

Study Guide for The Path of the Prophets

To be used along with the video of the same name on www.ChristianfromMuslim.com



Summary and Notes:

Today's lesson focuses on an excellent way to explain the gospel to Muslims: *The Path of the Prophets*. You will also hear a discussion on important differences between Islam and Christianity.

Reality – Winter Walk Devotional

To kick off today's lesson on following God's *path*, we see Dr. Cynthia and Huda walking a muddy path through an orchard. Huda and Dr. C love nature. Jesus used nature to teach spiritual lessons. Today Dr. C does the same thing. One good thing about winter, she tells us, is being able to see the structure of a tree that is usually hidden beneath its leaves. In the same way, with humans trying times show the strength of the faith that is holding them together.

What are the Differences Between Islam and Christianity? with Rev. Georges Houssney and Elias

In this segment Georges and Elias discuss the differences between Islam and Christianity. Raised in two different Muslim countries, they know and have lived with the differences. Of the many, Georges and Elias present their view of the most important ones:

- 1. How we get to heaven.** Islam, like every religion except Christianity, offers its followers a system of works. By works and religious practices (*deen*), Muslims hope to gain Allah's approval and increase their chance of being accepted into paradise. Christianity presents the Creator God himself as taking our punishment in his flesh, as Jesus, so that we can live in fellowship with him now – and forever!
- 2. Rules vs. Relationship.** Islam offers a system of rules which must be obeyed to gain favor with Allah. In contrast, Christianity offers a personal relationship with God as our Father and Savior. We walk in fellowship with Jesus and do the things that he did, because we love him. (*1 John 1:7 & 2:6*)
- 3. External vs. Internal.** Islam strives to improve a person and society through the external: rules and appearances. Although some are moral, many Islamic Laws are external or ceremonial. Christianity is about internal attitude and heart change.
- 4. Works vs. Grace.** In Christianity God saves us by his grace, not by our works, so our salvation is based on God's power, not ours! Christians are called upon to do good works, but these works are a result of our thankfulness for salvation, not to earn it. (*Galatians 5:13,14*)
- 5. Salvation is a free Gift.** In Jesus sacrificial death, God paid the price for our sins. All we have to do is humble ourselves to receive it. If we confess our sins, God forgives them (*1 John 1:9*). Houssney tells us to read the Bible to learn more about God.

The Path of the Prophets Gospel Video Tract for Muslims

This lesson includes a video presentation of the *Path of the Prophets*. We believe so strongly in this message that you will also find it posted on the home page of our website. Watch the video one or more times. (Other language versions of the video are in production.)

The method – with booklet, video, drama, bracelet, and bookmark – is being used around the world in several languages. Some languages can be downloaded free from our website. You might want to download the tract and read along with the video.

Introduction to the method. A Palestinian evangelist to Muslims, Brother E, took the jewel of the gospel, and placed it in a setting that Muslims recognize. The *Path of the Prophets* uses concepts they understand, like *the way* and *prophets*. In fact, every word in the booklet is either necessary to explain the gospel, or pushes a hidden button within Muslim thinking. Christians won't even notice these triggers, yet to Muslims they make a point stronger.

(Note: Old Testament characters which Christians usually call patriarchs, Islam calls prophets.)

Here is what ministry leader George Saieg says about *The Path of the Prophets* booklets,

“We’ve been reaching Muslims for the last 18 years in the US, and we’ve never seen any material that attracts Muslims to take the gospel from us like these booklets. They are so drawn to them...It is an amazing booklet. If you go through it, you know they have heard the gospel. It keeps them from jumping around.”



After hearing its message, Muslims in America from Pakistan and North Africa also responded positively. One told Dr. C, “*You are the first Christian I have talked to that made sense!*” another said, “*This makes sense and answers a lot of my questions,*” yet another said, “*It’s beautiful! It’s beautiful! I believe it is the way to God!*”

Even before she was a believer, a Saudi student would gather any friends and relatives visiting America to meet Dr. C. Then she would ask Dr. C to, “*Tell them the story!*” So, Muslims only here for a few days, were evangelized in part by another Muslim who was intrigued by this gospel story method. Praise God that this woman is now a sister in Christ!

The idea behind *The Path of the Prophets* is to take truths that Muslims already know, and build upon them. This puts the gospel into a Middle Eastern context that they can understand - without compromising its message or syncretizing it with Islam.

From Adam through the cross, the method presents blood sacrifice and substitution as the way to balance God’s justice and mercy. Some of the Qur’an came from the Bible, but its stories are incomplete. We take what Muslims know, and add to it in a way which is both intriguing and enlightening for the gospel.

