

Huggy An's presentation of Christian view of "going to heaven"
Responses from Mohammed will follow.

Christian view of "going to heaven"

1. God's attributes and human sin:

In order to present the Christian view of going to heaven, I like to first mention God's attributes in the Bible. In addition to His attributes of omnipotent, omniscience, omnipresence, sovereign, and etc., He is infinitely Holy (Isaiah 6:3), Righteous (Psalm 71:19), and has infinite love (1 John 4:7-8) to human being as He created us in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). The Bible teaches us that the origin of sin is the human tendency to be independent from God (Genesis 2:1- 3:24) in other words to live in his own way disregarding God. Christianity considers that any sins to God or to human beings are all against Holy God. Jesus raises the bar of sin by teaching that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27-30, see also Matthew 5:21-26). Bible also says that all human beings are sinners (Romans 3:10-18, 5:12) even though God created men in His image.

In order to better understand God's options for addressing human sin, I present the following story.

2. The dilemma of a righteous King toward his law-breaking son:

In a kingdom, there was a righteous king. He made a very important law and declared to all over the kingdom that he will remove two eyes from the first violator of the law as a punishment. The next morning, a police man arrested a young man who violated the law and brought him to the king. The king was shocked to find that the young man was his only son who the king loved so much and would inherit the kingdom. If the king takes out the two eyes from his son, then he will ruin his son's life and his kingdom. If the king forgives his son, then he cannot govern the country righteously and loses his credibility as a righteous king. He cannot lose his only son as well as his credibility as a righteous king. How can he solve his dilemma?

The king's solution was to take out the right eye from his son and the left eye from himself. By doing so, the king showed his love toward his son and exercised his righteousness simultaneously.

Was there any other solution to the king? He might take out the right eye from his son and the left eye from a man on the street. But it is very unfair for the man on the street as he had to lose his left eye for doing nothing wrong. Even if the man on the street wanted to donate his left eye for the King's son, his donation does not have any legal authority to save the eye of king's son. As the king was the father of the son and the supreme leader who made and declared the law, only his left eye had legal authority to save his son's left eye. But if the son refused to accept his father's offer, the king had to execute the law as he declared and the son would lose his two eyes. Nobody could criticize the king as a ruthless king. If the son accepts his father's offer with deep repentance, his left eye will be saved and everybody will say the king shows his love toward his son and executed the law righteously.

3. God's option for human sin:

When we commit sins, what are God's options for us? As God is infinitely holy, he cannot accept any small sin and there are no good deeds with which we can compensate for our sins to satisfy God's holiness. As He is infinitely righteous, He should punish us for any sins we committed without any exception. His punishment is hell. But as God has infinite love toward us, He cannot kill us for our sins. If God does not punish us for our sins because He is love, then He violates His attribute of righteousness. If He punishes us for our sins because He is righteous, He violates His attribute of love. What could be God's solution for sinful men without violating His attribute of Holiness, Righteousness, and love? When we commit a crime in the society, we pay the penalty by serving a jail term or pay fine. As mentioned above, as God is infinitely holy, any penalty we pay to God cannot satisfy His Holiness. The only solution is that God himself pays the penalty of our sins for us by being killed (as the righteous king did for his son) and then declares that whoever accepts God's redemptive sacrifice with sincere repentance can be forgiven for his/her sins. God's sacrifice establishes the ground for Him to forgive the sinners who accepts His redemptive sacrifice without violating His attribute of righteousness. He also establishes the ground to punish the people who refuse to accept His redemptive sacrifice without violating

His attribute of love. As God is the creator of the universe and everything in it and has complete sovereign power over the universe and human being, His sacrifice is effective to all human sins in the past, present, and future.

The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross to redeem our sins so whoever believes in Him obtains eternal life regardless of his (or her) sins (John 3:16, Roman 5:7-8). The Bible also says that Jesus will judge people on the last day and send unbelievers to hell (Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-15). In order for Jesus' death to have such redemptive power, Jesus must be God himself represented as understandable to human beings.

Even though God sacrificed Himself for the salvation of men, men cannot accept His redemptive death without His help as they are spiritually dead. God needs to open our spiritual eyes for us to realize our sins and to accept His redemptive grace. God also needs to empower believers to live continuously as saved people and so glorify Him. The Bible (John 16:12-14, Acts 1:5-8, Acts 2:1-39) says that Holy Spirit opens the spiritual eyes of unbelievers and empowers believers. Thus, the Holy Spirit must be God himself represented as understandable to human beings.

The next question to be addressed is; how God did, who is the creator of the universe, sacrifice Himself for our salvation and how does He help us realize our sins and accept His redemptive grace.

4. Jesus and the Holy Spirit as God's representation understandable to human beings

In this section, we are going to show that Jesus as God's incarnation can be understood as the higher dimensional transcendent being (God) revealing himself to a lower dimensional world without leaving His realm.

I like to borrow the explanation of Hugh Ross's book, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, for God's incarnation as follows. The following illustration never intends to give a full explanation of God's incarnation but merely to give a better mental picture of it.

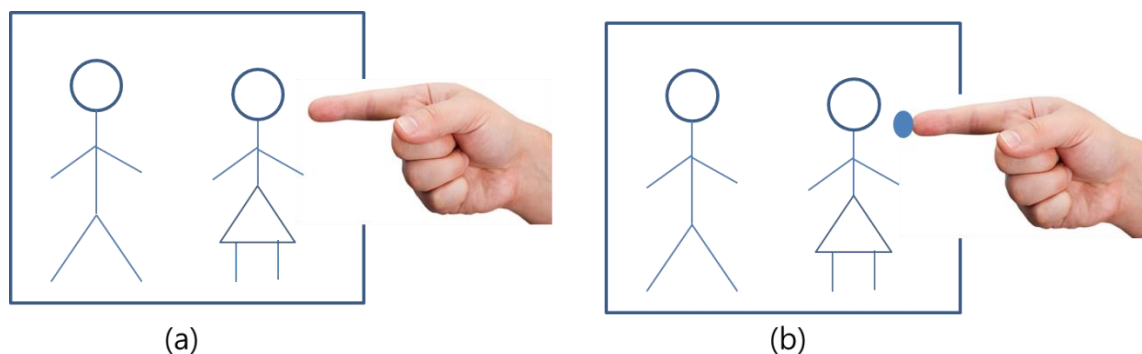


Figure 1. Two persons in a 2D world and a finger of a 3D person. (a) The finger does not touch the 2D plane. (b) The finger touches the plane.

