedness. He knew from the prophecies of the Old Testament exactly what he was facing.

What Jesus Was Anticipating

Mark 10:33,34

³³“*We are going up to Jerusalem,*” he said, “*and the Son of Man will be **betrayed** to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will **condemn** him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴who will **mock** him and **spit** on him, **flog** him and **kill** him....”*”

How did Jesus know what was ahead of him? (See Isaiah 53:5 “...*he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*”)

Yet, what was Jesus willing to do? (See John 12:27 “*Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.*”)

Islam considers the Christian gospel to be demeaning and false. According to Islam, Allah would not allow one of his prophets to suffer and die in this way. As a result, the details of Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection, so familiar to Christ’s followers, are life-saving facts that most Muslims will never hear unless we somehow let them know. They need to discover and trust what Jesus has accomplished as the Lamb of God in order to provide them with freedom from God’s judgment.

Lesson 2 - Who is God?

These Are Facts of Jesus' Arrest and Betrayal that Muslims Need to Hear

Luke 22:39-43

³⁹Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ...

⁴¹He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴³**An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.**



John 18:2-11

Later that night, Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus, led a group of armed soldiers and Jewish officials to the garden on the Mount of Olives where Jesus was praying.

⁴Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

⁵"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Since the officers had come only to arrest Jesus and not his followers, Jesus asked that his disciples be permitted to leave.

¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

¹¹Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! **Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?**"

How did God the Father answer Jesus' Gethsemane prayer? (Luke 22:43)

How did Jesus use the strength that God gave him? (John 18:11)



Testimony at the Trials of Jesus that Muslims Need to Hear

Luke 22:63-70

At daybreak, after they had been beating and mocking Jesus during the early hours of the morning, the guards led him to a trial arranged by the Jewish chief priests, teachers of the law, and council of elders.

⁶⁷ *“If you are the Christ,” they said, “tell us.” Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, ⁶⁸and if I asked you, you would not answer. ⁶⁹But from now on, the son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”*

⁷⁰ *They all asked, “Are you then the **Son of God?**” He replied, “**You are right in saying I am.**”*

Who is Jesus, according to testimony given at his Jewish trial? (Luke 22:70)

John 18:28-37

The verdict of the Jewish trial condemned Jesus to die for blaspheming God. But since legal executions required the approval of the Roman governor, he too would need to hear the case, decide its merit, and issue the death sentence. So the Jewish officials led Jesus to the governor’s palace soon after sunrise. Governor Pontius Pilate came out to investigate the early morning commotion and heard the officials accuse Jesus of trying to overthrow the government, saying that he claimed to be a king.

³³ *Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” ...*

³⁶ *Jesus said, “**My kingdom is not of this world.** If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”*

³⁷ *“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “**You are right in saying I am a king.** In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”*

Who is Jesus, according to testimony given at his Roman trial? (John 18:37)

John 19:1-16

Pontius Pilate was not convinced that Jesus was a threat to the government, so to mollify the blood-thirsty accusers outside the palace, he had Jesus flogged, draped in a purple robe, and crowned with thorns. Then Pilate displayed him to the growing crowd.

*⁶As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!” But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, **I find no basis for a charge against him.**”*

⁷The Jews insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

This new information terrified the governor. Who was this person, Jesus? When Pilate asked him about this, Jesus gave no answer. The governor grew angry. He reminded Jesus that he had the power to release him or to crucify him. Jesus replied that Pilate wouldn’t have any power at all if it were not given to him by God. God is the real judge of who is innocent and who is guilty.

*¹²From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, “**If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.**”*

That was not what Pilate wanted to hear. Now they were threatening his position as governor. So he made his decision.

¹⁶Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

What did Governor Pilate say about Jesus at the Roman trial? (John 19:6)

Why then did Pilate sentence Jesus to die? (John 19:12)

It is at the cross, which Jesus endured after the earlier ordeal, that we reach the heart of the gospel message. Tragically, Islam dismisses every part of this, claiming that *Isa* (Jesus) did not die on the cross, but that Allah caused someone else to die there (perhaps Judas).⁸



⁸ Islam says that Allah took Jesus up into heaven alive, and that from there he will come again to fight the Jews, destroy the symbol of the cross, be killed, and buried next to Muhammad.



The Facts of Jesus' Death by Crucifixion that Muslims Need to Hear

John 19:17-20, 25

*So the **soldiers** took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.*

*¹⁹Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: **JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS**. ²⁰Many of the **Jews** read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek....*

*²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood **his mother**, his mother's sister, **Mary the wife of Clopas**, and **Mary Magdalene**.*

How do we know that it really was Jesus on the cross. Who saw him there?

The Facts of Jesus' Death and Burial that Muslims Need to Hear

John 19:28-35

*²⁸Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and **gave up his spirit**.*

Because the Sabbath would begin at sunset, the Jews petitioned the governor to speed up the execution of the other two men so that all three bodies could be removed before the sun left the sky. Pilate gave the order, and his soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals who hung on the crosses next to Jesus.

*³³But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers **pierced Jesus' side** with a spear, **bringing a sudden flow of blood and water**. ³⁵The **man who saw it has given testimony**, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.*

John 19:40-42

*⁴⁰Taking Jesus' body, the two of them **wrapped it**, with the spices, **in strips of linen**. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the **tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there**.*

Colossians 1:22

*"...now he has **reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight**, without blemish and free from accusation"*

How do we know that Jesus actually died? (John 19:30,34,35)



What happened to the body of Jesus that also confirmed his death? (John 19:40,42)

Why is it important to believe that Jesus died? (Colossians 1:22)

The Good News of Jesus' Resurrection and Its Meaning that Muslims Need to Hear
John 20:1-23

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, **“They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”**

Stunned by this news, Peter and John, ran to find out what had happened. They went inside the tomb, saw that Jesus was gone, but noticed that the burial cloths were still there. The folded head cloth was lying separate from the strips of linen that had been around his body.

Then Peter and John went back home, but Mary Magdalene stayed at the burial place, weeping. After few moments she peeked inside the tomb, and she saw that now two angels were sitting where Jesus’ body had been.

¹³They asked her, *“Woman, why are you crying?”*

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” ¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵“Woman,” he said, *“why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”*

At first she thought this newcomer might be the man who had taken the body of Jesus out of the tomb. Then Jesus called her by name, “Mary.” Immediately she recognized him and wanted to hold on to him, but he told her that he had to leave and that he wanted her to tell his disciples where he was about to go: *“...to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”*

¹⁸**Mary Magdalene** went to the disciples with the news: *“I have seen the Lord!”* And she told them that he had said these things to her.



¹⁹On the evening of that first day of the week, when **the disciples** were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹Again Jesus said, “**Peace be with you!** As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²²And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³**If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.**”

What rumor about Jesus’ body began to circulate? (vv.2,13)

Who saw that Jesus was alive again? (vv.18,20)

What good news could be announced after Jesus rose from death? (vv.21-23)

⁹ John 12:35,36 “...I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” He (Jesus) said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”

This gospel of forgiveness earned by the sacrifice of Jesus has the power to draw people from every nation to worship Jesus as their Savior.⁹ It is a light shining in a dark place that can bring precious comfort to worried souls. This is the message that your Muslim friend needs to hear as soon as the time is right. The power of this gospel is able to open eyes that are blinded and bring lasting joy to hearts that are troubled by false religions.



But it’s easy to be distracted from what is really important. For example, religions of all kinds tend to favor certain worship locations. Islam teaches people to face Mecca when they pray to Allah. Every mosque has a “*qibla*,” a special niche to indicate the direction of Mecca. The city of Jerusalem holds special honor for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. There

the Jews offer up prayers while facing the Wailing Wall, the foundation of the former Temple. Christians gather at magnificent cathedrals built on the sites of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension. Muslims turn their attention away from all of these sites in Jerusalem to visit their dazzling structure called the Dome of the Rock, built in the Seventh Century by Abd al-Malik atop Mount Moriah where the Temple once stood. The Dome of the Rock commemorates Muslim claims about Muhammad’s Night Visit to heaven as well as lesser-known Islamic traditions about Creation and Judgment Day that focus attention on the rock beneath the Dome.



