

## Questions to Ask Your Muslims Friends

When a Christian reads the Qur'an, they will notice how different it is to the Bible. The god it speaks about, the prophet it proclaims, and the way of life it encourages, stands at odds with the core tenants of the Christian faith. It is in these differences that we can ask many questions of Islam. Muslims challenge Christians on three key topics – God, Jesus His Son, and the Bible. We too can ask Muslims about Allah, Muhammad and the Qur'an. Asking questions is the way of Jesus. More than 200 of his questions are documented in the New Testament. He asks us questions to encourage us to reconsider our preconceived notions and false ideas. This talk will look at topics of conversation, obstacles to discussions with Muslims, our theological differences, and a biblical response to Islam.

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### I. Starting Point

- a. Start with *Who* we know to engage other ideas

“The fear of the LORD [Jehovah] is the beginning of wisdom”

- i. Know the written word – Bible (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:15-17)
- ii. Know the Living Word - Jesus (Genesis 1:8 ‘they heard the *voice* of the Lord God walking in the garden’; Samuel 3:10, 21; John 1:1-14)

### II. Important Distinctions: Islam versus Muslims

- a. **Engage the people of Islam.** Muslims are made in the image of God, and He died for them.
- b. **Engage the religion of Islam.** Islam is contrary to the message of the Bible, and it denies the Living Lord Jesus.

### **Key Point to Remember**

1. The Lord Jesus challenges religions like Islam, but He died for Muslims!

### **III. Biblically Responding to Muslims**

- a. Jesus tells us to, “love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matthew 22:36-40)
  - i. It does *not* say: “love your neighbour’s ideas”
  - ii. It does mean we can love *and* disagree
  - iii. It also means we should love *and* ask questions! Just like Jesus.

#### **Main points to consider, as we engage Islamic ideas**

1. The Bible addresses some aspect of Islam on almost every page, and has given us all we need to respond to it.
2. “God is not surprised by Islam.”
3. If we engage Islam as Jesus engaged false religion, we will be empowered to witness among Muslims. That means asking questions! Just like Jesus did.

### **IV. Three Qur’anic challenges against Christianity (Qur’an 4)**

- a. **God:** The Qur’an denies the Trinity (Q 4:171)
- b. **Saviour:** The Qur’an denies the divinity of Jesus (4:171)
- c. **Text:** The Qur’an’s message undermines the Gospel (Q 4:57; 4:157)

***“On every core point of the gospel, Islam teaches the opposite”*** (Christian in West Africa)

***“Muhammad came to undo and undermine the work of Christ”*** (Hafiz and former Muslim)

#### **Main points to consider**

1. Our **differences** point out where **Gospel-centered conversations** can be had.
2. Our **differences** give us a **platform to ask** important questions about Islam.
3. Our **differences** provide a door to **explain the hope** within us as our Muslim friends engage with our faith (1 Peter 4:12-19; 2 Peter 3:14-15).

## V. The Key Person of our different Faiths

- a. **Jesus the Messiah, prophet, Saviour, King of kings** (Matthew 16:13-20; Deuteronomy 18:18-22 & Acts 3:22; Psalm 2; 24; Matthew 1:21-23; 1 John 4:14; Revelation 19:11-16). The one spoken about through the Old Testament (Luke 24:27)
- b. **Muhammad the prophet** of Islam (Qur'an 4:80, 47:33, Q 68:4 -moral character)

### Questions to Ask about Muhammad

1. Why does the Qur'an ask people to obey a mere man? Isn't this *shirk*?
2. Why obey Muhammad? When a person called *Isa* is a greater miracle worker in the Qur'an?
3. Why didn't Muhammad know God's name? (Deuteronomy 18)

## VI. Core Topics to Discuss with Muslim Friends

- a. **Divinity of Jesus.** "Why doesn't Allah *come* to save us?" (Exodus 3; 12:13, 51; 13:18-22; 14:14; John 3:16-17; Colossians 1-2)
- b. **The Holy Trinity.** "Who is Allah? If He is God, why is he described as a singular being (*Tawhid* [one]) and not as the Father, and the Son, and Holy Spirit?" (Genesis 1:1-3, 26-28; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:16-20).
- c. **The Bible & Qur'an.** "How do you know the Qur'an is unchanged, and why were there so many different Qur'ans in circulation in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and still today?"

