



Pilgrimage: Mecca or Jerusalem

Dear Friend in Jesus! Following in the footsteps of Muhammad, millions of Muslims around the world make a religious journey known as *Hajj* to Mecca. This pilgrimage is one of the five 'pillars' of Islam. Hajj is required at least once in the lifetime of Muslims who are physically and financially able (Qur'an, Sura 2:196ff).

The pilgrimage occurs from the 8th to 12th of *Dhu al-Hijjah*, the 12th and last month of the Islamic calendar. This year, it is expected to begin August 9th, 2019 and continue until August 14th, 2019 according to the Gregorian calendar. Since the Islamic calendar is lunar, the dates on the Gregorian calendar that correspond to Islamic Hajj shift yearly.



The idea of pilgrimage predates Muhammad. Prior to Islam, Arabs in the region travelled on pilgrimage to Mecca in order to worship their gods. They circled the Ka'ba, which was full of their idols. In 630 AD when Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, conquered Mecca, he destroyed the idols - except for the black stone he allegedly kissed. From then till the present, Muslims perform the *Tawaf*, a ritual that involves all the pilgrims walking seven times counterclockwise around the Ka'ba. Due to the religious and cultural significance of this place, Muhammad declared that daily prayers be directed towards Ka'ba. Interestingly, Muhammad originally decreed that all prayers must take place facing Jerusalem, but he later changed the direction to the Ka'ba, claiming that the earlier direction was a test from Allah (Qur'an, Sura 2:142-145).

Christians: Worship and pilgrimage to the Temple

Since Hajj holds such an important place in the life and worship of Muslim friends, they often wonder if Christians have a similar practice. They wonder if Christians pray facing Jerusalem or are required to travel to Jerusalem for pilgrimage. They do not know that such a practice is not a requirement of the Christian faith. While Israel and Jerusalem are special to Christians because of the life of Jesus Christ and the prophecies of God, God is everywhere and can be worshipped anywhere (Isaiah 66:1-2). According to the Scriptures, believers are the temple of God because of the dwelling spirit of God in them. As for worship in an answer to the question of where we should worship, Jesus declared: "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks." (John 4:21-23)

Before Jesus, believers had to go to the Temple in Jerusalem to give their sacrifices and offerings. When Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, died as the atoning sacrifice for our sins and rose from the dead, he fulfilled the requirement of animal sacrifices. Therefore, we no longer must travel to the Temple for sacrifice. Instead our lives are a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1).

Forgiveness and fellowship

While Muslims believe that performing *Hajj* will earn them forgiveness for their past sins, Christians believe that God forgives our sins through the precious blood Jesus Christ shed once for all. The animals sacrificed in the times of the Old Testament are symbols of what Jesus, the Lamb of God, did for us. Thus, forgiveness is not based on our works but rather on God's amazing love and gift of Jesus Christ to the world (John 3:16). We obey God out of love and gratitude to Him for His gift of forgiveness and assurance through the Messiah, Jesus! Similar to the unity Muslims feel during the Hajj, Christians anticipate the day when the body

of Christ will be united before the Throne of God (Revelation 7:9-17)! Meanwhile, we wait eagerly for Jesus Christ's return! (Matthew 24:30-31; John 14:1-6)

Brothers and Sisters let us earnestly pray for Muslims during this time. Let us earnestly seek to be the light in their darkness. Let us pray that they decide to follow Jesus Christ the only way.

Prayer and Praise points

- ❖ We are thankful to the Lord who continues to use us to reach Muslims with the gospel of Christ and equip Christians to share the eternal hope with them.
- ❖ Although a significant amount of missions directed toward Muslims is reaching them for the Gospel, please pray with us for the missionaries who encourage those who have converted to Christianity to continue to practice Islam in public. Pray this unbiblical effort will cease and that Muslim converts will have courage to proclaim the Gospel, living as a testimony to God.
- ❖ Please pray with us that the Lord will convict the hearts of pastors and mission leaders to include Muslim outreach in their programs. Many Christians in America have no idea how to approach Muslims or how to dialogue biblically with them. The mission field is no longer just a thousand miles away, it is here on our doorsteps.
- ❖ Pray that our websites, YouTube channels, television and radio broadcasts will continually be used and will help both Christians and Muslims understand matters of faith in Christ.
- ❖ Pray with us that the Lord will continually direct our minds and thoughts to respond to many questions and queries we receive daily.
- ❖ Steven is in the process of putting together studies on the Gospel of John and the book of Acts for Urdu speaking converts from Islam. He is also writing a series of 30 minutes' video program 'Agla Qadam' - Next Steps. The program will contain 30 episodes to cover the aspects of day to day life in the light of the Scriptures.

Free DVDs available

We are thankful to the Lord for the generosity of friends! We are able to give the following free DVDs on just one condition: study the subjects and use them to help others to know the Truth!

1. **"Answering Questions Muslims Ask"**
2. **"Jesus or Muhammad: A Question of Submission"**
3. **"Why do Muslims want to annihilate Israel?"**
4. **"The Islamic and Biblical view of men, women, and marriage"**

Jesus to Muslims: Financial Aspects

Jesus to Muslims relies solely on God through the generosity of our donors to: reach Muslims with the Gospel, expand our outreach, and hold seminars to equip Christians, give resources, as well as research and publish material for truth seekers.

Funds in total received:

June 2019: \$ 10,401.00

July 2019: \$ 6,551.00

Monthly Need is \$15,000. We praise God for His provision through His people. If you are mailing your gift, please use the envelope provided. For online giving, please go to: www.JesusToMuslims.org and click on "Support". Donations are tax deductible.

❖ Pray that people's hearts will be open to our ministry and the Lord will open doors of opportunity where we can share our message. May the Lord raise up support for our work to continue to go forth.

❖ We are still waiting upon the Lord to provide for the printing of Steven Masood's book *Into the Light* in Spanish. Also funding for the printing of the 14 evangelistic leaflets in Spanish.

❖ Please pray for our TX (September 4-12) and KY/TN (October 4-16) trips to equip the body of Christ in outreach to Muslims.

❖ Please pray with us for many more open doors to equip the body of Christ to reach Muslims. We rely on your 'word of mouth' promotions of this ministry's work to open those doors.

❖ We receive many requests from around the world to provide financial and ministry material resources to distribute amongst the lost. Please pray with us that God will provide the finances and the wisdom to know which requests are from Him so we can fulfill these needs.

Our Websites

www.JesusToMuslims.org

www.itl-usa.org

www.Iman-u-AmalTV.com

www.AishaMyDaughter.org