We live in a world of three dimensional (3D) space (if we include time as a dimension, our universe is the 4D world. But in this discussion, we do not include time). As God created the universe, we can say that God is the transcendent being of much higher than 4D. (We cannot fathom God's dimensionality but for the sake of explanation, we consider God's dimensionality). Let's assume there is a world of 2D space (a flat plane). One boy stands on the left and a girl stands on the right in the 2D world, and a finger of a man of the 3D space points to the girl as shown in Fig 1. Note that the person in the 3D world is a transcendent being to the persons in the 2D world. When the finger of the 3D person does not touch the 2D plane (Fig. 1(a)), the 2D girl cannot see the finger even though the finger is very close to her as the 2D world does not have depth. But the girl can see the boy even though the boy is farther than the finger from the girl. If the finger touches the plane, the tip of the finger that touches the plane can be seen by the two persons in the 2D world. But it is impossible for the two persons to figure out the whole of the 3D person. The 3D person can touch the 2D world with not only one finger but also two, three, or more fingers in different forms and different times. When the 2D persons see the finger tips, they see them as several distinct objects (or persons) at various times and space but they are all the fingertips of the 3D person, in other words, they are the 3D person in essence. Another important thing we should note is that the 3D person cannot interact with the 2D persons without presenting himself understandable

to the 2D persons by touching the 2D plane. Then, the 3D person can interact with the 2D person through his finger tip touching on the 2D plane.

Figure 1 gives us a good mental picture for Jesus as God's incarnation if we assume that the 3D person is God, the 2D world is our world, the two persons in the 2D world are us, and the fingertip touched on the 2D plane is Jesus. Of course God does not have fingers and is much higher dimensional being (if He has a dimension) in space and time than our 4D world. We emphasize that God's higher dimensionality is our analogy of God's incomprehensible transcendence and a God's finger touching our world is an analogy of God's presentation of Himself, as a theophany, to this world. Various theophanies in the Old Testament (OT) can be considered as God's fingertips that touch on our world in various forms and for various purposes. In the OT, God appeared to men as human words (Gen. 3:9, Gen. 12:1-9), burning bush (Exodus. 3:1-17), column of cloud and fire (Exodus 13:21), and etc. These theophanies exercised full authority of God and the persons who encountered the theophanies believed they met God. These theophanies suddenly appeared to the people of Israel and disappeared when the objectives of their appearances were accomplished. These sudden appearances and disappearances of the theophanies can easily be explained by the 2D vs. 3D analogy.

On the other hand in the New Testament (NT), God's presentation of Himself to this world has a unique purpose of paying the penalty for human's sins by dying on the cross. For the purpose, God presented Himself as Jesus through the birth from the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:16-38). With the simple analogy of the 2D-3D, we cannot explain the God's incarnation in the same way of explaining the burning bush. But if we note that God is a much higher dimensional being than humans, we can analogize Jesus as the finger tip of the transcendent God touching our world. Thus, Jesus is God in the same way the theophanies of the OT are God.

On the other hand, as Jesus was born from the Virgin Mary, he had a perfect human nature but without sins and was restricted voluntarily by the space and time of this world. When Jesus accomplished His objective of salvation, after his resurrection from death He ascended into heaven and disappeared from the sight of His disciples (Acts 1:9-11). His disappearance can be analogized as the detachment of God's fingertip from our world.

Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4, 10:44-46) can also be considered as God's fingertip touched on our world. But the analogy of the 2D vs. 3D cannot be applied directly to the Holy Spirit because the fingertip touched on the 2D space is restricted spatially but the Holy Spirit is not. However, when we consider again that God is a much higher dimensional being in space and time than us, we can still analogize the Holy Spirit to be God's fingertip touched to our world (in a different way from the fingertip analogy of Jesus) without being restricted by our space and time.

5. True meaning of Trinity:

Figure 1 gives us clearer understanding, even though imperfect, of Jesus and Holy Spirit as two different representations of God to men. When God revealed Himself to us as Jesus and Holy Spirit for our salvation, the Bible expresses them as two distinct persons and describes the relation between God and Jesus as the Father and the Son. The Christian theologians call the relation between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as "**Trinity**". We note that "**Trinity**" is often misunderstood as three gods, but its real meaning is one God interacting with human beings as three distinct persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) for our salvation. When God reveals Himself to humans, He reveals a small portion of Himself (a fingertip) understandable to humans. That is why Jesus, even though He is God, is limited by space and time. When Philip, one of Jesus' disciples, asked Jesus to show Father (God), Jesus said "anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Seeing Jesus is good enough for us to know God for His love and His salvation.

6. Jesus' death and resurrection as the central doctrine of Christianity:

In the above sections, I mention that Jesus death and resurrection are the central doctrine of the Christianity (1 Corinthians 2:2, 15:3-8, 15:12-20). Without Jesus' death, there is no way God can save us from our sins without violating His attribute of righteousness nor can He send unrepentant sinners to the hell without violating His love. Without Jesus' resurrection and ascension to the heaven, there is no way the transcendent (and much higher dimensional) God can interact and judge people at the judgement day. Only Jesus as God's representation to human beings can interact directly to human beings and judge the people (2 Corinthians 5:10)

as mentioned in section 4. Furthermore, as Jesus sacrificed Himself to redeem our sins, only He can judge us in justice at the last day.

