

Chapter 3, Aali-Imran (The Family of Imran) (part 1 of 3)

Description: Revelations confirmed and a blessed family.

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Introduction

This is the first of three articles summarizing the third chapter of the Quran called Aali-Imran or The Family of Imran. It takes its name from the story of Prophet Zachariah, Mary and her son Prophet Jesus, in verses 33 to 64. The family of Imran was a blessed family that also included the Prophet Christians refer to as John the Baptist, thus this chapter has particular relevance for Christians and does indeed address itself to them. The Family of Imran was revealed in Medina after the pivotal Battle of Badr and is in some ways a sequel to the previous chapter The Cow, or Al-Baqarah. The Cow was addressed primarily to the Children of Israel (the Jews) and in the Family of Imran the invitation is extended to the Christians. Thus the chapter begins by inviting the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) to the truth of Islam and goes on to warn the Muslims to take heed of the religious degeneration that plagued the two earlier communities.



Verses 1- 6 Quran confirms previous revelations

The chapter opens with the same combination of letters that opened the previous chapter. Alif, Lam, Meem. These letters are from amongst the various combinations of fourteen letters that open twenty-nine chapters of the Quran. God has never revealed any specific meaning attached to them. The letters are immediately followed by praising God, the Living and the Eternal. He is the One who has sent down the Quran to confirm the previous books, the Torah and the Gospel of Jesus. It is a guide and a criterion between right and wrong, and anyone who denies this will suffer a severe penalty. Be sure that nothing in the heavens and the earth is concealed from God.

Verses 7 " 13 Precise or symbolic?

Some verses are precise and others are open to more than one interpretation. There are people who try to mislead others by seeking to find hidden meanings in the unspecific verses and no one knows its interpretation except God. But those firm in knowledge say, "We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord."

The possession of wealth or the number of children you have will not help on that

momentous Day. Disbelievers will be overpowered and gathered together in Hell. The Battle of Badr was a lesson; the believers overcame twice their number because with God's support you cannot lose.

Verses 14 -20 An invitation

The life of this world is full of temptations, the desire for beautiful spouses, children, gemstones and jewels, and expensive homes and transport. However, what is promised in Paradise is even more desirable and beautiful. Those who fear God will abide in gardens with flowing rivers. The righteous are those who believe and ask for forgiveness and protection from Hell, they are steadfast, devout, spend in the way of God and pray before dawn. There is no deity but except God (Allah), He is just and the true religion is devotion to Him Alone.

The People of the Book did not differ except out of jealousy and God is swift to call to account those who deny His revelations. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, must tell those who argue with him that he and his followers are devoted to God and invite them to do the same. If they refuse however, he has still fulfilled his mission to convey the message.

Verses 21-30 Fear retribution

There will be a painful punishment for those who deny the revelations, kill the Prophets without justification, and kill those who order justice; they will be beyond help. Those who were given one of the earlier revelations refuse to settle their disputes according to God's commandments; they think the fires will not burn them. They deceive themselves and will come to know the torment of the fire. Praise God, the One who has power and control over all things. He is the one who causes the night to change into the day and separates the living from the dead and gives provision to whomever He pleases. God warns the believers not to seek protection from the unbelievers except for safety from tyranny. Remember that God knows everything concealed or revealed, He has power over everything. Fear retribution but know that He is compassionate to those who are devoted to Him.

Verses 31 " 41 Family matters

Prophet Muhammad must tell the people to love and obey God and to follow him (Muhammad); if they turn away he must warn them that God does not love those who disbelieve or ignore Him. God favors whom He wills - He chose Prophet Adam, Prophet Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran from amongst those who were living during their times.

God was listening when Mary the mother of Jesus was born; her mother dedicated her to the service of God and sought protection for her and her children from Satan. Mary grew to be a righteous woman and when she secluded herself in the temple, God provided her with all her needs, to the amazement of her guardian Zachariah.

