

Quran Appreciation - Winter Term (Jan-Mar 2018)

The Story of Nabi Isa (a)

Nabi Isa's conversation with Allah

Verses for the session

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۚ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا
دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنْتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

I did not say to them except what You commanded me: That worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord, and I was a witness over them so long as I was among them, but when You took me up, You were the watcher over them, and You are a witness over all things.

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ۗ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

If You punish them, then surely they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, then surely You are the Mighty, the Wise.

(Sura Maidah, verses 117-118)

Reflections

- How does Nabi Isa feel about his people?
- What is the one main message of all Prophets?

Cross Reference verses

Allah forgives His repentant servants - 9:104, 39:53

Allah is a witness over all things - 17:96

Tafsir

Nabi Isa explains what he actually told his people. Not to take his mother and himself as gods but to worship Allah who is the God of all of them. Prophets preach the message they receive from Allah. They do not change it or add anything to it. While he was alive with them he watched over them and made sure that they did not worship other than Allah. After his death he could no longer be responsible for them.

It is narrated that the Holy Prophet would sometimes recite verse 118 throughout the night. When asked why he repeated it so much he would say he was reciting it for his Ummah. He would tell Allah that his people were His servants, and if He chose He would punish them or He would forgive them. He would sometimes recite this verse and lift his hands and weep, saying ‘Allahumma Ummati, O Allah my Ummah . . .’ and he would pray for them. The Prophet was very concerned for the fate of his people. Allah gave him the power of intercession, to ask for forgiveness of those people from his Ummah who deserved it. Many scholars believe that the cause of revelation of Sura Inshirah (#94) was the gift of intercession granted to the Holy Prophet.

The two qualities of Allah mentioned at the end of the verse are Mighty and Wise. It shows that the decision to punish or forgive is based on these qualities. He has the power to do as He wills but His actions are based on wisdom. Each person will get what he or she deserves.

Important Lessons

- 1) Prophets came to preach the belief in only One God, who is their God as well as the God of all human beings.
- 2) Prophets are concerned about their Ummah.
- 3) Allah chooses who to forgive and who to punish based on His wisdom. Each person gets what he/she deserves.

Ideas

- 1) Students can act out the entire conversation between Allah and Nabi Isa (verses 116-118). They could write it out, discuss it and explain how Nabi Isa would feel during this conversation.
- 2) A good leader is concerned about his people. Talk about qualities of good leaders and make a table of leadership qualities found in the Prophets.
- 3) Discuss forgiveness of Allah. Who deserves it? Check these articles;
<https://www.al-islam.org/ahlul-bayt-ethical-role-models-sayyid-mahdi-sadr/repentance>
<http://www.shiavault.com/books/understanding-the-month-of-glory-lessons-on-the-month-of-ramadhan/chapters/11-seeking-forgiveness-from-allah>

Sources:

Tafsir Namune, Ayt. Nasir Makarim Shirazi

Tafsire Nur, Aghae Muhsin Qara’ati