

MODULE M – REACHING MUSLIMS

FACILITATOR’S MANUAL

In this six-session module, you will learn about Islam, including its origins, the Muslim lifestyle, and the five pillars. You’ll learn what Muslims believe about the Bible and how they view God. The last two sessions provide various methods for sharing the gospel with Muslims. The successful planting of churches among Muslims requires knowledge and patience. This module is designed to empower you so you can effectively share the love of God with your Muslim friends and neighbors who make up about 1/3 of the world’s population.



INTRODUCTION TO MODULE M FOR FACILITATORS

This specific module has been developed for those who find themselves planting a church among Muslims. The six sessions are:

- 1) Introduction to Islam
- 2) Muslim Social Customs and Lifestyle
- 3) Muslim Views of Christian Teachings
- 4) Three Worldviews
- 5) Evangelism Tools I
- 6) Evangelism Tools II

Each session consists of: a devotional, an initial prayer, learning objectives, information, questions, action plans, and a closing. As the facilitator, you have the option of modifying the session as you see fit. The action plans are meant to be accomplished between sessions if the module is taught over a period of weeks. Otherwise, if the module is taught in one sitting, then the action plans can be put into practice after completion of the six sessions.

The participant manual is a modified version of your facilitator manual. Where you have bolded and underlined words, their manual will have a blank. The answers are at the bottom of the page in both the participant and the facilitator manual. *Italicized text* is suggested instructions or questions for the participants. As a facilitator you may give the instructions and ask the questions.

We have taken out time frames for the module as each session will vary depending on the amount of included content used and the experience of the participants.

We have included an appendix that includes 10 Bible study lessons that can be used with Muslims or BMBs (Believers of Muslim Background) that take into account the worldviews of those we intent on reaching (see Session 3 for more on worldviews).

Any suggestions for improvement of the pedagogy or of the material would be appreciated.

Multiplication Network Ministries
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SUGGESTED 1-DAY FORMAT FOR MODULE M TRAINING	
SESSION ONE	INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM
	BREAK
SESSION TWO	MUSLIM SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND LIFESTYLE
SESSION THREE	MUSLIM VIEWS OF CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS
	LUNCH
SESSION FOUR	THREE WORLDVIEWS
SESSION FIVE	EVANGELISM TOOLS I
	BREAK
SESSION SIX	EVANGELISM TOOLS II
	CLOSING
	END OF DAY

SESSION ONE

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

DEVOTIONAL: A JUST GOD

Facilitator Instructions: *Divide participants into groups of three or four people. Read the Scripture passage below and then give the groups 5 minutes to answer the assigned questions.*

Group One: questions 1 & 2

Group Two: questions 3 & 4

Group Three: questions 5 & 6

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. (NASB)

Questions

1. What will God do to those who afflict those who believe in the gospel?
2. What will God do for those who are afflicted?
3. Who will be revealed in heaven with his mighty angels?
4. What will Jesus be dealing out to those who do not know God and obey the gospel?
5. What penalty will those who do not obey the gospel pay?
6. Where will the penalty be paid?

What do the participants think about Muslims and their future according to the scripture you read?

Prayer

Pray, giving thanks to God for His mercy in Jesus Christ and for the opportunity to gather and prepare to serve Him. Intercede on behalf of Muslims, asking for God's mercy and grace for them. Ask God to bless the leader(s) and participants as they work through this session, asking for God to bless your learning.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to define key words in Islam.
- Participants will be able to identify and list the major different Islamic groupings and their dominant jurisdictions.
- Participants will know what constitutes apostasy in Islam.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

Define Islam in your own words. Underline what is new information in the material below as you read together.

Islam is the name of the religion that came out of the teachings of Muhammad. It is believed that Islam originally meant “defiance of death” (for the sake of God and his prophet). Islam is one of the four largest religions in the world, along with Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism.

Definitions

There are some terms you need to know if you wish to understand Islam. Below we give some basic terms and a definition or description of the terms.

- **Muslim** is the name given to a person who adheres to the religion of Islam. Muslim means “one who submits to the will of Allah as revealed by Muhammad.”
- **Shahada**¹ is the confession that “there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet (or messenger) of Allah.” All one needs to become a Muslim is to confess the Shahada before three witnesses. To denounce the Shahada before three witnesses is to become an apostate.
- **Allah** is the Arabic name for God and cannot be translated easily into English. The word precedes the founding of Islam.
- **Muhammad**² is the prophet of Islam. His name means “the praised one.” Muhammad was born in the city of Mecca in A.D. 570 and died in A.D. 632. He claimed that he was the prophet to restore true religion and the praise of Allah throughout the world, just as Jesus Christ was a prophet in His time for His people.
- **Quran** (also spelled *Koran* or *Qur’an*) is Arabic for “the recitation” and refers to the collection of revelations supposedly given by Allah through the archangel Gabriel to Muhammad and preserved as the Islamic scripture. The Quran contains 114 chapters or

¹ It is important to note that Arabic words often have more than one spelling.

² There are various spellings for the name Muhammad, such as Mohamed.

suras. The shortest revelations appear first, the longest ones last. There is no chronological arrangement in the Quran.

- **Hadith**, or “collected traditions,” is also important in Islamic literature. These are the supposed words of Muhammad and are the customs that provide source material for the complicated political and social structure of Islam.
- **Caliph** is Arabic for “deputy” and refers to the main leaders of Islam, especially the immediate successors of Muhammad.
- **Ayatollah** refers to a spiritual master or leader in Shiite Islam, considered “the sign of Allah” or “assigned by Allah.”
- **Imam** is the name for the spiritual leader of a Muslim congregation.
- **Ummah** refers to the community of believers. All Muslims belong to the ummah. Their actions are defined on what brings honor to the community and what actions to avoid that would bring shame to the community. There is little room for individual thought or action without considering its effect on the community.
- **Sharia** refers to the laws that were established that govern all of a Muslim’s life. This will be explained in greater detail later.

We often look at Islam as a monolithic religion, meaning that everyone believes the same things and has the same practices. What we will see in this session is that Islam is not as united in doctrine or as uniform in practice as is often believed. In fact, Abu Dawood, in his book Sunan Kitaab al-Sunnah, Baab Sharh al-Sunnah, said that Muhammad prophesied, “My ummah [community] will be divided into seventy-three sects.”

Muhammad feared what would happen after his death. Do you know if this fear came true? Name the various divisions in Islam that you are familiar with.

DIVISIONS AND SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT IN ISLAM

Introduction

The Islamic religion was founded by Muhammad in the seventh century. In A.D. 622 he founded the first Islamic state, a theocracy, in Medina, a city in western Saudi Arabia north of Mecca. After Muhammad died in A.D. 632, his followers could not agree on whether to choose bloodline successors or leaders most likely to follow the tenets of the faith. The group now known as the Sunnis chose Abu Bakr, the prophet’s advisor, to become the first successor, or *caliph*, to lead the Muslim state. Shiites favored Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law. Ali and his successors are called *imams*, who not only lead the Shiites but are considered to be descendants of Muhammad. After the 11th imam died in A.D. 874 and his young son was said to

have disappeared from the funeral, Shiites in particular came to see this child as a messiah who had been hidden from the public by God and who one day would reappear as the *Mahdi*. This “12th imam” plays a very important role in Shiite eschatology (the doctrine of the Last Days). “The Twelvers” in Islam are Ali and then other successors to Ali.

In A.D. 656, Ali’s supporters killed the third caliph. Soon after, the Sunnis killed Ali’s son Hussein. Fighting continued, but the Sunnis emerged victorious over the Shiites and came to revere the caliphate for its strength and piety. Afterward, other groups also sprang up. Below are the major divisions of Islam at present.

Do you know of some countries that are predominantly Sunni?

What countries are predominantly Shiite?

How has this difference shown itself in regional wars?

A. Sunni Islam

Sunni is the largest denomination of Islam and is known as *Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’h*, or simply *Ahl as-Sunnah*. The word Sunni comes from *Sunnah*, which means “the teachings and actions or examples of the prophet Muhammad.”

The Sunnis believe that Muhammad did not specifically appoint a successor to lead the *ummah* before his death. A group of his most prominent companions gathered and elected Abu Bakr Siddique, Muhammad's close friend and a father-in-law, as the first caliph of Islam. Sunni Muslims regard the first four caliphs (Abu Bakr, `Umar ibn al-Khattāb, Uthman ibn Affan, and Ali ibn Abu Talib) as *al-Khulafā’ur-Rāshidūn* or “the rightly guided caliphs.”

Approximately 90% of the Muslims in the Middle East are Sunnis (90% of Egyptian Muslims, 90% of Jordanian Muslims, 90% of Saudi Arabian Muslims, and 98% of Libyan Muslims). Basically only 10% of Muslims are Shiites.

Movements within Sunni Islam

1. Wahhabism/Salafism

Wahhabism or Wahhabi is a religious **movement** or branch of Sunni Islam. Critics say that Wahhabism's strictness led it to misinterpret and distort Islam, paving the way for extremists such as Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network and the Taliban. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) also draws on Wahhabism for its ideology. It has been described by scholars as fundamentalist and puritanical, calling for a literal interpretation of the Quran. It has also been described as an Islamic reform movement to restore pure monotheistic worship (*tawhid*). Opponents describe it as an extremist

pseudo-Sunni movement. Opponents describe it as an extremist pseudo-Sunni movement, a form of Salafism.

2. Sufism

Sufism is predominantly a mystical-ascetic form of Sunni Islam. It is not a sect; rather, it is a **branch** of Islamic teaching that deals with the purification of the inner self. By focusing on the more spiritual aspects of religion, Sufis strive to obtain a direct experience of God by making use of their intuitions and emotions. A well-known Sufi sect is the “whirling dervishes” of Turkey and India. To see a video of the whirling dervishes, visit <https://vimeo.com/MultiplicationNetwork/WhirlingDervishesHD>.

3. Muslim Brotherhood

The *Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimun*, or Muslim Brotherhood, is an organization that was founded by Egyptian scholar Hassan al-Banna, a graduate of Dar al-Ulum. With its various branches, it is the **largest** Sunni movement in the Arab world, and often the largest opposition party in many Arab nations. The Muslim Brotherhood is not concerned with theological differences, accepting Muslims of any of the four Sunni schools of thought, although a part of Wahabism. It is the world's oldest and largest Islamist group. Its aims are to re-establish the caliphate and in the meantime, push for more Islamization of society. The Brotherhood's stated goal is to instill the Quran and *Sunna* as the “sole reference point for...ordering the life of the Muslim family, individual, community...and state.”

The brotherhood, due to its extremism, was banned in Egypt in 1948, 1954 and again in 1965. With the “Arab spring,” the Brotherhood was legalized in 2011. It claims to be non-violent, but its followers in Egypt on three different occasions attempted to overthrow the government. Worldwide, the Brotherhood wants to see a unified Islamic state.

Have you heard of the Muslim brotherhood? What have you heard?

B. Shiite³ Islam

Shiites comprise the second-largest denomination of Islam, approximately 10-20% of the world Muslim population. They believe that Muhammad’s family, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (the “people of the house”), including his descendants the imams, have special spiritual and political rule over the community. They also believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, was the first of these imams and was the rightful successor to Muhammad. Shiites reject the legitimacy of the first three Rashidun caliphs. The name

³ Also spelled Shi’ite.

Shiite is a corruption of *Shi'at Ali* ("partisans of Ali") and refers to the fact that they rejected all subsequent caliphs who were not descendants of Ali.

Shiites also believe that the 12 imams, or spiritual heads, claimed Ali as their ancestor. Most of these imams were killed except the final one, Muhammad, who disappeared as a child in A.D. 878. Shiites believe that eventually he will miraculously return to his people as the *Mahdi*, similar to the Christian Messiah. He is the "hidden imam" who will bring about a golden age before the end of the world, and only he has the right to declare jihad.

95% of Iran's Muslims are Shiite, and today Iran is a Shiite Islamic republic. Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, and Yemen also have large numbers of Shiites.

How has this concept of the "12th imam" influenced Iran's leadership and its view of the West?

C. Others

Suffice it to say that there are other expressions of Islam in the world today, like the **Kharijites** (literally "those who went out"), a general term describing Muslims who initially supported the authority of Ali ibn Abi Talib and then later rejected his leadership. Their name comes from the fact that they left or "seceded" from Ali's army. They rejected Ali ibn Abi Talib because, according to them, Ali committed a grave sin when he agreed to arbitration with Mu'āwiyah in the Battle of Siffin to stop the fighting and resort to negotiation. For the most part, the Islamic world is divided between the two previously mentioned expressions, Sunni and Shiite.

D. Bahai (Bahá'í)

We treat the **Bahai** faith separately as it has been considered from early on as a heresy rather than as a major branch of Islam. It was founded by Bahá'u'lláh in 19th-century Persia. We mention it because Bahaism is prevalent in many parts of the world, especially in the United States of America.

Bahá'ís hold the following beliefs:

- The **unity** of God: There is only one God who is the source of all creation, and all major religions have the same spiritual source and come from the same God.
- The unity of humanity: All human beings have been created equal.
- The unity of diversity: All races and cultures are seen as worthy of appreciation and acceptance.

It is believed that there are more than 5 million Bahais around the world, in more than 200 countries and territories.

Would some people find Bahaism to be a comfortable religion? Why or why not?

From what you have heard or know about Bahai, why would Muslims reject the teachings of this sect?

Differences Between Sunnis and Shiites

Topic	Sunnis	Shiites
Leadership	Sunnis accept Ali as the fourth “rightly guided caliph” along with the other three caliphs who were elected by their community before Ali.	Shiites believes that the imamate was the right of Ali, and the rule of the first three Rashidun caliphs was unlawful.
Authority/ Infallibility	Sunnis believe that there is no basis in Islam for a hereditary privileged class of spiritual leaders, and certainly no basis for the veneration or intercession of saints. They also believe leadership of the imam is not a birthright, but a trust that is earned and could be taken away by the people themselves.	Shiites believe that the imam is sinless by nature and that his authority is infallible, as it comes directly from God. They often venerate the imams as saints and perform pilgrimages to their tombs and shrines in the hopes of divine intercession.
Traditions (<i>hadith</i>)	Sunnis follow the <i>hadith</i> and accept them as valid as the Quran.	Shiites reject the traditions (<i>hadith</i>) that were not based on Mohammed and his family. The only “inspired” <i>hadiths</i> are the ones that originated with Muhammad and his family.
Messiah (<i>Mahdi</i>) UNITY	Sunnis believe that the Mahdi is yet to emerge into history. They also believe the Mahdi is an ideal ruler, but not necessarily in the line of 'Ali. This is part of Islamic eschatology.	Shiites believe the Mahdi has already been here, disappeared about A.D. 874, and will one day return from hiding.

Having studied the two major divisions of Islam (Sunni and Shiite) and several other Islamic movements, do you think it is fair to conclude that Islam is not a monolithic religion? Why or why not?

APOSTASY

Apostasy is the act of **leaving** Islam or **converting** to another religion or becoming an atheist. Apostasy is considered a heinous crime because it is an affront to Allah and to the *ummah*. As *shirk*, it means worshipping something or someone other than Allah, or making others equal with God. This is why it is an act or belief punishable by death. The Christian understanding of the Trinity (3 Persons in one Godhead) is misinterpreted by Muslims to be three separate Gods, and therefore is considered *shirk*.

Have you ever seen or heard how an apostate was dealt with in Islam?

If so, how did you feel about this?

In both Sunni and Shiite Islam, a male apostate must be put to **death** if he does not repent and return to Islam. In Sunni law, a female apostate must be imprisoned in solitary confinement and punished until she reverts to Islam. According to *Sharia* law, apostates should be killed. Some versions of *Sharia* law only demand death for male apostates, allowing imprisonment and punishment for women.

Aside from apostasy being a religious crime, it also has civil implications. For example:

- The property of the apostate is seized and distributed to his or her Muslim relatives.
- His or her marriage is annulled (*faskh*).
- Any children of the apostate are removed and considered wards of the Islamic state. If the entire family has left Islam, or if there are no surviving Muslim relatives recognized by *Sharia*, the apostate's property is liquidated by the Islamic state.
- A woman apostate loses all inheritance rights.

Blasphemy may be considered a form of apostasy and may trigger a violent reaction from believing Muslims. Negative comments (oral or written) about Muhammad are considered a form of blasphemy. Even drawings of Muhammad are considered blasphemy. In some countries, eating during the day in public during Ramadan is seen as blasphemy and requires some form of punishment, such as imprisonment or caning as in Morocco.

Ask participants the following questions:

What are some examples of apostasy or blasphemy that you have either experienced or heard of recently?

What does this say to you about the high price that converts to Christianity face when leaving Islam?

How should the church respond to those who become followers of Jesus?

Find some commonality that can serve as bridges to Christianity.

ACTION PLAN

Select one or more of these follow-up activities to do before the next lesson or plan the actions you will take before the next session to apply the material to your situation. Below is a list of possible action plan activities:

- Reread this manual and select 8-10 terms to teach or explain to someone in your church.
- Context investigation: find out which Muslim groups are most prevalent in the area and country where you live. Reread the sections of this manual that talk about those groups and identify things that are important to keep in mind as you share the gospel with people from these groups.
- Pray for Muslims throughout the world and your location in particular.
- Talk with a Christian who has converted from Islam and ask him or her to share how he or she became a Christian.

Have the participants share their action plans.

CLOSING

Share one term or idea from this session that was new to you.

PRAYER

Close in prayer, giving thanks to God for how the gospel has worked in your lives and for the people who have shared the gospel with you. Pray that the gospel may be proclaimed faithfully in your communities and throughout the world and that Christians may be strengthened to remain faithful when they are persecuted for the sake of the gospel. Ask God to give you opportunities to share the gospel with people in the coming week.

SESSION TWO

MUSLIM SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND LIFESTYLE

DEVOTIONAL: GOD'S MIGHTY WEAPONS

Facilitator Instructions: *After opening prayer, read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.*

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

We are human, but we don't wage war with human plans and methods. We use God's mighty weapons, not mere worldly weapons, to knock down the Devil's strongholds. With these weapons, we break down every proud argument that keeps people from knowing God. With these weapons, we conquer their rebellious ideas, and we teach them to obey Christ.
(NLT)

Questions:

1. What are God's mighty weapons mentioned in this passage?
2. Against whom are we to use these weapons?
3. How can these weapons break down every proud argument?
4. How do you relate this passage with conversations with Muslims?

Divide into three groups. Take five minutes to do the following:

Group 1: Reflect on and identify what "God's mighty weapons" are.

Group 2: Come up with an explanation of what the "Devil's strongholds" are.

Group 3: Reflect on and give examples of "proud arguments that keep people from knowing God."

After the five minutes are up, have each group briefly share their ideas with the whole group.

Then ask for a volunteer to pray, thanking God for this opportunity for fellowship and committing this session into the hands of God.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to identify the five pillars of Islam and three views of Islamic (Sharia) law.
- Participants will understand Islam as an all-encompassing religion.
- Participants will know the key Muslim practices related to marriage and eating.
- Participants will know the main holy days of Islam.
- Participants will understand the importance of honor and jihad for Muslims.

