

From Darkness Into Light

**A story of a life...
A story of a destiny,**

**By:
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The Lord Jesus Christ said:

***"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not
walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."***

John 8:12

presenting this book

The Lord Jesus Christ said:

*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you
free."*

John 8:32

To all those who are seeking the truth... the whole truth.

To all those who desire to live in the light of God

**To all those who are still looking for peace and safety, in the midst of this
tumultuous world**

To every Muslim who desires to know God.. the true God

**I present my book
That it may guide one soul that reads it.**

Chapter One

The Beginning

One day, on the banks of a beautiful river, on a cold winter night, in a small village that was inhabited by a few people, I entered this vast world. I was born into my family in the midst of joyful singing and thanksgiving to the Great Creator, the Living God. I was born in the month of January, 1947. When a child is born to a Muslim family, those who are present immediately react by repeating the statement, "In the Name of the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate," as though people are recognizing that God is Omnipotent and Almighty. The birth of a child and the safety of the mother is proof to the unlimited power of God.

As I came into the world, the lips of all those who were present were praising God. The family decided to call my name "Munthir," a word that means "he who warns people." Forty years after my birth, I realized the purpose of God in my life: He has used me as His minister to warn others who are living in the darkness of sin, and to show them the way of truth and divine light.

Several years after my coming into this world, and after a sister and a brother were added to the family, my father decided to move to the capital, Baghdad, where the opportunity to find a job and living was greater. Going to school required that I wake up early in the morning, and that I do my homework; however, my joy was great because I became a student. One of the courses that we had to study was the Qur'an, the holy book of the Muslims. Many countries use the Qur'an as the source of their legislation and laws. The school expected the students to memorize many of its verses by heart. The first chapter I had to memorize was the Surah of the Fatiha (the Opening), that starts: "in the name of God, the most merciful, the most compassionate... Master on the day of judgment... show us the straight way, etc." This surah or chapter is considered as the key to the whole Qur'an; thus, it has become an obligation for every Muslim to memorize it by heart, so that he/she can repeat it on many occasions, such as funerals, weddings, when visiting cemeteries, and joyful events.

My reading of the Qur'an increased, and I was able to memorize many verses. Studying the Qur'an became an important part of my daily life. I became well acquainted with many of the Islamic teachings and laws, as a result of my studying.

I belonged to a family whose members believed in Islam with all their hearts. I was brought up in an old traditional family that came out of Hijaz, the birth-place of Mohammad, which is now called Saudi Arabia. My family upheld Islamic traditions, and we belonged to a tribe that supported Mohammad. Since I was an infant, I savored the smell of piety and religiosity in our house. Everything that was in our house reminded me of piety and devoutness.

My father used to spend most of his free time at the mosque, praying and praising the wonderful Creator. He owned a small rug that he used to spread every day, in his room, in the direction toward Mecca, so he could pray. That is a tradition that many Muslims have adopted where they owned their personal rug to use for their prayer. The rug should be kept clean, in a clean place, to be used exclusively for prayers.

My mother, who was portrayed as good-hearted and meek, was also known to recite the verses of the Qur'an day and night, and to pray at home, as required by the traditions of Islam. She was

concerned about making sure that I received the right advice, so that I could be brought up as a good Muslim.

Both my father and my mother tried to instill in me, since my youth, the fundamental teachings of Islam. By the age of seven, I learned how to pray and my father began to take me with him to the mosque during the prayer time. During the time of prayer, I used to reiterate many of the verses and the prayers that I learned by heart, without really understanding what those words meant. I used to keep in my heart many questions concerning those prayers, but I did not ask my father so that he would not be bothered. I also learned how to wash for prayer, to be clean and pure for prayer.

The purpose in Islam of "the wash for prayer" is to purify the body on the outside. Such a wash before every prayer includes washing the right and the left arms, after that, washing the hands, next, the mouth by gargling with water, and then sniffing the water through his nose to cleanse it, and finally, cleaning behind the ears. The long process, called in Arabic, "Al-Wodoo'," that a Muslim should follow to purify his body on the outside, qualifies him to pray.

I practiced Al-Woodoo' five times per day. All Muslims who pray practice Al-woodoo' five times per day in an attempt to prepare their bodies to stand before God in prayer. However, I always questioned, in the depth of my soul, if that was all God required of me to be pleased with me. Could it be true that only the cleaning of my body on the outside was enough to make God accept my prayers? I was one of the millions of people in this world who present to God a clean body, when the heart and the inner compassions were the possession of Satan and the of the wicked world.

God knows the secrets of the heart and man's inner thoughts, and He cannot be pleased by the mere cleansing of the body while corrupt hearts are filled with deception, dishonesty, hatred and loathing. The cleaning of the body on the outside cannot be a substitute for the purity of the heart.

When I became eighteen years old, I began to practice the important fasting ritual that is a basic part of the Islamic teaching. Muslims, throughout the world, fast all the days of the month of Ramadan. Because I upheld the religion of my fathers and forefathers, I always found joy in fasting, where I refrained from drinking water and eating food, from dawn till sunset. When the Imam chanted from the miret or the radio, declaring the sunset, we were called to the large, special, delicious supper that my mother prepared. Then, we drank the tea in a gathering of several family members and friends. Ramadan's nights were the most memorable that I had while I was with my father and my mother.

It has become an obligation to every Muslim to read the Qur'an, from cover to cover, during the month of Ramadan. I used to spend hours during that month, studying the text of the Qur'an. I wrote down the verses that impressed me, on a special pad that belonged to me. However, I noticed something very important that I will never forget. I noticed that the Muslims fast the month of Ramadan as though to enjoy the delicious food at the end of the day, not essentially for the purpose of obeying God. I noticed many of my Muslim relatives and friends fast the month of Ramadan so that they can enjoy the good cuisine and the pasteries, but without spending any time in the prayer times that were required, for the fasting of the month of Ramadan should be accompanied by prayers.

Many questions came to my mind, but it remained without any satisfying answers. I was seeking answers in the Qur'an, but everything seemed too complicated and difficult. Every ritual

I practiced was nothing more than a custom or tradition that I inherited from my parents. I could not find anything in my prayers or my fasting that would give rest to my mind and peace to my soul. At the end of the Month of Ramadan, we celebrated the Al-Fitr Feast. I woke up on that day, at four o'clock in the morning, to go to the mosque where I prayed with a multitude of people. After prayer, I went with my father to the cemetery to honor our grandparents who died and were buried there. In the cemetery, I used to ponder within myself, wondering where those dead relatives really went?

I used to sit down with my father, at the grave of my grandfather whom I last saw when I was six years old. My grandfather was considered an important personality of our town's Muslim religious men. My father always recited Qur'anic verses at my grandfather's grave. I listened very attentively as he was reciting Qur'anic verses and praying to God to forgive my grandfather's sins that he committed during his life, so that he can go to heaven. I wondered in my heart, asking, "does this mean that my father does not know where my grandfather is now?"

I learned from the Qur'an that there is a paradise and eternal fires, and there is heaven and hell. I also learned that no one can know where he will go after death. When I got that far in my thinking, I was frightened and horrified. How could God, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient and the Just create man to live on this earth for so many years, and spend much of his time praying and fasting, worshipping God, without letting him know where he would go after his death?

I began to think about that subject: Where do people go after death? The doubts filled my mind concerning the Islamic teachings that were in me, since early youth. I started to feel that God could not be really as the Islamic teachings portrayed Him: a God of injustice. It was clear to me that when someone is pious, fears God, and keeps His commandments, he should be able to be sure as of the place where he would spend his eternity; otherwise, God becomes oppressive and tyrannical with no justice. This subject led me to another subject that is related to man's life here on earth: I wondered, why was my father praying to God asking Him to forgive my dead grandfather's sins? Does that mean that the religious Muslim cannot know, while living on this earth, whether God forgave him his sins or not?

I knew for sure that every man is a sinner, but I thought that man should have the knowledge, while still living, that God forgave him his sins, so that when he departs from this earth, he would be sure that he will go to meet God who forgave him and justified him. This subject made me begin my search in the Qur'an for the verses that give the Muslim the certainty of forgiveness and the assurance of going to heaven. However, the only thing that I found in the Qur'an were two verses that came in the Surah of Al-A'araf 7:8-9 that show that God, on Judgment Day, will weigh on one side of the scale man's good deeds against man's bad deeds on the other side of the scale. God will weigh the two sides; if the side of the good deeds has more weight, then man goes to heaven, otherwise, he goes to hell. Consequently, a Muslim, no matter how pious and how religious he can be, trying to live according to God's commandments and Islam's teachings, will not be able to know his eternal destiny.

When I arrived at that thought, I was struck by grief, sadness and depression, because I viewed my life as a movie, and I found that my sins and my wickedness were outweighing my good deeds. My disappointment was very great. I knew a relative of mine who went to Mecca, for the pilgrimage, ten times. I wondered, what was the benefit of those acts? I was told that that man went to Mecca for pilgrimage to help wipe out his sins, for the Qur'an says: "For those things that are good, remove those that are evil" (Hood 11:114). I was holding forth the literal teachings of Islam and the outward forms of religiosity covered my life; for this, many of my

relatives encouraged me to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, the birth place of Islam's prophet. However, I refused, and I am happy that I did.

Bidding Ferwell to My Father and My Mohter

My mother's heart was full of compassion and love as a mother, and she was a faithful wife to her husband. However, she was suffering from high blood pressure and other heart diseases. I watched her praying to God to heal her. She was sincere in her faith, living a religious life. I learned much from my mother, even though she lived a short life with us. Suddenly, my mother disappeared from my life as a result of a heart attack, in 1959, when I was twelve years old. With the death of my mother, a deep, painful scar was carved deeply in my heart, for I lost the person in my life that was really compassionate and loving. Her death was the greatest shock of my life. It made my turning to God stronger, because it became clearer to me that one day I would die, and I needed to be ready to meet God.

Later, my father was remarried to a woman who lived with us for a short period of time. Because of the difficult times that I had to go through, I had to clung tighter to my father. I went with him every Friday to the mosque to pray and to hear the Imam's Friday sermon. My knowledge of Islamic teachings was increasing every day. I also was successful in my study at school. However, as I read the Qur'an, a strange feeling of great love toward the person of Christ was brewing in me. I began to search the text of the Qur'an to find all the verses that speak about Christ. I memorized by heart every Qur'anic verse that had something to say about the wonderful person of Christ. I felt that Christ was a holy, pure Prophet, but the information that the Qur'an gives about Him was little. I did not know that there are other resources outside the Qur'an that spoke of Christ. In 1964, another sudden, unexpected shock struck my life, and that was the death of my father. Because of that shock, I was hit by a disease that kept me bed-ridden for months.

The Formal Worship and the Inner Conflict

After the death of my father, I felt lonely and abandoned, with no one to care for me or be concerned about me, which led me to use some entertainment that was not innocent. I felt that what I was doing was not pleasing to God, but despite that, I could not stop. I continued, however, to have the outward appearance of religiosity, praying, fasting and going to the mosque every Friday. In secret, I was committing sins that I tried to cover up with my empty form of worship.

When I turned fourteen years old, I began to feel the sense of guilt that kept me awake at night. I was tempted by many sins that I could not overcome, despite all my personal efforts. Even my daily prayers and fasting could not help me get the victory that I needed during those critical years. Time passed quickly, and I turned eighteen; that is when I comprehended that false worship consisting of my prayers, fasting, Qur'anic study and verse memorization could not change my life. Sin began to become dominant in my life and my feelings. The worldly attractions dominated my mind and I knew for sure that the Qur'anic verse means what it says: "The soul is surely driven to wickedness"

The struggle began to take shape in my life, the struggle between good and evil. I attempted, by all means, to please God and to triumph upon my weaknesses, but I could not. When I turned nineteen years old, I thought of studying the Qur'an again, but in greater depth, this time. As I

studied the Qur'an, I used to spend more time pondering its words and its terms, but I felt that I missed something important. I felt that I was living in a vacuum, without any purpose or aim and without hope. My life became meaningless. Everything around me portrayed my insecurity, even though I was a very religious Muslim who tried to apply the Qur'anic teachings in my life. My personal efforts to gain joy and peace in my life did not succeed at all. But rather, my life became full of fear and anxiety. I felt as though I was living in total darkness where there was no light, no hope nor aspiration. I knew that everyone that walks in darkness shall stumble and shall have an unhappy ending. But he that lives in the light sees everything around him, and is guided in the straight way that leads to the shore of safety and protection. During those difficult times, I turned my eyes towards the Almighty, merciful God, and I asked Him to give me the help I needed, and to lift away the scales from my eyes.

