

# Alan Shlemon "Engaging Muslims with the Gospel"

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

We're going to pray for ourselves and for Alan as he prepares to speak to us. Welcome, brother. Let's pray. Father, we give you thanks and praise that there are many Muslims in this city, and many of us probably know Muslims. We give you thanks and praise that you have put us in proximity to them, and we ask that you grant us opportunities that we might tell them about Jesus. I ask, Father, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit upon this, our brother Alan, as he opens your Word and helps us to understand the gospel and the whole counsel of God better, and as he gives us some coaching and encouragement as to ways to enter into good faith, friendly conversations with our Muslim friends about the gospel. And so, Father, we ask that you would bless Alan as he speaks and bless us as we listen. And we ask all of these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Amen. Welcome, brother. Thank you, brother. Well, good morning. My parents were born in the city of Baghdad, which is in the country of Iraq, which, by the way, if you're looking for a warmer vacation destination, I don't recommend you go there.

Things aren't quite settled there just yet. Maybe hold off for another, I don't know, 2,000 years, and things will get a little better. But my parents did not raise my brother and I as Muslims.

[ 2 : 44 ] Rather, they raised us as Christians. And the reason is, is because my people, my ethnic background, is called a Syrian. Now, this is not to be confused with Syrian, which is a reference to the country in the Middle East that exists today. Those people are Syrians. I am from Assyria, which is a country that has not existed for 2,700 years. Now, just out of curiosity, raise your hand if you've ever heard of the Assyrian people at some point in your life. Yeah, looks like a lot of you have. Chances are, if you've read any parts of the Old Testament, you'll recall the Assyrians, my people, are talked a lot about in the Old Testament. Which sounds kind of cool, until you realize we were the sworn enemies of Israel. So, consequently, that made us the sworn enemies of God. So, that was kind of a bummer growing up and kind of finding that out as you get older. But with therapy and counseling, I got over it. I'm very comfortable in my skin today. So, be of good cheer. I'm comfortable today. All right. But enough about my problems. Let's talk specifically about the nature of Islam and how we're supposed to reach out to Muslims that we might know as friends or family members, in fact. I remember when I first started witnessing to Muslims, I thought to myself, well, I need to find some Muslims to start talking to. That's probably the best way to get started. I was living in Los Angeles, and I knew of a very significant neighborhood that had a large population of Muslims. So, I thought to myself, all right, let's go there. So, I drove to the neighborhood. I'm driving around. I'm looking for some Muslims to talk to.

And I see this kind of mall area with a bunch of stores and restaurants. And the font that the restaurants were using had this sort of like Arabic script kind of font. And I thought to myself, well, this must be the right place. So, I parked my car. I got out, started walking around. And I see these

two guys that had a dark complexion, kind of looked like me. So, I'm like racially profiling them. And I'm like, oh, they must be Muslims, right? So, they're about to walk into a restaurant. And I ran up to the door. And I put my hand in the door. I said, excuse me, I'm sorry to bother you. I said, are you guys Muslims? And they kind of looked at each other a little bit hesitant and apprehensive. Like, why is some random person asking us this? But they eventually said, yeah, we're Muslims. Why? I said, oh, great.

I said, hey, I'm a Christian. Would you like to talk about God and Jesus and the Bible? And they said, to my surprise, sure. Hey, why don't you come inside and sit down with us as we eat? I'm like, whoa, that's great. That's really easy. Okay. So, we sit down. And for hours, we talked about God and Jesus and the Bible. And of course, we didn't agree on a whole bunch of things. But actually, the conversation was quite vigorous. And we went on for hours and had actually a really good time. Now, I want you to think about this. As I got up to pay for my part of the meal, and I pulled out some money, they saw that.

And they said, no, no, stop. Put away your money. They said, your money's not good here. We insist on paying for your meal. Now, imagine had I gone to an average, typical, sort of U.S. mall, and walked up to two average Americans and said to them the same thing. Hey, I'm a Christian. Would you like to talk about God and Jesus and the Bible? What do you think they'd say? Yeah. No would be the nicest thing they'd say. It's more like, get lost, freak. Like, no, we don't want to talk about Jesus.