INTRODUCTION

Most of us have a parent, a brother, a sister, a friend, a colleague, or a neighbor who is a Muslim. This is another reason for us to learn more about them in order to share our faith with them. Let's therefore discover a few things about this unique group of people.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

All Muslims are expected to do good works. The notion of scale is also introduced in Suras 101:5-6; 42:7. According to that doctrine, a Muslim will go to hell if his evil works outweigh his good ones. He will go to heaven when his good works outweigh the evil ones (ultimately the decision is believed to be Allah's). Often Muslims view access into heaven as a result of complying with what we know as the five pillars of Islam. Recognize that since there is no division between sacred and secular, religion and lifestyle, the five pillars reflect one's conduct socially and as members of the Muslim community.

The five pillars are described below:

1. The *Shahada*

The declaration of faith of the Muslims is called *Shahada*. This word simply means "to **affirm**." Muslims should regularly affirm or say what they believe in. Here is what they should say in Arabic: "I affirm there is no other God than Allah and Muhammad is the Apostle⁴ of God."

Muslims believe that in order to become a Muslim, one only needs to repeat this declaration of faith three times in front of three witnesses.

Some would say Mohammad's monotheism came about due to his encounter of Jews and Christians on the trade routes. What does Deuteronomy 6:4 say?

2. The *Salat* (Prayer)

Muslims perform many rituals before and during prayers: washing certain parts of their body, such as hands, face, teeth, mouth, beard, feet, and toes. They are even supposed to clean their nostrils because they believe that the devil comes and dwells in their nose during their sleep. They believe their prayers will not be counted as good works when these washings are not done. Rather than the intention of the heart, it is the rituals associated with the prayers (for example, the posture for prayer as explained below or the washings) that make the prayer "effective" or not.

Prayer Rituals

⁴ Sometimes the word "Prophet" or "Messenger" is substituted for "Apostle."

Muslims must turn toward Mecca whenever they pray. They must also touch the ground with their head⁵ and quote some prayers in Arabic. A great number of people across the world do not speak Arabic, yet they must say their prayers in that language.

Muslims must pray **five** times a day (unless they are Shiites who pray three times a day): at daybreak, in the afternoon, in the evening, at sunset, and after sunset. Friday is the holy day for Muslims.

Muslims use loud-speakers so that the call to prayer can be heard a long distance away. They consider wherever the call is heard to be Islamic territory.

The call to prayer consists of the following words: “Allah is great. I confess that there is no other God than Allah and Muhammad is his Apostle. Come to prayer, come to victory.” For the morning prayer, the following words are added to the call: “Prayer is better than sleep.”

It should be noted that Muslims often add their own personal prayers after completing the required words. They are not always merely rote prayers, but sometimes very personal prayers as well.

Compare this to Daniel’s prayers in the Old Testament.

How did Jesus teach his disciples to pray, according to Matthew 6:5, 6?

What can we learn from the Lord’s prayer in Matthew 6:9?

3. Ramadan (Month of Fast)

Fasting plays a very important role in Islam. Muslims fast during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Ramadan starts immediately after the new moon appears and ends at the next new moon a month later.

The month of Ramadan is to some extent the holiest of all festivals. It is during this month that Muhammad received his first visions. It is also an occasion for Muslims to renew their faith (rededicate themselves). Muslims fast during Ramadan in remembrance of the first supposed appearing of the angel Gabriel to Muhammad.

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, or having sexual intercourse from sunrise to sunset. It is not acceptable to stop one’s fast willingly during Ramadan. Beside the fear of going to hell, those who interrupt their fast

⁵ Sunnis touch the ground with their foreheads while Shiites touch a stone on the ground.

are often severely punished or shamed by fellow Muslims. Ramadan occurs every year on a different day of the Christian calendar. This results from the difference between the Muslim calendar (lunar) and the Christian calendar (solar).

What did Jesus say about fasting? When should it be done and how? Find some Scriptures that discuss fasting.

Both Christians and Muslims fast. What are some key differences in the concept of fasting or methods of fasting that you have observed?

4. The Zakat (Giving)

Muslims believe that if they give money to support Islam and help Muslims facing poverty, they are more likely to go to heaven. The Sunni Muslims must give 2.5% of their income and can willingly give additional gifts. Giving is a question of gaining more weight on the positive side of the scale in hopes that in the end of one's life Allah will be merciful.

What do Matthew 5:42 and Mark 5:43 say about the way we give?

According to 1 Corinthians 13:3 and 2 Corinthians 9:7, what should our attitude be in our giving? Is it to merit God's favor?

5. Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca)

All Muslims should go to Mecca at least once in their lifetime provided they can afford it. Muslims who are sick or physically unable to go are exempted from this journey but can also pay someone to go in their place. This pilgrimage takes place during the 12th month of the Muslim calendar. Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia, are considered to be the holy cities for Muslims. In Mecca, there is a structure in the form of a cube called *Kaaba* around which pilgrims should go seven times. This pilgrimage requires other acts of faith while in Mecca, but this is the predominant one.

THREE VIEWS OF ISLAMIC (SHARIA) LAW

Islam is more than just a religion. It is also a legal system whose law bears the name of *Sharia*. These laws are drawn from the Quran and the *Hadiths* (other books that help interpret the Quran). The *Sharia* tells Muslims what is allowed (*halal*) and what is forbidden (*haram*). All aspects of the life of a Muslim are affected by *Sharia*: food, marriage, the way to deal with women, education, business, medicine, inheritance, war, and religious practices. For 12 centuries, the *Sharia* has remained the same and is very demanding compared to modern norms. Many people say that it goes against freedom of religion and the fundamental liberties. For example, according to *Sharia* law, if one commits adultery, that person should be sentenced to death. Those who convert from Islam to other religions are considered apostates and should

be put to death. Someone who is found guilty of stealing should have his hand cut off and he who is found drinking alcohol should be whipped.

There are three views of *Sharia*: the fundamentalist view, the liberal view, and the modernist view.

- The fundamentalists live separately and endeavor to do their best to abide by the Islamic rules. They avoid, as much as they can, contact with the western world. This type of Islam is also called radical.
- The liberals consider that in a non-Muslim country *Sharia* can only be practiced in a limited way. Therefore, they freely choose which laws they will abide by and which they will ignore in light of the context in which they live.
- The modernists attempt to find another interpretation of *Sharia*, adapting the law according to the era, without putting into question the validity of the Quran and of the *Sunna*.

Today in several countries, there are some Christians who coexist as minorities with millions of Muslims and where Sharia is applied. How might those Christians live out their faith? Can you imagine yourself living in such an environment?

In some countries where Muslims are in the minority, they still insist on being governed by Sharia. How should a government respond to this?

In your context, how should Christians view and respond to Sharia law?

ISLAM: AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING RELIGION

Islam borrowed much of its teachings from Judaism and Christianity. As we can see, there are many similarities when it comes to prayer, fasting, as well as a believer's declaration as recorded in Deuteronomy 6:4. There are also major differences when it comes to attitude. Both Judaism and Christianity, like Islam, are all-encompassing religions in the sense that what we believe about God should influence how we behave, how we live our daily lives. This may be truer for Muslims than for Jews and Christians because of a sense of obligation in order to win God's favor (or a fear of God's disfavor). Jews and Christians usually respond out of gratitude to a loving, caring God.

We sometimes call this concept a *worldview*. Our view of the world, the lenses through which we see the world around us, influences how we act, what we say, what we are willing to die for.

How does your faith in Jesus influence how you vote? How you socialize? Your views on education?

MODERNIST

To what extent do you “wear your religion on your sleeve?” Do people know you are a Christian and that your faith influences every aspect of your life, as Islam does for a Muslim?

How can this understanding be used as a bridge for conversing with a Muslim?

Muslims also have a **fatalistic** view of life. They generally do not believe they control their lives. They fear death, evil spirits, shame, hell, curses, and scourge. They believe that their fate is controlled by a capricious Allah.

Exodus 34:6-7 says:

*The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out,
“Yahweh! The Lord!
The God of compassion and mercy!
I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.
I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations.
I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin.
But I do not excuse the guilty.
I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren;
the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.” (NLT)*

How does Muslim fatalism differ from the biblical view of God expressed in Exodus 34?

MARRIAGE AND EATING

1. Marriage

- Islam considers a minimum age of marriage to be after puberty.
- Sunni law permits a man and a woman, after puberty, to marry without getting permission from a *wali* (guardian). However, the law grants a guardian (father, brother, other male authority) the right to arrange and give away in marriage a minor girl before puberty, without her consent.
- A married Muslim woman can ask a *Sharia* court to annul the marriage on the grounds that her husband is impotent and unable to consummate the marriage, or that her husband is missing and presumed dead for the period of four years.
- Her guardian has the right to arrange and compel a girl’s marriage, if she is a virgin minor, a minor who is a divorcee or widow, or a girl/woman who is declared to be of unsound mind. Unlike females, male Muslims must consent and cannot be forced to marry. Males may marry up to four women as long as they are theoretically able to treat each one equally.
- **Mahr** (dowry, bride price) is a religious requirement for a legal marriage. However, it can be a promise of cash or property and is treated as debt. Half of the *mahr* must be paid at or after the marriage, but before the consummation of a valid marriage.

- A valid marriage under Islam requires two reliable witnesses, both of whom must be Muslim men or one of whom is a Muslim male and two are Muslim women (women's evidence is considered half as reliable as the testimony of a man's).
- If divorce occurs, the divorced wife loses her right to the dowry property (bride-price) in *khula* and *mubaraa* forms of marriage. Thus, a divorced wife has no rights in the wealth her husband gained during their marriage.
- Islam considers a child born within two years of a husband's death or woman's divorce, as legitimate and from her dead or previous husband.
- Islam permits a man to divorce his wife, but a wife is not allowed to initiate divorce.
- A female has the right to only 50% of an inheritance under Islamic code while males may receive 100%. Women are considered only half a man.

What are the key differences between a Muslim and Christian marriage in your context?

What key ideas about God are embodied in Christian marriage? (For example: Christ's love for the Church, Christ's self-sacrificing love, God's faithfulness to His people.)

What ideas about God and people are communicated by marriage in Islam?

Do you know someone who has been denied of his wife, children, or/and possessions because of his faith in Isa (Jesus)? What do you think would be your reaction if such a thing should happen to you?

Situations to role-play:

1. In 1 Timothy 3:2, Paul tells Timothy that church leaders should have "but one wife." However, some Christians today get married to more than one wife arguing that even Moses, Jacob, and David took several wives. Imagine you are speaking with a Christian who approves of a person having more than one wife. How would you convince him that a man should have just one wife?
2. What advice would you give a follower of Isa who is considering divorcing his wife because of the following challenges?

 bareness (sickness)
 adultery
 witchcraft
 refusal to embrace his faith
 disdaining or ill-treating him because of his faith.
3. If a polygamous person who has recently decided to follow Isa comes to you and said he is considering keeping his first wife and divorce the rest, what would you advise him and why?

How do these situations prepare you for conversations with your Muslim friend or acquaintance?

2. Eating Habits

Muslims do not have permission to eat certain food such as pork or to drink alcohol. According to Islam, every animal that is slaughtered by butchers should be prepared in a specific way and an Islamic prayer is said when the animal is being killed. The foods that Muslims are prohibited to eat are called *haram* and those they are allowed to eat ***halal*** (similar to Jewish *kosher*).

There are three categories of prohibited foods:

1. Those foods or drinks that cause the person to hallucinate or lose his senses such as wine and any drink containing alcohol and drugs like marijuana and the like.
2. The blood and meat of any animal that has not been slaughtered according to the ritual formula *Bismallah*. Also, pork is strictly prohibited.
3. Toxic or outdated foods.

*Have you seen stores that have the **halal** sign in the window or **kosher** icon on food packages?*

Divide into four groups. Read the Bible text assigned to your group and explain how it addresses the issue of regulations about food:

Group 1: Colossians 2:16, 20-23

Group 2: 1 Corinthians 8:4, 8-9

Group 3: 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

Group 4: Acts 10:9-15

*How are the **halal** rules similar to Jewish **kosher** rules? How are they different?*

*If you are living in a predominantly Muslim environment, how do you deal with the practices related to both **halal** and **haram** food?*

HOLY DAYS

Based on the moon, the Muslim calendar started back in 622 AD. The year is made up of 354 days and twelve months (Muharram, Safar, Rabia al-Awwal, Rabia Al-Thani, Jomada al-Awwal, Jomada al-Thani, Rajab, Chaaban, Ramadan, Chawwal, Dhou al-Qi'da, Dou al-Hijja).

Below are the key dates of Muslim festivals:

Muharram 1st – New Year | celebration of Hijra

Muharram 10 – Achoura | the Shiites mourn the martyrdom of Imam Hussein

Rabia al-Awwal – Maulidin Nabi | Muhammad’s anniversary

Rajab 27 – Lailat al-Miradj | celebration of Muhammad ascension

Ramadan 1st – Beginning of their fast, which lasts the whole month

Ramadan 27 – Lailat al-Qadr | Night of destiny

Chawwal 1st – End of Aid-el-Fitr | Ramadan fast. See note below.

Dhou al-Hijja – Aid-al-Adha | Abraham’s sacrifice. This is the most important celebration for Muslims. It comes up at the very end of pilgrimage and at this occasion families will kill a ram in imitation of Abraham when he was to sacrifice his son.

Given that Aid-el-Adah is the most important feast of Muslims and an occasion when Muslims across the world kill animals and offer them in sacrifice in imitation of Abraham, how would you explain the biblical meaning of the sacrifice of Abraham to a Muslim?

What difference(s) do you see between the Quranic version and the biblical narrative of the account of Abraham being told to sacrifice his son?

How can the story of Abraham and his son be used as a bridge for sharing the news about the sacrifice of Jesus, the Paschal (Passover) lamb?

HONOR AND JIHAD

1. Honor

One of the most important values of Muslim culture is **honor**. Honor is based on the way others see you, not necessarily on what you really are. Muslims believe that honor, dignity and reputation are the things that matter most in life. This maintains harmony within the ummah. Honor is sometimes considered more important than logic, facts, and even life itself.

Many Muslims believe that if honor is lost, one must **avenge** the loss at all cost, otherwise the person will remain dishonored forever.

A family's honor is very much based on the behavior of its women, who are obliged to dress and behave modestly. This is the reason women are strictly controlled by men. Every disobedience must be punished in order to save the family's honor. Immodest dress brings shame on the family and gives other males “the right” to take advantage of the woman.

A woman who is found alone with a male who is not a relative is also a cause for shame and dishonor, and may result in death in some Islamic cultures.

Likewise, if a member of the family converts from Islam to Christianity (or any other religion), this, too, brings shame on the family. This is considered as a betrayal of the *ummah*. Many converts across the world are killed by their families in order to restore their honor.

You may have heard of honor killings. These killings are justified in the mind of a Muslim in order to bring harmony back to the community, to right a dishonor, to eliminate shame by a punitive act. Although we do not condone honor killings, one can understand why such killings occur in an honor/shame-based culture like Islam.

Tell about a situation you are aware of in which a person tried to avenge or did avenge a loss of personal or family honor.

Deuteronomy 17:2-7

If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the Lord gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God in violation of his covenant, and contrary to my command has worshiped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars in the sky, and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death. On the testimony of two or three witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. The hands of the witnesses must be the first in putting that person to death, and then the hands of all the people. You must purge the evil from among you. (NIV)

How does the stoning commanded in this text differ from honor killing?

Matthew 5:38-45

You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (NIV)

How does Jesus speak about the practice of avenging injury or dishonor?

2. Jihad

The Quran and the *Hadiths*, which are the basic texts of Islam, contain many passages that glorify the holy war or *jihad* (struggle) done in favor of Allah and Islam. *Sharia* law declares that *jihad* is one of the most elementary religious duties of a Muslim. *Jihad* has been interpreted in two ways: 1) the **spiritual** struggle that Muslims have daily to be a good Muslim, or 2) the making of war against *infidels* (nonbelievers).

This second view is based on one's understanding of the world at large. Muslims divide the world into two:

- The areas over which Muslims dominate. These areas are called the House of Islam (*Dar Al-Islam*⁶)
- The areas over which Muslims do not (yet) have control. Those areas are called the House of War (*Dar Al-Harb*).

(NOTE: A third view sometimes mentioned is *Dar al-olh*, or reconciliation.)

According to Islam, it is the duty of Muslims to conduct *jihad* in order to transform the House of War into the House of Islam.

According to much of Islamic tradition, *jihad* is the means chosen by Allah for the purpose of extending the domination of Islam. The **caliph** (Muslim chief) was under the obligation of conducting *jihad* toward non-Muslims at least once a year with the intent of expanding the caliphate, or territory of the House of Islam.

Those Muslims who reject this point of view explain that *jihad* is a fight (struggle) that takes place in the heart, morally and spiritually, against sin.

In what sense does Christianity also represent an ongoing "struggle" in the life of a believer? (Sanctification. See Romans 7:23; Philippians 2:12; James 1:4.)

Does Christianity present a warlike interpretation of this struggle as it is sometimes interpreted in Islam?

⁶ Sometimes in place of Dar Al Islam we see written Dar al Salam (House of Peace).

ACTION PLAN

Decide on a specific action plan you will take between now and the next session. Samples are given below:

- Meet with a fellow participant to talk over the material.
- Find the answer to a question you have about something in this session by talking with someone or doing some brief research.
- Read the Bible texts mentioned in this session in order to be able to mention and explain them in a conversation with a Muslim.
- Do a role-play with a person from your church with him or her playing the role of a Muslim and talking about the material presented in this session.
- Re-read the manual for this session and share the information with a person or group at your church (for example, in a Sunday School or church education class).

Have the participants share their action plans.

CLOSING

Make a list of three key points you want to remember from this session.

Share something you learned about Islam, Muslim practices, or how to minister to Muslims during this session.

What from this session might you like to know more about? How could you find that out?

PRAYER

Thank God for the freedom and forgiveness we have in Jesus. Pray for the participants, their communities, and the Muslims who live near them and come into contact with. Pray for the leaders of Muslim communities to come to know Jesus as Lord.

SESSION THREE

MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS

DEVOTIONAL: SONS OF GOD

Facilitator Instructions: Have two volunteers read the Romans 8 and Romans 15 texts.

Romans 5:6-8

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (NIV)

Romans 8:15-16

The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. (NIV)

Questions:

1. Identify how God relates to us before and after we come to know Jesus.
2. What picture of God do we get from these texts?
3. What does the Romans passage say about our new relationship with God?
4. How does our claim to “sonship” differ from a Muslim’s status before Allah?

Pray, thanking God for His love for us, for making us His sons and daughters through Jesus and asking God to bless us as we study important differences between Muslim teachings and Christian teachings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Participants will know what Muslims believe about the Bible and the Quran.

