

Reaching Muslims For Christ

Sessions 6-7

1. Salvation in Islam

In Islam there is no such thing as salvation since we are all born in the Best Form. Every child is born a Muslim (the straight path), but our parents and society raise us up in bad things, and then we forget. You aren't converted in Islam, you're reverted. Because we are created in the Best Form, we must "remember." Our sins require a Muslim to constantly purify himself by offsetting their sin with good acts. In terms of fleshly and sinful desires, Muslims do not try to repress them but instead channel and control them. The Quran teaches that one man cannot and should not pay for another man's sins.

Islam holds that men do not have a need to be saved. Islam does not address a need for salvation or deliverance from anything. Salvation is not in the vocabulary of Islam. Instead a Muslim obtains success by doing the will of Allah. This is the Islamic counterpart to deliverance and redemption that one finds in Christianity.

In Christianity, we believe in original sin and that man is totally depraved in his efforts to be reconciled to God. In Christianity, humans have both SIN and sins. In Islam, humans only have sins. Since they are created in the Best Form we need to ask them then where their sin came from. They will say it came from Satan and their parents' example. Then ask where their parents' sin came from?

2. Presenting Christ to Muslims:

The Quran flatly denies the Trinity, and Christ's divinity. Most of the time, Muslims will draw you to explain and convince them of the Triune nature of God and the deity of Christ.

One should look how our Lord dealt with His own disciples. He didn't start out by telling them, "I am God, believe in Me". Rather, He began to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to calm the storm, He raised the dead, He walked on water, and He multiplied the bread and the loaves. Afterwards, He asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" To Peter's answer, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God", Jesus replied, "Blessed are you Peter, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in heaven."

The great missionary to Algeria, Charles Marsh, in his book, "Share Your Faith with a Muslim", told of a message he gave one time to a group of Muslim villagers. He started out by asking them, "What do you think about Jesus?", and then he went step by step, looking at the miraculous birth of Jesus, the prophecies that He fulfilled, the miracles that He performed, the matchless words which He spoke, the sinless life that He lived, and the death that He died, and His resurrection from the grave. It was a powerful message, and the Muslims were much moved. It clearly conveyed the gospel, and left them with the need to answer for themselves who this Jesus really is.

Bassam Madany, the pioneer missionary in reaching Muslims through the radio, in his book, "Sharing God's Word with a Muslim", wrote: "*We do not win Muslims to the Lord by first convincing them of the authenticity of Holy Scripture, or the scriptural nature of the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Deity of Christ and his crucifixion on the cross on Good Friday. Rather this is the basis of our teaching. This is our authority to proclaim to them the Biblical*

Messiah.

Our aim should be to start where every human being is. We are all creatures made in the image of God, who have fallen into sin. We have to begin the way Paul began in the letter to Romans, by expounding the misery of man and then the Good News of God. In other words, we begin with the Biblical doctrine of the plight of man and the divine grace which saves man from his captivity to sin. Once a Muslim accepts these first teachings, then we lead him to receive the doctrines of the Sonship of Christ and the Trinity.”

Perhaps a simpler way to put this is, you have to get a Muslim lost, before you can get him saved. He has to see his need for salvation, before he will ever want to turn to the One who can meet that need.

3. Some basic points

Remember that Muslims are people like you, with the same heart and needs like you. You can deal with issues of the heart when you're sharing with Muslims. They also need love and hope and assurance. Present Christ as the One Who can give them the assurance of salvation, the One who can give them real peace, and a living hope.

It's wise to be sensitive to that, and to be careful, when talking with Muslims:

- Avoid the appearance that you are proving your religion is better than theirs
- Always remember to seek the sinner. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, and this has to be our motive in sharing with a Muslim, too. We are not trying to win a debate, but a soul.

I read about the testimony of one missionary in a Muslim land who was invited to meet with a Muslim cleric to discuss their faiths. The Muslim cleric proudly demolished every argument the missionary brought in defense of Christianity, and felt he had overwhelmingly shown the superiority of Islam. But then he looked over and saw the missionary was silently weeping, and his soul melted. The cleric later became a Christian, but what first touched him was not an overwhelming argument, but the love he saw expressed in the missionary..

- **Friendship Evangelism:**

The method of evangelism most commonly used in reaching Muslims is called friendship evangelism.

Friendship evangelism is not about pretending to be a friend in order to convert someone. It is about becoming involved with people and being a real friend, and in this way showing the true love of Jesus, which can open the door to sharing the gospel with them. If possible, become acquainted with Muslims and get involved in their lives. Be a listener, and learn what they believe, and about their culture.

Charles Marsh, in *Share your Faith with a Muslim*, wrote: “*The next most important point to keep in mind is that the Muslim responds to love. He must feel that we really care about him as a man, that we love him and have a genuine concern for him, and not only for his soul. In nearly every case of conversion of a Muslim, he has first been influenced by genuine love*”.

