



CHAPTER 19

Maryam: Mary

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 6 sections; 98 verses)

The controversy with Christianity is continued in this chapter, and the title is taken from the name of Jesus' mother, *Mary*. The circumstances connected with her having given birth to Jesus are narrated here. But while the last chapter deals at greater length with the history of Christianity than with its doctrines, this aims at proving the falsity of the Christian religious dogmas, which it shows to be absolute innovations and quite foreign to the teachings of all the prophets.

The first two sections deal with the last representatives of prophecy in the house of Israel, viz., John and Jesus. The false doctrines that grew up round the name of the latter are clearly denounced at the end of the second section. The history of Abraham in the third, and that of some other prophets in the fourth, are referred to as showing that God always sent men as His prophets to reform the world. Towards the close of the fourth section it is stated that mere faith unattended with good deeds is nothing, and that faith cannot benefit a people except when it is translated into practice. The fifth section deals with the opponents of the prophets generally, while the sixth brings to a close the discussion of the Christian religion by outspokenly denouncing the false doctrine of the sonship of Jesus.

It is quite certain that the most important portion of this chapter, viz., that relating to the history of Mary and Jesus, was revealed early at Makkah, most probably about the fifth year of the Holy Prophet's mission, because this portion was recited by Ja'far, head of the first batch of the Muslim immigrants in Ethiopia, before the Christian king of that country, when a deputation of the Quraish urged the king to expel the Muslim refugees from his country (Ah. vol. I, p. 203). The emigration took place in the fifth year, and this chapter, therefore, must have been revealed before that.

SECTION 1: Zacharias and John

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1 Sufficient, Guide, Blessed, Knowing, Truthful God.^a

كَلِّمَ صَ ١

2 A mention of the mercy of thy Lord to His servant Zacharias —

ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِيَّا ٧

3 When he called upon his Lord, crying in secret.

إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ نِدَاءً خَفِيًّا ٨

4 He said: My Lord, my bones are weakened, and my head flares with hoariness, and I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee, my Lord.

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَ

اشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ

بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا ٩

5 And I fear my kinsfolk after me, and my wife is barren, so grant me from Thyself an heir^a

وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ

أُمْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ١٠

6 Who should inherit me and inherit of the Children of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, acceptable (to Thee).^a

يَرْتَضِي وَيَرِثْ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ وَاجْعَلْهُ

رَبِّ رَاضِيًّا ١١

7 O Zacharias, We give thee good news of a boy, whose name is John: We have not made before anyone his equal.^a

يُزَكِّيَّا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَىٰ

لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ١٢

1a. *Kāf* stands for *Kāf-in*, *Sufficient*, *hā* for *Hād-in*, *Guide*, *yā* for *Yamīn*, *Blessed*, *‘ain* for *‘Alim*, *Knowing*, and *ṣād* for *Ṣādiq*, *Truthful*. *Yā* has also been interpreted as being a letter of interjection, meaning *O*, but according to JA, *yā* stands for *Yamīn*, One possessing *yumn* or *blessings*.

5a. His fear was due to their not leading righteous lives, and he feared there would be none to lead people into the ways of righteousness after him.

6a. The inheritance of the Children of Jacob is the inheritance of the Divine blessing of prophethood, which had been promised to Jacob’s children.

7a. *Samī* means a *competitor*, or *contender for superiority* in eminence or glory; hence also an *equal*, or a *like*. The word occurs again in this chapter in v. 65 and bears the same meaning, not *namesake*, because there it is spoken about Allāh. It is not, of course, meant that one like John or equal to him was never before created in the world. According to the Gospels: “Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matt. 11:11). The meaning is that one like him was not born in Zacharias’ family, because in the previous verse it is his own relatives about whom Zacharias says that he feared, and therefore an assurance was now given to him

8 He said: My Lord, how shall I have a son, and my wife is barren, and I have reached extreme old age?

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَكَانَتِ
أُمْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ
الْكِبَرِ عِتْيًا ⑧