After Jesus resurrected and ascended to the heaven, the disciples spread Christianity to all over the world under severe persecution (Acts 1:1 – 28:31, 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, 11:22-27). Their only weapon was their witness of Jesus' death and resurrection for the salvation of men (Acts 2:22-32, 1 Corinthians 15:3-28).

7. Christian's view of good work:

I agree with you that faith and good work are inseparable. But there are subtle differences between Islam and Christianity regarding good work. Christians believe that we can go to heaven by believing that Jesus died for our sins and by sincerely repenting our sins (Mark 1:15). As God Himself already paid the penalty for our sins, we do not need to pay the penalty by doing good work for going to heaven. Doing good work is merely a proof that he/she sincerely repents and accepts Jesus as his/her savior. That is why James 2:17 says "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead". As you mentioned in your first email, James 2:14-26 emphasizes good work but not as a ticket to heaven but as a fruit of true faith.

To state this point more clearly, I like to mention my Spiritual experience briefly. I was not a Christian until 1983 and none of my family was Christian. Before becoming a Christian, I did not want to do any good work for others. But after I experienced the Holy Spirit, I accepted Jesus as my savior and became a Christian. Then, my whole life was changed. I wanted to do good work for God out of appreciation and love toward God who saved me from my sins, not for getting a ticket to heaven. I am confident to go to heaven, not because I have accumulated enough good deeds but because God already paid the penalty for my sins and I believe Him.

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1. First Communication:

1. God's attributes and human sin:

Mohammed1: You mentioned that one of God's attribute is love and that he has infinite love. Does God love evildoers? Does/did God ever hate something or someone? If yes, does that mean hate is an attribute of God? Why or why not?

You mentioned that one of God's attributes is omniscience. I totally agree with you on that the qualities of a true God should include omniscience. Was Jesus omniscient? Was the Holy Spirit omniscient? Was Jesus omnipotent? If you say yes to these questions, then what about Mark 13:32, Mathew 24:36, Mark 11:13, Mathew 21:19, John 8:28, John 8:40-42? A true God has the right and ability to do anything including placing whomever He wants wherever He wants in Heaven. Can Jesus do that? Please see Mathew 20:20-23.

Ans1: If you understand my 2D-3D analogy, you can get the answer for this question.

Please read section 4 and 5 of my 'Christian view of "going to heaven" carefully.

Jesus is the human form of the transcendent God to interact with human beings.

Most of your questions are related to the misunderstanding of Jesus.

2. The dilemma of a righteous King toward his law-breaking son:

Mohammed2: Nice story, Huggy! But, unfortunately, this story has a lot of fallacies. I am not going to comment on it now but maybe I will share my thoughts with you later on this. There is a better story that was told by Jesus in Mathew 20:1-16. Please read this story and make sure you understand what Jesus meant by this story. I may come back to this story later.

3. God's option for human sin:

You mentioned that God "cannot accept any small sin..." Do you mean that God is incapable of accepting any small sin? What do you mean by acceptance here? Can you please elaborate more on this? If God chooses to forgive a sin that someone committed, would you consider this as acceptance or not?

Ans2: I use this expression to emphasize that God does not break any of His attributes when he interact with human being. If he accepts any small sins, He will break His attribute of infinite Holiness. So God will not accept any small sins. You may say God can do whatever he wants even by violating His attributes. Then, His action may prove He is

not God. Therefore, He will not do any that violate His attributes. Again, I emphasize that His death on the cross and resurrection satisfy His Love and His Righteousness simultaneously and also show His deity. Please read section 3 carefully.

Mohammed3: You mentioned in the first section “that the origin of sin is the tendency of human being to be independent from God.” Was not God the one who created human being and sinning was part of the nature that God Himself created in us? If he does not accept sin in any way, then did not God himself create this problem/dilemma for himself? Could not God create human being to be perfect and sinless and all of the problem/dilemma that you posed would be solved?

Ans3: It requires a long answer but I want to make it as short and condense as possible as this is not the main subject of this discussion. The origin of human sins is his tendency to live as he likes by trying to be independent from God. God created Adam and Eve that way. According to Genesis chapter 2 and 3, God created Adam in His image and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and told Adam he can eat fruits from any trees except the fruits of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s command and ate the fruit and committed a sin and God kicked them out of Eden. And then all human sins and agonies started after they were kicked out. Then, question is why God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit and why God from the beginning put the tree in the garden? The answer is God gave them free will and let them exercise their free will, obey or disobey God command. Why give them free will? God’s ultimate purpose to create the universe and human beings is to be glorified by men forever whom God created in His image. He could make a robot and program it for glorifying Him day and night (as a perfect man) but the glorification is meaningless. God wants to be glorified by men who have overcome all temptation of disobeying Him by exercising their free wills.

Mohammed4: You referenced the story of Adam and Eve (Book of Genesis) and implied that this was the origin of sin. Does that mean there was no sin before the sin of Adam and Eve? Do angels sin? Or are they sinless? If they are sinless, would this qualify them to be gods? If they are not sinless, do not they also need redemption? Did Jesus also die for the sins of angles?

Ans4: If you believe that Adam and Eve are the first human beings God created, then there were no human sins before them. They committed sin by disobeying God’s command. Instead of repent, they blamed to each other. Yes, they need redemption too. Instead of killing them, God made garments of animal skin for their protection outside the garden. Instead of killing them, God killed an animal. God’s redemption by shedding blood started here.

Mohammed5: You mentioned that God “should punish us for any sins we committed without any exception.” You did not provide any reference from the Bible to support this statement, so with all due respect, Huggy, what right do you have to make such a claim on God’s behalf? I think I and you are in no position to speak what God should do or God should not do to be righteous. Only He, God Himself, has the right to make such a statement about Himself.

Ans 5: See Ans 2.