For example, they know about Noah on the ark – but not that Noah took seven clean animals for sacrifice, and only two of the others. They know about Moses’ commandments to the Jews – but not that they included blood sacrifices for sin. And they have no idea that the prophesied last sacrifice would be Jesus – God himself in human form.

The most important point to be made in presenting the gospel to Muslims is that only Jesus’ sacrifice, paying for our sins as the Lamb of God, balances God’s Justice and Mercy. It is not good deeds and bad deeds that need to balance. It is justice and mercy.

We call this “going to court.” We suggest that however you explain the gospel to Muslims, try to end up “in court,” by explaining justice and mercy. Why? Because Muslims believe Allah can simply forgive, that his “mercy overcomes his anger.” We must show them that God’s anger at our sins, his justice, must be met. Only Jesus does that.

If you are reading the booklet (on-line or on paper) you will notice that most pages have a comment in bold at the bottom of the page. That is the important point, some would say “take home message” of the page. In the video it is the statement made just before moving on to the next prophet or point.

These points build on each other to prepare for the gospel, so that by the time we get to Jesus, his crucifixion makes sense. For example, when speaking with an Iranian Ph.D. at a university, just before Dr. C got to that point he exclaimed, “So Jesus is the Lamb of God!”

Other Muslims have also recognized this important point. After viewing a live performance of *The Path of the Prophets* drama in France, a group of Muslim men were convicted, saying, “We never knew it was prophesied that Jesus would be the final sacrifice!”

This is the concept of “progressive revelation” – that God revealed more of his plan with successive prophets. Progressive revelation is a markedly different view from that of Islam. Islam says that every prophet brought the same message, which was, “Return to the worship of the One True God.” We agree that prophets brought that message. But they revealed other things too, like prophecies of the sacrificial messiah.

We also believe that *The Path of the Prophets* is the perfect gospel method for countering the one religion in the world with stumbling blocks built right into its holy book – Islam. Muslims have what we call “The Big Four” stumbling blocks to: God as man (Son of God), God as three-in-one (Trinity), Jesus’ death on the cross, and accepting the Bible. In its manner of sharing the gospel, *The Path of the Prophets* gospel method counters these stumbling blocks.

In conclusion, we hope that all Christians who love Muslims will learn how to share *The Path of the Prophets* – verbally, by giving the booklet, or by forwarding the video link. If you are a Muslim or former Muslim, we pray that these truths make you more assured of your new faith. Regardless of your background, this is one lesson you might want to review several times until it all sinks in. The effort will be worth it!

(Note: this study guide does not go through everything in the booklet, or explain all the hidden buttons.)

Did the Jews know that the Messiah would be a Sacrifice?

This is a question former Muslim Huda asked after reading *The Path of the Prophets*. Dr. C compliments her for putting together the ideas of the blood sacrifices from before Jesus, with the prophecies that the messiah would be “the Lamb of God.”

Dr. C explains that although both ideas were recorded in the Old Testament, the connection was not clearly understood until after Jesus died and rose again. This is largely because although the Jews at the time of Jesus had the prophecies, they were looking for a political savior to deliver them from Roman rule.

Blood Sacrifices and the Meaning of *Eid al Adha*

In *The Path of the Prophets* we point out that not just Abraham, but all the Old Testament figures did blood sacrifice for sin. This is news to them – and we turn it into good news!

Eid al Adha is the most important Muslim holy day: it's the day that they remember, and partly reenact, the sacrifice of Abraham. Muslims do know that God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, but sent a sheep as a substitute.



You might have heard of the term “cultural analogy,” which is something in a culture that can be used as a bridge to the gospel. Don Richardson popularized this concept with his story of the “peace child” in the primitive and hostile culture of Irian Jaya.

Eid al Adah is the best cultural analogy we have to explain the gospel to Muslims. The invitation of the *Path of the Prophets* uses it, saying,

- *How did Abraham and his son receive the mercy of God? Through the lamb God provided.*
- *What would happen if they did not accept the lamb? The son would die.*
- *How do we receive the mercy of God? Through Jesus, the Lamb of God.*
- *What will happen if we do not accept God's provision? We too will die, eternally.*

(Note: Since the point we are trying to make is that of substitution for the sacrifice, we do not get sidetracked into discussing *which* son. Muslims think it was Ishmael, whereas the Bible says Isaac. There may be an appropriate time to discuss this difference and the reasons for it, but we do not find that to be productive during a gospel presentation.)

Who should watch these video lessons?

In this final segment, Dr. C discusses the kind of people this course of lessons is aimed at – Muslims, former Muslims, and Christians who want to share Christian truth with them.

