

Workers Unashamed

Study to show yourself approved unto God
As a workman who does not need to be ashamed
Accurately handling to Word of truth
2 Timothy 2:15

Phase Three

Workers Unashamed

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Freely you have received, freely give [Mt.10:8]

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SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS OF OTHER RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO BASIC OBJECTIONS

ISLAM

Islam's Beginnings

Jesus Christ our Lord was born 570 years before Muhammad. The full and wonderful payment for our sins had been paid by His suffering and death long before Islam ever was, and we bless the name of the Lord for that.

In Mecca about the year 570 AD, Muhammad was born to a noble family of the *Quraish* [Koreish] tribe. They were the heirs and guardians of the *Ka'ba* in which were 360 idols and the sacred Black Stone.

Muhammad was orphaned early in life. The keys to the *Ka'ba* and the rule in Mecca passed on to others in his tribe. At age twenty-five, he married a wealthy widow, Kahdija, who was forty years old. After her death, he married others wives. The *Qur'an* did not limit the number of wives the Prophet could take.

In desolate caves while seeking spiritual light, he reported that Malika *Jubril* [Angel Gabriel] brought to him a Word from *Allah*, the one true God. From this experience, he believed himself to be the chosen Prophet to bring the final revelation of *Allah* to end unbelief and idolatry.

Fellow tribesmen in Mecca did not agree. He was resisted and driven out because it was feared that his fierce opposition to the old Arabic religion would harm their trade.

His *Hijrat/Hegira* [flight] from Mecca to Medina in the year 622 AD marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. There he was received as a prince and prophet and quickly became its political

and religious ruler. Increasingly militant “revelations” received there, as he said, from Gabriel, were accompanied by military action against Mecca.

By 630 AD, Muhammad led his first successful *Jihad* [holy war] against Mecca, the place of his birth. With his 10,000 troops, he “cleansed” the *Ka’ba* of its idols and made Islam the only religion of all the tribes of Arabia. Ever since then, Mecca and the *Ka’ba* have been the sacred center of Islam and of Muslims’ annual pilgrimage.

War was declared against all *Kafara* [unbelievers], whether pagans, Jews, or Christians. Only two years later, he died at the age of 64 in the year 632 AD. Islam since has spread and conquered from Mecca, with now having about one billion Muslims worldwide.

In this book, Arabic words and quotations from the *Qur’an* will appear in *italics*. The translation used is that of Ustadh ABDULLAH YUSEF ALI by royal decree [No. 12412, dated 27/10/1405 AH] printed at King Fahd Holy *Qur’an* Printing Complex in *AlMadinah AlMunawarah*.

Beliefs

The 5 Pillars of Islam

- [1] *Shahada* – The Creed
- [2] *Salat* – Prayers
- [3] *Zakat* – Alms
- [4] *Ramadan* – The Fast
- [5] *Hajj* – Pilgrimage

The 6 Beliefs of Islam

Belief:

- [1] in one God
- [2] in His angels
- [3] in His scriptures
- [4] in His prophets
- [5] in the resurrection and day of judgment
- [6] in predestination [fate]

Main Divisions Within Islam

Islam appears to be uniform in its beliefs and practices worldwide. This is because their **5 Pillars** are maintained everywhere, not because there is true unity. There are three main divisions and one major differing persuasion among Muslims.

[1] Sunni These are the ones who follow the traditions of Muhammad contained in the *Sunna*.

[2] Shiites This group honors Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad who married his daughter, Fatima. They believe that his descendants should be the leaders in the Muslim community. The last of the 12 *Imams*, *Al Mahdi*, is still believed to be alive and will return on the last day to restore justice to the earth.

[3] Kharijites Muslims who broke away from Ali and his followers are called by this name. They are strict, believing that the best Muslim should be the *Caliph* [successor to Muhammad], even if he be a lowly slave.

[4] Sufi Though not a separate group, they are of a different persuasion. Their desire is for a spiritual oneness with

Allah. They are more interested in the qualities of love, peace, and patience. Doctrine is not as important to them as personal experience with God. Many of this persuasion are found in more animistic and religiously tolerant places in the world such as India and sub-Sahara Africa where local practices are mixed freely with their type of Islam.

Definitions



he Muslim outlook must be understood
in order to communicate the truth of Christ to him

ABLUTION Ceremonial washing of hands, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and feet before the required prayers, five times daily.

ABRAHAM [*Ibrahim*] Abraham and his son, Ishmael [*Ismail*], were Muslims who laid the foundation of the *Ka'ba* and announced pilgrimage to it [S. 2:125-127; 22:26,27]. *Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian; but he was upright, and bowed his will to Allah's, which is Islam. And he joined not gods with Allah* [S.3:67].

ALLAH The proper name of God in Arabic. Literally means, "The God."

ANGELS [*Malika*] Messengers of *Allah* who are held in high regard, many times in a superstitious way. Sometimes they are communicated with by men. *The angels celebrate the Praises of their Lord, and pray for forgiveness for all beings on earth* [S.42:5].

CREATION *Allah* is the creator of all, though not everything was made at once. Evolution is part of his process. *It is Allah Who has created the heavens and the earth, and all between them, in six Days...the*

measure of which is a thousand years of your reckoning [S.32:4,5]. In Surah 70:4, a Day is as fifty thousand years.

EDEN A spiritual place other than earth. Gardens often picture heaven in the *Qur'an* and Eden is identified with that Paradise. O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden...Then did Satan make them slip from the Garden...On earth will be your dwelling place [S.2:35,36].

HADJJ Pilgrimage to Mecca taking place in the last month of the Islamic calendar. All Muslims are urged to make pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime. *Al Hajji* [the traveler] is the title given to pilgrims.

HIJRAT/Hegira The flight of Muhammad from Mecca in 622 AD to Medina. This is the date from which the Islamic calendar begins.

HOLY SPIRIT Generally is thought to refer to the Angel Gabriel who is the messenger of revelation from Allah [S.16:102] and the one who strengthened Jesus thereby [S.2:253].

IBLIS Satan. He refused to bow to Adam at God's command and was thus cast out of God's presence as a rebel [S.15:26-35; 38:74-77]. He tempts and leads men astray. *Iblis said: "O my Lord! Because Thou hast put me in the wrong, I will make wrong fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the wrong"* [S.15:39]. *Iblis said: "Then, by Thy Power, I will lead them all astray"* [S.38:82].

IMAM A teacher or leader in religion and group prayer.

INJIL The Gospel originally given to Jesus. Muslims believe that this original message given to Jesus has been corrupted by Christians, especially the Apostle Paul. The four gospels of the NT do not, then, contain that message according to them. Oh, what could be more misled! Even the *Qur'an* itself does not agree with this. *No change can there be in the Words of Allah. This is indeed the supreme triumph* [S.10:64]. *There is none that can alter the Words of Allah* [S.6:34].

ISA Jesus. It is unknown for certain how this name came to be used for Jesus. It may be because at the time of Muhammad some who were against the Christians had mockingly called Jesus “Esau.” Esau was rejected and hated by God [Mal.1:2,3] as Jesus was by them.

ISLAM Meaning, to submit. The one universal religion of all of Allah’s prophets. Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and the Apostles were Muslims. *When Jesus found unbelief on their part He said: “Who will be My helpers to the work of Allah? Said the Disciples: “We are Allah’s helpers we believe in Allah, and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims” [S.3:52].*

JIHAD Fighting for the cause of truth or defense against unbelievers required by Allah of every Muslim. It involves mental, spiritual, and physical conflict using any and all means at hand [S.2:190-193; 8:12-14,67; 9:5,13,14,20,29; 47:4; 61:4; 66:9]. *O ye who believe! Fight the Unbelievers who are near to you and let them find harshness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him [S.9:123].*

JINNS A created definite race of personal living beings made out of fire [S.15:27]. They are morally accountable and may believe or disbelieve; not exactly spirits, demons, or powers. The English word “Genie” comes from this. Satan was one of the *Jinns* [S.18:50].

JUDGMENT Allah determines all. None can know before death what his fate may be. Oh, what a hopeless and cheerless religion of bondage is this Islam! *Those whose balance of good deeds is heavy; – they will be successful. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in hell they will abide [S.23:102,103].*

KA’BA The enclosure in the sacred mosque in Mecca which is the center of Islam and pilgrimage. See Abraham and Hajj.

KAFARA Unbelievers. *Kafara* are any pagans, Jews, Christians, or unfaithful Muslims. Anyone who rejects faith, blasphemes, or says things that are unworthy of *Allah* are *Kafara*.

MESSENGERS Someone to whom *Allah* has revealed a Book. The main Messengers in Islam are Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Others include Noah, Lot, Joseph, David, Solomon, Jonah, and John the Baptist.

MOSQUES Places established for regular prayers. Only faithful Muslims are allowed to enter. *The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah* [S.9:18]. Mecca is the most holy of the mosques.

MUHAMMAD The final and greatest Prophet of *Allah* who confirmed all the messages of the former prophets; the Seal of the Prophets. He corrected the twisting of the former prophets' messages by the *Kafara*, and established Islam as the one universal and true religion of all men.

MUSLIM One who submits to *Allah* and his Messengers.

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK Jews and Christians who have distorted and lied about the Book of God. *There is among them a section who distort the Book with their tongues; as they read so that you would think it is a part of the Book, but it is no part of the Book; and they say, "That is from Allah," but it is not from Allah: It is they who tell a lie against Allah, and well they know it!* [S.3:78]. Yet, true followers of Jesus are said to be full of compassion and mercy from God [S.57:27].

PRAYERS Prayers are prescribed and memorized in Arabic. Surah 1 *Al Fatiha* is repeated five times daily. In verse 6 the Muslim repeats five times daily, *Show us the straight way*. A Muslim has no assurance of eternal life or sins forgiven. He will daily pray for the dead, especially the Prophets. Oh, Christian! Do we not have a message of full and free pardon and cleansing through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus?

PREDESTINATION Fate. You will often hear the Muslim say, “It is the will of Allah,” no matter what happens. *So Allah leads astray those whom he pleases and guides whom he pleases* [S.14:4].

QUIBLA Facing the direction of Mecca during prayers [S.2:142-144, 149].

QURAN Recitations. The perfect and final revelation of Allah to man, sent by Gabriel to Muhammad between the years of 610 and 632 AD. It was written down by Muhammad’s followers at his dictation and collected into a book. The standard text was formed during the reign of Caliph Uthman between 644 and 656 AD. Copies of the *Qur’an* that had differences were then destroyed. Their claim is that it descended from Allah in its present form which has never been changed. *We [Allah] sent down the Qur’an in truth, and in truth has it descended* [S.17:105]. Thus the earthly bound volume is thought to be a copy of an eternal book kept in heaven, the Mother of the book; so they understand *Surah 85:21,22. Nay, this is a Glorious Qur’an, inscribed in a Tablet Preserved!* It is claimed that the *Qur’an* brings the same message as the previous Prophets and books. *Nothing is said to thee that was not said to the messengers before thee* [S.41:43].

RAMADHAN The ninth month of the Islamic calendar in which Muslims fast daily from dawn to dusk. Some view the fast as purification for sins committed during the previous year.

SACRIFICE is celebrating the name of Allah over suitable food which is offered in thanks to him. Sacrifice has nothing to do with forgiveness of sins, but is merely asking Allah’s blessing on what is eaten and shared with the needy. *To every people did We appoint rites of sacrifice, that they might celebrate the name of Allah over the sustenance He gave them from animals fit for food...It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him...* [S.22:34,37].

SALLAH The 10th day of pilgrimage month in which a ram is sacrificed to commemorate Abraham's sacrifice of his son whom Muslims believe to have been Ishmael.

SHAHADA The Creed: *There is one God, Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet.* Some believe that the mere pronouncing of the words makes one a Muslim.

SHARIA Muslim law which is interpreted from [1] the *Qur'an* [2] *the Sunna* [3] Precedent decisions [4] the views of Muslim scholars and jurists.

SIN Ceremonial uncleanness constitutes serious transgression in Islam. Moral sins are also important to a Muslim, but a man's prayers will still be acceptable, though he is a cheat, if the proper rituals are performed.

SUNNA The traditions from Muhammad's teachings that were not part of the *Qur'an*.

SURAT/Surah A chapter of the *Qur'an*. Literally, a Step by which we mount up. The 114 chapters of the *Qur'an* were arranged under Muhammad's direction. *Surah* 1 is repeated five times daily in prayer. *Surah* 2 summarizes the main teaching of the entire *Qur'an*.

ZAKAT Charity. A definite portion of wealth which is given to the needy at the turn of the year.

In Islam, Who is Jesus?

To call Jesus the Son of God is a monstrous blasphemy and an unforgivable sin. *They say: "The Most Gracious has betaken a son!" Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous!* [S.19:88,89].

