

## Study 1: What Has God Revealed About Himself?

### Understanding the issue

Our **assurance** of God's **love** and **forgiveness** for us is perhaps the most important aspect of our witness for Christ.

This, however, presents a challenge because the **assurance** we have is seen by some Muslims as **arrogance**. In their view we cannot claim this assurance because this would put God in a box and in the Muslim view of things, God does not bind himself to any action. Therefore, when we communicate this assurance to our Muslim friends, it is very important that we do it with gentleness and reverence as is stated in 1 Peter 3. The love of God is an important place to start because a real experience of God's love helps Muslims understand other difficult theological concepts. Many times an attempt by Christians to share the plan of salvation with Muslims can easily be seen by Muslims as Christians trying to tell Muslims that they are better than Muslims because they believe the "true revelation of God." For a Muslim to recite his statement of faith is a way to earn God's favor and a way to keep in good standing with God. Our expression of faith should be an outpouring of our faith in God and a natural expression of our faith in who God is and the work that God has done in us. This is the important thing – that we make it clear that this matter of salvation is primarily a work that God has done. Our part, if we do have a part, is simply to respond, to say thanks, to allow God to teach us how to live out the truth of what God has revealed about himself. Yet our response is important because it is the **indicator** of genuine trust even though not the **initiator** of trust.

When discussing God's love, many times we as Christians make the statement, "God is love." This is a correct statement; it comes directly from the Bible. However, this can be very misunderstood by Muslims for a number of reasons.

1. Muslims do not believe that we can say what God is like, we can merely describe actions that God has already done. In fact to attempt to describe what God is like is one of the worst sins a Muslim can commit. Saying that God is love, is saying what God is like. Many times Muslims make the statement, "Whatever we think God is, that he cannot be." This comes from the conviction that God is much greater than our human comprehension. Unfortunately their caution goes too far because they limit God's right to reveal what he chooses to reveal about Himself. However, if we ask them this question, "If God chooses to reveal something about Himself, are we not obliged to trust what he has revealed to us?", they will usually agree. This keeps our discussion on a sound footing, the word of God, and shows that we are people of integrity and have a high respect for God's word.
2. Some Muslims think of this statement as an equation and rationalize that if God is love then love is God and that is definitely not true. We would have to agree that this equation is not correct.
3. Some Muslims are taught to understand "love" as a physical sexual attraction and not as described in 1 Corinthians 13. At times it seems that they want to persist in their erroneous understanding because this helps to justify their own beliefs.

In order to avoid this misunderstanding, we can mention our confidence in God's love for us personally. This, Muslims cannot refute. When we mention God's love we can start with recounting the specific historical acts of God's love (This is what we attempt to do by reading Psalms 139 and 136.) and begin to show our Muslim friends that God's love is a consistent pattern. (Psalm 136 tells of specific acts of God that show God's love. It also shows us that every action of God is an evidence of his love.) The fact that "God is love" is a true statement that is the foundation for this consistent pattern of God's love, but as God revealed himself throughout history, he first showed us his loving acts, then gave us the actual statement of "God is love." Why shouldn't we take the same approach with our Muslim friend? That is why we have begun this study.

But perhaps the most important thing that will convince Muslims of God's love is our own love for them. This may test and challenge our own relationship to God, for "Love is of God" and we cannot love our

Muslim friends without having a great sense of God's unconditional love for us. This not only communicates God's love to them, but it also builds trust that is extremely important in the process that they must go through.

In summary, what they may quickly pass off as "merely Christian arrogance" can be corrected through a patient consistent witness of

1. Love to our Muslim friend
2. Respect for our revealed Scriptures
3. Personal faith in God's love for us
4. Willingness to **patiently** correct their misunderstandings

Fuad Accad in his book, ***Building Bridges***, states that we must not move on to the issues of sin, its consequences and its remedy until first a person is convinced of God's love for them. I don't think we should make this a hard and fast rule but I think it shows the importance of understanding the concept of God's love. I do firmly believe that all through the process of explaining God's plan of salvation, we must be constantly aware of the fact that God's love is the reason for and foundation of all that God did in sending Christ to pay for our sins. Muslims may not understand God's love simply by us telling them about it or by reading accounts of his love toward people in the Bible. Their understanding of God's love may come only through your love to them. In order to do this God may send difficulties to their lives or even yours so that His love shines brightest!

In this study I have avoided references to Israel, because there tends to be a great hatred toward Israel by some Muslims. The mere mention of Israel may bring political overtones to their minds which would not be helpful. If, however, the term, "Israel," comes up in a passage or discussion, don't panic. Simply explain that this refers to "the followers of Moses" or "the descendants of Jacob that God told Moses to lead." Associating Israel with Moses or David or another Prophet they respect will lessen the political overtones. The Qur'an mentions the children of Israel by using the Arabic words, "*bani Is-ra-el*." If you don't know Arabic, though, it's best to stick to English. Also remember that Israel is simply the name God gave Jacob, meaning "prince of God," and "Israelites" refers to his descendants. For background material on the character of God studied in this lesson you may want to read Deuteronomy 6:4,5; Mark 12:28-34; Deuteronomy 10:12; Deuteronomy 30:6; and Isaiah 44 and 45.

One concept that we have made little mention of in the less is the holiness of God. This is not to eliminate teaching regarding holiness. It is just that Muslims are not very familiar with the term "holiness" because they do not believe that God holds himself to a self-imposed standard of moral excellence. However, when we analyze the concept of holiness, we find it is more than just moral excellence. The word "holy" simply means to be "set apart." Things or people are set apart for at least three different reasons: moral excellence or excellence of any kind, purity or cleanness, and purpose or function. All these ideas are included in the Biblical injunction to, 'Be holy, because I [God] am holy.' (1 Peter 1:16; Leviticus 19:2) Furthermore the Muslim faith includes most of these ideas but in separate realms. Muslims adhere vehemently to the fact that God is greater than anything else, so much that, in order to emphasize that our human minds cannot fully comprehend God, they will sometimes make the statement, 'Whatever we think God is, that he cannot be.' Even though they don't believe that God adheres to a self-imposed standard of moral excellence based on his character, they do believe that he does not sin – that whatever he does, is His right to do. He has the final authority and cannot be questioned. We could say that the Muslim view is that what God does is right, but not that God does what is right (in the morally absolute sense). So to a Muslim, God's "holiness" comes from his position. Because of his position, all His actions are right. This aspect of holiness also relates to His purpose and function as God. This is in contrast to the Christian view that God's holiness comes from His character which further validates His high position and gives Him the right to relate to man as He has chosen to do. Cleanness is very important to Muslims, for they are required to do various washings in order for their prayers to be heard by God. They also do emphasize cleanness of heart but to them cleanness of the body will bring cleanness of heart.

The fact that Muslims have a different understanding of "holiness" doesn't mean we should eliminate teaching on holiness. It is very important that Muslims learn the Biblical concept of holiness. But it is probably best to begin by confirming the things we do have in common. Then through our lives, the following studies and scriptures show the importance and benefit of the truth of God's holiness as revealed in the Bible. Remember that God revealed his character to the patriarchs like Abraham, Moses, etc as they encountered real live situations in their lives. Beware, God may take us through difficult times to cause us to trust in His promises (evidence of his morally absolute and supreme character) to demonstrate His truths to your Muslim friend!

This study has been revised from a study written by Dick Daeschner, for use amongst Muslims. Some questions have been eliminated and others added. Further comments have been included. These comments are indicated by this sign: ☾\*. I trust that these things are helpful and are in the spirit of Christ. Each Muslim is an individual and must be treated as such. Any information you read about ministering to Muslims must be taken as a "springboard" from which to observe and ask questions. You may find that the comments I have written may not apply perfectly to your Muslim friend, but I feel they are good guidelines. Please remember that only the one page summary sheet and the question sheet should be shown to your friend. It is **not** helpful to tell them this study has been made especially for Muslims!

## Study 1 Question Sheet (Answers and Comments)

### What Has God Revealed About Himself?

1. **Deuteronomy 7:9:** What did God reveal to Moses, about Himself?

**He is the only God. He is a faithful God. He is a covenant making and covenant keeping God. He is a loving God.**

*☪ These verses talk about the fact that there is only one God. This is different from the Muslim view that "God is One." Don't address that issue until later, unless your Muslim friend brings it up. Also, don't mention the trinity. Remember that the word, "trinity" is not in the Bible, but the concept of the trinity definitely is. Don't defend the use of the word "trinity." God never used the word in the Bible, he simply told us about himself. That is what we need to do with our Muslim friend--begin to tell them about God.*

**Isaiah 45:18:** What does the prophet Isaiah tell us about God?

**He created the heavens and the earth. He created the earth for a purpose--to be inhabited. He alone is God.**

God is above what he made and distinct from it. He is not any part of the universe or all of it. "We should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone--an image made by man's design or skill." (Acts 17:29) See also Isaiah 46 and Jeremiah 10.

**Mark 12:30-31:** What does Jesus say about our response to the One True God?

**We are to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. Loving our neighbor reflects our love for God.**

2. **Psalm 139:**

The Prophet David wrote a lot about God's actions toward him and other human beings. What does each section of verses below tell us about the One True God?

*☪ Muslims respect David as a prophet of God. It is usually helpful to start with verses from the prophets that they respect. A good place to start showing our Muslim friends about what God has revealed about himself is the stories of the prophets in the Old Testament. All of the men in Genesis, we refer to as patriarchs are considered by Muslims as prophets.*

**Verses 1-6: He knows everything (omniscient).**

God knows everything about every person, but His omniscience cuts two ways. None of our needs escape His notice, but neither do our failings. No part of our lives is hidden from God. Other verses which teach that God knows everything, including attitudes of the heart, are 1 Corinthians 28:9 and Hebrews 4:13.

**Verses 7-12: He is everywhere present (omnipresent). He guides and protects.**

The Bible does not teach that God is in everything as some religions claim, but that He is fully present in every place. Even though we may never doubt that God is accessible to us at any time, we do tend to think that He is only attentive to us when we are thinking about Him. The fact is that He gives His undivided

attention to every person in every place at all times. His ability to concentrate on His relationship with you is not diminished in the least by what He does to maintain His relationship with me.

☾ *Muslims may have difficulty accepting the fact that God can have a "relationship" with us. That may seem to them like it is bringing God down to the human level and thus degrading God. It may be best not to use the term "relationship" until Lesson 5 or 6.*

**Verses 13-14: His works are wonderful and powerful. (omnipotent)**

**Verses 17-18: His precious thoughts are compassionate toward us. His thoughts are more and greater than ours allowing him to care for and protect us.**

3. **Psalm 136:1-9:** What word does this Psalm use to sum up every action of God? **Love!**

☾ *Every action of God whether it seems good or bad is an action out of his care for mankind. It may not seem like this in the short run but in the long run this is always true.*

4. **Psalm 96:4-10:** How does God's Word say we should respond in light of our knowledge of God?

**We need to praise Him. We need to fear Him. We need to tell others of his glory and strength. We need to offer offerings to Him. We need to worship Him. We need to recognize his greatness so much that we tremble before him. We need to tell others about His reign and His righteous judgment.**

☾ *The worship of God in truth, is the highest service that we can render on this earth. Be reminded that worship is not just what we do in a building or with prescribed words and bodily positions but it is the done with every action of our lives that are lived in accordance with God's truth. For a Muslim, this may be what they are trying to get away from. "Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire.'" (Hebrews 12:28-29) These verses remind me that the only worship that is acceptable to God is out of humble thanksgiving. We don't need to say thanks for something we've earned; we give thanks **after** receiving a gift or having a firm promise of receiving that gift.*

5. **1 John 4:7, 8:**

What do these verses tell us about God?

**He is the source of love. He is love.**

☾ *Explain that later we will learn more about His love for us. Explain that all of God's actions whether they seem to be helpful or harmful, are expressions of God's love. This is why it is said that "God is love." Point out that this does not mean that "love is God." That is like making something other than God, our god. God forbid!! There is only one true God. If a Muslim has a problem with this, point out that the word "love" in "God is love" is an adjective--describing word. But the word "love" in "love is God" is a noun, so to make them interchangeable would be to change the whole meaning and turn truth into error.*

6. What do you think is the greatest act of love one person could do for another?

**The greatest human act of love is to give one's live for another. (John 15:13)**

☾ *Don't look up the scripture on the death of Christ or discuss the death of Christ at this point. Merely draw a point from life. This is a point of common ground that is not religious ground. Later it can be used to establish the "reasonableness" of the death of Christ.*

7. **1 Corinthians 13: 4-8a**: What do these verses tell us real love is like?

**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.**

☾ *From these verses we understand that love is **without impurity or imperfection**. God's love is heightened when we realize this. Why would someone need to be patient with someone if he and the other person were perfect? Why would it resist from delighting in evil if there was no evil in the first place, etc. Make the point that since God is perfect and without sin, the fact that he loves us means that we are imperfect.*

8. **Luke 15:11-32**: What does this story that Jesus told, tell us about love?