Scripture References:

II Corinthians 5:17

Galatians 5:13,14

I John 1:7,9 & 2:6

From “The Path of the Prophets” booklet:

Romans 1 & 3:21-26

Genesis 3,6,22

Psalms 118:1

Exodus 20,24

Deuteronomy 29

Jeremiah 31:31

John 1:1,14 & 5:27

Isaiah 9:6,7 & 40:8 & 53:10-12

Romans 10:9,10

Hebrews 2:10 & 4:16 & 10:25
John 15
Matthew 28:18-20

Qur'anic Reference to Abraham's sacrifice: Surah 37:107

Study Questions:

1. Did you like *The Path of the Prophets* video tract? We try to help people make bridges to other people, and to the gospel. The video or booklet could help bridge, primarily to the gospel. Watching or reading it could open good discussions between you and someone else.

- Can you think of a Muslim that you could share the video tract link or written booklet with?
- Would you then ask them what they think about it?
- Do you have ideas for sharing it with others who love Muslims?

2. The opening page of *The Path of the Prophets* discusses the character of God.

- Why do you think that is?
- Did you notice how all the characteristics of God listed on page one, came up again in the redemption story presented in *The Path of the Prophets*?

3. We recommend that you think deeply and meditate on the atonement of Jesus, how he could die in our place. You can better explain it to Muslims when you understand it deeply yourself.

- Dr. C thinks that Hebrews 2:10 is a powerful atonement verse which is often overlooked. How do you see this verse as explaining atonement?
- Is there another verse that makes better sense of the atonement for you?
- When she shares the gospel through *The Path of the Prophets*, to illustrate this verse, Dr. C uses an example from her own life, of a time that she had to take responsibility for a wrong that she did not commit. What example could you use from your own life?

4. Muslims believe Satan was thrown out of heaven for not bowing down to Adam. We, don't agree, of course, but it shows how important Muslims think Adam was.

- *If God judged and punished Adam, he will judge and punish us*. How might that make Muslims feel, since they see Adam as so important?
- Also, many Muslims believe that Adam and Eve did not sin; they innocently made a mistake. What would that say about God's justice?

5. Noah shows that we must go God's way, even if it seems odd and we might be ridiculed for it. The newest edition of *The Path of the Prophets* mentions that Noah took 7 of the clean animals onto the ark.

- Why do you think this captures Muslims' attention?
- What important point does this illustrate?

6. Muslims know about Moses, and many know about The Ten Commandments. Few know of the other laws of Moses.

- Why is it important that they know Moses had blood sacrifice for sin?
- Why is it important that Muslims know Moses brought many laws?

7. There is a saying in Islam that God's mercy overcomes his wrath (which could be read as justice).

- In "The Path of the Prophets," which two important attributes are balanced through Christ's sacrifice?

- We point out that this different view of God’s character potentially the greatest difference between Muslim and Christian. Why do you think this is?

8. Regarding the sacrifice of Abraham:

- What does it illustrate about God’s character?
- How does it come into the gospel invitation?
- For extra credit – do you remember what this day is called in Islam (Arabic for “feast of the sacrifice”)?

9. A significant difference between Shiite and Sunni sects of Islam, is that Shiites believe the blood of their martyred saints can intercede for them. Sunnis disagree, and call them heretics for it. They see honoring Muslim saints as giving Allah “partners,” something *haram* – forbidden. This practice creates one of the main reasons that these sects fight each other.

On the good side, by accepting an intercessor, Shiites are often more open to the gospel. This difference was noticed by pioneer missionary Samuel Zwemer over a hundred years ago, and is still encountered today. However, Shiites are the minority of Muslims – only about 15% worldwide. But if your friends are from Iran, Lebanon, or Eastern Saudi Arabia, there is a good chance they are Shiite.

- Since Shiites already believe in blood atonement, how would this difference affect the way you present the gospel to them?
- Dr. C explains that with Sunnis the challenge is to get them to accept an intercessor – Jesus as God; with Shiites the challenge is getting them to accept that only Jesus can intercede, because only he is God. Does this make sense to you?
- Dr. C teaches that a way to understand the difference is to consider how Catholics use saints to intercede for them, and Protestants don’t. What do you think of that analogy?

10. Practice sharing *The Path of the Prophets* with someone else. You can read it or try telling it from memory. You can even shorten it. The main thing is to focus on the character of God and how Jesus balances his Justice and Mercy.

11. Dr. C compares a winter tree to people under trials.

- What does she say holds us up in trials?
- Give a specific example of something that helps you during trials.

by Christian from Muslim, 2019
Permission granted for personal and study group copying only