

HAJJ PRAYER

Calling Christians to prayer and fasting for Muslims going on the Hajj

June 26-28, 2023

INTRODUCTION

This year the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia is scheduled to begin at sundown on June 26 and end at sundown June 28, 2023. The most significant parts of the pilgrimage take place during the first three days. This prayer guide focusses on the first three days of Hajj.

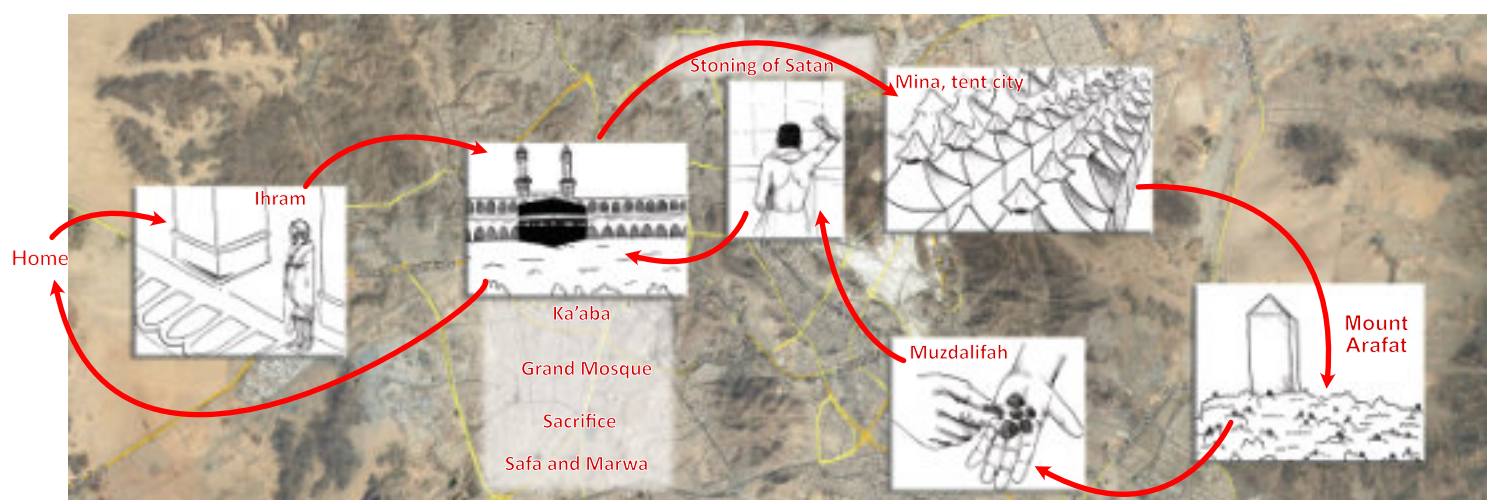
In Luke 7, Jesus says to a sinful woman, "Your sins are forgiven...Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Because Jesus is God, he has all the authority and power to forgive all of our sins through his atoning sacrifice on the cross and His glorious resurrection, for those who receive Him by faith. Praise His holy name for His mercy! However, the nearly 2 billion Muslims in the world today reject God's mercy by rejecting Jesus as Savior. Instead, Muslims go on the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia in order to receive forgiveness of sins from Allah. Consider this one Hadith (the sayings of Muhammad): It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: I heard the Prophet say: "Whoever performs Hajj for the sake of Allah and does not utter any obscene speech or do any evil deed, will go back (free of sin) as his mother bore him." (Al-Bukhaari, 1449; Muslim, 1350)

Therefore, the Hajj is the pinnacle of life for Muslims. They seek not only the forgiveness of sins but also to deepen their allegiance to Allah.

Since the Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam, all Muslims are commanded to perform the Hajj at least once in their lifetime if they are able. The Hajj begins on the 8th day of the 12th month of Dhul Hijjah in the Islamic calendar. Normally around 2.5 million Muslims from all over the world flock to Mecca for Hajj to perform sacred acts and follow the steps of Muhammad, their prophet. Due to Covid-19, this year Saudi will only allow 1 million, fully vaccinated and no older than 65 years old Muslims, from inside and outside the country to perform the Hajj.

THIS IS A CALL FOR CHRISTIANS TO PRAY FOR MUSLIMS AS THEY GO ON THE HAJJ.