- Participants will be able to identify the differences between how Muslims view God and how Christians view God.
- Participants will be able to explain what Muslims believe about the Trinity, Jesus as the Son of God, and the crucifixion.
- Participants will be able to identify the differences between Muslim and Christian beliefs about the End Times, heaven, and hell.

INTRODUCTION

At the first look, Islam seems to resemble Christianity and **Judaism**. First of all, the three religions teach that there is only one God. Each teaches the existence of angels, the devil, sin, heaven, hell, and the day of judgment. They also have many characters in common, for example Jesus (*Isa*), Mary (*Maryam*), Abraham (*Ibrahim*), Moses (*Musa*), David (*Daud*), Joseph (*Youssef*), Jonas (*Yunus*), Zacharia (*Zakaria*), John (*Yahaya*), etc.

However, the resemblance does not actually go beyond similarity in spelling. If we examine the details of the accounts of their lives, we will see that Muslims often view these Bible characters through different lenses. There are key differences between Muslim and Christian views of the Holy Scriptures and the three main characters of God, Jesus, and Muhammad, as well as the end times.

WHAT MUSLIMS BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE AND THE QURAN

Muslims believe that the Quran is an exact, word-for-word copy of Allah’s revelation to **Muhammad** through the angel Gabriel who is viewed as the equivalent to the Holy Spirit.

Muslims show reverence to the Quran and deem that the printed copy has some magical power. They consider that the book is holy and that it should never be handled in an irreverent way. Muslims are often shocked when they see how Christians handle their Bibles. A Muslim will never put a Quran under his arm or put it on the ground. Muslims will never write in the Quran or highlight something in it.

Muslims believe that the original Quran was spoken and written down in Arabic. Therefore, only the Qurans written in Arabic are considered authentic and authoritative. All versions of the Qurans in another different language are considered “The Meaning of the Quran” but are not actually the Quran.

Many people across the world memorize parts of the Quran in Arabic, even though they don’t understand that language or what the texts mean. Muslims believe that the Quran is perfect and is in itself a miracle because of its beautiful style (Chapter 11 verse 1). They believe that it is the summary of God’s revealed books.

The Quran makes reference to the Bible and to the Torah, teaching that these are the authentic Word of God. In spite of this, Muslims believe that Christians and Jews have falsified the

Scriptures that God originally gave them and therefore many among them do not have any respect for the Bible. Others claim that in the Quran Jesus predicted the coming of Muhammad (Chapter 61 verse 6). This is why some hold that Deuteronomy 18:18 and John 14:15-17 speak about Muhammad instead of Jesus and the Holy Spirit as claimed by Christians.

How does the Christian view of translating the Bible into different languages differ from the Muslim's view of the Quran?

Why do Muslims believe that the Quran can only be read in Arabic?

In light of Revelation 7:9-10, why do Christians believe God can be worshipped in all heart languages?

Some passages in the Quran seem to be contradictory yet this is explained away by what is called **abrogation**, where later texts are held as true while earlier texts are not denied. When it comes to the Christian/Jewish Scriptures, though, they are rejected where they differ with the Quran. Nevertheless, Muslims were not instructed to reject these Scriptures but to accept them as holy writings. Muslims were instructed to find answers to certain questions by consulting with “the people of the book.”

How can we respond to a person who says the Bible has been falsified?

What importance does the Quran give to the Scriptures if it instructs Muslims to consult “people of the Book?”

DIFFERENT VIEWS OF GOD

A question that keeps surfacing is, “Is the God of the Muslim the same God of the Christian?” A simplistic answer is “No.” Here are the differences:

- The God of the Muslims is distant and does not directly interact with humans. The God of the Jews and the Christians is a personal God who interacts in history, performs miracles, speaks, maintains the created world.
- The Muslim God requires abject submission. The Christian God demonstrates love and forgiveness, and provides a way of salvation for a fallen humanity.
- For Muslims, the only genuine description of God is found in the Quran. The Christian God presents Himself in the Bible, in history, in the person of Jesus Christ.
- In the Quran, the relationship of God and man is the same as that which exists between a master and his **slave**. Allah only reveals his will. Salvation depends on the people carrying out his will. The Quran declares that God is one and has no partners. The Bible, however, presents God in relationship with His creation, especially with humankind (Genesis 3:8-11). It is a relationship of a Father to His sons and daughters, not one of a master to His slave.

Name any other differences you may have thought of.

Divide yourselves into 5 groups to answer this question: “How do the following Bible passages show a different God from the God of the Quran?”

Group 1: Psalm 23

Group 2: Psalm 63:1-8

Group 3: John 1:1-3 & 1:12-14

Group 4: Romans 5:8; Ephesians 4:6; and 1 John 3:2

Group 5: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Based on what you know about the God of the Quran and the God of the Bible, how would you respond to those who claim that the God of the Quran and the God of the Bible are the same?

Find other Bible texts that point to a personal relationship between God and His people.

THE TRINITY, THE CRUCIFIXION, JESUS AS SON OF GOD

1. Trinity

Muslim imams have often denounced Christians for **negating** the oneness of God when they talk of the Godhead (Trinity). They consider Christians as believers in many gods. For Muslims, the doctrine of the Trinity clashes with their main belief that God is one. They have a lot of difficulty accepting that Jesus is one with God. The Quran teaches in **shirk** that Allah will not tolerate having a partner and that whoever associates him with another commits a great sin (chapter 4 verse 48).

John Gilchrist, in his book *Facing the Muslim Challenge*, sheds some light on this issue:

The Qur'an quite emphatically rejects the Christian belief as a triad of deities and names them as Jesus, his mother Mary, and Allah - in that order! In three passages this concept is assailed as polytheistic and blasphemous. The first reads as follows:

And do not say: Three. Desist - it is better for you! Truly Allah is only One. Glorified be he above taking a son to himself.
Surah 4.171

The word used here for “three” is *thalathah*, a common Qur'anic word appearing nineteen times in the book. It always means “three” and cannot be translated or rendered “Trinity”. The command not to speak of Allah as a threesome is contained in a passage exhorting Christians generally not to exaggerate in their

religion. By contrasting the oneness of God with the threefold Christian deity, it is clear that the Qur'an is unaware of the essential unity of the Christian doctrine of God.

In another passage, the Quran actually identifies the three different deities Christians supposedly worship. Interestingly all three passages which deal with this subject come from the very last portions of the Qur'an to come to Muhammad and it seems that it was only late in his life that he first heard of a Christian divine threesome without ever having the opportunity to discover precisely what the Trinity represents.⁷

It is important to understand, therefore, that Muslims are not thinking of the Christian teaching of "One god in Three Persons," but rather in human mathematical terms of 1+1+1=3. Notice that even in the Muslim understanding of the Christian Trinity there is misunderstanding as to the three Persons. For the Muslim, the Trinity represents God, Jesus and Mary, and not God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Nowhere in Scriptures is the concept of the Trinity represented as the Muslim sees it.

Read:

John 10:30

2 Corinthians 13:14

Isaiah 42:8 together with John 1:1-2, 14 and Luke 9:26.

How would you explain the concept of the Trinity to a Muslim in light of these passages?

2. Jesus as Son of God

In the Quran, Jesus is considered only a prophet and a **messenger**. He was born of a virgin and He performed miracles and was sinless. He is not God and He did not die on a cross for our sins. While Christians consider Jesus to be the Savior of the world, Muslims believe He has only been sent for Jews and Christians. In other cases, before the end of the world, He will return to bear witness to Muhammad and to the true Messiah. God sent Him as a prophet to the Jews and Christians just as Moses before Him. The Jews wanted to catch Him and put Him to death but God caused Him to escape (Quran chapter 4 verse 157). For them, God could not allow the one He sent to undergo such ill-treatment and for that reason took Him away to Himself. Jesus will return at the end of time to declare that Islam is the truth and call all His followers to adhere to it.

⁷ Gilchrist, John. *Facing the Muslim Challenge: A Handbook of Christian-Muslim Apologetics*. Life Challenge Africa, 2002. pp. 78-79.

Therefore, for many Muslims, saying that Jesus is more than a messenger or prophet—to claim that He is God’s Son—is extremely blasphemous and cannot be forgiven. For them, saying that God has a son implies that He had a wife. These words of Ibn Kathir, one of the most famous commentators of Islam, give us an idea of the extent to which both the doctrines of Trinity and Sonship are considered blasphemous in Islam. “Cursed are Christians! Some of them think that Jesus is God, others believe that he is a partner of God, still, others believe that he is a son...”⁸

Have any of you ever tried to explain to your Muslim cousin, friend or colleague that Jesus is the Son of God? How did you proceed and what was the outcome?

How would you explain the Sonship of Jesus to a Muslim in terms that he can understand? Is this a physical Sonship or a spiritual Sonship?

If any of you are Christians with a Muslim background, share with the class how you personally overcame the difficulty of accepting the Sonship of Jesus. Include how you would shed light on this when you discuss this with Muslims.

Divide yourselves in pairs or groups and identify how Jesus is anticipated to be or described in the passages listed below.

Job 19:25

Isaiah 53:10-12

Isaiah 61:10-11

Malachi 3:1

Luke 2:11

John 3:16

John 4:12

Acts 4:12

1 Timothy 2:5

1 Peter 3:18

Revelation 7:9-10

In recent years and across the world, Jesus has appeared in dreams to a multitude of people, including Muslims. Do you know of any relative, friend or colleague who had such an experience? What is his testimony? If Jesus is only for Jews and Christians why would He also appear to Muslims?”

The Quran puts emphasis on Mohammad as Allah’s prophet, revealing Allah’s desire for submission and obedience. Where is the Bible’s emphasis, according to John 20:30-31; 21:25?

⁸ Citation unknown.

Mohammad and Jesus are not equal to each other. For the Muslim, Mohammad is greater than Jesus and Jesus is a mere minor prophet. For the Christian, based on Scripture, Jesus is not a mere prophet, but the Son of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And so we can agree with the Muslim that Mohammad and Jesus cannot be placed on the same level, although for different reasons.

3. The Crucifixion of Jesus

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is another point of disagreement between Muslims and Christians. Islam does not recognize the death of Jesus. For Muslims, Jesus is so **holy** that He cannot die on the cross at the hands of impure creatures. Some Muslims go to the extent of saying that Jesus will come back to get married. He will then rebuke those who worship Him.

The death of Jesus in our place is, however, at the heart of the Christian faith, a propitiation for our sins and for original sin. For the Muslim, Adam's sin was forgiven and therefore his sin did not transfer to humankind. With no transmission of original sin, there is no need of a Savior, and therefore, no need for the crucifixion.

Muslims have different views of what happened to Jesus:

- According to one view, nobody was crucified. Jesus' death was an **illusion**. There was no crucifixion (Sura 4 aya 157).
- The second view acknowledges that Jesus was crucified but asserts that he did not die, contrary to what the Jews and the Romans believed. He came out of a comatose state in the tomb and then ran away.
- The third view is that another person was crucified instead of Jesus. Allah deceived the people and Jesus was taken alive to heaven (Chapter 4 verse 158). Nobody knows who took his place. Many Muslims, however, say it was Judas who took his place.

In light of Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 2:2, and Galatians 6:14, how do Christians view Jesus' crucifixion?

Based on Romans 3:21, 1 Peter 3:18 and 1 John 2:2, why do Christians see Jesus' death on the cross as something good?

Without a death there can be no resurrection. Paul's homily in 1 Corinthians 15, then, would have no reason to be in the Bible.

So we see how Islam destroys what Christianity teaches:

- Adam and Eve sinned and this sin stain passed down to all humankind.
- The payment for sin is death, which Jesus paid by going to the cross.

- The resurrection validates that God accepted the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.

None of this holds true if we reject original sin, a sacrificial death, and a validating resurrection.

What evidence does 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 12-20 provide that you could share with Muslims when trying to convince them that Jesus was indeed crucified?

HEAVEN, HELL, AND THE END TIMES

1. Heaven and Hell

In his book *I Believed in 'Issa, I Met Jesus*, Jamel Attar wrote,

No Muslim can claim that he has the assurance of going to heaven except those who have died as martyrs.... Until the end of his days no Muslim knows if he has done enough works to go to heaven. Small sins are automatically forgiven, but for serious sins a more or less long passing through a purgatory will end up covering them. Many expect that they have to go through a purgatory so that their sins or their violations of the commandments of God to be forgiven before they go to heaven.⁹

Muslims believe that their works will be put on a **scale** after their death. If their evil works outweigh their good ones, they will go to hell or suffer a lot of torment for a time before going to heaven. But if their good works outweigh their evil ones, they will go to heaven. This is why many of them live in fear. In the end, it is up to a capricious Allah to decide who may enter paradise. In fact, even Muhammad did not have the assurance of his salvation (Quran 46:9; Hadith Bukhari Vol.5, Book 55, Number 266).

The Quran does not talk about eternal life spent in the presence of God or contemplating his face. In Chapter 56 verses 10-40, heaven is described as follows:

The first (to abide by the instructions of Allah on earth), they are the ones who are going to be the first (in the coming life). They are the ones who are the closest to God in the Gardens of pleasures, a multitude among the last (generations), and a small number among the last (generations), on beds (endowed with gold and stones), jointed and facing each other. Among them boys eternally young will walk around, with cups, ... and a glass (filled).

⁹ Attar, Jamel. *I Believed in 'Issa, I Met Jesus: When a Fervent Muslim is Confronted by Grace*. Original: *Je Croyais en Issa, J'ai Rencontré Jésus: Quand un Musulman Fervent est Confronté à la Grâce*. Translated in 2017 by Jamal Attar and Betty Lacey. Salt and Light Books. pp. 46

What is the main difference between the Muslim and the Christian understanding of heaven and hell according to John 14: 1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; and Revelation 21:3-6?

2. The End Times

Muslim and Christian teachings also differ in their understanding of the Judgment Day (the End Times). While both the Quran and the Bible agree that the Judgment Day will arrive, the details about what will happen are very different.

According to the Quran, on the day of judgment, the good and bad works of everyone will be weighed on a scale so as to decide who will go to heaven or to hell. All the **non-Muslims** will go to hell.

The *Hadiths* speak often about the End Times and Judgment Day. There will be first famines, earthquakes, wars, immorality and unbelief. An anti-Christ (*Dajjal*) will appear and will bring corruption and oppression to the entire world. Many will be seduced by his miracles and deceitful teachings. (Sounds familiar?)

The anti-Christ will be helped by the Jews. A savior, the **Mahdi** will appear to fight against *Dajjal*, the Jews, and Christians in order to restore Islam to its original glory. Jesus will come back to earth as a Muslim and will help *Mahdi* to triumph over *Dajjal*. Jesus will break the crosses, kill all pigs, and will convert all Christians to Islam. All Jews will be killed and there will be no more non-Muslims. The *Mahdi* will establish a worldwide Islamic kingdom of peace and prosperity, with Jerusalem as its capital. There will be a final and terrible battle against Gog and Magog. (Straight out of the Bible?)

Muslims will eventually triumph with the help of Jesus. Jesus will rule during 40 years with the *Mahdi*, will get married, will have children, and then will die and will be buried as a Muslim by the side of Muhammad. The *Mahdi* will eventually die as well.

How would you explain the judgment day to someone who is not a follower of Jesus and particularly to a Muslim?

How can you explain the assurance of salvation that Christians have through the atoning death of Jesus?

What hope do you think a Muslim have if even Muhammad did not have the assurance of going to Paradise?

Divide yourselves into three groups and identify the key aspects of Judgment Day according to these biblical texts:

Identify the key aspects of Judgment Day according to these biblical texts:

Group 1: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Group 2: Matthew 25:31-46

Group 3: Revelation 20:11-15

CONCLUSION AND OVERVIEW

If time allows, divide the class into six small groups and have each group identify one of the key points they have learned about these topics.

Group 1: What do Muslims think about the Bible?

Group 2: What is the Muslim understanding about God?

Group 3: How do Muslims see Jesus?

Group 4: What is the main accusation of Muslims against Christians concerning the doctrine of Trinity and Jesus as the Son of God?

Group 5: What are the different positions of Muslims concerning the crucifixion of Jesus?

Group 6: What are the key ideas Muslims have about heaven, hell, and Judgment Day?

A final question: Are there any similarities that can be used as a bridge?

ACTION PLAN

Ask participants to set a measurable, realistic goal that they will complete before the next session. Below are examples of things to do:

Select one or more of these follow-up activities (or decide on appropriate ones) before the next session:

- Pray for the Muslims in your community to come to know Jesus as their Savior.
- Reread the Scripture texts in this session that respond to Muslims' questions and Islamic teachings about God, Jesus, and the Bible.
- Find someone in your family or church with whom you can share what you've learned in this session.
- Practice explaining the Christian teachings about God, Jesus, and the Bible to a Muslim.
- Read more about Islam and how to share the gospel with Muslims. Here are a few titles:
 - *I Dared to Call Him Father: The Miraculous Story of a Muslim Woman's Encounter with God* by Bilquis Sheikh with Richard H. Schneider
 - *La Foi à L'épreuve* by Chawkat G. Moucarry
 - *I Believed in 'Issa, I Met Jesus: When a Fervent Muslim is Confronted by Grace* by Jamel Attar
 - *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* by Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb

CLOSING

We are now at the end of our session. As Christians in this generation, we are engaged in a serious spiritual battle. God has in fact raised us up as intercessors (the Abrahams and Daniels) for others. For the salvation of the millions of our contemporaries who do not know Jesus as their Savior and Lord, should we not invest some time to intercede for them before we depart? Let us all raise our voices and pray for God to tear the veil hindering people both in our mission field and elsewhere from seeing the light of the gospel. Let us also ask God to make us aware of and sensitive to the needs of those around us and respond as God would have us respond. Close in a time of prayer for all Muslims in your mission field, your country, and across the world. Pray also for the body of Christ to understand the challenges and to show love and compassion for the Muslim world.

SESSION FOUR

THREE WORLDVIEWS

DEVOTIONAL: THE GOD WHO BEARS OUR SHAME

Facilitator Instructions: Have participants read Isaiah 53:1-6 and Romans 10:9-11. Note how the description of the Messiah in Isaiah 53 is one of a person who is despised, rejected, not valued, considered rejected by God and punished. It is the suffering of the Messiah that heals us, bringing us healing and freedom from shame. For those who trust in Jesus, whose sins are atoned for by Him on the cross, we no longer base our value on what we do, but rather what Jesus has done for us on the cross and is doing in us through the Holy Spirit. Ask people to keep this in mind as we learn about three different ways of thinking, also called worldviews.

Isaiah 53:1-6

*Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. (NIV)*

Romans 10:9-11

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified,

and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” (NIV)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to list the three different worldviews (honor/shame, guilt/righteousness, and fear/power).
- Participants will be able to describe each of the three different worldviews.
- Participants will determine which worldviews are normally found in Islam.
- Participants will have access to appropriate Bible texts to use in conversations with people from shame-based, guilt-based, and fear-based cultures.