### Three main Islamic Challenges to Christians

1. "How can God become a man?" (Genesis 3:8-15; Genesis 18; Numbers 12:8; Daniel 3:25)
2. "How can God be three? Allah is 'one' [Tawhid]?" (Qur'an 4:171)
3. "The Qur'an is unchanged/preserved! (Qur'an 85:22) The Bible is changed!"

## VII. Conflicting Ideas about God –Allah is no Trinity

- a. **God the Father** versus Allah who is no father
- b. **The ministry of the Holy Spirit** versus the spirit of Allah who does not commune, prompt or convict (Sufi Islam is slightly different)

- c. **The Son versus** Allah who cannot take on human flesh. Allah has no desire to live with us.

**Main point of Discussion**

- 1. Jesus is a stumbling block to Muslims, making him a main point of discussion.

**VIII. Unhelpful Modern Myths that hinder our discussions**

- a. **Myth One:** “People just need to believe in “God”
- b. **Myth Two:** “Islam and Christianity are similar”
- c. **Myth Three:** “Islam is an Abrahamic religion”
- d. **Myth Four:** “Use the terms ‘God’ & ‘Spirit’ to find ‘common ground’ with Muslims”
- e. **Myth Five:** “Stay away from Jesus, the Trinity & Old Testament in evangelism” (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 3; Jn 1:1-18; 3:16-17)

**Main points to consider**

- 1. If our religions are the same, then our message is confused. Islam has no Jesus, no cross, no salvation.
- 2. If our ‘gods’ are the same, then God is confused. Islamic theology opposes the Trinity, Biblical revelation, & salvation through God’s Son.

**IX. Islamic Differences: Understanding Muslims Friends**

Muslims may have different views of their own texts and different answers to questions.

- a. **Traditional Views**
  - i. majority of the Muslim world
- b. **Moderate/Modern Views**
  - i. might look quite secular and pluralistic
- c. **Mystical Views (Sufi)**
  - i. New age practices and popular in the West

**X. Understand Religions by their ‘founder’ and texts**

- a. A religion & its practice is ultimately understood through its founder/and texts
  - i. **For Islam** (according to tradition):
    - Muhammad
    - the Qur'an,
    - then for many Muslims: Tafsir (commentaries), Hadith (sayings/traditions), Sira (biography of Muhammad), Tarikh (chronologies/histories of Islam), Shari'ah (Islamic law)
  - ii. **For Christianity:**
    - The written word (the Bible)
    - The Living Word (the Lord Jesus)

**Remember this...**

1. The way a Muslim views their texts will impact how they respond to your questions, though on Jesus they are unified –in Islam, He is no God.
2. Keep Jesus at the centre of your conversations and enjoy gospel-centered interactions.

**XI. Theological Differences**

- b. **God** (name, character, actions)
  - ask questions on these Biblical realities
- c. **Human beings** (made in God's image, relationship, Jesus)
  - questions about who we are before god and *the man* Jesus
- d. **Sin & suffering** (test, precarious forgiveness versus forgiveness, healing)
- e. **Salvation** (eternal sin versus rescue to holiness & relationship with God)
- f. **Eternity** (eternal separation from God or life with the King of kings)

**XII. Staying True to God's Commission**

Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in **the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" (Matthew 28:18-20)

## QUESTIONS TO ASK MUSLIMS

### Appendix A

#### **Questions to Ask about Muhammad**

1. Why does the Qur'an ask people to obey a mere man? Isn't this *shirk*?
2. Why obey Muhammad? When a person called Isa is a greater miracle worker?
3. If Muhammad is from God, why does his message contradict the Bible?
4. Why didn't Muhammad know God's name? (Deuteronomy 18)
5. Why does the Qur'an never mention Jesus? (Who is Isa?)

#### **Questions to Ask about God**

1. Who is Allah?
2. Why doesn't Allah come to save us? (Genesis 3:15; Numbers 12:8; Matt. 1:21-23)
3. If He is God, why is he described like us –a singular being (Tawhid [one])– and not as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?" (Genesis 1:1-3; 26-27; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:16-20).

