

Fast 24

“And We have revealed to you (O Prophet) the Book with the truth, verifying what is already before it of the Book and **a guardian over it**, so judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires, (turning away) from the truth that has come to you.” — Ch. 5, v. 48.

Notes: One aspect of the Holy Quran’s “guardianship” of earlier scriptures is in connection with the accounts of the lives of prophets as given in the Bible. There are stories in the Bible which attribute sins, grossly immoral behaviour and idol-worship to several prophets. According to the Quran, all prophets were the ultimate paragons and models of virtue. In case of the story of Adam and Eve, there are other crucial corrections made by the Quran to the Bible story.

Adam and Eve

“And We said: O Adam, dwell you and your wife in the garden, and eat from it a plentiful (food) wherever you two wish, and do not approach this tree or you would be from among the unjust.” — Ch. 2, v. 35.

“And when We said to the angels: Be submissive to Adam, they submitted, but not Iblīs; he refused. We said: O Adam, this is an enemy to you and to your wife; so do not let him drive you both out of the garden so that you are unhappy.” — Ch. 20, v. 116–117.

Notes: The commands above are addressed to *both* Adam and Eve, as they are worded in the dual tense. According to the Bible, it was *before* the creation of Eve when Adam was told by God not to eat of the fruit of tree (Genesis, 2:16–17), meaning that *only* Adam was thus commanded. However, the Quran regards Adam and Eve as being *equally responsible* humans to obey this command from God.

Secondly, the Quran plainly says that they were warned not to listen to the devil who was an enemy to them. So not “approaching the tree” indicates not obeying the devil. There is no such rationale mentioned in the Bible story as to the meaning behind not “approaching the tree”.

“But the devil made them slip from it, and caused them to depart from the state in which they were.” — Ch. 2, v. 36.

“But the devil made an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them their shame that had been hidden from them, and he said: Your Lord has only forbidden you this tree that you may not become angels or become immortals. And he swore to them both: Surely I am a sincere adviser to you — thus he caused them to fall by deceit.” — Ch. 7, v. 20-22.

Notes: The devil made *both* the man and the woman slip by means of deceit. The two of them were equally responsible for listening to the devil. According to the Bible (Genesis, 3: 1–7), a serpent, or snake, approached Eve and tricked her into eating the fruit of the tree. She then gave it to her husband to eat. The implication is that the woman was more prone to being tempted than the man, so the serpent approached her only, and through her he deceived Adam, not daring to tempt the man directly. According to the Quran, the man and the woman were *equally* prone to being tempted.

“And their Lord called to them: Did I not forbid you that tree, and say to you that the devil is surely your open enemy? They said: Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall certainly be from among the losers.” — Ch. 7, v. 22–23.

Notes: Adam and Eve jointly confessed their mistake and both together sought forgiveness from God. However, in the Bible story, this repentance is nowhere mentioned. Instead, Adam said to God: “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Genesis, 3:12). He blamed the woman, and she blamed the serpent.

It will be seen that in the version in the Quran, Adam and Eve are treated as equal: they both received the same initial warning not to follow the devil, they were both equally responsible for committing the mistake of following him, and they repented in a joint prayer.

For what happened next, please see the next Study where we continue contrasting the Quran’s version with the Bible story.

Inspiring sayings

Maulana Muhammad Ali said in a Friday *khutba*:

“It is a remarkable fact of Islamic history that those who brought about a transformation in the world through the Quran were only those people who

had a very strong connection with God, the ones whose hearts were pure. ...
Our work is also to spread the Quran in the world. So I want to draw your
attention to the fact that we can only make the world benefit from the Quran if
our own hearts are pure and we establish a close relationship with God.”

— *A Mighty Striving*, page 308.