

WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR

MAN

GOD

IN THE BEGINNING . . . The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created by God and enjoyed perfect fellowship with Him. They were without sin and lived peacefully in a beautiful garden that supplied all their needs. God gave them only one rule, which was not to eat the fruit of a particular tree. However, Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by saying it would benefit them. They ate it, and that act of disobedience against God was the first sin. It severed Adam's and Eve's relationships with God because He is holy and cannot have fellowship with evil.

MAN

SIN

GOD

OUR CONDITION TODAY . . . Since we are all Adam's descendants, every child in the world has been born with his fallen nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, we are all born with an inclination toward sin and evil. Proof of this natural downward tendency is abundantly evident anywhere human beings are found. Our sin results in tremendous pain, sorrow, and suffering. The consequences of sin reach far beyond this life because those who reject God and die in a sinful state will go to Hell and be separated from God eternally.

MAN

JESUS

GOD

GOD'S PLAN . . . God wants to remove sin from our lives so that we can have a relationship with Him and spend eternity in Heaven. However, the penalty for sin is death, and that penalty must be paid. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Jesus lived as a man and died in our place for our sins. Because of that, if we follow the steps that God has laid out in the Bible, our sins can be forgiven. God will change our desires and give us power to live without sin so we can enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

APOSTOLIC FAITH WORLD HEADQUARTERS
5414 SE Duke Street | Portland, Oregon 97206 USA
WWW.APOSTOLICFAITH.ORG
TX002-0623

FROM MUSLIM TRADITIONS TO FAITH IN CHRIST

FROM MUSLIM TRADITIONS TO FAITH IN CHRIST

In Christ, Ola found something he had never experienced: power to live without sinning.

By Ola Balogun



Growing up, I was raised in a wonderful, loving home in Nigeria. There were nine of us including my parents and six siblings. Ours was a Muslim home, and our parents brought us up well with good moral values. The central mosque in our community had been built by my grandfather, so our family had a bit of a legacy around us. We were not fundamentalists, but we practiced the daily prayers, the fasts, and the special sacred events. I tried hard to live the right way and to be a good person, and my parents were proud of me.

It was in 1987, during my time at university, when God began to deal with me. Outwardly, I appeared to

be a good person, but I knew there was sin in my life. Despite not believing a person could live a sinless life, I still had standards of morality and I continually failed to meet my own standards. One day, the thought occurred to me: *What would happen if you got in a car accident and died?* I felt that I would go to Hell. In spite of my attempts to convince myself that couldn't be true because I was a good person—everybody knew me to be so—I could not convince myself that I would make Heaven. I felt condemned.

Those doubts made me want to know for sure how to get to Heaven, and other questions weighed on me as well. I wondered why evil things were happening in the world, and why there was such fierce disagreement between the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. I thought there must be answers to these questions, and the genuine desire of my heart was to find them. I longed to know the truth.

I held an allegiance to my parents' religion, though my knowledge of the Quran was very limited, so I began to study a translation of the Quran in order to dig deeper into what it taught. At the same time, there was a group at school who gave out pocket-sized New Testaments, and after receiving one, I decided to read it too. Thus, I found myself reading both the Quran and the Bible simultaneously for the first time.

In the New Testament, I started right at the beginning with the Book of Matthew. When I got to the Sermon on the Mount in chapter 5, the Beatitudes and Christ's teaching to love even your enemies struck me deeply. It was clear to me that the kind of life Jesus described was not normal or conventional wisdom. A person could never live that way naturally; it could only

be divine. I felt in my heart that if there were a way for a person to actually live like that, it must be the true religion, and that person would definitely make Heaven.

Sitting there in my room, I fell under heavy guilt for my sin, and without understanding what was happening, began confessing my sins. I poured out my heart to the Lord. My prayer was essentially this: “God, if You can make a change in my heart to make me able to live the life described in the Sermon on the Mount, then I will follow You to the ends of the earth.” Suddenly and instantaneously, God transformed my heart. He forgave me and took the sin out of my life! My moral upbringing had kept me from many outward sins, but when God saved me, my very desires were changed. For the first time, I was able to tell the truth without a single lie.

That day, I did not fully understand what had happened or much at all about being a Christian. All I knew was that I had prayed an honest prayer, and my life changed. I could finally say with certainty that Christianity was true because I had experienced being born again for myself.

REJECTION FROM MY FAMILY

My parents were extremely upset about my conversion, and they thought I had lost my mind. My mother was often in tears, believing she was losing her son. My father argued, trying to convince me I had to continue in our family’s Muslim heritage. They brought me before a panel that was meant to persuade me to change my mind. Our community leader was there, as well as the leader of our local mosque and some of my family members. They wanted me to recant my salvation and became very adamant, yet the Lord helped me to remain calm. I told them that if it was something I had done myself, I would recant, but what had happened was beyond me. I could not deny what God had done.

Many times in the coming years, my father would lecture me for hours about how my decision to become a Christian was a mistake. Though I knew it was all done out of love for me, it was very difficult to take emotionally. Once, my mom became so upset that she burned some of my Christian books. Even through that, the Lord gave me grace not to be angry or complain in response.

I did not fully understand what had happened or much at all about being a Christian. All I knew was that I had prayed an honest prayer, and my life changed.

My two grandmothers also tried to compel me to change my mind. They knew the pressure my parents were going through because of my conversion, and they begged me to at least wait until I moved out of the house to become a Christian. All of my siblings and cousins were against me as well.

My family’s problem with Christianity was the doctrine of the deity of Christ. They disagreed with the fundamental teaching that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Of course, the Sonship of Christ and His atoning death at Calvary is the very essence of Christianity. To reject Christ’s deity is to reject everything, because without Him there is no power to live without sin. Without Him, all we would have is self-righteousness and trying in our own strength to live a good life, which is what I had before. Christ is the One who provided what my soul had longed for, but my family could not understand that.

STRENGTH FROM GOD'S SPIRIT

Had it not been for the grace of God, I wouldn’t have been able to withstand that period of persecution at home, because I did genuinely love my parents and never wanted to hurt them. However, the love of Christ surpassed everything else in my life. My family thought they could force me to do what they wanted, but what they did not anticipate was that they were not fighting only me—they were fighting against the Lord in me! It was God’s Spirit that enabled me to stand for Him.

As a new believer, my heart yearned for more of the truth, and as I sought the Lord, He established me in the faith and gave me strength to stand firm. Eventually, the resistance from my family became much easier to withstand, and when people in my community would mock me, it was not a big deal anymore. God even gave me boldness to share the Gospel with my friends.

In my mid-twenties, my parents decided that I should move to the United Kingdom. There were major hurdles in the way, but God removed every one and made it clear that He wanted me to go. I arrived in London at age twenty-six, and God helped me switch careers and eventually find a job despite a national recession. In time, I met my future wife and we were married. We have faced challenges in life, but in every situation, the Lord has given us peace and patience to trust Him.

The Gospel means everything to me. I cherish how it is so simple, yet so powerful in the transformative effect it has on lives. My desire is to continue to love the Lord and give my all to Him until I make the goal of Heaven someday.

■ **Ola Balogun is an Apostolic Faith pastor in England.**

STEPS TO DELIVERANCE

ACKNOWLEDGE

Admit that you have sinned and need God’s help.
For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

CONFESS AND REPENT

Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)
Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)

FORSAKE

Determine that with God’s help you are going to turn away from all sin in your life.
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

BELIEVE

When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will hear your prayer and save you.
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. (John 3:16)

RECEIVE

God will let you know that the work is done in your heart.
The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)