**Love may move us to go beyond our cultural call of duty, but always in a wholesome way--never is a disrespectful or inappropriate way. It draws no boundaries as long it is in line with God's truth and it is looking out for the interests of others.**

☾ *Another very good answer would be that **the love the father had for His son is a small glimpse into the love God has for us**. However, some Muslims react strongly to expressing God and his actions in a human way. If you do choose to use this answer, try to steer away from referring to God as Father at this point. Simply speak of his unconditional, unashamed care for us. It would be good to stress that a father's love for his son is an inadequate example of God's love toward us because God's thoughts, actions and character are far greater than any human being's.*

9. How has God shown his love to you?

☾ *Share how you sense God's love daily or on a regular basis in your life, but don't share your testimony yet.*

## Study 1 Question Sheet

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**Verses 1-6:**

**Verses 7-12:**

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**Verses 17-18:**

3. **Psalm 136:1-9:**

What word does this Psalm use to sum up every action of God?

4. **Psalm 96:4-10:**

How does God's Word say we should respond in light of our knowledge of God?

5. **1 John 4:7, 8:**

What do these verses tell us about God?

6. What do you think is the greatest act of love one person could do for another?

7. **1 Corinthians 13: 4-8a:** What do these verses tell us real love is like?

8. **Luke 15:11-32:** What does this story that Jesus Christ told, tell us about love?

9. How has God shown his love to you?

## Study 1 Summary Sheet

### What Has God Revealed About Himself?

We cannot know anything about God, except what God has revealed about Himself. To conjecture about the character of God beyond what He has revealed would be wrong. To think that we can understand everything about God would also be wrong, for God is greater than us and therefore everything he does is of superior quality. However, whatever God has revealed about Himself, we can humbly believe. Since all of God's requirements stem from His very character it is important to know what God has revealed about Himself to mankind through the prophets. One of the first important things to know about God is that there is **only one true God**, the **creator** of the universe. He alone deserves our **worship**.

He has revealed through His prophets that He knows everything (omniscient), is everywhere present (omnipresent), and is all-powerful (omnipotent). This demonstrates that He has perfect **control** over the universe. But He has also revealed that He is personally concerned about us as human beings. He has thoughts of **compassion** toward us that protect us and comfort us in this world.

This compassion toward us is referred to as love. The fact is that every action of God toward us is for our better and ultimate good, even when He corrects us. (Psalm 136) So, we can say that everything God does is out of love for us. For this reason it is said that "God is love." This, however, does **not** mean that "Love is God"! Our human expressions of love are **not** objects of true worship!

Since we know God by what He has revealed about Himself to us, we must at this point look to His word, to understand what He says about true love. The type of love that He is referring to is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Since all of His commands come from His own character, we know that this is not only how He wants us to love, but what we can expect from His love toward us. Knowing this and also knowing that He wants us to know what He has revealed about Himself, brings us great comfort.

Knowing that God loves us is the key to life. The Bible says, "We love because [God] first loved us." (1 John 4:19) It is for this reason that it goes on to say, "For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." (1 John 4:20b) This is important because both Moses and Jesus Christ said that the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love our neighbor. (Mark 12:30-31; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18) So the power to love God and thereby honor and please Him is to know His love toward us. God's love toward us is given as a gift, which is received by giving thanks which is seen by God as an acceptable service. (Hebrews 12:28-29)

## Study 2: What is Sin?

### Understanding the issue

Understand the difference between the Muslim and the Biblical definitions of sin. The Muslim definition is a violation of a command of God of which the offender had full knowledge. The Biblical definition is simply "missing the mark" "a good attempt that fell short of God's perfect standard." One good illustration is an archer aiming at the target. If your friend has trouble with this concept of sin, ask him, have you ever used a bow and arrow or a gun or a catapult or tried to hit some mark of some kind of other? Then ask, "Could you see the mark or bullseye? Did you have the strength? Did you know how to use the bow/gun/catapult/etc.? Did you intend to hit the bullseye? So did you hit it every time? The obvious answer is, "No." So why not? At this point we can point out, "Sin is just like that. We may intend to do right but we may hit just a fraction to the right, left, up or down. Are any of those options acceptable if we are to required to hit the bullseye every time?" The obvious answer is again, "No." Again we can say, "That is what sin is, missing the mark, even though we tried very hard. What the Bible calls sin, many Muslims simply see as mistakes. One of the reasons for this is that in their minds there is no sure hope for the forgiveness of sins. By showing them that even mistakes are the result of the Fall of man and his sinfulness, their idea of sin is heightened and corrected. This gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to convict them of their own actions and convince them without a shadow of a doubt that they need a Savior. James 2:10 could be helpful at this point, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point, is guilty of breaking all of it."

To a Muslim, to intend to do something good that you are unable to do through circumstances beyond your control counts the same merit as actually doing it. Sometimes this makes for many good intentions that they have never really thought through in order to earn favor with God. This helps them to feel better about themselves thinking that the merit received from intentions will outweigh the bad things they have done. However, a clear understanding of the fact that sin results from just "missing the mark," shows that intentions are not sufficient. James 4:17 says, "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." If what we intend to do is also what we know we should do, then sin can be simply failing to do the things we intend to do. This doesn't mean that it is done out of great wickedness but simply of "missing the mark."

They still may not acknowledge the truth about sin. It is always easier to admit our wrong if there seems to be no consequences. If they refuse to admit that they have sinned, don't get frustrated and try to pressure them into admitting it. Simply say, "Well I know I have sinned, and this is what the Bible says about it." You may also want to ask this question, "If you knew there was a **sure** remedy for sin, that would not bring any punishment, or leave any lasting shame or sense of uncleanness, do you think it would be easier to admit that even mistakes were actually evidence of sin in our lives, especially if the answer to sin was simply being willing to view sin as God views it and and being willing to admit your sin to God and even others so that God could give you the desires to live right?" (At this point it would not be best to mention about Christ's death on the cross. That will come later.)

One thing that Muslims sometimes say is, "Well even Adam sinned," meaning to minimize the consequences of sin. They will even go to the extent of saying that God made us weak so God couldn't punish us for the way he made us. The account of Adam's sin can be helpful. Adam is considered by Muslims to be a prophet. The fact is that Adam acted with **full knowledge** of what he was doing. To a Muslim this constitutes a sin. If God punished Adam for his sin, does he think less of sin today? Muslims believe that Adam was in paradise (heaven) before he sinned and that God threw him down to earth as punishment for his sin. Don't argue about where Adam was before he sinned. Dwell on the consequences that occurred as a result of his sin.

Sometimes Muslims (like many others) will try to minimize sin. They may relate more to the concept of uncleanness and particularly shame. They also do not believe in original sin--that we are affected by the sin of Adam. Fouad Accad in *Building Bridges* has some good insight:

If... your friend... has been willing to acknowledge that sin is a reality – a reality that affects all of us-- then you could probably speak directly and personally to him about the sin reality. To a Muslim, communicating the dimension of sin that we would call *defilement* is very important. Muslims are constantly aware of the importance of being "clean." But as Jesus pointed out, although being clean on the outside is important, being clean on the *inside* is far more important (Matthew 23:25-28). Until a person sees that he is dirty on the inside, then he has no real sense of sin, and thus no perceived need for being saved.

Ask your friend outright, "Are you willing to admit that you have sinned?" Don't be so immediate in your wording as to say, "Are you willing to admit that you are sinning?"

Your own admission ("I know I have!") makes it less threatening for him to admit the same thing. Then if he admits his sinfulness, ask, "What do you think you can do to remove it?" This may leave him temporarily hanging, but it leads logically to the third principle, which gets to the heart of how bad the bad news of sin really is. (pp. 89-90)

Note: If your friend is having a hard time understanding the concept of sin or admitting responsibility to his own sin, the booklet, 'Sin and Atonement in the Bible and the Koran,' and the article, "YOU BELIEVE BABIES ARE BORN SINNERS AND ARE GOING TO HELL' – Facing the Muslim Attack on Original Sin,' would be good for you to read in order to get more of a background of the issues you are dealing with. Also, remember that it is the work of the Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. We simply need to declare the simple fact of sin and its consequences, humbly including ourselves in the problem. It is better to let the Spirit convince than to try to argue the point.

One of the issues that may come up is the issue of the image of God. When we think of image we many times think of the outward form. Muslims will do this as well. But to them the thought of this will be horrifying. "What," they will say, "you say that God has the same image as us? This is wrong!" At this we need to say, "What you are saying is that God has our image, but that is not what the Bible says. The Bible says that we are made in His image. So first we have to go back to what God has revealed about Himself. Does God say that He has a body? NO!! Does the Bible ever say that? NO!! Jesus Himself said in John 4:24, 'God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.' So we find that God is spirit. What is a spirit like? Can we touch a spirit? Does it have "substance"? (See Luke 24:36-39) So whatever God put into man that was in His "image," had to do with the spiritual element of man. Whenever we read the Bible, in order to find out more about how God made us and intended us to be, we must find out what God says about Himself!" Also, we don't have full knowledge about what man lost when he sinned against God. Perhaps man lost some of this image in the fall and it will only finally be restored when we see Christ face to face. (1 John 3:2)

The following will give you a little more background into the issue of God's image. This however would probably not be the best to discuss with Muslims at this point. The Bible teaches that we have to be changed in order to be with God. (1 Corinthians 15:40-54) Then we will be able to behold the glory of Christ. (John 17:24) How this will happen is explained in 2 Corinthians 3:4-18. We are in the process of being transformed at this time into the image of the glory of God, but someday we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2) When we realize this is part of the process of reconciliation and redemption, it causes us to wonder what man was like before the fall. The fact that Adam and Eve hid from God suggests that either they could not behold His glory or that the glory that God had given them was gone so they felt naked. The disciples were also afraid when they saw Christ in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. We know that we are to be conformed to the image of Christ. (Romans 8:29) This is not referring to his outward form though because Paul expresses his desire that Christ be "formed" in the Galatians. (Galatians 4:19) God does want us to "share His holiness," (Hebrews 12:10) and be "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4) Also Philippians 2:5-6 speaks of Christ as, "being in very nature God." The Greek word (*morphe*) translated "nature" means the inner quality that affects the outward expression. However Adam was not made "in very nature God" but was made in the "image of God" meaning that there were similarities at least in regard to his immaterial being. Perhaps before the fall, his outward glory resembled the glory of God thus causing them to realize their nakedness after the fall. But we should be

very careful before we speculate on this. More detail on the glory of God is found in Exodus 33:12-23; 34:29-35. Also see Daniel 2:22.

From these verses "image" refers to:

- Holiness
- Immortality
- Glory
- Nature

## Study 2 Question Sheet (Answers and Comments)

### What is Sin?

**Review:** What did we learn about God from the first study?

God is our creator and the only God. He is supreme in all his ways and worthy of our service and worship. We are responsible to love Him. He must judge sin, but He is also loving to those who go astray.

#### 1. **Genesis 1:27:**

What is the basic relationship of man and woman to God?

**All human beings relate to God as creatures to their Creator.**

Humans are the only creatures God made in His image. This means that we have qualities of personality in common with God, such as mind, will and emotions, but not uniquely divine attributes, such as omniscience and omnipotence. Being created in God's image also means that we were created with the ability to display the holy character of God. God expects us to "be holy, because I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44, 1 Peter 1:16).

☾ *Make the point that "image" is **not** referring to God's outward form. (See the notes in the supplement.) Do not discuss Jesus Christ's role in revealing God to man at this point. See John 1:18a and 4:24.*

☾ *The concept of "holiness" is not generally understood in Islam because God never holds himself to any standard of morality. He is above that. So the commands that God gives are not based on His character. Muslims relate more to the idea of obeying God's laws, being free from shame, and being free from defilement. For a Muslim the way to a "clean heart" is to follow God's commands and to imitate the lifestyle of the prophet Muhammad. However, when we analyze the Biblical definition of holiness (set apart) we see that there are at least three elements. Things are "set apart" for the following reasons: superior quality, cleanness and purpose of design. Muslims relate to being "set apart" for these reasons in different aspects of their life and religion, but their life and religion is not based on the "holiness" of God's character in the sense of abiding by moral absolutes..*

2. What responsibility does man have to God as his Creator?

**Man is responsible to honor, serve and obey God.**

3. **Genesis 1:26-31:** What did God think of them from the beginning?

**God pronounced the man and woman He had made "very good."**

One evidence of God's regard for man and woman was that He blessed them and gave them dominion over all that He had made. Psalm 8 describes humans as *"a little lower than God and crowned with glory (God's holiness)... (and) ruler over the works of your (God's) hands."* Because of our sin, we lost our position as ruler, but the writer of Hebrews reminds us that we do see Jesus *"...crowned with glory and honor..."* (Hebrews 2:9). Through faith in Him, God will *"bring many sons to glory"* (Hebrews 2:10) and restore them to their place of dominion over creation.

