

The Claim of the Jews and Christians That They Alone are the Beloved of Allāh



الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين

Allāh—the Lord of Abraham, Moses, Jesus (عليه السلام) and Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)—stated:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصْرَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ
بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَلِلَّهِ
مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

“But the Jews and the Christians say, ‘We are the sons of Allāh and His beloved.’ Say, ‘Then why does He punish you for your sins?’ Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills. And to Allāh belongs the dominion of the

heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the [final] destination.” (5:18).

The claim of the Jews and Christians that they are the beloved of Allāh [to the exclusion of everyone else] is false and the Lord of all of humanity has rejected this by establishing two realities. The first is to ask the question as to why they [and in particular, the Jews] have been punished by Him—a matter that they themselves readily acknowledge to be the case—and the second is to inform them that they are like all other people, there is nothing special about them above and over others. That the same universal rules apply to them as they do to everyone else. Namely, that the love, mercy and forgiveness of Allāh are attained by anyone who brings the means (asbāb) legislated in sound revelation that lead to them and that no one is exempt from Allāh’s ‘adl (justice).

Imām al-Sa’dī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: “From the statements of the Jews and Christians is that both of them make a false claim through which they purify themselves [above everyone else]. Both of them say, **‘We are the sons of Allāh and His beloved’**. The word ‘son’ in their language means ‘beloved’, they did not intend actual sonship because this is not from the doctrine of both of them, it is only the doctrine of the Christians regarding the Messiah [Jesus (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام)]. Since they made a claim

without any evidence, Allāh said in response to them: **‘Say: Then why does He punish you for your sins’**. For if you were His beloved, He would not have punished you [and also because Allāh only loves the person who abides by what pleases Him]. **‘Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created’**, the same laws of justice and benevolence apply to you [as they apply to everyone else]. **‘He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills’**, when they bring the ways and means of forgiveness or punishment. **‘And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the [final] destination’**, meaning, what issue has made you the specified ones for this [claimed] virtue, when you are from the generality of the slaves [of Allāh], and from the generality of those who shall return to Allāh in the abode of the hereafter wherein He will recompense you for your deeds [good with good, evil with evil].”¹

Imām al-Qurṭubī (رحمة الله) said: “They are not left except with two angles (choices). Either they say, ‘[Yes], He punishes us’ in which case it is said to them: ‘Thus, you are not His beloved because one who loves does not punish his beloved, and you affirm His punishment (of you), and this is an evidence for your lie’ ... Or they say,

¹ Taysīr Karīm al-Raḥmān (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth) p. 222.

‘He does not punish us’ and thereby, they reject what is in their books and what their messengers came with...”²

The Jews acknowledge that they have been subject to the punishment of Allāh throughout the ages and this is found repeatedly in the Tanakh (‘Old Testament’) wherein their punishment for falling into shirk (idolatry), bid‘ah (innovation), ma‘ṣiyah (sins) is documented, by their own Prophets.

Punishment for sins can also be said of other nations too—as this is a general principle—and hence there is something additional to the affair which the Qur‘ān also points to. This is their rejection of the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) after their sure knowledge and full conviction that he was the one mentioned in their books and for whom they had made a covenant with Allāh, to follow him when he appears. Imām al-Qurṭubī (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) mentions that Mu‘ādh bin Jabal, Sa‘d bin ‘Ubādah and ‘Uqbah bin Wahb said to the learned of the Jews in al-Madīnah, “O assembly of the Jews, fear Allāh! For by Allāh, you know full well that he is the Messenger of Allāh because you used to mention him to us before his sending [as a messenger] and you would mention to us his characteristics [as found in your books].”³

These Jews—who were the actual descendants of Banī Isrā’īl—knew full well that the Messenger who

² Refer to al-Jāmi‘ Li Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān in the tafsīr of al-Mā’idah (5:18).

³ Ibid.

arose from the mountains of Fārān (the region of Makkah), received revelation therein, then migrated to Sela' (a mountain in what became al-Madīnah, a mile or so away from where the Prophet's mosque is), was received with joy by the offspring of Qaydār (the descendants of Ismā'īl), and would eventually be victorious and have with him a new hymn and law (the Qur'ān) was Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) who was in their very midst. They would taunt the Pagan Arabs, saying that when 'their' messenger arrives, they will gain the upper hand over them.

However, they disbelieved in him and violated their covenant with Allāh which they had made through their Prophets who had informed them of the Messenger of Allāh, his place of arrival and his traits and qualities.

Thus, they will be judged on the basis of acceptance and rejection of the Prophets and Messengers—they rejected Jesus (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) and then Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)—and not on the basis that they are the beloved of Allāh, a false claim that has no evidence, save a distorted (muḥarraf), altered (mubaddal), abrogated (mansūkh) book.

Abu 'Iyaad

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