

السَّلَامُ عَلَى عِيسَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ

PROPHET 'ĪSĀ [JESUS A.S.] AND OTHER STORIES

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Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Be introduced to Maryam, the mother of Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Discuss the virtues of Maryam (as)
- Briefly discuss the story of the birth of Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Discuss the other miracles of Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Discuss the main messages of Prophet 'Īsā (as)
- Discuss the false belief of Jesus as God and how this can be proven to be false
- Understand that Prophet 'Īsā (as) did not die on the cross, but was raised to heaven and will return one day to earth
- Discuss the story of the 'Companions of the Cave' (Asḥābul Kahf)
- Understand that God helps those who are pious and adhere to his teachings
- Understand that if we show faith in Allah (SWT), He will give us strength and success

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

JUNIOR LEVEL

Lesson 1

There are two main sources for the life of Prophet 'Īsā (as) in Islam. The Holy Qur'an gives a history of his life, whilst the ḥadith help us understand his role and responsibilities as a Prophet. We must look at the Islamic version of the story of Prophet 'Īsā (as) because it is the most authentic and reliable source we have. The Bible, as we have discussed in the past, is not the true word of God, and so cannot be relied on as a reliable resource.

Prophet 'Īsā (as), or Prophet Jesus (as), is introduced in the Holy Qur'an as one of the greatest messengers of Allah (SWT). He was not only a prophet and a messenger, but one of the 'Ulul 'Azm messengers. The message he taught his people was that of submission to Allah. He asked them to leave everything else they obeyed and to truly worship Allah (SWT).

Prophet 'Īsā (as) was one of the major prophets, and thus he had a book revealed to him by Allah (SWT). This book is called the Injil. Unfortunately this book is no longer available to us. It was destroyed after Prophet 'Īsā (as) was raised to heaven.



THE BIOGRAPHY OF 'ĪSĀ (AS)

Maryam (as) is a very holy and special woman. She is the mother of Prophet 'Īsā (as). The story of Maryam (as) is very interesting.

Maryam's father's was 'Imran, and her mother's name was Ḥanna. Ḥanna had a sister called Elizabeth, who was married to Prophet Zacharyiah (as). Both these sisters could not have children. Ḥanna and 'Imran both prayed for a child sincerely and Ḥanna vowed that if she had the child, she would give him to the service of Allah. Her husband had had a dream that a boy would be born into his family, and so they assumed that this was the boy. However, before the baby was born, 'Imran passed away.

When Ḥanna gave birth, she had a girl, Maryam (as), and not a boy as she had expected. She was shocked, but decided to go on with her vow, and asked someone to look after Maryam (as). The priests picked lots about who should look after Maryam, and it turned that Prophet Zacharyiah (as) would look after her. This Maryam (as) was later to become the mother of Prophet 'Īsā (as).

THE VIRTUES OF MARYAM (AS)

Maryam (as) was a very pious and beloved servant of Allah (SWT), who dedicated her whole life to serving Allah. She is respected by Muslims and Christians alike. Some of her virtues include

- She is one of the four best women in history.
- She is the only lady whose name is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an.
- She is the first woman to be 'chosen' by Allah (SWT)
- She is the first infallible woman
- She was a woman who was spoken to by angels.
- She has the right of intercession



One of the miracles in the life of Maryam (as) is that Allah (SWT) would send her food and drink miraculously and she would have the fruits of winter in summer and vice-versa.

Maryam (as) dedicated herself to the worship of Allah (SWT) for her entire life. She would live in the place of worship and spend her time maintaining it and praying to Allah (SWT). One day, Allah (SWT) sent angels to her to tell her that she was going to have a baby boy who would be a very special person. When she gave birth to Prophet 'Īsā (as), her people did not believe her. In order to make them believe, Allah (SWT) gave Prophet 'Īsā (as) his first miracle. This miracle was that he spoke to people while he was still a baby in his cradle.

“He said: I am the devotee of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and has made a prophet, and made me blessed wherever I am...” (19:30)

This was the beginning of the mission of Prophet 'Īsā (as).

PROPHET 'ĪSĀ'S (AS) MISSION

Prophet 'Īsā (as) was sent to the Jewish community. At the time, the Jews were living in Palestine and were ruled by the Greeks. This had a big influence on Judaism and it was becoming corrupt. At the same time, the Jewish rabbis were abusing their power and corrupting the religion. Therefore, internally and externally Judaism was being corrupted.



The Christians say that Prophet 'Īsā's (as) only mission was to give his life as a sacrifice for our sins. However, Muslims believe that Prophet 'Īsā's (as) mission was similar to the missions of all other prophets, which was to guide and teach the people to worship only Allah (SWT).

HIS MISSION

Prophet 'Īsā's (as) first mission was to confirm the teachings of Prophet Moses (as) in general but to introduce some changes to them. Some Christians claim that Prophet 'Īsā's (as) denied all the rules of Judaism and the Torah, while others say he confirmed all the rules of the Torah. However, neither is true, and the Qur'an says that Prophet 'Īsā (as) confirmed some of the rules, but changed others. The rules he changed were rules that were imposed as a special punishment for the Jews.

