

Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: For, indeed, We vouchsafed unto Moses the divine writ and caused apostle after apostle to follow him;⁷⁰ and We vouchsafed unto Jesus, the son of Mary, all evidence of the truth, and strengthened him with holy inspiration.⁷¹ [Yet] is it not so that every time an apostle came unto you with something that was not to your liking, you gloried in your arrogance, and to some of them you gave the lie, while others you would slay?⁷²

Malik: To Musa (Moses) We gave the Book (Torah) and sent after him other Rasools in succession; then We gave Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), clear Signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit (Gabriel). Why is it that whenever there came to you a Rasool with a message which did not suit your desires, you became so arrogant that some you called impostors and others you killed!

Mustafa Khattab:

Indeed, We gave Moses the Book and sent after him successive messengers. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs and spanported him with the holy spirit.¹ Why is it that every time a messenger comes to you ?Israelites? with something you do not like, you become arrogant, rejecting some and killing others?

Pickthall: And verily We gave unto Moses the Scripture and We caused a train of messengers to follow after him, and We gave unto Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), and We supported him with the holy Spirit. Is it ever so, that, when there cometh unto you a messenger (from Allah) with that which ye yourselves desire not, ye grow arrogant, and some ye disbelieve and some ye slay?

Yusuf Ali: We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of Apostles; We gave Jesus the son of Mary clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the holy spirit. Is it that whenever there comes to you an Apostle with what ye yourselves desire not ye are puffed up with pride? Some ye called impostors and others ye slay!^{89 90 91}

Transliteration: Walaqad atayna moosa alkitaba waqaffayna min baAAadihi bialrrusuli waatayna AAeesa ibna maryama albayyinati waayyadnahu biroohi alqudusi afakullama jaakum rasoolun bima la tahwa anfusukumu istakbartum kafathabtum wafareeqan taqtuloona

Author Comments

70 - Lit., "We caused him to be followed, after his time, by [all] the other apostles": a stress upon the continuous succession of prophets among the Jews (see Tabari, Zamakhshari, Razi, Ibn Kathir), which fact deprives them of any excuse of ignorance.

71 - This rendering of ruh al-qudus (lit., "the spirit of holiness") is based on the recurring use in the Qur'an of the term ruh in the sense of "divine inspiration". It is also recorded that the Prophet invoked the blessing of the ruh al-qudus on his Companion, the poet Hassan ibn Thabit (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da'ud and

Tirmidhi): just as the Qur'an ([58:22](#)) speaks of all believers as being "strengthened by inspiration (ruh) from Him".

72 - Lit., "and some you are slaying". The change from the past tense observed throughout this sentence to the present tense in the verb taqtulun ("you are slaying") is meant to express a conscious intent in this respect and, thus, a persistent, ever-recurring trait in Jewish history (Manar I, 377), to which also the New Testament refers (Matthew xxiii, 34-35, 37), and I Thessalonians ii, 15).

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The holy spirit is Gabriel, a mighty angel created from light, whose main duty is to communicate Allah's messages to prophets.

89 - I understand "ransom them" here to mean "take ransom for them" though most of the Commentators take it to mean "give ransom for them". Mustafa had made a Pact which, if it had been faithfully observed by all parties, would have brought a reign of law and order for Medina. But some of the treacherous Jews never intended to observe its terms. They fought and slew each other and not only banished those who were obnoxious to them but intrigued with their enemies. If by chance they came back into their hands as captives, they demanded ransom for them to return to their homes although they had no right to banish them at all. If we understand by "ransom them" pay "ransom for them to release them from the hands of their enemies," it would mean that they did this pious act for show, although they were themselves the authors of their unlawful banishment. I think the former makes better sense.

90 - As to the birth of Jesus, cf. xix. 16-34. Why is he called the "Son of Mary"? What are his "clear signs"? What is the "holy spirit" by which he was strengthened? We reserve to a later state a discussion of the Quranic teaching on these questions. See iii. 62, n. 401.

91 - Notice the sudden transition from the past tense in "some ye called imposters" to the present tense in "others ye slay." There is a double significance. First, reviewing the long course of Jewish history, we have come to the time of Jesus; they have often given the lie to God's Apostles, and even now they are trying to slay Jesus. Secondly, extending the review of that history to the time of Muhammad, they are even now

trying to take the life of that holy Apostle. This would be literally true at the time the words were promulgated to the people. And this transition leads on naturally to the next verse, which refers to the actual conditions before Muhammad in Medina in the second year of the Hijra. Sections 11/13 (ii. 87-121) refer to the People of the Book generally, Jews and Christians. Even where Moses and the Law of Sinai are referred to, those traditions are common to both Jews and Christians. The argument is about the people who ought to have learnt from previous Revelations and welcomed Muhammad's teaching, and yet they both took up an attitude of arrogant rejection.

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