Mohammed6: You mentioned, “As God has infinite love toward us, He cannot kill us for our sins.” What do you mean by killing here? Does God kill people/ some people on the Day of Judgment?

Ans 6: Killing means here sending to the eternal hell.

Mohammed7: You said “God’s sacrifice is effective to **all** human sins in the past, present, and future.” So, based on what you said, no one need to be a Christian because **all** of our sins are covered by God’s sacrifice and He already paid the penalty of our sins for us. If this redemption is conditional and exclusive for those that accepts God’s redemptive sacrifice as you said in the document, then those would not be punished for their sins and by doing that, based on your definition of righteousness, God is violating his attribute of righteousness.

Ans7: Please read section 7 carefully for the answer. God’s sacrifice establishes the ground for Him to forgive the sinners who accepts His redemptive sacrifice without violating His attribute of righteousness. God’s sacrifice also establishes the ground to punish the people who refuse to accept His redemptive sacrifice without violating His attribute of love.

Mohammed8: Let us say person A chooses **not** to believe in the divinity of Jesus and **does not** believe Jesus died for people's sins. According to you, this person would be considered sinful and based on what you said, this person would be punished (or killed?) because God is righteous. But what about the love attribute of God? Will God violate his attribute of love by punishing/killing this person? What about the redemptive sacrifice? Does that mean the redemptive sacrifice (blood of Jesus) is not good enough to cover the sins of this person? Does that mean God did not pay the penalty of **all the sins (including not believing in him) of all human beings**? So, the person would still have to believe and accept this sacrifice? What would God's solution be for this person without violating His attributes of righteousness and love?

Ans8: Read Ans 7 for the answer. Again, I think you do not understand section 7. Please read the section carefully.

Mohammed9: If person A commits injustice/sin against person B, what happens to person A and person B on the Day of Judgment?

You said, "The only solution is that God himself pays the penalty for our sins for us by being killed..." Based on the Bible, this statement is not correct. In the Bible, there are many verses/passages that say, if you follow the commandment, if you obey God, or if you do such and such, then you will be saved, you will live, or your sins will be forgiven. So there are other solutions for sins! Please see Ezekiel 18, Leviticus 4:20, 4:26, 4:35, 5:10-13, 5:16, 5:18, 19:22, Numbers 15:25, 15:28, Deuteronomy 5, Deuteronomy 28, Matthew 19:17, Mark 10:17-19, John 17:1-3, Acts 8:22 and many more! The beautiful description of salvation in Ezekiel 18 is very similar to what I believe as a Muslim.

Ans 9: All the OTs you mentioned above (Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) are God commands to the people of Israel saying that they should obey the God's law not for going to heaven but because God chose them as His people and saved them from the bondage of Egypt. Ezekiel 18 says that the suffering they faced was not due to their ancestors' sins but due to their own sins so they should live as God's people by obeying His law. Remember God already chose the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as His people. But the people turned away from God and worship gentile gods (idols) and God was calling them to repent and return to Him by obeying His Law. Again, obeying His law was not for getting a ticket to heaven but as sign for them to trust and love God.

You need to read Matthew 19:17-30, Mark 10:17-34 to understand the true meaning of the verses. Read John 17:1-4. "finishing the work you gave me to do" in verse 4 means dying on the cross for our redemption and resurrection. I do not know why you refer Acts 8:22.

Mohammed10: You mentioned that God sacrificed himself for the salvation of men. Did Jesus truly sacrifice himself? Was not it the Father who left Jesus to be killed by men? (Mathew 27:46, Mark 15:34, Mark 14:35-36, Mathew 26:38-39) Why do we need all of this complication from the first place? Why such a drama and need for blood? Is this loving when the Father makes his son Jesus pay the price for something that he did not do? Why did not the Father himself pay it instead of punishing Jesus and have him killed?

Ans 10: Please read section 3 and 4 carefully. You asked similar questions elsewhere. It is crucially important to understand section 3 and 4.

Mohammed11: Remember the story of the righteous king you wrote in the second section. Even though it was his son who broke the law, the righteous king shared the penalty with his son by taking one of his eyes because he loved his son. The king was also righteous because he applied the same punishment that he established for breaking the law, which is taking two eyes. On the other hand, Jesus did not break any law (or did he?), and yet his Father made him pay the penalty for the sins of human being, sins that the victim Jesus did not commit. The Father did not even share the penalty with his son (Jesus) like the loving righteous king did when his son broke the law in your story. Also, God here was not righteous because the penalty according to the law that God Himself set was not to crucify or kill the law breakers but to punish them in hell fire so unless Jesus get punishment in hell fire, the penalty was not paid. Remember, the righteous king in your story, he applied the same punishment that he originally set which is taking two eyes. He did not change the rules to a different punishment! So, basically, as I understand it, in the case of Christianity, the Father was angry at people because of the sins they committed against him and what he does is that he let those same people kill his son (Jesus) as a penalty for the sins of the people. This is neither righteous nor loving. If this happens in our society today, based on civil judiciary system, this would be considered as child abuse.

The bible state that “the wicked is a ransom for the wicked is a ransom for the righteous, and the traitor for the upright.” (Proverbs 21:18). If Jesus was a ransom/sacrifice, then, according to the Bible, he is wicked because it is the wicked that becomes the ransom/sacrifice for the righteous, not vice versa.

Ans 11: *Please read section 3 and 4 carefully. You do not understand the meaning of the sections.*

Mohammed12: You mentioned that “the Bible says that Jesus died on the cross to redeem our sins so whoever believes in Him obtain eternal life regardless of his (or her) sins.” You referenced John 3:16 and Roman 5:7-8. In John 3:16, the author claims that Jesus was the only begotten son of God. Is this true? Because the rest of the Bible tell us otherwise. In Exodus 4:22, Israel is God’s son and is God’s firstborn! Does this make Israel God? In Jeremiah, 31:9, God says Ephraim is his firstborn! How can someone have two firstborns? Are Israel and Ephraim twins? Does this make Ephraim God? In Psalm 2:7, God said to David, you are my son and today I have begotten you. Does this make David God? It is obvious from these verses in the Bible that Jesus was not the only son of God. How then does the author of John 3:16 make such a claim? Based on the Bible, Jesus was not even the firstborn son of God and he was not the son of God from the beginning (Please see Hebrew 5:5).