The Desire to know the truth:

I did seek the truth because I had a strong desire to know it. I was looking for the thing that could give peace to my conscience and calm down my mind. However, the only resource I had was the Qur'an. Consequently, I decided to go back to studying it with an open mind and enlightened thinking. I trusted that God would not leave me alone in that crisis. After I studied the Qur'anic verses in depth, God revealed to me the truth for which I had been searching for years. The thing that was really amazing to me was the fact that the truth was in front of me all the time, but I was too blind to see it intellectually. However, the truth was made clear, as though it were through big headlines in the pages of the Qur'an, telling me about the awesomeness, beauty, and holiness of the person of Christ. I discovered through reading the Qur'an that Christ differs from all the prophets and all those who established religions, for He exclusively possessed attribute that no other prophet could have. The Qur'an described the Lord Jesus Christ as: The Word of God, of the Spirit of God, Sustained by God's Spirit, and the Near-Stationed to God. In other words, the Qur'an has testified that Christ was the greatest person that ever walked on the face of this earth.

When you read the Qur'an, you find that Christ has a very high position that is beyond compare. The Qur'an portrayed Christ as a matchless person that no human can come close to. I was greatly impressed by the miraculous, virgin birth of Christ. Of course, no other person could claim that he was born of a virgin, because every human is born of a mother and a father. All the prophets were born via the natural way, but the Qur'an tells us that Christ was definitely not born via the natural way, like all humans. He did not have a human father, for He was born of virgin Mary who had no relation with a man. It was God's Spirit who came upon her and the power of God overshadowed the virgin Mary. Therefore, such a birth made Christ, as far as the Qur'an is concerned, the only One to be born, into this world, of the Spirit of God. The Qur'an testifies, saying: "And Mary the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into her (body) of our Spirit, and she testified to the truth of the words of the Lord, and His revelations, and she was one of the devout (servants)." (Al-Tahrim 66:12).

I was so surprised when I read in the Qur'an that Jesus performed many great and wonderful miracles such as opening the eyes of the blind, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead. Reading about those miracles made me think: Why could the prophet of Islam not do miracles? Why did the Qur'an exclusively specify that only Christ could do great and wonderful miracles?

Another thing that fascinated me and attracted my attention was His sinlessness, infallibility and blamelessness. The Qur'an mentions that all prophets, including the prophet of Islam sinned and

had to ask God for forgiveness of their sins, except for Jesus of whom the Qur'an says that He was : "the holy Son" (Mary 19:19).

Christ and the Qur'an:

I knew much about Christ from the Qur'an, and everything I read was very impressive. Also, many questions were raised in my mind, but I could not find answers. Some of the questions that stuck in my mind were: Who was better, Mohammad or Christ? Why should I follow Mohammad who had never done any miracles? Why should I follow Mohammad who asked God for the forgiveness of his sins, when Christ never have to ask for forgiveness, because He had never committed any? Why was Jesus born of a virgin birth? Because of that wondering, I began to pray to God to guide me to the truth and lift away the scales from my eyes. I spent days and nights asking the Almighty God for help, and to show me the clear truth.

One day, as I was studying the Qur'an I found a marvelous verse that says: "If thou wert in doubt as for what We have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book before thee." (Jonah 10:94). In the above verse, God is commanding the prophet of Islam and all the Muslims, that when doubts strike them, as they read the Qur'an, they should ask those who were reading the Books that came before the Qur'an. Which books does the Qur'an mean? I found the answer in the Qur'an itself when it referred to the Torah and the Gospel, the books of the Jews and the Christians respectively. For this reason, the Bible describes the Christians and the Jews as the people of the Book, or the people of the Remembrance. In other words, the Qur'an, in that verse and other verses, encourages the Muslims to read the Bible, especially when they are assaulted by doubts. Consequently, I decided to read the Bible.

One day, I bought a copy of the Bible from the office of the Bible Society. I started to read the Bible and to compare it with the Qur'an, searching for the truth because I was anxious to know the divine truth and light. As a Muslim, I believed that the Torah and the Gospel (The Old and the New Testaments) Were light and guidance unto the world. The Lord led me to read the Gospel of John, where I discovered the power of Christ's personality, as He spoke with authority. In it, I read that Christ repeatedly used the phrase: "I am," to clarify the truth of His person. I read His statements and His sayings that touched my inner feelings because I found in them divine authority. His sayings entered into the depth of my heart. I was deeply impressed by Christ's statement when He said:

" I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6).

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John 10:9).

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).

Christ attracted me to His person by His great statements and eternal teaching. I have never heard from anyone claiming that the prophet of Islam had made any similar statements to those of Christ's. I could realize that such statements could not have been made by a mere human, no matter how much education that human attained. As I was reading the Gospel and see the authority by which Christ was speaking, I began to ask, Who really was Jesus Christ? Was He a

prophet or an apostle, as I was taught as a Muslim? Was He greater than a prophet? I prayed that God would make clear the straight way for me. I found the love of God to all humans, in the Holy Bible, as illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son, in the Gospel of Luke, chapter fifteen. In Islam men reiterates in their prayer God's ninety-nine excellent names, but none of those ninety-nine names had among them anything that would indicate or even imply the love of God. In Islam, God does not love sinners and does not guide to the truth those who live in iniquity (Repentance 9:24 and House of Imran 140). Every Muslim is deprived of knowing the love of God that overflows onto humanity, because God does not describe Himself in the Qur'an as love. As a Muslim, I was taught that God loves only the good people, and He hated the bad ones; but when I read the Bible, I realized that God's love for sinners, the lost, and the wicked was evident.

The Beginning of the New course:

One night, as I was searching for a broadcasting station on the radio, a Christian radion station attracted my attention. The station was broadcasting a program about the life of Christ. I began to listen to it every evening. I waited for it impatiently. As I was listening to those Christian programs, I felt as though God was talking to me to lead me to the Truth. My knowledge of Christianity was increasing every day. It was God's providence that I met an old friend who told me about an organization in the country of Lebanon who sent, free of charge, correspondence courses about the life of Christ, to anyone who requests such a course of study. So, I participated in that course, and I studied the Bible every day in order to answer the questions that were in the correspondence lessons. Because of that course, I came to know many facts and truths about the person of Christ.

I found that Christ healed the blind and the lame by one word of his blessed mouth. I found him commanding the agitated sea to calm down. Then, I studied about the death of Christ for me and for mankind. I was taught, as a Muslim, that Christ was not crucified, but that another person was crucified in His stead; in the meantime, God lifted up Christ to heaven. However, through the broadcasts, I began to hear something totally different than what I was taught all my life as a Muslim, namely, that Christ offered His life as a sacrifice for me, because I am too weak and too incapable to please God with my works, my fastings and my prayers. As a Muslim, I understood that the Gospel is God's Book, and it is a light for men; I also believed that God's Word cannot be changed or altered. Therefore, Christ, as I believed, was an honorable prophet who could not have told a lie or twisted statements. Then, I found the verse John 3:16 as the answer to all my questions concerning the crucifixion of Christ. It says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." That verse was personally a clear proof that God loves me, and He demonstrated His love by sacrificing His only begotten Son in my stead and for my sake, so that I would not perish in my sins.

I thank God for the Christian radio broadcasts, and for the correspondence course, and my personal Bible study, that worked together to reveal the divine truths that are hidden from most people. I realized, after I came to know many truths, that I was incapable of reaching God by the way of my good works. I was a religious man, practicing all the Islamic rituals and traditions, but I did not know anything about the God that I worshipped. As far as I am concerned, He was an unknown God, because I could not reach Him through religiocity. Religiocity is nothing more than false outward forms of worship that do not express the contents of the heart. Despite my being religious, I had sins and iniquities that no one knew except God. Religiocity was the

outside cover with which I armed myself to hide my faults, defects and blunders. I practiced religion so that I could appear before fellow-men as a pious person that fears God, and I forgot that God knew my thoughts and my heart, while men looked only at my face. As I studied the Bible, I found that the Bible described me as a sinner: "For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God." (Romans 3:23). This fact is repeated by the Qur'an, that man is weak and unable to please God. Even the prophets sinned and asked God for the forgiveness of their sins. I thought, if the prophets committed sins, what should be the situation of regular men, including myself? My conclusion was that man is a sinner and needs deliverance and salvation from his sinful state. Who, then, can save me and deliver me from my sins? I could not continue in that condition, and God cannot be fair and just if He would leave me without planning for a deliverer to save me. God could not have left His creatures groping in darkness without providing them the light they need for guidance to the way of truth and light.

The meeting in the church:

On a Friday, I was walking down a main thoroughfare in our city, when I arrived at a large building that has towers with bells. I understood that it was a Christian church. I entered the building, and I found that there was a religious meeting going on there. After the service, I met with the pastor, and I introduced myself to him. I told him that I needed someone to help me understand some divine truths. I began to attend the church meetings and I studied the Bible with the pastor who opened his heart to me, and explained to me many spiritual truths. God opened all the doors for me so that I could know God's truth. Studying the Bible, the Christian broadcast, the correspondence course, and going to God's house all worked together to help me feel that God has chosen me to be a believer in Christ.

Meeting Christ:

Several months later, I heard a Christian evangelist who came to our city to preach about the person of Christ. I decided to attend those meetings. I felt as though God has prepared a feast for me, through the man of God who came to the city where I lived. During one of the services, the evangelist spoke about a very important subject in Christianity; namely, the power of the blood of Christ. It was a message I would never forget for the rest of my life. The evangelist spoke about how Christ volunteered to die instead of the sinful mankind. I felt, as I was listening with passion, that God was directing the message to me personally. I heard truths that I had never heard before: the speaker explained the supreme love of God and proved that God's love was incarnate plainly in the crucifixion of Christ, who endured the punishment of man's sin. In conclusion, the evangelist directed some questions to the audience, one of which was: Are you sure that you are going to heaven after you depart from this world?

I began to think about that important question that I could not find an answer to, in my heart. I wondered how I could be sure of going to heaven after death? The answer was given by the Evangelist when he quoted the Bible, saying: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and the Savior, and He shall give you everlasting life." I asked myself, "Am I a believer in Christ, the Redeemer, the Savior?" I knew that I loved Christ, and I knew many facts about Him, as I heard from many. I heard that He is the Savior and the Deliverer, but my faith in Him was incomplete, because I did not have everlasting life.

I was impressed by the message of the evangelist and I felt that the Spirit of God was talking to my heart. I heard the evangelist asking the audience to open their hearts for Christ so that He could enter their hearts to cleanse them and purify them of all sins, because the blood of Christ cleanses all sin. I saw Christ, in that night, crucified, in pain, with His precious blood being spilled. I wondered, "Why did God allow that pure, innocent person to die such a horrible death?" The answer was: He died to deliver me from the curse and from the judgment. The evangelist asked the people to make a decision to follow Christ that evening, and he told them that he would be available to answer any questions, after the service.

I felt that the Spirit of God was convicting my heart, asking me to repent and to believe on the crucified Christ. After the service, I went to the Evangelist and I informed him that I was ready to accept Christ in my life. He prayed with me, and asked me to repeat a prayer after him, asking God to have mercy upon me and to forgive me my sins and I asked Christ to dwell in my heart. In that very timeless, historical moment, something wonderful happened: I felt that a heavy load fell off of my back, as though the Lord had performed an operation on me, whereby He gave me a new heart after He took away the old one.

I thank my God for the great divine work that He performed in me that evening, whereby I have, by the grace of God, become a new creation. The concepts of my life and mind were changed, when Christ revealed to me the divine truth that Christ was crucified for me. I was a poor sinner, deprived of God's forgiveness, but in that evening, Christ came into my heart, and He forgave all my sins because I trusted in the power of His cleansing blood. He touched me by His heavenly love and healed me of my sins.

I left the church that evening with the joy of salvation flooding my soul, because Christ gave me the assurance of salvation and the certainty of my going to heaven. I decided to follow Jesus no matter what the cost might be. I immediately knew that many of my relatives and friends would hate me; and indeed, many of them began to distance themselves from me and accuse me with horrible accusations, and they called me with some of the filthiest names they could come up with. I knew that Christ warned us that the road of faith is covered with thorns, and the road that leads to life is narrow, and only the few would find it (Matthew 6:14).

After I accepted Christ as my personal Savior, my life became difficult and full of painful trials. Because of my faith, I lost my job as well as many of my friends and relatives. Here, I remembered the statement made by Paul the Apostle, saying: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Philip. 3:7-8).

I was certain that gaining Christ was the most precious thing in this fleeting world. It is possible that a man may possess all the worldly pleasures: wealth, and palaces, without knowing the real joy of the forgiveness of his/her sins, and without knowing where he will spend his eternity.

Christ entered into my heart and into my life and gave me everything I really imagined and everything I sought. With salvation, Christ gave me the peace of God that passes all understanding: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27). He gave me the peace that most people do not have; consequently, the world is full with fear, anxiety, and worries. The world has nothing in it that prompts peace. The Lord Jesus is the Lord of peace and the giver of peace. No prophet dared claim that he could give peace. But Christ could make that claim because He can forgive man's sins.