Like, get away from us, right? But see, this tells us something about Muslims. They actually love to talk about God and Jesus and the Bible. And so, starting a conversation with a Muslim about religion or faith or God is like starting a conversation with Elon Musk about Tesla or SpaceX, right? I mean, if you just started the conversation, it would go. It's virtually effortless. And so, I'm thinking we have this wide open opportunity to talk to a massive group of people who are perfectly comfortable talking about faith and religion. And by the way, it turns out there are a whole bunch of Muslims to talk to. In fact, although this isn't a picture of every Muslim on the earth, this is a picture of Mecca, Saudi Arabia during one of their gatherings. And it kind of shows, you know, all these little dots are people, by the way. It just shows the magnitude of this gathering alone. But we estimate that there are probably about 1.8 billion Muslims in the world. And when you think of the general world population, what that means is almost one in four people on the planet is a Muslim. Almost one in four. That's a lot of Muslims. And when you consider a more sobering statistic, based on our best sort of demographic data, based on the rates of death in various countries, we estimate that every single day, about 40,273 Muslims die and enter eternity without Jesus. Over 40,000 Muslims die every single day and enter eternity without Christ. So the question then becomes, okay, well, with those kinds of numbers, right, and with the fact that Muslims aren't just in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, they're all over the planet, and of course, they're in Ottawa as well, what should be our approach as we consider how we could reach our Muslim neighbor? And fortunately, the scripture passage that we looked at just now helps actually answer this very question. And as you recall, as we looked at this passage, the Bible identifies us as ambassadors for Christ. Which means if you're here this morning and you profess to be a follower of

[ 8 : 36 ] Jesus, then you already are an ambassador for Christ. So that's not a title that's given to you after you've been a Christian for 20, 40, 60 years, and then we say, okay, well, now let's pin the blue ribbon upon your chest. You are now an ambassador. No. The instant you step over the line and decide to follow Jesus, you become his ambassador and you become his representative. And that means however you come across to other people, all the things that you say and that you do ultimately is a reflection upon the good name of Jesus. And so a key question every one of us must ask ourselves is, well, what kind of ambassador am I like? Am I an effective ambassador or am I an ineffective ambassador? Because regardless of which one you are, you are saying something about your king. But now the second thing that this passage here tells us is about the nature of our mission, right? So Paul tells us our identity. We're ambassadors for Christ. But notice what word is repeated three times in this passage. In fact, four if you consider the passage we read during our scripture reading. And the word is reconcile or reconciliation. Now, the idea of reconciliation is to bring together two parties that are at enmity with one another. And if you consider the fact that the Bible paints a picture of God and the world, and these two parties are at enmity with one another. However, Paul, writing to the Corinthian believers says, you, however, have been reconciled to

God. You've been made at peace with God. You are no longer an enemy of God, but you are now a friend of God. And since you have been reconciled to God, it is now your mission to proclaim that same message of reconciliation to the rest of the world. And so notice your identity is an ambassador for Jesus, and your mission is to proclaim the message of reconciliation. The question then becomes, how do we fulfill that mission and that role when it comes to Islam? And I submit to you, the answer is exactly the way an ambassador would do it. Like a political ambassador, right? What do political ambassadors typically do? Two things. They learn, and then they engage. They learn about the people group they're going to go reach, and then they go and engage that people group. And so what I want to do here in my comments this morning is help you to do both. Learn something about Islam, and actually give you some tactics to be able to engage Muslims. And in fact, I want to give you an overall strategy of how

I engage Muslims, and specifically address the most common objection you will run across when talking to a Muslim. All right, so before we get to that overall strategy, let me just give you four background pieces of information about Islam that are relevant for you to understand so that it makes better sense why this tactic is effective and why it works. Now, you may already know that in order to be a good Muslim, you're supposed to practice certain behaviors. These are known as the five pillars of Islam. And these pillars are reciting a creed, they are prayer, they are fasting, they are giving alms, and they're going on a pilgrimage. Now, I don't want to spend too much time on that. These are just sort of religious practices of Islam. You could probably Google them if you wanted to learn more about them. I'm more interested in another aspect of Islamic faith, which is not necessarily the behaviors of Muslims, but rather the doctrinal positions they must adopt. So the behaviors of the five pillars of Islam, but the doctrinal positions that they must adopt are called the six articles of faith. And I want to make aware to you just four of them that are relevant for this specific tactic and strategy that I want you to understand. So the first significant article of faith that's important for you to understand is the belief in the angels of Allah. Now, according to Islam, Allah has created angels. These angels do not have free will. They simply obey Allah and they administrate his kingdom. In fact, according to Islam, there are two angels that follow each and every one of you throughout your entire life. One angel keeps track of all your good deeds, and another angel keeps track of all your bad deeds. Okay, so as my Gen X, I'm sorry, my Gen Z kids would say, that's mad sus that these angels are like following you all around throughout your whole life, right? Kind of creepy. But that's what Islam teaches. A second required belief in Islam is the belief in the prophets of Allah. Now, according to Islam, Allah has commissioned different prophets throughout every human civilization. So every people group throughout all of humanity has received some prophet who is a human being that was commissioned by Allah to receive revelation and proclaim the truth. And what's interesting is that a lot of people who are in the Bible are identified as prophets of Allah. So for example, Adam is considered to be a prophet of Allah. Moses is a prophet of Allah. David is a prophet of Allah. And most significantly, Jesus is identified in the Quran as a prophet of Allah. And of course, not surprising, Muhammad also is a prophet of Allah.