Mary was an example to Zachariah who asked God to give him a righteous son even

though he and his wife were old and barren. The angels confirmed that this would be so but Zachariah asked for a sign. God took away his power of speech for three days. John was born, a son, destined to be a chaste leader and Prophet.

Verses 42 " 52 The story of Jesus

Mary, the mother of Jesus was chosen and exalted by God and her story is told to Prophet Muhammad from the unseen, it is something he (Muhammad) knew nothing about. The angels told Mary that God would give her a son who would be honored in both this world and the next. He will speak while still in the cradle and in maturity will be among the righteous. Mary is overwhelmed and confused for she is chaste and unmarried but the angels explain that God has only to say "Be" and it is. God will teach her son, Jesus, the Messiah, the revelations, the Torah and the Gospel and he will be a Prophet and Messenger to the Children of Israel. Jesus will do amazing things; make a bird of clay and it will become real, heal lepers and cure the blind - all with the permission of God. Jesus will confirm the Torah and make some things that were previously forbidden permissible. This is a sign for those who believe. Jesus will command his people to be mindful of God and to worship Him.

Jesus felt that many disbelieved so he asked them who would help him in God's cause. The disciples said, "We will help you in God's cause, we believe in Him and testify that we are Muslims."

Chapter 3, Aali-Imran (The Family of Imran) (part 2 of 3)

Description: The legacy of earlier revelations results in the best nation.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2016 IslamReligion.com)

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Verses 54 " 69 A true explanation

The disbelievers plotted against Jesus, they had a plan but God also had a plan, a better one. He promised to take Jesus and purify him from their disbelief and his followers to be exalted above the disbelievers, who will suffer severely in this world and the next. Those who believe will gain their reward. This Quran is full of signs and wise reminders. As an example Jesus is like Adam, both created



without a father. God had only to say "Be", and he was. Do not dispute about the birth of Jesus for this Quran has the true explanation. There is no true deity but God and He knows who amongst you is a mischief maker.

God tells Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, to invite the People of the Book to agree on what is common amongst them all; to worship none but God alone and associate nothing with Him. Muhammad is also to ask them why they argue about whether Abraham is a Jew or a Christian. Do they not reason as to how can he be a Jew or a Christian when he lived long before either the Torah or the Gospel were revealed. Abraham was one who submitted to God and he did not associate anything with Him. The people closest to Abraham are the Muslims, devoted to God Alone. Some of the People of the Book try to mislead others but they lead themselves astray.

Verses 70 " 80 Who is trustworthy?

God addresses the People of the Book asking them why they conceal the truth by mixing it with lies. Some People of the Book say they believe and then change their minds, over and over, as day changes into night. They encourage the true believers to behave like this too. Believers should only trust other believers. God grants His Bounty and His Mercy to whomever He wills.

Some amongst the People of the Book are trustworthy; others are not, because they do not think it is a sin to cheat someone not of their faith. Those who have the correct faith, fear God, and keep their promises, are loved by God. There are some who will sell out the truth for a small price, an agonising punishment awaits them. Others twist God's words into a lie. No Prophet would ever say "Worship me, instead of God". He would never suggest that angels or prophets be lords (gods) and he would never ask anyone to turn away from belief.

Verses 81 " 92 A reminder

God reminds the People of the Book that He took an oath from them to believe in a Messenger that will come to them confirming what they had already been given. They are reminded not to break their oath and warned that everyone returns to God, willingly or unwillingly. Prophet Muhammad is told to say that Muslims believe in God and what has been revealed to them and in what was revealed to Prophet Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and his descendants, as well as Moses, Jesus and all Prophets from God. There is no distinction between them " they all preached the same message and all need to be believed in.

A religion other than Islam will not be accepted and will lead to the Hellfire. God will not guide those who reject belief after it has come to them. There will be no respite except if they repent and correct themselves. Those who disbelieved and died in that state will not be able to buy their way out of punishment even with enough gold to fill the whole earth. No one will gain the greatest reward until he gives charity from what he cherishes, and God knows what is given.

