

**Lost for Words**  
**Week 3**  
**Science, other religions, suffering**

Last week. Practical tips. Avoid the dreaded download button, answer in a way that leads to Jesus, and ask questions.

We thought how we would use these principles to answer a question about God's existence.

Then we focused on the reliability of the Bible. By asking questions we saw that questions of bible reliability are wide ranging. Asking questions allows us to tailor our answer to the question being asked.

**The danger of information overload.** We'll put resources and reading list on the web.

E.g. Can we know what was written actually happened? Their intention to be historically accurate, the way the Gospels match with secular sources and the honesty of the accounts. These should motivate someone to at least have a read of a Gospel.

We now have Gospels available. Gospels or tracts?

This week...

- Science and Christianity
- Other religions
- The most personal question of all – suffering

**Science and Christianity**

Using the principles I've outlined talk on your groups about how you would answer someone who doubted the trustworthiness of the Bible because of the discoveries of modern science.



The Bible answers the *who* and the *why* questions rather than the *how* question.

**Other religions**

A few general thoughts

What people generally think about the world religions. The room illustration. This helps us to understand why people think we are so intolerant and arrogant.

**What we say is not always what is heard.**

Jesus is not offering his own opinions. Christianity is not based on speculation but on revelation.

**Remember our diagram.**

The person who says all religions are the same normally has no real understanding of the different religions. They tend to think religions are superficially different but fundamentally the same. Whereas the truth is that the world religions are superficially similar but fundamentally different.

How would you answer the general question about Christianity and other religions? Answer in a way that leads to Jesus. His identity and mission. Begs the question. Why God the Son come to earth?

Let's learn a bit more about *Islam* and *Mormonism*.

## Islam

Muhammad was born in Mecca (Saudi Arabia) in AD 570. He was raised by his Uncle Talib, who was a caravan trader. He taught Muhammad to be a camel driver.

At the age of 25 he started working for Khadijah, a wealthy older widow. Later married her. Since he no longer had to work he occupied himself with meditation.

At age 40 in 610AD he claimed revelations from angel Gabriel. Frightening revelations accompanied by violent seizures. He wasn't sure if these were divine or demonic. His wife encouraged him to submit to them. The revelations continued until his death in 632AD.

Afterwards his followers wrote down the revelations which became the Qur'an. Qur'an means recitation. It is believed that Muhammad could not read or write.

His uncle and his wife died in 620AD and so Muhammad lost his protection – his life was in danger. He escaped an assassination plot. Fled on 16<sup>th</sup> July 622 to the city later renamed Medina – this means the city of the Prophet.

Medina became a theocracy under Muhammad and the city prospered under the plundering of caravans of pilgrims to Mecca. He conquered Mecca in 630. He died in Jun, 632.

The principle of Abrogation.

Ask these three questions of every religion...

- Who is god?
- Who is Jesus?
- What is salvation?

Who is god?

Lots said about him but for our purposes it is enough to know the following.

These are all quotes from the Qur'an. It's vital to quote the source book.

**Sura 4:171:** "O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. 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: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not 'Trinity'...for Allah is One God."

**Sura 112:1-4** we read, "Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; **He begetteth not, nor is He begotten**; And there is none like unto Him."

We need to understand that in Islam the one unforgivable sin is what is called the 'sin of association' – or **shirk**. Allah forgives all other sins except the sin of associating other divinities with him.

**Sura 4:48** declares, "Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but he forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed."

Allah is not a Trinity. The true and living God is a Trinity.

We need to establish this major difference early on. Otherwise we won't find a common ground that we both share but will instead stand on Muslim territory until we get into trouble – and then we will need to back track.

### Who is Jesus?

Qur'an tells us that ...

- Jesus was a real historical person.

- His birth was announced by an angel.
- He was born of a virgin.

However...

**Sura 5:116-117** states, "And behold, Allah will say: 'O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, "Worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah"?' He will say: 'Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, Thou wouldst indeed have known it...Never said I to them aught except what Thou didst command me to say, to wit, "Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord;"

Jesus is not fully divine. Also...

**Sura 4:157-158**: "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, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge"

Jesus was not killed on the cross. **So a very different type of substitution.** Someone substituted for Jesus whereas Christians believe Jesus was substituted for us.

**Another Jesus. Much like liberal Christianity.**

2 Corinthians 11:4, "For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough."

### What is salvation?

**Sura 23:102-104** we read, “Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy – they will attain salvation: But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in Hell will they abide. The Fire will burn their faces, and they will therein grin, with their lips displaced.”

**Sura 101:6-11** we read, “Then, he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy, Will be in a Life of good pleasure and satisfaction. But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light – Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit. And what will explain to thee what this is? (It is) a Fire blazing fiercely!”

### How do we talk to Muslims?

- Clear away the cultural confusion
- Answer in a way that leads to Jesus
- Get them reading a Gospel
- Illustrations that explain the difference
  - In the water – instructions to shore or a rescue from the water.

### **Mormons**

In 1820 a 15 year old boy called Joseph Smith claims he had an encounter with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. As a young man he was confused by the differences among the many churches in his area and wanted to know which church

was right. He asked God would he should do. Then he had his encounter. This is when Jesus told Joseph not to join any of the churches for they were all wrong. He then called Joseph Smith to be a prophet through whom the whole gospel was restored.

**The Great Apostasy.** Following the death of Jesus Christ the gospel was lost. The priesthood authority (that is the authority to act in God’s name) was taken from the earth. This apostasy resulted in the formation of many churches with conflicting teachings.

He also claimed to have been met by an angel called Moroni, who directed him to a long-buried book, inscribed on golden plates, which contained a record of God’s dealings with ancient Israelite inhabitants of the Americas. After translating it he published it in 1830. This is the Book of Mormon. Mormons claim that it is another testament to Jesus Christ.

The church is led by a prophet and apostles today. The President of The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-day Saints is the authorized successor to Joseph Smith. **There are internal contradictions.**

**What do they actually believe?** Hand over to Scott.

The **gospel** of Jesus Christ is Heavenly Father’s plan for the happiness and **salvation** of His children and is centered on the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to show us how to live meaningful and happy lives and experience eternal joy after

this life. Through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, you can become clean from sin and enjoy peace of conscience. To become worthy to live in Heavenly Father's presence after this life and to receive this peace and strength, you must learn and follow the principles and **ordinances** of the gospel. The first principles of the gospel are faith in Jesus Christ and repentance. The first ordinances of the gospel are baptism and receiving the gift of the **Holy Ghost**. After you learn and follow the first principles and ordinances of the gospel, you must seek to follow Christ's example throughout the remainder of your life. This continued faithfulness is called "enduring to the end."

**How do you know it is true?** From the official website.

- Sincerely praying to your Heavenly Father and asking him if what you are learning is true.
- Continuing to study and give thoughtful consideration to what you are learning.
- Listening with your heart for the Holy Ghost to whisper the truth to you.
- Following God's commandments so you can feel the influence of the Holy Ghost.

Donald Macleod, "The loyalty which the system commands is undeniable. But it wasn't built on argument and it can't be refuted by it."

### How to speak to Mormons?

- Always clarify the terms.
- Ask questions.
- Ask them to explain what they mean.
- Press them on the contradictions.
- Never let them in the first time.
- Never give them your telephone number.