Muslims believe that Jesus is a direct Creation of Allah, like Adam, from the dust. *The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; he created him from dust, then said to him: “Be”: and he was [S.3:59].*

To them, Jesus is a Servant like all the Prophets and nothing more than another Messenger. *Christ the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger... [S.5:75]. He was no more than a servant... [S.43:59].*

Saying that there is a Trinity is blasphemy and unforgivable. *Whoever joins other gods with Allah, – Allah will forbid him the Garden, and the Fire will be his abode...They disbelieve who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word of blasphemy, verily a grievous chastisement will befall the disbelievers among them [S.5:72,73].*

Neither Jesus nor Mary are gods. *And behold! Allah will say: “O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, ‘Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?’” He will say: “Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right to say... [S.5:116].*

Allah is not Christ. *They disbelieved indeed those that say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary... [S.5:17].*

Jesus was not Crucified. *That they said in boast, “We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah”; – but they killed him not, nor crucified him. Only a likeness of that was shown to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no certain knowledge but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not [S.4:157].*

It was impossible for Jesus to Bear the Burden of anyone’s sin. *No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another [S.53:38].*

Jesus was Ignorant of what was in Allah’s heart. [Jesus is described as saying] *Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Thine [S.5:116].*

Jesus prophesied the coming of *Ahmad* [Muhammad]. Remember Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah sent to you, confirming the Taurat [Moses' Law] which came before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad [S.61:6].

Preaching to Muslims

For a Muslim to convert to the Lord Jesus Christ from Islam is not an overnight process. Many stumbling blocks of misconceptions need to be overcome.

Consistent, loving, and patient exposure of the Word of God to the Muslim is the key to reaching him for Christ. Most have heard virtually nothing directly of Jesus' teaching. Ignorance and bias colors their thinking about both the Lord Jesus and Christians.

In order to diffuse these ideas, love, patience, respect and honor, forthrightness, and perseverance are the essential qualities needed for this work. A gradual approach of **Taste and see that the Lord is good** [Ps.34:8], goes a long way in enlightening them to a true understanding of things.

Their own *Qur'an* enjoins Muslims to *invite all to the way of the Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious* [S.16:125]. The Word of God directs the Christian to **not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth** [2 Tim.2:24,25].

Muslim evangelism is no quick fix. Unless the gospel worker is prepared to invest in a long-term commitment, he will see little, if any, fruit for his labors.

Everything the gospel worker does, says, and his attitudes will be carefully watched by the Muslim. He will be looking for

consistency and genuine concern in the Christian, as well as for faults and ignorance.

The Scripture says to **honor all men** [I Pet.2:17]. This is particularly important with the Muslim who will quickly be offended by religious arrogance or disregard for his beliefs or his person.

Things to Avoid

Do not enter into discussions without prayer, both beforehand and during. To leave this off is spiritual foolishness.

Arguments, with their lack of patience and self-control, are worse than useless. Unless we are **speaking the truth in love** [Eph.4:15], we are no better than a noisy gong and clanging cymbal [I Cor.13:1]; both of which drive the listener away with fingers in his ears.

It is better to open the Word of God and show the Muslim the actual text than to quote from memory. He already believes that the People of the Book distort the message of God. Let him see the Word for himself. Any passages that he may refer to should be looked up also.

Attempts to invite him to your church meetings will not be successful. In his mind, to enter a mosque is to become a Muslim and to enter a church is to become a Christian. Conversion takes place before participating in Christian gatherings.

Do not be lured into reciting the *Shahada* out loud. A serious Muslim is ever as much an evangelist of his religion as is a serious Christian. He may try to get you to do so, thinking to “convert” you to Islam thereby. Simply politely explain, “I am a Christian and do not believe in your creed. It would not be right for me to pretend that I did.”

It is generally not advisable to carry a *Qur'an* along with your Bible when speaking the gospel to Muslims. Attention will definitely be drawn away from the Scriptures and their message. The Muslim may even think that you consider both as equally holy books and inspired by God.

As the Scriptures say, women should not teach men [I Tim.2:11,12]. This is especially so in a Muslim context where all religious teaching is done by men. For a Christian woman to preach to Muslim men will be resisted and despised from the outset. Likewise, Christian men attempting to discuss privately with Muslim women will be strongly opposed and misinterpreted by their Muslim men.

Things to Encourage

Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another [Col.3:16]. A shallow Christian with superficial understanding of the Word of God will be disregarded and despised by the Muslim as not being a serious person.

Expose the Muslim to the actual Word of God. This is what is **living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword** [Heb.4:12], not our wisdom or clever arguments.

A general familiarity with Islam and the *Qur'an* is most helpful in meaningful communication. Particularly, those verses in the *Qur'an* that can serve as bridges to Gospel truth are most helpful. This is only as a point of reference that leads from the known to the unknown. The *Qur'an* is not the Word of God and the Christian should not make it appear that it is. The Muslim cannot argue with his own holy book though he may be disturbed by this “new” presentation of Jesus from it.

Similarities Between Judaism and Islam

There are many parallels between the Judaism of Jesus' day and Islam. Both emphasize an external religion of human merit along with hatred for the Son of God.

In both, they have their Creed. Prayers are regularly scheduled and facing the sacred centers of their faiths; Jerusalem and Mecca. Ceremonial washings are required by both [Mk.7:2-8].

Fasting figures significantly in each. The giving of alms is prominent. Both have pilgrimage to their sacred center of worship;

to Jerusalem three times a year [Ex.23:14-17], and for the Muslim to Mecca.

In each, Christians are persecuted unto death, thinking God is being served by doing so [Jn.16:2,3]. They are agreed that confessing Jesus as the Son of God is blasphemy [Jn.5:18; 10:33,36].

Considering these obvious parallels, the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels takes on added significance as it relates to Muslim evangelism. The Gospels [*Injil*] are very relevant and powerful places to preach from the words of Jesus Himself.

It is noteworthy that the Lord Jesus did not hesitate to speak about those things which directly confronted the Jews' false concepts. Their view of God was lacking as well as that of the nature of true religion. They certainly had no true concept of who Jesus actually is.

Nevertheless, He did not avoid referring to Himself as the Son of God, as much as they may have disliked it. He clearly and lovingly spoke the truth so as to expose the emptiness of their external religion.

The Muslim does not know the message of Jesus whom he considers to be a true Prophet of *Allah*. He is often surprised when he hears Jesus' teaching for the first time.

Our Lord often emphasized the condition of one's heart before God in contrast to mere external religious ceremony such as in the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Mt.5-7. John's Gospel clearly reveals Jesus as the Son of God and uses many illustrations and figures of speech which readily appeal to the Muslim mind.

Using the Qur'an to Preach Jesus

Jesus is described in the *Qur'an* in many incorrect ways. Some of the descriptions, however, at least introduce a concept that somewhat relates to the true biblical revelation of Christ in the Word of God. These can be used to begin a discussion about who Jesus really is.

Jesus:

Is the **LIGHT** by which you shall walk straight in your path. *He will provide for you a Light by which ye shall walk straight in your path, and He will forgive you your past* [S.57:28]. **Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life** [Jn.8:12]. Jesus is the **Sun of Righteousness** [Mal.4:2]. Lesser lights are not needed when the Sun has risen in its strength. The moon fades into obscurity in the Light of the Sun. The moon only reflects the Light it has received from the Sun. This is how the Prophets are. The light of the moon [the Prophets] cannot bring life. Only Jesus, the Light of the world, brings warmth and Life.

Was given a **GOSPEL**. *We [Allah] sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light. And confirmation of the Torah that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah. Let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah hath revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by what Allah hath revealed, they are those who rebel* [S.5:46,47]. God gave to Jesus the Gospel which is guidance and light. Do you know what this Gospel is? Jesus summarizes His Gospel in these words: **Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes in Him who sent Me has eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life** [Jn.5:24].

Is to be **HONORED** by those nearest to God. *Behold! The angels said: “O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of the company of those nearest to Allah* [S.3:45]. *And those Foremost in Faith will be Foremost in the Hereafter. These will be those Nearest to Allah: in Gardens of Bliss* [S.56:10-12]. Even those closest to God, among even the Prophets, are to give highest honor to Christ Jesus the Lord. **For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor**

the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him [Jn.5:22,23].

Is the **SPIRIT** proceeding from God. ...*Christ Jesus the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him...* [S.4:171]. The Spirit is the very essence; one's own self. **And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power...** [Heb.1:3].

Never sinned. He is **HOLY**. [Gabriel says to Mary] *He said: "Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord to announce to thee the gift of a pure son* [S.19:19]. Jesus said that He never sinned. **The Father has not left me alone, for I always do those things that please Him** [Jn.8:29]. Gabriel said so. **The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God"** [Lk.1:35]. God Himself said the same. **This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased** [Mt.3:17]. Even Jesus' enemies could point out no sin that He had committed. [Jesus said] **Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?** [Jn.8:46]. Which kind of man is it that has never sinned? His is unique among all the Prophets.

Was **RAISED** up by God to Himself. *Behold! Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee of the falsehoods of those who blaspheme* [S.3:55]. *Allah raised him up unto Himself...* [S.4:158]. Which Prophet is alive but Jesus Himself? **God raised up His Servant Jesus and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways** [Acts 3:26].

The **SON of GOD**. Gabriel was sent to Mary ...*to announce to thee the gift of a pure son* [S.19:19]. The Muslim will emphatically tell you that nowhere is Jesus ever called Son of God in the *Qur'an*. Here, Gabriel himself refers to Jesus as the son given by God. It must be clearly stated to the Muslim that this is in no physical sense, but rather a description of the closest possible relationship. A son

partakes of the essential qualities of his father. In Middle Eastern expression, a traveler is called “a son of the road,” a desert dweller as “a son of the desert,” and a rogue as “a son of the wind.” James and John were called **the Sons of Thunder** [Mk.3:17]. Certainly in none of these descriptions are we to think of them in any literal and physical sense; so too in the Scriptures when referring to Jesus as Son of God. **These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life** [I Jn.5:13].

Is the **WORD**. *Behold! The angels said: “O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of the company of those nearest to Allah* [S.3:45]. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth** [Jn.1:1,14]. Our word expresses our true self and cannot be separated from who we actually are. Jesus, as the Word, expresses the true life, nature, and heart of God. **No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him** [Jn.1:18].

Is to be **OBEYED**. *When Jesus came with Clear Signs, he said: “Now have I come to you with Wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some of the points on which ye dispute: therefore fear Allah and obey me”* [S.43:63]. **He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the Word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day** [Jn.12:48]. The Word and message of Jesus must first be known before it can be obeyed. Do you know what commands God gave Jesus for you to obey?

Is a **MERCY** from God. Gabriel said to Mary ...*We wish to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from us: It is a matter so decreed* [S.19:21]. Surely the greatest mercy God can show man is that of forgiveness of sins and entrance into His presence. How can forgiveness of sins be obtained? **Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes in Him who sent Me has eternal life,**

and shall not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life [Jn.5:24].

Sent as a **PROPHET**. Jesus said *I am indeed a servant of Allah: He hath given me Revelation and made me a prophet* [S.19:30]. Every Prophet had a message from God. Do you know what His was? **Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people** [Lk.24:19].

CHRIST. *Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of the company of those nearest to Allah* [S.3:45]. What do the prophets say would be the mission of the Christ? **And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures...All things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."** Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, **"Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name among all nations"** [Lk.24:25-27, 44-47].

Will come again as **JUDGE**. *And Jesus shall be a Sign for the coming of the Hour Of Judgment: Therefore have no doubt about the Hour, but follow ye Me: this is a Straight Way* [S.43:61]. The Judge knows all men, their thoughts, actions, and motives. He has authority to act and His Word is final. **Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man who He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead** [Acts 17:30,31].

The message to all Muslims is to:
Believe in the scripture which He sent to those before him
[that is, before Muhammad. S.4:136]

Do you believe the Word of God, the Gospel, given by Jesus?
God commands that you do.

The Trinity, Son of God, & Sacrifice

Concepts about the nature of God, Christ, and sacrifice are difficult for the mind of man to grasp. These subjects are particularly so for the Muslim. The following are the three key stumbling blocks in presenting the Gospel to Muslims. Each is presented in a conversational style that can be readily adapted in personal discussions.

Trinity

The concept of the Trinity is an abomination to the Muslim who imagines the Christian to be worshiping three deities, one of whom is Mary. In explaining the Trinity to Muslims, the following will be helpful.

“We Christians believe that God is One. The Word of God tells us this. **Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is One!** [Deut.6:4]. Isaiah the prophet wrote these words **I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God** [Isa.45:5].

“We do not worship three Gods. We worship the One true and living God and none other.

“Think with me for a moment about this imagined situation. You have been invited to give a speech before a large audience. But unfortunately, circumstances arose which would not allow you to attend.

“So, in order not to disappoint, you carefully write down the exact words of your speech and send it in your absence. Your word is the expression of everything you would have said if you were there yourself.

“Your word communicates yourself, your very spirit. It reveals all that you are and really cannot be isolated from yourself. You, your word, and your spirit are one.

“You are not three, as if there were you, your word, and your spirit. You are one. Yet your body without your spirit is not you, neither could your spirit be without your body. But no one could truly know you apart from your word.

“All three are needed; yet you are not three, but one. Apart from your word, your spirit remains hidden though your body is seen. Without the live-giving spirit, neither your word nor body could be. Without your body, your spirit could not express itself in words.

“This is what is meant by Trinity: Not three Gods, but One; God, His Word, and His Spirit. Christians call these Father, Son [Jesus, the Word], and Holy Spirit. God is One and we worship Him as such.

