

Examples of Cruciformity

3. Abdul HE SMILES FOR JESUS

The following story can be found on the web page of the ministry, *Good News From the Middle East*,¹ directed by Tom Doyle, author of *Breakthrough: The Return of Hope to the Middle East*.

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Before Abdul met Jesus, he had every reason to frown. Growing up in the West Bank, Abdul was sure of one thing — he hated Israelis. They were the reason for everything that was wrong in his life. He was often subjected to searches at border crossings, and the daily clashes with Israel made life in the West Bank miserable. Abdul wanted to kill as many Jews in life as he could. This would please Allah. Soon Islam would win and the Jews would be exterminated from Israel. At least that's what Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, and other Palestinian leaders promised.

Abdul was on the path to becoming an Islamic terrorist. What else was he going to do with his life? He had no idea another invasion was coming. This time it wouldn't be the Israelis coming to fight against him. This time it would be Jesus coming to free him.

One night Abdul dreamed about a man in a white robe walking on water. He said, "Come follow Me." Abdul had never experienced anything like it. The next day he arose from bed and could not keep from smiling. "Who was that in the dream?" he wondered. Abdul thought about the dream all day. He had felt so peaceful during the dream. How could it be that today he didn't have a care in the world? Even in the midst of his city Jenin getting bombed all day!

That night the man in the white robe came to Abdul again. This time he introduced himself to Abdul: "I am Jesus and I want to take your sins away. I want to give you eternal life." In the morning Abdul woke up and knew he had to find Kamal, his best friend. Recently Kamal told Abdul that he had a dream, and it had changed his life but he wouldn't actually tell Abdul what it was. But Kamal was different, and his usual grumpy demeanor had been replaced with a smile. Abdul made a beeline for Kamal's home.

"Was your dream about Jesus?" Abdul blurted out to Kamal as he entered his house. "Yes, but how did you know?" Kamal seemed startled. Abdul went on, "I

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<sup>1</sup> From [www.goodnewsfromthemiddleeast.com/abdul.html](http://www.goodnewsfromthemiddleeast.com/abdul.html)

had a dream too. Jesus was in a white robe and told me he would forgive me of my sins and give me eternal life. I will never forget the way I felt when He was near.” “Neither will I!” Kamal added. Kamal went through the gospel with Abdul and shared verses from the Bible that was hidden under his bed. They talked for hours about Jesus. Finally he was ready. Abdul and Kamal knelt together, and Abdul received Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Peace filled the room. The guns and the bombs exploding in the background went unnoticed. They were in the presence of God.

Abdul and Kamal began to share their faith in Jenin. People seemed interested but both of them were warned about persecution if Hamas and Islamic Jihad heard about their conversion. Soon they did. Within days the two found themselves in jail. Hamas was threatening death to both of them. The days were gruelling. But, after numerous beatings and a month in prison, Israel invaded Jenin to root out terrorist groups. The Israeli Defense Forces came in full force. Tanks, missile launchers, and hundreds of soldiers were positioned throughout Jenin.

In the prison cell Abdul feared for his life. “Why are you so frightened, Abdul? Jesus will protect us, and the Israelis will probably let us out of jail when they get here. They don’t have anything against us believers. They know we’re safe.” Within minutes the Jewish soldiers were calling at the prisoners in Arabic to stand back from the cell doors. One by one the locks were shot off by the Israelis. Abdul could hardly believe his eyes. He was free! He ran for an Israeli tank, jumped on the gun barrel, and kissed it. “God bless Israel!” Abdul shouted.

Today the smile never leaves his face. He cannot contain his joy. Jesus gave him a new heart and a new nature. Abdul lives somewhere in Israel and attends a messianic congregation. What a turnaround! At one time he wanted to kill Jews, and now he worships with them. Abdul loves Jesus, and he loves Israel too. He works with Arabs and Jews and is part of the reconciliation movement in Israel. He was destined to be a terrorist and eventually a suicide bomber but Jesus set him free. He freed him from his sin. He freed him from a terrorist jail. He freed him from the hate and bitterness that ruled his life. And now he smiles.

*“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

JOHN 8:32