I was a religious Muslim who practiced all the required rituals and traditions of Islam, but all those rituals and traditions could not give me the needed peace of heart and peace of mind, simply, because rituals and traditions are man's personal efforts. The real peace is the free gift of God that only Christ can give to everyone that trusts in Him and believes in His redemptive work on the cross of Calvary.

I was faithful in keeping all the required rituals that are imposed by Islam, and I put them into practice faithfully and sincerely. However, sincerity has never been sufficient if it is not accompanied by the Truth. When I came to know Christ who is "The truth, the way and the life", I discovered that all my sincerity in my old religion did not help me know the Truth, because it was based on my personal efforts. The difference is vast between man's work and God's work.

I came to know that God had planned this great salvation and deliverance through the person of Jesus Christ, because He knew that I was incapable of reaching Him through my personal efforts. I found in Him what I was looking for, because He covered me with His love and compassion, by coming down to where I was, and dying in my stead. As a Muslim, I was deprived of the rich grace of God's peace and the peace of mind, because I was deprived of the gift of redemption and free salvation. I learned in my former religion that man cannot redeem himself, as stated in the Qur'an : "As to those who reject faith – if they had everything on earth, and twice repeated, to give a ransom for the penalty of the Day of Judgment, it would never be accepted of them. Theirs would be a grievous penalty." (The Table 5:36). According to the Qur'an, nothing can redeem men from eternal suffering, on Judgment Day. However, I thank God who planned and arranged, in my stead, the great, momentous Sacrifice, to be my ransom and my redemption: "And We ransomed him with a momentous (great) sacrifice." (Al-Safat 37:107). As a Muslim, I used to read that Qur'anic verse, but I could not understand its real meaning. When God enlightened my heart, and guided me to know Christ the Redeemer, I understood that the momentous sacrifice was the death of Christ on the cross for my sins.

The Liberation out of the Prison of fairy tales:

I could not understand many things in the Qur'an, even though it was simple and clear because Satan had blinded my mind, He did not want anyone to come to the knowledge of the truth. Satan has imprisoned millions of men within his will, and he deprived them of the gift of God's free salvation, and closed them in his prison of fairy tales and disobedience, so that they remain in his bondage.

As a person who was the follower of Islam, I was imprisoned in the prison of fairy tales and fables. The stories about Jins and mythical events that we were told and that I was made to believe were as though intentional to keep us in bondage. When I came to know Christ, He liberated me from that prison of fables and myths where I was held in bondage. He also gave me the peace of mind that no one else can give. Millions are still bound by the shortfalls and deceptions of baseless fables that they have inherited as traditions. Thus, they spend their years worshipping an unknown God who does not forgive them their sins, and keeps them bound in fear and terror; neither does he give them the assurance of their eternity. I once considered the cross as a fairy tale, as I heard and learned from others and from the religion of my fathers. But God demonstrated His supreme love through the cross, on which Christ, the just and the innocent, died to pay the debt of my sins and to satisfy the divine justice, on my behalf.

I was blind, but now I see:

The redemption of Christ to the sinful mankind is a clear and a sure proof of God's wonderful love. All I knew after my faith in Christ was that the Holy God truly loved me. Such love would break the stony hearts and touch the fanatic mind to free it from the spiritual blindness. I remember the story of the blind man that was healed by Christ, who had to say after he was grilled: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." (John 9:25).

The Straight Way:

I can testify today for the work of Christ in my life, and I say to every man, "I was blind, now I see." Christ said: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12). This verse means that anyone who has not come to Christ and accepted Him as Savior is in darkness, and that kind of ignorance leads to eternal destruction.

A blind man cannot see his way through the road he is walking on because he is blind. Also, the spiritually blind cannot know the truth. The Bible mentions in the Proverbs of Solomon: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12). Many people imagine that the road they are walking on is straight, without crookedness, but unfortunately, it leads to destruction and death.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Way, and there is no other beside Him. He said: "I am the way." This means that Christ is not a way among other ways, but He is the only way to heaven and eternal happiness. People imagine that there are many ways to reach unto God. Christ made this very important point clear: He told us that He is the way, not a way. Why is He then the only way to God?

The answer is clear and easy. God had planned for one way that would lead to Him. Christ had never lied, for this He always began his statement by saying: "Verily, verily I say unto you..." He told us that He is the way because He is "the Word of God." That means that He is the very expression of God and spokesman of the Triune God. No one else was given such a title. Christ is the way because He is the only one that can be the mediator between God and men. He is the only sinless, infallible and perfect being; for this, He is the sign unto the whole world, as the Qur'an also describes Him in the Surah of the Prophets 21:91. The Mediator should be sinless, blameless and infallible so that He can take God's hand and put it in man's.

When I was a Muslim, I used to read the Fatiha (the Opening) many times per day. In that prayer, there is an important phrase that says: "Lead us to the straight way." The straight way that is intended here is the way that leads to God. And "lead us" means to be guided, directed, conducted to the straight way that leads to God. Muslims, all over the world repeat that phrase many time every day, without really understanding what it really means. Every Muslim should understand that when he prays Al-Fatiha that he is lost and asking for direction to the straight way, and that he is away from God as everyone else who is in this world, violating God's laws. The Qur'an insists that: "man is created weak." (Women 4:28). Yes, man is incapable of pleasing God with his good works and personal efforts... because he is weak. Man has been trying to guide himself and to reach God, but he has failed miserably, because he is under bondage to his lusts and sinful passions. Further, there is no way some good words can outweigh all the evil and wicked works that man commits. However, God desires to deliver us from the evils and the sins of our corrupt nature.

Many people have tried to know God via virtues and good works, but they have failed, because man, by nature, is not good. For this reason, God became flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ, so that man can know God. The Lord Jesus Christ is the true way that man has been searching for, and he is still searching for it. Therefore, everyone that finds this truth shall discover this mystery of life. God is the First and the Last, the only One with no partners, colleagues or associates. However, this great God incarnate in the person of Christ, is able to wipe out sins and purify the hearts. My question today is: Why does man search for the truth, when the truth is right in front of his eyes? Why do people search for other ways? Christ is the Way that takes man to God and to abundant, better, eternal life.

I have decided to be deep-rooted in the truth, no matter how high the cost. I decided to sacrifice many things, so that I could continue walking with my Lord. The Lord arranged a wonderful way by which I could leave my country for another, where I could worship the God who redeemed me and saved me from the fire of hell. I thank God for keeping me safe, and for taking me to another country to have opportunities to freely serve Him and to tell others about His work in my life.

Maybe you are wondering how God could use the Qur'an to lead a Muslim to Christ. First, I would like you to know that all things are possible for God, when not all things are possible for men. Human minds are limited and their capabilities are restricted, but God is limitless and without boundaries. I would also like to point out that the knowledge of God through the Qur'an is not limited to any special person; but rather, it is an open door, to everyone who is searching sincerely and faithfully for the truth. God's invitation is open to anyone, regardless of who he is, or where he is. Also, the invitation is directed to all Muslims to study the Qur'an with an open mind, putting blind fanaticism aside. Fanaticism is the cause that leads to deprivation of God's blessings and of the enjoyment of the spiritual life that results in a personal relationship with God. Furthermore, religious fanaticism always stands as a stumbling stone in the way of any man who desires to know the divine truth.

God is able and is omnipotent. He has presented the opportunity to every man to come to the throne of Grace seeking guidance. God is faithful and just and loving and He is ready and willing to lead and show the straight way to every man who really wants to know it.

The Basic Reasons that Invited Me to Choose Christianity.

The Qur'an Testimony in favor of the Gospel

1 – The Necessity of Upholding the Gospel

The Qur'an did not demand of the Jews and the Christians to leave their religion or their Books, to join Islam. On the contrary, the Qur'an commanded the Jews and the Christians to uphold their Bible and to live by it, blaming the Muslims themselves for neglecting to read their own Book, saying:

"To those whom We have sent the Book, study it as it should be studied: they are ones that believe therein, Those who reject faith therein – the loss is their own." (The Cow 2:121).

"Let the people of the Gospel judge by what God hath revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by what God hath revealed, they are those who rebel." (The Table 5:47)

"As to those who hold fast by the Book and establish regular prayer – never shall We suffer the reward of the righteous to perish." (Al-A'araf 7:170).

"Moreover, We gave Moses the Book, completing to those who would do right, and explaining all things in details – and a guide and a mercy... Lest ye should say: The Book was sent down to two peoples before us, and for our part, we remained unacquainted with all that they learned by assiduous study." (The Cattle 6:154-1560)

2 – The only source:

Above all, the Qur'an made it clear that in case of any doubt in things that were written in the Qur'an, it became a necessity for the Muslims, and especially for their prophet, Mohammad, to turn to the Holy Bible, as it was commanded in the following verse: "If thou wert in doubt as to what We have revealed unto thee: then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee (the Jews and the Christians): the Truth hath indeed come to thee from thy Lord. So be in no wise of those in doubt." (Jonah 10:94).

The Qur'an commands all Muslims, as it commanded their prophet, to return to Holy Bible for the knowledge of the truth and for understanding the subjects that were difficult for them to understand, saying: "And before thee also the apostles we sent were but men, to whom We granted inspiration: if ye realize this not, ask of those who possess the message (The Jews and the Christians)." (The Bees 16:43). Also Mohammad had refused to be a referee among the people of the Book because he considered the Bible is a sufficient referee for them, knowing that the prophets used it to issue their judgment: "It was We who revealed the Torah, therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the prophets who surrendered (to God), and to those who were guided, and to the Rabbis, and to the doctors of the Law, for to them was entrusted the protection of God's Book. And they were witnesses thereto; therefore, fear not men, but fear me, and sell not my signs for a miserable price. If any do fail to judge by

what God hath revealed, they are the unbelievers." (The Table 5:44). Also, the Qur'an admonished the Muslims, saying: "Mankind was one single nation, and God sent messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Book in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed; but the people of the Book after the clear signs came to them and did not differ among themselves except through selfish contumacy. God by His grace guided the believers to the truth, concerning that wherein they differed. For God guided whom He will to a path that is straight." (The Cow 2:213).

Further, the Qur'an, magnifying the Holy Bible, commanded the Muslims not to argue with the Christians, in case an argument arises, saying: "And dispute ye not with the people of the Book except with means better, unless it be with those of them who conflict wrong: but say, We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you." (The Spider 29:46). The Qur'an has made the piety of the Christians as the standard that Mohammad and the Muslims must imitate or follow, saying: "Those were those who received God's guidance: copy the guidance they received." (The Cattle 90).

3 - The Qur'an Confirmed the Bible:

The Qur'an insisted repeatedly that it did not come down to contradict the Holy Bible, nor to replace it; but rather, it came to confirm it and to guard it from any alteration or change. The Qur'an testifies of the infallibility and the authenticity of the Bible, in tens of its verses, of which I chose the following:

"To thee We have sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety." (The Table 5:46).

"O children of Israel! Call to mind to favor which I bestowed upon you, and fear none but me. And believe in what I reveal, confirming the revelation which is with you, and be not the first to reject faith therein." (The Cow 2:40-41).

"There is, in their stories, instruction for men endued with understanding. It is not a tale invented but a confirmation." (Joseph 12:111).

"O ye people of the Book! Believe in what We have revealed, confirming what was already with you, before." (The Women 4:47).

"And this is a Book which We have sent down, bringing blessing, and confirming which came before it." (The Cattle 6:92).

"It is He who sent down to thee in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it."
(The House of Imran 3:3).

"That which We have revealed to thee the Book is the truth – confirming what was (revealed) before it." (Fater 35:31).

"When it is said to them, Believe in what God hath sent down, they say, We believe in what was sent down to us. Yet they reject all besides, even if it be truth confirming what is with them."
(The Cow 2:91).

4 – The Existence of the Bible with the Public:

If the Bible was not in the hands of the Jews and the Christians in the days of Mohammad, he would not have given those great testimonies for the Bible, and he would not have described it with magnificent descriptions.

It is not possible for any sincere Muslim to believe that the Bible has been tampered with and changed; for the Qur'an says that it came to confirm it. How could the Qur'an have guarded it if the Bible has been changed? Further, the Bible could not have been changed because it has been very popular and very widely circulated throughout the world, translated into many languages. Moreover, there have been many Christian denominations who are watching each other, and would not allow any of them to change it. Also, it could not be changed because it is considered holy to the Christians and to the Muslims.

The Gospel was available to people and was read and heard among all peoples, Arabs and others, and Mohammad described the Christians of his time and the Bible saying:

"Not all of them are alike: or the people of the Book are a portion that stand (for the right), they rehearse the signs of God all night long, and they prostrate themselves in adoration." (House of Imran 3:113).