4. **Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-13:**

What did God provide for Adam and Eve? What did He tell them? What were their feelings after they were put into the garden? What happened to change the relationship between God and man?

**A plentiful garden. He told them to take care of it and to eat of every tree of the garden but not to eat of the tree in the center of the garden. They felt no shame. Adam and Eve disobeyed God's specific command and knowingly ate the fruit from the forbidden tree.**

5. What attitude, or basic offence against God, was behind the act of disobeying Him?

**They rebelled against God and choose to follow their own desires instead of the command of God.**

Sin in rebellion against God, but active defiance is not the only form it takes. Passive indifference can also be rebellious. God is just as offended by those who disregard Him as He is by those who disobey Him. *"In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God"* (Psalm 10:4). Ignoring God, leaving Him out of our lives, is as much evidence of rebellion as deliberately violating His commands.

Rebellion also has as much to do with the purposes for which we live as it does the principles by which we live. God is as offended by our failure to pursue His purposes as He is by our failure to practice His principles.

☾ *Muslims are very much in tune with God's commands with the need to obey God's law. However, it would be good to add that all of God's laws have man's best interests in mind and never compromise the greatness of God. For a Muslim it is important that God is seen to be great. However, a Muslim may have a bit of a problem that God **always** has man's best interests in mind. In Islam God does not commit Himself to man by making promises to man or obligating Himself to man. Thus the holiness of God in that sense is foreign to a Muslim because He never holds himself to a moral standard.*

6. Who else was involved in this situation?

**The serpent, a very attractive animal, through which Satan, the enemy of God, spoke.**

Satan, or the devil, was originally an angel, a spiritual being created by God. He rebelled against God and was "cast down" from heaven to earth, where he continues to oppose God and His people. The origin of the devil is explained in Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-19, where he is portrayed as embodied in wicked kings. The appealing nature of the serpent made it the perfect vehicle for the devil's deception.

Satan's strength is greater than ours but inferior to that of God (1 John 4:4), and his efforts to oppose God are limited to those allowed by God (Job 1). He is described by Jesus as the "father of lies" (John 8:44), and he is destined to judgment in an eternal lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-10).

7. What did the serpent say about God's command and warning?

**Satan distorted God's word that Adam and Eve were not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and he denied God's warning that they would die if they did eat its fruit.**

Satan's tactics have not changed. First, he asked Eve if God had said that she and Adam were not to eat from "any" tree in the garden. He still tries to turn us away from God's will by distorting His word, especially by suggesting that His way is too narrow and that we will miss the best in life by following it. Eve readily accepted the idea that God is too restrictive and attributed to Him a prohibition against even touching the fruit.

Satan not only distorts God's word, he tries to raise doubts in our minds about the consequences of disobeying it. In the case of Adam and Eve, he contradicted God's warning that they would "surely die" (Genesis 2:17) with the blatant assertion that they would "not surely die" (Genesis 3:4)

8. Did Adam and Eve believe God or Satan?

**They believed Satan.**

Men and women still believe the lies of Satan rather than the word of God.

9. Why did Adam and Eve disobey God?

**They desired equality with God and doubted the word of God, wanting to decide for themselves what was right and best for them. The fruit looked good to them, and they trusted their own judgment more than God's word. Eve was deceived by the serpent, but Adam knowingly took of the fruit and ate.**

It is significant in the mind of a Muslim that Adam knowingly ate the fruit. This makes the difference between a mistake and a sin.

Behind all sin is the failure to believe God's warning of consequences if we do not obey Him and the implied promise of contentment if we do. "...no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless" (Psalm 84:11). "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

10. **Genesis 6:5-7:**

By the time of this passage, what did God think of the people He had made?

**"The LORD was grieved that he had made man."**

☪ *Some Muslims may have a problem with the statement that God "saw." This may be considered as ascribing a human action to God. It is seen by many Muslims as sin to ascribe human actions to God. If your Muslim friend objects to this don't worry, simply ask, "Do you object to this?" If he does, say, "That's interesting, would you mind explaining why you think that?" If he says that Islam forbids this, ask, "What is the authority on which this is based?" If he says "The Qur'an," say, "Would you mind if I do further study on that and we can talk more about that later? Do you mind if we finish this study trying to understand what the Bible teaches even though it may disagree with your beliefs?" This sets an example that you are willing to listen and are willing to do further study before you object to what is said. It also allows him the opportunity to give you permission to go on. It also gives him the permission to disagree. It is important that he graciously be given the opportunity to disagree. Giving the facts, clarifying and explaining the best we can, are our job. Changing the heart and bringing a person to have faith are God's part. The Qur'an also contains statements that attribute human actions or qualities to God. But be very gentle with this fact, because this could cause great embarrassment to a Muslim. If your friend has **strongly** objected to this concept of God, you may choose to point this out to him, wait till you meet next time and then state that you did some research on this. Then ask them if you could share with them what you discovered. Don't just give him the references; **gently** and **soberly** show him the following verses in the Qur'an: face of God -- Sura 2:115; eyes of God -- Sura 11:37; sitting on the throne -- Sura 20:5; hands of God -- Sura 38:75; hand of God -- Sura 48:10; the face of God -- Sura 55:27; God sees--Sura 49:13,18 (Note: The verse numbering between Qur'ans may vary from 1-3 verses.)*

11. As their maker and provider, did God have the right to feel this way about man's actions?

## Yes

The fact that the Lord is sovereign, or supreme, means that he has the authority and power to carry out his judgment of those who do not live the righteous life he requires.

12. Why did He want to destroy them? Also see Romans 3:23

**People had become wicked. They were sinning greatly and failing to give glory to God as God had created them to do.**

What God had made very good had become very bad; what He had made holy had become sinful. The three superlatives – every, only, all – leave no doubt about the hopeless and helpless depth of depravity to which mankind had fallen.

13. Have you ever sinned? What does God think about that sin?

**Answers will vary. If you are willing to admit that you have sinned, it will be easier for your friend to admit his or her sin.**

## Study 2 Question Sheet

### What is Sin?

**Review:** What did we learn about God from the first study?

1. **Genesis 1:27:**

What is the basic relationship of man and woman to God?

2. What responsibility does man have to God as his Creator?

3. **Genesis 1:26-31:**

What did God think of them from the beginning?

4. **Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-11:**

What did God provide for Adam and Eve? What did He tell them? What were their feelings after they were put into the garden? What happened to change the relationship between God and man?

5. What attitude, or basic offence against God, was behind the act of disobeying Him?

6. Who else was involved in this situation?

7. What did the serpent say about God's command and warning?

8. Did Adam and Eve believe God or Satan?

9. Why did Adam and Eve disobey God?

10. **Genesis 6:5-7:**

By the time of this passage, what did God think of the people He had made?

11. As their maker and provider, did God have the right to feel this way about man's actions?

12. Why did He want to destroy them? Also see Romans 3:23

13. Have you ever sinned?

## Study 2 Summary Sheet

### What is Sin?

"*God created man in his own image*" is the simple, Biblical description of how the human race began (Genesis 1:27). Basically, people are in a creature-Creator relationship with God. They are the crown of His creation. God thought enough of them to give them dominion over all other life on the earth. When God first evaluated what He had made, His judgment was that it was all good, including man and woman (Genesis 1:31).

Several generations later, however, God thought differently about the human race. In the sixth chapter of Genesis we find that, "*the Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thought of His heart was only evil all the time*" (Genesis 6:5). God wanted to destroy humanity. What made the difference? If we can find out what happened to cause people to change from good to evil in God's sight, we will discover the essence of sin.

What happened is recorded in Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-7. God placed a restriction on the man and woman He had created; in the middle of the garden was one tree the fruit of which they were not to eat. This negative command gave them an alternative to the will of God. They could then exercise their freedom by choosing to obey or to disobey God, their Creator. God warned that the result of eating of the forbidden fruit would be death.

A third part, appearing in the form of a serpent and identified elsewhere in the Bible as Satan, the enemy of God, spoke to the woman and contradicted God's command and warning. The man and woman were faced with a decision. They could continue to live in a proper creature-Creator relationship of obedience to God, believing His warning, or they could believe the serpent and set themselves free from God's control by disobeying Him and eating the fruit. They chose to believe the serpent rather than God. They took the step of disobedience, acting for the first time independently of God.

This is the essence of what the Bible calls sin. Sin cannot be defined by a list of acts, although it results in acts which the Bible calls "sins." Sin is the disease; sins are the symptoms. Sin is a state of rebellion against God, or acting independently of Him. Sin is making decisions without consulting God. To run your own life is to live in sin. Isaiah the prophet put it this way, "*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way*" (Isaiah 53:6)

The reality of sin is unsettling, but how concerned we are about it depends on the result of sin. In the next study we will see just how serious the consequences of sin are.

## Study 3: What are the Results of Sin?

### Understanding the issue

To a Muslim, the result of sin is a fiery hell. Their concept of hell is very much like ours, except they believe that every person spends time in hell being purified from sin. At a funeral they will have two special prayers, one before the burial asking forgiveness for any sins that they may have committed, and one after the burial, asking God to speed the dead person on his journey to heaven so he won't need to suffer too long in hell. Hell is a horrifying reality to a Muslim.

The Arabic word that Muslims use for hell is *jahannum* and the word for heaven is *janat*. Sometimes Muslims are not familiar with the English words for religious concepts. It is probably not best to use the Arabic terms with them but if you can know a few that could be helpful to the communication process. A good way to remember the difference between the Arabic words for heaven and hell is to remember that the word for heaven ends with a "t" which reminds us of the cross and it is because of the cross that we get to heaven.

The Hebrew word for death actually means "separation." Adam and Eve did not die physically the day that they sinned, but they were separated from God by being driven out of the beautiful garden that God had made for them. Ask the question, "Is this the way they should have responded to God who had given them everything even their very life?" and "Isn't this a just punishment for someone who had refused to appreciate what was given to him, knows they are wrong but are unrepentant?" (Muslim culture expects a son to keep a close relationship with his parents and to take care of them in their old age out of gratitude for them providing for him when he was young.) The result of sin was the break in fellowship on this earth but the final result is the second death. The Muslim holy book, the Qur'an, speaks of signs that God sent to warn people. I like to speak of physical death as simply a sign warning us of the second death that doesn't just separate our bodies from our spirits or us from our friends, but that which separates us from God for eternity. (Matthew 10:28, Revelation 21:8; 2:11; 20:6)

Your Muslim friend may still not get the full impact of the damning nature of sin. The following illustration seems to help. If you had guests over and you had poured each person a glass of refreshing pure clean water and suddenly a bird flew over and dropped a dropping in the glass, what would you do? Imagine what your guest would do if you said, "Well, that was a good glass of water, I'll just dip out the dropping and then you can drink it." Of a certainty you would take the glass of impure water away, and replace it with a glass of fresh water to be served to your guest. The thought of serving the glass of impure water to your guest would abhor you, but somehow we say to God, "Well, I've done all these good things in my life. Surely I have done more good deeds than bad deeds and you will accept me based on my good deeds. But, no, when God sees the impurity in our life, He requires a pure life to take its place. If the bird had dropped a drop of urine in the glass, it may have gone unnoticed, but it still would be impure. Many times we are not aware of the extent of the impurity of our own lives, but God knows everything. That is why it is important to remember that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Also, if we keep the whole law and yet fail in one point, we are guilty of breaking the whole law. (James 2:10) These facts make us worthy of eternal separation from God in hell. All of us must face up to the fact that we fall short of the perfect standard that God requires. By having that fact firm in our minds, we can appreciate how good the good news of Christ's sacrifice is for us.

Many Muslims will suggest that since God made us and knew that we would sin, he just asks us to repent and we will be fully restored. The fact is, though, that Adam and Eve simply disobeyed once and God cursed them and drove them out of the garden. Though God didn't strike them dead instantly, they sensed the effects of their sin when they hid from God because of their shame. Even then the lives of animals were taken to provide skins to cover Adam and Eve's shame. Later men began to call upon God. It is by calling upon God that we are saved from the results of sin if we call in faith on the promise of God's remedy for sin.

## Study 3 Question Sheet (Answers and Comments)

### What Are the Results of Sin?

Review: What did we learn from the last study about sin?

Sin is rebellion against God, whether by disobeying Him or disregarding Him.

☾ *It is also simply "missing the mark" of God's standard of perfection.*

#### 1. **Genesis 2:25; 3:7-24; 4:26b:**

How did Adam and Eve feel after they sinned? What did God do that showed he cared about their feelings? How did God punish them? Do you think God's actions were justified? What did man do to get God's attention?