Ans 12: *Exodus 4:22 means God chose Israel as His chosen nation and expressed it as firstborn to compare all the first born of Egypt to be killed. Jeremiah 31:9 has the same meaning. When God said to David “you are my son”, He meant David had intimate relationship with God. When John 3:16 says Jesus is the only begotten son of God, the expression means Jesus is only God’s incarnation in human form coming to our world for our redemption.*

Bible is different from Quran. In each chapter of Quran, there are many verses and has many different topics. Each several verses in the chapter have a different topic, so each word should be interpreted within the several verses. But Bible uses many different metaphors, and each chapter of Bible has one or two big topics. And different chapters are related to the other chapters as each book of Bible has own big topic. So when you interpret the Bible you have to read whole chapter and also read other chapters to understand the meaning of the verses. I notice that you try to understand the Bible verses in the way of reading Quran.

Mohammed13: Anyway, the statement in John 3:16 is issued by the author (John?) and the statement in Roman 5:7-8 is issued by the author Paul. Let us see what Jesus said about obtaining eternal life because the words of Jesus are more important than those of John and Paul. In Mathew 19:17, Jesus said you need to keep the commandments if you want to get eternal life. Are you going to follow Jesus and his teachings? or are you going to follow others (John, Paul, or others) and their teachings? I personally would choose Jesus.

Ans 13: *Again, you should also read at least up to Matthew 19:21 (hopefully up the last verse) to understand the whole meaning of what Jesus says. Jesus says to the young man to follow Him to get the eternal life. The young man had self-confident to have eternal life as he observed all the commandments. Jesus wanted to point that observing the law is not enough; more important thing is to trust and love God. Jesus tested the young man by commanding him to sell all his fortune and follow Him. Jesus’ intention was to let him realize his good work is not enough. John, Paul, and Jesus all teach the same message.*

Mohammed14: In fact, Jesus clearly said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven**. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, **‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers! that only those who obeys the Father would enter Heaven.**” (Mathew 7:21). Only Christians would prophesy in Jesus name and only Christians would claim to perform miracles in Jesus name. I am not aware of any other group of people who would do that. So who are those many people that Jesus would denounce on the Day of Judgment?

Ans 14: *“does the will of my Father” means not only obey the law but also love and believe in God. As I mentioned in my previous email, whenever we do good work, we should check our motivations. Is my motivation to get praise from other people or to glorify God? If I do good work not for glorifying God but for getting praise from other people, God will say to me evildoer. Do I do good work all the time to glorify God? No, I always struggle with the temptation of glorifying me not God. I have to reflect myself and pray and repent daily.*

Mohammed15: The truth is that Jesus did not die because his prayers to the Father (the only true God) to save him from death were answered because God loved him as Jesus was a righteous man, a chosen Messiah, and a great prophet. In Hebrew 5:7, it says “during the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears **to the one who could save him from death**, and **he was heard** because of his reverent

submission.” May the One who answered Jesus prayers and saved him from death guide us all to the truth and have mercy on us both in this life and in the hereafter. Amen.

Ans 15: I think we had enough discussion for this topic. I hope you believe Jesus’ death for our salvation and His resurrection.

4. Jesus & the Holy Spirit as God’s representation understandable to human beings &

5. true meaning of Trinity:

Mohammed16: This section is so unclear and confusing which is expected when someone tries to explain that $1+1+1=1$. Here are my questions and I hope you can address them adequately.

Who is/are God/Gods that you believe in? Is it the one being that include the 3 persons (i.e. 3 Gods)? If yes, then if one or more of the persons is/are missing, would you still call the remaining person/persons God? Are Jesus and the Father the same person having the same identity? What I mean here is that was Jesus the Father but in flesh form? Is this what you mean by representation? Or was Jesus a different person with a unique identity. Having three persons means having 3 gods. You can believe $3=1$ and call 3 persons as one God as part of your faith but this cannot be acceptable rationally and logically. I do not think people misunderstand the trinity but rather people are thinking logically and rationally which is how people should think.

There are many sects within Christianity. People within each of these sects claim that they have seen Jesus or the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit dwells in them (whatever that means). Yet, each of these sects have different teachings some of which are fundamental. Does the Holy Spirit teach different things to different people? For example Catholic Vs. Protestants Vs. Jehova Witnesses. All of these sects believe in Jesus as their savior and that he died for their sins but these sects have significant differences. What happens to those people? Who is right and who is wrong? Do all of them (including Jehova witnesses) go to heaven regardless of their beliefs as long as they believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus which you called “the central doctrine of Christianity”?

Are the three persons (The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) equal? If yes, then what about Mathew 24:35, Mark 13:32, John 10:29, and John 14:28.

A true God should have an eternal power. Jesus did not have an eternal power but it was given to him by the Father. Please see John 17:1-2, John 17:6-8.

Christians call Jesus Lord. Did Jesus has the Lord role eternally or was it given to him by God? In Acts 2:36, the disciple Peter said “**God has made this Jesus**, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” So it is God who made Jesus Lord and Messiah and Jesus was not Lord before God made him as such.

In the Bible, there is a clear distinction between God and Jesus. For example, in 1 Corinthians 11:3, it says that God is the head of Christ and Christ is the head of man and man is the head of woman. This means that there is a distinction between God and Christ and that God has authority over Christ so there is sort of hierarchical system here. (continue to next page)

Also, in 1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”. Clearly here we see that Jesus is just a man and there is a distinction between the one God and the one mediator. God is not a man but the mediator Jesus is a man. Based on the Jesus’s own words and the words of his disciples, Jesus was a man (not God. not God and man. Just a man). The disciple Peter said in Acts 2:29 “Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, signs which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.” This shows that Jesus was not God and all the miracles he showed were done by the will and power of God not Jesus himself just like all of the other prophets of God who came before him.