Effective witness must also identify itself with the needs of people. We need to constantly be on the lookout for ways and means of helping Muslims with their social and personal problems and should pray that God will create opportunities to discover Muslims needs and give us the resources we require to meet them. Those who work with Muslims can go out of

their way to genuinely befriend them; those who have Muslim neighbors can make an effort to get to know them and assist them with their problems. These are some of the possibilities that are before us. When Christians make it their aim to not only share the good news of the Gospel with Muslims but also to serve them in love and compassion, the beauty of Jesus will become more apparent to them.

The need for developing open family friendships has been recognized by virtually all who work among Muslims. The family unit is one of the most cherished values in the Muslim world and, wherever possible, Christians should try to befriend whole families and involve their own spouses and children in the family-to-family friendship. In such a way lasting relationships develop where true friendships are best established.

Muslims need to experience the warmth of true Christian friendship and fellowship.

Make sure we don't shortcut the gospel in Muslims lives by seeking easy & quick conversions. Don't try to chalk up as many converts as you can in the shortest possible time, just saying a quick prayer of salvation and that's it. Short-cut methods to elicit an early response or force a formal decision can do untold injury and harm to Muslims. Just as an untimely birth will damage or destroy a child, so a premature commitment will injure a Muslim and many have, in fact, turned against the Gospel permanently as the result of such hasty, insensitive approaches.

We must seek to work as closely as possible with the Holy Spirit and ensure that the outward effects of our ministries correspond to the real inward work the Holy Spirit is doing. No Muslim should be pressed into a premature commitment. Let the Spirit of God give the growth while we plant and water and only when the Muslim himself shows a genuine desire to become a true Christian should he be persuaded to do so.

- **Spiritual Warfare:**

Ephesians 6:10 -18 10 says *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,[c] against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

In dealing with Muslims, it is important to realize that we are in a spiritual war, and our war is with the devil, who John chapter 8 says is the "father of lies". Through the lies of Islam and the lies of its leaders, and the deceitful miracles that Satan performs through the occult practices of folk Islam, people are deceived and their minds are blinded to the truth. With Islam, we are dealing with spiritual deception, with the lies of Satan. But God's Word tells us that He has given us spiritual weapons to use in our warfare with Satan, which are powerful and effective. 2 Cor 10:4 says "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds". We need to use the spiritual weapons of prayer, of faith, and of the Word of God when dealing with Muslims.

Pray for Muslims, and in your prayers, ask God to open their eyes and reveal Himself to them.

- **Pray with Muslims and for Muslims**

This brings up another point, and that is, that Christians need to show Muslims that they are people of prayer, who believe in the reality of prayer. .

Muslims are very open and outward in the expression of their religion, and they will practice their ritual prayers openly for all the world to see. But they don't see Christians praying. Christians tend to pray in secret because Jesus said "when you pray, go into your closet, and, don't pray in order to be seen of men". So Muslims have the impression that Christians aren't really very religious and they don't pray. So it's good to be a little outwardly and openly religious with Muslims, and to take opportunities that come up to pray. Muslims will hardly ever refuse someone praying for them, and they do respect prayer. Many times God has used that.

- **Quote from the Bible:**

Also, in sharing with Muslims, it's very good to use the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, "*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" In one Muslim land, pages of the Bible were torn out and used by a Muslim grocery store in order to wrap its fruits and vegetables. One day, a Muslim who bought some fruit there, got home, and began reading the paper it was wrapped in, and he ended up getting saved as a result. The best tract you can give a Muslim is a scripture portion, or a New Testament.

How to Answer the Bible is corrupted:

Muslims will try to tell you that the Bible has been corrupted. But in the Quran, Surah 10:94, *Allah tells Muhammad, if he has any doubts whether the Quran is really from Allah or not, to read the scriptures that came before him, in other words, the Bible.* Was Allah telling Muhammad to read a book that was corrupted?

The Quran does charge Jews and Christians with corrupting their scriptures, but in Arabic there are two different words used to say a text has been corrupted. One of the terms in Arabic means corruption in the sense that the words themselves are changed to give a completely different text than the original. The other term for corruption means that the words aren't changed, but a misinterpretation is given to the text. The Quran only uses the second term when talking about Christians and Jews corrupting the Bible, accusing them of misinterpreting the Bible, and not of changing the words. So the text of the Bible, according to the Quran, was authentic in the time of Muhammad. The Quran also says that God is able to watch over His word.