“Let me just ask you this. Are your words really different than you? Is the spirit dwelling in your body something besides your own self? Is your body separate from who you are? No, you are one and not three.

“My friend, God is far greater, more exalted, and eternally other than man. If we, mere creatures, have deep mysteries about our own being, how much more so the One true and living God? What a man can invent, he can explain; what he can't, he cannot have invented. This is Revelation about God too wonderful for our complete understanding.”

Jesus as Son of God

Muslims have a great misunderstanding about what is meant by calling Jesus the Son of God. To them, it is claiming that God performed a physical sexual act to conceive a child. This is an

abhorrent blasphemy because *It is not fitting to the majesty of Allah that He should beget a son* [S.19:35].

Any who say that Jesus is the Son of God bring the curse of Allah upon themselves which will cast them into hell. *The Christians call Christ the Son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; in this they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth* [S.9:30].

They will insist that Jesus is never referred to as the Son of God either in the *Qur'an* or by Jesus Himself. He is merely a servant of God and it was others, the *Kafara*, who called him Son of God. As such, the Christian must carefully explain this title of Jesus to the Muslim or an insurmountable stumbling block will remain. The following will be most helpful in doing this.

“My friend, we know that it is not possible for God to beget a son as a man begets a son. This could never be. God is incapable of such a physical act and we must never think of God in this way. No Christian would ever think such a blasphemous thing of the true and living God.

“Yet we must inquire carefully about the birth of Jesus, for no one was ever born as He was. It is the angel Gabriel who has told us much about Jesus' birth. Gabriel appeared to the pure virgin Maryam with this message, He said: *“Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord to announce to thee the gift of a pure son* [S.19:19].

“How is it possible for this pure virgin to have a son since she knew no man? Gabriel again gives us the answer. **The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God”** [Lk.1:35].

This Holy Son resulted from the power of God. It was a miraculous act of the Holy Spirit of God Most High. Jesus' birth was a great miracle and a great mystery. How this came about only God knows.

“But we must ask ourselves this question. Since Jesus is called “Son” by Gabriel himself, both in the *Qur'an* and in the *Injil*, whose Son is He?

“We know that Jesus had no human father; that is very clear. It is not Joseph, then, who was His father. Was Gabriel His father? No, certainly not. He himself said that he was only a messenger sent to announce the *gift of a pure son* [S.19:19].

“The gift came, not from Gabriel, but from God. God gave the gift of this pure son. The gift was His. The Son was His. Jesus was the Son of God. What does God mean when He calls Jesus His Son?

“When we speak about a son we say that he is the very image of his father. He has the authority and right to represent his father and speak on his behalf. His word is the same as hearing that of his father. To see the son is to see the father. No one is as close to the father as is his son. The son is the heir of the father’s estate. To honor the son is to honor the father.

“This is what Christians mean when we say that Jesus is the Son of God. He is unique. No one else is like Him in relationship to God or with men. Here is how the *Injil* describes Him:

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.

“After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs.

“For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are My Son; today I have become your Father’? And again, ‘I will be His Father and He will be My Son’? And again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him’” [Heb.1:1-6].

Sacrifice

The concept of sacrifice in Islam is nothing like that found in the Old or New Testaments. The slaying of an animal is never done with any idea that the blood shed will forgive or cleanse away sin. To them, it is unworthy of *Allah* to suggest that he requires shed blood in order to forgive. *To every people did We appoint rites of sacrifice, that they might celebrate the name of Allah over the sustenance He gave them from animals fit for food...It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him...* [S.22:34,37].

Thus the OT sacrifices as a basis of sins being forgiven is rejected and even scoffed at by the typical Muslim. The Christian's oft repeated statement, "Christ shed His blood on the cross to forgive our sins," is a foolish impossibility in the Muslim mind. He will often attempt to "prove" the absurdity of this by quoting from Ezek.18:20, **The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity.**

He will say, "You call Jesus the Son of God and Adam as the father of the sinfulness of all men. The Bible says that the son cannot bear the iniquity of the father, so how can Jesus' supposed death pay the price for Adam's sin?"

He does not believe that Jesus actually died on the cross. Surah 4:157 says, in part, *They killed him not, nor crucified him.* Islam rejects the concept of vicarious atonement [bearing sins in another's behalf] citing places like Surah 53:38, *No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another.*

It is most important, therefore, to establish the true nature of sacrifice from the text of the Word of God itself. A most effective way is described below from the lives of the following men, who are considered to be true prophets of God.

"My friend, let us consider what God Himself tells us about sacrifice through the lives of His Prophets. From the very beginning we can learn about this by looking at what He did for His servant, Adam.

"Because of his sin against God, he became guilty, knowing that he was naked before God. Adam made his own coverings to

try and hide his shame. **They sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves** [Gen.3:7].

“God, however, was not satisfied with man’s efforts to cover his guilt and shame. The Lord Himself provided for them coverings which met with his approval. Here is what God did. **The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them** [Gen.3:21].

“God rejected Adam’s own attempts to cover his sin. God then provided for man what He accepted. The skins were obtained from slain animals. God Himself shed their blood that Adam’s guilt of sin might be covered.

“We next learn about which type of sacrifices God accepts. We read this in the Word of God from the life of Abel, His servant, and from his brother, Cain. Both brought their sacrifices to God. Abel’s was pleasing to the Lord while Cain’s was rejected.

“Abel brought the sacrifice of a lamb whose blood was shed, while Cain brought the fruit of his own toil, similar to what his father, Adam, had done. The Lord had no regard for Adam’s efforts, and He discarded Cain’s also. This is what the Scriptures tell us:

The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor. Then the Lord said to Cain, “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?” [Gen.4:4-6].

“Cain’s sacrifice was suitable food which was offered up to God with thanks, but it was rejected by the Lord. God only accepts what He Himself has shown us from the very beginning; the shedding of blood to cover the guilt of our sinfulness.

“Our father, Abraham, was directed by God to offer up his son as a sacrifice to the Lord. As he and his son walked along, his son inquired where the sacrifice was. **Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself that lamb for the burnt offering** [Gen.22:8].

As he was about to slay his son, **the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham! Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me.**

Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horn; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son [Gen.22:11-13].

“My friend, here we learn something very significant about the nature of true sacrifice to God. The ram was slain in the place of the son. The lamb died instead of the person so that the man might be set free from the judgment about to come upon him.

“The death of the lamb was accepted as a substitute in the place of the one who was condemned to death. The *Qur’an* describes it in this way, *We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice* [S.37:107]. The lad would not be offered again since the lamb had taken his place. This judgment would never face him again because God provided for Himself a lamb of sacrifice which was acceptable in His sight.

“Moses, the Prophet of God, reveals to us an additional truth about the sacrifice that the Lord receives. God was about to judge the land of Egypt for all of its wickedness. The Word of God tells us how the believers in the Lord would be spared from the wrath of God.

They are each one to take a lamb for themselves. Then the whole assembly of the congregation is to kill it at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the house where they eat the lambs.

The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt [Ex.12:3,6,7,13].

“Here, the blood of the sacrifice is what saved them from destruction and judgment. The blood of the lamb was their protection from the wrath of God coming upon the unbelievers. It is when the Lord saw the blood applied to where they lived that they were saved.

“All of these things were instructing us about the sacrifice that God accepts. They were preparing the way for the coming of the Lord’s final sacrifice, the one that forgives sins once and for all. The Prophet of God, Isaiah, spoke in great detail about this final sacrifice hundreds of years before God would send Him. Listen to the Word of God:

Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted. Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

He was taken away from prison and judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked - but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You made His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.

He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors [Isa. 52:13-15; 53:1-12].

“These wonderful Words of God about the Servant of the Lord reveal many things. They show us that it was the purpose of God Himself to make His Servant a sacrifice for sins. This Servant was pierced for our iniquities. He was like a lamb sacrificed to bear the sins of others. Who was this Servant? How could a Servant of God become a sacrifice to forgive sins?

“Hear the Words of God given to His Prophet John. **The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** [Jn.1:29]. Jesus is the Servant of God who became the final sacrifice to take away our sins.

“It is quite true that no sinful man could ever bear the sins of another because each has his own sins to bear. But Jesus is not sinful as are all other men and the prophets themselves. No, He is unique. He is the *gift of a pure son* [S.19:19].

He alone of all men never once needed to ask forgiveness. No verse in all of the Word of God or the *Qur’an* can be found where Jesus ever asked forgiveness for His sins.

He had none. God Himself said, **This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased** [Mt.3:17]. Jesus said of Himself, **I always do the things that are pleasing to Him** [Jn.8:29]. To His own enemies Jesus asked them, **Which one of you convicts Me of sin?** [Jn.8:46].

“Jesus had no sins of His own, so He alone of all men was qualified to bear the sins of others. None of the Prophets could do this, for they all had their own burdens of sins to bear.

“He was the prophesied Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. He was the fulfillment of all that had been prophesied about the Servant of the Lord who would bear the punishment for man’s sins.

“No one took His life from Him. He was not the victim of the schemes of evil men. He volunteered to die for the sins of all men. It was His free choice to substitute Himself in the place of

condemned humanity. Abraham's ram was a substitute, but not of its own choice.

“Jesus, however, gave Himself freely to die in the place of sinful men. This is what He says, **I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father [Jn.10:17,18].**

“It was the will of God that He do so. It was the eternal purpose of God that He should offer Himself as a sinless substitute for the sins of man in order that they be forgiven. This is what Christians mean when they say ‘The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin.’”

A Message to Preach

What do you Think About Christ?

A Salaam Alechem

Ppeace, it is a lovely greeting. Better still is to have a heart that is at peace with the true and living God. He alone can grant such peace. Do you know the way to peace?

Throughout history, the one true God has given His message to His Prophets. Abraham spoke for God as did Moses,

John, Jesus, and others. Since God is One, their messages will harmonize as one. There will not be conflict or confusion between them.

God commands all believers to *believe in the scripture which He sent before him* [S.4:136]. Jesus said, **Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill** [Mt.5:17].

We are to believe what the Prophets have said. We know many things about Abraham. The life and message of Moses is well known. You may be able to tell us many things about some of the other Prophets.

But can you tell us about the Prophet Jesus? Of Jesus the *Qur'an* says, *We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light* [S.5:46]. What is the message of this Gospel that all men are to believe?

My sincere desire is that no one misleads you about Him. I want you to hear what the Word of God tells us about Him.

Do not think that He is merely one of the Prophets, simply another Servant of God. No, He is unique; none can compare with Him.

Let us consider together what the Word of God says, that we might know the truth about His unique Life as the Light of men.

My friend, What do you think about His BIRTH?

Jesus is called the son of Mary. It is the father after whom the son is named. Ishmael is called the son of Abraham; John, the son of Zacharias; Muhammad, the son of Abdullah. Strange that Jesus is called son of Mary.

But it is only strange until we realize that He was born, not by a human father, but by the power of God. The pure virgin Mary was His mother. Apart from any physical contact, God Himself performed a holy act by His power to bring about His birth.

The angel Gabriel said to Mary, **the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God** [Lk.1:35].

All men, like Adam who was fashioned from the clay, are earthy and of the earth. Jesus is called “He who descended.” Jesus said, **No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: The Son of Man** [Jn.3:13]. Jesus said, **I am the living Bread that came down out of heaven** [Jn.6:51].

Only One who comes down from above, who is pure like the sun or the rain, can bring help from above. Gabriel says Jesus is *the gift of a pure son* [S.19:19]. Yes, **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners** [I Tim.1:15].

He alone, from above, can reach down to save those struggling in the mire of sin below. Even the greatest of the Prophets could not deliver their fellows, for they too were of the earth. There is none to compare with him in His birth.

My friend, What do you think about His CHARACTER?

Here was someone who was perfect in every way. He never once sinned or made a mistake. What kind of man was He who never needed to ask forgiveness? All other men who fear God regularly confess their sins and ask forgiveness. Some have admitted to asking forgiveness seventy times each day.

The Prophet Solomon said, **Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?”** [Prov.20:9]. However Jesus said even to His own enemies, **Which one of you convicts Me of sin?** [Jn.8:46]. Nowhere in the Bible or in the *Qur’an* is there found even one verse where Jesus asked forgiveness of God. He alone, of all men and among all the Prophets, was without sin.

My friend, What do you think about His CLAIMS?

Jesus said, **I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life** [Jn.8:12].

Have you ever watched the crescent moon shine greater and greater across the month's night sky? It shines brightest at full moon, then declines and dies. But another moon arises in its place next month to shine its light upon this darkened world.

This is how the Prophets are. They shine their light from God for awhile into this world of darkness and then pass from the scene. They help us to see along our way for a time. But when the Sun has arisen, no man needs the lesser light of the moon any longer.

Jesus is the Light of the world. The Sun never becomes old or wears out. It shines upon every man in every land and shall never die. Only the Sun provides the Light of Life. This, the moon can never do. The moon only reflects the Light it has received from the Sun. The Sun is the life-giving source of Light itself. This is who Jesus is.

Jesus also said, **I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father but by Me** [Jn.14:6]. Other prophets were sent to point the way to God. Jesus said, **I am the Way**. No other prophet would dare say such a thing. His claims are like no other claims.