**They realized they were naked and hid because of fear and shame. God covered them with animal skins. He told them they would experience hardship and drove them out of the garden. Yes. Man began to call upon God.**

☾ *Shame is a concept with which Muslims are very familiar. They usually relate more to shame than guilt, since relationships are so important to a Muslim. To go against the wishes of someone in authority such as a respected elder or parent, is bad and causes shame. In the Muslim culture, shame is some times only alleviated by taking the life of the person who caused the shame if the shame is extreme. Many Muslims today in the West would not want to admit that though. However, an honest Muslim should recognize that death is required to cover the shame of sin. Shame usually results from being "found out." This is why it is important that Muslims understand the true character of God--the fact that He is their Creator, all-knowing, all-powerful and requiring perfection from humans-- in order to sense the full shame of their sin.*

#### 2. **Mark 7:20-23:**

How did Jesus say an attitude of rebellion against God causes a person to act?

**A rebellious attitude of the heart produces acts of immorality, theft, murder, adultery, deceit, lewdness and slander.**

#### 3. Do you recognize some of these things in yourself? Notice that they include not only acts but also thoughts and attitudes.

**The root attitude of rebellion leads to evil thoughts as well as other wrong attitudes, such as greed, malice, envy, arrogance and folly.**

☾ *Thoughts and attitudes are sometimes not considered by Muslims as sin. Since they are not openly obvious many times, they create no shame before the eyes of their friends and family. Jesus however taught that thoughts were just as wrong as acts. (Matthew 5:27, 28) This is why it is important for a Muslim to understand that God knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Psalm 139:1-4, 23-24)*

#### 4. What do these things do to a person?

**All of these wrong actions and attitudes make a person unclean.**

The uncleanness to which Jesus refers here is moral impurity, the opposite of the holiness that characterizes God. The prophet Isaiah was describing the human heart when he said, *"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags"* (Isaiah 64:6a). Even our best efforts are impure relative to the righteousness of God.

☪ *Outward cleanliness is very important to a Muslim! The filthy rags mentioned in Isaiah 64:6a refer to menstrual rags. Muslims believe that if a Muslim man had already washed and was going to pray and would touch a woman who was menstruating, he would have to wash again before his prayers would be accepted by God. Other things that would make them unclean would be to touch a dog, or eat pork. It would not be good to argue about whether these things make a person unclean or not, but it may be helpful to read all of Mark 7 and point out that Jesus said, **"Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'."** (Mark 7:14b-16)*

5. **Psalm 5:4-6**

:What does God think about sin?

**God hates evil.**

6. What does sin do to our relationship with God? Also see Isaiah 59:1, 2 and Genesis 3:23.

**Sin separates us from God because He is holy and cannot tolerate sin in His presence. Our sin makes us unfit for a relationship with God.**

The effect of sin on our relationship with God is dramatized by the action God took when Adam and Eve disobeyed Him. God banished them from the garden; He sent them away from the place where He met with them (Genesis 3:8). Speaking to God, the prophet Habakkuk said, *"your eyes are too pure to look on evil"* (Habakkuk 1:13)

Paul explains that wrongdoing does even more than separate us from God; it alienates us from Him (Colossians 1:21). There is more than distance between us; there is a barrier that keeps us apart. By our sin we make ourselves enemies of God, subject to His judgment and wrath. All men and women are *"objects of God's wrath"* because we *"gratify the cravings of our sinful nature and follow its desires and thoughts"* (Ephesians 2:3).

7. **Genesis 2:17:**

What does God call the condition of being separated from Him? Compare Romans 6:23.

**God said the result of disobeying Him would be death. In the Bible the word "death" usually describes a spiritual condition, not a physical one, and that is certainly the case there.**

God warned Adam that *"in the day"* (see NASV, KJV and RSV) he ate from the tree of knowledge he would die. Adam and Eve did eventually die physically, which would never have been their experience if they had not disobeyed God, but it did not happen on the day they violated God's command. The immediate consequence of their sin was that they were driven out of the garden, which removed them from the special presence of God they had enjoyed there.

☪ *Do not refer to other translations at this point. This tends to be a distraction for Muslims. Continue to use the translation that you began the study with. However, if they bring up the topic of translations, feel free to discuss it. Simply point out that our English translations are simply that, translations. "The Holy Bible" refers*

*to the Bible in its original languages--Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. We are simply using "an English translation of the Holy Bible." Muslims only use the term "Glorious Qur'an" when speaking of the Qur'an in the original Arabic language. When using an English translation, they would refer to it as "an English translation of the Glorious Qur'an." This may seem like a small matter to you but is a big matter to them. Many Muslims have been taught that many years ago the Bible was translated, then another translation was made from that translation, and so on until today and the resulting "versions" that we have today, have gross differences. Because of this misconception it is best not to use the term "version" when referring to our translations, when possible. That may not be possible if they ask about the NIV. Simply explain that "version" is another term for "translation." A good dictionary will be helpful in pointing that out.*

This exclusion from the presence of God is what the Bible calls spiritual death. Jesus had in mind the distinction between physical and spiritual death when He said, ". . . let the dead bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:22). Paul was obviously thinking of spiritual death when he described those who were physically alive as ". . . dead in your trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1)

Separation from God means separation from good. Separation from His presence also means loss of access to His purpose, power, provision and peace.

☾ *End this lesson by referring to the last paragraph of the summary, mentioning that in the next lesson we will study about Jesus Christ. Up to this point, we have not emphasized Jesus Christ. However, he will be the central figure of the next three lessons. Remember to always speak respectfully of Jesus Christ. Try not to just use the name Jesus by itself. Try to use "the Prophet Jesus" or "Jesus Christ." Muslims usually give special respect to the prophets when they are speaking, by saying "peace be upon him." We do not need to use this phrase, though, because originally it was used as a prayer for the dead. Jesus Christ is the giver of peace, the Prince of Peace. He doesn't need our prayer for peace; we need his peace.*

## Study 3 Question Sheet

### What Are the Results of Sin?

Review: What did we learn from the last study about sin?

1. **Genesis 2:25; 3:7-24; 4:26b:**

How did Adam and Eve feel after they sinned? What did God do that showed he cared about their feelings? How did God punish them? Do you think God's actions were justified? What did man do to get God's attention?

2. **Mark 7:20:23:**

How did Jesus Christ say an attitude of rebellion against God causes a person to act?

3. Do you recognize some of these things in yourself? Notice that they include not only acts but also thoughts and attitudes.

4. What do these things do to a person?

5. **Psalm 5:4-6**

:What does God think about sin?

6. What does sin do to our relationship with God? Also see Isaiah 59:1,2 and Genesis 3:23.

7. **Genesis 2:17:**

What does God call the condition of being separated from Him? Compare Romans 6:23.

## Study 3 Summary Sheet

### What Are the Results of Sin?

Living independently of God and setting ourselves up as our own boss is the essence of what the Bible calls sin. It manifests itself in many ways and has certain consequences that God Himself has warned us about. The manifestations of sin are what the Bible calls sins. Sin causes spiritual uncleanness and brings shame to God, our Creator and Provider (Genesis 2:4-3:24).

The relationship between Adam and God changed because of Adam's sin. God punished Adam and Eve simply because they disobeyed Him. They were driven out of the beautiful garden God had made for them. With their sin, came a sense of nakedness, fear and shame, which they hadn't known before. For the first time, lives of animals were taken to deal with the results of sin in the lives of human beings. Adam and Eve experienced separation from God. Later they would die physically reminding each human being to avoid the spiritual death that is common to mankind. To avoid this spiritual death, men began to call upon God.

Our rebellion against God is evident in our conduct. We fail to live up to God's moral standards. Some people are more openly immoral than others, but when Jesus Christ analyzed the heart of man, He said, *"From within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside"* (Mark 7:21-23). Notice that He includes as evil not only actions but also thoughts and attitudes. Who is free from all these evidences of rebellion, these symptoms of sin? *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).

Our evil conduct resulting from sin has an effect on us. It defiles us; that is, it pollutes us, makes us dirty, dishonours us. It does so in the sight of a righteous, all-knowing God. Evil cannot remain in the presence of a righteous God. He hates evil. It destroys a proper relationship with God, causing us to shame God. It separates us from Him (Isaiah 59:1,2). The result of persisting in sin is destruction under the wrath of God (Psalm 5:4-6).

God's first warning to man was that disobedience would result in death. The Apostle Paul repeated that warning when he wrote, *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). Men and women who live their lives independently of God, acting as their own bosses, are living in a state of spiritual death, which manifests itself in the evil things mentioned above. They face a final death and eternal separation from God.

An understanding of who Jesus Christ is and what He did will help us understand how and why God can justly pardon us. The next study takes up those subjects.

## Study 4: Who is Jesus Christ?

### Understanding the issue

This study begins by having you ask your Muslim friend to tell you about the importance of the first-born son in the Muslim culture. Ask him if it is an honor or a disgrace for a Muslim man to have a son. Ask him if the term son always has a physical connotation or if it also has a spiritual connotation. (In Pakistan and even in the Arab world a man will sometimes call his daughter a son out of mere affection. In the Qur'an a traveler is called a "son of the road." Egyptians are referred to as "sons of the Nile." Josephus, the Jewish historian hired by the Romans to write a history of the Jews, refers to a man who had three sons one of which was his favorite. Josephus refers to the favorite son as his "monogenes" the same word that is used of Jesus in the Greek and translated in the NIV as "one and only" and in the KJV as "only begotten." Josephus obviously didn't mean that the favorite son was the "only one that was physically born." Instead he translated it as "beloved." This wasn't an unfortunate term that Jesus' disciples used. It was a term of honor that was clearly understood.) It is important to get the input of your Muslim friend concerning the use of the term "son" before you even talk about the term "Son of God." This helps to find some "common ground" that will be helpful in explaining truths from the Bible. Jesus frequently began his teaching by starting from something they were familiar with in order to lead them to things they didn't understand. If they bring up the question of Jesus being called the Son of God before you have finished discussing the cultural use of the word "son," tell them you'll answer that in just a bit. In a non-defensive way discuss the use of "son" in their culture. Then and only then discuss the issue of Jesus being the Son of God. Never speak in a defensive manner or they may think you are trying to hide something. Speak matter-of-factly and honestly.

As we see in John 20:30,31 another term for Christ, Messiah, or *Al-mesih*, is Son of God. "Son" refers to a spiritual relationship and not a physical relationship. It also refers to his position of honor that is given in Muslim culture to a first-born son. *Al-mesih* refers to the fact that he was anointed. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit of God, but his anointing was different than any other prophet. The virgin birth was a sign to warn people that something special was happening. (Read Luke 1:26-38 with a special emphasis on 30-35) I have found that this puts an amazing authority behind the message that Jesus is the Son of God, because Muslims have a respect for Mary and the angel Gabriel. Even then, Muslims generally refuse to call Jesus the Son of God, because they have been taught from birth, that to call Jesus this, is the worst sin they could commit. I believe that to hear Jesus being called the Son of God actually causes an automatic repulsion on the part of our Muslim friend because of the negative connotations involved. Because of this, let them see the term first in the Bible. In this study the term has purposely been avoided until this lesson. When they read the term in the Bible, ask them what they understand that to mean. Then explain it to them. If they don't want to accept your answer immediately don't worry, just be sure they understand what you are saying. In John 14:11, Jesus tells his disciples that if they don't believe him, to believe on account of the works that he does. So if a Muslim has a hard time believing that Jesus is the Son of God go to the accounts of his miracles, his character and his teaching.

In the writings of the Prophets (Old Testament), the Messiah was presented as a unique King. An ordinary king who was anointed by the authority of God would be called a "son" of God. For the same reason (an anointing of the Spirit of God) Jesus was called the Messiah, he was also called the Son of God, making him God's anointed King. (See Psalm 2; See also 1 Chronicles 17:11-14) However, notice that ordinary kings were called "anointed ones" but Jesus Christ was called "**the** anointed one," referring to a specific one that was previously known or one that was higher in rank.

In the Gospels, five times the term "Christ" is equated with the term "Son of God." (Matthew 16:17; John 20:31; John 11:27; Luke 4:41; Matthew 26:63) Jesus' baptism in Luke 3:21-22 sheds additional light on the meaning of "Son" as does the account of Jesus' transfiguration in Matthew 17:5. Jesus was called God's Son because he was loved by God and God was pleased with Him.

Muslims are usually aware of the words "only begotten" used in the KJV and have been taught that these words refer to a physical birth. For this reason the NIV translation is better. Since "begotten" is not used today in common speech it is difficult to pick up its full meaning from how it is used in contemporary society. A look in a good dictionary with etymological information shows, however, that the word "beget" is used in other senses as well. It basically means to "produce." A good translation for *monogenes* would be "unique", "beloved" or "one of a kind" with the emphasis on being of the same kind as that which produced it. For this reason the NIV translates "monogenes" as "One and Only."