WORLDVIEWS: THREE RESPONSES TO EVIL

Read the following three scenarios:

Scenario 1: Daoud breaks into a store where he is caught by the local police. He is placed in jail until his trial. At his trial, there is sufficient evidence to find him guilty of theft. According to the law, he must spend the next two years in prison for his crime.

Scenario 2: Daoud feels ashamed because he was caught stealing and his actions brought dishonor upon his family and his village. Do what he may, Daoud has not found a way to restore honor to his family and to himself. Until he does, he will continue to feel like an outsider.

Scenario 3: As Daoud was walking home late one night from work, he had to walk by a cemetery. As he got close to the cemetery, he felt chills going up and down his back. He called out “Bismallah” before hurrying past the cemetery and entering his home where he recited several verses of the Quran while fingering his prayer beads.

Analyzing the Worldviews

Each scenario above represents a particular worldview.

Write the following pairs on a whiteboard or piece of newsprint:

- *guilt/righteousness*
- *fear/power*
- *shame/honor*

Guilt/righteousness – Western culture is dominated by a **guilt-based** understanding of our posture before God or the law. We stand before a righteous God or judge, are measured against His written commands (like the Ten Commandments), and are judged either innocent or guilty based on whether we have kept the commands or not. If we are found guilty, we must pay a price or accept a punishment so that the offense is covered. Innocence or guilt is objective, based on a set of laws that must not be broken. Guilt/righteousness cultures tend to

be individualistic. People stand before God or the court on their own merit and think that what others do has no impact on one's standing before God.

Shame/honor – Eastern culture is a shame-based, **group-oriented** culture. The honor of the family and the individual is something that must be preserved. If dishonor occurs, the individual must find a way to cover his shame, or others must do everything possible to restore honor to the family even at the cost of shunning or killing the offender. In a shame/honor culture, the individual does not have a sense of guilt (having done something wrong) but of shame (being wrong personally). Shame is usually not for having committed an offense but for having been caught in the act, thus bringing shame upon himself and his family. You can see that shame/honor cultures tend to be collectivistic cultures where the community determines expectations for behavior.

Roland Muller writes:

All through the Bible, references are made to shame and honor in various forms. The Bible tells us to honor God, our parents, elders, Christian leaders, and government leaders. It even talks about certain things being more honorable than others. In all, there are more than 90 references to honor in the Bible, while the various forms of the word 'guilt' are mentioned only forty times, and even seven of these are in the New Testament.

The Bible also addresses shame, mentioning it over one hundred times. But simply counting the word 'shame' is not enough. There are many underlying principles in the Bible that deal with shame and honor, and demonstrate how God moves us from a situation of shame to that of honor.¹⁰

Fear/power – In a fear-based culture, a person is most concerned about staying healthy and free from sickness, the evil eye, and other things that bring down calamity upon him. Spiritual beings, people, and objects are believed to have power over people. If a person does not have power, then he is fearful of what may overcome him. He will go through rituals or wear certain amulets to ward off evil. Fear/power cultures are found mostly among **animistic** groups where people are fearful of **evil** and seek power over the spirit world, often through rituals and incantations.

Arthur Glasser writes:

Of greater concern and preoccupation are the Muslim's efforts to cope with the various acute problems and hostile forces which crowd his world and keep him from peace of mind and heart. There is the magic he feels

¹⁰ Muller, Roland. *Honor and Shame: Unlocking the Door*. Xlibris, 2001.

he must practice. And what of the demons he must placate? Or the fetishes he must not fail to use? Will his invoking of the saints help him surmount his fears? On and on. His world is dominated by the “evil eye,” by sickness and death, by sorcery and curses. Not by Qu’ranic Islam but by animistic Islam, and the hunger of the heart it constantly discloses.¹¹

Which one these three pairings (or more than one) do you think represents the worldview of most Muslims?

Shame/honor, followed by fear/power are the predominant worldviews of most Muslims.

There is fear of breaking the **peace** and honor of the *ummah* or community. The maintaining of the peace of the community is uppermost in the mind of every Muslim. He is not an individual, but he is part of the community. Individuality is discouraged for the good of the community. Maintaining the honor of one's family and community is **essential** to living well. Shame destroys one's relationships with others and isolates the person (scenario 2 above).

But much of Islam is a folk version of this major world religion. That means that the lives of its practitioners are oftentimes governed more by superstitions and rituals than by the religion's scriptures. A folk Muslim's life is enveloped by fear—fear of the dark, fear of the evil eye, fear of the jinn. In order to have power over those things that bring fear into his heart, the Muslim must counteract these evil forces by incantations, the wearing of amulets, or other protective means (scenario 3 above).

Discuss a real-life example of shame/honor and of fear/power that you have experienced or observed.

BIBLE STUDY

Divide yourselves up into four groups. You have a set of five Bible texts to study. Look up the following texts and spend 10 minutes doing the following:

1. Determine if the text is an example of guilt/righteousness, shame/honor, or fear/power.
2. Identify what each text tells us about that human condition.

The answers are below and are not included in the participant manual.

Group #1

- Ephesians 1:7, 2:5—*guilt/righteousness* - *We are forgiven through Jesus' blood.*
- Ephesians 2:12-13, 19—*shame/honor* - *We are made part of God's people and God's family in Jesus.*
- Ephesians 1:19-21—*fear/power* - *God's power raised Jesus from the dead.*

¹¹ Quoted in *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam* by Philip L. Parshall. IVP Books, 1983. pp. 113

- Psalm 44:13-15—*shame/power* - God made His people the scorn of the nations around them.
- Colossians 1:13—*fear/power* - God has rescued us from darkness in Jesus.

Group #2

- Malachi 1:6—*shame/honor* - God is due honor just as father and master are due honor.
- Romans 3:23-26—*guilt/righteousness* - All have sinned but can be justified by Jesus' atonement.
- Romans 2:24—*shame/honor* - When God's people sin, it brings dishonor to God.
- 1 John 3:8—*fear/power* - Jesus came to destroy the devil's work.
- Luke 15:17-19—*shame/honor* - The prodigal son wasn't worthy to be considered a son because of his actions.

Group #3

- Isaiah 54:4—*shame/honor* - God promised to undo the shame of His people.
- Romans 3:9-12—*guilt/righteousness* - Both Jews and Gentiles have failed to live righteous lives.
- 1 Samuel 2:8—*shame/honor* - Hannah celebrates that the God of Israel brings honor to the poor and needy.
- Deuteronomy 2:24—*fear/power* - God gave the Israelites power over Sihon the Amorite and his territory.
- Romans 10:11—*shame/honor* - Those who trust in Jesus are free from shame.

Group #4

- Ephesians 6:10-12—*fear/power* - God protects us from the attacks of the Devil.
- 1 Peter 2:6-9—*shame/honor* - Those who trust in Jesus are free from shame. Jesus was rejected but became the most important of all. Those who trust in Jesus are made part of God's chosen people and belong to God.
- 1 Samuel 1:6-7— *shame/honor* - Hannah suffers shame because she cannot have children.
- Colossians 2:13-15—*guilt/righteousness and fear/power* - Jesus canceled the law through the cross and defeated the powers and authorities who were fighting against him.
- Hebrews 2:14-15—*fear/power* - Jesus frees us from the fear of death and the power of death.

After the 10 minutes in groups, share which category the texts relate to and what the texts teach about the category. At the front, write the three pairs in different columns on the whiteboard or on three different sheets. Under each column, summarize what you have learned from their texts. The answers are below but the table will be blank in the participant manual.

Guilt/Righteousness	Shame/Honor	Fear/Power
<p>Both Jews and Gentiles have failed to live righteous lives.</p> <p>We are forgiven through Jesus' blood.</p> <p>All have sinned but can be forgiven through Jesus.</p> <p>Jesus canceled the law through the cross and defeated the powers and authorities who were fighting against him</p>	<p>God is due honor just as father and master are due honor.</p> <p>When God's people sin, it brings dishonor to God.</p> <p>The prodigal son wasn't worthy to be considered a son because of his actions.</p> <p>God made His people the scorn of the nations around them</p> <p>God promised to undo the shame of His people.</p> <p>Hannah suffers shame because she cannot have children.</p> <p>Hannah celebrates that the God of Israel brings honor to the poor and needy.</p> <p>We are made part of God's people and God's family in Jesus.</p> <p>Those who trust in Jesus are free from shame.</p> <p>Jesus was rejected but became the most important of all.</p> <p>Those who trust in Jesus are made part of God's chosen people and belong to God.</p>	<p>God gave the Israelites power over Sihon the Amorite and his territory.</p> <p>Jesus came to destroy the devil's work.</p> <p>God's power raised Jesus from the dead.</p> <p>God has rescued us from darkness in Jesus.</p> <p>God protects us from the attacks of the Devil.</p> <p>Jesus frees us from the fear of death and the power of death.</p>

Applying What We Have Learned

How can you use the information about how Muslims think about the world in order to reach out to Muslims with the gospel. How can a person determine which is the worldview of the person they're talking with? Listening to what a person is concerned about, most afraid of, will indicate whether they are concerned with living up to some standard, avoiding shame or being powerless.

We need to determine which Bible texts and stories would be most appropriate to share with Muslims and why. Share the truth about Jesus that relates most to what the person is concerned about. For example, if the person we're talking to is afraid of some person or thing they believe has power over them, share about the power of Jesus to give life and victory. If the person is most concerned about shame and isolation from community, share how Jesus takes away our shame and connects us to God the Father and His people.

ACTION PLAN

Select one or more of these follow-up activities (or decide on appropriate ones) before the next session:

- Identify the worldview that is most common in your community.
- Reread this session and make a small note sheet with what the Bible says about the worldview that is most common in your area.
- In three conversations before the next session, identify the worldview of each person by asking what they are most concerned about at present. Share how you deal with that concern as a follower of Jesus.
- Pray for Muslims throughout the world and your location in particular, asking God to open their hearts to the truth about Jesus. Pray for a specific person you know who doesn't know Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

CLOSING

Read together Acts 26:12-18. This text is the account of Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Acts 26:12-18

"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ (NIV)

The description shows all three ways the gospel works in our lives:

1. “To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God” – power
2. “So that they might receive the forgiveness of sins – innocence, freedom from guilt
3. And a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus” – honor and community

PRAYER

Close in prayer, giving thanks to God for how the gospel has worked in our lives, freeing us from the power of Satan, giving us freedom from guilt through the cross, and raising us to a place of honor in Jesus, included in His people. Pray the gospel may be proclaimed faithfully in your communities and throughout the world and that Christians may be strengthened to remain faithful when they are persecuted for the sake of the gospel.

SESSION FIVE

EVANGELISM TOOLS I

DEVOTIONAL: THE GOD YET UNKNOWN

When the apostle Paul was in Athens, he had the opportunity to share the gospel with men at the Areopagus, who were interested in the latest philosophies and wanted to know what Paul was teaching about.

Acts 17:22-23

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. (NIV)

Facilitator Instructions: Ask participants to describe how Paul starts his presentation of the gospel in verses 22 and 23. If they don't mention it, point out that Paul has learned about the men's religious ideas (he walked around and looked carefully at their objects of worship) and he uses something from their own religion as his starting point (the altar to “an unknown God”). Ask how the apostle Paul using this bridge helps us think about how to share the gospel with Muslims.

Pray, thanking God for working in us by his Holy Spirit so they we are His in Jesus. Ask God to bless this session and to use it to prepare us to share the gospel with Muslims.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Participants will understand three approaches for sharing the gospel with people from a Muslim background.
- Participants will determine which method(s) to utilize in their church planting efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Many different methods for evangelizing Muslims have been tried since the founding of Islam in 622 A.D. Not all have been effective. In this module, we are not proposing that reaching Muslims is easy, rather that it will take time and building relationships of trust with people. As a relationship is developed, confidence is gained to the point where it would be appropriate to share one's own testimony about Jesus.

In this session, we will look at “best practices,” methods or tools that have been effective at different times as ways of sharing the Good News with a Muslim and in different Muslim

contexts. Be aware of the fact that there is no single method or tool that is effective in all cases, yet these have proven to be sufficiently successful that they merit being mentioned here.

In Sessions Five and Six we will look at seven tools or approaches:

Session Five:

- Polemic and dialogical methods
- CAMEL Method
- Any-3 Method

Session Six:

- Path of the Prophets
- Discovery Bible Study
- Person of Peace (Luke 10:1-16)
- MNM Muslim-appropriate Bible Studies

Have the participants take five minutes and share with a partner how easy or difficult it has been for them to reach out to Muslims by answering these two questions:

1. What obstacles have you encountered when sharing your faith with a Muslim?
2. What methods seemed to be effective? In what particular cases?

Write their answers on the whiteboard or large paper in two columns:

Obstacles to sharing the gospel with Muslims:	Methods or ways that have been effective in sharing the gospel with Muslims:

Three tools or approaches will be examined. While no one method or approach or Bible study will be effective in all contexts, these have been shown in different contexts to be effective. Much depends on the frame of mind of the person they are trying to reach, their degree of openness, and the depth of the relationship that has already been established. It is our responsibility as Christians simply to share the gospel as best we can. It is the Holy Spirit who prepares and changes people's hearts to receive the truth about Jesus.

THREE TOOLS OR APPROACHES

In relating to Muslims, we must find ways to communicate truth in a **contextualized** way. We call these methods “bridges.” Philip Parshall explains that bridges “can function as connectors between people of entirely diverse viewpoints and worldviews.”¹² As we examine the three approaches in this session, our goal is to be able to bridge the gap between the Good News and the reality experienced by Muslims.

1. Polemic

The polemic method can be described as a method of evangelism using **Scripture**. 1 Peter 3:15-16 says, “But in your hearts revere 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, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” (NIV).

How does this text suggest we should approach anyone, including a Muslim, using Scripture?

Although this method may work in some cases, with Muslims this method is not often effective. Some Muslims are used to refuting the Bible and so this method does not usually result in an objective hearing. It is also seen as very confrontational.

Think about some of the texts that were used in Session Two. How might Muslims who have been taught that Christianity is false respond to these passages?

2. CAMEL Method

There is a Muslim proverb that says, “And we know that Allah has one hundred names. And that he has revealed 99 of his names to the sons of men that they may know and worship him. But one name, the one-hundredth name, he has told only to the camel. And the camel, he is not talking.”¹³

Read Philippians 2:9-11. What do these verses say about Jesus' name?

Philippians 2:9-11

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

¹² Parshall, Philip L. *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam*. IVP Books, 1983.

¹³ Cited in *The Camel: How Muslims are Coming to Faith in Christ* by Kevin Greeson. WIGtake Resources, 2007.

*and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. (NIV)*

Remember the devotional from Acts 17:23-28. How did Paul find a bridge for sharing the Good News of Jesus to a group of people who had never heard the name of Jesus before?

Someone wrote, “There he [Paul] adopted the same method [as Jesus] when he spoke to the Stoics and Epicureans at the famous Areopagus in Athens. There he paused to build a bridge for them from their ‘altar to an unknown God’ to the Christ who has revealed Himself to a lost world.”¹⁴

Why a person’s “name” is so important. When a child is born, we give him or her a name, a name that has significance for us. In some cultures, there is a public name and a private name known only to the person and his parents or a select few. A name can be honored by our deeds or it can be defamed by our misdeeds.

Read Acts 4:12. Ask why the name of Jesus is so important.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. (NIV)

The CAMEL Method prepares the way for presenting the Good News of Jesus to a Muslim by using a **bridge** from Islam to Christianity. The CAMEL Method makes use of the Quran to bridge the gap and point to the eternal truth found only in the Bible. The name CAMEL is an acronym for a concise presentation of the gospel: “Mary was **C**hosen to give birth to Isa; that **A**ngels announced the good news to her; that Isa would do **M**iracles; and that He knew the way to **E**ternal **L**ife.”¹⁵

How is this done?

Since we ultimately want to point the Muslim to **Jesus** (Isa al Masih), we might ask him to open his Quran to *surah al-Imram, ayat 42-55*, where we read of the virgin birth of Jesus (also v. 47), followed by His miracles. Verse 49 points out that Jesus would be a sign to Israel (and to the whole world).

Muslims also respect the names of David, Abraham, Moses, among others. Bridges can be built as we look at passages dealing with these biblical figures.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 41-42. See an expanded explanation of CAMEL on pages 104-109.

Arabic names for these biblical figures and other familiar terms are often used as long as this vocabulary does not conflict with biblical authority.¹⁶ Many call themselves *isahi*, or followers of Jesus (belonging to Jesus), a name more acceptable than Christian because of its historical connection to the Crusades. Christian meetings are usually held on Fridays with worship taking place on the floor of a home or veranda, with open rather than closed hands in prayer. Because of the bridges being built, the use of the Quran and Arabic names familiar to Muslims and a worship style similar to the Muslims', "the gospel found an indigenous home and was able to spread rapidly through their community."¹⁷

In their experience, how long does it usually take a Muslim to understand the truths of the Good News?

Is there anything in the CAMEL Method that they see might help the process go more quickly or be more effective in the conversion of Muslims?

What do you think—will the use of such bridge methods hinder more than help the sharing of the Good News? What problems do they find in this method, if any?

This is a **controversial** method because by using the Quran in witnessing to a Muslim, some believe that this gives credence to the authority of the Quran. Others say that using the Quran "equips Christians to unlock the worldview chains that have long bound Muslims from the truth. As these Muslim seekers cross the CAMEL bridge and begin reading the Bible for themselves, the Bible's two-edged sword pierces their hearts and fulfills the yearnings that the Holy Spirit has been impressing upon them. Through God's Word, they find eternal salvation and freedom from the bondage to sin."¹⁸

As Kevin Greeson clearly points out, the only **authoritative** Scripture, or Word of God, is the Holy Bible. There are truths reflected in the Quran because of Muhammad's early encounters with Jews and Christians, but these truths were distorted in many ways. For example, in the Quran, Abraham offers up Ishmael. In the Bible, Abraham offers up Isaac. This is just one example of a truth that has been distorted or misinterpreted by Muhammad.

Greeson goes on to say, "Apart from the Bible, we have no revelation of the Father's *agape* love for us, Christ's saving death and resurrection for us, or the Holy Spirit's dynamic power within us."¹⁹ "If our doctrines and understanding of God come from the Qur'an, then we will certainly not end up with a Christian view of God."²⁰

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 34-35

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 39

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Greeson quoted in "Is Camel Method Leading Thirsty World to Oasis of Truth?" *The Christian Index*, J. Gerald Harris, in <http://www.tciarchive.org/3313.article>, retrieved 10/12/2009.

The CAMEL Method focuses, then, primarily on the *Al Imran* passage cited above. It seeks to keep the person's eyes focused on Jesus. In fact, this passage, if studied with sincerity, should bring the Muslim to the point of seeing that even the Quran speaks of Jesus as more than a prophet. "After reading *surah al-Imran* 3:42-55 and listening to you explain it, no Muslim will be able to honestly say that Isa was merely a prophet. From the text of his own Quran, he will see that Isa is far more than a prophet."²¹

3. Any-3 Method

The Any-3 Method enables people to share the gospel with a Muslim whether or not they have developed a relationship with the person.