My friend, What do you think about His NAMES & TITLES?

Each of the Prophets had a special name given by God. Moses is called the spokesman [*kalim*] with God. Still others are referred to as *Ruh Allah* and *Habib Allah*. Now, which one of these two does someone love more, a friend [*Habib*] or his very self, his own spirit [*Ruh*].

Be honest with your own heart as you think about this. Yes, we love our own spirit, our very self, more than even the closest friend. It is *Surah 4:171* that calls Jesus, *Ruh Allah*.

God Himself said of Jesus, **This is My beloved Son: Hear Him** [Lk.9:35]. The *Qur'an* tells us that Gabriel was sent to *announce to you the gift of a pure son* [S.19:19].

Isaiah told us about this gift of a Son. **For a child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; and the government will rest upon His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace** [Isa.9:6]. What does God mean when He calls Jesus His Son?

When we speak about a son we say that he is the very image of his father. He has the authority and right to represent his father and speak on his behalf. His word is the same as hearing that of his father. To see the son is to see the father. No one is as close to the father as is his son. The son is the heir of the father's estate. To honor the son is to honor the father.

This is what Christians mean when we say that Jesus is the Son of God. He is unique. No one else is like Him in relationship to God or with men. Here is how the *Injil* describes Him:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.

After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say: "You are My Son; today I have become your Father"? And again, "I will be His Father and He will be My Son"? And again, when God brings His firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all God's angels worship Him" [Heb.1:1-6].

Jesus Himself said, **I am the Resurrection and the Life** [Jn.11:25]. He is the One who will raise the Prophets and all men

on the last day. He is able now to give new life, a clean life, eternal life to all who will receive Him and His Words from God. None can compare with Him in His names and titles.

My friend, What do you think about His DEATH?

Death is a great mystery to us. Which one of us knows when we will die? Who knows how you will die or where? God knows all these things, we do not know.

The Lord Jesus is different than all others. He knew. He predicted beforehand where He would die, and how, and when, and why.

Listen to what He said to His disciples, **We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him, insult Him, spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him. On the third day He will rise again** [Lk.18:31-33].

This death of Jesus was prophesied long beforehand in the Psalms of David that the *Qur'an* tells us, *To David We gave the Psalms* [S.4:163]. Here is part of David's prophesy about Jesus' very words at the cross, **They pierced My hands and My feet** [Ps.22:16].

No one took His life from Him. He was not the victim of evil men's schemes. He volunteered to die for the sins of all men. It was His free choice to substitute Himself in the place of condemned humanity. Abraham's ram was a substitute, but not of its own choice.

Jesus, however, gave Himself freely to die in the place of sinful men. This is what He says, **I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father** [Jn.10:17,18].

No one ever died as He died. The prophet John said of Jesus, **Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world** [Jn.1:29].

Where will you spend eternity after you die? This you do not know. God decides. But the wonderful Gospel given to Jesus tells us we can know in this life where we will spend the next. Listen to Jesus' own words, **I tell you the truth, whoever hears My Word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgment: he has crossed over from death to life** [Jn.5:24]. There is none that can compare with Him in His death.

My friend, What do you think about His RESURRECTION?

After His death, men did their best to keep Jesus in the grave. Soldiers were ordered to guard His tomb. There was no question in anyone's mind that He was dead.

But three days later, Jesus was raised from the dead just as He had said. An angel sent from God met His followers at the grave on that third day.

The angel said to them, **Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying** [Mt.28:5,6]. *Surah 4:158 says, Allah raised him up to Himself.*

We must all face the great enemy, death. All of the Prophets died and so must you and I. Jesus alone has conquered death. He alone is the living One among all the Prophets.

Only Jesus can save from death and sin. He is alive and able to deliver us. There is none like Him in His resurrection.

My friend, What do you think about His RETURN?

Jesus said He would come to earth again. **I will come again and take you to be with Me** [Jn.14:3]. Angels told His followers that He would return. **This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way you have seen Him go**

into heaven [Acts 1:11]. The *Qur'an* directs believers to follow Him in light of His coming in the Day of Judgment. *And Jesus shall be a Sign for the coming of the Hour Of Judgment: Therefore have no doubt about the Hour, but follow ye Me: this is a Straight Way* [S.43:61].

When He comes, everyone will stand before Him as Judge of all. You will see Him face to face. He will say to you, "What do you believe about Me?" He will ask you, "Do you know My Words, have you kept My commandments?"

Do you know what you will say? If you say that He is just one among many prophets, you will be condemned. No, He is unique. There is no one like Him.

No one else has come from above, pure and without sin. No other of the Prophets claimed to be the Savior. None of them have been raised from the dead.

Who is coming back as earth's King and Judge? Is it Moses, or Abraham, or one of the other Prophets? No, it will be the Lord Jesus Christ who will be earth's King, Judge, and Lord.

There is no one like Him in heaven or earth.

My friend, what do you think about Jesus now? I'm sure you have many questions. Let us continue to discuss these things together from the Word of God.

May the Lord bless His Word to your heart.

Jesus in the Word of God

At the Name of

J E S U S

every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that

J E S U S C H R I S T I S L O R D

[Phil.2:10,11]



IN THE WORD OF GOD, JESUS IS REFERRED TO AS:

ADVOCATE [1 Jn.2:1] **And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.** The legal counsel appointed for defense. Jesus represents believers before the court of heaven and assures our acceptance before God by His own righteousness.

ALPHA & OMEGA [Rev.22:13] **I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.** Jesus is Eternal, One in essence with the Father, and sovereign over all creation. Compare Rev.1:8,17 and Isa.41:4; 44:6.

AMEN [Rev.3:14] **The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.** The assurance and fulfiller of the promises of God [see 2 Cor.1:20]. The ultimate Truth, the source, and Creator of everything in heaven and earth [see Jn.1:3; Col.1:15].

BEGINNING & END See ALPHA & OMEGA

BEGINNING of the Creation of God See AMEN.

BRANCH [Isa.11:1,2. See v.1-5] Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him. [Jer.23:5,6] I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely. [Zech.3:8,9] I am going to bring in my Servant the Branch...and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. [Zech.6:12,13] Behold, a Man whose name is Branch...He will build the temple of the Lord. [All references to Jesus as the Branch are Isa.4:3; 11:1-5; 53:2; Jer.23:5,6; 33:15,16; Zech.3:8; 6:12,13]. He is the One who springs forth in freshness of life from a dry and deadened condition. Job 14:7-9 gives the imagery for this.

BREAD [Jn.6:51] from heaven [Jn.6:33] of God [Jn.6:48,57,58] of Life. He comes down from heaven and brings life to the world.

BRIDEGROOM [2 Cor.11:2] I have betrothed you to one Husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. [see Jn.3:29; Eph.5:25-27]. He loves His own with a fervency of affectionate devotion.

BRIGHT MORNING STAR [Rev.22:16] [see 2 Pet.1:19]. Jesus is the shining Light in the world of darkness.

CHRIST [Lk.2:11] There has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [see Lk.24:44-46; Jn.4:25,26; Acts 10:38]. Christ means the Anointed One; Messiah in the Hebrew of the OT. It was the High Priest [Lev.8:12] and the King [I Sam.16:1,12,13] who were the particular Anointed ones in the Scriptures. As Priest, Jesus is God's only mediator who gave Himself as the final perfect sacrifice for sins. As the everlasting Priest, He represents His people in full acceptance before the throne of God. As King, He alone has the right to rule the hearts of the subjects of His kingdom according to the Law issuing from His throne.

DAYSPRING [Lk.1:78] **Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high will visit us.** The Light of Revelation rises up through Jesus, the Light of the world.

DOOR [Jn.10:9] **I am the Door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved.** The one means of access to the presence of God.

EVERLASTING FATHER [Isa.9:6] **For a child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; and the government will rest upon His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.** This phrase is also translated, “Father of Eternity;” the uncreated origin of all the unending epochs of eternity.

FIRST & LAST See ALPHA & OMEGA.

FIRSTBORN [Col.1:15] **of all creation** and [Col.1:18] **of the dead.** [Heb.1:6] **When He again brings the Firstborn into the world, He says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”** Jesus is the lawful heir and representative of the Father having first place in honor and privilege both in heaven and earth.

GOD [Mt.1:23] **Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, “God with us.”** [see Isa.7:14; 9:6; Jn.1:1; 10:30; 14:7-12; 20:27-29; Col.2:9; Heb.1:3]. [Col.2:9] **In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.**

HOLY [Jn.6:69] **You are the Holy One of God.** [see Acts 2:27; Rev.3:7].

I AM [Jn.8:58] **Before Abraham was, I AM.** [see Ex.3:14; Deut.32:39; Isa.43:13; Jn.8:28].

IMAGE OF GOD [Col.1:15] **He is the image of the invisible God.** [see Col.2:9; Heb.1:3]. He is the essence and exact representation of the nature and being of God.

IMMANUEL See GOD.

JUDGE [Jn.5:22] **For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.** [see Mt.25:31-46; Jn.12:47-50; Acts 17:31]. [Jn.12:48] **The Word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.**

KING OF KINGS [Rev.19:16] **And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS”.** Jesus the Lord is the highest of all rulers and sovereigns.

LAMB OF GOD [Jn.1:29] **Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!** [see I Cor.5:7; Heb.10:1-14]. Christ is the final and perfect sacrifice for sin.

LIFE [Jn.5:26] **For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself.** [see Jn.11:25; 14:6]. Jesus alone Possesses uncreated eternal life and is thus the source of life to all.

LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT [I Cor.15:45] **The last Adam [Jesus] became a life-giving spirit.** [see Rev.1:18]. Jesus is able to impart life since He is the Living One forevermore.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD [Jn.8:12] **I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life** [see Jn.1:4,5,9; 12:46].

LION [Rev.5:5] **The Lion that is from the tribe of Judah...has overcome.** [see Gen.49:9,10]. Christ is the prophesied reigning King.

LIVING ONE [Rev.1:18]. See LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT.

LORD [Mt.22:42-45] **“What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” They said to Him, “The Son of David.” He said to them, “Then how does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, until I**

put **Your enemies beneath Your feet**”? [see Ps.110:1]. God’s testimony in the Scriptures is that He is **Lord**: [I Cor.2:8] **of glory**: [Rev.19:6; I Cor.8:6; Phil.2:9-11] **of lords**: [Jer.23:5,6] **our Righteousness**. See **KING OF KINGS**; **BRANCH**.

MASTER [Jude 4] **Our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ**. [see Mt.10:24,25; Jn.15:20]. He is the merciful Despot who has absolute ownership with unrestrained power.

MIGHTY GOD [Isa.9:6]. See **EVERLASTING FATHER**; **GOD**.

ONLY BEGOTTEN SON [Jn.1:18] **No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him**. [see Jn.3:16; Ps.2:7]. Literally this title means: the “One-of-a-kind” Son; the Unique One.

OVERSEER [I Pet.2:25] **You were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls**. Jesus is the One who watches over and protects the people of God.

PEACE [Eph.2:14] **He Himself is our peace**. [see Mic.5:2-5; Rom.5:1]. Peace with God is only through Jesus and his sacrifice.

POWER OF GOD [I Cor.1:24]. [see Acts 10:38].

PRINCE OF PEACE [Isa.9:6]. See **EVERLASTING FATHER**.

PROPHET [Acts 3:17-26] **Moses said, “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed to everything He says to you.”** Jesus is that Prophet like unto Moses who was to come; not Muhammad. [see Lk.24:19].

RESURRECTION [Jn.11:25] **I am the Resurrection and the Life, he who believes in me shall never die**.

ROOT OF DAVID [Rev.5:5]. The life-source who existed before David, and from whence David came.

RULER OF THE KINGS OF EARTH [Rev.1:5]. [see Ps.2:6-8]. See KING OF KINGS.

SERVANT [Acts 3;26] God raised up His Servant Jesus and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways. [see Isa.52:13; Jn.8:29; 17:4; Acts 4:27,28]. He perfectly performed the will of God in every detail.

SHEPHERD [Jn.10:11] I am the Good Shepherd; The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. [Heb.13:20] The God of peace brought up from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord. [I Pet.5:4] And when the Chief/Ruling shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. He leads and feeds His flock.

SON OF GOD [Jn.3:16] For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [see Jn.5:20-23; Rev.2:18]. THE SON IS: the very image of the Father [Col.1:15; Heb.1:3], the Father's authoritative representative [Heb.1:2], and the special object of God's love [Jn.3:35].

JESUS was called SON by:

GOD [Mt.3:17] This is My beloved Son.

GABRIEL [Lk.1:35] The holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

JOHN [Jn.1:34] I myself have...have testified that this is the Son of God.

JESUS HIMSELF [Jn.10:36] I said, "I am the Son of God."

HIS DISCIPLES [Mt.16:16] You are the ...Son of the living God.

SON OF MAN [Dan.7:13,14] Behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was

given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS [Mal.4:2] **But for you who fear My name, the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. Christ Shines His righteousness upon all men in every land.**

TRUE VINE [Jn.15:1-6] **I am the Vine and you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**

TRUTH [Jn.14:6] **I am the Truth.** [see Col.2:2,3]. Jesus did not only speak the truth, He is the embodiment of both truth and wisdom.

