

Weigh In

Weighing the facts about Pakistan

1.

The Tharparkar Desert in Pakistan is the only fertile desert in the world, and there are over 1.5 million people living in it.

2.

Most Pakistanis, especially girls, drop out of school by grade eight due to poverty and the need for extra income.

3.

As Pakistan is an honour-shame culture, maintaining family honour is foundational to the community. Any dishonourable actions can bring shame to the family.

4.

Blasphemy laws in Pakistan make it illegal for anyone to speak negatively about Islam. The penalty is imprisonment or death.

Corresponding Question Points:

(1) Deserts are biomes that receive little to no rainfall each year, making them hard to live in. Theorize why the Tharparkar Desert is fertile and supports millions of people. Afterwards, research why the desert allows life to thrive.

(2) What are the positive, negative, short-term, and long-term effects of dropping out of school to work? For example, a teenager who leaves school might be able to earn money for their family in the short term, but this decision could also limit their future job opportunities.

(3) Read Luke 9:23. Christians in Pakistan choose daily to go against their culture and sacrifice relationships with their family members. What sacrifices have you made in your friend groups and family to be a Christian?

(4) How do Pakistan's blasphemy laws align or conflict with international human rights standards, such as freedom of speech and religion?

One Way

Religious Comparison: Compare & Contrast What the Bible Says

The Five Pillars of Islam are required practices that form the foundation for Muslim life and are essential for going to heaven. However, not until Judgement Day does a Muslim discover if their efforts were enough to earn them a spot in heaven. In the diagram below are the Five Pillars of Islam and how Christianity differs.

Purpose: All these pillars are necessary for Muslims to have a chance at salvation.

Shahada (Declaration of Faith): Muslims must daily confess: "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger." It reminds them of their faith and commitment to Islam.

A person enters the Kingdom of God by confessing with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 10:8-13).

Salah (Prayer): Muslims must pray facing Mecca five times a day: at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and after dark. Prayer includes the recitation of a passage of the Quran and sometimes any personal requests.

Christians are instructed to pray to God, not out of religious duty, but because God wants a relationship with His people.

Zakat (Alms): Muslims are required to give 2.5 percent of their income to the poor. By faithfully giving, Muslims can secure divine blessing and community approval.

Giving is a core part of the Christian life. Jesus instructs His people to give to those in need. Whatever is given, Christians are to give and serve as if doing it for the Lord (Colossians 3:23-24), not for what can be earned.

Sawm (Fasting): During the last month of the Islamic calendar, there is a communal fast called Ramadan where no one eats during the daylight hours. The purpose is for spiritual enlightenment, and to identify with the poor.

Christians often fast in their walk with Christ. Fasting is not a requirement but has spiritual benefits as it draws a person closer to God. When a Christian fasts, it is done privately (Matthew 6:16-18).

Hajj (Pilgrimage): All Muslims who are able are required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and the surrounding holy sites at least once in their lives.

Christians often visit important historical sites for a deeper understanding of the Bible and God. While visiting holy sites are inspirational to a believer, it is not a requirement.

Purpose: Salvation is assured. All these practices help Christians have a deeper relationship with God.