According to one report, the Any-3 Method is:

- **Simple:** A person can learn *Any-3* in an hour, practice it with a friend that afternoon, and have fruitful interaction with Muslims that evening!
- **Natural:** "It feels spontaneous and free, helping Christians live an evangelizing lifestyle." Yet *Any-3* provides a simple and natural path for moving from casual conversation to a gospel presentation and inviting a positive response.
- **Adaptable:** "Because its principles derive from the evangelism pattern modeled by Jesus in John 4, *Any-3* can be adapted to virtually any culture or worldview."²²

Any-3 means Anyone, **Anywhere**, Any time. We can share the gospel with anyone anywhere at any time. It is a 5-step method for sharing the gospel respectfully. In other words, it is not a confrontational method; rather, it is intended to be a natural, conversational approach to sharing the Good News. And it is done using the Scriptures. There is no need to refer to the Quran.

The purpose is to: 1) get connected with Muslims, 2) get to a God conversation, 3) get to lostness, 4) get to the gospel, and 5) get to a decision. The goal is to be able to share the gospel quickly and effectively without months or years of developing a relationship. Similar methods have been used effectively in other contexts, sitting on a plane, at a restaurant, in a park, even with non-Muslims.

Each step begins by asking a simple question relevant to the particular step, followed by a transition question. The goal is to move from getting connected to the point at which a Muslim is given the opportunity to make a decision for Jesus.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

²² *Any-3: Lead Muslims to Christ Now!* in <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/any-3>, retrieved 6/27/15. For a fuller understanding of this method, plus a workshop outline for teaching this method, see Mark Shipman, *Any-3*, WIGTake Resources LLC (January 1, 2013)

1. *Get connected*. The method begins by asking a person a simple question like, “How are you?” in order to make a personal connection. This can be followed by a transition question like, “What religion do you practice?”

2. *The get-to-the-God-conversation question* in a conversation with a Muslim could be, “Have you ever wondered if you are doing enough to merit going to Paradise?” The transition question could be something like, “In your religion, what does it take for you to be assured that your sins are forgiven?”

3. *Get to lostness* happens after the person has shared how they can be forgiven, and three questions can be asked: 1) Are your sins paid for? 2) When do you think your sins will be paid off? 3) On Judgment Day, do you know that your sin debt will be paid? Normally the person’s response is, “How can anybody know for sure?” or “I certainly hope so.” This allows for the next transition in which we share the assurance we have, knowing our own sins have been forgiven—not because of anything we have done, but because God has provided a way for our sins to be forgiven and for us to live in communion with God in the present. If anything should pique the interest of a Muslim listener, this should.

4. *Get to the gospel* is the part of the conversation in which a simple presentation of the Good News is shared with your Muslim listener. Any-3 provides a sample story to share called *The First and Last Sacrifice* (this story can be found in the Appendix at the end of this manual). After sharing this or another story from the Bible, we move to the last and most important step. The transition to this final step is a synopsis of the Good News, that Jesus has paid the price for our sinfulness and that God has accepted that sacrifice on our behalf.

5. *Get to a decision*. Our hope is that a Muslim inquirer will see that this makes sense, affirm that Jesus did die for our sins, and understand that God has forgiven us (or taken away our shame) because of Jesus’ death and resurrection. We want him to accept this truth for himself and to submit to Isa al Masih (Jesus the Messiah).

The gospel presentation usually begins with Adam and Eve and their disobedience, resulting in their being expelled from the Garden of Eden.

It follows with God covering Adam and Eve with the skin of an animal, which required an animal to die. The reason for this is explained in Hebrews 9:22, that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins (forgiveness). You can likewise explain this verse in light of honor/shame by saying the blood covers our shame.

This is followed by the promise that one day God would provide a savior, a messiah. This would be Jesus who is declared by John as the (sacrificial) lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). On the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sins. The debt is paid in full. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is proof positive that God had accepted

the sacrifice and has taken away our shame and restored us to a right relationship with God. At this point you give the listener the opportunity to appropriate this truth for himself, to make a decision to follow Jesus, the Lamb of God.

To make this more conversational (rather than one-sided), we can ask questions like, “Isn’t it interesting that...?” or “That’s interesting, isn’t it?” or “Does this make sense?” This invites the listener to be an active participant in the conversation so it doesn’t become a monologue. Giving a Muslim friend a chance to respond is important in giving him or her to hear the whole gospel presentation and to truly “own it.”

Have the participants break off into pairs and ask each other what they think of this method. Have them share both positive and negative thoughts.

Practice going through a gospel presentation, following the Any-3’s five-step method. You can choose a Bible passage that reflects honor/shame or fear/power, or even guilt/righteousness from Session Four leading up to reconciliation/covering of sin or restoration of the sinner as found in Hebrews 9:11-5 and 10:4-10, 14.

After this, have several pairs share what worked and what needs improvement.

This method could also be used in studying the gospel of Luke with a Muslim. Of the four gospels, Luke is the one with which Muslims would be most comfortable. Many of the stories are well known to Muslims as they are found in the Quran.²³

PRACTICING THE METHODS

Divide them into three groups. Assign each group one of the three methods presented (Polemic, CAMEL, Any-3). Take 10-15 minutes to practice an example of the method you’ve been assigned.

Present your example, share your questions and concerns, and receive feedback from the group (5 minutes each). Discuss which tool(s) you feel more comfortable using and why.

²³ William Saal, *Reaching Muslims for Christ*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1991, 161-171.

ACTION PLAN

Select one or more of these follow-up activities (or decide on appropriate ones) before the next session:

- Identify which of the three ways to share the gospel is the one you'd like to learn to use first.
- Share the method you select with another person from your church and practice it with them.
- Use this method in a conversation with a person you think might not be a Christian.
- Develop a relationship with a person who you think may not be a Christian and pray that the Holy Spirit will prepare his or her heart to hear the gospel.
- Pray for Muslims throughout the world and your location in particular, asking God to open their hearts to the truth about Jesus. Pray for a specific person you know who doesn't know Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

CONCLUSION

Return to the chart made at the beginning of the session (obstacles to sharing the gospel with Muslims and methods that have been effective). Do the three methods presented address any of the obstacles mentioned or relate to the methods that were suggested.

PRAYER

Close in prayer giving thanks to God for how the gospel has worked in your lives and for the people who have shared the gospel with you. Pray the gospel may be proclaimed faithfully in your communities and throughout the world and that Christians may be strengthened to remain faithful when they are persecuted for the sake of the gospel. Ask God to give you opportunities to share the gospel with people in the next week.

SESSION SIX

EVANGELISM TOOLS II

DEVOTIONAL: THE SPIRIT AT WORK

Facilitator Instructions: *In Ephesians 1, Paul describes what he prays for his brothers and sisters in Christ. Have a participant read Ephesians 1:17-18 for the group. Ask participants to identify what this text says about who the Spirit is and what the Spirit does. The Spirit is called the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who enables people to know God better. Paul prays that the eyes of their hearts may be opened so they know the hope and riches they have in Jesus. As we make plans to share the gospel with Muslims, we must remember to pray for God to be at work. It's the Holy Spirit who reveals the truth about Jesus to people and opens their hearts to Jesus.*

Ephesians 1:17-18

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people... (NIV)

Pray, thanking for the opportunity to gather together, for His work in your lives through His Spirit and for the opportunity to be further equipped to share the gospel. Ask the Holy Spirit to be at work in the people you hope to share the gospel with and to use this session to prepare you to speak the truth in love in your conversations with them.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to list and describe four different evangelistic tools or approaches for reaching Muslims.
- Participants will determine which method(s) to utilize in their church planting efforts.

INTRODUCTION

In this session, we will look at the following tools or approaches:

1. Path of the Prophets
2. Discovery Bible Study
3. Person of Peace (Luke 10:1-16)
4. MNM Muslim-appropriate Bible Studies

What are the advantages of mentioning the Quran prior to opening the Bible with Muslims?

What are the disadvantages of using the Quran in sharing the gospel with Muslims?

How would one use the Quran: to point to the need for salvation or simply to point toward Jesus?

FOUR TOOLS OR APPROACHES FOR REACHING MUSLIMS

1. Path of the Prophets

Acts 10:43 says, “To Him all the prophets bear witness...” (ESV). This is a reference to Jesus the Messiah. In the Path of the Prophets method, sometimes called the Straight Path of the Prophets,²⁴ the church planter refers to the prophets whose witness points to the long-expected Messiah, or Al Masih. As the church planter meets with a Muslim inquirer, he or she refers to the prophets who are common to both the Quran and the Bible with the express purpose of leading them to an understanding of Jesus as Messiah. Some of the same caveats that were voiced regarding the CAMEL method can be echoed here regarding the use of the Quran (see Session Five). And yet, in order to gain a hearing among the Muslims, it may be necessary to refer to the **Quranic** prophets and then compare them to the biblical accounts of the same prophets. Another approach, though, would be to examine what the biblical prophets have to say, simply recognizing that these prophets are also spoken of in the Quran.

According to one writer, the goal of this method is to have Muslims:

- “discover the inspiration of Scripture for themselves,
- understand their own need for a sacrifice and a savior,
- see the fullness of who Jesus is and discover Him as Savior and Lord, and
- learn how to study God’s Word with others”²⁵

In this method, seven prophets are mentioned who bear signs to the coming Messiah while the eighth “prophet” is Isa (Jesus) Himself.

Muslims see Jesus as a Prophet, even though we know Him to be more than a Prophet. The prophets who are studied in this method are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah, and John, plus Jesus.

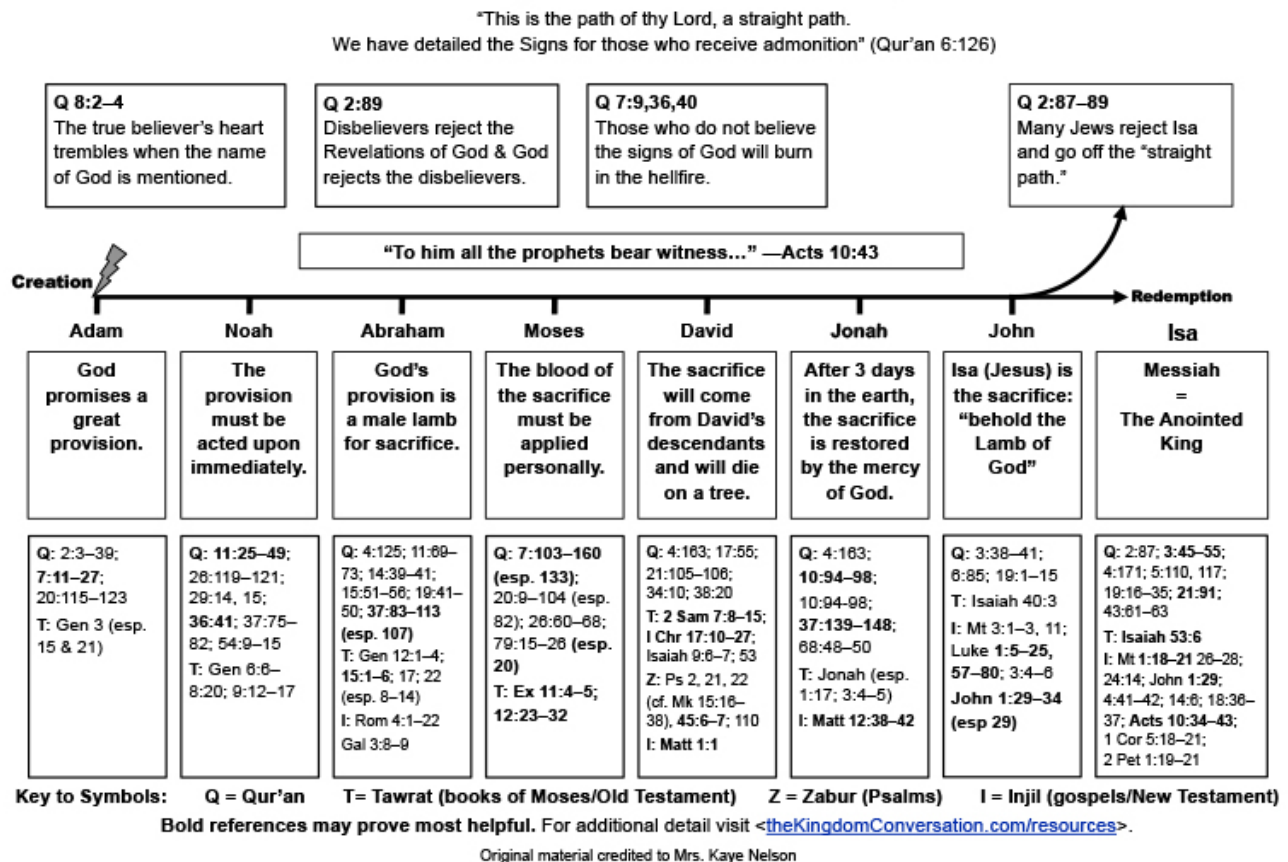
Which of these seven biblical characters do we as Christians recognize as prophets?

²⁴ Based on Quran 6:126: “This is the path of thy Lord, a straight path. We have detailed the Signs for those who receive admonition.”

²⁵ Hague, AJ. “Guide Muslims to the Bible.” *Mission Frontiers*, July-August 2013 edition *A Historic Wind is Blowing Through the House of Islam*. <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/guide-muslims-to-the-bible>, retrieved 6/26/15

See the diagram “The Straight Path of the Prophets” that shows the texts one can use to point toward Jesus as Messiah. Each of the “prophets” is listed together with a key sign (in the box below the prophet) and both Quranic and biblical texts. Remind the church planters that they can use or ignore the Quranic references, although according to the proponents of this method, it works better if Muslims begin by looking at the Quran first and then the Bible.

The Straight Path of the Prophets²⁶



In the account of Adam and Eve, we have God’s promise of a provision to cover the sin and shame brought on by their disobedience. Christian theologians call this first promise in Genesis 3:15 the *protoevangelium*, or first gospel. No one can do enough good works to merit forgiveness of sin. Only God can provide for our restoration and covering, and this comes through Jesus. Although Jesus’ name is not mentioned in Genesis 3:15, we have a glimpse into the future knowing that God will provide.

In the account of Noah, we learn that God’s promise of a provision is not enough; we must accept that provision or it does us no good.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

What would you think about a man who is told he can have \$1 million dollars but who refuses to accept the gift. What would you think of this person?

The ark God provides is of no good if we do not enter it. We shall surely drown otherwise. Nothing we do—no good works, even prayers five times a day—are sufficient for our salvation if we do not accept God’s provision.

In the account of **Abraham**, we learn that God will provide a sacrifice. The sacrifice is how God restores our honor and salvation. Blood must be shed. God provides a ram for Abraham's sacrifice.

In the account of Moses, we learn that we must apply the blood of the sacrificial lamb. The animal's blood takes the place of our blood. This blood covers our shame. In the Passover story, the blood of the lamb is applied to the doorframes of the house. Also, Hebrews 9:22 tells us, “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (ESV).

In the account of David, we learn that one of his descendants would become king forever. Isaiah 53 teaches that the servant of God would be a suffering sacrifice. In Micah 5:2-5, God announces that the ruler would come from Bethlehem (the town of David), shepherd God's people, and be their peace.

In the account of **Jonah**, we have another sign of the coming Messiah or Savior. Jonah is what we call a prototype. Jonah would spend three days in the depths of the sea in the belly of the giant fish, and then would be raised to life. In Matthew 12:40-41 and 16:4, Jesus connects Jonah's three days and nights in the fish to His three days in the earth.

In the account of John the Baptist, Jesus is identified as God’s provision, the sacrificial lamb. John declares, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29 ESV). Another text where Jesus is identified as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 is in the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-35.

Can you see how the path leads up to Jesus? Even Muhammad did not claim to be sinless, and he pointed to Jesus as the sinless one, conceived of a virgin.

In Jesus we have the culmination of the story. In a sense, all these accounts **lead** to Jesus. He is God’s chosen sacrifice. If you make reference to the Quran, besides *al Imran* 3:55, you can also go to 19:33-34 that reads, “And peace is on me the day I was born *and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive*. That is Jesus, the son of Mary—the word of truth about which they are in dispute” (italics ours). Clearly, the passage states that Jesus did die and was then raised back to life, something most Muslims deny.

John 1:1-7 says that Jesus was with God in the beginning and is God. Nothing was created without His participation. He is the light of the world and the life of all people. John the Baptist came as a witness to this light (Jesus) through whom all might believe.

As you go through the Path of the Prophets, be praying that God will guide your Muslim friend to an understanding of the truth. You may even pray for him and with him that God will reveal himself to him in ways that he has not done so before. Be encouraged by the fact that, as Hebrews 1:1-3 says, “In the past God spoke to our ancestors *through the prophets* at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (italics ours).

The Path of the Prophets method is not something that is done in a single day. It can be done over several days or weeks, giving time for your Muslim friend to reflect on each of the prophets and what they point out regarding the Messiah who is to come. Through the Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit, sincere seekers after the Messiah will find Him in all His glory, “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

2. **Discovery Bible Study**

Studies show that 90% of what people remember and apply to their own lives comes through self-discovery. Discovery Bible Study is based on the words of Jesus in John 6:44-45, “No one can come to me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws them ... It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me” (NIV).

The goal of Discovery Bible Study is two-fold:

1. Encourage people to hear God for themselves through His Word. (What’s God saying to you?)
2. Encourage people to obey what the Father is teaching them. (How will you apply what you have learned?)

Notice that it relies only on God’s Word and does not refer to the Quran. Also note that whereas the Any-3 tool is one-on-one, the Discovery Bible Study tool works best in a small group context.

Three things happen in a Discovery Bible study:

1. Ask and answer a simple question like those found in Part 1 below.
2. **Study** the Bible, letting the Bible speak for itself. This requires use of the inductive method and a reliance on the Holy Spirit to reveal the Word.
3. Commit to obey what the Bible has revealed to us.

A variation of this method has someone to retell the Bible story in his own words, thus making sure that the story has been heard correctly. This is especially important in oral cultures.

We present the two parts as examples of how to lead a Discovery Bible Study.