THE WAY [Jn.14:6]. **I am the Way.** Jesus did not merely point to the way, we must walk in Him, by Him, and through Him.

WISDOM OF GOD [Col.1:24] **Christ: the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.** [see Mt.11:27; I Cor.1:30; Col.2:2,3]. All knowledge and wisdom is in Jesus.

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR [Isa.9:6]. See **EVERLASTING FATHER.**

WORD [Jn.1:1] **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** [see Jn.1:14, 18; Rev.19:13]. Jesus is the full expression of the invisible God.

Is Allah the One True God?

ALLAH IS NOT THE FATHER

Many people wrongly imagine that *Allah* and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ are one and the same. They believe that they are merely different ways of describing the same God.

This is a great error. It is not true. *Allah* and the God of the Bible are not the same. We should never confuse this fact. **For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him** [I Cor.8:6].

With this, no Muslim would ever agree. Nowhere in Islam is God ever referred to as Father. This is certainly not one of *Allah's* 99 names. *Allah begets no son* [S.17:111] and hence is no one's father.

Yet God is called Father so often in the Scriptures that it hardly need be referenced to demonstrate this truth. The significance of this is critical.

The Lord Jesus directed believers to pray in this way, **Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your Name** [Mt.6:9]. Believers are to pray to the Father in heaven. That is His name. Muslims do not pray to the Father at all because He is not their God. *Allah* is not the Father in heaven; Father is not his name.

Christians and Muslims are praying to different gods. This is the harsh and sobering reality after all is said and done. It is why the Christian seeks to preach the gospel to the Muslim. It is also why the Muslim seeks to either convert or eliminate the Christian.

ALLAH DOES NOT LOVE SINNERS

Allah does not love transgressors [S.2:190]

He loveth not any ungrateful sinner [S.2:276]

Allah loveth not those that do wrong [S.3:140; 42:40]

Allah loveth not those who trespass beyond bounds [S.7:55]

The above quotations are self-evident and will not be discovered to be quoted out of context. It is the teaching of the *Qur'an* about *Allah*. He does not love sinners.

Contrast this with the repeated expressions of the love of God to sinful men revealed in the Scriptures. It is evident that the God and Father of the Bible is not to be confused with the *Allah* of the *Qur'an*. The following quotes from the Word of God show this to be true.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us [Rom.5:8].

For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy [Tit.2:3-5].

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) [Eph.2:4,5].

It is more than obvious that we are talking about two different gods entirely. One is the Father in heaven, the other is not. The One true and living God loves men who are wretched and miserable in their sin and rebellion, *Allah* does not.

ALLAH & JIHAD

From the above sampling of quotations, it is clear that the God of the Bible loves sinful men while *Allah* does not. Yet the *Qur'an* repeatedly claims that *Allah* is *oft-forgiving, most merciful* [S.4:25]. If this is true, who then does he forgive and love?

The *Qur'an* answers that question in no uncertain terms. *Truly Allah loves those who fight in his cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure* [S.61:4].

He loves those who fight in his cause; who fight unyieldingly whether with words, the pen, politics, wealth, or the sword; yes, and the sword.

How is the "faith" to be propagated and defended? Is error to be fought with truth or by physical force? The Lord Jesus answers, "With the Truth." Allah replies, "By Jihad."

Allah preaches a message of submission or slaughter. The *Kafara* are to be converted or eliminated. Islam must be embraced world-wide or populations who refuse are to be exterminated.

This is not extremism. It is faithful devotion to the *Qur'an*. Islam was begun by a *Jihad* led by Muhammad. Those who do not engage in *Jihad* are not true Muslims at all, but are no better than other *Kafara*.

Jihad is not optional if one would reach the Paradise of God and be saved. Those engaging in *Jihad* who *have the highest rank in the sight of Allah; They are the people who will achieve salvation* [S.9:20].

Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers in fight, smite at their necks; at length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind the captives firmly: therefore is the time for either generosity or ransom: until the war lays down its burdens.

Thus are ye commanded: but if it had been Allah's Will, he could certainly have exacted retribution from them Himself; but He lets you fight in order to test you, some with others.

But those who are slain in the way of Allah, - He will never let their deeds be lost. Soon will He guide them and improve their condition, and admit them to the Garden which He has made known to them [S.47:4-6].

What is it that the faithful Muslim is called upon to do in the cause of *Jihad*? The *Qur'an* answers this frequently so that there can be no mistake.

Fight in the cause of Allah...and slay them wherever ye catch them...and fight them on until there is no more persecution and the religion becomes Allah's [S.2:190-193].

I [Allah] will instill terror into the hearts of the unbelievers: smite ye above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them. This because they contended against Allah and His Messenger [Muhammad]: If any

contend against Allah and His Messenger, Allah is strict in punishment [S.8:13,14].

Fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, and beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem of war [S.9:5].

Fight them and Allah will punish them by your hands [S.9:14].

It is not ye who slew them; it was Allah [S.8:17].

This is not the Gospel of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not what the Lord Jesus practiced, nor what He taught His disciples to practice. Christianity is the true religion of love and forgiveness.

God Himself in the final Day of Judgment will righteously execute punishment upon all unbelief. It is His prerogative. But true believers in the Lord Jesus are never to take vengeance, much less take up the sword. Regarding this, the Scriptures are clear.

Jesus said, **But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you...treat others the same way you want them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same [Lk.6:27,28, 31-33].**

In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets [Mt.7:12].

But they did not receive Him...When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them' [Lk.9:53-56].

They crucified Him...but Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing' [Lk.23:33,34].

When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?' And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, 'Stop! No more of this.' And He touched his ear and healed him... Then Jesus said to him, 'Put

your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword' [Lk.22:49-51; Mt.26:52].

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good [Rom.12:17-21].

This is Christianity. It is completely opposite of Islam. They are not the same religions because they do not have the same God.

Love, forgiveness, blessing, peace, and kindness flow from the Father in heaven to His own people who display the same to others.

Submission to *Allah* displays his qualities. *Allah* is another god.

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your empty way of life received by tradition from your forefathers; but with the precious blood of Christ
[I Pet.1:18, 19]

Religious methods can be broadly described as being either manipulating or supplicating, controlling or submitting, directing or asking, and commanding or dependent. Animism, also known as African Traditional Religion [ATR], attempts to manipulate, control, direct, and command spiritual powers and influences according to the will of the man using them.

Animists view bodily posture, certain words, objects, and rituals as possessing effective power of their own which can be

employed to obtain one's wishes. His key to a successful life is the ability to manipulate forces according to correct formula.

The culture of the animist is determined by ancestral tradition and conformity to that by being in harmony with the powers that have brought it about. He therefore is ultimately concerned about the "who" and "why" of life rather than the questions of "what" and "how" that Westerners focus upon.

To discover who is in power and why this power acts as it does is a constant pursuit. Meaning to life is always to be understood in a spiritual way rather than in a physical or material manner.

Therefore the causes behind disasters, sickness, deaths, and other details of life will be sought for in terms of who made these things happen and why they did so. Power is needed, both to discern the events of life, to obtain protection from forces, and to direct their course.

This makes the correct performance of prescribed ritual of utmost importance. An animist's relationship with power has little to do with morality, but has everything to do with the expertise to get results by proper technique.

It is not the will of the god that is his concern, but the compelling, asking, or manipulating that god to perform his own will. Thus by rites, rituals, incantations, or use of sacred objects, he seeks to use spiritual powers to produce success, happiness, or whatever else he may want, whether good or evil. Simply stated, man is the focus of all of life and the forces are viewed as existing solely for his benefit.

He believes that life can be transformed by techniques applied to mind, body, and spirit. There is no "sin" other than to not correctly perform the proper rituals in the approved manner. For the animist, there exists no absolute standard external to himself that judges his actions or to which he is accountable.

Essentially, good and evil are judged by whether the action promotes the well-being or harm of the group, not in terms of moral truth according to a written standard. Because he sees himself as an extension of the corporate community, tribe, and its spirit world, he does not view himself as blameworthy of misdeeds. Any failure must be attributed to some means used against him and

the cause must be sought, not in himself, but in divining its spiritual source.

Feeling, experiencing, and participation are what make his life meaningful, not ideas or knowledge derived from written sources.

World religions, by way of contrast, are institutionalized rather than experiential and pragmatic [whatever works is considered true]. They point back to a founder, have sacred writings, and appointed places of worship. Sin is judged by an established written code and membership is determined more on moral grounds and agreement with documents than ritual participation.

Animists practice oral traditions passed down through ritual to insure the continued involvement of the ancestral spirits among the living. As such, a broken relationship between people of the same group is a serious breach in animist theology and is the closest thing to being considered "sin." The ancestors are thought to be the guardians of the living who determine which spirit will come to inhabit the unborn. Thus, to disrupt the harmony between the spirits of the ancestors and the group as a whole becomes a horrifying prospect.

This is not to say that an animist cannot have his own thoughts and distinct behavior. He may, but he must not violate ritual practices or this will provoke the anger of the spirit world and the community to which he belongs.

Great pressure is therefore upon him to conform to the accepted practices with respect to his assigned role within it. It is why individuality, diversity, and inventiveness are discouraged and rarely seen.

A man without relatives or children of his own is like someone without citizenship, identity, friends, or help in this life or the next. To be cut off from the tribe is therefore the most terrible punishment that can be inflicted upon anyone.

Yet his participation in the community is essentially self-seeking. His desire is to gain power both within the group and over his own destiny. Prayer, sacrifice, and rituals are not performed out of devotion, but in order gain what he wants by "using" the spirit world.

Power can be gained in a variety of ways; through sacrifices, offerings, incantations, liturgies, taboos, charms, fetishes, ceremonies, witchcraft, sorcery, or by contact with powerful persons or objects, through the laying on of hands, or articles of clothing, anointing, etc. Because of the universal belief that the spoken word carries power to effect reality, speaking in tongues is widely practiced among animists and is thought to have more power than understandable prayer.

Dreams, visions, and ghosts play a significant role as they are viewed as bringing contact with the ancestral spiritual world. Also, totems [certain animals, objects, or plants that are thought to have a special brotherly relationship with the family or tribe] are not to be treated as common, but as sacred. Trees, groves, rocks, streams, or mountains and high places are examples of these.

To an animist, the supreme God is at best distant and unconcerned with the practical affairs of men. He may be respected, but He is not personal, certainly not a Father, though He may be considered to be Creator or even Judge.

The existence of an impersonal power often referred to as the life-force is a common belief among animists. This force has no moral nature but can be tapped into and used for either good or evil. This belief is evident even in various forms of Pentecostalism where it is common to hear groans, shouts, or short gasping sounds to inhale or obtain the “power” of the Spirit of God.

Ritual is the foundation of animism and ATR. Through the correct formula, access is gained and help obtained from the spirit world. The basic belief is that if a man will perform so and so, a sure result must necessarily follow. The ritual act is sacred and effective merely by being performed according to correct formula. Many Muslims, for example, believe that by someone repeating the *Shahada* [the creed], he automatically becomes a Muslim.

There is a reciprocal relationship between the devoted man and his god. The god cannot influence the world apart from the ritual of the man and the man has no power to change his situation apart from the god. They are, in that sense, mutually dependent and one together in the stream of life as they influence their world.

That using the proper words correctly will always produce the desired results is fundamental to all animist belief and practice.

There are certain power words that must be used with great caution. “Positive” and “negative” declarations are believed to bring either prosperity or a curse.

Animistic healing takes place using this technique. Through power ritual language, sickness is commanded to leave the distressed and enter the body of a sacrificial animal.

Symbols also play a vital role in sustaining the animist’s contact with the spirit world all around him. Horns, swords, crosses, crescent moons, and bodily gestures all convey spiritual power.

Ceremonial meals are common expressions of the community’s ritual practice along with dances, music, and parades. Weddings, births, and burials are all highly important events for the continuance with blessing of the ancestral spirits.

Burial rites are especially significant to the animist. Without the proper ceremonies, the departed spirit will not be admitted to the blessed state but be doomed to wander as a haunting evil spirit who will trouble the living. This is why one-year anniversaries to honor the deceased are common practices among animistic peoples.

“Beware that you are not ensnared to follow them...and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?’ You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods” [Deut.12:30,31].

We must repent of the concept of incantation: manipulating spiritual powers through words. We must rather submit to the Word of the one true Sovereign God. We must abandon the practice of serving gods based on oral tradition where the priest speaks for the deity and is the mediator of power and contact with the supernatural [Isa.8:19,20].

It must not be thought that submission and obedience to the hierarchy of elders is to be absolute and unquestioning [I Thess.5:21, I Cor.10:15, Job 32:4-12, Tit.1:10, 11]. It is error to imagine that the true God can be influenced or controlled by ritual activity for selfish ends as the spirits are.

The true and living God [I Cor.8:6] is in an unrivaled category by Himself and shares no arrangements with other deities. All others must therefore be cast away and He alone worshiped and served.

Tribalism therefore has no basis to be continued since the ancestral spirits and gods of the tribe are wicked delusions and cannot continue to be served and honored alongside the true and living God. Christians are a single culture as citizens of one kingdom and tradition [Phil.3:20] who serve the one true Eternal Spirit, God the Father.