"Those to whom We have sent the Book studied as it should be studied, they are the ones that that believe therein: those who reject faith therein – the loss is their own." (The Cow 2:121).

Therefore, the Bible was with the Jews and the Christians, in the days of Mohammad. He himself mentioned many times in the Qur'an that they had the Book, the Bible, and he described it as "the people of the Book," and "the Book that you have." Of those verses, I quote the following:

"And believe in what I revealed, confirming the revelation that is with you." (The Cow 2:41).

"Then comes to you an apostle, confirming what is with you." (House of Imran 3:81).

The existence of the Bible with the Christian of Arabia, before and during the days of Mohammad, was evident, and those Qur'anic verses are another clear proof to its existence during that time, and to its infallibility.

5 – The Qur'an Did Not Annul the Bible:

A very strange opinion has spread among the Muslims, that the Qur'an replaced the Torah and the Gospel. However, this opinion is baseless and unfounded. It is a false claim that has no truth whatsoever in it. The Qur'an itself points clearly to the fact that it came to confirm the Torah (Old Testament) and the Gospel (New Testament), and to guard them, not to replace them; meaning, to assure the Muslims, that no one can change them. This is written in the following verses: The Cow 2:40, 41, 91, 121, 213; The House of Imran 3:3, 81,113; The Women 4:47; The Table 5:47; and The Cattle 6:90, 92, 154, 156.

Every reasonable man who makes such an accusation should be able to present the necessary proofs and the clear evidence to back up his claims. When proof is requested that the Qur'an has annulled the Bible, people present some very insufficient, unacceptable proofs, such as "That

which follows replaces that which came before." In other words, because the Qur'an came after the Bible, it annuled it and replaced it. However, if we read the Qur'an with an open mind and little attention, we find no verse in the Qur'an that even faintly insinuates that the Qur'an annuled the Bible. The contrary is the truth: besides insisting on confirming the Bible and testifying to its authenticity, the Qur'an admonishes the Christians and the Jews, saying: "Say, O people of the Book, ye have no ground to stand upon unless you stand fast by the Torah and the Gospel." (The Table 5:68).

If the Qur'an did indeed annul and rescind the Bible in its two testaments and its statutes, it would have never insisted that people should regard its laws and precepts, nor admonished people to make the Bible a part of their lives and to uphold it. It definitely would not have stressed the point that the Muslims should believe in the Torah and the Gospel. All the Qur'an most trusted commentators, such as Al-Beidawi, Al-Zamkhashri and Al-Jalalan, unanimously agreed that the Qur'an did not come to annul the divine scriptures that preceeded it. If the Qur'an came to annul the Gospel, it would not have been right for it to state: "Let the people of the Gospel judge by what God hath revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by what God hath revealed, they are those who rebel." (The Table 47). If God sent Mohammad to invalidate the religion of Moses and the message of Christ, would the following statement from the Qur'an be in harmony with such a claim: "If thou wert in doubt as to what we have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been before thee (Jews and Christians)." (Jonah 10:94).

The claim that the Qur'an had annuled the Bible is a far-fetched and baseless claim that is unreasonable and illogical; it should be rejected by those who read and understand the Qur'an. The main, fundamental purpose of the Qur'an is to lead the Muslims to the precepts of the Bible, saying: "God doth wish to make clear to you and to show you the ordinances of those before you, and He wishes to turn to you, and God is All-Knowing and All-Wise." (The Women 4:94).

Also, we read in the Surah of the Cow 2:136, the following verse: "Say ye, We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes; and that given to Moses, and Jesus, and that given to the prophets from their Lord: We made no difference between one and another of them and we bow surrendering to God." According to this Qur'anic text, it is required of every Muslim to believe in the law of the prophets who came before Mohammad and the Qur'an. Therefore, the idea that there is an annulling of the Bible by the Qur'an is a total contradiction to the Qur'an and its teachings.

How could the Qur'an annul the Bible when it came to confirm it and substantiate its authenticity, saying: "And when there comes to them a Book from God, confirming what is with them (the Bible)." (The Cow 2:89). Such a statement is a clear testimony, and no one can misunderstand its meaning. Confirming ultimtely contradicts the annulling. It is impossible for one book to annul another book that it simply came to confirm, as it tells us in the Surah of the House of Imran, saying: "It is He who sent down to thee, in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion to lead men to the truth." (House of Imran 3:3). This verse is clear that the Bible came before the Qur'an, and the Qur'an was introduced to confirm it, and that God was the source of that guidance. Therefore, if God is the source of the Torah and the Gospel, how could God's revelation be annuled? The world is still in great need for the message of the Bible to help deliver people from the bondage of sin and Satan.

Some Muslims say that the Qur'an contains the Torah and the Gospel; therefore, there is no more need for them. To realize the imprudence of this claim, please read again the above Qur'an verses that claim the total opposite. The Qur'an has never insinuated that it contained the Books

of the Bible so that the Muslim would not need them. The opposite is the true as it is explained in the following Qur'anic verse: "With it came down the Spirit of faith and truth to thy heart and mind, that thou mayest admonish in a clear Arabic Tongue, which is in the books of the forerunners, is it not a sign to the learned of the children of Israel knew it." (The Poets 26:193-196). No matter what verse is read in the Qur'an, the reader will never find even the faintest insinuation to support this baseless claim. If the Qur'an was silent concerning its confirmation of the Bible, that would not have necessarily meant to annul the Bible. The only way to believe that the Qur'an annuls the Bible is if the Qur'an very blatantly and clearly stated that it came to annul it, and there there was no more need for it. However, the truth remains that the Qur'an very strongly, in tens of it verses, confirmed the Bible (the Old and the New Testaments), and encouraged people, Muslims, Jews and Christians to read it, uphold it, and believe its precepts. And the Qur'an challenges the whole world, assuring them that there can never be a book that would be better than the Bible, saying: "Say, Bring ye then a Book from God, which is a better guide than either of them (the Torah and the Gospel), that I may follow it." (Stories 28:49). None could ever supercede the Bible.

Chapter Two

Why Did I Choose Christ!?

I became a Christian when I realized the position of Christ in the Qur'an and that His distinctions in the Qur'an superceded all the other prophets and all mankind. The Qur'an was clear in describing Christ's uniqueness, and it exclusively gives Him the attributes that belong solely to

God, as they were also stated in the Bible. The Qur'an attributes to Christ superb titles that no other prophet was given. It also ascribes to Christ great miraculous works that no other prophet did, neither before Him, nor after Him. The Qur'an clearly considered Christ as personality with a super-natural powers; for that, it described Him as "a sign unto the world."

First: His Titles

Of the blessed names of Christ that the Qur'an mentions are four, namely, The Word of God, the Spirit of God, the Messiah of God, and Jesus the Savior.

1. The Word of God

The Surah of the House of Imran 3:45, says: "Behold, the angels said, O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him, His name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter and of the near-stationed to God." Also, the Qur'an, in the Surah of the Women 4:171, says: "Christ Jesus the son of Mary was a messenger of God, and His Word, which is bestowed on Mary and a Spirit from Him." The question that arises here is: Which of the prophets did the Qur'an call the Word of God and His Spirit? God has called some people apostles, others He called prophets or preachers. However, none of those titles come close to Christ's title, "the Word of God". Doubtless, Christ is the greatest, above all the prophets and the messengers.

Some Muslims say that Christ is the Word of God because He was created by the Word of God. Such a claim is wrong, otherwise all the prophets and all humans should have been called God's Word, but they were not. It is clear that Christ was not called "the Word of God" because he was created by the Word of God, but He was thus called because He is the very expression of God. The 'word' is the declaration of the speaker; it translates his thoughts and makes clear his intentions and expresses his moods. In the same manner is Christ who is the declaration and the revelation of God to men. The 'word' demonstrates the authority of the speaker because his will is being implemented by his word; the Bible says: "Where the word of a king is, there is power." (Eccles. 8:4). In the same manner, Christ is God's Word by whom the Triune God created the universe and saved men. The word is a continued existence of the speaker and an undivided part of his person. And so is Christ who existed with God eternally; for this, He is lawfully the Word of God. He is, in essence, equal to God the Father.

Consequently, the name of Christ as it appeared in the Qur'an "*a Word from Him*" necessitates a divine meaning, for this "Word" is the name of a person, and in this case, the person is Christ, who is not created. Some Muslim scholars object to the deity of Christ, and they explain that title of Christ, *the Word of God*, as the command, "Be". But 'Be' is a verb, and 'Word' is a noun, and in this case, it is the name of a person. When the Qur'an referred to *the Word of God*, it continues in that verse, to say, "*a Word from Him, and His name shall be Christ, Jesus* the son of Mary"... The Qur'an did not say, "*a word from Him, and its name shall be..*" denoting that the term '*Word of God*' is a third person singular, not a neutral gender.

Fakhr Al-Razi, a renowned Muslim Imam, in explaining the verse in the Surah of the House of Imran 3:39: "God gives thee glad tidings of Yahya (John the baptist), witnessing the truth of a Word from God.." said; "What was meant by '*a Word from God*' is Jesus. John the Baptist was the first person to believe that Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit, and Jesus was called a

Word from God. The Word clarifies the meanings and the truths, and so does Jesus who guided and led to the divine truth."

This title that Christ has, *The Word of God*, reveals the real position of Christ, that position which is above all humans. The Qur'an gave this term exclusively to Christ. The prophets spoke and uttered and preached the Word of God, but the Qur'an never referred to them as the Word of God, because none of them deserved to be the Word of God. The unique Word of God who is in eternal existence. That means that the Word is the very expression of God, not created, but one in essence with God the Father.

2- Christ the Spirit of God:

The Qur'an, in the Surah of Mary, verse 171, says: "Christ Jesus the son of Mary was a messenger of God, and His Word, which is bestowed on Mary and a Spirit from Him." The renowned Imam El-Razi explained that verse saying that Jesus is *the Spirit of God* because He is a life-giver. El-Beidawi said that He was called *the Spirit of God* because He could raise the dead and the hearts of men.

If we study the term, *the Spirit of God*, in light of the New and the Old Testaments, we find that it means that Christ is of the same nature as God and his essence. For the Spirit of God is God, because God's Spirit is of Him and in Him, and cannot be separate. And we have to use the Bible to understand certain issues when it becomes difficult for us to understand them in light of the Qur'an. The Qur'an has commanded the Muslims to return to the Bible to understand difficult issues, saying: "If thou wert in doubt as to what we have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee." (Jonah 10:94). Besides, the Qur'an referring to Christ as the Spirit of God, also the New Testament, in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians chapter fifteen and verse 45, calls Christ "a Quickening Spirit."

It is important for us to understand the difference between two verses mentioned in the Qur'an, that some Muslims misunderstand and try to mix up their meaning. The two verses are:

"And He fashioned him (Adam), and breathed into him of His Spirit." (Adoration 32:9)

"And His Word which He cast unto Mary." (The Women 4:171).

In the first verse, God breathed into clay to make Adam, but in the second verse, the Spirit of God, entered into Mary, meaning that Christ is the very Spirit of God and the Giver of life.

The Qur'an called Christ "*the Word of God*" and "*Spirit of God*". The question that is raised here is: Was the Spirit of God in existence before the foundation of the world? The question is, Is God His Spirit. In the meantime, He utters with His Word, and far from it for God to be dumb. And we believe that God exists in Himself, inseparable from His Spirit, and speaks with His Word. If we said that God's Spirit and Word were created, and that they were not with Him from the beginning, in eternity before time, then such a belief is in total contradiction to the belief that God is unchanging and unchangeable. But if we believe that He is eternal, therefore, He is alive in His Spirit who is also Christ, according to the Qur'an, and He expresses Himself with His Word, who is Christ. Therefore, Christ is not a new creation by His birth through the virgin Mary, but He is as eternal as God the Father, for He existed with Him and is equal to Him in essence.

In order to block the attacks of those who blasphemously make “*partners*” with God, we must confess that the Spirit of God and His Word are of the self of God without separation. Since Islam called Christ the Word of God and the Spirit of God, we should confess that Christ is the Almighty God Himself. As long as Christ has those two titles deservedly, then He is eternal, and was in existence before He came into the world through the womb of Virgin Mary. Further, if we study the Qur'an, we find that Christ was exclusively given those two titles, because He was worthy of them, because He was and is God who became flesh to execute the plan of our salvation.

3 – Jesus is the Messiah (the Anointed) of God

The Qur'an called Jesus the Anointed (the Messiah) of God, saying: "Behold, the angels said, O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him, His name will be Christ (the Messiah) Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter, and of those nearest to God." (House of Imran 3:45). The Qur'an continues to say: "Christ Jesus the son of Mary was a messenger of God, and His Word, which He cast unto Mary and a Spirit from Him." (The Women 4:171). As we know and understand, the name is an indication as to the type of person that is talked about. Suppose we asked, What is the meaning of this honorable name by which Jesus was called in the Qur'an?