PART 1²⁷

Questions to ask:

1. What are you thankful for this week? (Prayer/Worship)
2. What has stressed you out this week? What do you need for things to be better? (Intercession)
3. How can we help each other with the needs we expressed? (Ministry)
4. What did we talk about last week? (Review/Accountability)
5. Did you change anything in your life as a result of last week's story? (Accountability/Obedience)
6. Did you get a chance to share the story with (the person they identified)? (Accountability/Evangelism)
7. We identified several needs last week and planned to meet those needs. How did it go? (Accountability/Ministry)

PART 2

1. Ask God to teach us as we read this week's passage (John 6:44-45: Hearing God/Scripture) and read the text for this week.
2. Ask for someone to retell the passage in his or her own words. Like they were telling a friend who wasn't there. (Understanding/Evangelism)
3. Ask the group: Do you agree with their retelling? Is there something they added or left out that they shouldn't have? As long as the group doesn't miss a key component of the passage, continue. If they miss something, read the passage again. If someone states something that isn't in the passage, ask, "Where did you find [what they said] in this passage?" Reread the passage, if necessary. (Priesthood of Believers/Group Correction/Understanding)
4. Ask: What does this passage teach us about God? (Discovery/Scripture/Priesthood of Believers)
5. Ask: What does this passage teach us about humanity? (Discovery/Scripture/Priesthood of Believers)
6. Ask: If we believe this passage is from God, how must we change? (Discovery/Scripture/Obedience/Priesthood of Believers)
7. Ask: Who are you going to share this passage with before we meet again? (Evangelism/Replication)

²⁷ Nored, James. "Discovery Bible Study." *Missional Outreach Network*. Parts 1 and 2 are cited verbatim. Retrieved 6/29/15.

This process is repeated every week with the hope that the members of the group will become followers of Jesus.

This method is not new, but it has been carefully explained in a systematic way to make inductive Bible study come alive for the participants.

David Watson has shared the outline for his Discovery Bible Study, which chronologically takes us from creation to the fall to the cross and redemption. See the Bible passages studied in the Discovery Bible Study method. (Note: There are other passages than these, but these are the ones for doing evangelistic Bible studies.)

From Creation to Christ – Guided Discovery Bible Study Reference List²⁸

Genesis 1:1-25	The Creation Story: God Created the World
Genesis 2:4-24	The Creation Story: The Creation of Man
Genesis 3:1-13	The Fall: The First Sin and Judgment
Genesis 3:14-24	The Fall: Judgment of a Sinful World
Genesis 6:1-9:17	The Fall: The Flood
Genesis 12:1-8, 15:1-6	Redemption: God's Promise to Abram
Genesis 22:1-19	Redemption: Abraham offers Isaac as a Sacrifice
Exodus 12:1-28	Redemption: The Promise of Passover
Exodus 20:1-21	Redemption: The Ten Commandments
Leviticus 4:1-35	Redemption: The Sacrificial System
Isaiah 53	Redemption: Isaiah Foreshadows the Coming Promise
Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20	Redemption: The Birth of Jesus
Matthew 3; John 1:29-34	Redemption: Jesus is Baptized
Matthew 4:1-11	Redemption: The Temptation of Christ
John 3:1-21	Redemption: Jesus and Nicodemus
John 4:1-26, 39-42	Redemption: Jesus and the Woman at the Well
Luke 5:17-26	Redemption: Jesus Forgives and Heals
Mark 4:35-41	Redemption: Jesus Calms the Storm
Mark 5:1-20	Redemption: Jesus Casts Out Evil Spirits
John 11:1-44	Redemption: Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead
Matthew 26:26-30	Redemption: The First Lord's Supper
John 18:1-19:16	Redemption: Jesus is Betrayed and Condemned
Luke 23:32-56	Redemption: Jesus is Crucified
Luke 24:1-35	Redemption: Jesus Conquers Death
Luke 24:36-53	Redemption: Jesus Appears and Ascends
John 3:1-21	Redemption: We Have a Choice

²⁸ Watson, David L. "From Creation to Christ – Guided Discovery Bible Study Reference List." *David L. Watson*. <https://www.davidlwatson.org/2009/07/11/from-creation-to-christ-%E2%80%93-guided-discovery-bible-study-reference-list/>, retrieved 6/29/15

What do you think of this method? What are its benefits? Are there any drawbacks to this method? What do you think of the chronological approach of looking at Bible passages from creation to redemption?

3. Person of Peace

Have several of the participants read Luke 10:1-12, taking turns.

Luke 10:1-12

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. (NIV)

The Person of Peace (POP) is someone with a predisposition to hearing the gospel, someone who is **thirsty** for good news, who has not turned his back on spiritual things and who is open to hearing something new. God often places such people into a community. These people (POPs) are often people of **influence**. It is through them that the Good News will be spread and be received as it comes from “one of their own.” This has been a tried and proven method on the mission field for centuries as missionaries, going into a new community, look for a welcoming person or family. In many cultures, hospitality must be shown to a stranger. It is the church planter’s role to discern if the person who welcomes him is that community’s POP.

Divide them into four groups and assign one of the following texts to each groups. The answers are in parentheses and are not included in the participant manual.

Read the passage and identify who in the text served as a bridge and what community needed to hear the gospel.

Group 1: Matthew 9:9-11 (Jesus calls Matthew. The first thing Matthew does is invite Jesus into his home where he meets Matthew's colleagues.)

Group 2: Luke 19:1-10 (Jesus calls Zacchaeus and goes to his home.)

Group 3: John 4:4-7,28-30, 39-41 (Jesus speaks with a woman by the well in the town of Sychar, reveals that he is the Messiah and she goes and tells the people of the town, who then believe in Jesus.)

Group 4: Acts 16:12-15 (Lydia hears the gospel from Paul and uses her home as a gathering place for the Christian community in Philippi.)

How might you discern who is a Person of Peace?

Share any of the points listed below that haven't been mentioned.

"How does one discern if a Person of Peace is in his or her life? Here are a few things to look for:

1. Do they receive you openly into their lives knowing that you are a follower of Jesus?
2. Are they open to spiritual conversations? Meaning, you can dialogue with them about spiritual issues without them shutting down emotionally.
3. Are they willing to look into the Scriptures with a curious spirit and not a critical one?
4. Do they have influence with others? Are they in a position of influence over their family, friends and within the community?
5. Is their home a hub of activity for the neighborhood and extended family?
6. Do they have the ability to introduce new people into their sphere of influence effectively?
7. Do they have a natural ability of including and bringing others to small groups, events or worship services?"²⁹

Consider those in your lives who might be POPs and to pray that God brings POPs into your lives. What will be your next steps in approaching this person with the Good News of Jesus? When?

4. MNM Muslim-appropriate Bible Studies

Multiplication Network Ministries (MNM) has developed a 10 Bible study lessons to use with Muslims and/or converts to Christianity. The Bible studies address the issues of fear and shame, taking into account the predominant worldviews of most Muslims. The Bible studies are included in the Appendix.

²⁹ Rohrmeyer, Gary, quoted in "The Person of Peace." *EvangelismCoach*. April 2, 2010. <http://www.evangelismcoach.org/2010/the-person-of-peace/>, retrieved 6/25/15.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Even with many different methods of sharing the Good News, the most effective method is usually a believer's personal testimony. This testimony is most effective after the believer has developed a relationship with the Muslim neighbor, and his daily walk demonstrates a deep spirituality.

Read 1 Peter 3:9-16.

1 Peter 3:9-16

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." But in your hearts revere 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, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (NIV)

Explain what these two verses are saying regarding our personal testimony.

Our lives should reflect God's love (repaying evil with blessing) and character (keeping our tongues from evil, seeking peace, turning from evil and doing good). We must always be prepared to give a defense (explanation) of the hope that is within us. The text also says that this should be done with gentleness and respect. A confrontational, spiteful approach will not work. We must show respect for the other person even as we share the urgency of knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. This makes clear, then, that we cannot rudely criticize the basic beliefs of Muslims. Doing these things will not gain us an audience. Our Muslim neighbor would simply turn a deaf ear to our comments or worse.

Carl Medearis shares a list of some 21 Do's and Don't's when sharing the gospel with Muslims. Among these 21 are these key recommendations:

- Never attack the person of Muhammad or the Quran.
- Treat the Bible with total respect in the same way that a Muslim shows respect for the Quran.
- Avoid eating in public during Ramadan.
- Never walk in front of a praying Muslim.
- Ask a Muslim what he believes. Do not assume you know.
- Offer to pray for your Muslim friends, such as praying a blessing or for a situation he may be facing.
- Be a good listener. In this way you gain the right to share.³⁰

PREPARING YOUR TESTIMONY

Develop a short and concise testimony, about two to three sentences, of what your life was like before you knew Jesus as your Savior. Share how you came to accept Him as your Savior and what your life has been like since becoming a follower of Jesus.

Take five minutes to share have them share their testimonies in pairs.

³⁰ Medearis, Carl. *Muslims, Christians and Jesus*. Bethany House, 2008. pp. 172-174.

ACTION PLAN

Select one or more of these follow-up activities (or decide on appropriate ones) before the next session:

- Identify which of the four ways to share the gospel is the one you'd like to practice first.
- Share the method you select with another person from your church and practice it with them.
- Use this method with a person you think might not be a Christian.
- Identify who in your circles of contacts might be a Person of Peace and pray that God opens up a way for you to get to know him or her and share the gospel with him or her.
- Develop a relationship with a person who you think may not be a Christian and pray that the Holy Spirit will prepare his or her heart to hear the gospel.
- Pray for Muslims throughout the world and your location in particular, asking God to open their hearts to the truth about Jesus. Pray for a specific person you know who doesn't know Jesus as their Savior and Lord.
- Lead a study of the Module M - Reaching Muslims sessions with people in your church or with pastors in your community.

CLOSING: CONCERT OF PRAYER

Pray for the following:

- Give thanks for the six studies in this module, for each participant, and for what people have learned about ministering to Muslims.
- Ask God to prepare Muslim people's hearts to hear and receive the gospel.
- Ask God to guide you to the right people at the right time for sharing your personal testimony.
- Pray for Christians around the world and in your community, that the Holy Spirit would cause them to live as faithful children of God and to speak the truth in love to people who need to know about Jesus.
- Pray for Christians who are being persecuted for their faith, that they would remain faithful to God and have strength from the Holy Spirit so they can bless those who insult and mistreat them and that their enemies may see Jesus in them and come to know Him.
- Pray that the studies in this module would bear fruit in the families, communities, and congregations represented by each participant.

APPENDIX

THE FIRST AND LAST SACRIFICE

By Mike Shipman. "Any-2: Lead Muslims to Christ Now!" *Mission Frontiers*. July 1, 2013.
www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/any-3

Part One: Jesus

Jesus, the Word of God¹, was in Heaven with God from the beginning. He was born into this world through the Virgin Mary. Both the Bible and the Qur'an teach this. Jesus never sinned, even though He was tempted in every way imaginable. Jesus overcame the desires of His flesh. He never married; never killed anyone; never gathered riches for Himself.² Jesus once fasted 40 days and 40 nights while being tempted by the devil, yet he never sinned.

Jesus performed great miracles. He cast out demons; healed the sick and blind; Jesus even raised the dead.

It is interesting that, though Jesus was not yet old, He began prophesying about His death. To his followers He said, "I must die, but I will rise again." Do you know why Jesus said, "I must die?"³

Part Two: Why did Jesus have to die?

The Adam and Eve Story

The answer is found in the *Taurat* (what Muslims call the five books of Moses). The *Taurat* tells us about the first persons God created, Adam and Eve. God put them in a perfect paradise, called the Garden of Eden. They were given great freedom to eat fruit from any tree in the garden except for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God warned them that if they ate of that fruit they would die.

¹ Muslims will recognize references to Jesus as the Word of God, His virgin birth and miracles from the Qur'an, surah al-Imran 3:42-55. This "Jesus" section parallels much of Kevin Greeson's *The Camel, How Muslims Are Coming to Faith in Christ!* (Richmond: WIGTake Resources, 2007) without actually quoting from the Qur'an. The miracle of casting out demons isn't mentioned in the Qur'an.

² This reference to the holy conduct of Jesus puts Him in sharp contrast with Islam's founding prophet.

³ Although many Muslims believe that Jesus did not die, we speak the truth about His death in "The First and Last Sacrifice Story." Out of respect, they usually let us finish the story. If they raise an objection at this point we try to delay answering until after the gospel presentation. When the question must be answered, we often refer to Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus' death. We also mention Qur'anic references, such as 3:55 and 19:33. The first reference clearly states that Jesus died, and 19:33-34 states the Muslim position that Jesus prophesied his death and resurrection: "And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive. That is Jesus, the son of Mary - the word of truth about which they are in dispute."

A Covering for Sin

One day, Satan visited Eve in the form of a serpent and tempted her to eat the fruit that God had forbidden. She ate the fruit, and gave it to Adam, who also ate it. Immediately, they were afraid, so they hid from God. But because God knows everything, he found them and punished Adam and Eve for their disobedience.

As punishment for their disobedience, God cast Adam and Eve out of the garden paradise, and eventually they did die. God's desire had been for them to live forever, but because of their sins, they lost paradise and died.

It is interesting that the *Taurat* says Adam and Eve committed just one sin and it resulted in their judgment and death. Adam and Eve seemed like good people, probably better than us. Perhaps they had already done hundreds of good works. They hadn't killed anyone, committed adultery, or stolen anything. But they disobeyed just once and it resulted in death. Some think that if our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds our sins will be forgiven, but that is not what the Bible says.

Promised Savior and New Clothes

Yet God still loved Adam and Eve. So He did something very interesting. God made a way for their sins to be forgiven. He changed Adam and Eve's clothes. God replaced the clothes made of leaves that Adam and Eve had made with new clothes made from animal skins. Of course, to make these clothes, an animal had to die. The death of an innocent animal was the price that God paid to cover the sins of Adam and Eve. Because He loved Adam and Eve, God himself offered the first sacrifice for the forgiveness of their sins. The Bible teaches us that apart from the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. (Hebrews 9:22) Since that first sacrifice, all of our forefathers have offered sacrifices to have their sins forgiven: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and others.

After pronouncing His judgment on Adam and Eve, God also judged the serpent (Satan) who had deceived them. God promised that from among the woman's descendants a Savior would come who would crush Satan's head, although Satan would also injure Him. Over the centuries that followed, many prophets of God foretold the coming of a Savior who would take away the sins of the world.

Part Three: "That is why Jesus had to die!"

And then Jesus came, born of a virgin, the descendent of the woman. Jesus lived a sinless life and performed great miracles. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, a prophet named John looked to Jesus and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

That is interesting, isn't it? Jesus was called "the Lamb of God." Why? Because a lamb is an animal used for sacrifice. Do you remember my question: "Do you know why Jesus said, 'I must die?'" That is why Jesus said, "I must die."

Jesus came to be God's sacrifice to pay for our sins. This is why He surrendered Himself to the Jewish leaders and Roman soldiers to be crucified. He was God's sacrifice for your sins and mine.

As He was dying, Jesus cried out, "It is finished," meaning that our sin debt had now been paid. Then Jesus bowed His head and died. But on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, just as He had promised.

For the next 40 days, Jesus appeared to more than 500 of His followers, and then was taken up into heaven. We know that one day, Jesus will return to earth as judge over all mankind.

Conclusion: "That is why I know my sins are forgiven."

The Bible tells us that if we surrender our life to Jesus as Lord and believe that He has paid for our sins through his sacrifice and that God has raised Him from the dead, our sins will be forgiven. ***And that is why I know my sins are forgiven.***

ANY-3 STORY FEATURES

That is Interesting

Notice that in "The First and Last Sacrifice Story" we periodically use the phrase "That is interesting." In *Any-3*, this phrase calls the hearer's attention to important points we don't want him to miss:⁴

- Jesus prophesied his own death.
- Adam and Eve were given the death penalty even though they only committed one sin.
- God changed their clothes (introducing the theme of sacrifice in Scripture).
- Jesus was called "The Lamb of God."

⁴ Feel free to use your own tag phrase for, "That is interesting." The important points to emphasize in this story are: 1) Sin brought judgment; 2) The effects of sin were shame, fear, and judgment; 3) Good works can't cancel sins; 4) God's provision of clothing made from a sacrificed animal foreshadowed His future provision of a sacrificial Savior.

Decision Questions

Two questions help us get to a decision:

- That makes sense, doesn't it? Although we cannot pay off our own sin debt, God has made a way for our sins to be forgiven through Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection.
- Do you believe what I have told you: that Jesus died for our sins and was raised again?

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER**LESSON 1****POWER OVER THE DEVIL: Luke 4:1-13****Introduction**

Have you ever been tempted to do something you felt was not right? Were you able to resist the temptation or did you give into it? Why is it that so often we yield to temptations? Do you feel that there can be a person who can truly resist temptation in this world or is all of humanity prone to falling? In this story from the Gospels we learn about the Master, Jesus, who was able to resist even the devil.

BIBLE READING: Luke 4:1-12

1 *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, **2** where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.*

3 *The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”*

4 *Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live by bread alone.’”*

5 *The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. **6** And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. **7** If you worship me, it will all be yours.”*

8 *Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”*

9 *The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. **10** For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; **11** they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”*

12 *Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”
When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.*

Study

1. Reread verse 1. Jesus is mentioned in the very first verse. What does the Gospel say about Jesus in this first verse in relation to the Holy Spirit?

2. What do you think it means to be “full of the Holy Spirit” and “led by the Spirit”?
3. What does this say to you about this person called Jesus? Would you agree that He must be someone very special if the Holy Spirit of God is in Him and leading Him?
4. According to verse 2, who tempted Jesus and for how long?
5. Can you imagine going 40 days without food? What would be your condition after 40 days without something to eat?
6. The devil tempts Jesus three times in this passage. According to verse 3, how does he tempt Jesus first?
7. The devil often attacks us, or tempts us, in our weakest points, doesn't he? Imagine not eating for 40 days and then having the Tempter encourage you to turn a stone into bread. In verse 4, what does Jesus say in response to this tempting of the devil?

Did you see that Jesus' response is not based on human words alone but on the Scriptures? He responds by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 from the Torah. He answered the devil by quoting God's Word.

8. Read verses 5-7. The devil's second temptation is an attempt to get Jesus to bow at the feet of the Tempter and to worship him. The devil promises him power and authority over all the kingdoms of the world. In verse 8, how does Jesus respond to the devil?

Again, Jesus quotes from the Torah, this time Deuteronomy 6:13. Jesus lets the Word of God fight against the wiles of the devil.

9. Once again in verses 9 and 10, Satan comes against Jesus, tempting him a third time. How does he tempt Jesus this time?
10. A third time Jesus quotes from the Torah, this time Deuteronomy 6:16. What does Jesus say in this verse?

The devil departs, defeated. He will return, but he knows that for right now, Jesus has defeated him by quoting the Word of God.

11. What does this say to you about the power behind the Word of God?

12. What does this say to you about Jesus?

As difficult as it is for us to not fall into temptation, the Bible tells us that our fall separates us from God. Romans 3:23 tells us that EVERYONE (ALL) have sinned (fallen into temptation) and therefore are separated (come short) from God. Proverbs 20:9 says, “Who can say, ‘I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin’?” The Bible goes on to say, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

13. What does this say, then, about our condition before God? Are we holy, without blemish, or are we impure?

And yet, the Gospel tells us that Jesus did not yield to temptation. Unlike us, Jesus lived a life of purity, not falling to the Tempter.

BIBLE READING: 1 John 3:5

But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.

