

The Problem Is Sin

The Muslim who turns to Jesus has no need to sacrifice himself or others to confirm his loyalty.

I renounced Islam and accepted Christ Jesus as my God and Savior at my home in Egypt in February 1993. By the end of August 1994, Muslims in Egypt had attempted to assassinate me several times. The last attempt was made by my own father, who tried to shoot me with his handgun to restore his honor and wash away his shame with my blood.

After that, I fled Egypt and went to Libya, continuing through the great desert of Africa to Chad, crossing mountains, deserts, jungles and rivers until I arrived in Johannesburg, South Africa.

In one of the suburbs of Johannesburg, I began fellowshiping with an English-speaking congregation, despite the difficulty of not knowing the language. For me, the most beautiful part of the service was praising and singing before the Lord.

One of the first songs that deeply touched me was "How Great Thou Art." Through it, I could appreciate this great God of ours who created the universe and then humbled Himself to provide salvation for me and everyone else.

Every time I heard it, my mind also went back to the Islamic songs I learned in my youth in Egypt. For example, as children we used to sing "Muslims We Are" when we gathered to begin a day at school: "Muslims, Muslims, Muslims we are / Accepting death, refusing surrender / In the Quran, our light of life / By the sword we vanquished the enemy / Ye who ask, this is our

destiny / Muslims, Muslims, Muslims we are.”

Imagine the sweet voices of children singing about attacking the enemy with the sword and accepting death rather than surrender.

In college, we sang the same type of songs. For example, we liked to take camping trips to the beach, and we would sing songs such as “I Shall Avenge My God and Belief” around the fire: “I shall avenge my God and belief / And go by my religion in full confidence / To achieve victory above all people / Or to God I go, dwelling eternally / We carry the sword, lions of honor / Delivering a taste of death and hell to the unbelievers.”

Again, imagine a group of young men in the prime of life singing about delivering death and hell to those who don’t believe.

These songs made me wonder: Why have my people surrendered to this cruel lifestyle? Is it because they like it? I do not think so.

The answer came to me through the true and living Word of God. Romans 5:12 explains that the source of the problem is sin: “Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (NIV).

As a result: “There is no one righteous, not even one. ... And the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes. ... For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:10, 17-18, 23).

Romans 3 describes the problems of my people: "The way of peace they do not know." My people are suffering because they are infected by the sin of this world.

As I understood this, I thought: If all Muslims knew the way of Jesus, they would live in peace with God, with other nations and with themselves. The Muslim who turns to Jesus Christ has no need to commit suicide or sacrifice himself in battle, nor would he need to kill others to confirm his loyalty to Allah and to his religion.

Allah's demands for people to fight unbelievers on his behalf expose him as a fraud. Surely the true God, the creator of this universe, is not a weak God who waits for us, His creation, to defend Him and His kingdom.

On the contrary, Jesus has defended us. He protected our blood by shedding His own (see Is. 53:3-6). Jesus is very capable of protecting Himself. He doesn't ask us to fight on His behalf.

I thank my Lord for giving me new songs of life to replace the old songs of death I sang before I knew Him.