When Muslims say that the Bible has been changed, it should be asked, when was it changed? According to the Quran it was an authentic book in Muhammad's time. So was it changed after Muhammad's time? There are three complete copies of the Bible, dating from two to four hundred years before Muhammad. Two of these copies are in the British Museum, and one is in the Vatican library, and they are all in agreement with the Bibles we have today. So the modern Bible is the authentic Word of God, and since the Quran tells Muslims to believe in it and examine it, they should be

willing to read it!

When sharing with Muslims, quoting from and reading from the Bible is powerful, because it is God's Word, and has authority, even more than anything we can say from ourselves.

- **Acquaint Yourself with the Quran:**

It's a good thing to become acquainted with the Quran if you can get one, in order to become familiar with what Muslims believe and their vocabulary. There is a big debate among our Christian mission circles on the subject of using the Quran to witness to Muslims. Some Christians believe that if you use the Quran in your witness to Muslims, it shows that we do admit to its inspiration! Other missionaries believe that using the Quran to point them to truth of the scriptures is fine as long as the word of God is shared and asserted as the supreme authority of all matters of faith. I personally believe it is helpful to take the Muslims to Biblical stories that are mentioned in the Quran (like Abraham offering his son) and use such stories as a springboard to illustrate Biblical truth such as the redemptive work of Christ. Note that the Quran does not mention the name of the son of Abraham, even though their traditions point to Ishmael.

The apostle Paul had no issue in quoting from the Athenian's own poets in order to point them to gospel truths. He simply found a common ground with his audience to proclaim the God who desires all men come to the knowledge of Him. There are other stories of Biblical characters in the Quran that can be used as jumping off points to share the gospel, like the stories of Noah and of Abraham. Again be careful how to use the Quran and not to assert any inspiration to it. Truth is truth wherever it can be found, but that doesn't make the Quran the word of God.

WM Miller the great missionary to Iran writes: "*the Christian should become well acquainted with the history and doctrines and practices of Islam. Only when he knows Islam well will he be able to present Christian truth in a way that will be intelligible and attractive to Muslims, and be able to avoid misunderstandings.*"

- **Be Careful How You Talk About Their Prophet**

When you talk with Muslims, often they will want to ask you, "what do you think about Muhammad?", and if you answer that he was a false prophet, or demon-possessed, you will have lost them.

When talking with Muslims, it is always best to let them draw the correct conclusions, by answering in a way that makes them think for themselves. Jesus said, in John 12:32, "**When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself.**" If we lift up Jesus, and proclaim His character, and the high standards which He set, it will be far more effective than if we attack Muhammad directly. There's a saying in English, 'you can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar.' So exalt Jesus, and don't directly attack Muhammad.

When Muslims ask me what I think of Muhammad, I will usually reply, "I am a Christian and so I follow Jesus, not Muhammad." Saying that, makes it clear where I stand, but does not insult them.

3. Cultural Barriers to Avoid:

- **Handling the Bible:**

When handling the Bible around a Muslim, always treat it with respect. Never put it on the floor or sit on it, or handle the book in any way that can be seen as disrespectful. Muslims believe the physical Quran is a manifestation of the divine Quran in heaven, and **they view the Quran in much the same way Christians see Jesus, as the manifested Word of God.** For Muslims, to mistreat or disrespect the physical book of the Quran, then, is the same as to disrespect God. They feel that if a Christian believes the Bible and respects God, he will also treat the physical Bible with respect.

It is probably better to use an unmarked Bible when sharing with Muslims, but if your Bible is underlined or highlighted and they see it, make sure you explain that you marked it because you esteem the Word of God and wanted to study it and to remember it, and not because you disrespect it.

- **Use your right hand**

Since most people in the Middle East and Asia will use the left hand for activities and functions that are unclean, it is better whenever offering a tract or a Bible, or anything else to a Muslim, to always give it with the right hand.

- **Dress Code:**

Another thing that is important when sharing with Muslims, is to be modest in your style of dress. In Muslim lands, Christians have a pretty bad reputation. They are the ones who own and operate the liquor shops, for example, and most of the Christians dress in more western style clothes. Muslims in Pakistan and Iraq will wear long pajama style pants, or long dresses, while the Christian ladies wear short skirts down to the knee, which are modest by western standards, but considered a little risk by Muslims. That, and the image of the “Christian” West they see in films and TV shows like “Dallas” from Hollywood, convince Muslims that Christians are drunkards and immoral people. **It is important, especially for women,** to be careful and modest in their dress and behavior.

- **Male-Female Relationship**

Share with the same It is generally better for a woman to talk with a woman and for a man to talk with a man, although in Europe and other western countries communication between the sexes is not as much of a problem as it is in Muslim lands, so just be sensitive to the situation. But a young Christian woman talking alone with a Muslim man should not be at all surprised, if he begins to show an interest in her that goes well beyond just listening to the gospel of Christ.

