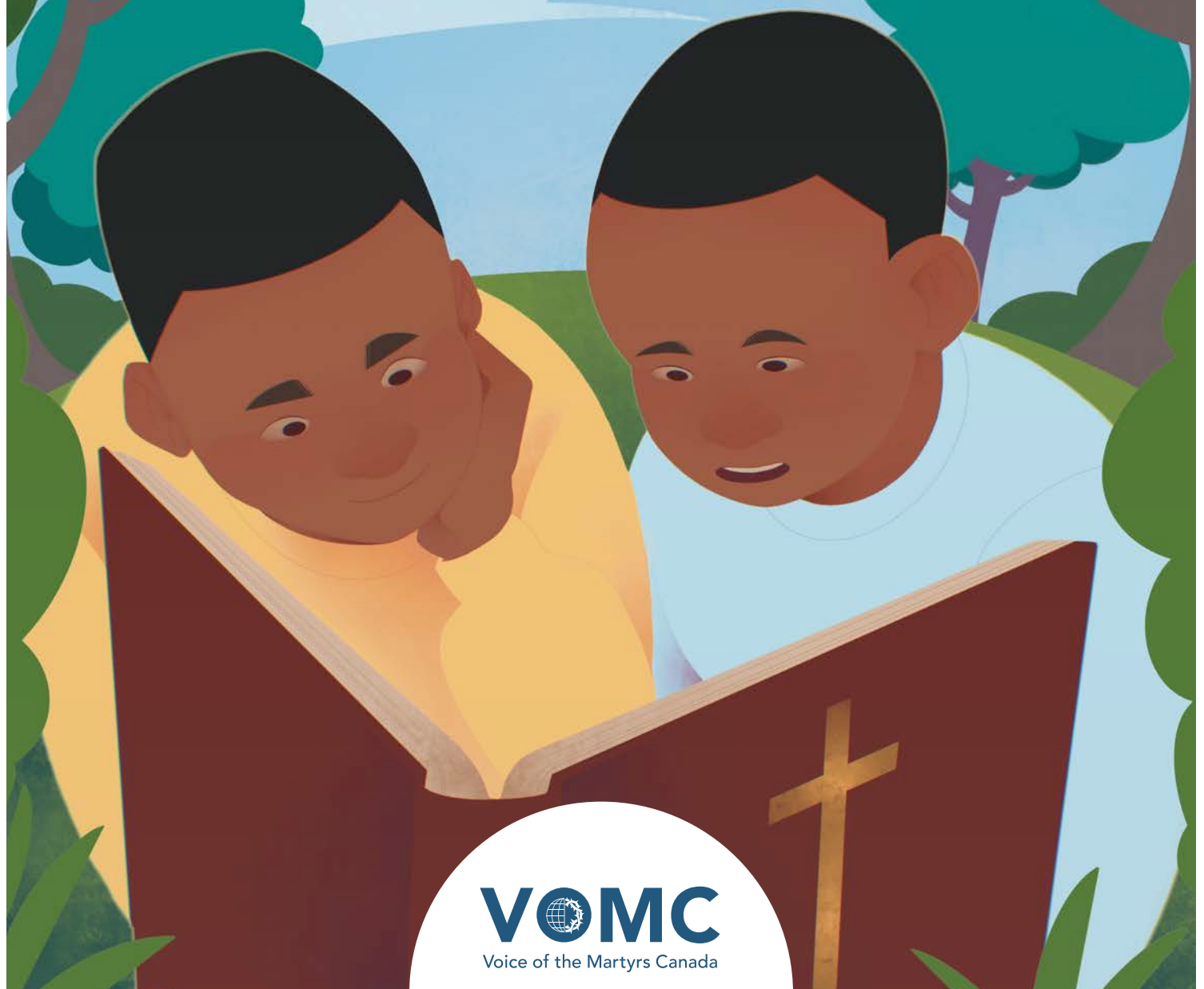


Issue 5

May 2026

An Interactive Teaching Tool for a New Generation

TABLETalks



VOMC
Voice of the Martyrs Canada

ALONG THE WAY • INVESTIGATING THE STORY • AFRICAN ADVENTURE

Along the Way

Growing up as a devout Muslim in Ethiopia, a country often thought of as a Christian-majority nation, Jemal despised followers of Jesus Christ.