When Jesus was about to leave this world/earth, Jesus prayed to the Father to protect his followers. Does a true God pray to someone else? Why did Jesus pray to the Father to protect his followers? Jesus said I protected my followers when he was with them in this world (John 17:12) and now he is asking the Father to protect them when he leaves this world and ascend to the Father in heaven. So Jesus cannot protect his followers when he ascended to heaven and this is why he prays to the Father to protect them? Jesus never prayed to the Holy Spirit. Also, the Father and the Holy Spirit never prayed to Jesus. To me, this is another reason that disqualify both Jesus and the Holy Spirit as true Gods and proves that only the Father has the eternal power and the Father is above all. In fact, Jesus himself called the Father “the only true God”. Please see John 17:3. How can someone then claim Jesus is God?

Jesus was a massager of God and his representative on earth when he was living on this planet. What I mean by representative may be different from your understanding. I believe Jesus was a representative of God just like Moses was a representative of God because God gave them authority like when a president of a company assigns a representative of him in a committee or when a king assigns a leader in a war for example then that leader would be the king’s representative in that war.

I think the trinity made it impossible for human beings to understand God and to relate to him. God outside the trinity is much more understandable and easier to relate to than having God inside the trinity. So, I do not agree with you that having this concept of trinity made God understandable. It is quite the opposite and I am sure that no one truly understands the trinity including those who believe. In fact, the trinity statement or creed cannot be found anywhere in the Bible. I would advise you to review the history and check when the concept of trinity was created. Until the year 325 CE, no one believed in the trinity as we have it today. Trinity is a later development made by men.

Ans16: As I mentioned in my response to your first part of comment, you do not understand section 4 of my ChristianviewofHaven which explains the relationship between God and Jesus using the analogy of 2D and 3D person. Please read the section carefully. You must understand the analogy of 2D and 3D person to understand the relationship between God and Jesus. As God created the 4D universe (now cosmologists claim there are multiverses), He can be analogized as the being of much higher than 4D. Please try to understand the meaning of the fingertip of 3D person touching on the 2D world. The 2D persons are analogized as us and the 3D person as God and the fingertips of the 3D person touching on the 2D plane as Jesus and Holy Spirit. God works as Jesus and Holy Spirit (as the two different finger tips) in this world to interact with us for our salvation.

6. Jesus’s death and resurrection as the central doctrine of Christianity:

Mohammed17: Pretty much all of the verses you have cited in this section goes back to Paul, whom I believe is the true founder of Christianity. Regarding the idea of salvation only by the death and resurrection of Jesus, I would advise to check response in Part 1 which I have sent you earlier. I think it is clear from the verses I have cited in my earlier response that this is not correct and that there are and were other solutions for sins and means to salvation other than having a man killed for the sins of people.

To elaborate more, Jesus said that you need to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teacher of the law in order to go to heaven. Otherwise, you will go to hell (Mathew 5:20). Jesus also said that he did not come to change the law and that all commandment and all law should be kept if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven (Mathew 5:17-20). In the same passage, Jesus

mentioned that whoever does not practice the least of these commands and teaches otherwise will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. *Ans 17: As I mentioned earlier, God gave the law to the people of Israel in OT for them to live as God’s chosen people, not for them to get a ticket to heaven. They sacrificed animals as the atonement every year. Jesus did fulfil the law by His death so that His death became an eternal sacrifice, no more animal sacrifice every year. Surely, we need to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teacher of the law in order to go to heaven as they did not do good work for glorifying God but glorifying themselves. That is why in many places of the NT Jesus condemned the religious leaders. Read John 14:6. ⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one come to the father except through me.”*

Mohammed18: It is clear from the writing of Paul (Paul's letters), that he teaches thing against these words of Jesus. Paul teaches that salvation is gained by faith and no need to do any of the commandments. He is the one who made pork allowed and he is the one who taught against circumcision. According to the Bible, pigs are unclean animals. They are inherently unclean in their nature and, therefore, pork should not be consumed. Pigs are unclean even before the Torah came so it has nothing to do with the Jewish law since prophets did not eat pork even before the time of Moses. Jesus did not eat pork, and the law that he commanded to follow does not allow eating pork. Yet, Paul teaches otherwise. Based on what Jesus said in Mathew 5:19, do not you think that Paul would be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven?

Ans 18: *In OT, Jewish law has three parts: Moral Law, Ceremonial Law, and Civil Law. Moral Law is eternal but the Ceremonial and Civil laws are not. In Genesis 9:1-3 God allowed Noah and his descendants to eat any moving animals (including pigs) for foods.*

Mohammed19: Also in Mathew 23:1-3, we have the following "Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So **you must be careful to do everything they tell you**. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach." **Ans 19:** *What Jesus tried to point is the hypocrisy of the religious leaders as they taught to other people but never did what they taught.*

Mohammed20: Paul created the idea of salvation by only faith. In Romans 3:28, Paul said "For we maintain that a person is **justified by faith apart from the works of the law.**" But James said in James 2:24 "As you can see, **a man is justified by his deeds and not by faith alone.**" Who is right Paul or James?

Ans 20: *Both are right. James emphasized that the genuine faith should bring good work. Paul emphasized the genuine faith that brings good work for salvation. Paul himself did a lot of good work in appreciation of being saved by Jesus, not for getting a ticket to heaven nor for glorifying himself, in his whole life after he met Jesus.*

Mohammed21: Paul clearly states that you only need to confess with your mouth that Jesus is lord and believe in your heart that raised from the dead. "**Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them."** But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'"(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: **If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**" Roman 10:5-9.