- **Avoid Politics specially the Arab-Israeli Conflict**

Avoid getting into political discussions with Muslims whenever possible, but if subjects like Israel and Palestine do come up, be very careful not to take sides with Israel or be antagonistic towards Muslims. In the West, particularly in America, Christians tend to be very pro-Israel. To Muslims, this can only mean that they are also anti-Muslim. We need to develop a spirit of love towards all men and to avoid taking sides in political disputes. Love must be the supreme motivating factor in our relationships with Muslims. Their confidence in us will soon evaporate if they sense in any way that we secretly hold militant attitudes towards them.

- **Don't Debate to win!**

When talking with Muslims, one thing you're going to have to expect is that there will be debate and argument. It's really unavoidable! 2 Tim 2: 23-26 says, "23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. 24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will".

1 Peter 3.15-16 says, "But sanctify the Lord God[d] in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed."

These verses tell us, when talking with those who oppose us, to be polite and to show respect, and not to lose our temper. The Bible doesn't tell us to run from debate, in fact it says we should be prepared to give a defense of our beliefs, but it does tell us that we should always respond in the right spirit.

So prepare yourself to give an answer for your faith and to face strong debate!

The author John Gilchrist writes: "*Muslims have been trained to think positively about Islam and to believe that Christianity is founded on very fragile pillars. The doctrine of the Trinity seems to them to be, by its very nature, illogical and obscure; the belief that Jesus is the Son of God a self-evident falsehood; and the atonement, at best, a license for free-living and, at worst, a grossly crude form of redemption. The Bible, likewise, appears to the Muslim to be so obviously the word of man rather than the Word of God, and he has been furnished with a number of arguments against it which he cheerfully believes prove it has been altered. It helps not that he is suffering under all sorts of illusions and misunderstandings about Christianity. It is the Christian's duty to overcome these obstacles and, the Muslim attitude being what it is, any timidity, uncertainty or shallow reasoning on the part of the Christian will soon persuade him that Christianity is indeed an indefensible religion.*

Muslims are confident about Islam and have a sense of assurance about their religion, whether we believe it is well- founded or not. Christians, therefore, must be able to present the Gospel and make a defense of it confidently and convincingly if they are to command the respect of Muslims for the message they proclaim. Any attempt to evade the issues will soon be read as a proof that the Christian does not really believe what he professes but simply goes along with it because he has been brought up as a Christian and has too much to lose by going against his heritage."

Christians must not only know what they believe, they must also be able to explain why they believe it. Muslims, quite generally, know that Christians should stress the deity of Christ, his actual crucifixion on the Cross, and many other teachings contrary to the teachings they hold. Understatement in any of these may cause them to pity and despise us. They will doubtless assume that we are cowardly and afraid to stand for the whole of our teaching.

This makes it essential for Christians to be well-instructed in the Word of God, to be soundly taught in basic apologetics' and to be assured of the truth of their faith. I would go so far as to say you should never attempt to witness to a Muslim unless you first believe unflinchingly in the authenticity of the Bible and the divine authority of its teachings. We need a comprehensive witness to Muslims and one of the essential ingredients of this is a sound knowledge of the doctrines and teachings of the Scriptures and an ability to graciously, but

nevertheless convincingly, defend them.

If you need to, find a Christian bookstore and get a good book or two on apologetics and study it.

4. Some common arguments that Muslims will bring

Bible Corruption:

Muslims will often say, “the Bible has been changed”. As we discussed before, in answering this, explain how the Bible we have is the same as copies of the Bible from hundreds of years before Muhammad. If the Quran says the Bible was authentic in Muhammad’s day, then how and when was it changed?

Why 4 Gospels

Muslims will ask, “Why do you have four gospels?” As Muslims understand it, Jesus was just a prophet who received a message called the Injil, or the Gospel, in the same way that Muhammad received the message of the Quran. When Muslims see, ‘the Gospel of Luke’, ‘the Gospel of Mark’, etc. they say this just proves that Christians corrupted the Bible, because, according to them, there is really only one Injil or Gospel that was given to Jesus. A simple way to explain the differences in the Gospels is to point out that the four gospels are similar to the hadith, which often tell different versions of the same story, some having one detail, and others telling other details.

Deity of Christ

Muslims will say, “there is no Trinity”, or, “God doesn’t have sons”. The best way to explain the Christian belief on this is to explain the Incarnation. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Muslims themselves have a belief in an eternal Word of God in heaven called Umm Kitab, or “Mother of the Book” which became manifested as the physical Word of God on earth in the Quran. This is very much like the Christian belief, only we believe in a Word of God who is a living Person and who is alive, and not a book.