14. Was Jesus sinful like us?

BIBLE READING: 1 Peter 2:22; 1 Peter 1:19

“He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth,” and “...the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

15. What do these verses, which refer to Jesus, say about him?

Jesus is able to withstand the devil because of the power he has over the devil. He quotes the Word of God. According to the gospel in John 1:14, God’s Word “*became flesh and made his dwelling with us.*” The sinless One, the all-powerful One, came to redeem us since we are unable to save ourselves from the devil.

Conclusion

In this lesson we see that Jesus lived a sinless life, unlike the rest of us. Even when tempted by Satan, Jesus was able to withstand him, quoting the Bible. Jesus had power over Satan. No one else in all of the world has power over the devil. This should say something to us about how different Jesus is from the rest of humanity. It should help us to see that Jesus is special. Jesus is, as the writer Matthew says, Emmanuel, which means God with us (Matthew 1:23).

Prayer

Consider what you have learned about Jesus in this lesson. Ask this same Jesus to be with you this week, to help you to overcome temptations that bring shame to you and to your family. Worship this Jesus who even has power over the devil. Ask Him for power to resist.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER

LESSON 2

POWER OVER THE STORMS: Matthew 8:23-27

Introduction

Have you ever been outside in a storm? How did you feel when the rain came pelting down and lightning flashed across the sky? Did you shudder when you heard the thunder? As human beings, we either love to watch a storm come across the fields or we are fearful. One thing we all know, there is no way for us to stop a storm. It is not something within our power to do. This Bible lesson is about Someone who does have power over storms. Let us read on and learn more about this person.

BIBLE READING: Matthew 8:23-27

23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. **24** Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. **25** The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

26 He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves,, and it was completely calm.

27 The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

Study

1. Reread verse 23. The verse tells us someone got into the boat. Who was it? You can’t tell from this verse, so you will need to read this in its *context*. Go back one verse and find who was talking just before this incident.
2. Verse 23 continues with the words, “and his disciples followed him.” So Jesus was not alone in this boat. His disciples, His followers, were in the boat with Him. Not everyone likes to be in water, not even in a boat. What about you? Do you like the water or would you prefer to stay on land? Explain your answer.
3. According to the next verse (24), what suddenly appeared while the disciples and Jesus were out on the lake?
4. How bad was this storm?
5. Look at verse 25. Why were Jesus’ disciples afraid? What did they think would happen?

Oftentimes when we face something terrible, we have very negative thoughts about what will happen. If we were in the boat with the disciples, we might think the same thing. Our minds go to what COULD happen. It left the disciples very afraid.

6. Read verse 26. How did Jesus respond to their fear?
7. Besides confronting His disciples for their fear, He also “rebuked the winds and the waves.” What happened next?

Notice that the Bible passage does not say that the storm subsided little by little until everything was calm again. It says that it was COMPLETELY calm.

8. Read verse 27. How did the disciples react to this calming of the waves and winds?
9. How do you think you would have reacted?

It is important to understand that the Jews were afraid of the seas. They felt that hideous animals resided in the depths of the water, ready to attack. The water for them symbolized death. It was only normal that they would feel they were about to die when the calm, peaceful waters suddenly turned to giant waves and the wind howled in all of its fury.

10. What do you think of Someone who can calm a raging storm? Does this give you confidence in this person? Do you feel He is someone you can trust, that He is someone who can protect you? This Jesus must be more than a mere man. Do you know of any man who can calm the seas?

Conclusion

In this lesson we see that Jesus had power over the seas and winds. He could calm a storm completely. His disciples did not die like they thought they would. He had power over nature, unlike us. This Jesus is Someone worth knowing. He is someone we can trust in. He is someone who can protect us when things are going bad or when others are against us.

Prayer

Consider what you have learned about Jesus in this lesson. Ask this same Jesus to be with you this week, to help you when you are afraid, remembering that even the storms cannot defeat Jesus. Worship this Jesus who even has power over the storms of life. Ask Him for power to resist these storms we face in our daily lives.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER**LESSON 3****POWER OVER DEMONS: Matthew 8:28-34****Introduction**

Some of you may live in a culture where demons seem to be in control. You are afraid to walk in the woods for fear of the demons who reside in them. There is constant fear about the evil eye. You may wear amulets to ward off the evil eye. You might say “Bismallah” when entering a dark room to scare off the jinn. This Bible lesson is about Someone who is not afraid of the demons or even the evil eye. In fact, this person has control over them.

BIBLE READING: Matthew 8:28-34

***28** When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. **29** “What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come to torture us before the appointed time?”*

***30** Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. **31** The demons begged Jesus, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”*

***32** He said to them “Go!” So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. **33** Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.*

***34** Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.*

Study

1. Reread verse 28. After the calming of the storm, Jesus and his disciples reached the other side of the lake. What was the name of this region?
2. In this same verse, who did Jesus encounter?
3. What do you know about demon-possessed people? Have you ever seen one? How did you feel?

4. This same verse tells us that people avoided walking past these tombs for fear of the demon-possessed men. Have you ever avoided walking through a certain area because of the evil spirits, or jinn that you felt resided there? Explain.
5. Look at verse 29. What words did the men shout at Jesus?
6. It is interesting the title the demon-possessed men gave to Jesus. What did they call him? What does this say about the power that Jesus possesses?
7. Look at the second question they ask Jesus. What do you suppose they meant about Jesus coming to torture them before the appointed time?
8. Read 2 Peter 2:4: *“For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment....”* What does this verse have to do with this question that the men ask Jesus?

These demon-possessed men, or the demons within them, knew that one day they would be judged. These demons are the fallen angels who rebelled against God in the beginning of time. They, together with their leader, Satan, were cast out of heaven into the bowels of hell, to wait for the final judgment.

9. Read verses 30 and 31. According to these two verses, what did the men beg of Jesus?

The demons in these men knew that if they were cast out, they would wander, looking for someone else to possess. By going into the pigs, they did not have to wander.

10. Read verses 32-33. What happened next?

Even the pigs did not want to be possessed, and chose to run headlong into the water where they drowned.

11. According to verse 34, why did the townspeople plead with Jesus to leave their region?

Not only did the townspeople lose their source of income—the keeping of pigs—but this is telling about these Jews. Jews were not supposed to eat pork, and yet they were tending pigs for sale.

Conclusion

Even demon-possessed men can be healed by Jesus. Jesus has power over the demons unlike the rest of us. Jesus was not afraid of them. He did not wear amulets or speak magical words. He only needed to command the demons and they obeyed Him.

Prayer

Consider what you have learned about Jesus in this lesson. Ask this same Jesus to be with you this week, to help you when you are afraid of the darkness, or of the jinn, or of the evil eye. Worship this Jesus who even has power over the demons. Ask Him for strength to resist the evil powers we face in our daily lives.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER

LESSON 4

POWER OVER SICKNESS: John 11:1-44

Introduction

Sickness is a natural part of our lives, the result of our fallen nature. During our lifetime we will contend with illnesses like influenza, colds, rashes. Some will contract major diseases like cancer or suffer from heart problems. Some will contract cataracts and have difficulty seeing or an eye infection that leaves them blind. Eventually, the final illness, death, will come to each and every one of us. In this Bible lesson, we will learn about many who were sick and their encounter with Jesus.

BIBLE READING: John 11:1-44

1 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.... **3** So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

4 When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." **5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."... **11** [he] went onto tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up."

12 His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." **13** Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, **15** and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."...

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. **18** Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, **19** and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. **20** When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection, at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

27 *"Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is come into the world."*

28 *After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you."...*

33 *When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.*

35 *Jesus wept.*

36 *Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him."*

37 *But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"*

38 *Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 "Take away the stone," he said.*

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

40 *Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"*

41 *So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."*

43 *When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."*

Study

This was an especially long Bible passage. Now answer some questions based on this passage.

1. In verse 1, who was sick?

2. According to verse 3, whom did the sisters send word to?
3. In verse 4, how does Jesus answer the sisters' concern about their brother Lazarus?
4. What do you suppose Jesus meant when he said, "This sickness will not end in death?"
5. According to verse 5, Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha. Why would Jesus delay his departure for Bethany in verses 6 and 7? What would you have done if you had gotten this news?

We've omitted several verses here in order to stay just with this story.

6. When we take up verse 11, Jesus makes a statement about Lazarus' condition. What does He say about Lazarus?
 7. According to verses 11-13, how did the disciples interpret Jesus' words about Lazarus falling asleep?
 8. Notice that in Jewish and Arab cultures, one usually did not say, "He died." They will say, "He has fallen asleep." Jews referred to death indirectly. They would not say, "He died." They would look for words less direct. Do you have an indirect way in your culture of saying someone has died? If so, what do you say?
 9. In verse 14, Jesus is saying that Lazarus is dead. Why did Jesus say it was good that He was not there?
 10. According to verse 17, how many days had Lazarus been dead before Jesus arrived?
 11. What does Jesus say to her in verse 23 to comfort her? In verse 24 how does Martha interpret these words?
- Jesus now makes a historic declaration about Himself. The words He utters no man has ever stated before. Pay close attention to what He says about Himself.
12. What is it that Jesus said about Himself in verses 25 and 26?
 13. What do you suppose Jesus means in this declaration about Himself?

14. How important is it to believe that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life? What does this mean about the importance of having a relationship with Jesus?

15. When Martha was asked if she believed this, how did she respond? What did she say about Jesus in verse 27?

Here we have two very important statements about Jesus. The One who calms the storms and casts out demons, this same Jesus calls Himself the Resurrection and the Life, the One who can bring people back from the dead. Martha's declaration is that Jesus is the promised Messiah. This is not ordinary man, this is God's Anointed One, the One Martha calls "*the Son of God.*"

16. What is your reaction to these two declarations? What do these say to you about this Jesus we have been studying in these four lessons?

Maybe it is too soon to answer this question. Shall we continue on to see what happens next? It is easy to make claims about oneself or to have others make claims about us. It is another thing if these claims are demonstrated.

17. Go to verses 33-35. According to these verses, who wept?

18. Read verses 38-44. Retell this story in your own words.

19. Lazarus came back to life, even after being in the tomb four days. Why was this resurrection necessary? What did it prove about Jesus?

Conclusion

Jesus had power over illness. Blind men were given sight. Lame people were made to walk. Deaf had their hearing restored. And even here, a dead person was brought back to life, to witness to Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life, and as the Messiah, God's own Son. In Luke 7:18-22, John is in prison and about to die. He sends his followers to Jesus to ask if He truly is "the one to come," meaning the Messiah. Jesus answers by referring to His healing acts. In verse 22, He says, "*Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.*" All that Jesus did on earth as the master physician and healer point to His Messiahship, as the one whom the world had been waiting for.

Prayer

Consider what you have learned about Jesus in this lesson. Ask this same Messiah to give you the faith to believe what He says about Himself. If so, you will have eternal life. Ask Him for strength to resist those who would speak against Jesus. Ask Him to help you face the challenges in your daily life, even sickness or approaching death.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER**LESSON 5****FROM DISHONOR TO HONOR: Luke 15:11-24****Introduction**

Do you live in a culture in which life is governed by honor and the desire to avoid bringing shame upon yourself or upon your family or community? Daily we strive to avoid doing things that will bring dishonor to our family. Should we bring dishonor, we may find ourselves ostracized by our family or community, cast out, or even killed. The Bible is full of stories about honor and shame and how we can be restored in our relationship with our family or community. Let us look at one of those stories that Jesus the Messiah told to His followers.

BIBLE READING: Luke 15:11-24

11 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. **12** The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate. So he divided his property between them.

13 Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. **14** After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. **15** So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. **16** He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! **18** I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ **20** So he got up and went to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23** Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. **24** For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

Study

1. Give your general impression about the younger son. Did he bring honor to himself, to his father, or did he bring dishonor? Please explain your answer.
2. Can you share a similar story from your own experience of someone who brought dishonor to his family? If so, please share it with the group.
3. Go back to verse 12. What request did the younger son make of his father?
4. Why was this a shameful request?
5. If you have difficulty in answering question #2, think about this. Sons inherit from their father when the parent dies, not before. It was as if the son were asking his father to die in order that he might gain his portion of his father's wealth while his father is still alive. What kind of position does that put the father into?

His father might need those funds to live on. The sons should inherit whatever is left over after the father dies. Yet, the son demands what he feels is his even while his father lives. Not only this, there is a presumption that he deserves something from his father. In many cultures only the eldest son inherits. Yet the son presumes he will and should receive something. It was not his to ask for. It was his father's to give as he sought fit.

6. Not only did the younger son demand "his" inheritance, but where did he go with it, according to verse 13?
7. What did he do with this wealth he obtained from his father?
8. Isn't it true that oftentimes people will act differently when they are far from home? Some men will travel to another country and do exactly what this son did, squandering his wealth, and living a loose and immoral life because no one from home can see them. Was this an honorable thing or a shameful thing?
9. According to verse 14, what happens next when the younger son has spent all his resources?
10. In verse 15, what did he have to do in order to survive?
11. Note that as a Jew, pigs were considered an unclean animal. Jews were not to keep pigs or come in contact with pigs. Jews would not eat pork since it was considered filth. How do you suppose he felt, having to feed pigs for a living?
12. What did the son say to himself in verses 17 and 18 when he came to his senses and realized his shameful condition?

13. In verses 18 and 19, the son recognizes two things about himself. What are they?
14. Have there been things we have done that we feel bring dishonor to us and shame to our family or community? Have we reached the point of feeling like an outcast, far from the presence of God?

Yes, the son recognized that he had sinned against heaven and against his father. He also realized that he was not worthy to be called his father's son. He was dishonored. He felt he was disowned by his father. He felt he was no longer a member of the community.

15. Read out loud verse 20. Tell this verse in your own words after reading it out loud.

16. What does this say about the father? Do you think the son expected his father to react in this way?

Surely the Jews who listened to Jesus tell this story expected a different reaction from the father. They did not expect grace, mercy, or compassion. Jesus put an unexpected twist to the ending of this story. The father embraced him and kissed him, totally unexpected by Jesus' listeners.

17. Instead of agreeing with the son that he had been sinned against and that his son was unworthy to be called his son, what did the father say in verse 22?
18. The robe and the sandals signify what in this culture? Is the father dishonoring the son or honoring him?
19. The ring was probably a signet ring with the engraving of the family name. What was the father saying to the son? Was he an outcast or was he being received as a member of the family?
20. Look at the joyful words of the father to the servants in verses 23 and 24. What does the father say?

Conclusion

This is a beautiful example of God's grace towards us. Jesus is saying that God our Father forgives us for our transgressions. He removes the shame and dishonor and receives us back into his family. Ephesians 1:4-7 says, *"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us."* Can't

you picture the father in Jesus' story doing this? And Jesus is saying, "I am the One He loves through whom all this is possible for you." We do not need to go through life carrying shame and dishonor. Jesus took this upon Himself in order that we might be restored to full fellowship with God the Father.

Prayer

Consider what you have learned about Jesus in this lesson. Ask Him to help you understand the deep meaning of this story regarding God's love for us. Ask Him to help you to see that God does not turn His back on us for our shameful acts, but provide a way to be restored into community with Him. Ask Him to help you face the challenges in your daily life, even as you wallow in shame and dishonor and do not know how to find that restoration.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER**LESSON 6****FROM UNCLEAN TO CLEAN: Matthew 8:1-4****Introduction**

Some people today suffer from an illness called psoriasis. It's a disease of the skin producing reddish splotches or rash. It can be debilitating as lesions in the joints, causing much pain. It is chronic and leaves the person oftentimes ashamed to be in public if areas where the blotching appears cannot be covered by clothing. The good news is that it is not a contagious illness. One person cannot transmit it to another person.

Unlike psoriasis, there is a dreaded disease as old as time. Once thought to be eliminated, it continues to pop up in different parts of the world. People shudder when they hear the word "leprosy" and think about all that this disease does to the human body. Parts can become insensitive to heat or pain and can eventually fall off from injury. It is an infection that can leave the body scaly, also causing blindness. Once thought to be highly contagious, it is not, but it is spread from human to human. With it comes social stigma and a sense of dread and of shame for many who contract this disease. Often such people are also isolated from society and may even be placed in colonies with other lepers.

Jesus dealt with several cases of leprosy. We need to see how Jesus reacted to lepers and helped to restore them to fruitful lives among their friends and family.

BIBLE READING: Matthew 8:1-4

1 When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. 2 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him, and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." 3 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. 4 Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Study

1. Have you ever seen anyone with leprosy? What do you understand about this disease? How does it affect the leper? His or her family? His or her community?

Lepers are oftentimes considered pariah, outcasts from society, people without a community. Forced to live apart, they oftentimes lose their sense of humanity. There is great shame in being a leper. This shame is felt not only by the person afflicted, but also often by the victim's family.

2. How would you feel if a doctor were to tell you that you have a case of leprosy? What thoughts would go through your head? What would you envision your future would be like?
3. According to verse 2, how did the man describe his condition to Jesus?

Imagine considering yourself unclean, physically, socially, spiritually. One would see himself as separate from everyone else. A leper even had to shout the word “leper” if he went out in public so that people could scurry, distancing themselves from him. This man who came to Jesus desired more than anything to be clean, restored to health, restored to life!

4. In verse 3, what was Jesus response to this man’s desire?
5. Why do you think Jesus told the man in verse 4 not to tell anyone what had happened before going to the priest?

BIBLE READING: 2 Chronicles 26:19-21

19 *Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the Lord’s temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead. 20 When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the Lord had afflicted him.*

21 *King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house-- leprous, and banned from the temple of the Lord. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.*

Study

6. What was King Uzziah doing in the temple?

In 2 Chronicles 26:17 and following, we find out that what Uzziah was doing was wrong. It tells us that the chief priest, Azariah, confronted the king for taking up the incense burner. They said, “*It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord. That is for the priests... who have been consecrated burn incense.*” That is why Uzziah became angry.

7. What was God’s response to Uzziah’s affront?
8. What did the priests do in verse 20 when they saw Uzziah had leprosy?

9. To whom did Uzziah attribute his leprosy in this same verse?

10. What was the rest of Uzziah's life like according to verse 21?

Imagine being isolated from your own family, like Uzziah was, and even banned from participating in worship in the temple. It is easy to see why becoming a leper changed everything.

Conclusion

Jesus gave hope to the lepers. He restored them to health. He gave them new life. They could return to their families after presenting themselves to the priest and declared clean again. No longer were they shamefully unclean, outcasts, forced to live apart from human contact.

There are many things that can separate us from others in our families and communities. We become ashamed and dishonored and need restoration. But we are unable to restore ourselves. Only Jesus can make wrongs right. Only Jesus can declare us clean through His own sacrifice. The book of Hebrews tells us that without the shedding of blood there can be no cleansing. Romans 3:15 says, *"God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith."*

Prayer

Consider what you have learned about Jesus in this lesson. Ask Him to help you understand how you can be cleansed of your shame by believing in Him. Jesus can help you to comprehend why a blood sacrifice is needed for cleansing and restoration and that it is ONLY His blood that can effect that change.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER**LESSON 7****FROM SHAME TO RESTORATION: Luke 7:36-50****Introduction**

People often go through life ashamed for past actions that have made them dishonorable in the eyes of their community. A person who sells her body for money is looked down upon. Women will have nothing to do with her. Men may use her but despise her afterwards. Others may have gambled away their possessions, losing even their land, leaving them and their family destitute. The community ostracizes them for these actions. A Mennonite bishop once told me that he was removed from his role in the church because he was in debt. He was not able to pay his bills. The church felt if he could not manage his own affairs, how could he manage the affairs of the church? For years he hung his head low, feeling ashamed, inadequate, and rejected by his own.