Ans 21: *Paul's this teaching is exactly aligned with Jesus' teaching in John 14:6.*

Mohammed22: Paul's goals were just to get as many followers as possible. He would do anything to win more followers. He went to the pagan gentiles and made his teachings of salvation and not following the law appealing to them. Paul adapted some of the pagan traditions and included it within Christianity. He was successful in doing that. After all pagan are polytheists so they would not mind believing in the trinity. The pagan gentiles are also ok with having a human god and they already have the concept of incarnation and human sacrifice so it would not be hard for them to believe that a god became a man and died for the sins of people. All of these things would not be possible to preach and convince a the Hebrew unitarian monotheists so Paul had to be pagan people in Rome and other places and write all of these letter to those pagan gentiles. Paul changed the law as he wished just to get more followers. That was his main goal and he was clear about as he said "Although I am free from everyone, I have enslaved myself to all of them **in order to win a larger number**. To the Jews I behave as a Jew; to those under the Law as one who is under the Law, although I am not under the law, to gain those who are under the law. To those who are without law I am without law, although not lawless toward God but committed to Christ's Law, **in order to win those who are without law**" (1 Corinthians 9:19). In summary, Paul was willing to change anything in order to get more followers. He made salvation just by faith. No need to follow any law and do any work. He thought that this would be attractive for pagan gentiles and perhaps it and so he can get more followers. Unfortunately, some Christians today think in the same way as Paul. They think by making Heaven and the Kingdom of God so cheap such that you only need faith in the death of man would attract people to the Christian faith. Christianity has become lawless and only full of emotions (dreams, music worship... etc.). It does not provide solutions to real life problems. Christianity is full of beautiful words but lacks any action and real solutions. We do not live in ideal world; the world has lots of problems and in need of heavenly solutions. I do not see Christianity offering that.

Ans 22: (1) Resurrected Jesus said about Paul in Acts 9:15-16, "Go! This man (Paul) is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Nothing is wrong for Paul to establish the Christian doctrine. His teachings are all aligned with what Jesus taught. Many Islam scholars criticize Paul like you do here to justify their attempt to discredit NT and Christianity. Why they want to discredit NT? Because they find that there are many contradictions between NT and Quran (We may discuss this subject later). I want to recommend you and them to read whole Acts and all his writings to learn more about Paul. It is not Paul but Jesus who makes the Kingdom of God so cheap by dying on the cross for our salvation, so whoever believes in Him will go to heaven. Jesus opens the gate of the heaven wide open and invites you to come by dying on the cross for your free salvation and by asking you simply accept Him as your savior. (2) You say that Christianity has become lawlessness and provide no solution for the world problems. I need to tell you my story: During Korean War, I was almost dead by malnutrition and other sickness. But we found American Christian missionaries who built a small hospital in a town to care of many sick people and I was one of them. Because of their dedicated help, I survived from the deadly sickness. Because of those Christian missionaries, our country changed drastically from the country infected by drunkards and idol worship to dramatic economic development. And about 30% of South Korean became Christians and the churches sent second largest number (first is US) of missionaries all over the world, many of them go to Muslim refugee camps to help them. Now in Chicago we have many Afghan refugees and our church also is helping those people in need. I am not sure how many Muslim refugees Saudi Arabia accepts and helps them now. After the Islamic terrorist attack on 9/11 in US, our church pastor (we attended an American church at that time) gave us a sermon of Jesus love toward the Islamic terrorist as Jesus teaches us to love our enemy (Matthew 5:43-48). At that time many Muslim students joined to our Bible study group to be protected. Now under pandemic crisis, the Samaritan Purse (a Christian charity organization) is busy to help people not only in US but also other countries and many churches are helping needed people in this crisis time as they did other crisis time. You criticize that Christianity does not offer any heavenly solutions. I want to know what heavenly solution Islam offers now other than violence all over the world incurred by Muslims (May be I have a prejudice, if then, please correct me).

Mohammed23: You mentioned that after the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples spread Christianity to all over the world. That is not correct. The disciples did not spread the message of Christianity. It was Paul who did. You referenced Acts 1:1,-28:31 and the book of Corinthians which all of them refer to Paul. Paul was **not** a disciple of Jesus. Paul was **not** a follower of Jesus, he never met Jesus when Jesus was preaching on earth, and Paul also taught things against the teachings of Jesus and the law. Paul also had disputes with some of the disciples of Jesus. Paul is the real founder of Christianity. Without the teachings and the writings of Paul, it would be hard for the Christian doctrine as we know today to exist.

Ans 23: Please read Acts carefully. There are many names who risked their lives to propagate Jesus' death and resurrection. There are other disciples who went to Asian countries but their names are not in the Bible. There are many second/third generation of Jesus' disciples who risked their lives for spreading Christianity. Even now there are many Jesus' disciples who spread the Good news of Jesus risking their lives especially in Muslim and communist countries. Again, Paul was appointed by resurrected Jesus as His disciple. If someone asks me who is more credible God's messenger between Paul and Prophet Muhammed, I will certainly choose Paul. I hope I discuss this topic later as this is not current topic. Yes, Paul disputed with Peter and Paul was right as Jesus did not discriminate any based on race as shown in John 4:4-26. Nothing is wrong for Paul to establish the doctrine of Christianity. He was appointed by Jesus to do that but the founder of Christianity is Jesus, the God incarnated. The founder of Islam is Prophet Muhammed. What is his qualification and credential to be claimed God's last and best messenger? I am eager to hear the answer from you.

Mohammed24: You mention that the only weapon the disciples had is their witness of Jesus death and resurrection. But we know from the Bible that this is not true. No one from the disciples of Jesus witnessed his crucifixion. All of his disciples forsook him and fled and not a single disciple of Jesus saw his death.

Ans 24: I already presented many Bible verses that show many eye witnesses of Jesus death and resurrection in the previous email. That means Jesus death and resurrection is real.