Where we worship, though, is not nearly as important as whom and why we worship. God wants people to worship him in spirit and in truth,¹⁰ believing that he is the Savior of the world. Those who do will notice that the Bible often uses the illustration of buildings and stones, not to call attention to places of worship, but as symbols to describe the wonderful Savior that we worship:

“The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” (Psalm 18:2)

“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.’” (Isaiah 28:16)

“Their rock is not like our Rock.” (Deuteronomy 32:31)

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:11)

*⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and **the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.**” ⁷Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But **to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,”⁸and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”** They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.* (1 Peter 2:4-8)

Why is Jesus called a precious cornerstone?

What will happen to those who reject him?



¹⁰ John 4:24 *“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

A Muslim’s favorite expression, one that we might hear quite often in a conversation, is “Inshallah” or “in sha’ Allah” – “if Allah is willing.”

Christians sometimes use a similar expression. Like Muslims, we might say, “God willing” when we are talking about something that is unknown or unknowable, such as what we will do tomorrow or next year.

But a Christian would never use that expression when talking about God’s promises of eternal life in heaven. If someone asked us whether we will go to heaven when we die, we would not say, “God willing.” Because we know what his will is. We have God’s promise that a place in heaven is prepared for everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus.

Certainty about life in heaven is one of the major differences between biblical Christianity and Islam. Islam teaches its followers that they cannot know Allah’s will about their eternal future. If you were to ask the average Muslim whether he or she expects to enter heaven when life ends, the person likely would give a nervous smile and say, “Inshallah.”

So a major attraction that biblical Christianity has for a Muslim is this powerful truth: Christians are sure of heaven when they die.



What promise is given to those who trust him?

What is the “rock” that Islam trusts, and why is it unable to compare with Jesus Christ?

¹¹ Isaiah 60:1-3

¹² 2 Corinthians 5:19

¹³ Isaiah 53:5,6

¹⁴ Ephesians 1:7

Islam is the religion. Muslims are the people. You may feel a strong dislike for the Islamic religion, and yet develop real friendships with its followers – probably not with the ones who adhere to the Qur’an with a radical zeal, but not all of them are like that.

Ordinary Muslims are people who live very non-threatening lives. They are laborers, housewives, students, teachers, office workers, and business people. Some of them are American citizens. They might work or shop where you do, attend the same school, or live nearby. Often they are as likeable and friendly as anyone else, if not even more so.

In other words, if the stranger you happen to meet is a follower of Islam, don’t impulsively jump to negative conclusions. Try to reach out. If possible, get to know the person. Live your Christian faith.

With another powerful picture, Scripture urges believers to share the light of Jesus Christ that God has brought to us. *“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.”*¹¹

God wants to dispel spiritual darkness and hopeless fear of eternal judgment with the truth that we have. He is at peace with all people through Christ, *“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”*¹²

Both the Old and New Testaments bring that message of peace. It is based on the perfect sacrifice God provided, *“he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all,”*¹³ *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.”*¹⁴

Isn’t it time to bring this good news to Muslim people? Share it not only with the words you speak to them, but with your gentle, respectful behavior as God’s redeemed people and with your prayers for those who live in fear of Allah’s judgment.

Discussion Points

How are the demands of Allah, the god of Islam, different from the law and gospel message that God proclaims in the Bible?



Since Muslims are taught that Jesus is only a law-giving prophet, what good news are you able share with a Muslim?

Why is it important that our Savior Jesus is both true God and true man?

Islam says that Jesus did not die on the cross and rise from death—why is it important to believe that he did?¹⁵

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:17 “...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins.”

What does the resurrection of Jesus tell us about him, about the Bible, and about our sins?

What present and future blessings do we enjoy because God is our Savior, and how can we share those blessings?



Taking the Lesson Home

The Muslim view of God and of Jesus Christ couples Islam's belief in miracles with its doubt regarding the greatest miracle of all—the gift of a Savior who is both God and man, who died as a sacrifice to pay for all sin, and who rose from death as the living Redeemer and Lord of all.

Biblical topics like the Trinity or the crucifixion of Christ and any symbols referring to them can spark negative responses from any Muslims who have been trained to reject them. But Christian love is a gift they welcome. How can you show Christian love to a Muslim acquaintance?

Islam denies the Trinity and considers the cross to be offensive to Islam. This makes it highly unlikely that a Muslim would visit a worship service in a Christian church. How can you bring the church to a Muslim?



Prayer

Make us instruments of your peace, O Lord. Bless our efforts to share your unconditional love in Christ with Muslims who live in uncertainty under constant fear of your judgment.

Further Reading



Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims
Pages 105-159 *Comparison/Evaluation*

Lesson Two

Allah in the Qur'an is unpredictable.
The God of Scripture is unchanging love.

Islam sees Jesus as a moral example.
The Bible tells us Jesus is our Savior.

The Bible reveals that God is Triune.
Islam denies this.

Lesson 3: Muslim Beliefs/Practices



Muslim Beliefs/Practices

Background

In Lesson 3 we will consider what the Bible and the *Qur'an* say about human life, death, and life after death. Both Christianity and Islam address these matters very seriously, but their conclusions are very different.

Focus Questions

Have you ever seen a *Qur'an* or read the *Qur'an*?

Have you visited a *mosque*?

Have you heard an *Imam* tell non-Muslims about Islam?



Video

Scripture

The Qur'an is written in Arabic. Translations are available, but Muslims don't accept those versions as the revealed word of Allah. And since only 20 percent of Muslims understand the Arabic language, most have not spent much time with their scripture.

Knowledge of Islam

The majority of Muslims are not well-informed about their religion. But most are well-versed in the six main beliefs of Islam:

Belief 1: There is no God but Allah.

Belief 2: Two angels are assigned to each person to record their good and evil deeds—and to give a report to Allah on the day of judgment.

Belief 3: The Qur'an is Allah's revelation of his will to all people, transmitted to Muhammad the final prophet.

Belief 4: Human messengers were sent by Allah to bring his warnings and guidance to specific groups of people: the first of these messengers was Adam, and the final—and most important—messenger, was Muhammad.

Belief 5: Judgment day is coming, including the resurrection. Each person will be called to account... based on their thoughts, words, and deeds.... and either sentenced to a place of torment... or admitted them to a place of sensual delight...

Belief 6: Allah's decree controls everything, his will and only his will.

5 Pillars

Most Muslims also understand the behaviors that are expected of them.... called the five pillars of Islam.

Shahada: *The daily declaration of faith*

Salah: *Obligatory prayers spoken five times a day*

Sawm: *Fasting during the 30 days of Ramadan each year*

Zakah: *An obligatory two-and-a-half percent of wealth given for the poor annually.*

Hajj: *Pilgrimage to Mecca if possible at least once during a person's life.*

It is important to recognize that not everyone who claims to be Muslim is a Muslim at heart. As with other religions, many are Muslim in name only without practicing its beliefs. Others follow its practices superficially, but their lives

The Qur'an

Muslim tradition says that in 610 A.D. at the age of 40 Muhammad began to receive a series of divine revelations from the angel Gibril (Gabriel). This continued for 22 years until his death in 632 A.D. The result of these revelations is the Qur'an, Islam's holy book. Muhammad began to recite its teachings to his wife Khadija at first, then to others in Mecca, and finally to a growing army of his followers in Medina.

The Qur'an is about the same size as the New Testament. It has 114 surahs (chapters), arranged according to length. The longest chapters, which are at the beginning of the Qur'an, are the ones that Muhammad recited in Medina as the Islamic religion grew stronger. They tend to be more antagonistic and hostile. The milder, shorter chapters in the last part of the Qur'an actually are the first ones Muhammad recited as he struggled to gain followers among the idolaters in his hometown of Mecca.

and values conflict with Islam. Only a minority of Islam's followers are very knowledgeable and deeply committed to the religion.