9 He said: So (it will be). Thy Lord says: It is easy to Me, and indeed I created thee before, when thou wast nothing.

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَىٰ هَٰئِنِ
وَقَدْ خَلَقْتَنكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا ⑨

10 He said: My Lord, give me a sign. He said: Thy sign is that thou speak not to people three nights, being in sound health.^a

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ
أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ⑩

11 So he went forth to his people from the sanctuary and proclaimed to them: Glorify (Allāh) morning and evening.

فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَدَّىٰ
إِلَيْهِمْ أَن سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ⑪

12 O John, take hold of the Book with strength. And We granted him wisdom when a child,

يَجْبِي حُنَّ الْكِتَابِ بِقُوَّةٍ وَآتَيْنَاهُ
الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا ⑫

13 And kind-heartedness from Us and purity. And he was dutiful,

وَحَنَّانًا مِّنْ دُونِنَا وَزَكُورًا وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا ⑬

14 And kindly to his parents, and he was not insolent, disobedient.^a

وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ⑭

15 And peace on him the day he was born and the day he died, and the day he is raised to life!

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ
وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ⑮

that the promised son would not be like the other members of his family whom he feared. Or the meaning may be, that one like him had not appeared in that age.

10a. The word *lail*, i.e., *night*, is interpreted as including the day, as *yaum*, or *day*, includes the *night*. Moreover, in 3:41 the words are *three days*, thus showing that three days and three nights are meant. It should also be noted that the Qur'ān does not support the idea that Zacharias was struck dumb, because it speaks of him as being *in sound health*. The object of assuming silence was to be engaged solely in prayer to the Divine Being, and hence Zacharias told his people also to glorify God; see also 3:41a.

14a. The various aspects of the character of John deserve to be noted. He was pure and sinless and never disobeyed God. In fact, what is said of one prophet is equally true of all. They are all pure from birth, and never disobey God.

SECTION 2: Mary and Jesus

16 And mention Mary in the Book. When she drew aside from her family to an eastern place;

وَأذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَدَتْ
مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾

17 So she screened herself from them. Then We sent to her Our spirit and it appeared to her as a well-made man.^a

فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا
إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾

18 She said: I flee for refuge from thee to the Beneficent, if thou art one guarding against evil.

قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ
كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾

19 He said: I am only bearer of a message of thy Lord: That I will give thee a pure boy.^a

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ
لَكَ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾

20 She said: How can I have a son and no mortal has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste?

قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي
بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾

21 He said: So (it will be). Thy Lord says: It is easy to Me; and that We may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us.^a And it is a matter decreed.^b

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيَّسٌ
وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا
وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾

22 Then she conceived him; and withdrew with him to a remote place.

فَحَصَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَدَتْ بِهِ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾

23 And the throes of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-

فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ

17a. This shows that it was in a vision that the spirit came, and the conversation that follows also took place in a vision. The word *tamaththala* ("it appeared") used here lends support to this, for the word signifies *assuming the likeness of another thing*, and this happens only in a vision. Further the spirit or angel of God appears to His chosen ones only in a vision, and angels are not seen by the physical eye.

19a. The words *I will give thee a pure boy* are the words of the message. The Spirit, in fact, only conveyed the Divine message, as it always does. Every word of the Holy Qur'ān is the word of God, but every word was delivered to the Prophet by the angel.

21a. Jesus was a *sign* to men, in the sense that he was made a prophet, and every prophet is a sign, because the Divine revelation which is granted to him affords a clear proof of the existence of the Divine Being. Or, he was a sign to the Israelites in particular, because with him prophethood came to an end among the Israelites.