So it is that many go through life ashamed, feeling rejected, feeling dishonored. They need restoration. In this lesson we will learn about one person who was restored to the community by the love shown her by Jesus.

BIBLE READING: Luke 7:36-50

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. **37** A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. **38** As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. **39** When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

41 "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven."

44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and

wiped them with her hair. **45** You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. **46** You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. **47** Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins have been forgiven.”

49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Study

1. Who invited Jesus to have dinner with him?

A Pharisee was known as a teacher of the law. They saw themselves as the ruling religious leaders. They felt that all Jews should look to them and follow their example. They did everything possible to make themselves look good in the eyes of the people.

2. Do you know religious leaders who have the same attitude? How do you feel in their presence?
3. Who approached Jesus while he was reclining at the table? What does verse 37 say about her?

The passage doesn’t say this, but it can be assumed that this sinful woman was probably a prostitute.

4. According to verse 38, what did this woman do?
5. What do you think made her do these things?
6. In verse 39, what was the Pharisee’s response to her actions?

In verse 40 we learn that Jesus knew exactly what the Pharisee was thinking. He begins to tell a story.

7. In your own words, retell the story that Jesus shared in verses 41-42.

8. Which of the two debtors should have felt more forgiven?

Jesus did not rebuke the woman for her action, even though she was a sinner. In this culture, her presence would have brought dishonor to the host and to Jesus. The fact that Jesus allowed her to touch his feet, to come in contact with him, would have made him ceremonially unclean. Nevertheless, Jesus is more upset with the Pharisee than with the woman.

9. Reread verses 44 through 46. Jesus gently tells the Pharisee that he dishonored him as his guest. How did the Pharisee dishonor Jesus?

The Pharisee ignored all of the social niceties of hospitality that a guest would deserve upon entering one's home. After walking to the host's home, a good host would offer water to wash the dust off of the sandaled feet. He would have greeted his guest with a kiss to the cheek, welcoming him to his home. He might even have poured out oil on his head as a way of honoring his guest. The Pharisee did none of these things. In fact, he dishonored Jesus by ignoring the social norms of hospitality.

10. In your culture, what are some ways that you would honor a guest in your home?

11. How would a guest feel if you did not do these things?

So Jesus is saying that this sinful woman, as despised and shameful as she was in Jewish society, she showed him the honor and respect that he deserved as a guest. So much so, that Jesus tells the Pharisee something about her condition.

12. According to verse 47, what does Jesus say to the Pharisee about the woman and why?

13. According to verses 48 and 50, what does Jesus say to the woman?

The woman, like the debtor who owed five hundred denarii, felt a great indebtedness to Jesus. She recognized her sins and came to the Master, feeling ashamed for her past and recognizing the Master as one who would understand her.

The Pharisee, on the other hand, did not recognize his own sinful nature. In fact, he saw himself as sinless, especially compared to the woman. Jesus restores her to her community by forgiving her of her sin. She can leave the house feeling forgiven by the Master.

14. Have you ever felt a heavy burden for your wrongdoings? Have you sensed a great deal of shame before your own community, your own family? How would you feel if someone were to treat you the way Jesus treated the woman?

15. The Bible says through the Prophet Isaiah, “Though your sins are like scarlet they shall be white as now; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.” Prostitutes have often been called scarlet women. Thinking about this woman, how do you apply this verse?

Jesus came to a sinful people to restore them to a right relationship with God. This restoration is not something a person can gain through their actions. They cannot earn it. The woman was declared forgiven (restored) because of her contrite heart. She wept at Jesus’ feet, recognizing her lostness and separation from God and His people. Jesus forgave her and restored her to a right relationship. He could do that thanks to the unique relationship that exists between Him and God, which is the reason the Scripture calls Him the Only the Son of God and Mediator between God and man.

16. Read 1 Timothy 2:5. *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.”* According to this verse, then, who is able to forgive us our deepest failings, our grossest shame and dishonor?

The Pharisee, even though not recognizing his own shamefulness, could not restore himself. Like the woman, he would need Jesus’ forgiveness as the Mediator.

Conclusion

Jesus is a restorer of souls. No one else is capable of bringing us into a right relationship with God the Father. In the same way that Jesus took away the woman’s shamefulness, He can do this for each one of us if we come to Him with a contrite heart. We cannot do this on our own. Like the woman, we need to recognize our shamefulness and need for restoration, as hard as it may be.

Prayer

Consider what you have learned about Jesus in this lesson. Ask Him to help you understand how you can be cleansed of your shame like the woman in this story. Ask Him to help you understand how you can be cleansed of your shame by believing in Him. Ask Him to help you see yourself as the woman saw herself, not like the Pharisee who did not see his own need of a Restorer.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER

LESSON 8

GLORY TO THE LAMB OF GOD: Revelation 4:1-5:14

Introduction

We seem to be surrounded by war and stories of war in today's world. We open a newspaper or turn on the television, and we read about or hear about a war in some far off country. Or we are living in a country torn in two by strife and civil unrest. Many people die in a war. Death is a daily occurrence in places like southern Sudan or Syria. Bodies oftentimes lie in the street, unclaimed and unburied. There is no time to honor the dead as people continue to struggle to survive another day.

In this lesson we learn of a vision of one who was slain in the greatest battle of all times, a war between good and evil. Through His death, He was given honor and glory. Through His death our sins are forgiven.

BIBLE READING: Revelation 4:1-11

1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." **2** At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. **3** And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. **4** Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. **5** From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. **6** Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. **7** The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. **8** Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

"Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come."

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, **10** the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the

throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

11 *"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."*

Study

1. Describe the vision in verses 1-7 the author of this Bible passage has.
2. Read 4:8. In the midst of this magnificence the four living creatures make a declaration. What do they say?
3. Who do you think these words refer to?
4. Continue reading 4:9-11. Is there any doubt as to whom these verses refer? Pay particular attention to verses 10 and 11. Who is the recipient of this praise?

There is only one who sits on a throne who created all living things. This is the Lord our God. In this passage He is surrounded by beauty and adoring creatures. It is almost a vision too magnificent to be described in human words.

BIBLE READING: Revelation 5: 6-14

6 *Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. 9 And they sang a new song, saying:*

*"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

10 *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth."*

11 *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands,
and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the
elders. 12 In a loud voice they were saying:*

*"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"*

13 *Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and
all that is in them, saying:*

*"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"*

14 *The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

Study

5. According to verse 6, who is standing at the center of the heavenly throne?
6. In verse 7 what does he take from the right hand of God, the One who is seated on the heavenly throne?
7. Read verse 8. What did the living creatures do before the Lamb?
8. What was the "new song" that they sang to the Lamb, in verses 9-10?
9. What do these verses say about the Lamb? How important is He in this story? Why?
10. Verses 11-14 continue with tremendous praise to the Lamb by multitudes of the heavenly host. How do these verses describe the honor being given to both God and the Lamb?
11. Why was the Lamb worthy of being praised and glorified?

BIBLE STUDY: John 1:29-34

29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”*

32 *Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”*

In Revelation, the last book of the Bible, we have just read of the glory given to the Lamb who sits at God’s right hand. In the Gospels we also read of this Lamb in very similar tones.

12. Whom did John see coming towards Him in verse 29?

13. What does John call Him in this verse?

14. According to the last part of this verse, what does Jesus the Lamb do?

15. Can you imagine someone who can take away the sins of the world? What does this say to you about how special this person, Jesus, is?

16. How does John describe Jesus in verse 34?

Many people have difficulty in seeing Jesus as the Forgiver of sins, as the One who takes away our sins and restores us to a right relationship with God. Yet, we have seen in these verses a description of Jesus as one who is worthy of praise for these very acts of salvation.

BIBLE STUDY: Matthew 9:1-8

1 *Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. 2 Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.”*

3 *At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This fellow is blaspheming!”*

4 *Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?”* **5** *Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?* **6** *But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “Get up, take your mat and go home.”* **7** *Then the man got up and went home.* **8** *When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.*

17. According to verses 1 and 2, what did Jesus say to the paralyzed man?

18. In verse 3 how did the teachers of the law react?

19. Jesus could have been stoned for this blasphemy. How did Jesus justify his words, according to verses 4-7?

20. According to verse 8, then, the people, filled with awe and praise for Jesus, were astonished why?

Conclusion

In no other person in the Bible will we find such honor and glory being given to someone. In fact, God says that He shares His glory with no one (Isaiah 42:8). And yet, Jesus is praised by the heavenly creatures as well as by human beings. This Jesus is also able to forgive us of our sins. No one but God can do this. This Bible study shows us that Jesus was slain for the sins of the world, and thereby He is worthy of all the praise and honor. God honors Jesus for His self-sacrificing deeds that led to His death. Do you honor Him as well?

Prayer

Consider what you have learned about Jesus in this lesson. Ask Him to help you understand how you need to recognize His authority and to give Him His merited praise and honor, for He alone was worthy to open the book of life because He paid the price for our sins.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER**LESSON 9****THE SUFFERING SERVANT: Isaiah 53:3-11; Matthew 5:10-12****Introduction**

In this lesson we see the Master as a suffering servant. For some, it is difficult to see a persecuted, beaten Jesus, yet the Holy Book portrays him in this way. Aside from the miracles, aside from God's blessing on his baptism, there is this other side of the coin. Jesus needed to suffer in order that we might be made righteous in God's eyes.

In this lesson we will look at the prophecy from the Prophet Isaiah who describes in detail the suffering that Jesus the Messiah would need to go through. This is a prelude of what must befall many of those who would follow Jesus.

BIBLE READING: Isaiah 53:3-11

3 *He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*

4 *Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.*

5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*

6 *We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

7 *He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

8 *By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;*

for the transgression of my people he was punished.

9 *He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.*

10 *Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.*

11 *After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.*

Study

1. How is Jesus described in verse 3?
2. Verse 3 makes it clear that this is truly a part of what Jesus must go through. It says He is “a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.” Imagine, Jesus, the Messiah, being treated this way. Is this side of Jesus something new for you? Explain.
3. Verses 4 and 5, though, tell us something earth-shaking about this suffering that Jesus goes through. What is it?
4. How does verse 6 make it abundantly clear that Jesus' suffering was not deserved, but due to our own shame before God?
5. Look closely at verse 7. What metaphor does Isaiah use in describing Jesus, the suffering servant, in this passage? He was like....
6. What do verses 8 and 9 say happened to Jesus, unlike what some holy books have reported?
7. According to verses 10 and 11, though, what happens to Jesus in the end?

Some religions portray Jesus as a wise guru, a prophet, someone who cannot or does not suffer in this life. The thought of his dying is an offense to some, especially since this passage says he suffered and died in our place. We call this *substitutionary atonement*. He took upon himself the suffering and pain that we deserve.

8. What thoughts go through your head when you think of Jesus taking your place, suffering and dying for your iniquities in order to restore you to a right relationship with God the Father?

BIBLE READING: Matthew 5:10-12

10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

11 *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Study

Above in our Bible study, we learned how Jesus needed to suffer and die on our behalf, unlike the accounts found in some other religions. It should not surprise us, then, that we as followers of Jesus may also go through trials and tribulations, persecution, ostracism. In some cases, followers of Jesus must flee their homes, their families, their communities when they decide to follow Jesus the Messiah. There often is a high cost to be a disciple of Jesus. We ought not to make light of this, but recognize this as a reality for many believers in countries where Christianity is looked down upon.

9. According to verse 9, who are blessed?
10. What does blessed mean? How would you describe it?
11. Does it make sense to say that we are blessed when we are persecuted? Explain.
12. Not everyone who is persecuted, though, is blessed. According to this verse, what is the condition under which one is blessed when persecuted?
13. What is the reward for those who are persecuted because of Jesus?

14. Let us look at verse 11. Sometimes people do and say things about us that are not true, simply because we are followers of Jesus. How does this verse describe what happens?
NOTE: that this happens “because of me” (Jesus)

15. Has this every happened to you? Explain.

16. According to verse 12, what should be our reaction to this when others insult us or say false things about us because of Jesus?

Many people have difficulty in seeing Jesus as the Forgiver of sins, as the One who takes away our sins and restores us to a right relationship with God. Yet, we have seen in these verses a description of Jesus as One who is worthy of praise for these very acts of salvation.

Conclusion

As followers of Jesus, we must recognize that Jesus did suffer and die. The Holy Book relates this truth in many different passages, even though some people deny that Jesus suffered and died.

Likewise, as followers of Jesus, we must be ready to also suffer and sometimes even die for our faith. We cannot recant or deny that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. Even if we suffer in this world, Jesus promises, “Great is your reward in heaven.”

It would be easy to deny Jesus or to be ashamed of being His follower in the face of potential persecution or pain. The Apostle Paul, who had been a leading teacher among the Jews and a persecutor of Jesus followers, met this same Jesus on the road to Damascus. He became a member of God’s family and proclaimed without reservation the good news about Jesus. He, too, suffered and was persecuted for the sake of Jesus. Yet, he wrote these powerful words in his letter to the Roman church: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

Prayer

Ask Jesus to help you to understand these truths that may differ with what you learned as a child. Ask for God’s strength to bear up under whatever happens to you—offenses, falsehoods, persecution, ostracism, even death.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus.

MNM MUSLIM-APPROPRIATE BIBLE STUDIES: STORIES ABOUT THE MASTER**LESSON 10****LEAVING ALL BEHIND: Philippians 3:7-11; Hebrews 10:32-36; Matthew 19:16-29****Introduction**

In the previous lesson we learned about the Suffering Servant, Jesus the Messiah. He paid a great price that we might be restored to a place of honor with our Heavenly Father. Lost in our shame, distant from our Father, there was no way we could restore our relationship with God. We also saw that once we became followers of Jesus, we too would be open to persecution, ridicule, beatings, ostracism, and even death.

In this lesson we will go one step further. In counting the cost of following Jesus, we must recognize that we are called to leave some things behind, things that are precious to us. Our faith in Jesus is not a cheap faith. It is not based on going through certain rituals or following certain rules. It means a full-fledged obedience to the One who gave His life for us. It means daily obeying Jesus as Lord, recognizing His kingship and rejecting all others.

BIBLE READING: Philippians 3:7-11

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and 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 on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Study

1. Look at verse 7. For the sake of Christ, how does Paul see the things around him?
2. What do you suppose Paul means by these words?
3. Going on to verse 8, he repeats this phrase “count everything as loss.” For him, what things are more priceless or precious?
4. What does it mean to “know” someone?

5. Paul is not only concerned about knowing Jesus, but to have gained Jesus (to be his follower), to have honor before the Father through the Son's sacrifice on our behalf. This is so important to Paul that he now says everything else is what?

Another way of saying this is that everything else is now seen as filthy rags. By following Jesus we suffer the loss of many things. Looking back, we see that they are not worth the cost of NOT knowing and following Jesus.

The next few verses speak about the power of the resurrection. Had Jesus stayed in the grave, we would not have new life. We would likewise remain dead once we died.

6. According to verse 11, because of Jesus' resurrection, what do we gain?
7. Looking at verse 10, besides gaining new life in Jesus, what do we share with Jesus?

BIBLE READING: Hebrews 10:32-36

32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. **33** Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. **34** You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. **35** So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Study

Jews who followed Jesus were sometimes also met with hostility. They were seen as being disloyal to their nation and their religion. Let's see what the author of Hebrews has to say about the condition of these Jesus followers.

8. According to verses 32-34 that begins, "After you were enlightened" (came to faith in Jesus), how were they treated by their fellow Jews?

9. Can you identify with these sufferings? If you have made a decision to follow Jesus, have you declared your faith and found the same degree of hostility from your family and friends, even neighbors? Explain.
10. If you are just considering the claims of Jesus and who He is, have you considered that to follow Him might result in a Hebrews 10:32-36 response by those around you?
11. What promise are you given in verses 35 and 36 if you remain faithful in Jesus?

BIBLE READING: Matthew 19:16-29

16 *Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”*

17 *“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”*

18 *“Which ones?” he inquired.*

Jesus replied, “‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’”

20 *“All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”*

21 *Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

22 *When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

23 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”*

25 *When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?”*

26 *Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

27 *Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”*

28 Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. **29** And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.

Study

When we decide to follow Jesus, sometimes it costs us in ways we cannot even imagine. In this passage we will look at the cost for a rich young man and his decision if the cost is too much to bear.

12. According to verse 16, a young man came to Jesus with a question. What question did he ask?
13. How did Jesus answer him? “If you would enter life, _____.
14. According to verse, 20, did the young man feel he had done everything Jesus required? Explain your answer.
15. What was the one additional thing in verse 21 Jesus required of the young man?

Sometimes we think we are living holy lives. We give to the poor. We pray. We go to God’s house to pray with others. We do all of the things required by our faith and then some. But Jesus touches this man where it will most hurt him. He needed to give up his wealth and give it all to the poor and then follow Jesus.

16. According to verse 22, was the young man able to do this? Explain your answer.

Jesus told those who were gathered around Him that it is difficult for the rich to enter the Kingdom of heaven. Why? Because they value their wealth over a relationship with the Father. For them, their money and possessions are more important to them than following the King.

17. Whether it be possessions, honor, family, are you able to make this kind of sacrifice? How important is Jesus to you? Enough to leave all behind, if necessary, or will you walk away, sorrowful like the young man?
18. Read Exodus 20:12: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” How do we reconcile honoring our parents if following Jesus is viewed as bringing shame upon them? This is a hard question to answer. How will you deal with this dilemma of honoring Jesus without dishonoring your parents?

Conclusion

There are many things that a Jesus follower may have to give up, things like fame and wealth. If your culture is against those who follow Jesus, you are literally turning your back on your community, your family. It may cost you your home, your family, your work, your place of honor in your community. For some, like the rich young man, the cost was too high a price to pay in order to follow Jesus. Others, like Paul, counted everything else as garbage for the privilege of following Jesus and being called a son of the King. Jewish believers to whom the author of Hebrews was writing also faced much suffering and rejection for their faith. Each person, when confronted with the claims of Jesus, must make a decision: to follow Him or to reject Him.

Romans 8:16-17 says, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” We might even die for following Jesus, but Paul says to the Roman believers, “If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us” (2 Timothy 2:11-12). The choice is ours: to follow Jesus at all cost or, by rejecting Him, to deny Him.

Prayer

Ask Jesus to help you to understand the high cost of following Him. Pray that He will give you strength to make the right decision, even if it costs you in this world. Your reward will be in eternity with Him, reigning as one of God’s heirs.

Prepare for the next meeting

Share this story with your friends or family. Ask them what the lesson says to them about Jesus and the high cost of following him.