That said, Muslim people universally believe that the afterlife is earned by one's actions on this earth. Of course, that's a direct contradiction of the Gospel message.



Thinking about the Video

Islam claims that the Arabic *Qur'an* is the only official version of Allah's word. What limitations result from this?

Why do Muslims build their lives on the "Five Pillars" of Islam?

Islam could be called a religion of fear. Why?

**The Qur'an
(continued)**

The Qur'an makes many references to biblical characters and events. No doubt Muhammad came across portions of the Bible in Arabia, and he probably spoke with both Jews and Christians when he travelled as an Arab trader during his younger years. At that time many Christians in Arabia were members of apocalyptic sects, and they wrestled with the Nestorian and Monophysite controversies about the deity of Christ.



Bible Study

Today's lesson will show the eternal difference resulting from the opposite views of Jesus and of the dying world's need for a Savior taught by the Bible and the *Qur'an*.

Muslim Beliefs and Behavior

The average Muslim may be no more afraid of dying than the next person. But ask a devoted Muslim what Islam says about judgment day, and you can sense real fear. On judgment day Muslims expect to rise from the grave and be brought before Allah. They believe that Allah will examine carefully the written record of their lives, weigh the difference between their good and bad deeds, test their merits by seeing if they can cross a hair-thin bridge over hell, and award heaven only to the Muslims who please him, who have built their lives on the five pillars of Islam. Consequently, Muslims do not know what future awaits them on judgment day.

The only certain thing is that if they fail to pass Allah's judgment, they will go to hell along with *infidels* (non-Muslims). Although Muslims hope that when they have suffered enough, Allah will release them from hell, this offers little comfort to any who have heard Muhammad's description of the terrible punishments prepared for them.¹

Islam gives Muslim people a false hope when it says that hell has an exit door. This is an opinion that Scripture does not support.² There is no way out of hell. Both heaven and hell are eternal destinations.

Also, according to the Bible, no one is able to earn a place in heaven by living a good life or by obeying religious rituals like reciting the *Shahada*,³ praying five times a day, fasting, giving to the poor, and traveling to religious sites.

One of the most basic biblical facts that Muslims are lacking is this: God's original creation was perfect but sin ruined it; and God, who is holy, expects people to be perfectly holy.⁴ They do not realize that sin has a deadly, condemning hold on everyone.⁵ Only the Bible teaches that.

For example, listen as Jesus teaches an "expert in the law" about the strict demands of God's law.

¹ Muhammad says that Allah gave him a vision of hell to show him examples of how both Muslims and infidels are punished there. He saw a man lying on his back. As he watched, someone threw a stone at the man's head, then, as the stone rolled away, the other man ran after it, picked it up and returned to strike the man on his head again. The same thing happened over and over again. This illustrated Allah's punishment of a Muslim who neglected to say his obligatory five daily prayers. Another Muslim who told lies was tortured with an iron hook that beat and tore open the man's face and neck. After each beating the man's face recovered, and he was punished over and over again. Adulterous Muslims were cast into an oven.

² "... besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us." (Luke 16:26)

³ The opening words of the Qur'an that are recited by every Muslim in daily prayer and that identify a person as a Muslim are known as al *Shahada* (the declaration of faith): "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger."

⁴ According to the Qur'an, Allah created Adam and Eve as imperfect, forgetful, impulsive beings. When they took the forbidden fruit, Allah forgave their rash behavior but expected them and their descendants to submit to his will for the rest of time. Thus, the Qur'an claims that right knowledge, a submissive attitude, and good behavior are the way to avoid Allah's punishment.

⁵ Romans 5:18 "...the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men...."

What Must a Person Do To Gain Eternal Life?

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵*On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “**what must I do to inherit eternal life?**”*

²⁶*“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”*

²⁷*He answered: “ ‘**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind**; and, ‘**Love your neighbor as yourself.**’”*

²⁸*“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “**Do this** and you will live.”*

²⁹*But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And **who is my neighbor?**”*

Jesus replied by telling the story of a certain traveler. Robbers attacked him and left him to die somewhere along the road to Jericho. Then two Jewish travelers, one a priest and the other a Levite, came upon the victim, but they ignored him, hurrying on their way. Finally a foreigner, a Samaritan, came along. He felt sorry for the man, tended his wounds, transported him to an inn, and paid for his complete recuperation there. At the end of the story Jesus asked:

³⁶*“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”*

³⁷*The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “**Go and do likewise.**”*

The “expert in the law” thought he could save himself. How did the question that he asked Jesus imply that a person can earn life in heaven? (v.25)

What does God’s law require people to do? (v.27)

What did the “expert in God’s law” request from Jesus? (v.28,29)

How did Jesus illustrate being a perfectly loving neighbor? (vv.30-36)

What point was Jesus making when he said, “Go and do likewise”?





The Apostle Paul emphasized the same truth in the opening part of his letter to the Romans. Obeying the law of God cannot save people. This is not because there is something wrong with God’s law, but because humans cannot follow it perfectly. Read Paul’s conclusions about this:

Romans 3:19-20

*“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore **no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.**”*

What does the law of God reveal to people?

What moral status can people never achieve by trying to keep the law?

But then, Paul makes his joyful announcement of what God has done to make people holy in his sight. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. God the Son freely paid for our sins with his holy blood! *“... now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ.”*⁶

⁶ Romans 3:21-24

⁷ Isaiah 64:6

⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:21

Nothing that people do to please God or to earn his forgiveness has any saving value, *“all of us have become like one who is unclean and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”*⁷ The only payment for sin that counts in God’s sight is what Jesus has done for sinful mankind, *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*⁸

The Apostle Paul once thought that he had reason to trust in himself. As a young man he had kept God’s law so perfectly that no one in the Jewish community could find any fault in him. He was so zealous that he went out of his way to persecute Christians because he thought they were heretics. But when Jesus appeared to him from heaven and convinced Paul that he was rejecting the only Savior of the world, Paul’s entire attitude changed. He completely abandoned his old faith in himself:

Philippians 3:7-9

*“...whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a **righteousness** of my own*

that comes from the law, but that **which is through faith in Christ**—the righteousness **that comes from God** and is by faith.



Ephesians 1:7

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

What moral status did God freely give Paul through faith in Jesus Christ?
(Philippians 3:7-9)

What did Jesus do to make this possible for all of us? (Ephesians 1:7)

Muslims need to know that God loves them too and that he wants them to have the inheritance of life in heaven. God wants to do the same for them that he has done for us: *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”* (Colossians 1:13,14)

But the *Imams* (teachers) of Islam are keeping Muslims in the dark, saying that a Savior is neither needed nor possible⁹ and that God cannot have a son. Because Islam teaches this, we need to be patient, prayerful, and completely dependent on the Holy Spirit's power as we use God's word to introduce a Muslim to Jesus. Part four of this Bible study unfolds this challenge in greater detail.

The Gospel in Islam?

Doesn't Islam already have the gospel? The *Qur'an* talks about the *Injil* (gospel). But if you read the *Qur'an*, you will see that the *Injil* of Islam is simply moral law. It gives people nothing more than the obedient example that Jesus set. It does not say that Jesus took away sin and guilt. It offers no gift of forgiveness through faith in the sacrifice Jesus offered on the cross, the sacrifice of his holy life. Muslims do not have the gospel of Christ as we know it from the Bible.

As a result, Muslims have more reason to be terrified of judgment day than they realize. They do not know the strong warning that God has for people who try to save themselves. Parts of the following information are disturbing, but this is what Jesus says will happen to those who reject him as their Savior.

⁹ Islam denies the doctrine of original sin. It teaches that people enter the world without the burden of a sinful nature and that sin is merely forgetfulness that can be cured by listening to Allah. The Qur'an also claims that neither sin nor righteousness can be transferred from one person to another. [6.164] 'Every soul earns only to its account no soul shall bear another's burden.'