We find that the name "*Christ*" means “the anointed.” Anointing denotes that olive oil is used to pour on the head of a chosen person for a prominent position, to serve in a revered office. This anointing custom was used to appoint prophets and kings, such as David. However, Christ was not anointed by oil poured by human hands, but His anointing was a special, spiritual, divine anointing that signifies His special relationship with God the Father. Every person that is anointed, is anointed for a special office such as a high priest, a prophet or a king. However, the person of Jesus was anointed for the three exalted offices all together, the High Priest, the Prophet, and the King. Therefore, the anointing of Christ was God's anointing. Accordingly, Christ is the Great High Priest, the Great Prophet, and the Great King.

The Qur'an admits that Jesus was exclusively called "*the Christ*", with all the three great offices belonging to Him. It is keen to see that Christ called Himself a prophet in Luke 4:24, and King David called Him Lord in Psalm 110:4; and he called Him King in Psalm 2:6, and Priest in Psalm 110:4. Isaiah the Prophet called Him, "the Almighty God" (Isaiah 9:6). The Bible is full of verses that explain the meaning of the name of Christ, and we should understand it in the Qur'an by the light of the Torah and the Gospel, the Books that the Qur'an confirms. The Qur'an tells us that it was the angels of heaven who carried that name down from heaven to this earth, as good tidings to Mary and the world, saying: "Behold, the angels said, O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him, His name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter, and of those nearest to God." (House of Imran 3:45).

Therefore, "Christ" is a heavenly name, straight from God; for this, Christ has a special message from God to the world. The conclusion in studying this book is that God anointed the person of Jesus and sent Him to be Mercy unto mankind: "And We appoint Him as a sign unto mankind and as a Mercy from Us." (Mary 19:21). The very confirmation of the Qur'an of that very title of Christ, clearly indicates that Jesus, the Son of Mary is the God that was prophesied about as coming to the world as the only Hope and only Savior for the world.

4 – Jesus, the Arabic word for it: Issa

The Arabic name Issa is derived from the Greek word "eiessu", and it means, Savior. This name that is full of the majesty of Might and goodness, brings us the good tidings of the redemption of mankind, and of the deliverance of their sins. The word Messiah as one of the titles of Jesus, came in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Qur'an. In the Old Testament, it described Christ prophetically, saying: "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." (Isaiah 62:11). In the New Testament, Gabriel, the archangel, said to Virgin Mary: "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus." (Luke 1:31). Then in the book of Matthew, the meaning of the name is made clear: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21).

Then the Qur'an came calling Him Jesus, confirming what was revealed in the Torah and the Gospel. The Qur'an confirmed this name of the Savior and mentioned it twenty-five times in its chapters (surahs), and the following Qur'anic verses are quoted:

"And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear signs and strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit."
(The Cow 2:87).

"O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him, His name will be Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary." (House of Imran 2:45).

"Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary, was a Messenger of God and His Word that He cast unto Mary."
(The Women 4:171).

The Lord Jesus Christ has made His salvation available to mankind, of every nationality, color and religion, throughout the age. Salvation from sins, by His atonement on the cross, satisfies the requirements of God's justice. Christ sacrificed Himself and shed His own blood to grant people mercy and forgiveness, and to free them from the bondage of sin, and to translate them from the kingdom of darkness into righteous life. He saves from death and delivers from hell: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death.." (Hosea 13:14). Peter said: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Secondly: His Prophetical Titles

1- Christ the Son of Mary:

This title is referred to or insinuated by the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an. The Torah called Jesus, "the seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15); Isaiah the Prophet prophesied that He would be born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14). In the Gospel, at the start of His ministry, some people referred to Him as the "Son of Mary" (Mark 6:3). The Qur'an referred to Jesus with that title, Son of Mary, as a testimony to the untainted, pure motherhood of Mary and to the miraculous birth of Jesus from a virgin who was not touched by a man. The Qur'an testifies, saying:

"And We made the Son of Mary and His Mother as a sign." (Believers 23:50).

"When the Son of Mary is held up as an example..." (Zukhruf 43:57).

"And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the Son of Mary.." (The Table 46).

"And We gave Jesus the Son of Mary clear signs.." (The Cow 2:87).

"His name is Jesus the Son of Mary.." (House of Imran 3:45).

This name "Jesus the Son of Mary," is given to Jesus, attributing to Him the honor of which He is worthy, because of His relation to God, and not to a human father. There is preference over all men in that name, and it is a testimony God's coming in the flesh.

2 – Christ the servant of God:

Christ, in His coming in the flesh and becoming a man, is the servant of God, as is confessed by the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an. The Old Testament says: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." (Isaiah 52:13). The New Testament says: "...But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Philip. 2:7). The Qur'an stated: "Christ distaineth not to serve and worship God." (The Women 4:172).

Psalms 40:6 says: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required." (Psalm 40:6). In Israel, there was a tradition that a man should serve as a slave (a servant) for seven years. After seven years, he should be freed. But if he loved his master and wanted to stay as his servant, then his master would pierce his ear, as sign that that slave is his servant forever.

When men sinned, God was not pleased with their offerings and their sacrifices which could not atone for their sins. David saw with the prophetic eye, the Lord Jesus in the flesh, coming to save men. Paul the apostle gave us the whole picture of how Christ volunteered to become the servant so that he would be the atonement for the sins of mankind, to free them from their sins, saying: "Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philip. 2:5-8). As a king is clad with humility, so Christ did not hesitate to come down and dwell among the poor to comfort them, and to finish the needed work to save man from his sins.

3 – Christ the Prophet:

Moses prophesied in the Old Testament, saying: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18:15).

The New Testament says: "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." (John 6:14).

The Qur'an quotes Jesus, who says: "I am indeed a servant of God.." (Mary 19:30).

According to the Qur'an, the Lord Jesus could talk when he was a baby, in the crib. Such an incident is to tell us that He was not a natural human, and His being supernatural is clear and sure; He is the Word of God and the Spirit of God that God cast unto Mary. And according to the Holy Bible, He is the "I am" that became flesh to declare to us what we did not know, but would like to know about God.

4 – Christ the Messenger

Isaiah the prophet said in the Old Testament: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isaiah 61:1). The New Testament quoted Christ, saying: "But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent me." (John 7:29.) Then, the Qur'an came to say: "Christ Jesus the Son of Mary, the Messenger of God and His Word, that He cast unto Mary." (Women 4:171). It is essential for us to mention here that the sending of Christ by God is distinguished from the sending of human prophets and messengers. In the light of the Bible, we know that Christ came down straight from God, on a divine, unique mission, as the uttering of the words by the speaker. Also, the Qur'an admits that the words of Christ and His preaching were not given to Him by Gabriel or another angel, but rather, the result of his dialogue, chatting with God the Father. That is where the Qur'an says: "And God teaches Him the Book and wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel, and appoints Him a messenger unto the children of Israel.." (House of Imran 3:48-49).

5 – The Holy Christ:

The Old Testament described Christ as "the Most Holy" (Daniel 9:24). The New Testament says of Him: "Holy and undefiled" (Hebrew 7:26). The Qur'an said of Him: "A Holy Son." (Mary 19:19). In this statement, the Qur'an confirms the Bible, and acknowledges that Christ was exclusively born of a virgin, and that He was the one and only to be born without the touch of Satan on him, but Holy and Pure of all sins, as Mohammad preached.

6 – Christ the blessed:

King David said of Christ in the spirit of prophecy: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord." (Psalms 118:26). And in fulfilment to King David's prophecy, the New Testament recorded the scene, as the Lord Jesus entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, in the Midst of the people's praise: "And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Mark 11:9). The Qur'an came to confirm this fact by telling us that Christ had carried this message all along, since His very birth, saying: "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be." (Mary 19:31). During His life on earth, Christ proved that He was, in every moment he spent on this earth, blessed and blessing wheresoever He was.

Which one of the prophet could say that he was a blessing, in every moment of his life? When the Qur'an used the term, "wheresoever I be," it meant that humans, regardless of who they are, are vulnerable to weaknesses, and thus they are overcome by human factors, circumstances and temptations., Christ proved through His perfect life, that He was above all circumstances, because He was the blessed wheresoever He was.

The Bible states: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (John 1:8). Yes, everyone that has lived upon the face of this earth has sinned and has been polluted by iniquity, except for the Lord Jesus Christ, who knew no sin. There was no guile in his mouth, because blessing and grace were His companion, with the backing of the Holy Spirit, from the cradle, to the cross. For this, no one else could be a mercy and a blessing, and the Qur'an states that no one enjoyed that high position where he could be mercy and blessing except Christ who could say: "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be." (Mary 19:31).

7 - Christ, the Highest Example:

The Lord Jesus made the following statement: "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:15). Then the Qur'an came to confirm the fact that Jesus is the supreme example, saying: "And We have made Him an example to the children of Israel." (Zukhruf 43:59).

Christ was, in all His ways, wonderful. He is the amazing sign from God, and He is the supreme example to all mankind. He is an example, not in the battlefield, but in piety, in holiness, and in serving others as He was quoted in the Qur'an: "And He enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live. He hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing and miserable." (Mary 19:32). The Qur'an has placed the person of Jesus Christ in a high place of infallibility and has made Him the supreme example who knew no sin.

8 – Christ, the Honorable in This World and the Hereafter:

The New Testament described the Lord Jesus Christ: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Col. 1:15-20).

In echoing the above stated verses which are a clear evidence of His supremacy and authority over the whole universe, the visible and the invisible, the Qur'an comes to back them and confirm them by saying that the Lord Jesus is "Held in honor in this world and the hereafter, and is near-stationed to God." (House of Imran 3:45). El-Baydawi said, in explaining that Qur'anic verse, that the honor in this world is prophethood, and in the hereafter is advocacy. El-Razi added in his explanation, that honor is His virtue and purity from faults in the world, and a wealth of righteousness in the hereafter, or the answering to His supplication in this world, and the supremacy of His office in the hereafter. In fact, it means His supremacy of prophethood and advocacy, for He is the prince of prophets and messengers, and the most honorable over them and the nearest-stationed to God.

In this subject, the New Testament says of the Lord Jesus at His ascension to heaven: "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." (Mark 16:19). Then the Qur'an says: "But God raised Him up unto Himself." (The Women 4:158).

Thirdly: Christ is a Sign Unto Mankind

Isaiah the prophet said of Christ: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14). The Lord Jesus himself said of the miracle of His resurrection: "For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." (Luke 11:30 (KJV)).

In the two above verses, Christ was the sign in His incarnation and a sign in His resurrection. In echoing the truths of those verses, the Qur'an said: "And We shall appoint Him as a Sign unto men and Mercy from Us." (Mary 19:21). Then the Qur'an continued to say: "And We have made her and her Son a Sign unto mankind." (The Prophets 21:91).

Therefore, and according to the Qur'an, Christ is a Sign because He is supernatural, no matter what angle you use to look at Him. He is a Sign in His birth, a Sign in His message, a Sign in His life, a Sign in His death, a Sign in His resurrection, a Sign in His ascension to heaven, and a Sign in His second coming to judge the world.

1 – Christ was a Sign at His Birth:

Christ's birth was miraculous; for He was wonderful, unique, and above all the levels of mankind. All men, including all the prophets were born according to the natural laws, except for Christ, who was born of a mother that was not touched by a man (Mary 19:20). It was an archangel who came and told Mary the good tidings of the coming birth of Christ. Consequently, Mary received in herself the Word of God and His Spirit that resulted in the birth of the sinless, pure, and holy Son, while she was still a virgin.

Islam teaches that Christ's birth was unique, in the sense that He was the only person ever that was not touched by the devil, at His birth. The prophet of Islam said, describing the purity and

the infallibility of Christ at His birth: "Satan pokes with his finger the side of every human, at birth, except Jesus, the Son of Mary, when he came to poke him, he poked the curtain." Satan was not allowed to touch or pollute the person of Christ.

All men were born with the factor of a father and a mother, except for Christ who was born in a miraculous way. He is different than all men because He came from above. John the Baptist said of Him: "He that cometh from above is above all: He that cometh from heaven is above all" (John 3:31). Christ has proven, by His virgin birth, that He is supreme above all the prophets and those who established religions. Therefore, anyone who compares Jesus to Moses, David or Mohammad, makes a big mistake, for the Qur'an declares that Jesus is different from all humans because He was born of a virgin, without the factor of a human birth.

2 – Christ was a Sign in His Message:

The Qur'an described the message of Christ as unique and better than any other by the backing of the Holy Spirit. The message of Christ differs from the messages of all the prophets and the messages of all those who established religions, for the message of Christ is the good tidings of great joy... tidings of the precious salvation, and tidings of freeing men that are in bondage from their sins. Christ came to give a new life to all those sinners who are dead spiritually that believe on Him. Christ said:

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
(John 10:10).

