

^ISA (JESUS), A PROPHET OF ALLAH

As a mercy from Him, *Allah* sent many messengers to humans. They were all sent to teach people the correct and acceptable way of worshipping *Allah*, their Creator and the Creator of everything. All the prophets of *Allah*, the first of whom is *Adam*, and the last of whom is *Muhammad*, came with one Religion--*Islam*, one creed--the belief in the Oneness of *Allah*. They all taught that *Allah* is attributed with all the perfect attributes, one of which is that He does not resemble any of His creations. They taught what *Allah* ordered us to perform and to avoid in this life. They taught about the Judgment Day on which all of us will be judged as to whether or not we fulfilled our obligations in this life. None of them taught their people what contradicts the belief in the Oneness of *Allah*. Each one of them ordered his followers to believe in the rest of the prophets. *Imam al-Bukhariyy* related that Prophet *Muhammad*, *sallallahu ^alayhi wa sallam*, said:

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which means: <<The prophets are like brothers from the same father with different mothers. Their Religion is one, although their *Shari^ahs* (rules of the Religion) differed. I am the most deserving of *^Isa* (Jesus), the son of *Maryam* (Mary). There was no other prophet between us.>>

Eternally, *Allah* chose Prophet *^Isa* (Jesus) as a messenger before Prophet *Muhammad*. He was one of the five best messengers of *Allah*, called *Ulul-^azm*⁽¹⁾, those with the highest status, who were the most patient. He was *^Isa*, the son of *Maryam*, the daughter of *^Imran*, from the children of Israel⁽²⁾. Prophet *^Isa* like all the prophets, was truthful in what he conveyed from *Allah*. Although today Muslims follow the *Shari^ah* of

¹ *Ulul-^azm* are the messengers of *Allah* who have the highest status. In order, they are: Prophet *Muhammad*, Prophet *Ibrahim*, Prophet *Musa*, Prophet *^Isa*, and Prophet *Nuh*

² Israel was another name given to Prophet *Ya^qub* (Jacob), who was the son of *Ishaq* (Isaac), the son of *Ibrahim* (Abraham). It means <<the righteous slave>>.

Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ, they respect, love, and believe in *ʿĪsā* and in his prophethood.

MARYAM, THE MOTHER OF ʿĪSĀ ﷺ

Maryam (Mary), the mother of *ʿĪsā*, was a pious Muslim woman from the offspring of Israel who lived during the time of Prophet *Zakariyyā*. Prophet *Zakariyyā* was a prophet of *Allāh*. He ordered people to follow the *Sharīʿah* revealed to Prophet *Mūsā*. In the *Qurʾān*, there are two *sūrah*s (chapters) named *Al ʿImrān* and *Maryam* referring to *Maryam* (Mary), the mother of *ʿĪsā*. In these *sūrah*s, issues relating to *Maryam*: her birth and her high status, and the birth of her son, Prophet *ʿĪsā* are stated.

Maryam's mother conceived and delivered *Maryam* when she was at an advanced age, when women usually can no longer have babies. When one day, *Maryam*'s mother saw a bird feeding its young, she longed for a baby herself. She made a supplication to *Allāh* to bless her with a child. She vowed that she would make him a servant for the Holy House in Jerusalem, dedicated for worship, because she hoped the child would be male. *Allāh* answered her supplication and *Maryam*'s mother conceived. However, she delivered a baby girl. She named her *Maryam* and asked *Allāh* to protect her and her offspring from evil.

Since *Maryam*'s father had died, Prophet *Zakariyyā* (who was the husband of *Maryam*'s sister) became *Maryam*'s guardian. From him, *Maryam* learned the Religion. She grew up as a righteous, pure, and pious Muslim woman worshipping *Allāh* and endeavoring greatly in performing obedience to Him. Before she turned fourteen (14) years old, *Maryam* was a *waliyyah* (a very pious woman with a special high status). She became the best of the women in the world. It is mentioned in the *Qurʾān* that the angels said that *Allāh* chose *Maryam* and preferred her to the other women of the world (*Al ʿImrān*, 42).