Okay. Now, I put photo not available, not because I don't have an image or depiction of Muhammad. I do. But as you probably know, it is wildly unpopular and politically incorrect to show images of Muhammad. And since, you know, many Muslims come to my presentations and sit, there's no need for me to unnecessarily offend Muslims. Although interestingly, it was Muslims who first started creating artwork and images of Muhammad back in the 12th century. And they actually created lots of them. And some of them are still hanging in museums around the world. But obviously, it has since fallen out of favor, according to Islam, for fear of idolatry and out of respect for prophets. Technically, they don't like me to show any images of any prophets. But they usually let me get away with, you know, showing pictures of Jesus and others. Anyways, the point here I'm trying to make is this. Belief in Jesus is a required doctrine in Islam. Now, it's important to understand, their Jesus is not the same as the biblical or true

[ 15 : 34 ] Jesus. Okay. According to Islam, Jesus is not part of the Trinity or the Son of God. And in fact, in the Quran, it specifically teaches against this. Islam believes in what's called Tawheed, which is this form of monotheism that says there is one God, but this one God exists as one person. And so, they are vigorously anti-Trinitarian. In fact, to deny the doctrine that there is one God who exists as one person is to commit the most grievous sin in Islam. That's called the sin of shirk. It's an unpardonable sin.

Meaning, if you believe and attribute divinity to, say, Jesus or the Holy Spirit, you've committed that unpardonable sin called the sin of shirk. And if you die not having repented of it, you're guaranteed to go to hell. No questions asked. You know, do not pass go, do not collect 200, go directly to hell, right? Anybody play Monopoly here? No? Okay. Maybe you recognize that reference. Okay. That's right.

Bad joke. All right. So, notice, in Islam, they don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God, part of the Trinity. They also deny the crucifixion of Jesus. And that's because the Quran says he was not crucified, but rather he was made to appear as if he was crucified. And of course, if Jesus wasn't crucified, then he couldn't have been resurrected. And if he didn't get crucified and rise again, he can't atone for sins. So, on the Islamic and false view of Jesus, Jesus is merely a human being who was commissioned to be a prophet. Just like we would say Moses was merely a human being who was commissioned to be a prophet. And just like Muslims would say Muhammad is merely a human being who was commissioned to be a prophet. Now, despite this lower Christology that they have about Jesus, it's still rather interesting when you read the Quran to see what does the Quran say about Jesus. In fact, Jesus is the most referenced person in all of the Quran. 187 references to Jesus in the Quran compared to about 25 about Muhammad.

And when you read the Quran, what you notice is the Quran has a very, very high view of Jesus. According to the Quran, his birth was announced by angels. And in fact, I have a citation there, Surah 3. The word surah just means chapter. So, chapter 3, verses 44 through 45 is where you'd find this.

The Quran also affirms that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. The Quran teaches that Jesus was able to perform miracles like heal sick people and raise the dead. The Quran affirms that Jesus lived a sinless and perfect life. The Quran even calls Jesus the Messiah. And according to the Quran, Jesus at the end of his life was taken up to be in the presence of Allah and he's the one who's appointed to come back at the end of time to kill the Antichrist, to break all the crosses, and to kill all the pigs.

[18:54] So, no more bacon wrapped filet mignon at that point, which would be a big bummer because bacon wrapped filet mignon is amazing, amazing food, right? Very tender filet, right? You can cut it almost like a butter knife, right? Filet is so tender.