If we simply explain that Jesus was anointed with the Spirit of God, then he is no different than any other prophet. So we must explain that he was **uniquely** anointed. So what kind of anointing was that? Again we must go back to what has been revealed to us. Jesus himself said, " 'before Abraham was born, I am! ' " (John 8:58) His virgin birth is also a sign that he was different from any other prophet! Having explained these facts, having pointed out that Jesus claimed the ability to forgive sins and proved it with miracles, and having read Luke 1:26-38, I like to simply state that "Jesus was the very eternal spirit of God who took on human flesh without ceasing to be God." This points out that he shared the same spiritual essence with the Father. Continue to encourage them to look at what God has revealed about Himself in the Holy Bible. See [Son of God](#) for more details on this topic.

On issues that Muslims would tend to disagree on it is best to let the scriptures speak for themselves. Muslims will take things from the scriptures that they will not take from you. If they ask you specifically if you believe Jesus was God or if He was equal with God, then give them a straight answer. To prepare in advance for this question, read through [Who is Jesus?](#) to understand why Jesus never said outright, "I am God." Also read, [Answer to "Is Jesus Christ God?"](#).

The topic of the Trinity may also come up. The *Qur'an* denounces the concept of the Trinity. Be ready to admit that the word "trinity" never occurs in the Bible. However, the concept does. The primary issue regarding the Trinity is the issue of who Jesus is. It may be helpful to remember that Muslims are many times taught that the Christian Trinity is God the Father, Mary the Mother and Jesus the Son. It is in this context that Muslims abhor calling Jesus, God's Son. The *Qur'an* forbids the worship of Jesus and Mary as gods in competition with the One True God and insinuates that this is what Christians do. The concept of the Holy Spirit may also be confusing because Muslims generally believe the Holy Spirit to be the angel Gabriel. Read ["Toward an Understanding of the One God"](#) to help explain who Christ is and the reasonableness of the plurality of God.

The early evangelists--Peter, Stephen, Paul and others--began with the Old Testament in their sermons. Read through the paper, [Prophecies of Jesus Christ](#) in preparation for this lesson and the next. If your friend objects to what the Bible says about Jesus, ask him, "What do you understand is the proof that someone is a prophet?" Some will answer that a prophet needed to be mentioned in previous scriptures. At this point you may want to make a copy of this paper and give it to them to read, or offer to go through it together, either now or after finishing this study.

Your friend may claim that what the Bible says about Jesus proves the Bible has been changed. Don't argue at this point. I have found that if people read the Bible with an open mind, the Bible proves itself to be true. A good place to have them start in this case is in Genesis. Have them read from Genesis 1 to Exodus 20. Then have them read the Gospels. If you think this is an honest question, ask them, "What are the specific problems that you have with the Bible?" Another option would be to ask them what criteria would be important to them in their search for the answer about the truthfulness of the Bible. This way they are forced to set down the criteria. There are a number of good books out on this topic. Two I recommend are [The Bible: Corrupted or Unchanged](#) and [Balance of Truth](#).

Generally Muslims believe that Jesus is a prophet. However they believe he was a prophet equal to all the other prophets, such as Adam, Abraham, Moses, Noah, Isaac, David, Solomon, etc. They believe he was born of the virgin Mary (*Miriam* in Arabic). They believe that he miraculously spoke while still an infant. They believe he did many miracles. They don't believe that he is the Son of God or that he was crucified. They can't imagine that God would allow any of His prophets to die in the way the Bible claims Jesus died.

To them God's prophets must always be shown to be victorious. This, however is not what the *Qur'an* says in Sura 2:91 where God is claimed to have Muhammad say to the Jews, "Why then have ye slain the prophets of Allah in times gone by, if ye did indeed believe?" Here the Jews are claimed to have killed the true prophets of God. However, the fact that popular Muslim belief differs from the *Qur'an* is **very** difficult for Muslims to accept. If you choose to mention this verse it must be done with great care and gentleness. Muslims also believe that Jesus will come back someday, encourage everyone to believe in Muhammad and Islam, break all crosses and kill all pigs. Then he will live, marry and have children, and die. Jesus is also referred to as *Al-mesih* in the *Qur'an* eleven times. However, the meaning of the term Messiah is not explained in the *Qur'an*. Muslims do recognize that the word *mesih* comes from the root word *msh* "to rub" or "to anoint" and that *mesih* is an intensified form meaning "most anointed" or "anointer." They also acknowledge that the term *Al* refers to one that is well-known or previously known. Some Muslims will also acknowledge the fact that he is the most anointed by stating that Jesus was the greatest of all the prophets because of his teaching and miracles, but that Muhammad was the **last** prophet, so he is the one whom they need to follow. Muslims will claim that Jesus came **only** for the Jews. This, however, disagrees with many scriptures both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Muslims usually refer to Jesus as *Isa* (pronounced as Esau, but not associated with the Old Testament character) which is an Arabic word and probably a transliteration of the Greek name of Jesus, 'Ihsous. Immediately afterwards they will always include the phrase, *alaihi salaam*, or something similar meaning "may peace be upon him." Muslims sometimes question why we don't also respect our prophets in the same way. A good answer is that Jesus never asked us to show respect by referring to Himself or any other prophet in that way, even though we obviously respect the prophets very much. Think through how you show respect for the prophets!

Jesus is also referred to in the *Qur'an* as the "*Kalimatu' Ilah*" (Word of God) and also the "*Ruhu' Ilah*" (Spirit of God). A good discussion on the meaning of the Word of God is found in [Balance of Truth](#), pp. 184-191.

It is good to start with the things that we have in common, but we can't just stop there. We will have to explain the things on which they disagree with the Bible.

## Study 4 Question Sheet (Answers and Comments)

### Who is Jesus Christ?

**Review:** What did we learn from the last study about the result of sin?

The consequence of sin (rebellion against God) *is and simply not meeting up to God's standard* is separation from God.

1. What is the importance of the first-born son in your culture? Is it an honor or a disgrace for a man in your culture to have a son? Does the term "son" always have a physical connotation or does it also have a spiritual or metaphorical connotation? Would anyone in your culture call someone his "son" even though he wasn't his own physical son? Why would he do this?

☪ **In Muslim culture it is usually more prestigious to have sons than daughters. In some Muslim cultures only sons can inherit property. The oldest son sometimes gets a larger share of the inheritance, or at least he is given responsibility for the family when the parents get older.**

☪ *Be sure you have familiarized yourself with the material in the Summary Supplement.*

2. **John 20:30, 31:**

Why did John write about Jesus? What words does he use to describe Jesus? What do you understand by these terms?

**John recorded some of the many miracles Jesus performed as evidence that He is the Christ, the Son of God. John's ultimate purpose was that readers would receive spiritual life by believing in Jesus.**

*"Christ" is from "Christos," the Greek word for "Messiah," which is the Hebrew word for "Anointed One," the title given in the Old Testament (Daniel 9:24:26) to the one whom God would send to save His people from their sins. The prophet Isaiah foretold that Messiah would die for the sins of His people but rise again (Isaiah 53:8-12) and ultimately rule over an eternal kingdom on earth (Isaiah 9:6,7).*

*One of Jesus' first disciples announced to his brother, Peter, that he had found "the Messiah (that is, the Christ)" (John 1:41). When Jesus was brought to trial by the Jews, ". . . the high priest asked Him, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?' 'I am,' said Jesus" (Mark 14:61, 62). When Peter spoke to his fellow Jews in Jerusalem on Pentecost after Jesus' death and resurrection, he said, "Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).*

3. **John 14:1-11:**

List and summarize the things Jesus said about who He is.

**Throughout the passage Jesus refers to God as "Father" and "my Father," making clear His claim to be the Son of God. By His statements that knowing and seeing Him is to know and see the Father and that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him, Jesus was also claiming that as the Son of God He is equal with God.**

☪ **Also emphasize John 14:6. This is one of the two verses that have been cited as most influential in bringing Muslims to Christ. Jesus said that he was the way, the truth and the life.**

Even though the main point of the passage is the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God, He also claimed to be the way to God. He is not one way among many but the only way to the Father. *"No one comes to the Father except through me."*

☪ *Remember that the term "Father" when used for God, especially in reference to Jesus Christ as "God's Son," is at best misunderstood and at worst seen to be blasphemous and a grievous sin. But we must not feel like we need to shy away from using this term. This would be an appropriate time to explain what this means. To establish the authority upon which to make these claims read Luke 1:26-38 with your friend or have him read it to you. Muslims are familiar with Gabriel (Jib-ra-el in Arabic) as the angel who is claimed to have brought revelation to Muhammad. Mary (Miriam in Arabic) is also respected as the mother of Jesus. If they object to calling God "Father," listen to their reasons. Tell them they don't need to agree, but ask them if they understand what Jesus meant. If they still have a problem with that, don't argue. Ask them if you can agree to disagree on this point and continue on. Remember that in the last verse of this passage Jesus says that if they didn't believe what He told them, they were to, ". . . at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." If Jesus could allow them to do that, we can allow our friends to do that. Next lesson we will be studying one of Jesus' miracles.*

#### 4. **John 6:33-40:**

List and summarize the other claims Jesus made about Himself.

**The predominant theme of Jesus' words in this passage is His claim to be the "bread of life," which "comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." He claimed to be the source of life, the one who is able to give life.**

Only God has life that is inherent to His nature and not derived from other life. Jesus said that He has life ". . . in himself . . ." (John 5:26; 1:4) and can give it to others (5:21, 39, 40). Both statements reaffirm His claim to be God by attributing to Himself what is only true of God.

The life which Jesus gives is not physical and temporal, sustained by bread like that which God provided to the people with Moses in the wilderness, but life that is spiritual and eternal. We were created with a spirit as part of our being (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12), and we are only truly alive when we are alive in body and in spirit. It is only when we are alive spiritually through faith in Jesus Christ that we will not longer hunger and thirst for peace with God and purpose in life.

#### 5. **John 5:16-18:**

Why did the Jews try to kill Jesus in this situation?

**The Jews were trying to carry out the requirement of the law that a person should be stoned who claims equality with God (John 10:30-33; Leviticus 24:16). The evidence that led to their verdict of blasphemy was that Jesus called God His "own" Father.**

Many accuse Christians of reading far more into this one word than Jesus ever intended. If all we had were Jesus' statement, there might be grounds for a different interpretation, but the Bible also records the reaction of those who shared language, culture and religious background with Jesus. Their understanding was that Jesus claimed a unique relationship of equality with God, and Jesus never tried to dissuade them.

Jesus was always careful to distinguish His relationship with God from that which any person can have with God as father through faith in Him. Jesus never referred to God as "our" Father, except when He taught His disciples how they should address God in prayer. In order to emphasize the uniqueness of His relationship with God, Jesus described Him at one point as ". . . *my Father and your Father . . .*" (John 20:17). The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus is God's "own" Son (Romans 8:32), whereas believers are His children by adoption (Romans 8:23)

6. **John 5:24:**

What response to His claims did Jesus say He expects from us?

**Jesus expects us to believe His claims to be the Son of God and the source of life.**

☪ *Some Muslims may find it very hard to even write the term Son of God without saying it is blasphemy. Only a work of God can make them say it happily. Don't insist that they write it but just state that this is what the Bible actually says and go on. God isn't working in their hearts, then we can't convince them. You may want to ask, "Why couldn't you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" Repeat back to them their answer so they know you really want to understand them. Since you have initiated the question, it may be best to jot down the answers when the study is over, not during the study.*

7. What will be the result of responding as Jesus requires?

**Those who believe in Jesus as the Son of God have life. They are no longer condemned to spiritual death but have been raised to eternal life (vs. 21, 24, 25).**

Elsewhere, Jesus explained, ". . . *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full*" (John 10:10). This verse is often misquoted and usually misunderstood. Jesus is quoted as saying, "*I have come that they might have abundant life.*" When put this way, the implication is that Jesus came to give us more of something we already have, but His statement is far more profound than that.

Jesus came to give us something we lack entirely until we receive it from Him. He came to give us spiritual life. Without Jesus Christ in us our spirits are dead. Through faith in Him we can have real life (1 John 4:9) and a relationship with God. "*This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God*" (John 17:3). Spiritual death is separation from God; life is reconciliation to Him.

## Study 4 Question Sheet

### Who is Jesus Christ?

**Review:** What did we learn from the last study about the result of sin?

1. What is the importance of the first-born son in your culture? Is it an honor or a disgrace for a man in your culture to have a son? Does the term "son" always have a physical connotation or does it also have a spiritual or metaphorical connotation? Would anyone in your culture call someone his "son" even though he wasn't his own physical son? Why would he do this?

2. **John 20:30, 31:**

Why did John write about Jesus Christ? What words does he use to describe Jesus Christ? What do you understand by these terms?

3. **John 14:1-11:**

List and summarize the things Jesus Christ said about who He is.

4. **John 6:33-40:**

List and summarize the other claims Jesus Christ made about Himself.

5. **John 5:16-18:**

Why did the Jews try to kill Jesus Christ in this situation?

6. **John 5:24:**

What response to His claims did Jesus Christ say He expects from us?