Trinity:

Perhaps the most difficult subject to explain to Muslims is the Triune nature of God in the Bible. A typical challenge from Muslims on this subject is “where was God when Jesus died?” You will need to lovingly show them from the scriptures concerning the nature of God in the Bible. You can challenge them in similar fashion (however after you have answered their questions) “where was Umm Kitab, when the Quran was manifested on earth? You say we believe in three Gods, then you must believe in two Gods, Allah and the Quran, because we believe in Jesus as you believe in the Quran, being part of God, and yet being separate.” You also need to show them that the God of the Bible is One!

1) The Bible clearly states 23 times that God is One! (read examples in the Torah, Psalms, Prophets and Gospel Deut.6:4; Ps.86:10; Is.44:6-8; 1 Tim.2:5-6a)

2) Mark 12:29-30 Jesus said Himself that God is One.

For a Muslim, the only thing you can know is the Will of God. You cannot know God personally because He is unknowable. Jesus is the complete revelation of God the Father

(John 14:9), and the eternal Word (communication) from God (John 1:1-14). Why should we settle for only a shadow of God when we can go to the true reality of Christ?

A Good Prophet Cannot be Killed:

They will say, “Jesus didn’t die on cross” God has put a likeness of Him on someone else (the Hadith list him as Judas). You need to explain to them that Jesus death on the cross was part of God’s eternal plan, as the verses in Rom 3:26 and 1 Cor 1:18-25 tell us (and which you can also read to them). It was not weakness or failure on God’s part, but it was His eternal plan to save us, and Jesus was obedient in doing His will.

With Muslims, you always need to explain everything, because their knowledge of Christianity is so distorted and wrong.

They will say, “a sacrifice is not necessary for God to forgive sins, he can just forgive us, without one.” You need to explain that God is Holy and righteous, and too pure to behold sin. He is not like some oriental judge who is willing to take a bribe under the table and to overlook justice. God has to punish sin, because He is just, and we all justly deserve His wrath. But He Himself paid the debt we owed, in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The proof of that sacrifice being accepted is that Jesus rose from the dead, and we can now be forgiven, and have the assurance of being forgiven, if we put our trust in Him. Share the scripture in Romans 3:23-26 that speaks of God being just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus.

Bible Prophecies About Muhammad:

Muslims will say, “The Bible prophecies about Muhammad.” Muslims believe that Jesus foretold Muhammad’s coming in John 14:16 where Jesus said, “*and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter*”. The word for comforter in Greek is “paracletos”, but Muslims say another Greek word, “periclutos” was originally used. “Periclutos” means ‘praised one’ in Greek, which is Ahmed, in Arabic, another way of saying Muhammad. One problem with this interpretation is that “periclutos” is never found in any ancient manuscripts, and furthermore, John chapters 14, 15, and 16 quite clearly explain that the Comforter Jesus was speaking of is the Holy Spirit, who will dwell in believers, not Muhammad.

Sometimes Muslims will also try to say Muhammad was foretold in the prophecy of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.” There are many problems with the Muslim interpretation of this, not least of which is that Muhammad was not a descendant of Israel, as the phrase “from among your own brothers” means.

Gospel of Barnabas:

Muslims will say, “The original gospel of Jesus has been found, and it teaches about Muhammad.” A book called the **Gospel of Barnabas** appeared first in the seventeenth century, and Muslims claim that this was the original gospel given to Jesus. The book has Jesus prophesying of the coming of Muhammad by name several times and denies that Jesus was crucified, saying that Judas was actually crucified in his place, and that Jesus ascended into heaven without dying. Throughout the book, one finds a typical Islamic spirit, and Jesus appears as a model prophet of Islam. Jesus calls Muhammad the Messiah, and in it Jesus appears as sort of a forerunner like John the Baptist was.

The book is an obvious forgery dating no earlier than the fourteenth century, with many

obvious errors and anachronisms. The book speaks of the year of jubilee, for example, which it says now comes once every one hundred years. The year of Jubilee was celebrated every fifty years in the Jewish and later Catholic church calendars. Only in the year 1300 did Pope Boniface change it to every 100 years, and this was later changed back to every fifty years by the next Pope, and has been every fifty years since then. The book also has Barnabas bitterly condemning the apostle Paul for false doctrines like his teaching that circumcision is not necessary to salvation. But the Bible tells us in the book of Acts that both Paul and Barnabas stood up for the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus alone at the Council of Jerusalem. There are many other errors, such as grossly mistaken descriptions of the climate of Palestine in summer, and Nazareth is described as a coastal city on the sea. Much of the book uses ideas and expressions from Dante's *Inferno*, which was written in the early 1300's, so it was obviously written after that.

Islam is the True Religion:

Muslims may say, "Islam is an improvement over Christianity", or words to that effect. To that I would ask, how is it an improvement?