Everything that Islam forbids comes with a warning of punishment in this life and certainly in the hereafter. Likewise, everything it proscribes comes with a promise of personal reward. Sometimes that reward is a blessing or sign of God's favor, but the most sought-after reward for many Muslims is the remission of their own sins. Therefore, many men and women make the pilgrimage not just once (as is required of all Muslims who are able), but again and again over the course of their lives. Pray that the increasingly commercialization of the Hajj will lead to disillusionment among Muslims. Pray that they will be fed up with empty rituals, dead works, and hypocrisy. Pray that they will see that their religion is powerless to prevent Covid-19 and question its legitimacy. Pray that they will come to know that salvation from their sins is only found in the Lord Jesus Christ.



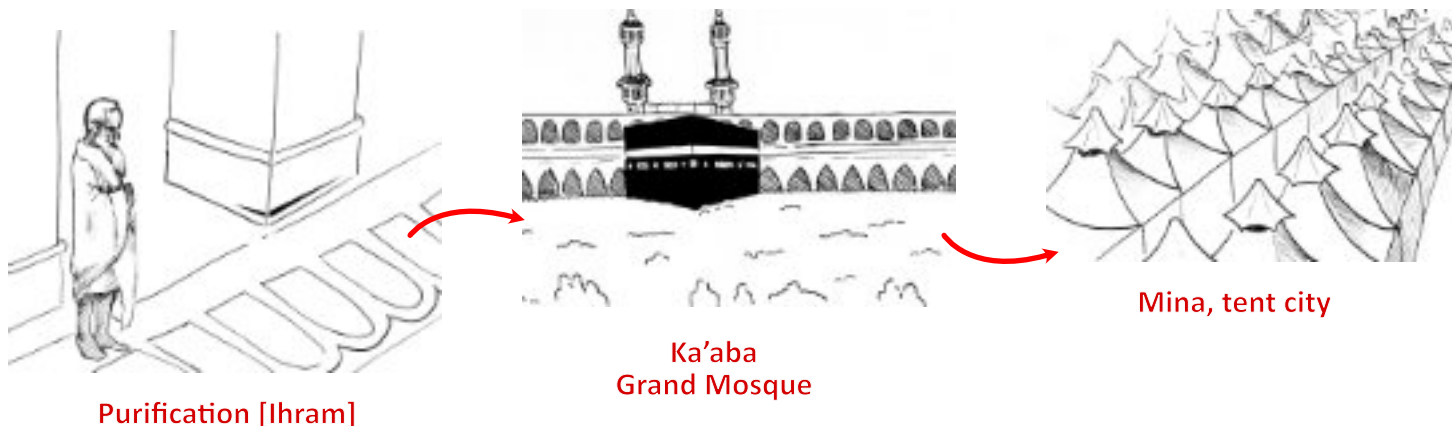
The following pages are designed to fuel Christ-centered prayers during each of the three days of this Hajj. To prepare yourself spiritually for this prayer time, read through Hebrews 9:1 – 10:22.

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DAY 1

June 26, 2023



SACRED ACT 1: IHRAM (CLEANING, PREPARATION DAY)

Pilgrims must enter into the state of Ihram (purity) which involves ritual washing and then wearing white, plain garments. These garments indicate that all pilgrims are equal. Following this cleansing, pilgrims are officially on the Hajj.

As they cross the pilgrimage boundary, the men will shout the Talbiyah, a Muslim prayer: "Here I am at Thy service O Lord, here I am. Here I am at Thy service and Thou hast no partners. Thine alone is All Praise and All Bounty, and Thine alone is The Sovereignty. Thou hast no partners."

During this day of cleansing, pilgrims visit the the Grand Mosque in which the Ka'aba is located. The Ka'aba is a black building in the center of the Mosque that is considered to be the Bayt Allah ("House of God"), the most sacred site in Islam. It is equivalent to the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple. After leaving the Grand Mosque, many pilgrims will walk to the tent city of Mina to spend the night.

Key Scriptures to Pray

"But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God." Hebrews 9:11-14

Going before the Father

- Pray Muslims would know that only the Lord Jesus Christ provides the "purification for sins" that they desire. Pray for their spiritual journey to include dreams and visions of Jesus.
- As Muslims walk into the Grand Mosque and see the Ka'aba, they feel like they are entering the most holy place on earth. Hebrews 9:11-14 says the Lord Jesus entered the "Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption". Pray that pilgrims would know that only in Jesus can they have an unblemished conscience and eternal redemption.