¹⁰ The Apostle Paul echoes this illustration of God's judgment in Romans 2:6-11, but he does not want anyone to think that a believer is saved by doing good works. We are saved by faith in Christ alone (Romans 3:21-28, Galatians 3:11, Ephesians 2:8, 9). Yet saving faith is never alone. It always produces loving works of gratitude (Ephesians 2:10). Who does good works? Hebrews 11:6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please God."

The Sheep and the Goats¹⁰

Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ "When **the Son of Man** comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the **sheep on his right** and the **goats on his left**.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; **take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world**. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

The people gathered on the King's right side, who love Jesus and who have done these things as a result, will be amazed by what he tells them. "When did we do all of this for you?" they will ask.

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, **whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.**'

Then the King will condemn the people on his left, sending them into the hell prepared for Satan and his followers. Why? For the exact opposite reason – they had no love for Jesus, no thankful reason to help those who love him.

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, **whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.**'

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to **eternal punishment**, but the righteous to eternal life."

Who will serve as the judge of all people? (v.31)

What will Jesus look for? (vv.37-39)

Who are the sheep and the goats? (vv.32,33)

What will the sheep receive? (v.34)

What will the goats receive? (v.46)

What will Jesus not see in the *goats*? (v.45)



What is the basis for God's judgment? (v.35-36, 42-43)

Jesus wept to see the majority of people rejecting what he offered them. He wept, and he warned about the judgment coming for unbelievers, but he also promised, “*whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.*” (John 3:36)

These are powerful words of encouragement for us to help our Muslim friends learn the truth. If we don't tell them, who will? Tell them about their Savior so they may rely on him to remove God's judgment on their sins. Let Jesus replace their fear of the future with confidence and joy.

Muslims may be more ready to listen than we are to speak. It has been said that many Muslims who became Christians were previously fascinated with the stories about Jesus that are told in the Qur'an. They wanted to know what the Bible says about Jesus.

A changing tide?

According to a March 2008 report in the *International Herald Tribune*, many young Iraqis, exhausted by first-hand exposure to the violence of religious extremism, say they have grown disillusioned with religious leaders and skeptical of the faith that they preach. Forty young people in five Iraqi cities were interviewed over a two-month period, during which a pattern of disenchantment was noted. Young Iraqis, both poor and middle class, blamed clerics for the violence and the restrictions that have narrowed their lives.

In January 2009 *Fox News* telecast interviews with Mosab Hassan, the son of a founding member of Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist organization.¹¹ Mosab had been a leader of the Islamic Youth Movement there. But he converted to Christianity after spending time in an Israeli prison and then having a “chance” meeting with a Christian in Jerusalem who invited him to study the Bible.

¹¹ The telecast is entitled, “Escape from Hamas.” Watch it on www.hulu.com.

There are openings for the gospel in the Muslim community.



Proper Fear of God

Before we conclude this lesson, let's take a moment to address a question that a Christian may have about today's topic. You might ask, "Don't we as Christians *fear* God?" We began this segment of our Bible study by describing the fear that Muslims have of judgment day and of what Allah will say to them. Theirs is a terrible uncertainty. It's not at all like the fear, love, and trust in God that Christians have.

As Christians we fear, love, and trust God by humbly respecting him as our wise Creator who patiently sustains everything by his powerful word, giving sinful people time to repent. Wonder and amazement fill us when we think of him as the judge of his creatures who has graciously provided the world with a Savior, Christ the Lord. Our Christian "fear" is expressed in a life of daily repentance. We are truly sorry for our sins, and we receive God's forgiveness with joyful, grateful hearts. Because of God's gift of free and full forgiveness in Christ, we love and respect him. And we show respectful love to our fellow human beings as well, especially toward those who believe in him. At the same time, we look forward to the day of God, eagerly waiting for the return of Jesus who will rescue us from the coming wrath and welcome us to a happy life with him forever.

A note about prison ministry

It's a sad fact that in U.S. prisons many African-American people are attracted by Islam.¹² This is not because they have a deep understanding of the teachings of the Muslim faith, rather it is because that religion seems to fill certain earthly needs. It offers structure, brotherhood, acceptance, and a way to compensate for past mistakes, whether by taking revenge on the establishment which is run by *infidels* (non-Muslims) or by reforming their lives.

¹² Many are attracted by the Nation of Islam (NOI), founded in 1930 to elevate the condition of black people in America. NOI is considered heretical by the rest of Islam for portraying its founder as an incarnation of Allah.

One way to counteract this trend is by bringing a Christian ministry into the prison system and following up with Christian practical and spiritual support for converts to Christianity after they are released. Paul's ministry to prisoners in Philippi provides food for thought.

Prison Ministry at Philippi

Acts 16:23-34

The book of Acts tells us that Paul and Silas were arrested by the city officials of Philippi on charges of promoting illegal activity. The officials had them beaten and imprisoned. The jailor was ordered to guard them carefully. He put them in an inner cell of the prison and locked their feet in stocks.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.** ²⁶Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all **the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.** ²⁷The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! **We are all here!**"

²⁹The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

³⁰He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” ³²Then **they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.** ³³At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately **he and all his family were baptized.** ³⁴The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.



In this case, prison ministry was conducted by Christian prisoners. What methods did they use that we can also use to share our faith with prisoners, including those captured by Islam? (v.25)

What evidence is there that the Holy Spirit caught the prisoners’ attention through the words of Paul and Silas? (v.28)

The jailer imagined himself in deep trouble with the legal authorities and with God. He wasn’t ready to be judged by either one. To answer his spiritual need, how did Paul bring him and his family into the family of the Christian church at Philippi? (vv.29-34)

What practical ideas does that give you for a follow-up ministry with prisoners?

Whether through involvement in prison ministry,¹³ through prayer for outreach to Muslims, or through the Christian friendliness we show to people we meet who are of Muslim background, let’s remember that building relationships of trust is key to opening the door to the Gospel. There will be more on that topic in the next lesson.

¹³ An example of Christian prison ministry is a program being operated from a central office in Minnesota where a small staff utilizes the services of hundreds of volunteers to manage a ministry-by-mail program that has reached over 43,000 inmates. Volunteers accomplish a variety of services: prepare regular mailings, correct Bible correspondence tests returned to the central office by inmates, and serve as pen pals to inmates. For more information about this kind of ministry, please call (507) 354-3130.



Discussion Points

What are some of the main beliefs of Islam?

What are the “5 pillars” of Islamic behavior?

What do Muslims expect to happen on Judgment Day?

According to the Bible, what will happen on Judgment Day?

Why is it that some Muslims are not well acquainted with the Qur’an and have only a shallow connection with Islam?

What encouragement does Paul’s experience in Philippi give you to become involved in prison ministry to Muslims and others?

Taking the Lesson Home

The outwardly moral lives that Muslims try to lead may give them the impression that their religion is superior to the Christianity they see around them. But no matter how hard Muslim people try to keep the law, they have a terrible uncertainty about God's judgment and a deep fear of his punishment. True Christians, on the other hand, are like Simeon holding the Christ child in his arms.¹⁵ We praise God with our lives and face the end of life with hope and joy.



¹⁵ Luke 2:29-31

¹⁶ 1 Peter 3:15 "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

In view of the uncertainty that Muslims have about their eternal future, what fruit of faith do you want to show, especially to a Muslim, whenever a Christian dies?

When a Muslim person asks you about your remarkable confidence, what does the Apostle Peter encourage you to share?¹⁶



Prayer

Be with us, O Lord, so we may light the way for Muslims to turn from their fears and false beliefs to the joy of your salvation.

Further Reading



Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims
Pages 55-103 *Beliefs and Practices*

Lesson Three

Islam teaches people to respect the Qur'an.
God urges careful study of the Bible.

Christians follow the Savior in whom they trust.
Muslims obey five rules in which they trust.

Islam's gospel is nothing but law.
Christ's gospel gives salvation.

Lesson 4: Reaching Out



Reaching Out

Background

After looking into the heart of what Christians and Muslims believe, this final lesson offers suggestions on forming friendships and finding opportunities for sharing the gospel of Christ.