He would eagerly debate Christians to make them doubt their faith while pointing to the Quran as the source of ultimate truth. When Jemal was in the eighth grade, he taught other Muslim students how to draw Christian converts back to Islam.

In high school, Jemal met a former Muslim named Yonas who travelled throughout the area sharing the Gospel with Islamic leaders. Whenever Yonas was in town, Jemal would debate him and ask questions about the Christian faith.

Over time, Yonas' answers began to make sense to Jemal. "I learned from Yonas and the Bible about Christ," he says. "Also, I was looking in the Quran. When I compared them, I started to leave the Quran and gradually started to love the Bible."

When Jemal shared what Yonas had taught him about Jesus and the Scriptures with local Islamic leaders, he hoped they could debunk Yonas' claims. But surprisingly, they had no answers. They simply warned him about the dangers of meeting with a Christian.

For several years, Jemal read his Bible and met with Yonas in secret. Then, when he turned 20, Jemal decided to place his faith in Christ. "It took many years to decide," Jemal says. "I was afraid to come to church and talk about Christ because if [militant Islamists] heard and knew I converted to Christianity, immediately they would [hurt] me."

Jemal's family noticed changes in his character, and when his father asked him if he was a Christian, he boldly shared that he was. Jemal's brothers and some other men from the village beat him, trying to persuade him to return to Islam, but his love for Jesus – which had been growing for years – sustained him through the persecution.

Jemal's father rejected him and told him he never wanted to see him again, so Jemal fled to another town where Yonas welcomed him as a brother in Christ. The new believer participated in a training program for Christian converts from Islam and has since been working in full-time ministry. After completing the training, Jemal got married and returned to his hometown, but

unfortunately his family continues to persecute him.

Despite this rejection and the loss of his home, land and belongings, Jemal says Jesus is worth it, and he hopes that God will use his new life for His glory.

Reading Between the Lines

Define the Verb

The word "persuaded" means:

- a) Convinced someone
- b) Pursued a goal
- c) Took a break

What tense is the verb "persuaded"?

- a) Past
- b) Present
- c) Future

The word "participated" means:

- a) Took part in
- b) Rained heavily
- c) Enjoyed something

What tense is the verb "participated"?

- a) Past
- b) Present
- c) Future

The word "share" means:

- a) To give a portion of something
- b) To injure
- c) To hoard

What tense is the verb "sharing"?

- a) Past
- b) Present
- c) Future

Fill in the Blanks

Put the verbs from above into the correct sentences.

1. James _____ his teacher to give him another chance at his test.
2. Michael _____ in the 100-metre dash in track and field.
3. The toddlers are _____ their toys well.