THE BIRTH OF ʾISA

The great scholar *Ibn Jarir* and other scholars narrated that one day, *Maryam* ran out of water. She asked her cousin, *Yusuf*, to go with her to get some water. He declined, saying he had his water for that day. So *Maryam* went to fetch water alone. There, she found Angel *Jibril*, whom *Allah* had sent to her in the shape of a man. Thinking he was a human who might harm her, she asked refuge with *Allah* from him. *Jibril* told her, "I am the Messenger of your Lord to you. I was sent to give you a pious child who is pure from sins." *Maryam* told him, "How would I have a son? I have no husband, and I am not an adultress or a fornicator." *Jibril* told her, "Creating a son without a father is an easy matter to *Allah*. *Allah* will make him for the people a sign of the Power of *Allah*. He will send him as a mercy from Him and an endowment to the those who follow him and believe in him. Creating him is a matter *Allah* willed and destined, so it will not be blocked or changed."

Jibril blew the soul of ʾisa into *Maryam* and ʾisa's soul entered into her womb. *Maryam* became pregnant with ʾisa, peace be upon him. There is a difference of opinion as to the term of her pregnancy. Some scholars said it was nine months long, some said eight, and some said otherwise. However, when the signs of pregnancy became apparent on her, her cousin, *Yusuf*, the Carpenter, was disturbed and did not know how to interpret that matter. He knew how pious she was, so he could not accuse her of fornication. On the other hand, the signs of pregnancy called for attributing fornication to her. So he decided to open the subject with her. He asked her, "Tell me, would plants grow without seeds? Would trees grow without rainfall? Would there be a child without a male?" To all these questions *Maryam* said "Yes." Then she asked him, "Did you not know that *Allah* made the plants emerge without seeds on the day He created them? Did you not know that *Allah* created the trees the first time without rain? Did you not know that *Allah* created *Adam* and *Hawwa'* (Eve) without a father or a mother?" *Yusuf* knew all these things and when she responded in this way, he felt assured of her innocence and that this was something special given to her by *Allah*.

When the signs of her pregnancy became apparent, *Maryam* went away from her people. The pangs of birth led her to the trunk of a dead palm tree. Out of her shyness from the people, and fearing they would accuse her of having done an ugly act, she wished she was dead and not a trace of her could be found. *Jibril* called her to comfort her. He told her that *Allah* made a small river run under her from which she could drink, and should she shake the trunk of the dead palm tree next to her, it would turn green. Then moist dates would fall down, from which she could eat and be nourished. *Jibril* told her that when she faced her people with her son to tell anyone who questioned her about him that she had made a vow⁽³⁾ not to talk to any human

³ Although this is no longer the case, in the rules revealed to the prophets before our Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ it was an acceptable act of worship to vow to refrain from speaking to anyone for a period of time.

for that day. That day, *Maryam* gave birth to her son, ʿĪsā, peace be upon him. Forty (40) days later she carried him back to her people. They accused her of having fornicating. In response, *Maryam* pointed to her son, telling them to talk to him. They were angered at this and thought she was mocking them by asking them to speak with a 40-day old baby lying in a small cradle. At this, *Allāh* made ʿĪsā speak. He said:

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which are verses 30-33 of *Sūrat Maryam* and mean: [I am a slave of *Allāh*. He will reveal the Book to me and make me a prophet. He blessed me wherever I am. In the rules revealed to me there will be a special attention given to Prayers and *Zakaḥ*. *Allāh* has predestined that I will be kind to my mother and not a tyrant with a bad ending. Peace was on me the day I was born. Peace will be on me on the day I will die and on the day I will be resurrected.]

When *Maryam's* people heard that, they refrained from harming her or Prophet *Zakariyyā*, about whom they had made ugly accusations. After baby ʿĪsā spoke these words, he did not speak again until he became at an age when children normally begin to speak. ʿĪsā's speaking from the cradle was a preparation and a sign of his creed and coming prophethood, when he would call the people to believe in *Allāh*, the One Who does not have a partner, and to believe in the message of ʿĪsā -that he was the slave and messenger of *Allāh*. The first words he spoke were, "I am the slave of *Allāh*."