But filet doesn't sometimes always have as much flavor as you want, but if you wrap it in bacon, it adds some, you know, fatty flavor, which is great. Okay. That's not going away because, remember, this is Islamic theology. Islamic theology is false, right? Now, this is rather significant that the Quran itself affirms this about Jesus. But what's even more interesting is when you contrast with what it says about Jesus with what it says about Muhammad. According to the Quran, there was no announcement of Muhammad's birth, right? He had a very ordinary birth. The Quran does not affirm any kind of miraculous events to Muhammad. It doesn't say he was sinless. It doesn't call him the Messiah. And according to the Quran, Muhammad has been dead and buried in Saudi Arabia for the last 1400 years, and he's not the appointed one to return. So what this tells me is that I, as a Christian, have tremendous freedom to talk about Jesus with my Muslim friends and neighbors, right? Why? Because the Quran, which is the highest authority in Islam, speaks volumes about Jesus and has a very high view of who Jesus is.

So this is also a key doctrinal position that Muslims must affirm about Jesus. So they must believe in Allah's angels. They must believe in the prophets of Allah. They also must believe, and here's another article of faith that Muslims must affirm, they also must believe in the final judgment. And according to this doctrine, at the end of time, every human being will be resurrected and judged according to their deeds, okay? And so all the good and bad deeds are going to be brought upon and put onto a scale. And by the way, how do we know what good and bad deeds you have? Those angels, that's right, those angels that have been following your whole life, right, they will bring the deeds forth, they'll put them on a scale, and if your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds, you go to heaven. If your, I'm sorry, if your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds, you go to heaven. [21:18] If your bad deeds outweigh your good deeds, you go to hell. So they have a meritorious based system of salvation. It's based on merit. It's based on deeds, on what you do, right? Quite contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is based on grace and nothing that we can do ourselves.

So this is, again, another required doctrinal position Muslims must affirm. And the fourth one that I want you to become aware of before I unpack this tactic is the belief in the books of Allah.

Now, the Quran identifies four divine revelations that are from Allah, and it identifies them by name. All right? The first one, of course, is the Quran. So the Quran refers to itself as a divine revelation that is, that is from, of course, from Allah, and given to which prophet in Islam? Tell me out loud. Muhammad, exactly. The Quran also identifies the Torah as a true revelation on par with the Quran given to which prophet? Moses. That's right. The Psalms is also named in the Quran as a true revelation on par with the Quran given to which prophet? David. And then finally, the gospel is identified as a true revelation on par with the Quran given to which prophet? Jesus. Right. Now, I know what you're thinking. Wait a minute, Alan.

Then, how could it be that Muslims are required to believe in the books of Allah? And one of those books is called the gospel. And, of course, if you think of the gospels, right, in the New Testament, they claim that Jesus was the Son of God, right? He makes a reference, and he says, I and the Father are one.

[ 23 : 10 ] The gospels affirm the death and crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, right? All of these things which Muslims, or I should say, what Islam denies. So, does anyone here know how do Muslims reconcile the claim from the Quran, their highest authority, that the gospel is a true revelation, and yet deny all these aspects of what the gospels teach? That's right. It's corrupted. So, the number one objection that you will hear from a Muslim is that the gospel, and I'm not going to address the Torah and Psalms as much right now, because the gospel, I think, is most pertinent for our purposes to share the gospel. But the number one objection you will hear from a Muslim when you're talking to them about faith and religion, or if you're trying to share the gospel, is that they'll say the gospel is corrupted. Either Christians intentionally change the gospel, or as a result of their irresponsibility allowed it to become corrupted. Either way, what the gospels say is not accurate.

It's got the words of Allah and the words of humans mixed in together, and we don't know which is which, so we can't trust it. Now, not only is this the most common objection we'll run across when talking to a Muslim, it's also the most serious objection. Because where are the words of Jesus and his message of reconciliation found? The gospels, right? But that's the very source of authority the Muslim's going to say, uh-uh, you got to take that off the table when we're having a conversation, because that has become corrupted. All right, well, with that said, I want to tell you how to overcome that objection, because unless you address this objection, you are not going to go very far in your ability to share the gospel with the Muslim friend or neighbor. Because virtually every conversation with the Muslim at some point comes down to just one issue, and that one issue is authority.

Muslims claim the Quran is the authoritative word of Allah. We would say, no, that's not the case. The Bible is, and specifically in this case, we want to share the gospel is the authority.

