

## Good News for Muslims

This is part of the G-Path: **Go** to the nations.

Motto: **Love one another – Go and make disciples**

### Introduction

Our aim is to raise up Muslim followers of Jesus. Our approach is to teach Gospel stories for Muslims to memorise and think about. Ask them what Jesus is saying to them through the story and how they will obey it. Let Jesus do His work in people's hearts.

### Befriending Muslims

Avoid talking about the three **C's**: Church, Christianity and Conversion.

Try to befriend the Imam and explain how you want to help him to learn more about Jesus, so he can lead and teach his community well.

Some Muslims may be afraid to discuss openly with you in front of other Muslims, so one-to-one may work better than in groups.

Muslims often view Christians as immoral and irreligious. For this reason, don't refer to yourself as a Christian, but rather a follower or disciple of Jesus (or Isa, as they call Jesus).

Don't talk about conversion, or invite them to church, or talk about going to church or about abandoning Muslim beliefs. You will meet much resistance if a Muslim thinks you are trying to convert them to Christianity. Instead explain you hope they will be a good Muslim who learns to listen to and follow Jesus (or Isa).

Avoid getting into arguments. Don't compare Islam and Christianity, Muhammad and Jesus or the Qur'an and the Bible. Go for truth you can agree on, and build on that. Invite them to read the Gospel and judge for themselves.

### Share and Heal

Share your testimony. Talk about listening to Jesus and experiencing His love and peace. Talk about God's grace and Jesus giving us His righteousness to deal with our sin (avoid talking about the Cross or Jesus dying for our sins unless they are comfortable with that). Talk about your assurance that you are a child of God and how God lets you 'see' His glory and enjoy His presence.

The Qur'an teaches that Jesus healed the sick, fed the crowds, raised the dead (Surah 5:110,112). So visit them, make friends, pray with them and for them. Pray for healing, miracles, visions, dreams...

### The Search for Truth

Many Islamic leaders are involved in occult practices and local traditional religious practices. This brings demonic spiritual control over many Islamic communities. (Phil Parshall, Muslim Evangelism, p101). They live in fear of evil spirits (Jinn) and are often very superstitious. Islam offers no protection or deliverance from evil.

Many desperately want to know God, but Allah is hidden and unreachable. He will not allow anyone to draw near or know him personally. Rituals feel empty. No presence of God. No power to live a holy life.

Many seek signs, visions, dreams, understanding, healing.

"You are sure to find those closest in affection towards the believers are those who say, "We are Christians", for there are among them those devoted to learning and ascetics. These people are not given to arrogance..." (Surah 5:82)

### The Death of Jesus

The Qur'an denies the death of Jesus on the cross:

And for their saying, "We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the Messenger of God." In fact, they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them as if they did. (Surah 4:157)

The idea that God the Father should demand blood as the price for our sin, and that God the Son should die to offer that blood, seems absurd and unjust to many Muslims. I do not think this is a matter worthy of argument.

This doctrine is not clearly taught by Jesus and was not part of the Gospel Jesus proclaimed. I think questions about how Jesus died, or why he died are best left until a person comes to faith through the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

## **About Islam**

### **Muhammad**

Muhammad was an illiterate wealthy merchant born around 570AD.

He claims to have ascended to heaven and back one night from Jerusalem's temple mount (now Dome of the Rock).

He fled from Mecca to Medina in 622AD and established Islamic Law. After several fierce battles he returned to Mecca in 630AD and died two years later.

He claimed to be the successor to Jesus and the last prophet.

### **The Qur'an**

The Qur'an has 114 chapters (Suras) ordered in descending length. The shorter chapters are generally the earlier ones, so it is in reverse chronological order.

Muhammad said the Qur'an was dictated by Allah and is inspired in every word. Like the Gospels, it was passed on orally and written down by scribes over the following years. Many variant versions were reduced to one in 652 and all others burnt.

Jesus is mentioned 93 times in 15 suras.

The Qur'an tells the story of John the Baptist's conception (Surah 3:35-41) and Jesus' conception (Surah 3:42-47).

### **The Attraction of Islam**

Islam offers certainty, tradition, community and prayer. It is simple to understand and follow.

First pillar of Islam: Creed (how a person accepts Islam): 'I bear witness that there is no god but God; I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of God.'

Second Pillar: Prayer 5-times a day (with washing, and kneeling) +Friday noon at the Mosque.

Third Pillar: Giving 2.5% income.

Fourth Pillar: Fasting dawn to dusk for the month of Ramadan.

Fifth Pillar: Pilgrimage to Mecca once in lifetime.

### **Predestination, Sin and Judgement**

There is a strong belief in the unalterable will of Allah, and that our lives are predestined in every detail. As God is all-knowing and all-powerful, everything that has happened and will happen in the universe—including sinful human behaviour—is not only known but commanded by him.

"By no means can anything befall us but what God has destined for us" (Surah 9:51)

"God misleads whom He will and whom He will He guides" (Surah 14:4)

This suggests that we are not morally responsible for our actions, as they are predetermined by Allah.

Despite this, Muslims are taught that even though our actions are predetermined and unalterable, when we do good or evil we become morally responsible for those acts and will be judged accordingly.

Muslims believe that sin is just our mistakes, not the result of an evil nature. On judgement day, our sins and good deeds are weighed up to decide our destiny.

"The scripture (Qur'an) is good news to the believers who do good deeds" (Surah 18:2)

There is no atonement for our sins. Only dying in a jihad fight can assure a Muslim of salvation. Because of this they have little concept of repentance or God's forgiveness and no concept of receiving righteousness as a gift of grace.