Jesus Christ is not a deity to be added to those already being served; the one who can forgive and carry to heaven while the others take care of the “practical” issues of daily living.

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

“Therefore, ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” [2 Cor.6:14 - 7:1].

Because the animist views all of life as means to his own ends by manipulating, controlling, or even deceiving the forces he encounters, this has direct bearing on his home, especially his women. The basic animistic orientation towards women is a result of his whole outlook on life. To him, women are disposable possessions; a means to achieving man’s end for pleasure, profit, power, and progeny [children].

The following passages must transform our thinking from this animist perspective to that of a genuine Christian home.

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN/WIFE IS:

- [1] to be honored, understood, and not mistreated since she is weaker [I Pet.3:7].
- [2] to be loved as one's own body, not treated as property [Eph.5:25,28,31].
- [3] a helper, not an animal used as a sexual object for pleasure and children [Gen.2:18-20].
- [4] not a slave whose labor profits the man. The man is to provide for her [I Tim.5:8]. Man is not king [Gen.3:16].
- [5] not to be divorced [Mal.2:16] and barrenness is no cause to do so [Lk.1:7; Gen.11:30; 18:10,11; I Sam.1:5-8]. [6] not under the authority of the extended family or clan. They have no rights over the wife of their male relation [Gen.2:23,24].
- [7] not the one held responsible for the training of the children; the man is [Eph.6:4; Gen.18:19; Deut.11:18-21; Prov.4:1-4; Ps.78:3-8].
- [8] not to be isolated and separate from the man and all that concerns him; no secrets covered up. All is freely shared [Gen.2:25].
- [9] a fellow heir of the grace of life, not of lesser privilege [I Pet.3:7; Gal.3:28].

If repentance from the animistic view of the wife and home is not actual, it renders our Christianity an empty masquerade, because our prayers will be ineffective and hindered [I Pet.3:7].

There is evidence that the roots of basic animistic thinking and practice have not been abandoned in the Christianity of West Africa. When the Orthodox church came with its liturgy, rites, priests, ceremonies, cassocks, religious objects, and sacred places, essentially they were received within the animistic framework.

These things were believed to be vehicles of power that were effective in and of themselves, rather than merely representative and symbolic. The Bible, as a sacred object, often is used as a talisman, pictures of Jesus as a means of grace, and water and crosses as charms for protection or blessing. Extreme forms of these characteristics are seen in the so-called White Garment churches.

Modern Pentecostalism in West Africa stemming from the 1970's is ever as much flagrantly animistic. Here the "Man of God"

has taken the place of the oracle priest who speaks for the god. Thus it is thought that the “pastor” has contact with the “Spirit” in a way that the uninitiated do not, and must never, therefore, be questioned.

Power is transferred by his touch through the laying on of his hands. Objects such as water, oil, and handkerchiefs that he has “blessed” are believed to transfer the “anointing.”

The “Positive Confession” doctrine is nothing more than the foundational assumption of all ATR: The spoken word has power to affect reality if the correct method is used. Shouting, “Back to sender,” is a popular formula [incantation] used by “deliverance” ministers to transfer spirits, curses, or problems to a sacrificial victim, in this case, to the person who is the “source” of the spiritual affliction.

All of these things are animistic to the core and must be repented of if our religion will be Christian indeed and be conformed to the pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

“For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord; and because of these abominable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so” [Deut.18:9-14].

Perhaps the most critical issue facing the church of West Africa is that of the influence of ATR upon its beliefs and practices. Specifically, two major concerns must be responded to biblically, both in teaching and in practice.

The issues are these:

[1] What is a Christian home?

[2] What is Christian burial?

Because these have not been addressed by the West African church itself, there has been no distinctive Christian culture emerge in the more than one hundred and fifty years that the gospel has come to this part of the world. In these two areas in particular, little difference can be seen between the Muslim, Animist, and Christian in their basic assumptions about and daily treatment of wife and children, or with respect to the dead and the burial ceremonies attending that event.

These are questions that must be answered by the African, not by the Western missionary.

From the Word of God and led by the Holy Spirit, determination must be made of what is truly Christian and what is simply ATR masquerading in a new religious dress.

Persecution surely will come, but that truth, once discerned, will set you free.

PREACHING TO THE IDOLATER

THE FOLLY OF IDOLATRY

The foolishness of idolatry is mentioned in several places in the Word of God. Even the idolater will recognize the manifest folly of idolatry when these passages are brought before him.

“Our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them” [Ps.115:3-7]. Idols have no life; they do not exist.

They are only the work of men's hands. Why should a man who can walk and speak and reason and see and hear bow himself and serve a piece of stone or wood that can do nothing?

“Present your case,’ says the Lord, ‘bring forth your strong reasons,’ says the King of Jacob. ‘Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; Let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; Yes, do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed and see it together. Indeed you are nothing, and your work is nothing; he who chooses you is an abomination’” [Isa.41:21-24]. The Lord not only exposes the nakedness of idols, He mocks the complete emptiness and stupidity of it. Any who would choose to follow the nothingness of idolatry is an abomination.

“Those who make an image, all of them are useless...Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing?...The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals, fashions it with hammers, and works it with the strength of his arms...The craftsman stretches out his rule, he marks one out with chalk; he fashions it with a plane...He cuts down cedars for himself...Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; Yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; Indeed he makes a god and worships it; He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it. He burns half of it in the fire; With this half he eats meat...and the rest of it he makes into a god, his carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, ‘Deliver me, for you are my god!’...And no one considers in his heart, nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say, ‘I have burned half of it in the fire...and shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?’ He feeds on ashes; A deceived heart has turned him aside; and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, ‘Is there not a lie in my right hand?’” [Isa.44:9-20].

THE TWO WAYS

Though a man has two eyes, he can only look in one direction. His two legs can only walk upon one trail. Only one voice can be listened to at a time though his ears are two. Serving two masters is an impossibility.

There must be repentance from all aspects of idolatry if the Gospel is to be received unto salvation. There can be no compromise between God and Satan. Light immediately scatters darkness so that it disappears altogether. It must be one or the other, not both.

“Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry...What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? [I Cor.10:14, 19-22]. Will the Lord not be provoked to jealousy and wrath if we worship Him one minute and the next turn aside to serve idols?

“You turned to God from idols to serve the living God” [I Thess.1:9]. Their backs were turned upon their idols when they turned to face the living God. A man cannot face both ways.

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

“And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’

“Therefore, ‘Come out from among them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.

‘I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says the Lord Almighty.

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” [2 Cor.6:14 - 7:1].

“Beware that you are not ensnared to follow them...and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?’

“You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods” [Deut.12:30,31].

“When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.

“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

“For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord; and because of these abominable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For these nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so” [Deut.18:9-14].

“No man can serve two masters...” [Mt.6:24].

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” [Mt.7:13,14].

THE GODS OF OUR FATHERS

Many fear ancestral covenants and sins of their forefathers coming upon them. Others are fearful that the gods they abandon will harm them or their families if they forsake them for the sake of Christ. Persecution from the family and tribe often will result as it did in NT days. The Thessalonians who turned to God from idols suffered affliction because of it [I Thess.2:13, 14; 3:3, 4]. The temptation is to compromise between idolatrous practices and the Gospel of Christ; trying to maintain traditional practices to not offend the ancestors and family while vainly holding onto a hope of eternal life from Christ.

Here are passages from the Scriptures that deal with the gods of our fathers and ancestral traditions.

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your empty way of life received by tradition from your forefathers; but with the precious blood of Christ” [I Pet.1:18, 19]. Ancestral traditional ritual and practices are wholly based upon instructions passed down from the spirits of the ancestors. The Word of God says that they are empty ways of life. These are the very things that the blood of Christ has been shed to redeem us from; false practices of false gods. They must therefore be abandoned.

“The Lord had made a covenant [with His people] and charged them, saying: ‘You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them; but the Lord, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice. And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods. And the covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods. But the Lord your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies’” [2 Kings 17:35-39]. Other gods are not to be feared by the true believer. They are powerless before the one true and living God. The Lord protects

those who fear Him from all enemies, including the false gods of earth.

“Therefore hear the Word of the Lord...because you have said, ‘We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol/hell we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves.’

“Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily...Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol/hell will not stand; When the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it’” [Isa.28:14-18]. Ancestral curses and covenants are not to be feared or trusted. They will prove to be a false and empty protection from the sure wrath of God coming upon all who follow other gods. Only those will escape who are resting upon the sure unmoving Foundation laid by God Himself, which is Christ Himself [I Pet.2:4-6].

“Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you have laboured at since childhood. Perhaps you will succeed, perhaps you will cause terror. All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. Here are no coals to warm anyone; here is no fire to sit by. That is all they can do for you – these you have laboured with and trafficked with since childhood. Each of them goes on in his error; there is not one that can save you” [Isa.47:12-15]. All sorcerers, oracles, and herbalists cannot save even themselves from the wrath of the living God. Their power is weak, evil, and false. They and all who follow their directives, prophesies, and rituals will be destroyed along with them.

CURSES

Many times a traditional worshiper will fear curses coming upon him if he abandons the old ways for the Narrow Way of Christ Jesus the Lord. He may know very well that he is a sinner and in need of salvation, but fear may keep him from truly repenting and confessing Christ. The following passages from the Scriptures address curses and true believers.

“Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight” [Prov.26:2]. There is no cause for a curse to come upon a true child of God. No matter what the curse, the power of God is greater to protect His child from that evil.

“They hired Balaam...to pronounce a curse on you. However, the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you” [Deut.23:4, 5]. Here was a professional sorcerer hired to curse the people of God. God is in control of all, not the devil. The Lord turns even the curses of evil men to good for his people, to those who serve him alone apart from compromise with idolatrous ways.

“He has blessed, and I cannot change it...The Lord their God is with them...There is no sorcery against Jacob, no divination against Israel. It will now be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘See what God has done!’” [Num.23:20-23]. Here is Balaam himself who was hired to curse Israel admitting that his curses are powerless against the true people of God. Though he wanted to curse them, he could not. There is no sorcery against the true people of God, for the Lord God is with us.

“Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; Speak the word, but it will not stand, for God is with us” [Isa.8:10]. Here the schemes and incantations spoken against the true people of God fall to the ground harmless. Why? God is with us.

“Let them curse, but You bless; When they arise, let them be ashamed, but let Your servant rejoice” [Ps.109:28]. The curses of men and of the ancestors do not fall upon the true servants of God. Rather, they rejoice and are blessed.

“Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, when the Lord has not commanded it?” [Lam.3:37]. No curse or incantation has any effect upon a true believer because God has not commanded it. He is in control of all that comes upon His children.

ABANDONING THE GODS OF OUR FATHERS

Believers in the true and living God are always called upon to completely abandon their traditional idolatrous practices. There can be no mixture between the two. The following passages will show different situations in which this was done.

“And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, ‘Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.’ So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem” [Gen.35:2-4]. A true believer cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons at the same time [I Cor.10:14-22]. Idols must be abandoned before one can truly sacrifice to the Lord God.

“Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it and ground it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain” [Deut.9:21]. Moses broke, crushed, and burned the golden idol that the nation of Israel had made under Aaron’s direction. He so completely destroyed it that no traces of it could ever be found again.

“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord...If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good” [Josh.24:14,15, 20]. No compromise can exist between idols and the living God of heaven. We must choose whom we will serve. Both cannot be served.

“Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it The-Lord-Is-Peace...Now it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him...tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it...Then the men of the city said to Joash, ‘Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it.’ But Joash said to all who stood against him, ‘Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him?...If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!’” [Jud.6:24-31]. If these gods are truly gods, let them arise and do anything against the God of heaven or His servants. The testimony of the servants of the living God is that the small gods of the land are powerless before the God of heaven.

“When they left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire” [I Chron.14:12]. The everlasting portion of gods and those who serve them is fire. Often idols are burnt by those who have repented from the folly of idolatry.

“And the king commanded...to bring out of the temple of the Lord all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem...And he brought out the wooden image from the house

of the Lord...burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes...Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land...that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord. Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him” [2 Kings 23:4, 6, 24, 25]. Here was a man who had one of the highest commendations ever given to a man. He made no compromise with idolatry. The temple of God and idols have nothing in common.

“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” [Acts 19:18, 19]. There can be no mighty work of God when idolatry in all of its forms is not utterly rejected. When it is, the believers are protected by the Lord from spiritual assault and their testimony prevails in the land.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

I want to tell you a very interesting story about a sincere man named Michael. Now, Michael was a faithful Roman Catholic: he was baptized as an infant and later confirmed in the Faith. As he grew to be a young man, he became an altar boy as well. Weekly confession was made to the Priest and he never missed the Mass unless seriously sick.

For many years he continued in this way, putting all his trust in the Church and the teachings of her Priests. But, as God would have it, a great change came over him, simply through reading the Holy Word of God.