Verses 93- 101 God knows everything

God addresses the Children of Israel. All the food that is lawful for the Muslims was lawful for them, except when they made it unlawful themselves. They are warned against making up lies about God and told to follow the religion of Abraham. Then they are reminded that the first House of God was at Mecca. It is a blessed place and a sanctuary. Pilgrimage to the House of God is a duty for all those who are able to find their way there. God however does not need their pilgrimage, He is all Sufficient. The People of the Book are asked why they deny the revelations from God and try to stop others from following the correct path. God knows everything that they do. He (God) reminds the believers that many People of the Book are trying to turn them from belief back to disbelief. Think! God's revelations are being recited and the Messenger (Muhammad) lives amongst you, He says. Whoever clings to God will be shown the right path.

Verses 102 " 109 The best community

God speaks to the believers saying be mindful of God, devote yourselves to Him and do not die except in a state of full submission to Him. Hold fast to the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad and stay together as a united community. Let there be among that community people who invite others to righteousness, enjoin good and forbid evil. On the Day of Judgment those with dark faces will be questioned about why they rejected faith and are punished for doing so, whilst the ones with bright faces will bask in God's Mercy. Everything belongs to God and will return to Him.

Verses 110 " 120 Misbehaviour

Among the People of the Book are believers but most of them are consistently disobedient. For those with faith they are no more than an insignificant annoyance. They will be disgraced because they killed the Prophets, defied God and used to transgress beyond bounds.

Among the People of the Book are those who accept the message of Muhammad, believe in the Last Day, pray at night and bow down before God; enjoin good, forbid evil and compete with each other in doing good deeds. These people will not be denied their reward. The unbelievers will not have any protection not even from their wealth or their children. Hypocritical charity will not help them. They wronged themselves. God reminds the believers not to form friendships with such people because they will try to corrupt you whilst desiring your utter destruction. You might love them but they do not love you. God knows what is in their hearts and says plainly that they grieve when good befalls you and rejoice when misfortune overtakes you. Their plans will not harm you for God knows exactly what they are doing.

Verses 121 " 129 Victory is in the hands of God

Prophet Muhammad is reminded of how God intervened in the Battle of Uhud by strengthening the hearts of those who were wavering and how at the Battle of Badr He granted them victory over a large opposing force. Remember these things and know that

if you are mindful, God will strengthen your forces with 5000 angels ready for battle in case of a sudden attack. Be sure though that it is God who relents or punishes. Victory is only from God. He forgives or He punishes according to His will.

Chapter 3, Aali-Imran (The Family of Imran) (part 3 of 3)

Description: Patience and fortitude are rewarded. This world is no more than a transitory illusion.

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Verses 130 " 145 A test

God warns the believers against usury (compound interest that doubles and redoubles). Fear God and obey Him and His Messenger. He loves those who live good lives, give generously, control their anger and seek forgiveness for their sins. Their reward is forgiveness and Paradise. Travel through the lands and look at the history of those who disbelieved or rejected the truth. The Quran is a guidance for all people. Do not be



downcast if you suffer for the days alternate, some are better than others. God waits to see the true believers, those who will struggle and remain steadfast.

Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, was a Messenger and others like him passed through this world before him. God asks the believers if Prophet Muhammad were to die would they reject his message. Doing so would not harm God. No one dies without God's permission and he dies at a predetermined time. Those who work for the sake of this life only, will get what God decides for them and they will not have a share in the Hereafter. And those who work for the sake of the Hereafter, God will give them a share in the Hereafter, along with what He decides for them in this life.

Verses 146 " 152 Remain steadfast

In the past many Prophets have fought steadfastly for God, some with many followers, and they did not give in to adversaries or disbelief. They only asked for forgiveness and victory over the disbelievers. They were rewarded in this life and reward awaits them in

the Hereafter. If the believers obey the disbelievers, they will become losers. God is your Protector and He will cast fear into the hearts of the disbelievers. God addresses those who fought in the Battle of Uhud; they lost courage and disobeyed an order. God says, some desired this world, others the Hereafter, so they were defeated. It was a test. They are already forgiven.