Another mission of Prophet 'Īsā's (as) was to unify the Jewish community, who used to have disagreements within themselves. However, after his arrival, people became even more disunited and split into more groups and sects. Some of them were jealous of Prophet 'Īsā (as) while others were after their own selfish interests like greed for power and fame.

Prophet 'Īsā (as) also used to teach people to live a simple life, believe in God and do good to others. He himself lived a very humble and simple life, and taught his followers to do the same.

His final and most important mission was to tell people of the coming of the Final Messenger after him, who was Prophet Muḥammad (saw).

Review Questions

1. Which is one of the honours of Maryam (as):

- She was one of the four best women of the world
- She was sinless
- Both a & b

2. Which book did Prophet 'Īsā (as) have revealed to him?

- The Holy Qur'an
- The Torah
- The Injil

Lesson 2

In the previous lesson we learnt a little about the birth and life of Maryam (as) and her son Prophet 'Īsā (as). In this lesson we will look at the miracles of Prophet 'Īsā (as). We will discuss some of the Christian beliefs about this great prophet and see why they are false.

THE MIRACLES OF PROPHET 'ĪSĀ (AS)

A miracle is a sign from Allah (SWT) given to his prophet to show that he is the messenger of Allah. This is so that the people of the time believe in this prophet and see obvious proof that this person is sent by God. Prophet 'Īsā (as) performed many miracles, all by the leave of Allah (SWT). Some of his miracles include:

- Speaking as a baby
- Healing the blind
- Bringing the dead back to life
- Bringing inanimate objects into life (e.g. he could turn the clay state of a bird into a real living bird)

Unfortunately, partly because of these miracles, some Christians began to believe that Jesus is God. This is absolutely not true. Jesus is a servant and a creature of God. He was created by God. He is not God. The miracles he performed were all amazing, but he could only do them by the permission of Allah (SWT), who allowed him to do these things.

“Then will Allah say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount My favour to thee and to thy mother. Behold! I strengthened you with the holy spirit, so you didst speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold! I taught you the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel and behold! You made out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My permission, and you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission, and you heal the blind and the leper, by My permission. And you bring the dead back to life, by My permission..." (5:110)

IS JESUS GOD?

Christians have a belief called 'Trinity'. They believe that there is one god, and at the same time 'three gods'. They also believe that Jesus is the 'son of God' but that Jesus is also 'God'.

This belief does not make sense for a number of reasons:

1. Jesus (as) himself never claimed to be in God, even in today's Bible. In fact, Jesus never let people call him 'good', let alone 'god'
- Jesus ate and drank like other human beings. Why would God need food and drink to survive.
- Jesus was created and born. Why would God need to be created and born?
- Christians believe Jesus died. How can God die?
- How can there be one god and three gods at the same time?

So it is obvious that believing in Jesus as God does not make any sense and is false belief. Christians originally thought of Jesus as a prophet of Allah (SWT). However later people corrupted the religion and began to claim Jesus was God.

DID JESUS REALLY DIE?

Christians believed that Jesus (as) was captured by the Jewish leaders of the time. They also believe he was tortured on the cross and died. They believe that then Allah (SWT) brought him back to life three days later. This belief is also not true.

The Holy Qur'an makes it very clear that Prophet 'Īsā (as) was not tortured or killed. Instead, one of the companions of Prophet 'Īsā (as) was made to look like him by Allah (SWT). The Jewish leaders captured this companion and tortured and killed him instead.

So what happened to Prophet 'Īsā (as)? He was raised to heaven by Allah (SWT) without dying. He remains in heaven and will be brought back to life at the end of times.

CONCLUSION

The main conclusions we draw from these lessons are:

- Prophet 'Īsā (as) was one of the great prophets and messengers of Allah (SWT)
- His mother was an honourable and sinless woman, by the name of Maryam (as)

- Prophet 'Īsā (as) performed many amazing miracles by the permission of Allah (SWT)
- Prophet 'Īsā (as) is not God. Rather, he is the servant of God
- Prophet 'Īsā (as) was not tortured or killed. Rather, he was raised to heaven by Allah (SWT).

Review Questions

1. Prophet 'Īsā (as) came to:

- a. Teach the people to worship one God
- b. Die for the sins of people
- c. Feed the hungry

2. Jesus (as):

- a. Died on the cross
- b. Was raised to Allah (SWT) before being caught by the enemies
- c. Got lost and has never been found again.

Lesson 3: Ashābul Kahf

COMPANIONS OF THE CAVE

In the Quran, a whole chapter, SuraT al-Kahf is name after a group of people called 'the Companions of the Cave'. We will discuss the story of these special believers in this lesson.