This was something he had not done throughout his days in the Church. He had merely believed whatever the Reverend Fathers had told him. But when he read for himself, O, what a difference there was! And this is what happened:

“Ah! I’ve never been so absolutely surprised by anything in all my life!” so Michael thought to himself when he had finished reading the Scriptures. “Of all that I have known of religion, in this Bible there is not found even one word describing what my Church and I have been practicing! I find no mention of the Pope, the Mass, or confession to the Priest. I read nothing about Purgatory, the adoration of the Virgin, or of praying to the Saints!”

Now, you can imagine what a great confusion this brought to his mind. Really, he didn’t know what to think but kept pondering these things as he read and re-read his Bible.

It was in this state of mind that he happened to meet the Reverend Father in the marketplace and, after exchanging greetings, this is how their conversation went:

M. “Father, I have been carefully reading the Word of God and have seen many wonderful things in it. But I am most surprised that I have not found even one word in it about the Pope, the adoration of Mary, Confession, Purgatory, the Mass, and many other things besides. Yet this is all that I’ve known about religion and I now have many questions which I hope you can help me understand.”

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT ONLY THEIR PRIESTHOOD
CAN UNDERSTAND AND TEACH THE SCRIPTURES

Now, the Priest was nearly scattered in his mind by this frank confession and replied in this way:

Rev. “I’m surprised at you, Michael, you know very well that the sacred mysteries of the Holy Mother Church are committed to her Priests and not to simple common people like you. You cannot possibly understand these things in any other way and certainly not by yourself.”

M. “But, excuse me, Sir, I have read in the Scriptures that the Apostle Peter, though a simple fisherman [Mt.4:18], and an unlearned and ignorant man [Acts 4:13], nevertheless had the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ revealed to his heart by God Himself, apart from any Priests [Mt.16:17].

“I also learned from Jesus Christ’s own words that if anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the

doctrine, whether it is from God [Jn.7:17] and that if you abide in My word...you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free [Jn.8:31, 32].

“So I believe that I can read and understand the Word of God apart from learned Priests, for our Lord Jesus has said, **You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes** [Mt.11:25]. The Apostle John also says a similar thing, **But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and as it has taught you, you will abide in Him**” [1 Jn.2:27].

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT THE APOCRYPHA [14 FALSE BOOKS WRITTEN BEFORE CHRIST], TRADITION, DECREES OF POPES AND COUNCILS, AS WELL AS THE BIBLE ARE ALL INSPIRED BY GOD

This answer, you can imagine, was like the sting of a scorpion to the Reverend Father who hotly replied, “My son, hear your Father. Truth is to be found in the traditions of the Holy Roman Catholic Church and in the decrees of Peter and the Popes as taught by the Holy Order of the Priesthood. Don’t deceive yourself that the Bible alone contains all the truth or that you are capable of understanding it!”

M. “With all due respect, your Reverence, in the Word of God it is recorded that our Lord Jesus Christ said, **He that rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him: the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day** [Jn.12:48].

“The Prophets also command us to listen to **the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them** [Isa.8:20]. And the Wise Man warns us, **Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar** [Prov.30:6].

“Sir, I don’t want to be a liar by believing and speaking things that God has never said in His Word, and I fear to be without the light of His Word on the Day of Judgment. So, I’m

seeing that I must believe the Bible alone.

“And, as for the decrees of Peter and the Popes establishing truth, I see in the Word of God that this is not so. For when God told Peter to kill and eat, he decreed, **Not so, Lord** [Acts 10:14]. But neither God nor the Church was bound by his decree for the Lord said, **What God has cleansed, you must not call common** [Acts 10:15].

“So, clearly Peter was bound by the Word of God, and not God and the Church bound by his decree.”

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT ONLY THROUGH CONFESSING
ONE’S SINS TO A PRIEST CAN A PERSON BE FORGIVEN

I must tell you that when the Priest heard this, he was furious, confused, and fearful all at the same time. For truly, he did not know what to say. Controlling himself, however, he managed to command with a show of authority, “I will expect to see you at Confession this week for your arrogant defiance of the Holy Mother Church and her representatives!”

And, with that, he turned to the market woman to begin arguing with her over the price of her tomatoes, refusing to discuss with Michael any further.

Michael pondered these things the remainder of the week as he continued to study the Word of God. The same thought kept coming to his mind over and over again, “The Reverend Father did not answer me even once from the Scriptures in all that he said.”

*This did nothing, however, but encourage him to continuing seeking truth from the Word of God. There he was comforted as he read, **You have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus** [2 Tim.3:15]. Such light to his soul caused him to reflect, “The Word of God is very clear, even to a simple farmer like me.” And this made him very glad indeed.*

Now he did, in fact, go to Confession that week, but the Priest was not prepared for what he came to confess. I will tell you how that went.

Rev. “My son, what have you come to confess?”

M. “Father, I have come to say, that **with the mouth**

confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him shall not be put to shame” [Rom.10:10, 11]. And I confess that I am not ashamed that I believe in Him.”

Rev. “What kind of Confession is that!”

M. “It is the confession according to the Word of God which says, **That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved** [Rom.10:9]. I have come to confess that I have been saved through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Never in all of his years as a Priest had he heard such a strange Confession! And, truthfully, it shook him to his foundations! But he would never let anyone know that, of course. So, he retorted with authority, “Without Confession of your sins to the Priest and performing the necessary Penance, I will not grant forgiveness for your transgressions.”

M. “Father, the Word of God plainly says, **Who can forgive sins but God alone?** [Mk.2:7]. And I have come here today **that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins** [Mk.2:10]. Since I have received forgiveness from God Himself and the Lord Jesus Christ, I see nothing that a Priest can add to that.”

O, I tell you, the Priest was cut to the heart by this bold confession and had no answer except to blurt out, “Of course you must confess to the Priest! To refuse is to be cut off from the means of grace deposited in the Holy Roman Church! Will you confess or not?”

M. “I humbly submit myself to what I have discovered in the Word of God as King David also did. **I acknowledged by sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord;” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin** [Ps.32:5].

“I have therefore obeyed the clear meaning of the Word of God, confessed my sin to God alone, and He has wonderfully forgiven me.”

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT ONLY BY PERFORMING
PENANCE [showing remorse
by saying prayers or making sacrifices demanded by the Priest] CAN
SINS BE FORGIVEN

This was too much for the Priest who felt himself more and more helpless before the light of the Word of God. All he could do was burst out angrily, "You are a wayward and stubborn son who will perish in your sins unless you submit to my authority and that of the Church! I shall command you a most severe Penance to pay for your wicked rebellion! And if you refuse, there is no hope of your ever being forgiven!"

Now, you must know that all of the Priest's raging did nothing to move Michael from the peace and assurance he had found in believing the Word of God. He thus answered him, "I have found in the Word of God what I never was told in the Church. There the Lord reveals that salvation is by His grace through faith alone, apart from Penance, religious works, or Church ceremonies.

*"The truth of the Scriptures has been so wonderful and powerful to cleanse my soul. I rejoice in verses like these, **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that having being justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life [Tit.3:5-7].***

*For by grace are you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest anyone should boast [Eph.2:8, 9]. It is to simply abide in the Lord Jesus Christ that will bring eternal life to our souls. Our Savior said, **Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine; neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing**" [Jn.15:4, 5].*

O, how the Priest was exceedingly annoyed at this setting aside of his authority. Actually, he trembled under this Divine assault of his man-made traditions for which there was to be found no basis in the Bible. All

he could do was raise his voice with this challenge, “Are you so deceived as to suggest that the Sacrament of Penance is unnecessary for salvation?”

M. “Well, Father, no matter how many or how great a man’s good works are, they can never add one thing to the salvation which comes by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the best that we may do is worthless rubbish in the sight of God according to the Scriptures which say, **But we all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags** [Isa.64:6].

“How could filthy rags add anything to our acceptance before God? They rather will result in our being cast out of God’s presence. This is what our righteous works of Penance are; filthy rags.

“If keeping the laws of the Church could produce righteousness, then Christ needed never to die. **I do not set aside the grace of God: for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain** [Gal.2:21]. But this is exactly what Penance does, it frustrates the grace of God and makes salvation dependent upon our works.

“This could never be, for eternal life is a gift from God, not something that a man can earn by his own works. Every gift is fully paid for by the giver and offered freely. To add any payment to it makes it no longer a gift, but even insults the giver.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord [Rom.6:23]. God has fully paid the price for our sins through the Lord Jesus Christ and offers eternal life as a free gift to all who will receive it. Penance adds nothing to that except to offend God.”

With these last passages from the Holy Bible, the Priest had heard enough and flew into a rage, shouting at poor Michael, “You rebel! You heretic! How dare you defy me and the Holy Mother Church! Get out! Get out! And don’t come back until you are willing to repent of your errors, submit to the authority of the Church, and serve your Penance for this your hateful rejection of the means of grace!”

And so, Michael was refused attendance at the sacrifice of the Mass unless he would deny his confession of faith and submit to the Reverend Father’s demands. But I must tell you, though the Priest’s words and deeds brought sorrow to his heart, it did not destroy his faith or his joy.

*Thus for many weeks he found comfort through prayer and in the Word of God which he loved. **Great peace have those who love Your law: and nothing causes them to stumble** [Ps.119:165]. And these are some of the things he learned at that time.*

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT THERE IS NO SALVATION
APART FROM KEEPING THEIR MAN-MADE TRADITIONS

“Why, it is the Apostle Peter himself who rejected man-made traditions as worthless to save men!” *thus did Michael realize as he reflected on Acts 15:9-11. And this is what Peter said, [God] made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you test God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.*

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT PRAYER CONSISTS OF PRAYING
THE ROSARY [using a string of beads];
FOR MULTIPLE REPETITIONS OF THE LORD’S PRAYER AND OF
RECITING “HAIL MARY”

“Prayer is not at all like the meaningless repetition that I used to do, praying through the Rosary! The teaching of the Lord Jesus is so clear. I am simply to pray directly to the Father in the name of Jesus!” **And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they shall be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them...In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name** [Mt.6:7, 9].

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son 14:13].

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT THE LIVING CAN PRAY FOR THE
DEAD
AND THEREBY RELEASE THEM FROM PURGATORY, AN IMAGINARY
PLACE OF SUFFERING

“Amazing! The only man in the entire Word of God who ever prayed to a Saint was a man who was in Hell! And then his prayer was rejected by heaven! It neither delivered him from Hell nor did it help the living! O, what delusion I have been taught by the Church!” *And this is what he had read that made him exclaim so.*

And being in torments in Hades...he cried and said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me...” But Abraham said...“between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot; nor can those from there pass to us” [Lk.16:23-26].

O, what a joy and blessing prayer became to him! He had learned to pray according to the Word of God. And he spoke directly to the Father in heaven with words similar to these.

Blessed be the Lord, because He has heard the voice of my supplications! The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song will I praise Him [Ps.28:6, 7]. I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live [Ps.116:1, 2].

Now you must not imagine that Michael was alone in his discoveries from the Holy Scriptures. No, indeed! He met many others who also had come to know the true way of Salvation; and what joyous and loving fellowship they had together!

Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another: and the Lord listened, and heard them, so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord, and who meditate on His name. “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son who serves him” [Mal.3:16, 17].

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers [Acts

2:42].

A great step was taken by him as he understood more and more the true teaching of the Word of God. And this is what led him to do so.

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT BEING BAPTIZED AS AN INFANT
INTRODUCES THE PERSON INTO THE SAVING GRACE OF
JUSTIFICATION

“I never realized this before, but baptism is only for those who have truly repented and believed the message of salvation in Christ Jesus. In fact, I’ve never found one verse in the whole of the Bible that speaks about baptizing infants!

“An infant cannot possibly repent and believe! Of what meaning then was my baptism by the Church when I was a baby? It had no meaning at all! It was nothing more than an empty religious ceremony! Well, if there was nothing to prevent this man I have read of in the Bible from being baptized, then neither is there anything preventing me.”

And the eunuch said, “See, here is water; what hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”...And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him [Acts 8:36-38].

And that is just what he did. One of the other simple Christians that he had come to know and love baptized him at the stream amid great rejoicing among those present.

Nor was this the only testimony that he had. No, not at all. The Word of God so now filled his heart that he could not keep it to himself. He spoke of the love of Christ wherever he went and told many of the true way of salvation.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes [Rom. 1:16].

Now, I must tell you how the news of these wonderful changes in Michael affected the Reverend Father. O, he trembled in alarm, quaked with fear, and raged in anger! Especially the reports of his baptism and preaching these “heresies” to others disturbed him greatly.

So, he determined that he must put a stop to this at once. And in

a great agitation of spirit, he proceeded to Michael's house to silence him once and for all. And this is what happened.

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT ALL SOULS MUST ENTER
PURGATORY AFTER DEATH
TO SUFFER PUNISHMENT FOR THEIR OWN SINS BEFORE POSSIBLY
ENTERING HEAVEN

Rev. “Michael, very disturbing reports have come to me about your stubborn rebellion in continuing to wickedly refuse to submit to the Holy Roman Catholic Church! I am therefore come to you today to command you to return to the Mother Church and cease from all of your heretical ideas and practices! Even if you agree to submit, you will suffer horribly in Purgatory before you can be cleansed of your sins!”