21b. She conceived him in the ordinary way in which women conceive children; see 3:44a.

tree.^a She said: Oh, would that I had died before this, and had been a thing quite forgotten!^b

قَالَتْ يَلَيْتَنِي مِمَّنْ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ
نَسِيًّا مَّنْسِيًّا ٢٣

24 So a voice came to her from beneath her: Grieve not, surely thy Lord has provided a stream beneath thee.

فَتَادِلْهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَّا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ
جَعَلَ رَبُّكَ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ٢٤

25 And shake towards thee the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on thee fresh ripe dates.^a

وَ هُزِّي إِلَيْكَ بِجَذَعِ النَّخْلَةِ تَسْقُطُ
عَلَيْكَ رُطَابًا جَدِيًّا ٢٥

26 So eat and drink and cool the eye. Then if thou seest any mortal, say: Surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent, so I will not speak to any man today.^a

فَكُلِي وَ اشْرَبِي وَ قَرِّبِي عَيْنًا فَأَمَّا
تَرِينَ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِي إِنِّي
نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ
الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا ٢٦

27 Then she came to her people with him, carrying him.^a They said:

قَالَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ قَالُوا لِمَ نَرِيْمُ

23a. This shows that Mary gave birth to Jesus while on a journey; hence the reference to water and food in vv. 24 and 25, such as one can only find in a journey. That she was going to a distant place is shown by v. 22. She may have had recourse to the trunk of a palm-tree to find a support in the throes of childbirth.

23b. Mary gave birth to Jesus under the ordinary circumstances which women experience in giving birth to children. The throes of childbirth were too severe for her to bear, and hence she gave utterance to such words. The reference to the throes of childbirth clearly shows that an ordinary human child was coming into the world. Or, there may be a reference to Gen. 3:16, *in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children*.

25a. The Qur'an does not accept that Jesus was born on 25th December. It was the time when fresh ripe dates are found on palm-trees. It is now a recognized fact that the 25th of December was not Jesus' birthday. Bishop Barnes says in the *Rise of Christianity*: "There is, moreover, no authority for the belief that December 25 was the actual birthday of Jesus. If we can give any credence to the birth-story of Luke, with the shepherds keeping watch by night in the fields near Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus did not take place in winter, when the night temperature is so low in the hill country of Judaea that snow is not uncommon. After much argument our Christmas day seems to have been accepted about A.D. 300" (p. 79). Bishop Barnes then goes on to relate that the 25th of December was taken from the Persian cult, Mithra being the God of the invincible sun: "And his festal day was suitably that on which, after the winter solstice, the sun again began clearly to show his strength".

26a. It was really a kind of fast. Zacharias, as we have already seen, was told not to speak to people for three days.

27a. The conversation that is related to have taken place in the verses that follow is alone sufficient to make it clear that the coming of Mary to her people with her son, as

O Mary, thou hast indeed brought a strange thing!^b

لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾

28 O sister of Aaron,^a thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother an unchaste woman!

يَأْتُكَ هُرُودٌ مَا كَانَ آبُؤُكَ أَمْرًا
سَوْءًا وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾

29 But she pointed to him. They said: How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?^a

فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ
مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾

stated in this verse, relates to a time when Jesus had grown sufficiently old to have been raised to the dignity of a prophet, and to have received Divine revelation, as he speaks of having been given the book in v. 30. The commentators, merely because the verse follows one in which the birth of Jesus is spoken of, understand the incident to relate to a time when Jesus was still a baby. But it should be noted that the Holy Qur'ān does not relate stories in all their details, and often omits a number of incidents which are not needed for its purpose. Compare, for instance, the 11th and 12th verses, the first of which relates only Zacharias' receiving the joyful news of a son, while the second asks that son to take hold of the Book with strength. Jesus could only say that he was made a prophet, when he was actually entrusted with the mission of a prophet, and not before, and Jesus' address to his people, as related in vv. 30 and 31, clearly shows that he had already been entrusted with that mission. Moreover, it is unreasonable to suppose that, as soon as Mary gave birth to the child, she took it to her people to make a show of it. The Qur'ān, v. 22, states that she was then going to some remote place, and thus the incident related here could not have taken place immediately after the delivery. The word *carrying* does not show that she was carrying him in her arms; it means that he was being carried on an animal. Compare 9:92, where some of the companions are spoken of as coming to the Prophet that he might *carry* them, and he is related as saying in reply that he had not that on which to *carry* them. Compare Matt. 21:1–7. There the story is related of Jesus entering Jerusalem riding an ass, or an ass and a colt: "And brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon" (Matt. 21:7).