And so you have to reconcile this issue. You have to deal with the issue of authority. And here's what I've discovered in talking to Muslims for now over 15 or 20 years, is that there is a distinction between what many Muslims say and what Islam teaches. Meaning, there's a distinction between what Muslims say and what authoritative sources in Islam teach.

And although Muslims will say the gospel is corrupted, it turns out that their highest authority, the Quran, teaches the opposite, that the gospel is a trustworthy revelation from Allah.

[ 26 : 06 ] And let me show you what this looks like. It turns out that the gospel, I'm sorry, the Quran affirms three things about the gospel. The first thing is this. The Quran affirms that the gospel is a divine revelation of Allah. And I have just three or so verses in the Quran cited here. There are actually probably a dozen. So I just want you to know that these statements I'm going to be making are not from some esoteric verse here that's maybe taken out of context and misinterpreted. Like, this is the plain teaching of the entire corpus of the document of the Quran. Okay? So the number one, the Quran affirms that gospel is a divine revelation of Allah. Number two, the Quran affirms that the gospel was available to be read in the 7th century when Muhammad was around and talking about Islam. Okay? Christians could read it. Muslims could read it. It was available. And the third thing that the Quran affirms about the gospel is that the gospel is authoritative, which means it should be believed and obeyed.

Now, if this is true, if what I'm saying here is accurate based on these verses, this is a monumental and very significant truth because now we have the highest authority in Islam affirming something about the gospel, which is that it is trustworthy and should be believed. And so here's kind of the logic of this approach. Notice, whatever the Quran affirms, Muslims must affirm. Right? Because remember, the Quran is the highest authority in Islam. So whatever it says, Muslims must affirm.

Premise two, the Quran affirms that the gospel is uncorrupted. Therefore, conclusion, therefore, Muslims must affirm the gospel is uncorrupted. So there's two premises there and then a conclusion.

And for those of you who are into philosophy or logic, just so you know, this is what you call a valid deductive argument, which means if premise one is true and premise two is true, then the conclusion, the last sentence logically follows by necessity. It must be true. Now, which premise one or two is the one that the Muslims are most likely to reject? Two. That's right. No Muslim will reject one because of course, if the Quran says something, they must affirm it. Okay, well, it turns out that I've given you some citations, although I'm going to unpack it here in just a second, to show you that the Quran affirms that the gospel is uncorrupted. Now, although I had like probably, I don't know, nine or ten citations, that's a lot of numbers for you to remember in citations.

Here's the thing. If you just remember one specific citation, surah 5, 46-47, it turns out that this one passage incorporates all three points in these two verses.

[ 29 : 21 ] All right? So surah 5, verses 46-47. So chapter 5, verses 46-47, and I guess I had some color coding here, but I guess it didn't come through, but I think we can still do it. So, yeah, okay. So, this passage has all three points, right? So, let's take a look at what it says here.

Starting at the top, and we sent, and by the way, the we sent is a reference to a law. So, it's kind of the royal we don't think like, oh, is that the Trinity? That's not at all what's meant there. It's just a royal we. So, and we sent. So, Allah sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah, and we gave him, meaning Jesus, the gospel. Okay? So, there's a claim where Jesus is given the gospel. So, it's coming from Allah.

So, there's a claim that the gospel is a divine revelation. Then it says, the gospel in which was a guidance and light in confirming that which preceded it. So, there you have the claim that the gospel is authoritative. It's being described as a guidance and light. It is a guide for people to follow, and it provides a light for the truth. Why would Allah call the gospel a guide and a light if it was corrupted? That makes absolutely no sense. The only reason the Quran is saying this is because it presumes that the gospel is uncorrupted and trustworthy. Otherwise, why call it a guidance and light?

It continues. So, which is a guidance and light confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as a guidance and instruction for the righteous. So, by the way, there, notice the Torah is also described as a guidance and light. And it says, and let the people of the gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. Now, the phrase people of the gospel is a reference to Christians at the time. So, notice what the Quran is saying. Hey, you Christians, you should judge by what Allah has revealed in your gospel.

Well, the only way the Christians could do that is if it existed with them in their hands at that time in the 7th century. And of course, we know it did because the gospels were produced in the 1st century.

[ 31 : 42 ] So, if it's still around 500 years or 600 years later, that's not a big surprise, right? So, notice the Quran is presuming that the gospel exists and is available to be read there at the time.