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African Adventure

1 _ R _ O _ G _

2 _ U _ A _

3 N _ _ _ _

4 _ N _ _ L _

5 A _ _ E _ _

6 _ O _ _ _ F _ C _

7 _ _ D _ _ S _ R _

8 _ T _ _ _ I _

9 _ _ G _ I _

10 _ _ Z _ B _ O _

11 _ _ M _ _ A _

12 _ H _ _

13 L _ _ Y _

14 _ A _ _

15 Z _ _ B _ _

16 _ G _ _ _

17 _ _ U _ T _ I _

18 _ _ R _ C _ _

19 G _ _ _ _

20 C _ T _ _ _ F _ _ _ _ P _

21 B _ _ W _ _

22 _ _ Z _ N _ _

23 _ O _ D _ _ R _

24 _ E _ _ _ N _ _ A _

25 R _ _ O _ H _ O _ G _

26 U _ N _ _

27 T _ _ _ I _

28 _ _ I _ _ A _

29 _ O _ H _ _ D _ _

30 _ _ _ O _

31 K _ _ _ _

32 _ M _ _ W _

33 S _ _ _ A _

34 _ E _ _ _

35 _ I _ _ _ L _ _ E _

36 _ R _ _ _ _ S _

37 _ R _ E _

38 _ J _ _ U _

39 B _ R _ _ _

40 _ M _ O _

41 _ O _ T _ _ _ _ U _ _ _

42 _ _ I _ _ _ S S _ _

43 _ _ _ D _

44 _ M _ I _

45 _ A _ _ _ _ S _

46 _ _ O _

47 _ _ L _ _

48 _ E _ _ H _

49 _ W _ _ N _

50 _ B _ R _

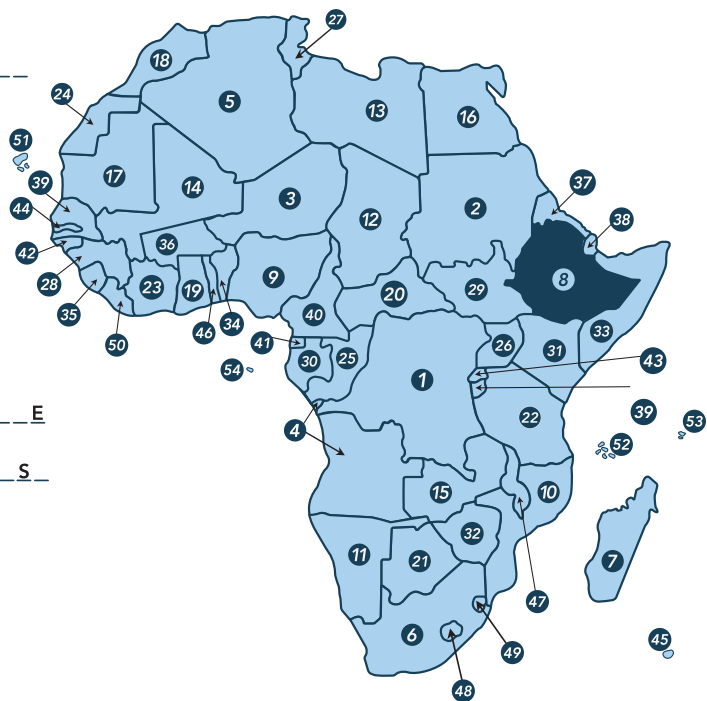
51 _ P _ V _ _

52 _ M O _

53 _ Y _ L _ S _

54 _ A _ M _ N _

P _ _ C _ _



Did you know that Africa is the second-largest continent and consists of over 50 countries? Looking at the image above, see how many African countries you can name on your own. If you need to, use a map to locate and label every country by its corresponding number, filling in the answer key. *Make sure to notice where Ethiopia is located!*

Printable resources, an answer key, and additional activities are available online at: www.vomcanada.com/TableTalksEthiopia26.



African Adventure

Answer Sheet

1 DR Congo*	17 Mauritania	33 Somalia	49 Eswatini
2 Sudan	18 Morocco	34 Benin	50 Liberia
3 Niger	19 Ghana	35 Sierra Leone	51 Cape Verde
4 Angola	20 Central African Rep.	36 Burkina Faso	52 Comoros
5 Algeria	21 Botswana	37 Eritrea	53 Seychelles
6 South Africa	22 Tanzania	38 Djibouti	54 Sao Tome and Principe
7 Madagascar	23 Cote D'Ivoire	39 Burundi	
8 Ethiopia	24 Western Sahara	40 Cameroon	
9 Nigeria	25 Rep. of the Congo	41 Equatorial Guinea	
10 Mozambique	26 Uganda	42 Guinea - Bissau	
11 Namibia	27 Tunisia	43 Rwanda	
12 Chad	28 Guinea	44 Gambia	
13 Libya	29 South Sudan	45 Mauritius	
14 Mali	30 Gabon	46 Togo	
15 Zambia	31 Kenya	47 Malawi	
16 Egypt	32 Zimbabwe	48 Lesotho	

*Democratic Republic of the Congo



Weigh In

Weighing the facts
about Ethiopia

1.

