

Prediction of a Christian Triumph

Wilson: I often wondered about some Qur'anic verses which are contained in chapter 30. The verses deal with the future of the Romans and predict their triumph over their opponents:

“The Romans are vanquished in the nearby land, and they, after their defeat, will gain victory within nine years. God's is the command before and after. And on that day, the believers will rejoice for God's help. He helps whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Merciful. (It is) God's promise. God will not fail in His promise, but most people know not.” 30: 1-6

I like to hear your comment on these verses which seem to contain a very definite prophecy, as I would like to know if that prophecy has been fulfilled.

Chirri: In the first decade of the seventh century, a war between the two great powers of the time, the Persian and Byzantine Empires was started. The war continued for more than twenty years, and the Persians were mostly victorious. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes the situation:

“The Persian armies plundered Syria and Asia Minor, and in 608 advanced to Chaledon. In 613 and 614, Damascus and Jerusalem were taken by the General Shahaboraz, and the Holy Cross was carried away in the triumph. Soon after, even Egypt was conquered. The Romans (the people of the Byzantine Empire) could offer but little resistance, as they were torn by internal dissensions and pressed by the Avars and Slavs. ”

The verses from the Qur'an cited were revealed in the sixth or seventh year after the first revelation came to Muhammad. (This means that these verses were revealed in 615 or 616.) The prophecy contained therein is definite and unconditional. It states that the vanquished Romans will obtain a decisive triumph over the victorious Persians within nine years from this revelation.

Once again the prophecy was made in a direction contrary to the expected outcome of the conflict. It was to be expected that the Romans would be defeated completely, since the Persian forces had already reached the very gates of Constantinople. At that time even the Roman leaders had little hope of eventual victory.

The Roman leaders, with all their military skill and information about that war, could not anticipate their victory. Clear information was unavailable to Muhammad because radio, television, press and efficient postal system did not yet exist. Muhammad, living in Mecca and very far from Constantinople, made the prediction of triumph within a stated time.

The prophecy was fulfilled within nine years after it had been made. Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, advanced to Northern Media, where he destroyed the great fire temple of Gondzak; then in 623 he recaptured all of the lost ground.

Wilson: The above quoted verses indicate that the Muslims were very concerned for the defeat of the Romans at the hand of the Persians. The prophecy seems to have been revealed as a condolence to the Muslims, since it states that the believers in Islam will rejoice for the victory of the Romans. This actually announces a true love on the part of the Muslims towards the Christians.

Chirri: Your statement is true. The Muslims actually were very saddened by the news of the defeat of the Christians at that time. The Christians are followers of the scriptures, and the Muslims are followers of the new scripture, the Qur'an. Both share many beliefs. The Muslims, therefore, felt that there is a close bond between them and the Christians. They felt that the Christians are their brothers in religion.

The news of the defeat of the Romans was a good tiding to the idol-worshippers. They rejoiced at the defeat of the Christians and classed them with the Muslims, their enemies, because both Muslims and Christians are followers of the scriptures and opposed to idol-worshipping.

This relation between the Muslims and the Christians was only natural. Had the Christians accepted Muhammad and received his truth with open hearts, as the Muslims accepted the truth of Jesus, the brotherly relation could have continued between the followers of the two faiths. Unfortunately, the Christians refused to recognize the prophethood of Muhammad and to accept his truth. This and the subsequent events which took place after the death of the Prophet changed the natural atmosphere between the Muslims and Christians.

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