Focus Questions

You notice a new person in your community who may be Muslim. What is your reaction?

A student in your family brings home a Muslim friend. What challenges does this raise?

Three popular topics of friendly conversation with a guest are events, people, and ideas. Could you include religion as you speak with a Muslim? Why or why not?



Video

Reaching Out

If you went to a ballgame with a Mormon, would you buy a beer? If you were having breakfast with a Jewish friend, would you order bacon?

The apostle Paul would say no to both. Paul knew he was free to eat anything... but he sometimes changed his habits so that he did not unnecessarily offend those he was preaching to. He didn't want to create barriers to his message. Similarly, it is important for us to avoid offending Muslim people unnecessarily.

So, here are a few guidelines.

Practicing Muslims avoid alcoholic beverages. They do not eat pork or meat containing blood. What they do eat comes from sources that are considered "halal"... which is somewhat analogous to kosher foods in the Jewish world. Like most Christians, Muslims ordinarily begin and end a meal with brief prayer.

Many Muslims also will want to avoid mixed company—that is, having male and female guests in proximity to each other. Again, follow your host's lead. Pets are considered unclean, so if you have a Muslim in your home, put your dog or cat in a different room... or outside. If you have a Bible visible... make sure it is in a place of respect—on a high shelf.

And if you visit a Muslim's home, offer to remove your street shoes when entering.

Just a few changes in our behavior can open the door to greater dialogue with Muslim people.

So what can you talk about? Casual conversation can touch on food, family, and acquaintances. Most of all, be a friend.

Crossing cultures with the gospel requires a great deal of time, patience, and understanding. Many Muslims may feel ostracized by Westerners and have few friends who are not Muslim—so your role is important. Often, ministering to the practical, physical needs of others is the best way to build the trust and understanding that can later provide a bridge for the gospel of Christ. When the opportunity arises, ask your Muslim guest about his or her faith and worship customs... as a way to begin the conversation.

Muslims do not know that heaven is guaranteed... or that God's love is unchanging. And they certainly don't know—or don't believe—the gospel of his death and resurrection as the world's Savior. When the time is right, these are the subjects that need to be shared. Don't attack Muhammad or the Qur'an... that will only create distance. And don't start by discussing the Trinity... because Muslims have long been taught that the Trinity is impossible... unreasonable. The topic has the potential to sidetrack your early discussions.

What Makes Islam Attractive?

Most individuals enter the religion of Islam through family connections. They either are the children of Muslim parents or they marry Muslims.

Islam also has some attractions.

For the lonely or for minorities, the appeal of Islam can be its family-like network, the umma. Muslims take care of fellow Muslims. They welcome people of all nationalities who submit to Allah and accept Muhammad as the final prophet.

To those looking for stability in a changing world, Islam offers authoritative control over all facets of life. It forbids drinking, public display of affection, premarital sex, homosexuality, theft, etc.

Instead, follow the example of Paul... as he approached the Athenians.

That is, mention your faith in God as the creator and judge of mankind. Because on this point, you and your Muslim friend can agree. Ask them what they think of God as judge. Is there fear of what his judgment will be? Then share the fact that you have no fear.... you are sure of your salvation. When this leads to more questions, use that opportunity to talk about your Savior. Bear witness to the promises that are in both the Old and New Testaments.

As Jesus promised, he is with us always. He reminds us that when we bring God's word, we are not speaking our own ideas, the Holy Spirit is speaking through us.



Thinking about the Video

You notice a person/persons who may be Muslim in your community. How do you go about meeting?

You are planning a day or an evening with a Muslim or Muslim family. What steps will you take to make the event successful?

Once you are acquainted, what questions could you ask a Muslim person in order to open the topic of religion?

What Makes Christianity Attractive?

Love, warmth, hospitality, helpfulness, and caring interest in other people are some of the attractive qualities of Christ's people.

Muslims value these characteristics highly and typically will respond with warmth, even though they may not be accustomed to having Christians approach them as friends.

Another attractive characteristic of Christians is that they speak the truth in love, gently affirming what God has done to bless us. Conversation with a Christian appeals to people when its goal is not to win an argument or a convert. It simply wants to help. At the same time it opens the way for the Holy Spirit to win a soul.



Bible Study

Does it seem like a lot to expect, asking you to make personal adjustments in regard to food, friendships, pets, behavior, and the like in order to reach out in friendship to a Muslim? Christian love begins with removing any barriers that might exist between yourself and another person. It calls for generosity, humility, and respect. Listen to the Apostle Paul.

Christian Love in Doing Outreach

1 Corinthians 9:19-22

*¹⁹Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²²To the weak **I became weak, to win the weak.** I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³**I do all this for the sake of the gospel....***

1 Corinthians 8:13

*...if **what I eat** causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.*

Acts 18:3

*...because **he (Paul) was a tentmaker** as they were, he stayed and worked with them.*

In what way did Paul spend personal resources to reach and befriend others? (Acts 18:3)

How did Paul change his diet in order to become like the people he wanted to reach? (1 Corinthians 9:22, 1 Corinthians 8:13).

What lifestyle adjustments could you make in order to befriend a Muslim?

What was Paul's objective? Eventually what did he want to share with both Jews and Gentiles? (1 Corinthians 9:22-23)

Since customs differ from one country to another, and because there are many outward differences between Christianity and Islam, it will take a while for you as a Christian to become acquainted and feel at ease with a Muslim person that you have met—and for that person to feel at ease with you. You need to develop mutual trust and understanding. Some relationships can take months or years to mature, depending on how often you meet and how well you communicate with each other.



Helping with practical, physical needs, and being there when a Muslim who is far from home feels loneliness or fear is a good way for a friendship to grow. What you already know about life in your area, schools, shopping, and community services could be helpful to a new arrival. It might be a good idea if members of your church were to provide immigrants with classes in English as a Second Language. Be willing to share your knowledge and skills. Meet with each other, talk on the phone, or exchange email with your Muslim friend. Since Muslims place a high value on true friendships, be available when needed.

Jesus is an example of a person who made himself available. He was ready to listen and help even at times that were not especially convenient for him.

John 3:1-3,13-17

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ²He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

³In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”... ¹³“No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵that **everyone** who believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him **shall not perish** but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to **condemn the world**, but to **save the world** through him....”

Nicodemus came to meet with Jesus at night sensing that Jesus would welcome the visit and answer his questions. What impression do Muslims need to have of you before they will ask about the reason for the hope that you have?

How did Jesus avoid offending Nicodemus, yet make Nicodemus aware of his sinful condition, his need for a Savior, and the Savior he needed?



Muslims mistakenly assume that Christian values are the same as Western values. Why does this happen? Partly, it is because the religion of Islam rigidly controls every detail of their lives, and Muslims assume that Christianity has the same hold on people who live in the Western world. So when they look at the behavior of Western entertainers and Western governments, they get a very confused impression of what Christianity is all about. We as Christians need to carefully communicate the real values of our faith.

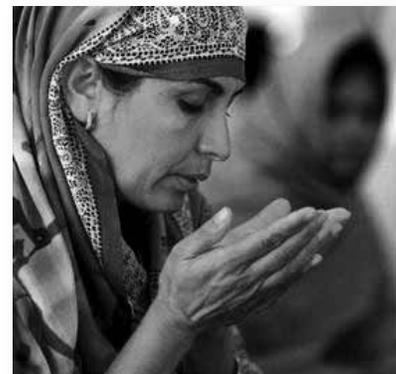
Again, Jesus provided an example of making an effort to communicate God-pleasing values cross-culturally when he spoke to a woman in Samaria.