1. When God told the Jews in the Old Testament that certain foods were clean and unclean, He was teaching them about His holiness and separation from sin. When Jesus later came, in Mark 7:1-23 (and I would actually read the whole verse when talking with a Muslim), the Pharisees questioned Him about His disciples eating with unwashed hands, and Jesus said, "it's not what goes into a man, but what comes out of him that makes him unclean." Later His disciples asked him about this, and he explained, "what goes into the body doesn't go into his heart, but passes through the body, but what comes out of a man, like evil thoughts, comes from his heart and makes him unclean." In saying this, the Bible says, He declared all foods clean. So how is it an improvement to say six hundred years later, that eating pork once again makes a man unclean?

2. Also, in the ancient times, people like Solomon had many wives, even though this was against what God had told them. When Jesus came, He said there is only one woman for one man, for as long as they both shall live. So how is it an improvement to say six hundred years later, that a man can now have four wives, and can divorce his wife just by saying "I divorce thee" three times?

3. And again, in the Old Testament, the Jews were taught to love their neighbors, and to hate their enemies. But when Jesus was asked by a religious teacher, "Who is my neighbor?", He replied by telling the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 (and again I would read the whole passage). Six hundred years later, Muslims were told Muslim concern was to be reserved for the Umma, or Islamic community. How is that an improvement over what Jesus taught?

And if Muslims deny that, then ask them why, when the tsunami of December 2004 occurred, was there such a big debate in all the Muslim lands about whether according to Islam, they should do anything to help non-Muslims (this even though most of those who died were Muslims). In the end, the nations that did the most to help, were from the Christian West, and the wealthy Arab nations' aid was very limited.

4. Lastly, Jesus came in the way of peace, and Muhammad came with the sword. In what way is that an improvement?

Value Systems

Learning about and understanding the culture of Muslims is very important to effectively reaching them for Christ.

The central issue in sharing the gospel is the matter of communication. If we don't communicate in an understandable way, then we haven't really preached the gospel. There is more to real communication than just speaking words to someone. Those who study communication, tell us that when a message is communicated, every one of us has filters that determine how we understand is being communicated. What is said is not always the same thing as what is received by the hearer. The speaker of a message means one thing, but the message passes through a filter to the hearer, and the message may be understood in a totally different way than the speaker intended.

Sometimes in communicating across languages, we can make serious mistakes and get into trouble by innocently mispronouncing a word, giving it a completely different meaning than what we intended. But even when speaking the same language, there are filters that we all use, and one very important filter we all use in interpreting communication is our own cultural system and our own value system.

Islam grew out of a Middle Eastern, Arab Bedouin culture, and all over Muslim world there are certain values held, which often are different than those in the West. These values are important for us to keep in mind when sharing the gospel, so that our communication will be received as we intended.

Hospitality:

One of the main Islamic cultural values is hospitality. Hospitality goes back to the core Arab Bedouin values of obligation and honor. Hospitality is required, even when the means of giving it are very limited. Missionaries working among Muslims can testify how many times they were invited into the homes of Muslims, who were often poor, but still they laid out a feast. There is an emphasis on giving in abundance.

Hospitality, when given, creates an obligation for the one who receives it, and it needs to be reciprocated. Whenever there is a debt or an obligation, it must be repaid in an appropriate way. When we are ministering to Muslims, we must be hospitable, if we are to be respected.

Hospitality in sharing a meal together is a great way to minister to Muslims. The food and fellowship shared can bring great opportunities to talk. For those who are new Muslim converts, this is perhaps a more meaningful way to minister and disciple than even in formal meetings, as they experience the Christian life and fellowship lived out. It is a more relaxed time in which needs for prayer can more easily be brought up.

Time:

Another Islamic value concerns time. In the West, we see time as a commodity to be used or spent. We say we spend time doing something, we save time, we lose time, our time is precious and so on. In Islamic cultures, time is seen as being subordinated to the greater importance of relationships. Being on time is not seen as important, and this can be very frustrating for westerners to deal with. For example, a Muslim may make an appointment to meet you, but someone just happened to come by when they were coming, so they stayed to have time with them. Getting upset over that will just hurt your testimony with them.

The Importance of the Past:

The Islamic value system is also very Past oriented. In western cultures we tend to be future oriented. We feel that the past is done and gone, and what we really value is the advance of technology and the march of progress. What is past is discarded, and seen as not important anymore.

But for Muslim cultures, the past is considered more important than the future. The past holds the lessons we should learn from and follow, in the past is the golden age of Muhammad and Islam when it was triumphant. In relations with Christians, the Crusades of nine hundred years ago are viewed as important and meaningful to Muslims as if they had just happened yesterday. Their culture looks back at the past and values it. So in ministry to Muslims, it may be helpful when you share the gospel, to tie what you say into a sense of history. Tell, for example, how Moses was given the law, but the people didn't keep it because their hearts were blind, and so God promised (in Jeremiah 31:33) the day would come that He would write the Law upon their hearts, not on tablets of stone. When Jesus came, He died for our sins, and rose again, so that we can be forgiven and born of the Spirit. He changes our hearts, and writes the Law within us. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation by the Spirit of God.