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
(Luke 19:10).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
(John 5:24).

That was the unique message of Christ that differs totally from other messengers' and prophets' messages: He came to save sinners, to give abundant, eternal life, and to deliver men from everlasting condemnation. It is the message of peace, aspiration, and hope.

3 – Christ is a Sign with His Miracles:

According to the Qur'an, the message of Christ was backed and confirmed by His miracles that no one else, neither before Him, nor after Him, could repeat. Some of Christ's miracles were:

a. Creating:

The Qur'an tells us that Christ, while was on earth, He could create. He was quoted in the Qur'an saying: "I have come to you, with a sign from your Lord, in that I create for you out of clay, as if it were, the figure of a bird." (House of Imran 3:48 and The Table 5:110). Creating is the attribute of God exclusively, and only God could create by breathing into clay. But the Qur'an insists that Christ is the creator who could create life by breathing into clay.

b. Raising the dead, healing the blind and the lepers:

The Qur'an insists upon and confirms the miracles of Christ, quoting Christ: "And I heal those that are born blind, and the lepers." (House of Imran 3:49). The Qur'an focused on Christ healing those who were born blind. It also showed that He healed the most frightening disease in that society, leprosy, which is highly contagious and difficult to heal. It should be noted that Christ was the only one that could heal those who were born blind.

c. Knowing Man's Future and Secrets:

This one attribute is exclusively God's, but the Qur'an attributed it to Christ, where it stated, as quoting Christ: "I predict to you what ye eat, and what ye store in your houses." (House of Imran 3:49). Of course, this verse reveals that Christ could tell man's secrets. Also, Christ could tell the future, as He prophesied in the Qur'an about His own death and resurrection, saying: "Peace is on Me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I shall be raised up to life again." (Mary 19:33).

When someone studies the Qur'an, it becomes clear to the Qur'an student that Mohammad, the prophet of Islam, had confessed that he was totally incapable of performing any miracles, and he declared that he was a mere human; saying: "And they say, Why are not signs sent down to him from his Lord? Say, The signs are indeed with God: and I am indeed a clear warner." (The Spider 29:50). Then, Mohammad justified his inability to make miracles by claiming that people did not believe the miracles anyway, saying: "And We refrain from sending the signs, only because the men of former generations treated them as false." (The Journey 17:59). Does not that Qur'anic verse give the impression that God gave up? God does not give up, and the men of old responded splendidly to God's signs and miracles, as mentioned in the Bible.

If any prophet should have come after Christ to call on Christ's followers to turn away from Christ and to believe in Mohammad, he should have been able to come with greater miracles that would supercede Christ's miracles, so that he could have convinced the Christians to become Muslims. Instead, Mohammad admitted and acknowledged that he was totally incapable of performing any miracles.

4 – Christ Was a Sign in His Perfection and Holiness:

The Qur'an decided that all the prophets and the messengers had sinned against God, and they asked for forgiveness. None of them was excluded, except Christ. The Qur'an declared that Mohammad's sins almost broke his back, saying: "Have We not expanded thee thy breast? Have We not removed from thee thy burden that did gall thy back." (The Expansion 94:1-3). The burden as it is understood by interpreters is the burden of sins and iniquities. Thus, by the text of this verse, the Qur'an is admitting that Mohammad had committed sins, and that he needed to ask for forgiveness and for God's guidance, as it is also stated in the following verse: "Verily We have granted thee a manifest victory, that God may forgive thee thy faults of the past and those to follow; and guide thee on the straight way." (Victory 48:1-2).

The Qur'an mentioned the prophets, and mentioned that they sinned. However, Christ alone was excluded, for He knew no sins, which the Qur'an mentions. He had never needed to repent or to ask for forgiveness, for He was holy; and the Qur'an said of Him: "To grant to thee the gift of a holy Son." (Mary 19:19). Therefore, Christ is the only One that is sinless and infallible.

5 – Christ is a Sign in His Resurrection:

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, granted peace to individuals in this world that has known no peace. He has proven to be the Prince of Peace since the day of His birth into the world, confirmed by the events of the day He died, and the day He rose again, as it was recorded in the Qur'an: "Peace be upon me, the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I will be raised again alive from the dead." (Mary 19:33). The New Testament tells us that the resurrection of Christ from the dead is His greatest sign. "For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." (Luke 11:30).

Christ's resurrection is considered as the seal for the trueness and authenticity of His message, as Paul the apostle spoke of the person of Christ in the flesh, saying: "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name." (Romans 1:4-5).

Also, the resurrection of Christ is the basis for our justification. The Bible says: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:25). Thus, the resurrection of Christ has become the cause of our Hope to be resurrected and to live with Christ for ever as He promised, saying: "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14:19).

6 – Christ is a Sign in His Ascension to Heaven:

The Qur'an testifies that as Jesus came into this world in a miraculous, unique way, He also departed from this world in a miraculous, unique way. The ascension of Christ, alive, to heaven, has been an unparalleled event in all the history of mankind. The ascension of Christ alive to heaven is a fundamental teaching of the Qur'an. The Muslims believe that Christ was alive when He went to heaven, and He is still alive with God. The Qur'an says: "Behold, God said, O Jesus, I will cause thee to die, and I will raise thee to Myself." (House of Imran 3:55). Then the Qur'an insists, saying: "But God did raise Him to Himself." (The Women 4:158).

Therefore, the ascension of Christ to heaven, after His death and resurrection, is a distinctive attribute that the person of Christ enjoyed exclusively. No human has ever had such a privilege. Whether some Muslim believe that Jesus died or not, the fact remains the same, that He ascended to heaven alive. And those who insist that Jesus did not die, let them know that the ascension of Christ to heaven was without the Prince of Death being able to extend his authority over Christ, yet, the ascension of Christ to heaven alive is the most wonderful and the greatest miraculous event that can happen to a person. Has the Qur'an testified to any other prophet or any human, other than Christ, conquering death? Only Christ did. But as for Mohammad, the Qur'an clearly speaks of his death, saying: "Mohammad is no more than a messenger, many were the messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then turn back on your heels?" (House of Imran 3:144). As for the destiny of Mohammad, the Qur'an spoke of it as though there was no assurance, saying: "That thy Lord may raise thee to a praised office." (The Journey 17:79). While the Qur'an gave only a possibility for Mohammad to go to heaven, it insisted strongly, three times, that Jesus was ascended to heaven alive.

7 – Christ, the Sign on Judgment Day:

The Qur'an attributes to Christ a unique role at the end of the world, on Judgment Day, saying: "And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment)." (Zukhruf 43:61). In this Qur'anic verse, the word "the hour" means, as the Qur'an translators put it, the hour of judgment. This Qur'anic verse is telling us that the second coming of Christ is a sign of the sure coming of the last day, and that it is a condition for the coming of the Day of Judgment. Moreover, the role that Christ will have on that day is a distinctive privilege that no prophet or messenger will have. Therefore, Christ's second coming will be a sign for the Judgment Day. If we wonder who, other than Christ, has such a privilege, the answer is clear: no one else.

The Qur'an also testifies that Christ is honored in this world and in the hereafter. This honor, as it is explained by Muslim scholars, is the ability to be an advocate for the people. Therefore, Christ will be, on the Judgment day, the Judge and the advocate. It is clear in the Qur'an that advocacy is the office of Christ alone. Even Mohammad was denied such a privilege, as it was recorded in the Qur'an, saying: "Whether thou ask for their forgiveness, or not, if thou ask seventy times, God will not forgive them." (Repentance 9:80). In the above-stated verse, the Qur'an clearly states that God rejected the advocacy of Mohammad in the end of times, as it is stated in the Surah the Crowds, saying: "Is, then, one against whom the decree of punishment is justly due. Wouldst thou then deliver one who is in fire?" (The Crowds 39:19). On the other hand, the Qur'an says of Christ: "O Mary, God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him, His name will be Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary, held in honor, in this world and the hereafter and of those who are nearest to God." (House of Imran 3:45). As mentioned above, that the commentators of the Qur'an have unanimously agreed that honor means the ability to be an advocate on Judgment Day. The Qur'an gave that office exclusively to Christ.

Chapter Three

Very Important Questions

In this chapter, I shall answer some very important questions, among which are:

1. Are the Torah and the Gospel God's books? Was there any alteration of the Bible?
2. What does it mean, that Christ is the Son of God?
3. Is the Cross a reality or a myth?
4. Is God one or three?

Is the Bible Altered?

Some people, including our Muslim friends, think that the Bible, the Old and the New Testaments, was altered, and that human hands have corrupted it. They believe that the Bible that is in our hands today, is different than the Bible that was written by the prophets and the

apostles, and it is different than the Bible that existed in the days of Mohammad. I used to think much about this subject before I became Christian. By God's grace, I arrived at a sure answer to this important question. And I pray that the Lord would open the eyes of everyone who believes that the Bible has been tampered with and changed, that they may know the truth and see the light of God.

The Holy Scriptures testify that God is the One that inspired His Word and that He is the Guard and the protector thereof. Here are some verses from the Holy Scriptures:

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."
(Isaiah 40:8).

"Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it."
(Jeremiah 1:12).

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."
(Deut. 4:2).

The the Qur'an came to confirm this very essential truth, to say:

"It is We who revealed the Torah to Moses: therein was guidance and light. But its standards have been judged the Jews, by the prophets who bowed to God's will, by the Rabbis and the doctors of law: for to them was entrusted the protection of God's Book, and they were witnesses thereto... And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the Son of Mary confirming the Torah that had come before Him: We sent Him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Torah that had come before Him, a guidance and admonishing to those who fear God. To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it; and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what God hath revealed.." (The Table 5:44-48).

In the above quoted Qur'anic verses, the reader finds a strong testimony for the authenticity of the Bible, in both its parts, the New and the Old Testaments. Also, in those verses, there was a commandment to the prophet of Islam to judge that which was sent down, and then Mohammad was encouraged to guard the Torah and the Gospel.

Could there be alteration of the Bible? Let us read what the Qur'an says:

"And in their footsteps, We sent Jesus the Son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before Him, We sent Him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light and confirmation of the Torah that had come before Him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear God... Say, O people of the Book, ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by Torah, and the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord."
(The Table 5:46 & 68).

In the above stated verses, the Qur'an admonishes the people of the Book to uphold the precepts of the Old and the New Testaments, as it existed at the time the Qur'an was written. The Qur'an commands all the believers, including the Muslims, to believe the Bible. Such verses are nothing less than an acknowledgement and a confession in favor of the authenticity and accuracy of the Bible that is free of the pollution of alteration and change.

The Qur'an went on to say: "And before thee also the apostles We sent were but men, to whom We granted inspiration; if ye realize this not, ask of those who possess the Message (Christians and Jews)." (the Bee 16:43). In this verse, there is a strong command to Mohammad and to the Muslims to ask the Christians and the Jews about any difficult issue that confronts them in understanding the Qur'an or the Bible. Could it be possible that the Qur'an would command Mohammad and the Muslims to ask the people of the Book, if their Book has been tampered with and changed?

The Qur'an has recorded many verses in its text, that contain promises from God Himself that no one would be able to pollute God's Word by changing it, saying:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Remembrance (the Bible), and We will assuredly guard it."

(ElHijr 15:9).

"There is none that can alter the Words of God."

(The Cattle 6:34).

"But no change wilt thou find in God's law."

(Creation 35:43).

"None can change His Word."

(The Cattle 6:115).

The Lord Jesus Christ promised that the Word of God cannot be changed. He said in the sermon on the mount: "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:18). Then Christ said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35). After all this proof and strong evidence, would it still be possible for the Bible to be altered? God inspired it, and He is able to guard it and keep it safe.

I also would like to point out to the following important issues;

Firstly, there could not have been any alteration or change to the Torah (the Old Testament) before the coming of Jesus Christ; otherwise, Christ would not have required of His followers to read the Old Testament that testifies of Him. It would have been impossible for Christ to ask His followers to read an altered or a changed Book. There could not have been any change in the Bible after the coming of Christ, because His disciples would have testified against any alteration or change, and they would have resisted it. It would have been easy to uncover any alteration by comparing the altered copy with the copies they had of the true original. The Qur'an testified, seven hundred years after Christ, that the Torah (Old Testament) is inspired by God; therefore, there was no alteration or change in it. Any person that makes such a charge is, in reality, stabbing the authenticity of the inspiration of the apostles and the prophets, and he is attributing weakness and negligence to God, in keeping His Word.

Secondly, the Gospel (the New Testament) could not have been altered or changed. But if it were altered, when did that alteration or change take place? Was the alteration before the coming of the Qur'an or after the coming of the Qur'an? If someone says that the alteration came before the Qur'an, such a claim would be a direct stabbing into the Qur'an itself, as it testifies to the authenticity of the Gospel (the New Testament), saying:

"If thou Wert in doubt as for what We have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book before thee" (Jonah 10:94).

