

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

may admit the believing men and women to Gardens under which rivers flow'. (Surah Fath verse 5). (Tafseer Ibn Katheer vol.5 pg. 508 Dar Al Kitab Al Arabi, Beirut 2013)

Hafiz Ibn Jareer At Tabari (A.R) has also explained the above verse of Surah Al Ahqaaf in details and given several explanations. From among these, he stated that the most preferred and correct commentary of the verse is that which Abu Bakr Al Hazali has narrated from Hasan Al Basri. In this, Hasan said about the verse which states, 'And I do not know what will be done with me or with you', he (Hasan) said, 'As for the hereafter, then May Allah forbid, he (the Prophet ﷺ) knew he will be in Jannah from the time his pledge was taken among the prophets. However, he said, 'I do not know what will be done with me and with you (the polytheists) in this world. Would I be taken up as other prophets in the past were taken up or would I be killed as other prophets before me were killed? And I do not know what will be done with me and with you. Would my people deny me or would my people believe in me? Would my people be destroyed with stones falling from the skies or would they sink in the earth?

After this, Allah revealed the verse, 'And (remember) when we told you, 'Verily, your Lord has encompassed mankind (i.e. they are in His Grip). (Surah Isra v. 60). From this verse, the Prophet (ﷺ) knew that he would not be killed by the people. Then Allah revealed the verse, 'It is He who sent His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it superior over all religions even though the polytheists (Mushrikeen) hate it'. (Surah Tawbah verse 33). In this verse, Allah gave the Prophet (ﷺ) glad tidings that He will make his religion superior over all other religions. Then Allah revealed to him regarding his Ummah (nation) and said, 'And Allah will not punish them while you (Muhammad ﷺ) are amongst them, nor will He punish them while they seek (Allah's) forgiveness'. (Surah Anfaal verse 33). So in these verses, Allah informed the Prophet (ﷺ) what He would do with him and with his Ummah (nation). (Tafseer At Tabari vol.25 pg. 12 Dar Ihya At Turath Al Arabi Beirut 2001)

The verse further states, 'I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am but a plain warner'. Here, Allah orders the Prophet (ﷺ) to inform the people that whatever he instructs them to do and whatever he does (from his actions and statements), it is nothing except that which is based on a revelation which has been sent to him, and he is only a plain warner who warns them of Allah's punishment if they disbelieve.

Surah Al Ahqaaf states in verse 10:

10. Say: "Tell me! If this (Qur'ân) is from Allah, and you deny it, and a witness from among the Children of Israel testifies to a similar book, and believes in it, while you are too proud (to believe)." Verily! Allah guides not the people who are Zâlimûn (polytheists, disbelievers and wrong-doers).

Here, the Prophet (ﷺ) was instructed again to warn the polytheists/unbelievers who rejected the Holy Quran as the Book of Allah, to think about their actions and consider the consequences that would follow if they remain firm on denying the true message of Islam. He said to them, 'O Polytheists (Mushrikeen)! Tell me! What do you think Allah would do with you if you deny this Quran as the Book of Allah, when indeed, it is a revelation from Him. Besides this, a witness (or witnesses) from the children of Israel have already testified to the truth of it. What then, prevents you from believing in it? Have you become arrogant, and are too proud to believe in it? What will be your state in the sight of Allah?

Referring to their state as that of misguidance, Allah says at the end of the verse, '**Verily, Allah guides not the people who are unjust/wrongdoers**'. It means that there are sufficient evidences to prove that the Quran is a revelation from Allah, and all these evidences were made clear to the polytheists. Yet, they continued to reject and deny the Quran as Allah's speech. On account of this, they have become wrongdoers and are unjust, and so, Allah Has deprived them of guidance.