John 4:4-10,13-26

⁴Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, **“Will you give me a drink?”** ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

Jesus' simple question opened a conversation with this foreign woman. She was very surprised that he would talk to her. When she commented on this, wondering why **he** would ask **her** for water, Jesus replied with an invitation. He said that if she knew who he was, **she** would ask **him** for water, and he could provide her with the water of life, meaning God's word for her soul. She seemed puzzled by what this meant, so Jesus took a more direct approach to helping her. He told her to go and get her husband and come back. She replied that she didn't have a husband. Jesus said he was aware of that, and he quickly summarized the sordid details of her past and present life. All at once the Samaritan woman realized that this stranger was no ordinary man. She remarked that he must be a prophet. But at the same time she dodged any more talk about herself by asking Jesus an impersonal theological question—‘Where is it proper to worship? Here in Samaria or in Jerusalem?’ Jesus let this question lead her into even deeper spiritual matters by saying that the place where people worship isn't nearly as important as the content of their worship. He also told her that the worship done by Samaritans was lacking in some very important respects. When she heard this, the Samaritan woman said,



²⁵... *“I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”*

²⁶Then Jesus declared, *“I who speak to you am he.”*

Tired as he was, Jesus broke through the cultural barriers separating nations and genders in order to help this foreign woman. How did he open a natural conversation with her?



Jesus turned the conversation to spiritual matters in order to change the woman's values and life. God also has changed our values and lives. How can we convey this to a Muslim friend?

Conversations with Muslims can easily turn to religious topics. Although most Muslims are not well-versed in Islamic doctrine, they are very willing to talk about their customs and what is important to them.

When discussing personal values, a Muslim might ask you what you think of the prophet Muhammad, whom they respect very highly.¹ You would need to be ready to respond, perhaps by saying that you know only a little about Muhammad, but you can see how much he means to them. Then try to lead the discussion in a slightly new direction. Mention how important it is that we have a good relationship not only with men, but with God. The problem, however, is that God is holy and we are not. Include yourself by using the word “we” when talking about sinful human nature. In a kind and respectful way, continue by saying that the entire world's relationship with God has been broken by sin. But the good news is that God has made peace with mankind and restored the world to himself through Jesus.

If it's difficult to put this into your own words, it can be helpful to read about it from certain parts of the Bible, for example, from Luke's account of the birth of Jesus, noting the reason that Luke gives for Jesus' coming.² The need for a Savior is a delicate subject for us to raise because Islam does not teach it at all. A Christian must not give the impression that only Muslims need a Savior. We are all guilty of sin and deserve to be rejected by God.

But Scripture makes it clear to us and to all people who are troubled by their sin that there is one, and only one, reliable “Way” that leads to God.³ It is faith in Jesus who shed his holy blood to remove the judgment of eternal death that all sinful people deserve and to open the way to eternal life in heaven for everyone who trusts in him, “... we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place [heaven] by the blood of Jesus.”⁴

The forgiveness and purity that Jesus provides⁵ for sinful people is good news. Talk about it with a happy tone in your voice. It reveals the love that is in God's heart, and it is the heart of our message. Share it with respectful, eager confidence as Paul did.

¹ Details of the daily life (sunnah) and teachings of Muhammad are collected in the Hadith, writings that Muslims consider to be sacred and second only to the Qur'an. Muslims believe that Muhammad's life provides examples for them to follow. No part of his life, or of any Muslim's life, is considered to be secular or outside the realm of religion.

² Luke 2:10,11 “...the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.’”

³ “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” (John 14:6)

⁴ Hebrews 10:19

⁵ “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God through him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)



Imitate Paul's Example

Acts 17:16-34

In Athens it was upsetting for Paul to see idols everywhere he looked. But it also spurred him into action. He began to teach anyone who would listen, either in the synagogue or out in the marketplace. Some Greek philosophers who heard him mocked his message, but others were curious. It was something new to them.

¹⁸...because **Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.**

Wanting to learn more, they brought Paul to the Areopagus, the center of debate and decision-making in Athens, and they invited him to speak.

²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “Men of Athens! **I see that in every way you are very religious.** ²³For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: **TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.** Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴“The **God who made the world and everything in it** is the Lord of heaven and earth and **does not live in temples** built by hands. ²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷God did this so that **men would seek him** and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

²⁹“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man’s design and skill. ³⁰In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹For **he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.**”

³²When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, **some of them sneered**, but others said, “We want to **hear you again** on this subject.” ³³At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴A few men became followers of Paul and **believed.** Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

What did Paul do instead of attacking the religions he found in Athens?
(vv.22,23)



How did he use elements in the beliefs of the Athenians as a lead-in to Christ? (vv.24-31)

What was the message that Paul was bringing to the people of Athens?
(v.18)

What mixed reaction did his message receive? (vv.32-34)

There are different ways of spreading the gospel. Some Christians provide prayer support; some let Christian literature do the talking; some are bold to speak themselves. As Christians we shouldn't be afraid or make excuses or do nothing at all. God assures us of his help just as he reassured Moses.

How Easy It Is to Make Excuses

Exodus 3:11-12

¹¹ ...Moses said to God, "**Who am I**, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

¹² And God said, "**I will be with you**. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Exodus 4:10-13

¹⁰ Moses said to the LORD, "**O Lord, I have never been eloquent**, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

¹¹ The LORD said to him, "**Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?**" ¹² Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

¹³ But Moses said, "**O Lord, please send someone else to do it.**"



What three reasons did Moses give for not going to Pharaoh himself?

What can we learn from the promise God gave to Moses?

Jesus promises that he is with us always, and he reminds us that when we bring God's word, we are not transmitting our own ideas. We are bringing what God has said.

If some of us are not comfortable with sharing our faith on a one-to-one basis, there is a solution for that anxiety. Another Christian can go along. Jesus sent out his disciples in pairs. This can be a helpful approach for some of us too.

On occasion, a Muslim who wants to know more about Jesus Christ may approach you. Jesus is a powerful figure who appears on the pages of the Qur'an, so it could happen that a Muslim friend will ask you to share what the Bible says about Jesus.

We shouldn't be nervous. Our motivation for befriending Muslim people is the love that Jesus has for all. Our confidence is that Jesus is Lord of all and nothing is too hard for him to accomplish. As Scripture shows, our Lord is able to bring even people who were enemies to repentance and faith.

Fear of the Enemy and Resentment Can Be Overcome

Jonah 1:1-3

¹ *The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai:* ² *“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”*

³ *But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.*

Jonah 3:1-3,10

¹ *Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time:* ² *“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”*

³ *Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days....*

¹⁰ *When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.*

Jonah 4:1-3

¹ *But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.* ² *He prayed to the LORD, “O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. **I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.*** ³ *Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”*

Nineveh headquartered a militant, heathen nation that terrorized Israel. Why was Jonah unwilling to bring God's word to them?



Similarly, why might someone feel resentful about evangelizing Muslims?

What does God reveal to overcome that hesitation?

God is making us ready to be his witnesses. But where can we find opportunities to befriend Muslims, and share the good news of God's love in providing his Son as Savior? Much depends on where we live. There are Muslim populations in most major cities, with the largest concentrations found in California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Michigan,⁶ but Muslims may be living almost anywhere in the US. They may be friends of our children or grandchildren, or related to our family by marriage.

The fact that many Muslim women wear *hijab* (covering for the hair and/or face) makes it easy to recognize them on the street or in the store. But it's important to note that while Muslim women may carry on a conversation with other women, ordinarily they do not speak with men.⁷

Muslim students can be found on most large university campuses, and this is where Christian young people will meet them almost on a daily basis. Friendships can develop, and as a result a Muslim student may one day be visiting your home.

If you have the opportunity to welcome a Muslim into your home, remember to observe certain courtesies. As mentioned in the video, keep pets outside or out of the living area during that time. Observe a respectful separation of men and women if that's customary for your guest. Be aware of what Muslims mean by *halal* food.⁸ If you have a Bible in view, be sure to treat it with proper respect.⁹ When the opportunity arises, ask your Muslim guest about his or her faith and worship customs, keeping in mind that it may not be possible to initiate very much conversation about religion until after the initial meeting. The depth of that conversation will depend on how long it takes to develop a trusting relationship.

Remember that your most valuable possession is your heavenly Father's promise that your sins are forgiven because of Christ and that he will never leave you or forsake you. This is wealth that you share appropriately when your heart is full of love and respect for the person listening to you.