When any person makes an accusation that the Gospel was altered before the coming of the Qur'an, such an accusation is a direct stab at many of the Qur'anic verses that clearly testify in favor of the authenticity of the New Testament inspiration.

However, if someone made the claim that the alteration of the the New Testament took place after the Qur'an, such a claim should not be accepted by the Muslims, because it is accusing the Muslims of not carrying on their responsibility of guarding the Gospel, as the Qur'an says, expecting the Muslims to obey: "To thee We sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety." (The Table 5:48). When 'guarding it' means protecting it; therefore, when a Muslim says that the Gospel has been changed, he then is charging that the guard has failed in meeting the responsibility laid upon him. In that case, the Muslims should have kept a true, original copy of the Torah and the Gospel before they were altered, because guarding necessitates the existence of the guarded.

Thirdly, it is impossible that any alteration or change could have happened to the Bible (Torah and Gospel), because all the new geological discoveries have uncovered over thirteen thousand pieces of manuscripts that agree with the Gospel (the New Testament) text that we have today in our hands. Further, there are many parts from the New Testament that were quoted by the early Christian fathers in their writings. Also, the Textus Vaticanus, that was written 328 AD; and the textus Sinaiticus that was written in 350 AD; and the Syrian text that was written in the fourth century after Christ, are available with thousands of other manuscripts of the Bible, with all the translations that exist, to the readers to read and to compare. All this proof is clear evidence that the Bible that is in our hands is the inspired Word of God, about which Paul the apostle said: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

What Does it Mean: Christ, the Son of God

Most Muslims are unaware of the real meaning of Christ's title: the Son of God. They believe that such a term is a blasphemy and sacrilege. They surely interpret that term inaccurately, for they imagined that God got married to a woman and begat a son from her. Far from it, that God would do anything like that. Because of the importance of this issue, it becomes necessary to clarify.

When the Christians say that Christ is the Son of God, they intend, with such a term, a different concept than the concept the Muslims have about sonship. The concept of sonship in the Christian understanding differs from the sonship of the secular concept. It is far from it that the Holy, All-knowing and Almighty God does what a human would do. Man is an earthly, limited creature, and God is eternal. Furthermore, the Bible describes the Almighty God as a Spirit, not a body, saying: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). It is readily concluded from this verse that God is not a material being; consequently, God does not get married, nor does He need to get married, nor does He beget children. Such is the Christian doctrine. Therefore, he is in error, whoever believes that the sonship of Christ to God is a carnal human-like relation, because God was not born, and He does

not beget. The Christians do not believe that Christ is a carnal son, produced in the natural, human, sexual way; God does not get married to beget children. Christ is the Son of God in the purely spiritual sense.

Christ came to this world to fulfil the purpose of God in spreading the message of love, peace and the redemption of humanity from the curse of sin. Christ was miraculously conceived in Mary, by the Holy Spirit, and was born of a pure virgin, because He is God's Most Holy One. This simply means that Christ is supreme to every human and above all the prophets, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:6). Therefore, Christ is God's Most Holy, the incarnate Word of God, and of His Spirit.

Why Was Christ Called The Son of God

It was not the Christians who called Christ the Son of God, but rather it was the Almighty God Himself who gave Him this unique title. We can prove this with the Word of God. As long as we believe that God is Almighty, and we believe His promises, then we trust His Word that is recorded in the Bible.

The Bible tells us that when Christ went down in the Jordan to get baptized, the heavens were opened, and a voice came from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17). This voice that was heard was the voice of the Almighty God who is Omnipotent, and He is the One that assured the hearers that Christ is His Son. The Bible tells us that the title of "the Son of God" was given to Christ even before He was born into this world, by Gabriel, as he made the announcement to Christ's mother Mary:

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.
And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest... Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"
(Luke 1:30-35).

Therefore, the sonship of Christ to God is spiritual, not carnal nor material.

Was Christ Really Crucified?

Most Muslims find great difficulty in understanding the necessity for the crucifixion. Therefore, many of them ask, "How could the reality of Christ's death on the cross be in harmony with the reality of God permitting one of His prophets to die such a heinous death. How could God allow such a thing to happen to one of His men?"

This subject has preoccupied my mind, as a Muslim, but God the omnipotent enlightened my eyes, and I have experienced the power of the Cross in my life, so I would like to make this subject clear.

The Qur'an attributes titles and honors to Christ that puts Him on a totally separate level above all humans. When we compare Christ's distinctives that are mentioned in the Qur'an and the distinguished characters of the prophets that the Qur'an mentioned, it becomes clear that the difference is enormous. The Qur'an gives Christ distinctives that it does not give to any other, such as being a sign in His birth and His youth. The Qur'an says: "Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, to announce to thee the gift of a holy Son. She said, So it will be. Thy Lord saith, That is easy for Me, and We appoint Him as a sign unto mankind and as a Mercy from Us. It is a matter so decreed." (Mary 19:19-21). The Qur'an tells us that Christ was a Sign in His life: "And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear signs and strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit." (The Cow 2:87). He was a sign in His death and ascension: "Behold, God said, O Jesus, I will cause thee to die, and I will raise thee to Myself." (House of Imran 3:55). Also, He was a Sign on Judgment Day: "Behold, the angels said, O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him, His name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter and of the near-stationed to God." (House of Imran 3:45). He was a Sign in His person as Jesus the Son of Mary: "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be." (Mary 19:31); "O Mary, God hath chosen thee and purified thee – chosen thee above the women of all nations." (House of Imran 3:42). "He is the Word of Truth about whom they vainly dispute." (Mary 19:34). He is the Holy Son from His birth (Mary 19:19). He is Jesus the Son of Mary, God's Word and His Spirit: "Christ Jesus the son of Mary was a messenger of God, and His Word, which is bestowed on Mary and a Spirit from Him." (The Women 4:171). Based on what was conveyed in these Qur'anic verses, and in light of God's Word that is revealed in the Bible, we cannot consider Christ as one of the prophets, as our Muslim friends imagine, but He is the Word of God and His Spirit. The Gospel says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1&14).

In addition to all the descriptions that came in the Surah of the Women 4:171, the term "His Word" does not mean a command from God, as some Muslim scholars misunderstand it, but the Word of God is Christ Jesus, who was the Son of Mary, the Messenger of God, His Word, as He is of His Spirit. All these descriptions explain each other and complete each other. The following verse makes the matters clearer as it says: "Behold, the angels said, O Mary, God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: His name will be Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary." (House of Imran 3:45).

Therefore, the Word of God is a real person whose name is Christ Jesus, not just an utterance or a mere command from God. Christ is the Word of God, and He is the Word which is the character that stands in the very self of God. He is of the Spirit of God because He emanated from the self of God, and there is no difference between God and His Spirit. The relationship here is a relationship of a source not of an addition. The Spirit that raises the dead and the hearts of men, carries in His work the very evidence of Himself. In the Qur'an's definition of Christ, Christ is God sent Messiah, God's Word, and God's Spirit. Such a definition describes a personal relationship between Christ and God the Father that supercedes humans and all prophets and messengers, without any exception.

Christ's Death on the Cross

Judaism, Christianity and Islam declare that God created man in the state of innocence (Eccl. 7:29), and that He created him in His own image after His own likeness (Genesis 1:26).

Therefore, man was created in the image of the Almighty, after His likeness and glory (1Cor. 13:6). In the Surah of the Fig, the Qur'an says: "We have in deed created man in the best of moulds." (The Fig 95:4). The intention of the Creator was to keep man in incorruption, but man was influenced by his pride to break the divine commandment: "Thus did Adam disobey His Lord, and allow himself to be seduced." (TaHa 20:121). Consequently, Adam sinned, and he fell under the judgment of God that ascertained that the soul that sinned must die. (Ezekiel 18:20). Adam's sin was reported in the Torah, the Book of Genesis, chapter 3; and it was also reported in the New Testament, the epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans 5:14 & 19; and 1 Corinthians 15:22. Then, the Qur'an reported the news of Adam's and Eve's sin in the Surah of the Cow 2:35-37, and Surah of Al-Aaraf 7:11-26, and the Surah of TaHa 20:115-123).

The Word of God tells us that if men refuse to keep God in their knowledge, they fall in the sin of disobedience, as their first two parents, Adam and Eve, did, and deserve the sentence of death. It was possible for the created humans to avoid corruption and to live in purity and stay in the knowledge of God. God was not satisfied to create us out of nothing, and to give us the breath of life, but He gave us the possibility of life in a relationship with Him. But man turned away from living with God, and responded to Satan's seduction; and man became the cause of his own corruption. Thus all humans have gone astray and became corrupt; no one does good (Psalms14:14). All have sinned, without exception, with no difference between regular humans and the prophets and the messengers who carried God's inspiration and revelation to mankind. This very serious subject was recorded in all the books of all the main religions. The prophets did not hesitate to mention their own personal sins, to explain to mankind their need for a Savior that God promised Adam in the Garden, who would come to bruise the head of Satan who forced humans into his bondage.

If we study the Qur'an in depth, we find that it exposes the sins of the prophets. In the Surah of Al-Aaraf 7:23, we read about the sin of Adam; in the Surah of Noah 71:21-28 the sin of Noah is exposed; in the Surah of the Cattle 6: 77 and of the Cow 2:260, and of Safat 37:87-88, we read about the sin of Abraham; in the Surah of the Stories 28:15-21, the sin of Moses is reported; in the Surah of Sad 38:21-26, David's sin was recorded; in Surah of Sad 38:34-35, Solomon's sin is reported. However, was it befitting for God to leave man in his wickedness which would lead him to eternal destruction, even though He created him in His own image?

The Qur'an decides that man is incapable of redeeming himself, and that he cannot deliver himself from the torment of hell, saying: "As to those who reject faith – everything on earth, and twice repeated, to give as ransom for the penalty of the Day of Judgment, it would never be accepted of them. Theirs would be a grievous penalty." (The Table 5:36). "Though they will be put in sight of each other – the sinner's desire will be: Would that he could redeem himself from the penalty of that Day by sacrificing his children, his wife and his brother, his kindred who sheltered him, and all, all that is on earth – so it could deliver him? By no means, for it would be the fire of hell." (Al-Ma'arej 70:11-16).

Could the wonderful love of God endure the sight of corruption erasing the image of God from mankind? Would God be pleased by the destruction of all mankind whom He created in the best fashion? If God left mankind to that miserable fate, would that not be considered negligence on God's part? Does ignorance befit the majesty of the Holy God? Far from it. Wasn't it God who said: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Because of His great love, God's will was to save man, but how? Could it be by repentance? Repentance cannot take away man's punishment because it is unable to satisfy the requirements of divine justice. Even if man could achieve sincere repentance, it would only help the repentant to cease to commit new sins, but it cannot wipe out the old sins, nor their effects, nor the judgment of God on all those sins. Here, we wonder once again, what could God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, possibly do?

God's desires to justify man, so that man, this corrupt being, can enjoy incorruption, at the very time, satisfies the requirements of divine justice. This, of course, agrees with the plan of God for redemption. Christ, the Word of God, who was in the beginning with God, possesses a unique nature. He alone could change and renew man's corrupt nature. For this reason, the Lord Jesus Christ, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phillipians 2:6-8). In order to endure the penalty of man's condemnation, on behalf of sinful mankind, Christ found it necessary to take on Himself the nature of man, and come to our world: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14).

The principle of the atonement is a law that is engraved in man's nature and stamped in his heart and in his conscience. In most religions, men believe that a substitutionary sacrifice that they offer for themselves would atone for their sins and give them forgiveness. The Qur'an says: "To thee have We granted the fount of abundance; therefore, to thy Lord turn in prayer and slay (a sacrifice)." (Abundance 108:1-2). Imam El-Baydawi said in explaining those two verses: "the slaying of the sacrifice on the day of the feast." In Bukhari's book *Al-Sahih*, volume III, he wrote: "The prophet of Islam said, The first thing we do today is to pray, then we come back to slay (a sacrifice). Whoever does that, he fulfils our law. Whoever slays (a sacrifice), it is said that he offers the flesh for his family, without any doubt." Abu Barada Ben Niyar said, "I have a small lamb." Mohammad answered, "Slay it, but you cannot atone for anybody other than yourself." The Qur'an also said on this subject: "God will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths. For atonement, feed ten indigent persons...that is the atonement of your faith.." (The Table 5:89).