Food in Ethiopia is served on a communal platter; each person scoops it up using a piece of a spongy bread called "injera." No forks allowed!

2.

Ethiopia welcomes refugees from Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia, as it sits in the middle of numerous conflict-ridden areas.

3.

Christians in Ethiopia may be denied access to community resources, such as water from the village well, because of their decision to follow Christ.

4.

Ethiopians who leave Islam to become Christians are typically persecuted and disowned by their Muslim family members and community.

Sources:

<https://www.ethiopiaimmigration.org>

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ethiopia/>

<https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/ethiopia/>

<https://vomcanada.com/ethiopia.htm>

<https://operationworld.org/locations/ethiopia/>

Corresponding Question Points:

1. What does sharing food from one big plate tell us about how Ethiopian people approach friendship and community? Do you think you could share one big plate with your family?
2. Can a region surrounded by conflict ever truly offer refuge, or is it a temporary illusion of safety, especially for Christians who flee religious persecution? Explain your answer.
3. Persecuted Christians in Ethiopia are forced to find new ways of meeting their daily needs – and these solutions are often inconvenient or costly. Are there areas in your life where being a Christian has required sacrifice or inconvenience? Share your experience and how it affected your faith.
4. In a culture that revolves around community and relationships, is the decision to follow Christ an easy one? Compare and contrast the cost of becoming a Christian in Canada versus Ethiopia. What similarities and differences did you find?

One Way

Christians and Muslims share many beliefs about Jesus, but they disagree on two major points. Christians believe Jesus died on the cross and that He claimed to be God. The Quran, the holy book of Islam, teaches otherwise.

Author Nabeel Qureshi once described how, as a middle-school student, he convinced a girl on the bus that Jesus didn't die on the cross. The Quran specifically says that Jesus' enemies "did not kill Him, nor crucify Him, but it was made to appear so" and that "God raised Him up."¹ Nabeel argued that Jesus hung on the cross for only three hours, which wasn't typically long enough to kill someone. Some people lasted for days. He also claimed that the Roman governor Pilate ordered Jesus to be taken down early because of a dream his wife had. According to his argument, Jesus

Religious Comparison: Compare & Contrast What the Bible Says

was put in the tomb alive, treated with medicines by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, and healed over three days.

These kinds of arguments can sound convincing if you aren't prepared to respond. Looking at the medical evidence alone, Christians and non-Christians alike come face-to-face with strong indicators that Jesus *did* die on the cross – evidence further supported by scientific, historical, archaeological and Biblical records.

Consider the list of evidence below.



Roman "cat o' nine tails" scourging: This whip wasn't just painful; it was brutal. The metal and bone pieces tied into the leather straps ripped deep into a person's skin and muscle. Many people died from the blood loss before they ever reached the cross.

Carrying the crossbeam: By the time Jesus was forced to carry the heavy wooden beam, He had already lost so much blood that He was close to collapsing. The journey itself added more strain to an already weakened body.