7. What will be the result of responding as Jesus Christ requires?

## Study 4 Summary Sheet

### Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus is revealed to be **the Christ**, meaning, **the Messiah** that was prophesied hundreds of years before by the prophets. The term Son of God is linked with the term Messiah to refer to the One who would have a unique, special choosing and anointing by God to do the work God called Him to do. The key is to discover the extent and uniqueness of this anointing.

The ability of God to pardon our sin and yet remain just, is based on Jesus Christ--who He is and what He did. The apostle John wrote a book to let people know who Jesus Christ is. Toward the end of it he wrote, *"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name"* (John 20:30, 31).

John recorded many claims Jesus Christ made for Himself. In chapter fourteen he claimed a right to our belief in Him equal to the belief we have in God. He claimed to be *"the way, and the truth, and the life,"* the only one by whom we can come to God. He called God His Father and claimed that if a person knew Him, he knew God. He said, *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."* Jesus Christ claimed divine authority for His words and His works.

In John 6, He said He could satisfy the spiritual hunger and thirst of those who believe in Him. He claimed that He came from heaven and that what He did while on earth was according to the will of God. He said that it is the will of God that belief in Him (Jesus Christ) determines who has eternal life. All of these statements are clear claims to equality with God.

In John 5, we find an incident in which Jesus Christ healed a man on the Sabbath (day of rest), an act that was unlawful according to the religious leaders of that time. By working on the Sabbath and by calling God His Father, Jesus Christ again claimed equality with God. The Jews recognized His claim immediately and sought to kill Him for such blasphemy.

Reading on in chapter five, we find Jesus Christ claiming that even as God gives life, He can give life. He also said that God had given Him the authority to judge all people. In response to His claims, Jesus Christ expects us to honor Him even as we honor God. He goes on to make the further claim that if we don't honor Him, we don't honor God.

The claims that Jesus Christ made are very serious claims for any man to make. However, we need not feel we must **hastily** ignore, reject or accept these claims. Before we decide on these claims, we must look carefully at the claims themselves, the authority appealed to for making the claims and the proof of the claims that were made. We must determine before God to follow what He reveals no matter what the cost, even if we have to admit we have been wrong. Then we can follow this process, and with trust in God's guidance the claims will show themselves to be true or false.

## Study 5: What Did Jesus Christ Do?

### Understanding the issue

The Biblical view of what Jesus did is explained in the notes in this section. To repeat them here would not be necessary. It is important though to have some understanding of what Muslims believe that Jesus came to do. Where the Muslim view of Jesus agrees with the Biblical view of Jesus it is helpful to acknowledge that agreement. If we just highlight the differences we may be guilty of miscommunicating some important truths by our silence.

Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet. We know that Jesus was indeed a prophet as He Himself stated in Luke 13:33. On this point we can and should be happy to agree with Muslims. But the fact is that he was more than a prophet. Muslims will generally disagree on this point because they said he was only a prophet like all the other prophets that went before such as Abraham, Moses and David. Muslims believe that, as a prophet, Jesus simply came as a messenger, but not as a sacrifice, atonement for sin, substitute, Savior or Lord.

Muslims believe that Jesus commanded people to worship God. We too can happily agree with this because Jesus Himself told others to glorify God. (Matthew 4:10; 5:16) Also the Apostle Paul has instructed us to glorify God. (Romans 15:6) However, we are also aware of Jesus' own statement in John 17:5, "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." It is a fact that Jesus never asked for worship but he did accept worship from those who understood who He really was. (Matthew 2:11; 14:33; 28:9; John 9:35-38; Luke 24:52) In each of these situations the word used for "worship" is the same word in the original language that Jesus used to command people to worship God. The fact that Jesus accepted this worship is significant because the Apostle Peter refused worship (Acts 10:25, 26) and an angel refused worship. (Revelation 22:8, 9) In both of these situations the same word is used for worship as Jesus used to refer to the worship given to God. The difference between what Muslims and Christians believe is that Muslims do not agree that Jesus is also worthy of worship. This is not in agreement with Revelation 5:13; 7:10; 22:1, 3.

Muslims believe that Jesus did miracles. Because of this fact, some Muslims believe Him to be greater than all the other prophets. The miracles that Muslims are taught He did were to make a bird out of clay and breath life into it, heal people and raise people from the dead. Many Muslims will say, though, that other prophets had a different kind of power to do different types of miracles but showing the same power from God. The Qur'an is claimed to be Muhammad's miracle. The reason why they believe Jesus did these miracles was by the permission of God, and because He was strengthened by the Holy Spirit. (Sura 5:113)

The topic of the cross may come up in discussing the death of Christ. Generally Muslims will find the cross offensive especially if they feel you are trying to get them to believe in the importance of the meaning of what Jesus Christ did on the cross. Muslims remember the Crusades which occurred 900 years ago. The Crusaders fought against Muslims and slaughtered many of them in the sign of the cross. The cross was the symbol they held up as they fought against the Muslims. The Crusaders saw it as the authority by which they committed these acts. This is very vivid in the minds of Muslim today. This is something you need to be aware of. A good way to communicate the purpose and message of the cross is the "[Sacrifice Diagram](#)." It would also be helpful to point out the prophecies in [Psalms](#) and [Isaiah](#) mentioned in *Prophecies of Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Al-mesih)* that refer to his death. You may need to emphasize that the cross is not a symbol of aggression for Christians but a symbol of humility and willingness to suffer as Jesus Christ did. Jesus never taught his followers to use it as a sign of aggression. A good way to understand the cross is that it is allowed for a broken relationship between God and man (--) to be restored (-|-) by Christ, the mediator between God and man.

It may be helpful to know that Muslims are taught there is reward for suffering in the cause of God. This cause of God is referred to as *Jihad*. However, there is a difference between the Muslim concept of suffering for God and the Christian concept. For Muslims they receive benefit for suffering while acting in an aggressive way toward non-Muslims, but for Christians we are rewarded for suffering when we refuse to act in an aggressive way toward others. This is a significant difference! Your Muslim friend may not practice *Jihad*. Many Muslims don't practice this. However, this is what Islam teaches. (It is **not** a good idea to mention the word *Jihad* or talk about what Muslims believe about this, unless your Muslim friend brings it up. If you would bring that up, that would **not** be helpful in your relationship with your Muslim friend. Some Muslims are embarrassed of this teaching in Islam. However, without referring to what Muslims believe, if you choose, you could mention that the suffering that Jesus taught us to endure was suffering that refused to take revenge. It is **not** suffering in the act of aggression.)

## Study 5 Question Sheet (Answers and Discussion)

### What Did Jesus Christ Do?

**Review:** What did we learn from the last study about who Jesus is?

Jesus claimed to be the unique Son of God . . .

☪ . . . which has a spiritual meaning not a physical meaning and means that He was the uniquely anointed prophet of God because he embodied the very essence of God.

#### 1. Mark 2:1-12:

What was Jesus doing when the paralyzed man was brought to Him?

**Jesus was "preaching the word" to a crowd of people when four men brought their friend to be healed by Him.**

The miraculous works Jesus performed were almost always done in conjunction with His teaching. The word He proclaimed had to do with who He is and what he came to do, the Son of God who came to save sinners. His healing miracles are often called "*signs*," which means they point beyond the physical relief to a spiritual reality. Jesus described Himself as "*the light of the world*" as He healed a man born blind (John 9) and "*the bread of life*" after feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes (John 6).

#### 2. What did He do for the paralytic that could be seen by the crowd?

**Jesus healed the paralysis of the man, who was able to walk out of the house, carrying the mat on which he had been brought.**

#### 3. What other power did Jesus claim to have?

**Jesus claimed to have the authority to forgive sins.**

☪ *Explain that Jesus was "God's uniquely anointed prophet and King." Explain to them that his anointing was different from any other prophet's anointing in that he had the ability to forgive sin. To many Muslims the Christian concept of forgiveness of sin is simply a license to sin. Read Romans 6. Also read, "[Dear Shahida](#)."*

#### 4. What does Jesus' claim together with the healing imply about Him?

**Jesus was claiming to speak as God when He said, "Your sins are forgiven you," and His miraculous healing proved His claim.**

Any offense committed against another person is also a sin against God. King David recognized that his sins against Bathsheba and here husband (2 Samuel 11) were also against God because his actions violated God's commands. David was not denying his sin against the people involved but rather emphasizing his guilt before God when he wrote, "*Against you (God), you only, have I sinned . . .*" (Psalms 51:4).

☪ *Even though the Qur'an itself mentions the sins of a number of prophets, Muslims are taught that the prophets did not sin. The above fact is good to know but a Muslim could find this quite offensive to suggest that one of their and your prophets sinned. To some Muslims this proves our Bible has been corrupted. At this point, perhaps a better story would be the account of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-11) It would **not** be helpful at this point to mention that their own Qur'an mentions that Muhammad and other prophets sinned. An interesting fact is that **nowhere** in any of the Muslim writings is any sin attributed to Jesus.*

When we forgive someone, we are committing ourselves not to hold their offense against them, but we cannot speak for God. We can, and should, say, "I forgive you," but only God can say, "Your sins are forgiven."

#### 5. **Mark 2:13-17:**

What did Jesus say He came into the world to do?

**Jesus said He came to call those who admit they are sinners, not those who think they are righteous.**

The Bible teaches that ". . . *there is no one righteous . . .*" (Romans 3:10) and that ". . . *all have sinned . . .*" (3:23), but not everyone is willing to accept God's judgment of them. Jesus cannot heal those who think they are not sick, but He will forgive those who admit they are sinful.

The apostle Paul explained that "*no one will be declared righteous in his (God's) sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin*" (Romans 3:20). Those who think they can achieve righteousness on their own are deceiving themselves (Romans 10:2, 3). Only the righteousness that they received as a gift from God can make them acceptable to God.

*Explain that Christ's sacrifice is not just for "bad" people but for good people too. Emphasize again that to "sin" doesn't mean that we don't try to be good. We simply fall short of what God expects. It's like archery practice. You can aim carefully, and with great power pull back on the bow, but if you fail to hit the exact center, the bull's eye, you fall short of hitting the mark. Good intentions are not enough!*

#### 6. **Mark 10:33,34:**

What did Jesus say would happen to Him?

**Jesus explained to His disciples that He would be tortured and killed but would rise from the dead three days later.**

*Be familiar with Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and Psalm 22:1, 14-18. These verses prophesy Christ's death. Point out that Jesus' death was prophesied hundreds of years before he was even born. (Again be very matter-of-fact; don't be too triumphal because this is very hard for a Muslim to swallow. It is a very humbling realization to realize he and his whole family and his ancestors have been told wrongly and have believed wrongly about Jesus' death.) They also believe that Muhammad was prophesied in our Bible. See the ["Prophecies of Jesus Christ."](#)*

#### 7. **Mark 10:45:**

What did He say was the purpose of His death?

**Jesus said that He came "to give His life as a ransom for many."**

## 8. What is a ransom?

**A ransom is a price paid to release someone from bondage.**

The cultural practice from which Jesus drew His analogy is slavery, but the contemporary problem of hostages being held for ransom is a more familiar and equally useful illustration.

*Muslims sometimes have a problem with the whole idea of one person paying for another person's sin. If so, go back to the story of Abraham sacrificing his son. Have them tell you the story. Read the story in the Quran (Sura 37:99-113) and in Genesis 22. Also read the articles, "[Abraham's Sacrifice](#)" and "[Forgiveness](#)." The parallel that you will want to draw is that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son. However God allowed a substitute or ransom and the son was not sacrificed. God also said that a man who sins should die. However, God allowed a substitute or ransom in Jesus Christ. If God allowed it in the case of Abraham and his son, why would He not allow it in our case? Keep this in mind that the whole idea of a "ransom" is that "the one took the place of" or "secured the release of" by adequate payment.*

## 9. In light of our previous studies, from what does the death of Jesus give release? (See Romans 6:23; 1 Peter 3:18)

**Jesus said, ". . . everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34, cf Romans 6:17, 20; 7:14), and the Bible teaches that ". . . the wages of sin is death . . ." (Romans 6:23). Therefore, the death of Jesus is a ransom from sin and death, because sin leads to death (Romans 6:16)**

*If there is a difficulty on this point, take some time to go through the article "[Atonement of Sin by Blood Sacrifice as Given by God to the Prophets in the Holy Bible](#)" in order to show that blood sacrifice for sin is a consistent message all through the Bible and that it didn't just begin with Jesus Christ. It is also good to point out that the Old Testament is the Jewish scriptures. The fact that the Jews didn't believe in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, yet didn't remove the scriptures that gave the foundation for his sacrifice, is evidence that this message of sacrifice is a true message from God.*

## 10. Romans 5:8:

What did God show us through the death of Christ?

**God showed us His love through the death of Christ.**

Jesus took the penalty we deserve for our sin against God; He died in our place. He was crucified, nailed to a cross by His hands and feet and left hanging until He died. Before Jesus died physically, however, He suffered a far more painful death, a spiritual one. The perfect relationship the Son of God had with His Father was broken by our sin, which Jesus took upon Himself.