It finally says, whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, then it is those who are defiantly disobedient. Again, another reference to the command by the Quran to consider the gospel authoritative because you're supposed to judge your life according to the gospel. And if you don't, you're disobeying. Well, why would the Quran say that if the gospel is corrupted? It wouldn't because the gospel was never corrupted in the 7th century when this was written. So, notice this one passage composed of two verses makes the claim that the Quran, I'm sorry, the Quran claims that the gospel is a divine revelation of Allah available in the 7th century to be read and is authoritative, meaning it should be believed and obeyed. So, I like to have this, I have this citation memorized, and those other verses that I had for those other, for those three points, I just kind of keep on my cell phone written down so that if I'm in a conversation, I can just highlight them and show them to my Muslim friend when I'm talking to them, okay? I mean, it's just a quick thought experiment.

If there were a Muslim, and I know this isn't going to happen, but if there was a Muslim who had never read the Quran, who had never heard the Bible or of Christianity, and had never been biased by a Muslim scholar or imam, and that Muslim was given the Quran to read from beginning to end, and then asked afterwards, tell me, what do you think the Quran says about the gospel? The only conclusion he would walk away with is, oh, the gospel seems to be this wonderful divine revelation that is a guidance and light, it's revered and honored, it's a wonderful thing that tells the truth from

Allah. That's the only conclusion they would walk away with. Because the highest authority in Islam, that's what it teaches. It's only through Muslim culture has this idea that the gospel has become corrupted developed. It's just a cultural belief. In fact, through studying Islam, I discovered that for the first 400 years of Islam, there wasn't a single Muslim scholar, including Muhammad himself, who ever claimed the gospel was corrupted. No one ever did. It wasn't until the start of the Crusades that we saw the claim of the Bible being corrupted start to pop up. So, the Quran affirms that in the 7th century, the gospel was uncorrupted. Now, a Muslim might say, well, maybe it was uncorrupted then, but what about now? Hasn't it changed from the 7th century to now?

[ 34 : 35 ] Well, of course, we know that's not the case, because although copies have been made of the Quran, I'm sorry, of the gospel and the Bible from the first century all the way to today, and the Quran comes around in 632 AD and says, no, no, no, it was uncorrupted. We actually have copies of the entire Bible from the 4th century, so nearly, you know, 200 or so years before the Muslims came around, before the Quran came around, before Muhammad ever spoke. We have copies of the entire Bible. Now, there are some sections missing, but the gospels are all there. The New Testament's almost complete. And we can compare these earlier manuscripts of the Bible, these codices of the Bible, to today's Bibles, and they're virtually identical. Why? Because the transmission has been so perfectly preserved. And so, if nothing's changed since before the Quran to now, with regards to the gospel integrity, then if the Quran comes around in the 7th century and says, oh yeah, it was not corrupted, then nothing's changed even since the 7th century to today. So, Muslims can know, yeah, nothing's changed in the last 1400 years, therefore, we can know that nothing's changed in the gospel either. Okay, so, you know, I started using this tactic back in 2010. When I first started going to a maximum security state prison, I used to do ministry in this prison, and there's lots of

Christians and Muslims that are in this prison. And so, I used to go and equip the Christians how to reach the Muslims there. I use it even, this is a picture from just last summer. I take Christians to mosques on a regular basis. This is 70, about 70 high school Christians. I will call up a mosque and say, hey, I would like to bring 70 high school Christians to your mosque tomorrow. Is that okay? Okay, I've been doing this for like 15 years. They always say yes. So, we go there. We watch their service. Then, we go up to a room upstairs in the mosque. We invite these top Islamic scholar there to give us a message and encourage us to convert to Islam. And then, we ask them questions, right?

And of course, what we notice is the Islamic scholar always claims the Bible's corrupted. But of course, I've spent two days training these students how to understand this objection, how to respond to it.

And of course, they're able to respond and just gently push back. And we've been doing this for years. And we have such a great relationship with this mosque and many others around the country because we are always conducting ourselves as ambassadors, right? Yes, we're engaging them, but we're doing it in a gracious, loving way because we remember we represent Christ in everything we do. So, we want to come across as winsome and gracious. All right, let me just close with my overall strategy and in terms of how I incorporate this tactic in my overall strategy when I talk to Muslims.