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ ءَايَتِنَا

عَجَبًا

إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا ءَاتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ

رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

"Or do you think that the people of the Cave and of the inscription were of Our wonderful signs? When the youths sought refuge unto the cave, then they said: 'our lord! Grant us mercy from your presence, and provide for us in our affair a right course.'" (18:9-10)

Allah (SWT) introduces the people of the cave and we learn about how these people sought protection and mercy from Allah (SWT) because the ruler at their time would force his

people to worship idols and if they did not, they would be killed. However, these people were believers in One God.

This group of youths who were living in comfort, decided to leave those comforts and seek refuge in a cave in order to escape the illegitimate ruler of the time. This allowed them to protect themselves from being killed and to keep their faith.

The youths left their city in secret, fearful of what would happen to them if they got caught. Soon after leaving, they reached a cave, and decided to rest there.

GOD'S MIRACLE- THE DEEP SLEEP

فَضَرْنَا عَلَىٰ ءَادَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَىٰ لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ ءَامَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ

وَوَدَّعْنَاهُمْ هُدًى

“Then We set over their ears (a curtain of sleep) in the Cave for a number of years. Afterwards we raised them up in order to test which of the two parties would better calculate the time they had tarried. We relate to you their story with the truth; verily they were youths who believed in their Lord and We increased them in guidance.” (18:11-13)

It was in this cave that a great miracle occurred. The youth had reached the cave in a state of fear. They were not sure where to go from there and what would happen to them next. They asked Allah (SWT) to guide them.

Allah (SWT) sent His Mercy upon them by causing them to sleep for 309 years.

ALLAH HAS POWER OVER ALL THINGS

This miracle demonstrates Allah (SWT) great power of how he can allow someone to stay asleep for such a long time without any harm coming to them.

وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَاوَرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ

وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْهِمْ ذَاتَ الشَّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِّنْهُ

ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ مَن يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَن

يُضِلِلْ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا

“And (had you been there) you might have seen the sun when it rose, declining from their Cave towards the right, and when it set, leaving them away unto the left, and they were in a wide space thereof. This is of the Signs of Allah, whomever Allah guides, he is rightly guided, and whomever He leaves to stray, you shall never find for him any guiding friend.” (18:18-19)

Allah (SWT) made them choose the perfect spot in the cave whereby direct sunlight never reached them as well as being in a wide enough space to allow them to stay there as well. In addition, Allah (SWT) made them look as if they were awake, especially because he was able to move them from side to side with their dog also stretching his paws to show that it's protecting them. This apparent situation shows the power of God and how He can easily create miraculous situations especially for those who seek His help and mercy.

HOW LONG DID THEY SLEEP FOR?

After such a long sleep, the youth woke up, not realising what had happened. They thought they had slept for a few hours or for a day. They were out of food and supplies. They decided that one of them should disguise himself and re-enter the city to get supplies.

وَكَذَٰلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِّيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ كَمْ

لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رُبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا

لَبِثْتُمْ فَأَبْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ

أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِّنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ

بِكُمْ أَحَدًا

"And in like manner We did raise them that they might question among themselves. One of them said: 'How long have you tarried?' They said: 'We have tarried a day, or part of a day'. (Finally) they said: 'Your Lord knows best how long you have tarried. Therefore send one of you with this money of yours to the city and let him see which of them has purest food, and bring you provision from it, and let him behave with (care and) gentleness, and let him not inform any one about you.' (18:19)

So one of the group went into the city to get supplies. Slowly, he began to notice some amazing changes. The city had changed completely. The currency was different, and the people were all different as well. The most important change he noted though was that people now believed in Allah (SWT). He had left a city full of people who worshipped idols and disbelieved in God. Now, the city was full of believers, believing in One God.

ⁱⁱThis completed the miracle of Allah (SWT). He had saved this group of youth from the disbelievers, and then showed them His Power and Authority by showing them that their city became a city of believers over time.

The people of this new city realised the miracle that had happened, and they honoured the Companions of the Cave by building a mosque at the site of the cave in honour of them.

MORALS

The main moral of the story is that if we put our trust and faith in Allah (SWT), He will protect us, give us strength and give us success. Sometimes, Allah (SWT) will even create a miraculous situation in order to protect a believer who puts his or her trust in Allah (SWT) and asks Him for guidance out of a difficult situation.

The second moral is to understand that Allah's Power is Limitless. This was shown through the miracle of the long and deep sleep, as well as the gradual change of the city from that of disbelievers to believers.

Review Questions

1. Why did these righteous people seek refuge in the cave?

- a. They were looking for an adventure.
- b. They were looking for shelter.
- c. They wanted to be able to worship Allah (SWT) without being killed

2. Which of the following demonstrates Allah's (SWT) miracle?

- a. They found a cave that had appropriate space

- b. They slept for many years without being harmed
- c. The sun never reached them directly
- d. They were guarded by their dog
- e. All of the above

ⁱ References

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