⁶ The Detroit suburb of Dearborn, Mich., where many Arabs first settled to work in the automobile industry, listed 29,181 Arabs in its population (30% of the total population) in the 2000 census.

⁷ Mixing of genders is considered Haram, disobedience to Islam's established law (shari'a)

⁸ Halal (permitted) meat, like Jewish kosher food, is sold in special markets. To be halal it must come from an animal that has been slaughtered by a Muslim who speaks the name of Allah prior to slitting the animal's throat and draining out the blood.

⁹ Muslims customarily keep their Qur'an on the highest shelf and clean their hands before opening it. They might find it offensive to see a Bible on the floor, or having torn pages, or marked with a pen.



You may know a Christian woman who was attracted to a Muslim man and decided to marry him. Later she found out that he wanted to bring her and their children into Islam. If she complied and renounced the Christian faith, this probably is a matter that you constantly bring to God in prayer. Is there more that you can do? Avoid arguing with her about religion. Stay open, loving, available, helpful. Live your Christian faith.

God encourages all of us as Christians to live our faith. What is more, God provides us with all the qualifications we need to be personal witnesses of the Gospel.

Your Qualifications to Be a Witness

1 Peter 2:9

...you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

What are four phrases that Peter used to describe who we are as Christians?

Because of who we are as Christians, what are we equipped and meant to do?

You may not see the royal robes that God wrapped around you when he placed his name on you in baptism. You may not feel holy or chosen by God to be his witness, but that is what you are, thanks to the life-changing work of Christ your Savior. Now he wants you to watch for the opportunities that he provides for you to serve him. Be ready for them.

How to Be Prepared to Witness

1 Peter 3:15

*...in your hearts **set apart Christ as Lord**. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who **asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have**. But do this with gentleness and respect...*

Romans 5:1-2

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

What position does Jesus have that can make us unafraid to share or defend our faith?



What is the hope that we have (See Romans 5:1-2), and why do we have it?

Peter gave an example of an opportunity to share your faith. What is it?

How does God want us to use an opportunity like that?



Our fear in approaching others will quiet down when we remember the unlimited power of Christ, who is with us and who is Lord of all. Trusting him, we will use the opportunities we have to reach across cultures with the gospel of Christ, motivated by his love for all.¹⁰

At some point in the past, other people crossed cultures in order to bring the gospel to us. Christianity did not originate in America or in Europe. It began with promises God made to Adam and Abraham. At the center of the gospel is a man who was born in a foreign land, a prophet like Moses, a descendant of David, the son of Mary, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Someone brought that astonishing gospel to us. Now it's our privilege to bring it to others. Jesus is sending us to people he loves, people of all languages and cultural backgrounds—including Muslim people. All of them need and many are looking for the hope that we have. Let's share it.

¹⁰ *"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."* (2 Corinthians 5:14,15)



***D*iscussion *P*oints**

What can make us hesitate to share our faith in Jesus?

How does God encourage and enable us?

What pre-evangelism steps can we take to build a relationship of love and trust?

Why is it important to know and respect cultural differences? Can you give examples?

What is the heart of the Christian message?

How would you go about sharing your faith?

Taking the Lesson Home

The purpose of this Bible study is to encourage and equip Christians to befriend Muslims and share Christ's love. This final lesson touches on the fact that sin can get in the way of the Gospel. Sin can undermine the message before it's brought, or it can make the messenger of Christ feel unworthy and unfit. The solution for this is simply to apply the Gospel first of all to the messenger. It changes everything.



Jesus calls and equips us to be his witnesses. How will you respond to his call and his blessing?

Jesus reminds us that the Gospel works at its own pace and with its own power.¹¹ Does he tell us this to give us an excuse for silent inactivity? Explain your answer.

¹¹ Mark 4:26-28 "...A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head."



Prayer

O Lord, give us the courage and patience we need to serve you by showing your love and by sharing the forgiveness you provide through your work as the Savior of all people.

Further Reading



Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims
Pages 161-191 *Witnessing to Muslims*

Lesson Four

Christians show regard for Muslim customs,
As the Apostle Paul adapted to preach Christ.

Christians are open and helpful to Muslims,
As Jesus cared for others during his ministry.

Christians see Muslim misconceptions about
them,
But look for opportunities to talk about Jesus.

Appendix 1: Background Information on Islam

Muhammad and the Qur'an

Islam traces its roots to the prophet Muhammad (a.d. 570-632). Born in Mecca (or Makkah) in southern Saudi Arabia, Muhammad tended sheep and camels as a youth and later became a caravan merchant. Muhammad would go out to a desert cave near Mecca to fast and meditate for days at a time. On one such occasion, he claimed that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and related a message he was to share. The ensuing message rejected the prevalent Arab polytheism (worship of many different gods) and called for the worship of one God, Allah. Those who submitted to Allah became known as Muslims, literally “submitters,” and their religion Islam, “submission.”

In the wake of subsequent persecution, Muhammad and his followers fled to Medina (Yathrib), some 260 miles north of Mecca. The year of this “Migration” (Hijra), a.d. 622, marked the beginning of the Muslim era. Meanwhile, the prophet’s revelations kept coming, spanning a period of 22 years (610-32). These revelations, recited by Muhammad and written down by his followers, make up the chapters, called Suras, of the Muslims’ holy book, the Qur’an (Koran).

While in Medina, Muhammad added the role of secular leader to that of prophet. He led raids on enemy caravans and took part in numerous pitched battles. By the time of his death, he had established himself as master of much of Arabia and unified its many tribes under the banner of Islam.

Muhammad spoke of himself as the last and greatest in a line of prophets that included Moses and Jesus. Tragically, he denied the center of Christian faith, Jesus’ crucifixion for the sins of the world. This is the gospel, the good news that through his death we have forgiveness and life. The Bible asserts, “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!” (Galatians 1:8). Muhammad stands under that condemnation.

Muslims and the West

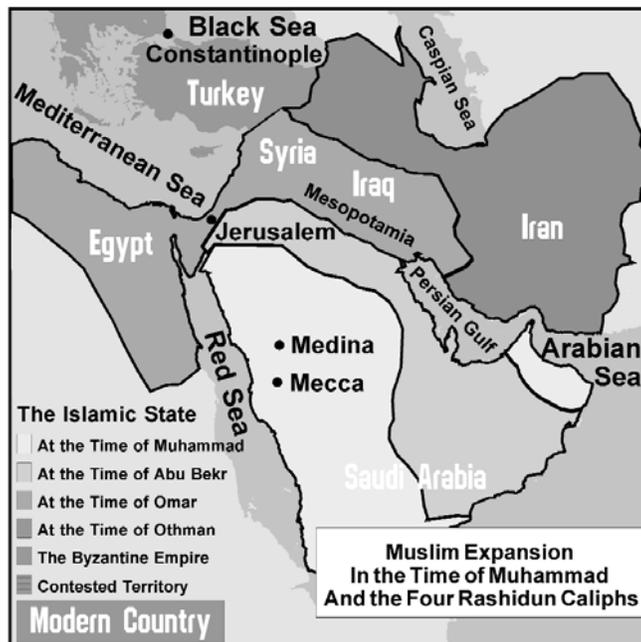
Within a hundred years after the prophet’s death, Muslim armies had subjugated most of the Middle East, conquered North Africa, taken Spain, and penetrated into France, only to be stopped at the battle of Tours in 732. Centuries later, the Crusades (1095-about 1300) attempted through military force to win the Holy Land back from the Muslims. In Martin Luther’s day, the powerful Muslim Turkish armies menaced Europe from the east, besieging the city of Vienna in 1529.

In the late 1600s, however, the Turks suffered several military setbacks, followed by two long centuries of decline. By the end of the 19th century, Turkey was considered the “sick man” of Europe, and other countries eagerly looked forward to taking shares of what had been the Turkish Ottoman Empire. The final blow came when Turkey sided with Germany in World War I . . . and lost. Following the war, the Empire was divided into what is now the Middle East. New borders were drawn, and new countries, such as modern Iraq, were formed.

