

The First and Last Sacrifice

Part One: Jesus

Jesus, the Word of God,¹ was in Heaven with God from the beginning. He was born into this world through the Virgin Mary. Both the Injil² and the Qur'an teach this.

Jesus never sinned, even though He was tempted in every way imaginable. Jesus overcame the desires of His flesh. He never married, never killed anyone, and never gathered riches for Himself.³ Jesus once fasted 40 days and 40 nights while being tempted by the devil, yet he never sinned.

Jesus performed great miracles. He cast out demons; healed the sick and blind; Jesus even raised the dead.

It is interesting that, though Jesus was not yet old, He began prophesying about His death. To his followers He said, "I must die, but I will rise again." Do you know why Jesus said, "I must die?"⁴

Part Two:

Why did Jesus have to die?

The Adam and Eve Story

The answer is found in the *Taurat*,⁵ where God tells us about the first persons He created, Adam and Eve. God put them in a perfect paradise, called the Garden of Eden. They were given great freedom to eat fruit from any tree in the garden except for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God warned them that if they ate of that fruit they would die.

A Covering for Sin

One day, Satan visited Eve in the form of a serpent and tempted her to eat the fruit that God had forbidden. She ate the fruit, and gave it to Adam, who also ate it. Immediately, they were afraid, so they hid from God. But because God knows everything, he found them and punished Adam and Eve for their disobedience.

God's Punishment

As punishment for their disobedience, God cast Adam and Eve out of the garden paradise, and eventually they did die. God's desire had been for them to live forever, but because of their sins, they lost paradise and died.

It is interesting that the *Taurat* says Adam and Eve committed just one sin and it resulted in their judgment and death. Adam and Eve seemed like good people, probably better than us. Perhaps they had already done hundreds of good works. They hadn't killed anyone, committed adultery, or stolen anything. But they disobeyed *just once* and it resulted in death. Some think that if our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds our sins will be forgiven, but that is not what the *Taurat* and *Injil* teach.

Promised Savior and New Clothes

Yet God still loved Adam and Eve. So He did *something very interesting*. God made a way for their sins to be forgiven. He changed Adam and Eve's clothes. God replaced the clothes made of leaves that Adam and Eve had made with new clothes made from animal skins. Of course, to make these clothes, an animal had to die. The death of an innocent animal was the price that God paid to cover the sins of Adam and Eve. Because He loved Adam and Eve, God himself offered the first sacrifice for the forgiveness of their sins. The *Injil* teaches us that apart from the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. Since that first sacrifice, all of our forefathers have offered sacrifices to have their sins forgiven: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and others.

When pronouncing His judgment on Adam and Eve, God also judged the serpent (Satan) who had deceived them. God promised that from the woman's descendent a Savior would come who would crush Satan's head, although Satan would also injure Him. Over the centuries that followed, many prophets of God foretold the coming of a Savior who would take away the sins of the world.

Part Three:

“That is why Jesus had to die!”

And then Jesus came, born of a virgin, the descendent of a woman. Jesus lived a sinless life, and performed great miracles. At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, the prophet John declared Jesus “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.”

That is interesting, isn’t it? Jesus was called “the Lamb of God.” Why? Because a lamb is an animal used for sacrifice. Do you remember my question: “Do you know why Jesus said, ‘I must die?’” That is why Jesus said, “I must die.”

Jesus came to be God’s sacrifice to pay for our sins. This is why He surrendered Himself to the Jewish leaders and Roman soldiers to be crucified. He was God’s sacrifice for your sins and mine.

As He was dying, Jesus said, “Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they are doing.” Then He cried out, “It is finished,” meaning that our sin debt had now been paid for. Then Jesus bowed His head and died.

But on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, just as He had promised. For the next 40 days, Jesus appeared to more than 500 of His followers, and then was taken up into heaven. We know that one day, Jesus will return to earth as judge over all mankind.

Conclusion: “That is why I know my sins are forgiven.”

The Injil tells us that our sins will be forgiven if we surrender our life to Jesus as Lord, believing that His sacrifice paid for our sins and that God has raised Him from the dead.

And that is why I know my sins are forgiven.

This makes sense, doesn’t it? Although we cannot pay off our own sin debt, God has made a way for our sins to be forgiven through Jesus’ sacrificial death and resurrection.

Do you believe what the Injil teaches: that Jesus died for our sins and was raised again?

ANY-3 STORY FEATURES

That is Interesting

We periodically use “That is interesting” to call the hearer’s attention to important points we don’t want him to miss: ⁶

- Jesus prophesied his own death.
- Adam and Eve were given the death penalty even though they only committed one sin.
- God changed their clothes (introducing the theme of sacrifice in Scripture).
- Jesus was called “The Lamb of God.”

Decision Questions

The two questions help us get to a decision:

- That makes sense, doesn’t it?
- Do you believe what the Injil teaches?

¹ Muslims will recognize references to Jesus as the Word of God, His virgin birth and miracles from the Qur’an, *surah al-Imran* 3:42-55. This “Jesus” section parallels much of Kevin Greeson’s *The Camel, How Muslims Are Coming to Faith in Christ!* (Richmond: WIGTake Resources, 2007) without actually quoting from the Qur’an. The miracle of casting out demons isn’t mentioned in the Qur’an.

² *Injil* is the Muslim name for the gospels/New Testament, one of their own holy books.

³ This reference to the holy conduct of Jesus puts Him in sharp contrast with Islam’s founding prophet.

⁴ Although many Muslims believe that Jesus did not die, we speak the truth about His death in *The First and Last Sacrifice Story*. Out of respect, they usually let us finish the story. If they raise an objection at this point we try to delay answering until after the gospel presentation. When the question must be answered, we often refer to Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus’ death. We also mention Qur’anic references, such as 3:55 and 19:33. The first reference clearly states that Jesus died, and 19:33–34 states the Muslim position that Jesus prophesied his death and resurrection: “*And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive. That is Jesus, the son of Mary - the word of truth about which they are in dispute.*”

⁵ *Taurat* is the Muslim name for the Torah/Old Testament, one of their own holy books.

⁶ Feel free to use your own tag phrase for “That is interesting.” The important points to emphasize in this story are: 1) Sin brought judgment; 2) The effects of sin were shame, fear, and judgment; 3) Good works can’t cancel sins; 4) God’s provision of clothing made from a sacrificed animal foreshadowed His future provision of a sacrificial Savior.

Adapted and reprinted with permission from pages 48–51 of *Any-3: Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime — Lead Muslims to Christ Now!* by Mike Shipman (Richmond: WIGTake Resources, 2013), available from ChurchPlantingMovements.com/bookstore.