27b. The reference in Mary's *bringing a strange thing* may be to her having given birth to a son who claimed greater authority than the elders of Israel, with a deeper hint to the calumny against her, for which see 4:156a. But the word *fari* also signifies a *forg-er of lies*. It is remarkable that in his reply Jesus does not make a single reference to the circumstances of his birth. Hence the inference is quite reasonable that the question, whichever significance of the words may be taken, was directed against the mission of Jesus and not against the circumstances relating to his birth.

28a. As shown in 3:35a, Mary belonged to the priestly class, as Wherry also admits, "because she was of the Levitical race, as by her being related to Elizabeth it would seem she was," and therefore she is rightly called *ukht Hārūn*, or *sister of Aaron*, the word *ukht* being by no means limited to the close blood-relationship like its equivalent in English; see 3:35a for further explanation. It relates the following incident: Šafīyyah (the Prophet's wife) came to the Messenger of Allāh (may peace and the blessings of Allāh be upon him!) and said: "The women say to me, a Jewess, daughter of two Jews". He said to her: "Why didst thou not say: Surely my father is Aaron and my uncle is Moses and my husband is Muḥammad?"

29a. Old and learned Jews would no doubt speak of a young man who was born and brought up before their eyes as *a child in the cradle*, as if disdainfully to address one so young. See what follows, vv. 30, 31, wherein it is made quite clear that the incident mentioned here relates to a time when Jesus was a grown-up man.

30 He said: I am indeed a servant of Allāh. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet:^a

قَالَ لِرَبِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ هَذَا أَنبِيَ الْكِتَابِ
وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ۝

31 And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate so long as I live:^a

وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَمَوْ
أَوْصَنِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ۝

32 And to be kind to my mother; and He has not made me insolent, unblessed.^a

وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي ۖ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي
جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ۝

33 And peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised to life.

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ
أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ۝

34 Such is Jesus son of Mary — a statement of truth about which they dispute.

ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ
الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ ۝

35 It beseems not Allāh that He should take to Himself a son. Glory be to Him! when He decrees a matter He only says to it, Be, and it is.

مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحٰنَهُ
إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ
كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۝

36 And surely Allāh is my Lord and your Lord, so serve Him. This is the right path.^a

وَلِلَّهِ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ
هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ۝

30a. It is clear that this conversation did not take place when Jesus was an infant in the cradle, but when he had actually been made a prophet.

31a. It is absurd to suppose that prayers and alms were enjoined on Jesus while he was only a day old and that he really observed these injunctions at that age. In fact, Jesus' answer clearly shows that he was addressing his people after he had been entrusted with the mission of prophethood.

32a. Here only the mother is spoken of, whereas in a similar case in v. 14 John is spoken of as being kind to both parents. This may be due to the fact that Joseph may not have been living at the time when Jesus spoke these words. Joseph was already an old man when he married Mary, and by the time that the ministry of Jesus begins we find no mention of him even in the Gospels, the mother and brothers being the only relations mentioned. Or, the mother alone is mentioned because the Gospels relate an incident showing that Jesus was rude to his mother (Matt. 12:48), and this verse disproves the statement, it being one of the objects of the Qur'ān to clear Jesus of all false charges.

36a. According to Matthew, when Jesus was tempted of the devil, who asked him to worship him, Jesus' reply was: "For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

37 But parties from among them differed; so woe to those who disbelieve, because of their presence on a grievous day!

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ قَوِيلٌ
لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ مَّشْهَدٍ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

38 How clearly will they hear and see on the day when they come to Us; but the wrongdoers are today in manifest error.

أَسْمِعُ بِهِمْ وَأَبْصُرُ يَوْمَ يَأْتُونَنَا لَكِنِ
الظَّالِمُونَ الْيَوْمَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

39 And warn them of the day of Regret,^a when the matter is decided. And they are (now) in negligence and they believe not.

وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ
الْأَمْرُ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

40 Surely We inherit the earth and those thereon, and to Us they are returned.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الْأَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا
وَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

SECTION 3: Abraham

41 And mention Abraham in the Book. Surely he was a truthful man, a prophet.

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٤١﴾

42 When he said to his sire: O my sire, why worshippeth thou that which hears not, nor sees, nor can it avail thee aught?