[ 37 : 42 ] When I have a chance to talk to a Muslim, I want to ask them one key question. And this key question is important because it can help me get to sharing the gospel in under 60 seconds. And here's the key question as you see it. My question is this, are you 100% sure you're going to heaven?

Now, notice I don't ask them, are you confident or are you, do you think so? I say, are you 100% confident? Now, what do you think every Muslim says to this question? They say no. And the reason is because remember, they don't know what the angels are going to bring in terms of their good and bad deeds.

They don't know what the scales are going to show. So, they don't have 100% confidence. So, my follow-up question is, well, would you like to have 100% confidence? Right? Now, I'm not saying that because I can offer it by virtue of anything I'm going to do. But you know what I'm talking about, right? You know what Christ has done. So, when they say, sure, I'm, yeah, of course I'd like to have 100% confidence.

Or they're just curious, what are you as a Christian going to say to this? Here's what I do. I point them to John 3 16 through 18. Why? Because first of all, John 3 16 is the most well-known passage in all of Christendom, right? And so, you'll probably already have that reference memorized. All you got to do is just add a few more verses, okay? Second of all, it's Jesus speaking. And since they revere Jesus as a prophet, they're more likely to consider that. And third, because John is part of the gospel, that's also mentioned in the Quran as a true revelation from Allah. Now, I'll read this passage to them, or have them read it, because it's, you know, it's Jesus sharing the message of reconciliation.

And if they say, well, but that's part of the gospel, that's corrupted. Well, then, of course, you know what I'm going to do. I'm going to go and use my tactic to show them that they can't cite that as an objection, right? So, I'm going to use the Quran as leverage, because that's their highest authority, to remind them, hey, by the way, your highest authority says it's not corrupted. Your highest authority of the Quran says it's a divine revelation of Allah.

[ 39 : 56 ] It's trustworthy. It should be obeyed. So, you can't claim it's corrupted. Once they acknowledge that, then you can go back to John 3 16 through 18, or whatever passage you want to go to.

But again, I recommend something from the gospels where Jesus is speaking, because they revere Jesus. And they need to hear Jesus, because Jesus is the only person who can give them hope to have 100% confidence in their future and eternal destiny. Because Jesus addresses both sides of the Islamic scale.

Think about this. Jesus, in his death and resurrection, by his atoning work on the cross, wipes away all of your bad deeds, all your sins, right? So, the side of the scale that would normally hold all of your bad deeds is completely unweighted, because Christ has atoned for all of them.

But Christ doesn't just atone for your bad deeds. He also imputes his righteousness, which is a fancy way of saying his good credit, his perfect life, his perfect standing with God is credited to you. So, all, so the side of the scale that would hold all your good deeds is now perfectly weighted with the perfect life of Christ. So, with no bad deeds and all the perfect good deeds of Christ, the tips, the balance tips in your favor 100% perfectly. Of course, in the mind of a Muslim, right? So, this is why Jesus is the answer. This is why the gospel is the answer for Muslims, because only he can give 100% certainty that they can go to heaven. Again, we can offer that to them, not because of anything that we're doing, because we're pointing them to Christ. So, that's my overall strategy of how I engage Muslims with the gospel, and again, incorporating that key tactic of leveraging their source of authority just for the sake of removing the objection that the gospel's corrupted. Address that, and you've addressed the issue of authority, and then you can turn to the gospel for the truth.

[ 42 : 06 ] Let me close in prayer before Pastor George comes about. Heavenly Father, we're so thankful that you have trusted us to be ambassadors for your son, Jesus. Lord, we're so humbled by that. We're just blown away by that, Lord. We thank you, though, that your Holy Spirit lives in us to give us the wisdom, the words, the courage to be able to communicate the truth, the message of reconciliation to all people, and especially to Muslims. Lord, help us not to see Muslims as the enemy, but people who desperately need to know the truth of the gospel. They're in a situation, they're in a system, they're being deceived by this idea that they can somehow work their way through their own righteousness to you.

But, of course, you know the truth, and you've communicated the truth to us. Help us to be able to share with them the message of the gospel, that there's nothing that they can do, but that you've already done the work for them, Lord. They just need to put their trust in you and in your son, Jesus Christ.

Thank you for this reality, Lord, that we can share with them. Help us as we communicate to our Muslim friends and neighbors to do it in a way that brings honor and glory to your son, Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Thank you, Adam. Thank you.