Heaven is pleasures forevermore, including multiple virgin wives for men.

## Finding Agreement

The Qur'an teaches many truths about Jesus that we can agree with and build upon.

### The Injil – The Christian Gospel

Muslims are commonly taught that the original gospel (Injil) which Jesus received is now lost and corrupted through translation.

It is true that we do not have the full text of the gospels from when it was first written down, but we do have the exact same text that Muhammad had in his day.

In several places the Qur'an says that God has confirmed to the "prophet" that the Torah and the Gospel which Muhammad had in his day are true:

"We believe in God and what was given to Moses, David, Jesus and the prophets by their Lord." (Surah 2:136)

"He has revealed to you O Prophet the Book in truth, **confirming** what came before it, as He revealed the Torah and **the Gospel**" (Surah 3:3)

O believers! **Have faith in** Allah, His Messenger, the Book He has revealed to His Messenger, and **the Scriptures He revealed before**. Indeed, whoever denies Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers, and the Last Day has clearly gone far astray. (Surah 4:136)

We sent Jesus, son of Mary, confirming the Torah revealed before him. And We gave him the Gospel containing guidance and light and confirming what was revealed in the Torah—a guide and a lesson to the God-fearing. So **let the people of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed in it**. And those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are the sinners. (Surah 5:46-47)

When Jesus came with the clarifications, he said, "I have come to you with wisdom, and to clarify for you some of what you differ about. So fear God, and obey me." (Surah 43:63)

The Qur'an therefore confirms that the Gospel is true. It commands that we have faith in the Gospel, and that "*the people of the Gospel*" (Christians) should judge by its contents. All of this is said of the Gospel which was available in Muhammad's day. We have that exact same scripture today.

Muslims point to the various translations and differences in the earliest manuscripts as proof of corruption. But in fact, like the Gospels, the Qur'an was originally passed on orally and only written down by scribes in later years. Just as with the Gospels, many variant versions existed and they were reduced to one in 652 AD. At that point all the other versions were burnt. Whereas the variant versions of the Gospels were preserved. The variations are in fact tiny and insignificant.

### The Trinity

Some Muslims think the Christian Trinity is Father, Mary and Jesus:

And on Judgment Day Allah will say, "O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you ever ask the people to worship you and your mother as gods besides Allah?" He will answer, "Glory be to You! How could I ever say what I had no right to say?" (Surah 5:116)

This may be what some ignorant Christians thought in Muhammad's day, but it is not what the Gospel says, or what disciples of Jesus believe.

We agree: Mary was Jesus' earthly mother and nothing more.

We agree: Jesus is not a god besides or in addition to the Father. He is one God with the Father, in exactly the same way as the Torah speaks often of God's Spirit as one with God. The Father, Son and Spirit are all expressions of the One God.

We agree: The Gospel tells us that Jesus was NOT created by God, nor the offspring of God, but that He has always been **one** with:

Surah 19:34 That is Jesus son of Mary—the Word of truth about which they doubt.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. He was **with God in the beginning**.

John 1:17-18 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; **the only God**, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. (ESV)

## **Jesus, the Son of God**

The Qur'an teaches that Jesus was sinless, born of the Virgin Mary and filled by the Holy Spirit:

"And she who guarded her virginity. We breathed into her of Our spirit, and made her and her son a sign to the world." (Surah 21:89)

But they say that if Jesus was God's son then there must have been sexual relations between God and Mary which is an offence.

We can agree with the Qur'an:

"Allah has no offspring" (Surah 4:171).

However, God Himself described Jesus as His Son:

Luke 9:35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"

God and Jesus used the term "Son of God" to describe his relationship with God, not that he was a biological son or the offspring of God:

John 10:30 Jesus said "I and the Father **are one**."

## **Jesus is coming again to be our Judge**

The Qur'an teaches that Jesus was resurrected from the dead, ascended alive into Heaven, and will return on Judgement day to be the judge of all mankind:

"So Peace is upon me [Jesus] the day I was born, and the day I die, and the Day I get resurrected alive" (Surah 19:33)

God said, "O Jesus, I am terminating your life, and raising you to Me, and clearing you of those who disbelieve. And I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve, until the Day of Resurrection." (Surah 3:55)

Allah raised him up to Himself. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. Every one of the People of the Book will definitely believe in him before his death. And on the Day of Judgment Jesus will be a witness against them. (Surah 4:158-159)

In Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 60 'The Book of the Prophets', Hadith 49 'The descent of Isa, son of Maryam', we read:

Allah's Messenger said, "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, surely (Jesus,) the son of Mary will soon descend amongst you and will judge mankind justly (as a Just Ruler); ... Abu Huraira added "If you wish, you can recite (this verse of the Holy Book): -- 'And there is none Of the people of the Scriptures (Jews and Christians) but must believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Judgment He will be a witness Against them.'" (Surah 4.159)

## **Gospel Stories for Muslims**

### **Friendship with God**

John 15:15-16 Jesus said "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."

### **Rest for our Souls**

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

## **Jesus the Son of God**

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:17-18 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. (ESV)

Luke 9:35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"

## **Salvation from God, not our fleshly works**

John 6:63 Jesus said "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe."

Mark 1:15 Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Acts 26:18 Jesus said "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 made righteous by faith in me."

## **Learning about God and Jesus**

Matthew 11:27 Jesus said "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

John 6:45 Jesus said "Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me."

John 16:13 Jesus said "The Spirit of truth will guide you into all the truth."