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا
يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا ﴿٤٢﴾

43 O my sire, to me indeed has come the knowledge which has not come to thee; so follow me, I will guide thee on a right path.

يَأْتِيَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ
يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٤٣﴾

44 O my sire, serve not the devil. Surely the devil is disobedient to the Beneficent.

يَأْتِيَنِي لَوْلَا تَعْبُدُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ
كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾

45 O my sire, surely I fear lest a punishment from the Beneficent should afflict thee, so that thou become a friend of the devil.

يَأْتِيَنِي لَوْلَا أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَسِّطَ عَذَابٌ
مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾

39a. The day of Judgment is here called the day of Regret, because man will then regret that he wasted the opportunity given to him to work for his own good.

46 He said: Disliketh thou my gods, O Abraham? If thou desist not, I will certainly drive thee away. And leave me for a time.

قَالَ أَرَأَيْبُ أَنْتَ عَنْ إِلَهِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ
لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهُ لَأَرْجِمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِي مَلِيًّا ⑤

47 He said: Peace be to thee! I shall pray my Lord to forgive thee. Surely He is ever Kind to me.

قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ رَبِّي
إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا ⑥

48 And I withdraw from you and that which you call on besides Allāh, and I call upon my Lord. Maybe I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord.

وَاعْتَزَلْتُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَادْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدَاعٍ
رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ⑦

49 So, when he withdrew from them and that which they worshipped besides Allāh, We gave him Isaac and Jacob. And each (of them) We made a prophet.^a

فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلْتَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَكُلًّا
جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ⑧

50 And We gave them of Our mercy, and We granted them a truthful mention of eminence.^a

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ
لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ⑨

SECTION 4: Other Prophets are raised

51 And mention Moses in the Book. Surely he was one purified, and was a messenger, a prophet.^a

وَأذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
مُخْلِصًا وَقَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ⑩

49a. It is elsewhere made clear that Jacob was his grandson (11:71; 21:72). Nor should it be supposed that *giving* signifies only the giving of a son, for of Moses it is said a few verses further on, *We gave him his brother Aaron, a prophet*, though Aaron was older than Moses.

50a. The literal significance is, *We made for them the tongue of truth to be lofty*. As *the tongue* is the vehicle of expression, therefore *lisāna ṣidq-in* stands for *a truthful mention*. However humble a life a prophet may lead, he is granted an eminence among later generations, but the distinguishing characteristic of a prophet is that his record of eminence is a truthful one.

51a. *Rasūl*, or *messenger*, means *one who is sent with a message* for the regeneration of men, while *nabī*, or *prophet*, is one who has the gift of prophecy, i.e., who receives a *naba'* or *information* from on high. The elect who are chosen for the regeneration of man are called *prophets* as receiving knowledge from Allāh, and *messengers* as delivering to humanity the messages they receive.

52 And We called to him from the blessed side of the mountain, and We made him draw nigh in communion.

وَنَادَيْنَاهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ
وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ نَجِيًّا ﴿٥٢﴾

53 And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron, a prophet.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ
نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٣﴾

54 And mention Ishmael in the Book. Surely he was truthful in promise, and he was a messenger, a prophet.^a

وَإِذْ كُنَّا فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِذْ أَنْتَ
صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٤﴾

55 And he enjoined on his people prayer and almsgiving, and was one in whom his Lord was well pleased.

وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ
وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا ﴿٥٥﴾

56 And mention Idris in the Book. Surely he was a truthful man, a prophet,

وَإِذْ كُنَّا فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِذْ أَنْتَ
كَانَ صِدْقًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٦﴾

57 And We raised him to an elevated state.^a

وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٧﴾

58 These are they on whom Allāh bestowed favours, from among the prophets, of the seed of Adam, and of those whom We carried with Noah, and of the seed of Abraham and Israel, and of those whom We guided and chose. When the messages of the Beneficent were recited to them, they fell down in submission, weeping.^a

