

Fast 11: Prophets and Messengers of Allah — as mentioned in the Quran

- Continuing with the mention of prophets in Chapter 21 of the Quran (entitled *The Prophets*) it then mentions David and Solomon, the two great kings of the Israelites. It says that God gave them understanding, wisdom and knowledge to run their kingdoms. They had control to use nature to their advantage: mountains, birds, the wind, and they had subdued physically strong tribes and set them to work on great projects (21:78–82). This is then contrasted with the afflictions of Job. From the Bible, it appears that Job was a wealthy man, blameless and righteous who always obeyed and thanked God. By a series of trials, he lost all his material possessions, and his servants and family members. At this material loss he said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (The Bible, Book of Job, 1:21)

Then he lost his health, his body being covered in painful sores. Yet throughout this, he remained faithful to God, uttering not a word of thanklessness. Eventually everything was restored to him. The Quran mentions his story only briefly:

“And Job, when he cried to his Lord: Distress has afflicted me, and You are the most Merciful of those who show mercy! So We responded to him and removed the distress he had, and We gave him (back) his people and more like them with them, a mercy from Us and a reminder to the worshippers.” (21:83–84)

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ
الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ
ضُرِّهِ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنْ
عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَابِدِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

There is a stark contrast between David and Solomon mentioned in 21:78–82, who ruled over a great kingdom of power and glory, and Job mentioned immediately afterwards who lost everything material. The Prophet Muhammad too lost his kinsmen at Makkah because they opposed his mission. At one stage in Makkah, his opponents imposed a social and economic boycott on the Prophet and the Muslims, and his other relations as well, and they were blockaded in a part of the city. They underwent all kinds of suffering in this isolation, including starvation. This lasted for three years before some of the less severe opponents of the Prophet took pity on their plight and called off the boycott. Thus did the Holy Prophet suffer like Job.

Later the Holy Prophet Muhammad was in the position of David, as a brave fighter at Madinah against the much more powerful forces of his enemies. Like David and Solomon, he too became a ruler of great power and glory, to whom the neighbouring monarchs submitted, as was the case with Solomon’s rule.

- Then a few more prophets are mentioned in ch. 21:

“And Ishmael and Idrīs and Dhu-l-Kifl;
all were from among the patient ones;
and We admitted them to Our mercy;
surely they were from among the good
ones.” (21:85–86)

وَأِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِنَ
الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

In some cases, it is not easy to identify the prophet from the name in the Quran and there are different opinions in those cases as to the correct identity. Idrīs here is said by many to be the prophet known in the Bible as Enoch, who was an ancestor of Noah and hence belonged to very early times. The Bible says of **Enoch**:

“And Enoch walked with God; and he was no more, for God took him”
(Genesis, 5:24).

The Quran says elsewhere about **Idrīs**:

“And mention Idrīs in the Book. Surely
he was a truthful man, a prophet, and
We raised him to an elevated state.”
(19:56–57)

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا
نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٧﴾

There is a clear similarity between the Bible description “for God took him” and the Quranic expression “We raised him to an elevated state”. This would show that the Enoch of the Bible is the prophet who is called Idrīs in the Quran. The standard Western canonical Bible does not contain any Book of Enoch, but has a few references to him. There is, however, a book of Enoch in the Ethiopian Bible and in a Slavonic Bible. This book has also been published separately in English translation since the 1880s.

In the New Testament there is a quotation attributed to Enoch as follows:

“Now Enoch, (in) the seventh (generation) from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him’.” (Jude, 1:14–15)

This prophecy about the Lord coming with ten thousand saints to execute judgment was fulfilled by the Holy Prophet Muhammad when he conquered Makkah at the head of ten thousand companions and executed judgment on the ungodly of Makkah.