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DAY 2

June 27, 2023

Sacred Act 2: Wuqoof (standing at Arafat)

Today is the most important day of the Hajj. Why? Because Muslim scholars say this is the “day the religion of Islam was perfected.” The Hajj only becomes valid when the day of Wuqoof is observed. It is on this day Muslims believe their major and minor sins are forgiven. If they miss this day, their pilgrimage is pointless. Today, they will ask Allah for mercy and forgiveness as they stand or sit near Mount Arafat.

Muslims believe that as they finish this day they are cleansed of sin which also brings freedom from shame. At sunset, a cannon sounds. Pilgrims leave Mount Arafat to go to Muzdalifah, an open level place where they sleep or stay up all night under the stars.

Key Scriptures to Pray

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29

“He [Jesus Christ] commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he [Jesus] is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” Acts 10:42-43

Going before the Father

- Muslim pilgrims long for their major and minor sins to be removed from their lives. John the Baptist’s words cry out that Jesus takes away the sins of the world. Pray that Muslims would not feel they have a cleansed heart until they accept and delight in the finished work of Christ.
- God appointed Jesus to be judge of the living and the dead. Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ receives forgiveness of sins. Pray that the truth of the Lord Jesus’ life, death and resurrection would penetrate the hearts of longing Muslims. Pray they will be drawn to the Giver of Life and believe in Him to receive the forgiveness of sins through His name alone.
- Pray that as many Muslims seek to stay up all night to pray, they would have dreams and visions of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:17). Ask God for an open heaven so that the ones who are genuinely seeking an encounter with God will meet Him.



Mina, tent city



Mount Arafat



Muzdalifah
Collecting stones

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DAY 3

June 28, 2023

For the pilgrims, day three is the longest day. There are five different sacred acts to perform and they can be done in almost any order.

- They will stone the pillars of Satan
- Men will shave their heads (an act of humility and cleanliness)
- They will sacrifice a permissible animal
- They will circle the Ka'aba seven times
- They will run between the two hills of Safa and Marwa

Key Scriptures to Pray

"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." Hebrews 10:10-14

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 6:12

Going before the Father

- Muslims understand that there are spiritual battles caused by Satan. Throwing rocks at Satan during the day of stoning is meaningless. The cross and resurrection of Christ defeated Satan. Pray that they will know Christ and the mighty work that He did to defeat Satan.
- As Muslims circle the Ka'aba and run from hill to hill, pray that they will see the futility of these acts. Pray that they will find the Living Water, Jesus.
- While there are many symbols and rituals in the Hajj that rest on pagan foundations, there are also some which have been appropriated from the story of Abraham in Genesis. The animal sacrifice made on this day commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. The Quran has very little to say about Abraham. As the story of Abraham's animal sacrifice is replayed by millions of Muslims, pray that many will be stirred to seek out more information about the Biblical Abraham and the true meaning of the ram which he sacrificed in place of his son Isaac.
- A deep awareness of personal sin and the desperate desire to be free from it is a sure sign of the Holy Spirit's work in a person's life (John 16). Most are looking for peace through forgiveness, but true and lasting peace comes only through reconciling the broken relationship between God and man. This reconciliation cannot be found in the Hajj, but only in Christ. Pray for Muslims who return from the Hajj to be restless, finding no peace until they find Christ.



Muzdalifah



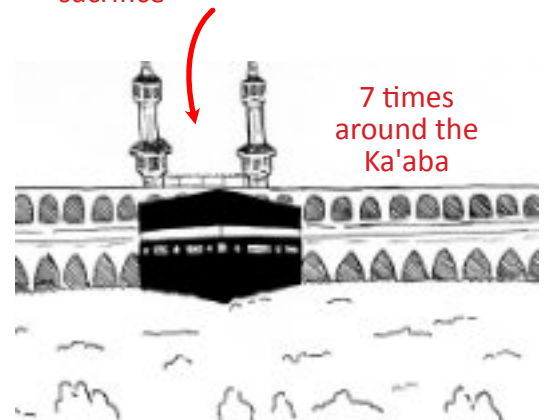
Stones, three pillars where they stone Satan



Men will shave their heads



Animal sacrifice



7 times around the Ka'aba



Running between Safa and Marwa