Prostration

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ
النَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ آدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ
حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ نُورًا وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْرَائِيلَ نُورًا مِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا
إِذَا تُلَى عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَرُّوا
سُجَّدًا أَوْ بُكِيًّا ﴿٥٨﴾

54a. Ishmael was a prophet. When Abraham prayed to the Lord “that Ishmael might live before Thee” (Gen. 17:18), the reply was: “And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee” (Gen. 17:20), which shows that Ishmael was made a prophet; see 2:124a, 125c. In the Holy Qur’ān Ishmael is mentioned by name on the following occasions as one of the prophets: 2:125, 127–129, 133, 136, 140; 6:86; 19:54, 55; 21:85; 38:48; while he is referred to in 37:101–107.

57a. Idris is the same as Enoch. The word *raf’*, which is used of Jesus, is also used of Enoch, and some commentators therefore misinterpret the words as indicating that Enoch was taken up to heaven alive. But the same mistake is made in both cases, for *raf’* signifies *raising to high dignity*; see 3:55b. The mistake seems to have arisen from what is said of Enoch in the Bible. Thus, in Gen. 5:24: “And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him”. The New Testament is plainer yet: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him” (Heb. 11:5). Only once again is he mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān, viz., in 21:85.

58a. Here the reciter prostrates himself; see 7:206a.

59 But there came after them an evil generation, who wasted prayers and followed lusts, so they will meet perdition,

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ
يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾

60 Except those who repent and believe and do good — such will enter the Garden, and they will not be wronged in aught:

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا
يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٠﴾

61 Gardens of perpetuity which the Beneficent has promised to His servants in the Unseen. Surely His promise ever comes to pass.

جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ عِبَادَهُ
بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَأْتِيًّا ﴿٦١﴾

62 They will hear therein no vain discourse, but only, Peace! And they have their sustenance therein, morning and evening.^a

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا إِلَّا سَلَامًا وَلَهُمْ
رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿٦٢﴾

63 This is the Garden which We cause those of Our servants to inherit who keep their duty.^a

تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾

64 And we descend not but by the command of thy Lord. To Him belongs what is before us and what is behind us and what is between these, and thy Lord is never forgetful.^a

وَمَا نَنْزِلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا
بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ
ذَٰلِكَ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾

62a. This description of the Hereafter is really to show that the Muslim in this world talks of nothing but peace. Islām is really *peace*, and it is by making peace here with the Creator and His creatures that one can find peace hereafter. This is the great truth underlying the Islamic idea of paradise, for of paradise it is frequently stated in the Holy Qur'ān that there will be nothing but peace therein.

63a. The state of *perfect peace* spoken of in the previous verse is here called the *Garden* which the righteous will inherit.

64a. The words, *we descend not*, are generally understood to refer to the coming of angels with Divine revelation. There is no doubt that the reference here is to the revelation of the Holy Prophet, the significance being that, as the angels brought revelation to previous prophets, so they now bring revelation, by the command of the Lord, to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. The concluding words of the verse, *thy Lord is never forgetful*, signify that the promises and prophecies made by God through His prophets could not be forgotten. Thus an account of the previous prophets is concluded with a reference to the revelation of the Holy Prophet, and this is the subject dealt with in the remaining sections of the chapter.

Some, however, think that these are the words of the faithful, which they will speak when they enter paradise (Rz).

65 Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, so serve Him and be patient in His service. Knowest thou any one equal to Him?

رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ
لَهُ سَيِّئًا ۝٦٥

SECTION 5: How the Opponents were Dealt with

66 And says man: When I am dead, shall I truly be brought forth alive?

وَيَقُوْلُ الْاِنْسَانُ اِذَا مَاتَ لَسُوْنٌ
اُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ۝٦٦

67 Does not man remember that We created him before, when he was nothing?

اَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْاِنْسَانُ اَنَّا خَلَقْنٰهُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا ۝٦٧

68 So by thy Lord! We shall certainly gather them together and the devils, then shall We bring them around hell on their knees.^a

فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرُهُمْ وَالشَّيْطٰنِ ثُمَّ
لَنَحْضُرَهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ۝٦٨

69 Then We shall draw forth from every sect those most rebellious against the Beneficent.

ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيْعَةٍ اِلَيْهِمْ اَشَدُّ
عَلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ عِتِيًّا ۝٦٩

70 Again, We certainly know best those who deserve most to be burned therein.

ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ اَوْلٰى
بِهَا صِدْقًا ۝٧٠

71 And there is not one of you but shall come to it. This is an unavoidable decree of thy Lord.^a

وَلٰنْ مِنْكُمْ اِلَّا وَاْرُدُّهَاۗ كَانَ عَلٰى
رَبِّكَ حَسْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ۝٧١

72 And We shall deliver those who guard against evil,^a and leave the wrongdoers therein on their knees.^b

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَاَنْذَرُ
الظَّالِمِيْنَ فِيْهَا جِثِيًّا ۝٧٢

68a. The *devils* here are clearly those who lead others to evil.

71a. The *wicked* only are spoken of, as the context shows clearly. That the righteous will not go to hell is made clear further on: "The day when We gather the dutiful to the Beneficent to receive honours, and drive the guilty to hell, as thirsty beasts" (vv. 85, 86). According to 21:102, *the righteous will not hear the faintest sound of hell*.

72a. For the meaning of *thumma*, the first word of v. 72, see 2:29a. It is wrong to suppose that the righteous will be first cast into hell and then delivered; see 71a.

72b. Compare v. 68, where it is said that the guilty will be brought to hell *on their knees*.

73 And when Our clear messages are recited to them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Which of the two parties is better in position and better in assembly?^a

وَلَا إِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمُ الْآيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَمْ يَلْبَسُونَ
خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَ أَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ۝

74 And how many a generation have We destroyed before them, who had better possessions and appearance!

وَ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّن قُرُونٍ هُمْ
أَحْسَنُ أَثَاثًا وَ رَءِيًّا ۝

75 Say: As for him who is in error, the Beneficent will prolong his length of days; until they see what they were threatened with, either the punishment or the Hour.^a Then they will know who is worse in position and weaker in forces.^b

قُلْ مَن كَانَ فِي الضَّلَاةِ فَلْيَسُدْ لَهُ
الرَّحْمَنُ مَدًّا هَٰذَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَرَّادِمَا
يُوعَدُونَ إِنَّمَا الْعَذَابُ وَ إِنَّمَا السَّاعَةُ ط
نَسِيغٌ لِّمَن هُوَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا
وَ أَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا ۝

76 And Allāh increases in guidance those who go aright. And deeds that endure, the good deeds, are, with thy Lord, better in recompense and yield better return.

وَ يَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى ط
وَ الْبَقِيَّةُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ
ثَوَابًا وَ خَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا ۝

77 Hast thou seen him who disbelieves in Our messages and says: I shall certainly be given wealth and children?^a

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ
لَأُوْتِيَنَّ مَالًا وَ وَلَدًا ۝

78 Has he gained knowledge of the unseen, or made a covenant with the Beneficent?

أَظْلَمَ الْغَيْبِ أَمْ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ
عَهْدًا ۝

79 By no means! We write down what he says, and We shall lengthen to him the length of the chastisement,

كَلَّا ط سَتَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَ نَمُدُّ لَهُ
مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا ۝

73a. That is, they are proud of their great wealth and numerous forces.

75a. The *Hour* signifies the *hour of doom*, the time of destruction, when their power will be utterly destroyed. The '*adhāb*', in comparison with the doom, signifies a lighter punishment.

75b. In these words it is clearly indicated that the time will come when they will find themselves in an evil condition, and their forces weaker than the forces of Truth.

77a. They have no eye for the higher values of life; all they want is wealth and children.

