

Surah 61. As-Saff

Asad: O YOU who have attained to faith! Be helpers [in the cause of God - even as Jesus, the son of Mary, said unto the white-garbed ones,¹⁴ "Who will be my helpers in God's cause?" - whereupon the white-garbed [disciples] replied, "We shall be [thy] helpers [in the cause] of God!" And so [it happened that] some of the children of Israel came to believe [in the apostleship of Jesus], whereas others denied the truth.¹⁵ But [now] We have given strength against their foes unto those who have [truly] attained to faith:¹⁶ and they have become the ones that shall prevail.

Malik: O believers! Be the helpers of Allah, just as Isa (Jesus) the son of Maryam said to his disciples: "Who will be my helper in the cause of Allah?" And the disciples responded: "We will be your helpers in the cause of Allah." Then a group from the children of Israel believed in him (Isa) and another group disbelieved. We aided the believers against their enemies, so they became victorious.

Pickthall: O ye who believe! Be Allah's helpers, even as Jesus son of Mary said unto the disciples: Who are my helpers for Allah? They said: We are Allah's helpers. And a party of the Children of Israel believed, while a party disbelieved. Then We strengthened those who believed against their foe, and they became the uppermost.

Yusuf Ali: O ye who believe! be ye helpers of Allah: as said Jesus the son of Mary to the Disciples "Who will be my helpers to (the work of) Allah?" Said the Disciples "We are Allah's helpers!" Then a portion of the Children of Israel believed and a portion disbelieved: but We gave power to those who believed against their enemies and they became the ones that prevailed. ^{5446 5447 5448}

Transliteration: Ya ayyuha allatheena amanoo koonoo ansara Allahi kama qala AAeesa ibnu maryama lilhawariyyeena man ansaree ila Allahi qala alhawariyyoona nahnu ansaru Allahi faamanat taifatun min banee israeela wakafarat taifatun faayyadna allatheena amanoo AAala AAaduwwihim faasbahoo tha hireena

Khatab:

O believers! Stand up for Allah, as Jesus, son of Mary, asked the disciples, "Who will stand up with me for Allah?" The disciples replied, "We will stand up for Allah." Then a group from the Children of Israel believed while another disbelieved. We then supported the believers against their enemies, so they prevailed.

Author Comments

14 - For this rendering of al-hawariyyun, see surah {3}, note [42].

15 - I.e., some of them recognized him as a prophet - and, therefore, as no more than a created, human being - whereas others denied this truth in the course of time by regarding him as "the son of God" - and, therefore, as "God incarnate" - while still others rejected him and his message altogether. The fact that the earliest followers of Jesus regarded him as purely human is evident from the many theological

controversies which persisted during the first three or four centuries of the Christian era. Thus, some renowned theologians, like Theodotus of Byzantium, who lived towards the end of the second century, and his followers - among them Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch in the year 260 - maintained that the "sonship of God" mentioned in the then-existing texts of the Gospels was purely symbolic, denoting no more than that Jesus was a human being exalted by God. The originally widespread teachings of Bishop Arius (280-326) centred in the concept of Jesus as a mortal man chosen by God for a specific task, and in the concept of God as absolutely One, unknowable, and separate from every created being; this doctrine, however, was ultimately condemned by the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381), and gradually ceased to have any influence on the Christian masses.

16 - I.e., all who truly believe in Jesus as God's Apostle and, thus, as a forerunner of the Last Prophet, Muhammad, whose message confirms and expands the true message of Jesus.

5446 - If we seek Allah's help, we must first help Allah's Cause, i.e., dedicate ourselves to Him entirely and without reserve. This was also the teaching of Jesus, as mentioned in this verse.

5447 - See iii. 52, and n. 392; and for the Biblical reference, see the last note. The names of the twelve Disciples will be found in Matt. x. 2-4.

5448 - A portion of the Children of Israel-the one that really cared for Truth-believed in Jesus and followed his guidance. But the greater portion of them were hard hearted, and remained in their beaten track of formalism and false racial pride. The majority seemed at first to have the upper hand when they thought they had crucified Jesus and killed his Message. But they were soon brought to their senses. Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70 and the Jews have been scattered ever since. "The Wandering Jew" has become a bye-word in many literatures. On the other hand, those who followed Jesus permeated the Roman Empire, brought many new races within their circle, and through the Roman Empire, Christianity became the predominant religion of the world until the advent of Islam. So is it promised to the people of Islam: they must prevail if they adhere to the Truth. Badr (A.H. 2) was a landmark against Pagan Arabia; Qadisiya (A.H. 14) and Madain (A.H. 16) against the might of Persia; Yarmuk (A.H. 15) against the might of the Byzantine Empire in Christian Syria; and Heliopolis (A.H. 19) against the same Empire in Christian Egypt and Africa. These were symbols in external events. The moral and spiritual landmarks are less tangible, and more gradual, but none the less real. Mark how the arrogance and power of Priesthood have been quelled; how superstition and a belief in blind Fate have been checked; how the freedom of human individuals has been reconciled with the sanctity of marriage in the law of Divorce; how the civil position of women has been raised; how temperance and sobriety have been identified with religion; what impetus has been given to knowledge and experimental science; and how economic reconstruction has been pioneered by rational schemes for the expenditure and distribution of wealth.

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