Verses 153 " 159 God forgives

Those who fled from the battle even though Prophet Muhammad was calling out to them were rewarded with nothing but sorrow and grief. This was to teach them a lesson not to grieve for what might have been. God forgave them and caused calm to descend and some fell securely asleep but others were anxious and suspicious of God's motives. Prophet Muhammad is told to tell them that nothing would save those who were destined to die whether they had fought willingly or not or even if they had hidden in their homes. On the day of the battle those who turned away did so because of Satan's influence over them. They too are forgiven.

The believers are reminded not to think that if their brothers had remained at home rather than travelling or fighting for the cause of God they would be safe and not die. This is wrong. God has control over life and death. There is no cause for regret because whether you die at home or are killed you will return to God. By the mercy of God, Prophet Muhammad was lenient. If he had treated them harshly they would have deserted him. Prophet Muhammad is told to pardon them, ask for forgiveness for them and to consult with them. Take a course of action and then rely upon God, this is what God loves.

Verses 160 " 168 True believers or hypocrites?

If God aids you none can overcome you but if He forsakes you none can aid you. Therefore, the believers should put all of their trust in God. It is inconceivable that any Prophet would withhold the spoils of war from the faithful. Whoever deceives others will be accountable to God on the Day of Judgement.

A person seeking the pleasure of God does not behave like a person who has incurred the wrath of God. In the eyes of God, they are on two completely different levels. It was a great favor from God when Prophet Muhammad was made a Messenger to his people. He is among them reciting the Quran, purifying them and teaching them how to behave even though before this they were clearly astray.

What happened on the day of the battle (Uhud) was a test from God to see who the true believers were and who the hypocrites were. On that day the hypocrites were closer to disbelief when they spoke with their mouths what was not in their hearts. God knows what is concealed.

Verses 169 " 179 Grace and bounty

Those who have been killed serving God are not dead but alive and happy. They are receiving God's grace and bounty and know that the reward of the believers will not be

lost. Those that remain faithful after suffering defeat will have a great reward. Those who ignored the words of the hypocrites who were trying to instill fear suffered no harm but instead also received grace and bounty from God. God reveals that it was Satan trying to instill fear but reminds the believers not to fear him. He says fear only Me (God).

God tells Prophet Muhammad not to grieve over those who turn back to disbelief. They will cause God no harm at all and they will find a terrible torment awaiting them in the Hereafter. Those who barter faith for disbelief will also face a fierce punishment. Some disbelievers are given more time on this earth but it is not a reward it is just a way to increase their burden of sins. God will separate the believers from the hypocrites but not by revealing the unseen. If you want to know about the unseen, know this, God chooses whomever he wants to be a Messenger, so believe in God and His Messenger and guard yourselves from evil.

Verses 180 " 195 An illusion

Those who are stingy when giving in charity will find what they withhold hanging around their necks on the Day of Judgment. The Children of Israel are questioned about the killing of their Prophets and reminded of the burning fire that waits for them. Being kept away from the Fire and admitted into the gardens of Paradise is true success, and the life of this earthly world is nothing more than an illusion and is a test for you. The believer will suffer much abuse at the hands of the People of the Book and the polytheists. When God entrusted the People of the Book to spread His message they concealed it and sold it for a paltry price. It was a bad bargain and they will be paid in full with an agonizing torment.

God has power over everything; the creation of the universe and its precision is a sign for those who understand. Those who remember God are the ones who understand, they believe in God and His promise of Paradise and ask for forgiveness. When they call out God answers promising that their good deeds will never be lost and those who had to flee their homes or were expelled or endured suffering for the sake of God will be rewarded with Paradise.

Verses 196 -200 Patience rewarded

Do not be perturbed by the freedom and ease of the unbelievers, their enjoyment will be brief and their final destination is Hell. The believers will gain Paradise. Among the People of the Book are those who believe submissively in God and His revelations, i.e. they sincerely accept Islam; they will surely have their reward. The believers are reminded to be mindful of God, patient and steadfast.

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