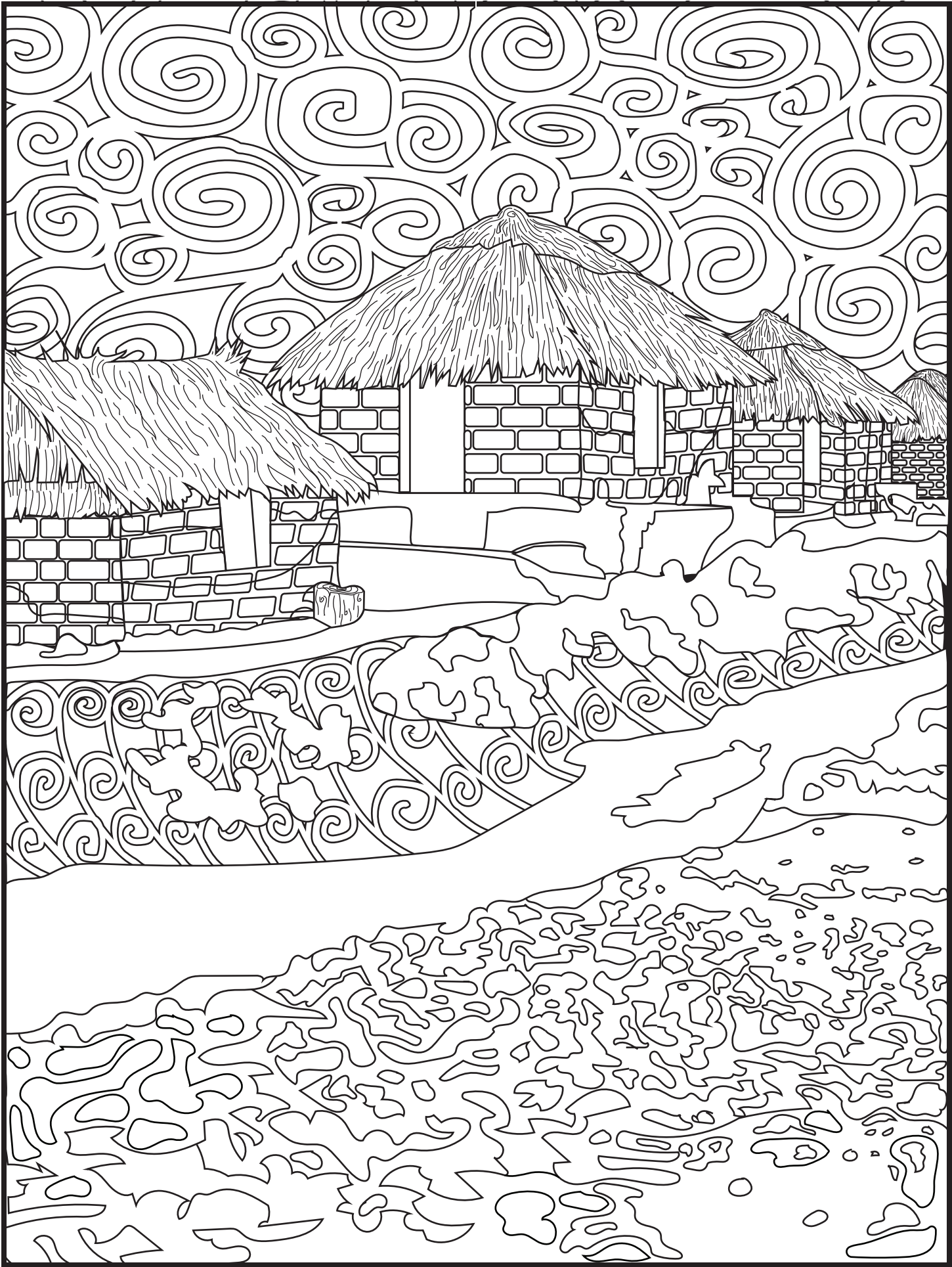
Crucifixion: Crucifixion was designed to kill a person slowly by making it harder and harder for them to breathe. Roman soldiers were trained to make sure the victim died – if they failed, *they* could be executed for not doing their job. Their own lives depended on confirming the death.

The spear wound and the "blood and water": When a soldier pierced Jesus' side, a mix of blood and clear fluid (John 19:34) came out. That only happens *after* someone has died, once the blood separates inside the body. It's a medical sign of death, not survival.

Medical consensus: Modern experts – including non-Christian historians and doctors – agree that no one could survive a full Roman crucifixion. The combination of scourging, blood loss, shock, suffocation and the final spear wound makes survival medically impossible.

The point isn't to focus on the gore, but on the facts. Learning how science, history and Scripture come together to confirm the story of Jesus gives us confidence that our faith is rooted in truth – not just feelings. This prepares us for thoughtful conversations with others so that we can stand boldly in our Christian beliefs.