EARLY LIFE OF PROPHET ʿĪSĀ

Lady *Maryam* took ʿĪsā to Egypt where they stayed for a period of time. Then, they returned to the countries of *ash-Sham*- to a city known as *an-Nasirah* (Nazareth). ʿĪsā, peace be upon him, studied the *Tawrah* (Torah) in the schools and memorized it. He spoke Syriac, the language of the people of Palestine at that time, and the language in which the Heavenly Book, called the *Injil*, was revealed to him. He was a pious worshipper of *Allāh*, following the rules of the Torah revealed to Prophet *Mūsā*.

THE PROPHETHOOD of ^ISA

Allah gave the Prophethood to ^isa when he was thirty years old. *Allah* revealed to him new laws which abrogated some of the laws revealed to Prophet Musa. Prophet ^isa conveyed the revelation to the people and called them to believe in his message.

Prophet ^isa, like all the prophets of *Allah*, performed miracles. *Allah* sent all the prophets with miracles⁽⁴⁾ as a proof to their prophethood. People would witness the miracles and believe in their prophethood. Many of Prophet ^isa's miracles were in curing illnesses, to be a stronger proof of his truthfulness, since the people at his time were famous for their knowledge in the field of medicine. Prophet ^isa cured those with seemingly incurable illnesses. Prophet ^isa cured a man inflicted with leprosy. He put his honorable hand on the face of a man who was born blind and cured his blindness. Once, Prophet ^isa supplicated to *Allah* to bring back to life one person who had died and was being carried to the burial place, and *Allah* brought this person back to life.

Prophet ^isa had other kinds of miracles also. He formed the shape of bats from clay and then, by the Will of *Allah*, they flew away a distance. One of the miracles of ^isa is mentioned in the Qur'an in Surat al-Ma'idah, Verses 112-115:

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which tell about one time when Prophet ^isa and the people who were with him reached to a place where there was not enough food for all the people with him. The students of ^isa asked him to supplicate to *Allah* for food which would come down on them from the sky. ^isa made supplication to *Allah* and the angels brought down the food on a piece of material before the eyes of the people. Hundreds and hundreds of people ate

⁴ A miracle is an extraordinary event performed by a man who claims prophethood, which no one can imitate or match to discredit the prophet, and which supports his claim of prophethood.

from that food, and there was no sign the food had diminished in quantity. This miracle increased the belief of the believers. The blasphemers however, claimed ʿĪsā had performed sorcery on their eyes.

After his revelation, Prophet ʿĪsā lived on Earth for about three years. He used to travel from place to place calling people to the proper worship of *Allāh*. He was so detached from the worldly matters that he did not worry about not having a house to return to at night. He used to sleep wherever the night would fall on him, whether he was in an open land or in a sheltered place. He wore clothing made out of unwoven wool. He ate from the raw plants of the Earth, without desiring to cook them. He did not marry and did not have children.

THE *INJIL*

ʿĪsā received a Heavenly Book, the *Injil*, which contained the *Shariʿah*, (rules of the Religion) revealed to him. In it was the prohibition of associating partners with *Allāh*. In it was the prohibition to consume the usurious gain (*riba*), pig meat, blood, and the meat of animals slaughtered improperly. It contained the order to perform the Prayer (with bowing and prostration) twice a day. It had the order to fast (but other than the month of *Ramadan*), and the order to perform *taharah* (purification). Prophet ʿĪsā came with a *Shariʿah* that made permissible some of the things which had been forbidden upon the children of Israel in the Torah. Although what is called "The Bible" today contains some true stories and alleged sayings of Prophet ʿĪsā, it does not contain the true *Injil* which was revealed to him.

THE ASCENSION OF PROPHET ʿĪSĀ

When Prophet ʿĪsā was 33 years old, the blasphemers among the offspring of Israel plotted to kill him, but *Allāh* saved him from their harm. *Ibn Abi Ḥatim* and *an-Nasaʿiyy* narrated from the route of *Ibn ʿAbbas* that he said:

Prophet ʿĪsā was in session with twelve of his elite companions in a house. He told them that some of them would blaspheme in the future. Then he asked them, "Who among you would volunteer to be made to look like me, be killed in my place, and be my companion in Paradise." The youngest among them stood up and said, "I." Prophet ʿĪsā told him to sit, then repeated his same question. Again, the same young man said, "I." Again, Prophet ʿĪsā told him to sit, then asked the same question. After the same young man volunteered for the third time, Prophet ʿĪsā told him <<you are the one>>. Prophet ʿĪsā was raised to the sky from an opening in the ceiling of the house. When the Jews came after Prophet ʿĪsā, they saw that young man, whom *Allāh* made to look similars to