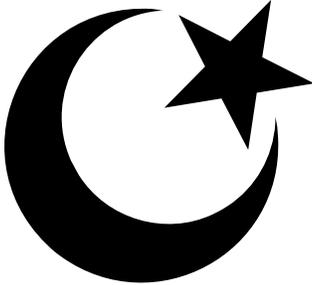


In fact, for a period of some 150 years, from about 1800 to 1950, Muslim lands were dominated by European colonial powers. The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 marked the establishment of a non-Muslim nation in dar al-Islam, the house of Islam. The once glorious Muslim empires seemed little more than desert wastelands, divided by foreigners and unbelievers.

With the drilling of oil in the Middle East, Islamic hope revived. Especially within the last half century, Islam has again become a major force in world affairs. High birth rates and worldwide expansion make Islam the world's fastest growing religion. Many Muslims are willing to lay down their lives to destroy the enemies of Islam.



Appendix 2: How Islam Differs from Christianity



Islam is a monotheistic religion that sees itself as very distant from heathen polytheism. It is, however, a “heathen” religion in that it does not know Christ as the Savior. Islam rejects the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and the gospel of his death as a payment for sin.

Islam is a religion of the Law, very similar in many ways to Pharisaic Judaism. Islam teaches that if Muslims do more good than evil, they can be saved. Its ceremonial laws are a variant of those of Judaism (no pork, no alcohol, etc.).

Its central confession is that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger or prophet. It recognizes Moses, David, and Jesus as preliminary prophets, but Muhammad is believed to be the last and greatest prophet for all people. It emphasizes prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and charity among its religious works.

We must approach Muslims as we would any other people who do not believe in Christ. They need to know their sin and their Savior. Muslims do not recognize their need for a Savior because they do not recognize their sin. They think the only sin that separates from God is the gross sin of unbelievers rather than the sinful nature that all people have inherited from Adam and the sinful thoughts, words, and deeds that everyone commits every day.

Many Muslims have false impressions about Christian beliefs, for example, that Jesus, a man, became God, or even that the Trinity is God, Mary, and Jesus. It is best to approach the doctrine of the Trinity at an appropriate time by quoting from the Bible (e.g. Matthew 28:19), affirming that the Scripture Jesus has given us is the reliable word of God. Similarly, use the Bible to reveal the divine nature of Christ. God's word says that God became man, not that man became God, and that God took on a human nature in order to be our Savior (e.g. John 1:1,14; Galatians 4:4,5).

Some Muslims can be very confrontational and frank when there is an airing of the differences between Christianity and Islam. For that reason, it is best to avoid argumentation and simply share your Christian faith in a calm and friendly way.

Appendix 3: Witnessing Tips

Ten DOs:

Do know what the Bible teaches. Being well grounded in the faith is essential.

Do respect Muslims as people for whom Jesus died. The Bible says that *“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them”* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Do show sincere respect and friendship to Muslims.

Do listen to their real needs. Ask questions.

Do focus the conversation on Jesus Christ after you establish a relationship of trust and friendship. Use the Word of God.

Do give literature about Jesus and the Bible.

Do invite a Muslim friend to a function at church in order to develop friendships with other Christians. When appropriate, offer to take your Muslim friend to a church service.

Do become well informed about Islam. Books about missionaries to Muslims or Muslim converts to Christ are especially inspiring.

Do be available. We may not appreciate what a tremendous step it is for Muslims to convert. Even in North America, they face ostracism from their families, and, especially in the case of Muslims from the Middle East, they live with the fear of physical reprisal and even death.

Do pray that the Muslim heart may be softened for the gospel. “Whatever good may be done is done and brought about by prayer, which is the omnipotent empress,” wrote Luther. “In human affairs we accomplish everything through prayer” (What Luther Says 2:3497).

Ten DON'Ts:



Don't treat the Qur'an disrespectfully. It is one thing to disagree with the teachings of Islam, another to ridicule them.

Don't treat the Bible disrespectfully by placing it on the floor, for example. Above all, don't undermine the Bible by ungodly living. Remember that being a Christian means living by the Word as well as talking about it.

Don't get into a battle of the books,—the Qur'an versus the Bible. Let the Bible speak for itself. The straightforward assertions of the Bible are powerful, and through them the Holy Spirit works.

Don't make assumptions about what the Muslim believes. Ask him or her.

Don't attack the name Allah as a false god. This is a touchy issue, since many Arabic-speaking Christians inaccurately use the name Allah to refer to the God of the Bible. It would only incite anger to point out at the start that some scholars believe the name Allah is related to the pagan moon god of pre-Islamic Arabia.

Don't attack Islam, Muhammad, or the Qur'an. Light candles instead of cursing the darkness. Depending on their relationship to Islam, some Muslims may themselves be critical of the faith and ready to hear the other side.

Don't be insulting. It would be foolish, for example, to invite a practicing Muslim over for a pork dinner and wine, since Islam forbids these foods.

Don't witness alone to a person of the opposite sex.

Don't give up. St. Augustine's mother prayed and witnessed for over a dozen years before her son became a Christian, and he became one of the great theologians of all time.

Don't be afraid. It can be intimidating to share our faith, both for us and the other person(s) involved. But Paul writes, *"...God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline"* (2 Timothy 1:7).

Appendix 4: Taking the Lesson Home

Lesson One

1. Since Islam puts its own slant on some important events recorded in the Bible, what do you need to ask Muslim people in order to better understand their thinking?

Ask them what they have been taught. What do they believe? Some Muslims have very much knowledge of Islam, others are not deeply committed. Show a genuine interest in their faith, fears, and futures.

2. Islam is growing rapidly through expansion efforts that are fueled by oil revenue, the dedication of its followers, and its goal to dominate the world. What greater goal, power, and motivation does Jesus give to Christians?

Our goal is to bring the gospel of Christ to all people. Christ's love is our motivation. It is his power that brings people to faith as they hear the word of God.

Lesson Two

1. Biblical topics like the Trinity or the crucifixion of Christ and any symbols referring to them can spark negative responses from any Muslims who have been trained to reject them. But Christian love is a gift they welcome. How can you show Christian love to a Muslim acquaintance?

Become a friend. Be humble, helpful, kind, patient, not argumentative, courteous, generous.

2. Islam denies the Trinity and considers the cross to be offensive to Islam. This makes it highly unlikely that a Muslim would visit a worship service in a Christian church. How can you bring the church to a Muslim?

By praying for him or her and by providing the Bible's answers to spiritual questions the Muslim may ask.

Lesson Three



1. In view of the uncertainty that Muslims have about their eternal future, what fruit of faith do you want to show, especially to a Muslim, whenever a Christian dies?

Talk about the certainty of life in heaven that Jesus has earned for all and that he gives to all who trust in him.

2. When a Muslim person asks you about your remarkable confidence, what does the Apostle Peter encourage you to share?

Share the reason for your confidence – Jesus has paid for all your sin, provided the gift of holiness, and prepared for you a place in heaven.

Lesson Four

1. Jesus calls and equips us to be his witnesses. How will you respond to his call and his blessing?

Answers may vary.

2. Jesus reminds us that the Gospel works at its own pace and with its own power. Does he tell us this to give us an excuse for silent inactivity? Explain your answer.

He wants to encourage prayerful, patient, caring witness.



Developed by the
Outreach to Muslims Committee
to be used with the DVD
Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims

Islam and the world view of Muslims are powerful forces in the world today. They are frequently in the news, and the coverage is often alarming. What effect does this have on Christians?

Anything poorly or wrongly understood can generate negative emotions or fear that discourages contact with Muslim people.

Scripture, however, gives Christ's Church an uncommon attitude and aim. Jesus includes everyone in the scope of the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:19.

Men and women who are convinced of this can overcome the challenges raised by their fears and begin to build positive relationships with Muslims.

This Bible study and video are intended to introduce Christians to key aspects of Islam and Muslim life in order to help us speak the truth in love to Muslims.

**A Bible Study for Christians -
Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims
Participant Guide
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