PSALMS 94:15



ON • JUSTICE • AND • THOSE • WITH
• VIRTUOUS • HEARTS • WILL • PURSUE • IT

• JUDGEMENT • WILL • AGAIN • BE • FOUNDED

Secret Sentence Solver

Instructions

Use the clues and your problem-solving skills to fully reveal the mystery message!

- 1) The hidden message is shown as blank lines, each representing a letter.
- 2) The numbers under each blank stand for a specific letter. Numbers are randomly assigned.
- 3) Some blanks already show letters – use these as clues to figure out which letters match the remaining numbers.
- 4) Fill in the letters as you solve the code. Look for word patterns and repeated letters to help you decode the message.

25 14 14 25 16 7 14 M 17 16 4

12 14 12 H 26 16 1 A 9 12 26 16 15

16 10 C 7 16 20 12 12 26 15 14 U 11 6 26

17 16 .

3 14 26 25 F S : G



Secret Sentence Solver

Answer Sheet

$\frac{N}{25}$ $\frac{O}{14}$ $\frac{O}{14}$ $\frac{N}{25}$ $\frac{E}{16}$ $\frac{C}{7}$ $\frac{O}{14}$ $\frac{M}{17}$ $\frac{E}{16}$ $\frac{S}{4}$

$\frac{T}{12}$ $\frac{O}{14}$ $\frac{T}{12}$ $\frac{H}{26}$ $\frac{E}{16}$ $\frac{F}{1}$ $\frac{A}{9}$ $\frac{T}{12}$ $\frac{H}{26}$ $\frac{E}{16}$ $\frac{R}{15}$

$\frac{E}{16}$ $\frac{X}{10}$ $\frac{C}{7}$ $\frac{E}{16}$ $\frac{P}{20}$ $\frac{T}{12}$ $\frac{T}{12}$ $\frac{H}{26}$ $\frac{R}{15}$ $\frac{O}{14}$ $\frac{U}{11}$ $\frac{G}{6}$ $\frac{H}{26}$

$\frac{M}{17}$ $\frac{E}{16}$

$\frac{J}{3}$ $\frac{O}{14}$ $\frac{H}{26}$ $\frac{N}{25}$ $\frac{1}{F}$ $\frac{4}{S}$: $\frac{6}{G}$



Align the Mind

Based on the book, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*, the following quotes were compiled alongside the Scriptural truths found in the box below.

1. "...I knew I was a sinner and that I had rebelled against God's commands at times and chosen my own path over His dictates. But since Muslims believe that salvation is a matter of doing more good than bad, I never really felt anguish over my sin..." (p. 201).

2. "...in my case, I knew of no Christian who truly cared about me, no one who had been a part of my life through thick and thin. I had plenty of Christian acquaintances...there were none that I knew who cared about me. Since no Christian cared about me, I did not care about their message..." (p. 121).

3. "Of course, like all people...we all generally just believe what we are taught...attempt to defend what is already believed, potentially ignoring or underestimating evidence that points to the contrary. This is only natural since it is extremely difficult to change beliefs that are dear to the heart" (p. 116).

4. "These are the costs Muslims must calculate when considering the Gospel: losing the relationships they have built in this life, potentially losing life itself, and if they are wrong, losing their afterlife in paradise. It is no understatement to say that Muslims often risk everything to embrace the cross" (p. 253).

Grab your Bible and fill in the blanks to complete these verses.

1. "He saved us, _____ of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy." – Titus 3:5 ESV

2. "_____ to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good." – Romans 12:9 NLT

3. "But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, _____ . Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." – 2 Corinthians 3:16-17 ESV

4. "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must _____ , take up your cross, and follow Me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it." – Mark 8:34-35 NLT



Align the Mind

Answer Sheet

Grab your Bible and fill in the blanks to complete these verses.

a) "He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy." – Titus 3:5 ESV

b) " Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good." – Romans 12:9 NLT

c) "But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is removed . Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." – 2 Corinthians 3:16-17 ESV

d) "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way , take up your cross, and follow Me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it." – Mark 8:34-35 NLT

