

FOR THE LOVE OF MUSLIMS

Lessons for Online Missionaries dealing with Muslims

Lesson 14: Did Jesus Die?

Did Jesus actually die? How could God let his beloved prophet be murdered? Many Muslim seekers bring this objection up, so it is important to know how to address it.

Before we talk about how to respond to this objection, it is crucial to understand *why* Muslims so strongly object to Jesus' death. Muslims are taught that this is what the Qur'an says. (In actuality, the Qur'an is ambiguous at best; it can even be argued from the Qur'an that Jesus did in fact die, but we won't get into that here. The important thing for us to know is that Muslims are taught that the Qur'an denies Jesus' death.) In addition, Muslims believe God is all-powerful and they cannot understand how God would allow one of his most important prophets (Jesus) to be tortured and murdered. That would make it seem that God was weak and helpless because he was unable to prevent Jesus' death. Muslims believe that God is certainly neither weak nor helpless, so he would definitely have prevented Jesus from dying.

Muslims don't understand the reasons *why* Jesus needed to die; they don't see the *purpose* in his death. Once an internet contact understands what the Bible says about the *purpose* in Jesus' death, it will probably be easier for him or her to believe that Jesus did, in fact, die. You can check out <http://bible.org/article/why-god-became-man> for a thorough reasoning of why Jesus had to die.

You might quote from Old Testament prophecies that predict Jesus' death (e.g. Isaiah 53) and show how Jesus' death fulfilled these prophecies. The Old Testament sacrificial system was dependent on the death of an animal, often a lamb, for the forgiveness of sins. Thus, it was very powerful when John the Baptist called Jesus "the lamb of God" (John 1:29). It pointed to the fact that Jesus would die for the sake of others as a sacrificial "lamb." Jesus' death was necessary for us to be able to experience God's forgiveness once and for all. God forgives us, but it is through Jesus that we receive forgiveness. Jesus is the means by which God forgives us because he completely fulfilled all of the requirements of God's sacrificial laws when he lived and died. We know that God is always willing to forgive, but there has to be action on our part in accepting and following Jesus.

As with other objections, one of the best ways to address the objection to Jesus' death is to encourage the seeker to read an entire gospel account of Jesus' life (the book of Luke is a great one to start with). You could encourage them, "Why don't you read about the whole life of Jesus? Then you will know what the Bible says about how and why Jesus died and you can form your own opinion." As the Muslim seeker comes face to face with the dramatic story of Jesus' birth, his teachings, his miracles, his death, his resurrection and his ascension, the Holy Spirit can work in his or her heart to bring home the truth of the story.

In addition, if the situation seems right, you may want to point to some historical and scriptural evidence for the validity of Jesus' death. This article goes over a number of different people who give testimony as witnesses that Jesus did, in fact, die:

http://www.arabicbible.com/islam/crucifixion_of_jesus_christ.htm.

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