7. Christian's view of good work:

Mohammed25: You mentioned that good work and faith is inseparable and that good work comes with true faith. Does this mean that no true faith can come without good work as James said that faith without work is dead? If that is the case, then this is what I believe as a Muslim. I do not see any difference between the idea of salvation in Islam and Christianity except that Allah is immortal because He does not die (but the God of Christianity is mortal because Jesus died).

Ans 25: Now you know that your statement of this is not correct as Jesus is God incarnated.

Mohammed26: Also, Allah is so merciful that he does not require blood or sacrifice and rather He Almighty can forgive to whomever He wishes by his grace and mercy (but the God of Christianity needs sacrifice and blood to forgive). I believe that I am saved by the mercy of Allah and you believe that you are saved by the blood of Jesus. My God does not need to pay any penalty to save me but your does. My God is above all and has the power to do anything and his mercy is abundant. God Almighty said in the Qura'an 7:156 **"but My mercy encompasses all things."** May God Almighty showers us with His mercy.

Ans26: No, Allah is not merciful as he commands many Muslims to go through hell fire to cleanse their sins and then let them go to heaven. I expect that if I go to Islamic heaven I will see most of the Muslims there have disfigured body by burnt damage. Allah did not pay penalty for Muslims but required them to pay penalty in the hell as purification process. On the other hand, Christian God died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins so that all the Christians can directly go to heaven unscathed by hell fire. That is grace and mercy.

Second communication:

Mohammed1: It is my understanding that you believe that the only way to salvation and heaven is to accept Jesus as the savior and that Jesus died for the sins of humans. If someone accepts that Jesus died for their sins and that he/she are saved by the blood of Jesus, then he/she will go to heaven without judgment regardless of their sins and even if they do not do work. Is my understanding of what you believe correct? Please correct me if I am wrong.

On this point, I have some confusion that I hope you would clear it up for me. You mentioned that both Paul and James are right. You said that Paul only emphasized that we cannot earn ticket to heaven by doing good work. I understand that and I agree with your understanding on this particular point. However, Paul also said in **Romans 3:28** **"For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law."** So Paul also emphasized that you only need faith to be saved and go to heaven regardless of your work unlike James who said you are justified by **both faith and work, not only faith**. In one of your previous emails, you agreed with me that faith and work are inseparable. In today's email, you confirmed that by saying that genuine faith should bring good work and if it does not then that faith does not bring salvation. I understand that and I agree with you 100%.

Ans1: I think your understanding is 99% correct. The Christian's view of salvation is that "going to heaven" is not what you earn by doing good work but it is the gift from God. In other words, as God is infinitely holy, any good work we do cannot satisfy His infinite Holiness. If we have genuine faith in God (and faith in Jesus' redemptive death and resurrection), God gives us eternal life as His gift, not as award for our good work.

In Luke 23:39-43, Jesus was hanged on the cross with two criminals on His left and right. As one of the two repented and asked Jesus his salvation, Jesus said to him that he would be with Him in Paradise today. The criminal did not do any good work but simply repented his sins to Jesus just before he died on the cross. It seems very unfair for those who have been a sincere Christian for many years. But Jesus said in Revelation 22:12, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done". Jesus also said in Matthew 20:1-16 about God's sovereignty to give award to the workers. So all the Christians who have genuine faith will go to heaven regardless of their work but they will get rewards based on what they had done in this life. What kind of reward He would give to them will be based on His sovereign plan.

*What is the genuine faith? Simply saying “I believe in Jesus” is not genuine faith. We agree that genuine faith should bring good work but **I do not mean that genuine faith plus good work will bring salvation**. I think you misinterpret what James said. Good work is merely outcome of the genuine faith, not a necessary condition for heaven. By doing good work, we will get reward in the heaven as mentioned above. The “genuine faith” means “born again” by the Holy Spirit. The man on the cross changed from a criminal to a Christian, Paul changed from Christian persecutor to Jesus’ greatest disciple, a man who killed five family members in a house became a Christian and led many people in the prison to Jesus before he was executed by the Korean law, and I changed from a selfish atheist to a Christian. After I became a Christian I have been doing (at least trying to do) good work out of appreciation of being saved, not for getting a ticket to heaven. Holy Spirit compels the born again people to do good work not for getting a ticket to heaven but out of appreciation of being saved.*

Mohammed2: But, in **Roman 4:5**, Paul said “And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness”. So Paul says that faith that does not bring work would also count as righteous or genuine. I would appreciate your clarification on this point.

***Ans2:** Roman 4:5 talks about Abraham’s righteousness. Before Abraham did any good work for God, he was chosen by God and he believed Him. Paul means that God had a plan to choose Abraham before he even knew God, let alone doing good work. When God chose him, Abraham believed in God and God counted him as righteous. Abraham did good work after he was chosen (after God counted him righteous), even obeying to God’s command of sacrificing his only (promised) son, Isaac.*

Mohammed3: If I confess now that Jesus is my savior and that he died for my sins, would I be guaranteed to go to heaven eternally regardless of my many sins and even if I do not do any work?

***Ans3:** Yes, if you repent your sins sincerely and accept the redemptive Jesus, you are guaranteed the eternal life even without doing any good work for Him now. But you are going to do good for God out of appreciation of being saved. Holy Spirit will change you that way. But remember that accepting Jesus means you become a born again Christian, not simply to say “I accept Jesus”. We need more discussion for this subject when we have lunch together in the future.*

Mohammed4: In Islam, there are 6 pillars/articles of faith which a person has to believe to be considered a believer (someone who has faith). Is there something similar in Christianity? I know you need to believe that Jesus died for your sins and you are saved by his blood. Is there anything else that you need to believe to be considered a believer from a Christian point of view or is this the only thing that you need to believe to be considered a person of faith? I would appreciate sharing your knowledge with me on this point.

***Ans4:** We have articles of faith that summarize what we, as Christians, believe. One is Apostle’s creed as follows.*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places*