God separated Himself from His own Son, not because He had any sin of His own but because He was willing to take responsibility for ours. The *separation* from God which Jesus experienced was manifested by three hours of darkness and the cry of Jesus, ". . . 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' " (Matthew 27:46)

*The phrase ". . . 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' " that Jesus spoke from the cross also was used to tell the people that what God had revealed in Psalm 22 (Zabur) was what was happening at that moment. In verse 24 of the Psalm it mentions that God "has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted on; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help." The fact is that Jesus did suffer. God did not despise that but instead allowed it. Yet he did not continue to hide his face from Jesus and when the sin was paid for he brought Jesus back to life. This brings praise, life, and the salvation of the whole earth. (vv. 25-31)*

**11. Matthew 28:1-10:**

Did Jesus rise from the dead as He predicted?

**An angel announced to the women who went to the tomb that Jesus had risen and gone to Galilee, where they could see Him. Luke 24; John 20; and 1 Corinthians 15 also give accounts of His appearances.**

Jesus described the generation of His earthly ministry as wicked (Matthew 12:38, 39) because so many demanded that He prove Himself by miracles and yet refused to believe in Him no matter what He did. Still, He assured them that He would prove His identify by his resurrection (Matthew 12:40)

☪ *Muslims are taught that Jesus didn't even die, so the resurrection is out of the question. But yet they believe that Jesus ascended into heaven. They are simply taught pieces here and there from the Bible so it is important that we tell the whole story in a logical way. Here is a good place to mention that without the resurrection Jesus wouldn't have ascended up into heaven. The Bible mentions that Jesus' resurrection proves two important facts that prove his deity--Judge of the world (Acts 17:31; cf Psalm 96:10 ) and Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:4).*

Jesus was critical of His followers as well, not because they wanted evidence of the resurrection but because they were not satisfied with the eyewitness testimony they had. He rebuked the disciples for not believing the women who reported seeing Jesus at the tomb (Mark 16:9-14), and He chastised Thomas for not taking the word of the other disciples that they had seen Jesus (John 20 :24:29). In the Bible we have the apostles' eyewitness accounts of seeing Jesus after His resurrection (John 17:20); Acts 2:32), and God determines the sincerity of our search for the truth about Him by our response to that evidence.

**12. Romans 6:20-23:**

What can God do for us because His Son died and rose again?

**Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God can set us free from sin, make us holy and give us eternal life.**

*" . . . without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). The holiness of God is like the heart of the sun, which destroys whatever comes near it that is not like it. Any substance not of the same nature as the sun would be vaporized as it approached the sun. The Bible teaches that God is a "consuming fire" (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29), who destroys anything unholy in His presence.*

Because Jesus died for our sins, God can make us holy (Colossians 1:21, 22; Hebrews 10:10) and fit for a relationship with Him. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the righteousness from God we need in order to have a relationship with God. *"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe"* (Romans 3:22)

*The idea of a "relationship" with God is quite foreign to a Muslim. To be "accepted" by God may be a better term to use.*

**13. 1 John 5:11, 12:**

What relationship must we have with Jesus Christ if we are to benefit from what He did?

**In order to have life, we must "have" Jesus.**

The Bible says that the "hope of glory" (being holy) is "Christ in you" (Colossians 1:27). He is our righteousness and our holiness (1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 4:24). Those who have Jesus Christ in them (Ephesians 3:17) have His righteousness credited to them (Romans 4:24). There is no in-between; Jesus is either in us or He is not. Those who have Him in their heart have spiritual life, which is eternal, and those who do not are spiritually dead and separated from God.

*Since Muslims simply understand Jesus as a human being, they may not understand that it is the Spirit of Jesus that must be in us. Make sure they understand what "Son" means!!! It is too easy for them to think we are really trying to tell them that they have to simply adhere to the "Christian faith" by saying that Jesus is "the Son of God." (All it takes to become a Muslim is to recite the Muslim creed, "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.") They may be familiar with the Catholic concept of "receiving Christ" in communion. To "have Jesus" may sound similar to receiving the wafer in communion. Coming into relationship with God is not a ceremony they go through. Explain that they are to trust in the unique anointing of Jesus which carried the authority of God because Jesus Christ was not only aided by the Holy Spirit but embodied the very essence of God. Explain to them that his anointing was different from any other prophet's anointing in that he had the ability to forgive sin. **In the next lesson we will learn more about how this happens.***

## Study 5 Question Sheet

### What Did Jesus Christ Do?

**Review:** What did we learn from the last study about who Jesus Christ is?

1. **Mark 2:1-12:**

What was Jesus Christ doing when the paralyzed man was brought to Him?

2. What did He do for the paralytic that could be seen by the crowd?

3. What other power did Jesus Christ claim to have?

4. What does Jesus Christ' claim together with the healing imply about Him?

5. **Mark 2:13-17:**

What did Jesus Christ say He came into the world to do?

6. **Mark 10:33,34:**

What did Jesus Christ say would happen to Him?

7. **Mark 10:45:**

What did He say was the purpose of His death?

8. What is a ransom?

9. In light of our previous studies, from what does the death of Jesus Christ give release? (See Romans 6:23; 1 Peter 3:18)

10. **Romans 5:8:**

What did God show us through the death of Christ?

11. **Matthew 28:1-10:**

Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead as He predicted?

12. **Romans 6:20-23:**

What can God do for us because His Son died and rose again?

13. **1 John 5:11, 12:**

What relationship must we have with Jesus Christ if we are to benefit from what He did?

## Study 5 Summary

### What Did Jesus Christ Do?

From the record in the Gospels it is clear that the three years of Jesus Christ's public life were busy ones. His time was spent preaching, teaching and healing. He preached and taught because He had a message to communicate to men and women. His healing is evidence of His love for people and concern for their welfare.

The incident recorded in Mark 2:1-7 reveals Jesus Christ's primary mission in life--what He came to do. When a man obviously in need of physical healing was brought to Him, Jesus Christ's first words were, "*Son, your sins are forgiven.*" When those who heard protested that only God can forgive sins, did not disagree with them. Instead, He performed a visible miracle of healing to prove that all His words have divine authority, including His shocking declaration of forgiveness.

What Jesus Christ said and did in this situation was not only another clear claim to be God, it also showed that Jesus Christ gave forgiveness of sins top priority in His dealing with people. He elaborated on His mission to sinners while He was eating at Levi's house. When questioned as to why He ate with tax collectors and sinners, He answered, "*It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners*" (Mark 2:17)

From Mark 10:33-34 we learned more about what Jesus Christ came to do. Jesus Christ revealed to his disciples His advance knowledge that when He arrived in Jerusalem He would be put to death. Even knowing that, He continued resolutely toward Jerusalem. He did not seek to avoid the death He knew awaited Him, because, as He told His disciples (Mark 10:45), His purpose for coming was to give His life. Jesus Christ came to die, and His death was to be a "*ransom for many.*"

In the previous studies we have learned that God is righteous and just, but also loving. He created us to live in harmony with His will. Disobeying God and acting independently of His will results in many evil things, or sins, in our lives. Because God is just, He cannot overlook our sin, and He requires the penalty of death. But because God loves us, He does not want us to die. No matter how much He loves us, God cannot set aside His justice, but He can satisfy its requirements. Because of His love, God sent His Son to earth to pay the penalty for our sin.

Jesus Christ not only died, He also came back to life, as He had predicted. The fact of His resurrection confirms His claims for Himself, and it means that He is alive today. If His death as a ransom from sin is to apply to us so that God can give us life, we must have Jesus Christ. "*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life*" (1 John 5:12). In the final study we will discover how a person can receive Jesus Christ.

## Study 6: How can I be Accepted by God?

### Understanding the issue

Do not try to get your Muslim friend to "become a Christian." The term "Christian" can have a lot of connotations for a Muslim that are not helpful. The term "Christian" is many times synonymous with an immoral lifestyle. Muslims need to know God, know the assurance of his forgiveness and repent of their sins. They need to enter the Kingdom of God as Jesus taught. They need to be accepted by God according to the truth of God's word, the Bible.

In the mind of a Muslim, the most important thing is that he get to paradise or heaven. There is no guarantee of this in this life, however. There is no assurance for the Muslim of what will happen after death, whether they will make it to heaven or go to hell. Many will tell you that they need to do good works in order to get to heaven. Yet they will usually always say that in the end it depends on the mercy of God (Allah). Therefore, there is no assurance. The Bible, also, teaches that we are saved by God's mercy, but it is important to know the difference between the Biblical view of mercy and the Islamic view of mercy. Muslims do not believe that God did anything to provide His mercy to us; he simply grants it out of hand. Yet the Bible teaches that God provides His mercy to us through the sacrifice, life and work of Jesus Christ. This plan is carefully laid down for us in the Holy Bible. (See the 'Atonement' paper and the 'Prophecy' paper in addition to this lesson. It is important to understand the theme of atonement in the Bible well because Muslims deny this. It is also important to be familiar with the prophecies about Jesus Christ because Muslims claim that the Bible includes prophecies about Muhammad. Some of these "prophecies" that Muslims claim for Muhammad in the Bible are actually prophecies referring to Christ. By being familiar with the prophecies of Jesus Christ, we will see the difference in the quality of the prophecies of Christ and the alleged "prophecies" of Muhammad.) Muslims do believe that eventually all Muslims will get to heaven but it may be after much purification in hell. The question we need to ask ourselves is, "How do we communicate this concept of knowing God?" Some Muslims view paradise as a place where they don't have to worship God in the same way as they did on earth. To them paradise is where they praise God and give thanks to him because they have attained what they desperately sought after. This is interesting but it shows that their "worship" on this earth is not out of thanksgiving for having received the gift of eternal life but more out of duty in order to attain to eternal life. But for us as followers of Jesus Christ, we can give thanks now. Hebrews 12:28 says, "Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe."

Perhaps your Muslim student has brought you a gift at sometime in the past. You can refer to this occasion and point out to them that it was only after you received the gift that you returned thanks. We only say thanks for things we have already received. If you would have said thanks for the gift before you had any promise of receiving that gift, you would have been considered rude or greedy. But if your friend had said to you a few days before, "I'll bring a gift when I come," at that time it would have been proper to say thank you based on the word and integrity of your friend. The key is that you had been given a promise. For Muslims, to believe in Jesus is to acknowledge that He was a prophet and to obey His commands. This is also true for true followers of Jesus, but in addition to that, for a true follower of Jesus to believe in Jesus is to also trust the promises that Jesus has given. This is important when we realize that Jesus is the sacrifice and the priest who offered the sacrifice as is described in Hebrews. How could he promise or guarantee that the sacrifice would cover sin? In order to offer a sacrifice that was good for all time he needed to be eternal, because a sacrifice is good as long as the priest is alive. To a Muslim, however, God does not give promises to us regarding life after death, because they are taught that our state in the afterlife is determined by the amount of good deeds vs. bad deeds we have done. The fact that our future is dependent upon our trust in the sacrifice of Jesus, and that the reason why we can trust that sacrifice is based on who Jesus is and what he has done, is foreign to the mind of a Muslim.

You may need to keep coming back to the concept of believing a promise. This is very foreign to Muslims. They may need to hear it several times in different contexts before they really grasp this concept. I like to bring in the fact that when God gave the Law to Moses, He didn't give him the laws and then say, "Well, try that and see how you like it. If you can't keep these, get back with me in 6 months and we'll see what we can do." No, when He gave them the laws, He immediately said, "And when you fail to keep these laws here are the sacrifices you need to do to mend the relationship with Me." God gave a whole system of detailed sacrifices at the same time He gave the laws because He knew they would fail to keep the laws.

The idea of forgiveness and the guarantee of acceptance by God through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus is seen by Muslims to be a license for sin. You need to point out to Muslims that when we believe in the sacrifice of Jesus, we also admit our sinfulness, repent of sin, and receive the Holy Spirit. (Make sure they understand that the Holy Spirit is actually God and not the angel Gabriel since they are taught that Gabriel is the Holy Spirit.) The Holy Spirit actually desires within us to do the will of God. (Philippians 2:13) This takes out what Muslims view as the "risk factor" in this forgiveness experience. When the Holy Spirit comes to live within us, we are actually adopted into the family of God. Muslims understand very well how a family system works. As a part of His family, He disciplines us and corrects us. We are also now called by his name and therefore our conduct reflects on His own name and either honors or dishonors it. Because of this, He takes special care to instruct us and guide us in those ways that bring honor to Him. Muslims also understand the process of the marriage arrangement. This is a good opportunity to ask them about this process. In the Middle East the groom's family gives the bride's family a dowry which is an indication that the groom is serious about marrying the bride. In the case of a divorce the bride would keep this money. This transfer of money is a good illustration of God giving us His Holy Spirit because it reduces the risk of irresponsible behavior in the relationship. The money that is given is incentive for the groom to act responsibly with his wife and care for his wife. If he fails to do this, his father-in-law could take back his daughter and the groom would lose the money. The transfer of that money allows the bride's father to give her in marriage to her husband to be. If you have spent time with your Muslim friend and have asked him to explain the marriage customs in his culture, you can use that to help explain this process.