M. “Father, thank you for your concern. But I will never suffer in Purgatory, for no such place exists. Even if it did, I can only conclude that the Priests are very wicked because they claim they have power to release souls from that place, but will only do so if they are paid money to do it. Why do you not rather use your power to save these souls out of love for Christ rather than for your love of money?”

“Furthermore, I need nothing else to purge my soul from sin, for the Scriptures tell me that **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin** [I Jn.1:7]. There is therefore nothing greater or needful to add to what Christ has already done for my soul because Jesus Himself said, **Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes on Him that sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death unto life** [Jn.5:24].

“I have put my whole trust in Christ and His wonderful forgiveness, believing in His complete cleansing, so I fear no Purgatory as you say.”

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT MARY IS A CO-REDEEMER WITH
CHRIST WHO IS TO BE WORSHIPED
AND WHO INTERCEDES FOR MEN, FORGIVING THEIR SINS

O, how this enraged the proud and ignorant Priest! He nearly lost control of himself as he shouted at the peaceful Michael.

Rev. “I warn you, Michael, you are yet in the bondage of iniquity and in the grip of Satan! Christ is full of wrath against you which is about to burst on your head for all of your devilish rejection of and blasphemies against His true Church!

“Your only hope is to prostrate before the Blessed Virgin Mary and plead for her to pardon your sin. She alone can intercede with her Son for you at this hour. And we know that He cannot and never has refused any favor she has asked, since she is the Mother of God and the Mediator of all grace.”

M. “Sir, if the Word of God agreed with what you say, I would certainly obey at once, but it does not. Mary cannot intercede for anyone since she herself by her own mouth confessed that she is a sinner needing a Savior. **And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior”** [Lk.1:46, 47]. In all of the Holy Scriptures, not even one person ever prayed to her at any time.

“No, she is not a mediator. **For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus** [I Tim.2:5]. And it is Jesus Christ who has compassion upon poor lost sinners, not Mary. **But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them** [Mt.9:36]. That no one needs Mary’s intercession is more than evident, for Jesus will never refuse any who come directly to Him. **All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out** [Jn.6:37].

“You want me to pray, ‘Hail, Mary, full of grace.’ But it is not her, but the Lord Jesus Christ who alone is full of grace and able to give that grace to men. **The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth...and of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace...Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ** [Jn.1:14-17].

“You claim that Jesus never refused anything His mother

asked of Him. But it is not true. At the wedding in Cana, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, does your concern have to do with Me?” His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it” [Jn.2:3-5]. Clearly, He told her she has no authority over or place of privilege with Him. She submitted to His word, not Jesus to her word.

“Again, when His mother came and wanted to speak with Him, Christ shut His ears to her voice and closed His heart to her request. He publicly has shown to all that His mother’s requests do not move Him to mercy. **Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak with You. But He answered, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, is My brother and sister and mother”** [Mt.12:47-50].

“Finally, Sir, it is not the name of Mary that is the refuge of sinners, but the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit said to them...“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”** [Acts 4:8, 12].

If you had been there and witnessed all of this, a strange but wonderful sight would have met your eyes. On the one hand, there was Michael; calm, peaceful, and respectful in his every reply. On the other hand, there was the Reverend Father; abusive, uncontrolled, and furious.

*It would have made you remember what the Word of God says about such a scene. **And not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God*** [Phil.1:28].

ROMAN CATHOLICS BELIEVE THAT THE LORD’S SUPPER [THE MASS] BECOMES A MIRACULOUS RE-SACRIFICING OF CHRIST WHEREBY THE BREAD BECOMES HIS LITERAL FLESH AND THE CUP HIS LITERAL BLOOD. TO THEM, THIS IS HOW ONE RECEIVES CHRIST, ETERNAL LIFE, AND IS THE ONLY MEANS OF SALVATION

Now, the Reverend Father had reserved his final threat for the

last, thinking that it would certainly gain his purpose of having Michael repent and return to the bosom of the Church. And this is what he said:

Rev. “You miserable and wretched blasphemer! How dare you disgrace our Lady, the Blessed Virgin! You have shown yourself to be more stubborn than a pig and worthy of no better treatment!

“By all the authority vested in me as a Priest of Rome, I assure you that I will cut you off from all means of grace! You shall be excommunicated from the Holy Roman Catholic Church and all her sacraments of grace!

“You shall be refused the sacrifice of the Mass! You will no longer be a partaker of Christ since you have judged yourself unworthy of receiving His body and blood in the Host! And as you well know, the Scriptures say, Unless you eat Christ’s flesh and drink His blood, you can never be saved!

“And, as if you didn’t already know this, it is only in the sacred mystery of the Mass that Christ is offered up as a sacrifice for your sins! You will therefore be forever banished to hell for this your mortal sin since you have rejected all sound wisdom and the only means of saving grace to your soul!”

Now, the Reverend Father concluded his assault with a note of bitter triumph, thinking no one could refuse or refute his final demands. But the power of the Holy Spirit, the truth of the Word of God, and the grace of Christ cannot be so easily overcome. And this is how Michael quietly replied:

M. “All of these things you have said do not disturb my soul or convince my mind, since they are nothing but man-made traditions which can never save. For long, the traditions of the Church have been a wearisome burden to me. But when I came to Christ by faith alone, I received that rest of heart which He promises to all who come unto Him.

“You cannot therefore cut me off from Christ, for He Himself has welcomed me and, according to the Word of God, I’ve found this to be so, **Strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith** [Eph.3:16, 17].

“As for your pretended repeated sacrifices of Christ at your altar during Mass, the Word of God refutes your false claim. **For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being**

sanctified [Heb.10:14]. When Jesus said, **This is My body** [Lk.22:19], when referring to the bread, He certainly did not mean that literally anymore than when he said, **I am the Door** [Jn.10:9], or **I am the true Vine** [Jn.15:1].

“The Lord’s Supper is a simple symbolic means to remember our Lord Jesus Christ; the glory of His person and the blessedness of His one sacrifice for sin [I Cor.11:23-26]. But you Priests have made it into a superstitious ritual in order to strike fear into the hearts of communicants. And, at the same time, they **crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame** [Heb.6:6]. He is put to shame because you Priests deny Christ’s one complete sacrifice for sins once and for all according to what He said on the cross, **It is finished** [Jn.19:30].

“Yet you Priests continue to insist that Christ is offered at every Mass as a repeated sacrifice for sin. But the Word of God condemns this folly, saying, **Not that He should offer Himself often...He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once...He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself...so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many** [Heb.9:25-28].

“Even if what you say is true, then it only exposes the wickedness of you Priests, for Jesus said, **Most assuredly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you** [Jn.6:53]. Now this shows your evil, for you Priests give the bread to the people but never the cup! And Jesus said without drinking His blood, no one has eternal life.

“This shows your wickedness because, if what you say is true, you purposefully withhold eternal life from men. And, if what you say is false, then you are among those **untaught and unstable [who] twist to their own destruction also the other Scriptures**” [2 Pet.3:16].

At this point, the Reverend Father had exhausted all of his arguments, for he knew little more than the tradition of the Church. There was nothing left for him to do but turn to Michael with glaring hatred for rejecting his authority, mingled with a sadistic satisfaction in the prospect of dealing finally with this threat, both to him and the members of the Church. And he exploded with these words:

Rev. “You damnable heretic and blasphemous rebel! You

son of Judas, the traitor, who are possessed with the antichrist spirit! You might well wish that you had never been born!

“For this very Sunday I will consign your soul to the pit of hell which is the portion of all heretics! You shall be forever cut off from all means of grace and the forgiveness that is in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone!

“Besides all this, I will warn everyone of your evil and devilish doctrines to insure that no one else is misled by your madness! Be gone! You son of perdition!”

Now Michael was unmoved by the Priest’s outrage and calmly replied:

M. “The Word of God is my comfort and refuge. Your threats do nothing to affect the salvation in my soul for Jesus has said, **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand** [Jn.10:27, 28].

“Sir, I have heard His voice. I am His follower. He has not cast me out, but has given me eternal life. And nothing that you, the Church, or all the councils of Popes combined can do, will ever snatch me from His mighty and loving hand.”

And so it was that the Priest stormed off in a raging heat of fury, and Michael quietly returned to his Bible and prayed for those who wrongfully persecuted him.

But before we leave him, Michael has one more thing to say:

“My dear reader, this is my testimony. Like the blind man, Jesus has touched my spiritual eyes and I now can see Him and all things clearly. And, like that blind man, I also have experienced the same treatment at the hands of religious rulers. **They reviled him...You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us? And they cast him out** [Jn.9:28, 34].

“But, like him, Jesus found me and I now worship Him. **Jesus found him...and he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him** [Jn.9:35-38]. And I have never once regretted making this decision.

“What of you, dear reader? The Word of God is plain and the invitation of Christ is to you as well, **Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest** [Mt.11:28].

“This is Christ’s invitation and promise to you. Won’t you come now?”

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

The Jehovah’s Witnesses [JW] deny many basic teachings of the Scriptures:

No Deity of Jesus – He is a “god” created by Jehovah.

No heaven except for 144,000 who are born again. The JW will enter a paradise on earth.

No hell for anyone. At death unbelievers simply turn into dust.

No trinity – There is one God, Jehovah. Jesus was created, maybe Michael of OT; the Holy Spirit is God’s energy.

No resurrection of Christ’s body. He was raised in spirit only.

No Deity of the Holy Spirit. He is not a person, but God’s “active force.”

No Bible is accepted other than their own “correct” version, The New World Translation [NWT].

Typically when speaking to a JW, it is best to go straight to the heart of the matter: WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Col.2:9 **For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily** [KJV, NKJV]. The NWT reads, “because it is in him that all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily.” *Question:* Is any aspect of the divine quality lacking in Jesus? The “divine quality” is anything that is true of Jehovah as is stated in Isa.46:9 in the NWT, “Remember the first things of a long time ago, that I am the Divine One and there is no other God, nor anyone like me” [see also Josh.22:22 in the NWT]. Therefore, all that is true of the very being and nature of Jehovah is Christ’s full possession.

Rev.5:11-14 Jehovah and the Lamb [Jesus Christ] receive equal **blessing, honor, and glory** from every created being in heaven and on earth along with **worship**. *Questions:* If Jehovah alone is to be worshiped [Mt.4:10], and God will not give His glory to another [Isa.42:8], how can Jesus receive equal worship, glory, and honor if He is not equal with Jehovah? In In.5:23 Jesus says that all must honor Him **just as they honor the Father** [NWT]. Do you honor and worship Jesus equally with Jehovah? If you do not honor Jesus in the same way you honor the Father, then you do not honor Jehovah at all.

Isa.9:6 **For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** *Questions:* Jesus is called the Mighty God. Isa.10:20,21 says that Jehovah is the Mighty God. "...they will support themselves upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in trueness. A mere remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God" [NWT]. Are they not one and the same since there is only one Mighty God? Jesus is called the "Eternal Father" [NWT]. Who is the Eternal Father, Jesus or Jehovah? Are they not one and the same? [Jn.14:8,9].

Who is the SAVIOR, Jehovah [Isa.43:11; 45:21, Tit.1:3] or Jesus [Lk.1:47, Tit.2:13]?

Whose NAME do we call upon to be Saved, Jehovah's [Rom.10:13] or Jesus' [Rom.10:9]? Acts 4:12

Who is the FIRST and LAST, Jehovah [Isa.44:6; Rev.1:8] or Jesus [Rev.1:17; 22:13]?

At whose Name will EVERY KNEE BOW, Jehovah's [Isa.45:23,24] or Jesus' [Phil.2:9,10]?

In.1:1 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** The NWT has the last phrase as "...and the Word was a god." *Questions:* How could Jehovah make another god since He Himself says that He has never done so? [Isa.43:10]. If Jesus is "a god," is He a true god or a false god? If He

is true, how can there be more than one true God? If false, how could Jehovah make a false god? If neither, why was he made at all?

The Bible refers to Jesus as the **Firstborn of all creation** [Col.1:15] and the **Beginning of the creation of God** [Rev.3:14]. Neither of these descriptions means that Jesus was created. **FIRSTBORN** is a designation of honor, supremacy, and exaltation as having rights to the inheritance and authority to speak on behalf of the Father [Ps.89:27]. This Firstborn is to be worshiped by all the angels of God [Heb.1:6]. **BEGINNING** of the creation indicates that He is the Source of all; the One who created all in the beginning, but not a creation Himself.

THE DISCIPLESHIP EXPERIENCE

The Discipleship Experience is an intensive study of the Key Passages of the OT, Key Passages of the NT, and basic Doctrine. It is comprised of 150 lessons presented in a question format. The disciple must carefully examine the various passages in his Bible to arrive at the understanding of the Scriptures under consideration.

This is a self-study approach and can be done at one's own pace. For example, if one lesson is completed weekly, it will take nearly three years to finish all; three lessons weekly will take one year. Questions arising from the study can be addressed when the disciple meets with the one discipling him. The lessons are contained in a separate book that will be provided by the one who is discipling.

ARE WE LIKE CHRIST?

This is a book that covers the history of Christianity from the time of Christ until the present with a particular emphasis upon following the Pattern of Christ both individually and collectively. Areas of particular interest to the African such as Missions in Africa, Animism, Slavery, and Islam are included. It also is provided as a separate volume.