In the above verse, Allah says, '**and a witness from the children of Israel testifies to a similar book and believes in it**'. While explaining this verse, some commentators of the Holy Quran have stated that the 'witness from the children of Israel' refers to Abdullah bin Salaam who was a Jewish scholar who

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accepted Islam when the Prophet (ﷺ) came to Madinah. Regarding his acceptance of Islam, it is stated that upon the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ) in Madinah, he (Abdullah bin Salaam) came to visit him. When he saw the blessed face of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) he said, 'I recognized that it was not the face of a liar'. He then pondered and came to the conclusion that he was the awaited prophet. He then said to the Prophet (ﷺ), 'I will ask you three questions, and no one but a prophet knows these answers. He then asked, 'What is the first sign of the Hour? What is the first meal that the people of Paradise will be given? And why does a child resemble the father or mother? The Prophet (ﷺ) gave him the answers to these questions and upon that, he accepted Islam. (Safwah At Tafaseer vol.3 pg. 180 Maktaba Tawfiqiyah Dar As Sabooni 2009).

Imam Al Qurtubi has also mentioned that Abdullah bin Abbas, Hasan Basri, Ikrimah, Qatada and Mujahid (A.R) have stated that '**the witness from the children of Israel**' mentioned in the verse, refers to the companion of the Prophet (SAW), Abdullah bin Salaam. He testified to the Jews that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was mentioned in their Torah and that he was a prophet of Allah'. (Tafseer Al Qurtubi vol.16 pg. 162 Maktaba Rasheediya Queta)

Some other commentators (of the Holy Quran) have stated that the statement, '**and a witness from the children of Israel testifies to a similar book and believes in it**' does not specifically refer to Abdullah bin Salaam. But it is general to those of the children of Israel who accepted the Holy Quran as a divine revelation just like the Torah and the Injeel.

While explaining this verse, the great exegete, Hafiz Ibn Katheer (A.R) writes, '**a witness from the children of Israel has testified to something similar**' means, 'the previous scriptures that were revealed to the prophets before me all testify to its truthfulness and authenticity. These previous revealed scriptures have given glad tidings of the Holy Quran and have informed about similar things to that which the Holy Quran has informed. The witness here refers to any witness in general. It includes Abdullah bin Salaam and others from them as well. For certainly, this verse was revealed in Makkah before Abdullah bin Salaam had accepted Islam'. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer vol.5 pg. 509 Dar Al Kitab Al Arabi, Beirut 2013)

Surah Al Ahqaaf states in verse 11

11. And those who disbelieve say of those who believe (weak and poor): "Had it (Islam) been a good thing, they (weak and poor) would not have preceded us thereto!" And when they have not let themselves be guided by it (this Qur'an), they say: "This is an ancient lie!"

Here, Allah mentions the statement of the Mushrikeen (polytheists) which they said about the poor and weak Muslims. They would often say, 'If this Quran and religion (of Islam) was good, then these poor and weak people would not have preceded us in getting it'. They thought that since they were wealthy and had leadership positions, they would always be the first to achieve anything which had good in it. Therefore, if Islam was good, then they would have been the first to get it before anyone. But seeing that the poor and weak people from among them like Bilaal, Ammar, Suhaib, Khabbab (R.A) and others were the first to receive Islam, this was a sign (according to them) that there was no good in it. This trend of thought was based on their erroneous assumption that they had in their minds. They considered themselves to be honored in the sight of Allah, on account of their wealth and position. They thought that they would not be deprived of anything that was good, and that they were more deserving than others. However, they were totally mistaken in their thoughts, and allowed pride and arrogance to deprive them of the real good, which was Islam.

With respect to the above verse, commentators have mentioned that there were different causes for the revelation of the above verse, which all show the same arrogant conduct of the polytheists/unbelievers. It is narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) invited Abu Dharr Ghifari (R.A) to Islam, and he accepted it. He (Abu Dharr) then invited his tribe to it (Islam) and they accepted Islam. When the unbelievers of the Quraish heard that the tribe of Ghifaar had embraced Islam, they said, 'If this religion was good, then Ghifaar would not have preceded us in accepting it'. Upon this, the above verse was revealed.