Sometime during or at the end of this lesson may be a good time to share your testimony. In sharing your testimony with your Muslim friend, it is important to communicate that your salvation was a work of God and that you received this gift of salvation as a result of believing God's promise. Also, it is helpful to point out how genuine trust and resting in the promise of God brings a changed life. Muslims object to the notion that Christians claim they are forgiven by God. They see this as an unhealthy license to sin and the reason for the immorality and lawlessness they see on television and in society here in the West.

If you get to the end of this lesson and you feel your Muslim friend doesn't understand what you are referring to in this lesson, pray about this and ask God for wisdom. Remember that God draws him. Take him through the "Decision Chart." If he selects "please, pray with me now" use the prayer in the summary. If he selects "I want to pray alone later" or "I'm willing to think more about this" or "I don't want to trust in Christ now" encourage him to read back through the summaries or give him a "How to Know God Personally" tract. If he says "I'm already trusting in Christ" ask him if he wants to meet regularly to learn more. If you have prayed with him, the next time you see him, ask him if he wants to meet regularly to learn more. If he says "I'm willing to learn more about this" ask him if he has any specific questions that you can study through. He may say, "I'm trusting something else." If that is the case, ask him to indicate what he is trusting in. If he indicates that he is trusting in good works, ask him if he realizes what God's standard is--perfection--and what the penalty for not meeting up to that is--eternal death. If the answer is "God's mercy" ask him if he understands what the Bible teaches about **how** God provides His mercy. At another time you may want to use another "method" of explaining the gospel such as the Kingdom Diagram or Kingdom Presentation. No matter what the decision, communicate that you still care about your Muslim friend and will remain his friend.

## Study 6 Question Sheet (Answers and Comments)

### How Can I Be Accepted by God?

**Review:** What did we learn from the last study about what Jesus did for us and the relationship we must have with Him to benefit from what He did?

#### 1. John 1:12:

What must a person do to become a child of God?

**In order to become children of God, we must receive Jesus by believing in His name.**

*Do not ask them if they want to "become a Christian" or refer to "becoming a Christian." Even after going through this study, the word Christian will probably have a lot of negative connotations. It is too easy for them to think we are really trying to tell them that they have to simply adhere to the "Christian faith"(which in their minds is different than what the Bible teaches) by saying that Jesus is "the Son of God." (All it takes to become a Muslim is to recite the Muslim creed, "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.") Try to use terms that are found in the Bible like "become a child of God," "receive Christ," "believe in Christ," "know God," etc. Muslims strive to be "accepted by God" in paradise, so that is a good expression to use.*

Jesus' name represents who He is and what He had done. To believe "in" Jesus Christ means more than affirming His existence. Belief **in** God usually means belief that there **is** a God, but the issue here is dependence, not existence. Even the demons believe that Jesus is God's Son (Matthew 8:29; Luke 4:34), but they refuse to admit their sin and believe in (trust in, depend on) Him as their Savior.

The question, "Do you believe in this chair?" is not a request to speculate on it's philosophical reality but to decide if you trust it to hold you up if you sit in it. Likewise, belief in Jesus is not merely being convinced that He once lived or even that He is the Son of God, who lived a perfect life, died for sin and rose again. We become Christians by trusting in Jesus alone to take away our sin and give us the righteousness we need to approach God. We become children of God by depending on what He has done for us, not what we do for Him, as the basis of our acceptability to Him.

#### 2. John 14:6:

What did Jesus say about other ways to God?

**Jesus insisted that only through Him is it possible to have a relationship with God.**

Jesus is the only way to God, not because Christians say so but because Jesus said so. We might prefer to include sincere followers of any religion, but we cannot worship Jesus as God and question the truth of what He says.

The reason that only Jesus can get us to God is that only He was God and man. Because he is God, He had no sin of His own for which "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12).

He had to die, and because He became a man, He could die in our place.

3. What right does Jesus have in being the only way to God?

**He is both God and man. God gave him that right. He has life in himself. He paid for our sins.**

*There can be many answers. The purpose of this question is to make your friend think about what he has come to believe about Jesus not just what he knows the Bible says.*

4. **Romans 3:20-26:**

What about our own efforts to get right with God? What do these verses tell us about the way to be justified (declared righteous) and righteous (accepted) before God?

**The law of God reveals how righteous we must be to have a relationship with Him and how far short we fall from His standard of holiness. The only righteousness that can make us fit for a relationship with God is the righteousness He gives to those who believe in His Son.**

*"All who rely on observing the law (to get right with God) are under a curse (condemned to death, separation from God), for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law' " (Galatians 3:10). Since no one is righteous in himself (Romans 3:10), the only way to have a relationship with God is to accept from God the righteousness He offers "freely by his grace." "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).*

5. **What does it mean to believe in Jesus?**

a. **1 John 1:9:** What is necessary to be forgiven and cleansed from sin?

**Confess our sins.**

*Confession of sin done out of trust in God's assurance of forgiveness through Christ, moves God to action. It is important to know what is our part and what is His!*

b. **Romans 10:9, 10:**

What do these verses tell us about the process of being saved from sin and reconciled to God?

**To be saved from sin and death (separation from God) a person must submit to Jesus as Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead.**

God raised Jesus from the dead to prove that He is His Son and to show that He accepted the sacrifice Jesus offered on the cross for our sins. Believing that God raised Jesus means depending on His sacrifice for your salvation. Affirming that Jesus is Lord means seeking to live by His principles and for His purposes.

*It is difficult for Muslims to call Jesus Christ, Lord. To do this causes them to commit the worst sin in their religion.*

c. **Romans 10:11-13; Isaiah 55:6, 7:**

What will people do who believe that only God through our Lord Jesus Christ can save them from sin?

**Those who admit their sinfulness and believe that only Jesus can save will call on Him to be their Savior and Lord.**

The true God is a living God, who wants a personal relationship with those who believe in His Son. Relationships cannot be established or maintained without communication, and a relationship with God is no exception. Those who believe in Jesus call on Him in prayer to grant them His forgiveness and His righteousness.

d. **John 13:13:**

What can we expect when Jesus sends His Holy Spirit into our lives?

**When Jesus enters our lives, He comes in as Teacher and Lord to guide and govern.**

It is only through Jesus Christ that we can know God and His purpose for our lives. God's will for our lives will be the most gratifying for us and most glorifying to Him. True Christians will want Jesus to teach them His ways and rule (even overrule) in their lives, so that they can experience His best for them.

It is not possible for Jesus to enter our lives without being Lord. He does not become Lord because we make Him so. Jesus is Lord over all, and He cannot leave that part of His nature on the doorstep of our lives when He enters as Savior. It's not that we must obey Jesus as Lord in order to have Him as Savior. True believers regularly violate the Lordship of Christ, but they admit their sin and affirm His right to rule.

"... *God cannot be mocked* ..." (Galatians 6:7). We cannot expect His forgiveness when we have no desire to overcome the sins that make it necessary. Jesus only enters the lives of those who want Him as Savior and Lord. We must not only receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We must not only receive Jesus Christ as Savior but also repent of (turn away from) our sin and follow Him as Lord (Acts 20:21).

6. **John 3:16-18, 36:**

What is the result of believing in Jesus Christ? What is the result of rejecting God's love?

**Whoever believes in (depends on) Jesus Christ for salvation will have life (a relationship with God) that is eternal (starts now and lasts forever).**

**Those who reject the sacrifice of God's Son for their sin will perish and never see life. They are condemned (sentenced) to death and to wrath of God.**

*Clarify the "Son" concept again if need be. Many Muslims will say that they believe in Jesus more than we Christians do. To believe in the prophets is to verbally acknowledge that they are prophets of God, but it does not mean trusting one's life to them. Make sure your friend understands what it means to "believe in Christ" as was mentioned under question 1.*

Even the general sense of those consequences is enough to show how serious they are, but the more we learn about them, the worse they turn out to be. For example, "*perish*" does not refer here to annihilation but to separation (see Matthew 5:30, KJV, for this sense of the word). Ceasing to exist is infinitely less severe than eternal existence apart from God. Rejecting God's love results in being banished from the presence of God, or being destroyed relative to Him. Never seeing life means remaining dead in the spirit, that part of our being through which we relate to God. Wrath refers to the suffering to which those separated from God are destined.

**7. Matthew 11:28-30:**

What will happen if we come to Jesus?

**Jesus will give us rest. We will join him in his work and will learn from him about being fully accepted by God and living a life pleasing to God. We will experience his gentleness and humility.**

*This is the other most influential verse in helping Muslims trust in Christ.*

**8. John 6:44a:**

Who draws us to God? How have you sensed God drawing you during this study? How would he want you to respond to his drawing?

**God himself does.**

*This re-emphasizes to a Muslim that this is God's work. You are not trying to pressure them. You have simply given them the facts and are giving them a chance to respond to God. This is a thing primarily between them and God.*

**Note: If you haven't done so already, this would be a good time to ask them if you could tell them how God drew you to Himself.**

**Don't use the phrase "become a Christian." They need to "be accepted by God," "know God," "know the assurance of his forgiveness" and repent of their sins. They need to enter the Kingdom of God. "Becoming a Christian" may bring up many connotations in their mind that you would not endorse nor want them to have. For many Muslims, people who drink; wear indecent, short skirts; and disrespect their parents are called Christians.**

## Study 6 Question Sheet

### How Can I Be Accepted by God?

**Review:** What did we learn from the last study about what Jesus Christ did for us and the relationship we must have with Him to benefit from what He did?

1. **John 1:12:**

What must a person do to become a child of God?

2. **John 14:6:**

What did Jesus Christ say about other ways to God?

3. What right does Jesus Christ have in being the only way to God?

4. **Romans 3:20-26:**

What about our own efforts to get right with God? What do these verses tell us about the way to be justified (declared righteous) and righteous (accepted) before God?

5. **What does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ?**

a. **1 John 1:9:** What is necessary to be forgiven and cleansed from sin?

b. **Romans 10:9, 10:**

What do these verses tell us about the process of being saved from sin and reconciled to God?

c. **Romans 10:11-13; Isaiah 55:6, 7:**

What will people do who believe that only God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, can save them from sin?

d. **John 13:13:**

What can we expect when Jesus Christ sends His Holy Spirit into our lives?

e. **John 3:16-18, 36:**

What is the result of rejecting God's love?

f. **Matthew 11:28-30:**

What will happen if we come to Jesus Christ?

g. **John 6:44a:**

Who draws us to God? How have you sensed God drawing you during this study? How would he want you to respond to his drawing?

## Study 6 Summary

### How Can I Be Accepted by God?

True life is being accepted by God or knowing God (John 17:3), and He offers us that life in Jesus Christ. In order to have life, we must have Him. In order to be accepted by God when we die, we must know that acceptance before we die. In John 1:12 we find that *"to all who received him (Jesus Christ), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."* One aspect of receiving Jesus Christ, then, is believing in His name. We must believe that He has a unique anointing from God and that only His death in our place can pay the penalty for our sin.

When we receive Jesus Christ, we receive the Savior. Before Jesus Christ was born, God sent word by an angel that He was to be named Jesus, *"because he will save his people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21). Believing in Jesus Christ results in receiving eternal life. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). When we receive Jesus Christ into our lives, we also accept Him as our *"Teacher and Lord"* (John 13:13). As Teacher, He will begin to increase our understanding of the truth about God, ourselves and the world. As Lord, He will guide us into His will for our lives and help us obey Him.

In Romans 10 we see what we must do to be saved. First, *"you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord.'"* It is not enough to recognize that Jesus Christ is the Lord (God); you must also acknowledge Him as your Lord and turn control of your life over to Him. Also, you must *"believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead."* The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead demonstrates that He is who He claimed to be and that He accomplished what He came to do. *"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins"* (1 Corinthians 15:17). But He was *"... declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead . . ."* (Romans 1:4).

The only way to have a relationship with God is to have the righteousness of God. This righteousness cannot be achieved by our own efforts to be good; it must be accepted as a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8, 9). *"Righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe"* (Romans 3:22).

Do you believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead? Do you recognize your inability to be good enough to be accepted by God? Do you want His will for your life? Have you called on Him to be your Savior and Lord? If not, you can do so by praying something like this: *"Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am a sinner. I left you out of my life and still thought you would accept me. Now I know that I can only become a child of God by receiving your forgiveness and your right standing before God. I believe that you were anointed by God to die for my sins and that you rose from the dead. Come into my life as Savior and Lord. I trust your Holy Spirit to live in me to cause me to obey you and serve you with all my heart."* You can rejoice in your new life and your eternal relationship with God *"for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'"* (Romans 10:13).