#### **God the father**

1. Is Allah a father to you?
2. Does Allah have a son?
3. Is Allah relational?
4. Does he invite you to join his family?

#### **God the holy spirit**

1. Does the Holy Spirit exist in Islam?
2. What sort of spirit is Allah?
3. Does Allah send a helper (like the Holy Spirit) to Muslims
4. What sorts of spirits do some Muslims testify to in their life experiences?
5. How can a Muslim know if a spirit is from God or from the Satan?

## **God the son**

1. Is Isa Jesus?
2. How does Isa compare with Jesus?
3. Why is Isa *not* called: King, God's Son, Son of Man, Priest, Saviour in the Qur'an?
4. Is Isa divine?
5. Can Isa save us?
6. Have you investigated who Jesus is?

## **Questions on our differences**

1. Does the Bible leave room for more 'Abrahamic religions' after Christ?
2. Has the term 'Abrahamic religions' been harmful to evangelism?
3. Has the term 'Abrahamic religions' led to pluralism?
4. If Islam does not come from our Heavenly Father, who is its father?
5. What does the Living God think of Islam and how does God define who belongs to Him?

## ***Resources from One Truth Project***

Contact information: [info@onetruthproject.org](mailto:info@onetruthproject.org)

Facebook/Instagram: [@onetruthproject](https://www.facebook.com/onetruthproject)

Podcast –The First Steps of God: [@Thefirststepsofgod](https://www.facebook.com/Thefirststepsofgod)

Bible Tours through the [British museum](https://www.britishmuseum.org/)

Courses on Islam, history, theology, and mission: <https://www.onetruthproject.org/onlinecourses>

TBN UK: Book by Book: Jesus through all the scriptures/[Deuteronomy](#) /[Colossians](#)

## ***Resources to aid evangelism among Muslims***

Peltola, Elizabeth. *A Short Guide to Islam: A Biblical Response to the Faith of Muslim Friends*

Dieppe, Tim. Peltola, Elizabeth. *Questions to Ask your Muslim friends: A Deeper Look at Islamic texts and Beliefs.*

Blackham, Paul. *Book by Book, Biblical Frameworks* (Genesis/Exodus).

Blackham, Paul. *30 days of Theology*, (Roots, God, Jesus, Creation, Church, Help).

## ***Suggested Readings:***

Ed. Andreas Fingernagel and Christian Gastgeber, (2016) *The Book of Bibles*. Taschen.

Blackham, Paul, Frameworks: 30 days of Theology and Bible Study (Roots, God, Jesus, Creation, Help, Church), volumes 1-6.

Fernández-Morera, D. (2016). The myth of the Andalusian paradise: Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic rule in medieval Spain. Wilmington, ISI Books.

Hirsi Ali, A. and E. Husain. (2009). The West and the future of Islam: a debate between Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Ed Husain, 20 November 2007. London, Centre for Social Cohesion.

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Moin, E. T. a. M. (Mar. - Apr.,1979). "Socialism and Islam." MERIP Reports, Mar. - Apr., 1979, No. 75/76, Iran in Revolution, pp. 29-30: 29-30.

Ed. Scot McKendrick and Kathleen Doyle. (2016) The Art of the Bible: illuminated Manuscripts from the Medieval World. Thames and Hudson. Taschen.

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"A Common Word between us and you", October 18, 2007,  
<https://www.acommonword.com/common-ground-between-islam-and-christianity/>

Discussion between Ed Husain and Beth (Grove) Peltola, Can Islam overcome sexism and violence? (1st September, 2018)  
<https://www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Saturday/Unbelievable/Episodes/Unbelievable-Can-Islam-overcome-sexism-and-violence-Ed-Husain-vs-Beth-Grove-Husain-vs-Beth-Grove>

Excerpts from the Church Fathers: <https://www.churchfathers.org>  
The Church Fathers: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/>

*The Bible is our textbook for responding to Islam (2 Timothy 3:13-17; 2 Peter 1:3-10)*