When talking with Muslims, try to give a sense of historical perspective, and think of how your testimony relates to what the Bible says and Jesus taught, and not just say "Jesus gave me love, joy, and peace."

5. Evangelism Notes

What We Share:

The main things in Islam that do not coincide with Christianity are our Un-Corrupted Bible. The Bible proclaims the Deity of Christ and the Atonement and this is our message (Acts 17:3). These things are spiritually discerned and have to be revealed to the Muslim. (Mt 16:17)

"¹ And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony^[a] of God. ² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human^[b] wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Corinthians 2:1-8)

Study the person of Christ with them from John 1:1-14 and from Acts chapters 13. This will help them connect the person and work of Christ to their life now and to the lives of Christians they know.

As noted above, the only relationship the Muslim knows concerning God is master/slave. We have a new relationship initiated by Christ (Jn 15:). After they understand the distinction between Jesus the Son of God, and Christians as children of God, study the depth of a Father/son and a Father/daughter relationship with God the Father. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him." (1 John 3:1)

How We Share:

We don't always need to answer their questions or defend God's Word from their objections. Recognize where the real battle is and their objections may be a distraction from the real issues. There is value in discussion (seeds planted), but when they are arguing, it is generally not of much value because they generally don't listen. Muslims are very resistant! Don't debate or become argumentative, but reason and teach them in a kind and gentle manner. (2 Timothy 2:23-26)

How do we handle hard questions?

(1) Try to steer away from distracting questions to subjects they need to hear. Muslims generally ask if I believe that there's 3 Gods, if Jesus is the Son of God, if the Bible is corrupted, if I have read the Quran, etc. They are generally not open to discussion on these difficult subjects. Muslims are easily distracted from the real issues of sin and spiritual depravity, instead of the great debates of Jesus' deity. What they need to hear about is their own personal spiritual life. Ask them about issues such as sin and salvation. "Do you sin?" "Is lying a sin?" "If they're not lost, then who needs a savior?" Point out the major difference the Quran and the Bible, which is how we approach God. The Bible clearly challenges that we approach God only through the sacrifice of Christ.

(2) As much as possible, open your Bible and give them answers from the Bible. It helps for Muslims to see in written form what the Bible says exactly. Don't just challenge their thinking, but give them an exact thought from the Scriptures to wrestle with since there are so many distracting issues.

(3) Give brief answers until they are really ready to study the subject. Usually when you first meet a Muslim, their desire is not that deep. It is better to just be brief the first time, and then go and prepare and pray for the next times.

(4) Be aware of Satan's attempt to rob Jesus of his glory. Remember who is central in all the discussion Jesus Christ.

- Don't be intimidated by the Quran or the religious intensity of Islam. If we are living full Christian lives, Christianity is much more rich and full than Islam. It helps to parallel parts of the Christian lifestyle to the Muslims' religious life (confession of faith, prayer, tithing, the fast, the pilgrimage). In Christianity, our commitment to God is much higher, and we have deeper convictions behind our religious actions. Remember though that we live by the law of grace and they are under the law of Islam.
- Don't be wimpy Christian! Muslims don't respect those who waver in their faith. They may dislike what we say more than a liberal Christian, but they will deeply respect us.
- Be natural about your love for Christ. They are natural in expressing their own

Muslim beliefs. For Muslims, the things of God are not a private thing. Be open and natural. Share what you're learning from the Lord that day. Pray with them, read the Bible with them, read through the Prophets, discuss the Bible, pray using the Bible, etc.

- Love your Muslim friend. Don't be an "American friend." Muslims have good reason to be full of fear and distrust.

When We Share:

1 Peter 3:15 " *But sanctify the Lord God[d] in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.*"

- Don't push them to make a decision for Christ until they feel that they need to. Ask them who would they want to choose between Christ or their family, ethnic identity, etc.
- There is generally no fast way for a Muslim to convert because of their need for a process conversion. They need simultaneous evaluation and integration otherwise they revert back because of "spiritual schizophrenia." Help them to evaluate their old life in view of their new life. We need to be to be aware of their specific needs and take the time to disciple them.
- When you are talking with Muslims, it's like teaching a young child. They don't understand things until they form a category for understanding something. For example a child won't understand why adults drink or where babies come from, until they have the capacity to categorize these "adult" things. When Muslims say that Allah is Merciful, they mean he is merciful enough to create a Paradise. You need to ask them what they mean by Merciful or Compassionate, and ask them for a concrete example of that belief. This way you are clear on their meaning of the word and you also can give concrete examples of Christianity and what the Bible means. Another example is the Muslim perception of God, and how it is much different from how we understand Him. Remember Allah is Seen by Muslims as and Allah is Seen by Christians as
Make sure they understand where you are coming from. Always clarify and explain.

