

The Disciples of Jesus (part 2 of 2): Similarity with the Companions

Description: The similarities between Al-Hawariyoon and the Companions of Prophet Muhammad.

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Islam holds the disciples of Jesus, Al-Hawariyoon, in high esteem. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, mentions Jesus and his



disciples in his traditions. The Quran mentions their faith and their status as the helpers of Jesus, highlights their faith and sacrifice, and calls on the Companions of Prophet Muhammad to be like them.

"O believers! Be supporters of God, as when Jesus, son of Mary, asked the disciples, 'Who are my supporters for God?' The disciples replied, 'We are supporters of God.' Some of the Children of Israel believed and some disbelieved. We then supported the believers against their enemies, so they prevailed." (Quran 61:14)

This verse tells us that some of the Children of Israel heard Jesus' message and believed him, while others disbelieved. Six hundred years later some people believed Prophet Muhammad while others turned their back and actively fought against Islam. Prophet Jesus and Prophet Muhammad both needed strong people around them. They needed helpers; they needed trustworthy people with conviction of faith. Al-Hawariyoon were the people of the inner circle, the ones Prophet Jesus could depend on, and the

Companions were the ones who stood by and supported Prophet Muhammad.

Prophet Muhammad said, *"There is no Prophet who was sent by God to a nation before me except that he had hawariyoon and companions."*^[1] During the campaign of al-Ahzab, the Prophet asked his Companions three times which of them would scout the disbeliever's camp, and al-Zubayr volunteered each time. The Prophet said, *"Every Prophet has a disciple (hawari), and my disciple is al-Zubayr."*^[2] This story reflects a narration in Ibn Kathir's commentary on the above verse, Quran 61:14, in which a young disciple volunteered three times to take the place of Jesus when Jesus and Al-Hawariyoon knew that harassment and arrest were probable.

Some groups of Prophet Muhammad's Companions can be directly likened to the disciples of Jesus. When the fledgling Muslim community migrated to Medina, they were met and taken in by the residents of Medina, who came to be known as the Helpers, or the Ansar. They played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Islamic community. They embraced the emigrants as if they were family; they shared their homes, their food, their businesses and their wealth "all for the sake of God, and out of respect for Prophet Muhammad and his message.

The leaders of the Children of Israel harassed Jesus and tried to make it very difficult for him to spread his message. While his followers understood that he was calling them back to the teachings of the Torah, the Jewish government of the time accused him of blasphemy. Jesus needed helpers to keep him safe, and he needed them to have a deep understanding of the message.

Some of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad were given glad tidings of Paradise long before their deaths. They can also, in some respects, be compared to Al-Hawariyoon.

Prophet Muhammad said *"Abu Bakr will be in Paradise, Umar will be in Paradise, Uthman will be in Paradise, Ali will be in Paradise, Talhah will be in Paradise, al-Zubayr will be in Paradise, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf will be in Paradise, Sa'd will be in Paradise, Sa'eed will be in Paradise, and Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah will be in Paradise."* (Sa'd is Sa'd ibn Abi Waqas and Sa'eed is Sa'eed ibn Zayd)

God chose Prophet Muhammad as a mercy to humankind and thus to spread the message of Islam. He also chose the people that would be close to him. In part one we mentioned that God Himself chose Al-Hawariyoon. He knew which people would be the best supporters of Prophet Jesus. God also knew who the best supporters of Prophet Muhammad would be. If we examine their lives, we will notice that there was something about the close Companions of Prophet Muhammad that made them different from all other men at the time, and this is why God chose them; they were trustworthy, honest and truthful men. They were men with strong characters, and they shared all these qualities with their Prophet.

We are blessed to know a great deal about Prophet Muhammad's Companions however we do not know as much about Al-Hawariyoon. What we do know is limited to what is in the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad. We do know that they possessed the same qualities as the Companions and were also chosen by God. From the

freely available Christian texts we can glean very little. The Gospels can be interpreted in many ways and are colored by their contributors' and editors' reflections on events that had happened 60 or more years before they were written.

Peter (Cephas) the man formerly known as Simon was very close to Jesus. Jesus changed his name; this was also one of Prophet Muhammad's practices. If the name of a Companion had a bad meaning or a meaning in conflict with Islamic principles, Prophet Muhammad gave that person a better name. Jesus changed Simon's name to one that was full of meaning. Peter (Cephas) means stone or rock, and scholars of the Gospels generally agree that Peter was a man of strong, unmovable conviction.

Prophet Muhammad mentions Jesus in some of his sayings and from his words we are able to deduce a little more about Jesus and his disciples. Prophet Muhammad considered Jesus to be like a brother.

"Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all people to Jesus, the son of Mary. The Prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one."[\[3\]](#)

Both Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Jesus shared a mission and were both surrounded and protected by men who shared their devotion to God and His cause.

Endnotes:

[\[1\]](#) *Saheeh Muslim*

[\[2\]](#) *At-Tirmidhi*

[\[3\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

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