

DARUL ULOOM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
A CONCISE COMMENTARY COURSE OF
THE HOLY QURAAAN (2001-2020)

Regarding the punishment which came to them, Allah says:

56. And We made them a precedent (as a lesson for those coming after them), and an example to later generations.

Here, Allah mentions that the punishment which came to Fir'aun and his people was a 'precedent' and an 'example' which was a lesson for those coming after. Allah sent this punishment to them which occurred before many nations, so that succeeding nations would be aware that those who turn away from Allah and disbelieve in His messengers, would have a destructive end in this life and the hereafter.

Sura Az Zukhruf continues in verses 57 and 58 and state:

57. And when the son of Maryam (Mary) is quoted as an example [i.e. 'Isa (Jesus) is worshipped like their idols), behold! Your people cry aloud (laugh out at the example).

58. And say: "Are our *aliha* (gods) better or is he ['Isa (Jesus)]?" They quoted not the above example except for argument. Nay! But they are a quarrelsome people.

Verse 57 explains that when Isa (A.S) (the son of Maryam) was mentioned as an example to the polytheists of the Quraish, they laughed and mocked the Prophet (ﷺ).

Regarding this, it is narrated that once the Prophet (ﷺ) recited to the Quraish a verse of the Quran which states, 'Certainly you and whatever you worship besides Allah will be the fuel of Hell'. (Al Ambiya:98). When Abdullah bin Zab'ari (who was not yet a Muslim) heard this, he said to the Quraish, 'If I meet Muhammad, I will argue with him'. He then said to the Quraish, 'Ask Muhammad if it is true that everything that is worshipped besides Allah will be in Hell. We worship the angels, the Jews worship Uzair and the Christians worship the Messiah, son of Maryam. Would all of them be in Hell?' The polytheists of the Quraish became happy with this statement and saw that Abdullah bin Zab'ari had won the argument against Muhammad (ﷺ) and had refuted his statement. It is about this incident, verse 57 referred to when it said,

57. And when the son of Maryam (Mary) is quoted as an example [i.e. 'Isa (Jesus) is worshipped like their idols), behold! Your people cry aloud (laugh out at the example).

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) heard what was said, he replied, 'Everyone who likes to worship something other than Allah will be with the one whom he worshipped, for indeed they are worshipping Satan, and whomever told them to worship that person'. Then Allah revealed the verse, 'Verily, those for whom the good has preceded from Us, they will be removed far therefrom (Hell) (21:101) It means Isa (A.S), Uzair (A.S) and the angels and those righteous servants of Allah who were worshipped by the ignorant people shall be far away from Hell. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer vol.5 pg. 474 Dar Al Kitab Al Arabi Beirut 2013)

Another narration states that the Prophet (SAW) once told the Quraish, 'There is no good in anything that is worshipped besides Allah'. The Quraish replied, 'Did you not say that Isa (A.S) was Allah's messenger and a pious man? Then if the matter is based on what you have said, then he also is being worshipped besides Allah. So he must also go to Hell'. Upon this, Allah revealed, 'And when the son of Maryam is quoted as an example, behold, your people cry aloud (laugh out at the example).

Verse 58 mentions, '***And say: "Are our *aliha* (gods) better or is he ['Isa (Jesus)]?"***

They said to the Prophet (ﷺ), 'Are our gods better or he (Isa A.S)'. Through this question, they meant to argue that if all those who are worshipped will be in Hell, then they are happy that their gods will be together with Isa, Uzair and the angels'. Upon this, Allah revealed, '***Verily those for whom the good has preceded from Us, they will be removed far therefrom (Hell) [e.g. 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary); 'Uzair (Ezra), etc.]***. (Sura Ambiya v.101)

Allah then states at the end of the verse, '***They quoted not the above example except for argument. Nay! But they are a quarrelsome people***'.

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Here, Allah states that the only reason the Mushrikeen (polytheists) mentioned about Isa (A.S) was to dispute and argue with the Prophet (ﷺ). Their intention was not to recognize the truth or to accept it. It was simply to fight against the teachings of ‘Tawheed’ which the Prophet (ﷺ) brought to them. They did not pay attention to what was being recited to them in the Quran, nor were they concerned about the falsehood they were upon. They intended only to overpower/dominate the message of the Quran through useless arguments which had no basis and foundation. They knew very well that prophets like Isa (A.S) and Uzair (A.S) would never be in Hell since they were not idols who were worshipped by men, nor did they tell people to worship them. Therefore, to compare prophets Isa (A.S) and Uzair (A.S) to their lifeless idols, was not only unjust and unrealistic, but it was also absurd and ridiculous.

While speaking about arguments and disputes, the Prophet (ﷺ) warned his followers and said, ‘People who go astray after guidance has come to them are a people given to arguing’. After saying this, the Prophet (ﷺ) recited the above verse which states, ‘They quoted not the above example except for argument. Nay! But they are a quarrelsome people’.

Sura Az Zukhruf continues in verse 59 and states:

59. He [Isa (Jesus)] was not more than a slave. We granted Our Favour to him, and We made him an example to the Children of Israel.

In this verse, Allah mentions about the great prophet, Isa (A.S), and makes it clear that he was only a servant who was chosen to be a prophet and messenger. He was not a god, nor was he the son of Allah as claimed by misguided people.

Allah further says about him, *‘and We made him an example for the children of Israel’*. It means that Allah made him [Isa (A.S)] as a sign through whom people would recognize the greatness of Allah, since he was created without a father. Allah also blessed him with the ability to perform many miracles which were all lessons for them to recognize the truth. Yet, they turned away from him and plotted to kill him.

Sura Az Zukhruf goes further in verse 60 and states:

60. And if it were Our Will, We would have made angels to replace you on the earth.

In this verse, Allah mentions that if it was His wish, He could have destroyed mankind and replaced them with angels who will live on the earth, and be fully obedient to Him in His worship. (Tafseer Al Baghwi – Ma’alim At Tanzeel vol.4 pg. 143 Idara Taleefat Ashrafiya Multan)

This explanation indicates to Allah’s great ability, showing that He has the power to create angels on the earth who will live and die as human beings. It also explains that just as Allah has created the angels in the heavens and made it their dwelling place, so too, He can cause them to reside on the earth, living as human beings. This is not difficult for Him, since both the heavens and the earth belong to Him and He has full authority and power to make any of His creation live wherever He decides. Therefore, the angels being placed in the heavens to live, is no special honour granted to them for human beings to view them as the daughters of Allah and then worship them. (Tafseer Al Qurtubi vol.16 pg. 91 Maktaba Rasheediya Queta)

Another interpretation given to the above verse is that it is a response given to the Christians who, on account of the miraculous birth of Isa (A.S), took him as a god and started to worship him. In the verse, Allah mentions to them that if He had so desired, He could have done things that are more amazing than the act of creating Isa (A.S) without a father. If He wanted He could have created angels from human beings and they would be their offspring just as their children (are their offsprings). This, He can do, to show His greatness, power and control over all things. Therefore, the birth of Isa (A.S) without a father was a miracle to show Allah’s greatness and it was not meant to show that Isa (A.S) was a god to be worshipped. (Tafseer Al Bahrul Muheet vol.9 pg. 385, 386 Darul Fikr Beirut 1992)