Pray with your Muslim Friends:

Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Elijah, and Ezekiel all fell on their faces in worship (Neh 8:6; 2 Chr 7:3; Mt 26:39). Daniel, Stephen, Peter, and Paul all knelt in prayer. David, Solomon, and Jesus stood and lifted their hands when they prayed (1 Timothy 2:8). All the postures of praying while bow, kneel, prostrate, stand, hands toward heaven. Each of these postures are comfortably used in typical Muslim. It would be a great impact to the Muslim to pray with them in one of these manners. Their focus should be pointed to the object of prayer and not the manner of prayer.
A helpful prayer is to pray Matthew 16:17 for your Muslim friend.

Bring them into your Christ-centered Community:

For new Muslim converts there is an increase in loneliness and emptiness and depression. It is important to introduce them to other believers. It is especially crucial for women converts to be brought into a safe community of close women friends. In Islam they had a great

network and support group of women, but in Christianity, we rarely provide that in our churches.

We must love Muslims and befriend them. Muslims are very hospitable people. If you want to love Muslims, you need to be hospitable to them also. Muslims value traditional respect for elders. If we want to love Muslims, you need to lovingly respect the elders. Religious devotion is very important to Muslims. If you want to love a Muslim, openly declare and live your faith while being respectful of some of their traditions.

Role-Play: Example of questions from watching the Jesus film:

Muslim: "You said that this movie of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) comes from the Bible. Your Bible is corrupt and has been changed. That is not what happened to the Prophet Jesus. All of your prophecies from King David and the Prophet Isaiah (peace be upon him) have been changed and corrupted."

Christian: "These are the books of the Psalms and the Prophets. Why would God let his Book brought by his prophets become corrupted?"

Muslim: "Allah revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Quran chapter 3:78 that your Bible is corrupt."

Christian: "When were the Scriptures altered or corrupted?"

Muslim: "Christians and Jews have so many different versions of the Bible."

Christian: "Manuscripts of the Bible date back to the 2nd century, but Muhammad lived in the 7th century. The Bible must have been altered after Muhammad because in Quran chapter 42:15 Muhammad says, "I believe in the Book which God has sent down," the book of the Torah, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospel."

Muslim: "In the Jesus film we saw, the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was born of Mary was a virgin. This is also what the Quran says."

Christian: "Jesus isn't just a prophet born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is the Savior, Messiah as prophesied by the Prophet Micah 700 years before Jesus. Micah 5:2 says, 'But you, Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.'"

Muslim: "In Luke 2:49, What does Jesus mean when he was a boy when he said, 'my Father's house?'"

Christian: "Jesus has a unique love relationship with God the creator, and that relationship is best described by calling Him Father. In the Bible King David prophesies in Psalm 2 the following:

6 I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.

7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD:

He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.

Muslim: "The Bible talks of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) raising a child from the dead just like we saw in the Jesus film."

Christian: "Yes! Jesus has the power of God to heal, and Jesus has power over death."

Muslim: "In your Bible, not only did Jesus raise a child from the dead, but your Book also says the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him) raised a boy from the dead. That's no different from what Jesus did."

Christian: "Yes this is true. But did Elijah feed the five thousand? Did Elijah heal the blind? Did Elijah cast out demons? Did Elijah prophesy his own death and resurrection?"

Muslim: "But Elijah (peace be upon him) prayed and it didn't rain. And Elijah (peace be upon him) prayed and fire came from the sky. You say that Jesus was crucified and that he did not have the power to resist."

Christian: "It is true that Jesus was crucified, was buried, and then rose again on the third day by God's power. But Jesus willingly gave up his life as a sacrifice for our sin."

Muslim: "Jesus didn't die!! Jesus was only a Prophet (peace be upon him) and was no more than a Messenger. Haven't you read the Quran? You can't kill a Prophet. Why would God allow His Prophet or especially His Son be killed?"

Christian: "You Muslims say that Jesus was a Prophet and that God would not allow his Prophet to die. But many of God's prophets were tortured and killed according to God's Will and Purpose. The Prophet Zechariah was stoned, the Prophet Jeremiah was chained and put in prison, and the Prophet Isaiah was killed unjustly.

"Hebrews 11:35-37 says, 'Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated.'

"So, why would God allow his Prophets to be tortured and killed unjustly? In them same way, God has a purpose for allowing His Son to be killed, just like the prophets.

1 John 2:2 says, 'Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.' Jesus is the Savior that King David prophesied about in Psalm 2. Jesus saved us from our sin, and took upon Himself the punishment for all the sins of the whole world."