

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - The Caliphate of Umar

Conquest of Jerusalem

After the Battle of Yermuk, the Muslims won other battles in Syria and the Byzantines were forced to evacuate Syria when the Muslim forces attacked Jerusalem. The Lord Bishop of Jerusalem proposed to surrender Jerusalem in case Umar the Caliph of the Muslims came to take over the city himself. Some of the companions of Umar advised that the Caliph should not go to Jerusalem, and the Christians after having been defeated could not dictate terms. When the advice of Ali was sought he said: "I had advised you not to go to Syria when the war was imminent for in the case of defeat that would have led to demoralization on the part of the Muslims. Now that God has rewarded the Muslims with victory, and the Christians desire that the Caliph should come himself to get the surrender of Jerusalem, I would advise that the Caliph should go to Jerusalem, for he will be going there as a victor. The presence of the Caliph of the Muslims in Syria would add to the prestige of the Muslims and would be instrumental in converting the Christians to Islam. Jerusalem is not merely sacred to the Christians; it is sacred to the Muslims as well. It was from Jerusalem that the Holy Prophet ascended the Heavens, and the sanctity of the place demands that its occupation should be taken by no one other than the Caliph of the Muslims." Umar accepted the advice of Ali, and personally went to Jerusalem to obtain the surrender of the city.

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Source : *Alim.org-Ali bin Abu Talib History*