ʿĪsā . They took him, thinking he was Prophet ʿĪsā and crucified him

It should be noted here there are two widespread false stories about this matter. In one, it is claimed that one of ʿĪsā's students was paid a great sum of money to lead those Jews to ʿĪsā . However *Allāh* made this student look like ʿĪsā , so they thought he was ʿĪsā and they crucified him. In another, it is said that the person killed in place of ʿĪsā was the leader of the Jews. Both of these stories are false.

After Prophet ʿĪsā was raised to the heaven, his nation lived following his guidance, teaching, and methodology for two hundred (200) years. However, the nation of Prophet ʿĪsā did not remain steadfast to *Islām*. Many people who claimed to follow the rules of ʿĪsā perverted those rules and changed the statements of the *Injil*. Three hundred (300) years after Prophet ʿĪsā was raised to the sky, those who were following the ones who had perverted the teachings of Prophet ʿĪsā became very numerous, and those who were truly following the Religion of *Islām* were few and weak. After some five hundred (500) years, none of the believing Muslims of ʿĪsā's nation were left. When Prophet *Muḥammad* ﷺ began receiving Revelation, he was the only Muslim living among people on Earth, worshipping solely *Allāh*.

PROPHET ʿĪSĀ'S DESCENT TO EARTH

Prophet ʿĪsā , peace be upon him, is still alive- in the second heaven- worshipping *Allāh*. He will descend to Earth before the Day of Judgment and his descent will be one of the great signs of the nearing of that Day. Prophet *Muḥammad* ﷺ informed us that ʿĪsā will descend to Earth at a place on the eastern side of Damascus, with his hands on the wings of two angels. He will meet a group of Muslims getting ready to perform the prayer, with the *Mahdiyy* as their *Imām*. The *Mahdiyy* will ask Prophet ʿĪsā to lead them in that prayer. However, ʿĪsā will ask the *Mahdiyy* to stand *Imām* for them- as a sign that Prophet ʿĪsā will rule with the rules revealed to Prophet *Muḥammad* ﷺ. After this one time, ʿĪsā will lead the people in prayers because he has a higher status than the *Mahdiyy*.

After he descends, Prophet ʿĪsā will rule the Earth with the *Shariʿah* of Prophet *Muḥammad* ﷺ, the *Shariʿah* which Muslims are ordered to follow until the Judgment Day. He will kill the *Dajjal*, an ugly, evil blasphemer who claims himself as God, and who misleads many people to blaspheme. Prophet ʿĪsā will perform *Hajj* and travel to visit the grave of Prophet *Muḥammad* to salute him. He will greet him by saying, “*As-Salāmu ʿalaykum*

ya Rasul- Allah ", as narrated by *Abu Dawud at-Tayalisiyy* and others. This means: "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of *Allah*".

During his time, the people of *Ya'juj* and *Ma'juj* (Gog and Magog) will appear and cause great destruction to Earth and devastation to Muslims. Prophet *Isa* will take the believers to Mount *at-Tur* where they will supplicate *Allah* to relieve them from these people. *Allah* will answer their *du'a'* and destroy all the people of *Ya'juj* and *Ma'juj*. After that, Prophet *Isa* will rule the Muslims and there will be a time when peace, comfort, and safety prevail.

After he descends, Prophet *Isa* will live for forty (40) years on Earth. He will marry and have children. Then, he will die and be buried. *Abdullah Ibn Salam* said, "It is written in the original Torah that Prophet *Isa* will be buried next to Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ." (in the chamber of Lady *A'ishah*.)

CONCLUSION

Prophet *Isa* was a messenger of *Allah* revealed to convey to the people the religion of *Islam* and to call them to worship *Allah*, their Creator. Muslims believe in his prophethood and in his truthfulness in conveying that message. Prophet *Isa* is still alive in the second heaven, worshipping *Allah*. He will return to Earth before the Day of Judgment and will rule the Muslims with the *Shari'ah* of Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ. Peace be upon this respected, honored, and beloved Messenger of *Allah*.

Praise be to *Allah*, and *Allah* knows best.