Also, Islam requires conditions for the wholesomeness of the sacrifice, that it should be without blemish. Such conditions were in agreement with the requirements imposed upon the sacrifices in the Torah. The sacrifices required by the Torah Law were to be without blemish, because they were a symbol of Christ the Redeemer, who was perfect, without blemish, and who atoned for the sins of the world. The prophet of Islam also testified to the perfection of Christ, when he was quoted by Al-Bukhari, in His *Sahih*, saying: "Every human, at birth, is touched by the devil, that is why he cries; except for Mary and Jesus." Mohammad, the prophet of Islam used to say, every time he offered a sacrifice: "O God, I am slaying this on behalf of my people, and of all those who testify of your oneness, and of my mission. O God, this is on behalf of Mohammad and his family." Every Muslim who goes to pray on the day of the Feast of the Sacrifice (*Al-Ad'ha*), should repeat words such as: "O my God, make this sacrifice an atonement for my sins, and purify me and keep evil away from me."

However, it is obvious that animal sacrifices, as such, are not sufficient to save man from his sins, otherwise, why does not he offer it repeatedly every day and every year? Because of the insufficiency of the animal sacrifices, it became necessary for someone perfect, blameless, and sinless, whose death would be sufficient and accepted, to lift the penalty from the sinful man

who is condemned to death in the fire of hell. Such substitutionary death would become the cause of saving man's soul and of delivering him from Satan's bondage, by bruising the head of the devil, as God promised Adam. Here are some conditions that should be met in the expected Redeemer:

1. The Redeemer should be above the power of sin and not defiled by it. If He was affected by sin and died, His death cannot be for the redemption of the world. His death would be a penalty for his own sins. As the Bible says: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." (Psalms 49:7).
2. The Redeemer should be more powerful than Satan who has put the world in his bondage, for the captive cannot free another captive. And the slave cannot free another slave.
3. The Redeemer should be able to do what men fail to do.
4. The Redeemer should have authority and power over the flesh and the spirit.
5. The Redeemer should be able to bring together God and man.
6. The Redeemer should be made human, sinless and blameless, not condemned as a sinner. The judgment of death was issued against man: this situation necessitates that an innocent man, as a substitution, should die in the stead of the guilty one, against whom the judgment was issued.
7. The Redeemer should die voluntarily, by His own will.
8. The Redeemer, after He dies, should arise from the dead, and live, conquering death; otherwise, how would he be able to give life to the dead?

All the above stated conditions cannot by any means be available in animal sacrifices because of their weaknesses. Neither can those conditions be met in any man, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Angels are out of the question because they are not humans. However, all these conditions were available and present solely in the person of Christ.

It is certain Christ, the Word of God, was preparing Himself, from the beginning, to come in the flesh. God was whispering the words of inspiration into the ears of His prophets, in the Old Testament, declaring to them the mystery of man's redemption. The prophecy declared: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14). The Word of God tells later that the prophecy was fulfilled, saying: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5). This means that we might receive forgiveness of our sins and eternal salvation.

The glad tidings of the Gospel of redemption tells us that all men were under condemnation and death, but Christ, the Word of God, volunteered by taking on Himself a human body that could die, so that He could accept the sentence of death in the stead of mankind, to take away the condemnation that had been issued against whosoever believes in Him. When Christ completed the work of redemption, the judgment of death was lifted from all those who accepted His

redemptive work. Thus, by being supreme, above all, and without sin, He could satisfy the requirements of the divine justice.

Someone may ask, "Why should the death of the Redeemer be accomplished on the cross? Why not other types of death?" The answer lies in the fact that God planned it that way, because He Himself could redeem us. There was no other way, where the righteous becomes a curse for our sake, for it is written "cursed is he who hangeth on a cross". If Christ had come to justify us from the sin that the Law has locked us in under its power, He had to become sin for us by hanging on the cross.

By His death on the cross, Christ carried the sins of all mankind. By His death, He has ended the enmity between man and God, and He has made it possible for us to be reconciled to God. All of these things were made possible by His atonement on the cross.

As the Gospel teaches us about the love of God, we find that the work of the cross agrees completely with the mercy and the compassion with which God is attributed. We conclude from what we were allowed to know, that God the Creator had planned a precious salvation by the incarnation of Christ, in the fashion of a sinless man, to pay the price of the sins of mankind. By His death, He opened the gates of heaven to every sinner who believes, and He reconciled God with man. The cross is necessary for finding the solution to the problem of sin that spoils in the life of men who are condemned to eternal death. The cross is the real headlines of the unlimited love of God. Whosoever experiences the power of the cross, will have his sins forgiven, and he will have everlasting life. Congratulations should be presented to whosoever experiences the work of the cross as a means to come into the presence of God to receive His blessing. There is no other way to change the life of a sinful man except by the way of Christ's blood that was shed on the cross to cleanse the sinner's heart and to make him a new creation.

Is God One or Three?

Our Muslim friends ask this important question: Do the Christians worship one God or three Gods?

In answering this important question, let me get straight to the point: "The Christians believe that God is One and has no partners." He is unlimited, fills the heavens and the earth, Creator of everything, Eternal, without beginning and without end; His dominion is endless. The Lord Jesus Christ said that the first and the most important commandment was: "The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." (Mark 12:29-30). Furthermore, the Christian Statement of Faith begins by the phrase that says: "We believe in One God.." Then, the Apostle of Christianity, John, made the following statement: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (John 5:7). Also, the Oneness of God becomes clear as the Lord Jesus Christ commands His disciples, saying: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Christians believe that God exists in Himself, that which is called, God the Father. It would be impossible for the Almighty God who created everything to be without self-existence. When

the term 'Father' is used, it does not mean genetic birth-giving, but rather the spiritual fatherhood, where the Son emanated from the Father. This God that exists in Himself, and is called the Son, or the Word, is the very expression of God. For it will be impossible for the Creator, who created a human that speaks, not to be able to express Himself with the Word. Giving the title of the Word of God to Christ was taken from the Greek work "logos" that means word and is used in respect to the mind. Out of logos is derived the word logic. This is an indication of how intelligent and orderly was this creation that was created by the Logos, the Word. The Christians believe that God is alive by His Spirit, that what the Christians call the Holy Spirit; because it is impossible for God, who created all living things, to be without life. And God is One Spirit.

Therefore, God is one, exists, utters by His Word, and lives by His Spirit. The Christians believe that the Father, the Word, and the Spirit are equal in essence and inseparable. The Bible, in both Testaments, clearly speaks of the deity of God as pervasive, and complete, and that the deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is One. The New Testament refers to the Father as God, to the Son as God, and to the Holy Spirit as God.

Theologians have agreed to use the word "Triune God" to refer to God. Even though each Person of the Triune God differs from the other and perform a different work, they are one in essence. There is not one piece of truth that is simple. To use a simple example, a stone that may seem as one piece, is in fact composed of millions of atoms. A piece of wood that seems lying there quietly, within it, indeed, a constant motion that never stops. If this exists in our material world, how about the spiritual world?

It is difficult for our limited mind to comprehend the unlimited. It is not easy for the created to fully understand the Creator, had it not been for His love that He demonstrated to us in the Holy Bible.

Why Did I Believe in Christ? Why Did I Become a Christian?

Herein, I will mention the basic reasons for taking Christianity as a way of life, and for abandoning my former faith.

1. I became a Christian because I found it the solution to the problems that confronted my mind, such as:
 - Why does the righteous usually have a hard life, while the wicked enjoys a life of luxury?
 - Why do innocent children suffer when they did not know neither the good nor the evil?

Hundreds of questions came to my mind. I found an answer that gave rest to my heart, and convinced me of Christianity. Christianity showed me the righteous Christ arrested and bound, while the wicked, because of whom He was bound, were enjoying and abusing their freedom. It showed me Christ crucified painfully, while the guilty ones, for whom He died, were enjoying life and growing wealthier. Therefore, I could comprehend that the pain of the believer is only the shadow of the cross that was reflected on him from the top of the hill of Golgotha.

2. I became Christian, because it is not the fabrication of a human. If it were fabricated by a human, its requirement would have been within human reach. But Christianity demands the humanly impossible:

- It is easy for a human to do good to someone who does good to him.
 - But it is difficult for us to do good to someone who does evil to us.

- It is easy to reward good for good
 - But it is supernatural to reward good for evil.

If Christianity could not present the humanly impossible, it would have been impossible for it to be the real message of God. However, in Christianity, a man is given a new nature, as it is written: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (Cor. 5:17).

3 - I became a Christian, because I found in Christ the power to be triumphant over my sins. I have found in the cross of Christ forgiveness for my sins; and in the Spirit of Christ, I find, every day, a new continued power to have the victory over my moral weaknesses. Christ said: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35).

4 – I became a Christian, because I found my real self. As for my sinful soul, I have buried it in its tomb that I found in Christianity. Christ said: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 16:25). The closer I get to Christ, the greater the freedom of my soul, and the easier it gets to overcome the attractions of Satan's bondage. Moreover, the closer I get to Christ, I find that my self being crucified with Christ, so I could say with Paul the apostle: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I (not the wicked self), but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20).

5 - I became a Christian because I could see God in Christianity. When I heard God talking to Adam, and I heard Him talking to Moses in the bush, I thought it was Him, because He was in the cloud. But when I heard Christ, I said that is the voice of God, and when I saw Him, I could say, I have seen the Father (John 14:9), and that was enough for me. This is what Christ meant when He said to Philip: "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (John 14:9).

6 – I became a Christian because Christianity is not the fabrication of human passion. For the human passion attempts, every time it fails, to fabricate something that would agree with its abilities and its needs. Thus the fabrication is the result of human nature's need. However, Christianity was not a human fabrication because it is on the opposing side to human nature. Natural passion needs joy and an easy life, Christ says: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24). Human passion says, I desire power, influence and greatness; but Christ says: "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." (Matthew 20:27). Christ did not offer His followers a crown of greatness, but instead, He offered a cross. He did not promise them the joys of life, but rather pain and persecutions.

7 – I became a Christian because I could see that Christianity gave the best portrait of humanity. I used to look at life, through my former religion, and see that it was very dark, closed in on itself. However, after my faith in Christ the Savior, my outlook on life was radically changed, and I see things bright with certainty and openness. I used to look at those who are neglected in this world, and I saw them as a mass of nothing, dumped on the side of life's road; but since I came to Christ, I have tried to touch those men with the hand of Christ so that they can experience the resurrection from their nothingness.

8 – I became a Christian because I found in Christianity the greatest example of love and sacrifice, made clear by the cross of Calvary. Christ loved even unto death, shedding His own precious blood in our stead, when we were yet sinners, condemned to hell. He endured the sufferings of the penalty for us, so that we can have the victory in the eternal life that He gave us: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8).

9 – I became a Christian, because I have found in Christianity, great principles, high standards, and divine values that I could not find in another religion. I found forgiveness in its highest forms: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matthew 5:39). Studying this verse in depth, it becomes clear that it is full of great, deep meaning. It carries in it the meaning of forgiveness, the real, kind humanity and high morals. Christianity presents the most wonderful examples of the high principles, in the sermon on the mount, where we find Jesus saying: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44). How fantastic and wonderful are those words, and how great are their meaning. Undubitably, Christianity is wonderful and matchless in its principles and values.

10 – I became a Christian because it is founded upon a very strong personality that cannot die, the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the power of its life. He is the wonderful Person whose Spirit touches every generation. He is not limited to one age. He is meek in His greatness, great in His kindness, and clear in His mysteries. He is the Rich who became poor, to make us rich. He is the precious one who was humiliated to give us honor.

This is the Christ of whom I heard, but my hearing of Him was transformed to personal knowledge of Him. My knowledge of Him became a friendship, and my friendship turned into real love that developed into worshipping Him.

11 – I became a Christian because now I can face death, and certain of my fate in eternity, because in Christ, I have received the light for my assurance, and the blessed hope in everlasting life: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3:36). "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24).

Christ came to this world to make the fallen human a complete man in all the facts of his life. It becomes clear from studying the Holy Gospel that Christ did not prepare us for life after death only, but He also prepared us to live this life on this earth, as well. He did not bring to us rigid laws that would tie down our feet, but He gave us principles that can guide our feet. Christ is the miracle of all ages and generations, our wonderful, supreme example in life and in living. He is alive who came in the flesh to live on our earth. Eyes saw Him, and hands touched Him, and they found in Him the best example.

Christ, the desire of all generations, is calling us to surrender our lives to Him, so that we can live the high principles that He left for us. The most important necessity for man is to be sure that his beliefs are straight; but beliefs are not enough if they do not become a part of man's life. Man without principle is like a garden without trees; and principles without life, is like a tree without leaves. Why shouldn't you consider having high principles? The greatest principles you can adopt in your life come from Christianity, for its principles are the most supreme.

Why don't you come to Christ today? He is the only Person who is qualified to be the one to whom you can surrender your life. His invitation is always heard, calling you: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matthew 11:28-29)... "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." (Ephes. 3:17). You need Christ, because all the wealth of this world will not help you or give you the peace that you need: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).