80 And We shall inherit from him what he says, and he will come to Us alone.^a

وَوَرِثَتُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿٥٠﴾

81 And they have taken gods besides Allāh, that they should be to them a source of strength —

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِلَهَةً لِيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ﴿٥١﴾

82 By no means! They will soon deny their worshipping them, and be their adversaries.

كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا ﴿٥٢﴾

SECTION 6: False Doctrine of Sonship

83 Seest thou not that We send the devils against the disbelievers, inciting them incitingly?

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِينَ تَكْوُرُهُمْ آثَرًا ﴿٥٣﴾

84 So make no haste against them. We only number out to them a number (of days).^a

فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٥٤﴾

85 The day when We gather the dutiful to the Beneficent to receive honours,^a

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ وَفَلَا ﴿٥٥﴾

86 And drive the guilty to hell, as thirsty beasts.^a

وَوَسَوْقِي الْمَجْرُمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا ﴿٥٦﴾

87 They have no power of intercession, save him who has made a covenant with the Beneficent.

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٥٧﴾

88 And they say: The Beneficent has taken to Himself a son.

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا ﴿٥٨﴾

89 Certainly you make an abominable assertion!

لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا ﴿٥٩﴾

80a. The reference is to his saying in v. 77: “I shall certainly be given wealth and children”. God’s inheriting thus means that their wealth and children will be taken away from them and ultimately be a source of strength to Islām.

84a. Because their doom is already decreed.

85a. *Wafd* is a party coming to a king to receive honours (R, LA).

86a. *Wird* signifies coming to or arriving at water (LL); hence it signifies thirsty, because thirsty beasts are driven to water.

90 The heavens may almost be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces,

تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ
الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا ﴿٩٠﴾

91 That they ascribe a son to the Beneficent!

أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا ﴿٩١﴾

92 And it is not worthy of the Beneficent that He should take to Himself a son.^a

وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴿٩٢﴾

93 There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes to the Beneficent as a servant.

إِنَّ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
إِلَّا آتَى الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا ﴿٩٣﴾

94 Certainly He comprehends them, and has numbered them all.

لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾

95 And everyone of them will come to Him on the day of Resurrection, alone.

وَكُلُّهُمْ آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا ﴿٩٥﴾

96 Those who believe and do good deeds, for them the Beneficent will surely bring about love.^a

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾

92a. The five verses 89–93 contain a most emphatic and clear condemnation of the Christian doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus Christ. It may be noted that this chapter belongs to about the fifth year of the Holy Prophet's mission, as portions of it were read out before the Negus by Ja'far, who was the head of the Muslim immigrants to Abyssinia. Thus Islām had set before itself from the very first the grand object of the reformation of Christianity. The particular point on which stress is laid in this chapter, as against the fundamental errors of the Christian religion, *Sonship* and *Atonement*, is that God is *Rahmān* (Beneficent), and does not require any compensation to forgive sinners. It is for this reason that the name *Rahmān*, in preference to all other names of the Divine Being, is mentioned over and over again in this chapter, and the key to the whole position is contained in v. 92 in the words: *It is not worthy of the Beneficent that He should take to Himself a son*. In fact, the doctrine of Atonement is contradicted by Christ's own words in the Lord's prayer: "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). A man is said to forgive his debtor when he remits the debt and does not exact any compensation. Even thus does God forgive the sinners; He needs no compensation.

96a. Allāh's *bringing about love* for the righteous means that He loves them Himself and inspires love for them in the hearts of other people, while they also love Allāh as well as their fellow-beings. The righteous servants of God are opposed at first, but gradually their goodness prevails and they are loved and admired. There is a prophetic reference here to the great love with which the hearts of the enemies of the Prophet were to be inspired in the near future, and even today the hearts of men are being inspired with greater and greater love for him as the world witnesses the good which he did to humanity.

97 So We have made it easy in thy tongue only that thou shouldst give good news thereby to those who guard against evil, and shouldst warn thereby a contentious people.

فَاتَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ
الْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا لُدًّا ﴿٩٧﴾

98 And how many a generation before them have We destroyed! Canst thou see anyone of them or hear a sound of them?

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هَلْ
تُحِصُّ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَسْمَعُ
لَهُمْ رِكْرًا ﴿٩٨﴾