

The Kingdom of God: A Commentary of Surat al-Mulk

Lesson 4



Verse 22

أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكَبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“Then is one who walks fallen on his face better guided or one who walks erect on a straight path?”

- This verse compares through allegory, the state of non-believers and a believers.
- The non-believers are like one who walks aimlessly off the beaten path. He constantly stumbles and falls on his face because of the pitfalls and obstacles that he is wholly unprepared to face. All this because the path he has chosen is not a path at all.

Verse 22

- In this vein, one commentator has suggested that the verse does not mention the crooked path upon which the non-believers tread so as not to dignify it by calling it a “path”.
- The believers, on the other hand, are like one who has chosen a clear and straight path upon which they walk without stumbling. Clearly, the latter is equipped to reach his desired destination, while the other is destined to remain blindly wandering, stumbling in the darkness.

Verse 22

وفي الكافي عن الكاظم عليه السلام انه سئل عن هذه الآية فقال انّ الله ضرب مثل من حاد عن ولاية عليّ عليه السلام كمن يمشي على وجهه لا يهتدي لأمره وجعل من تبعه سويّاً على صراطٍ مستقيم والصرط المستقيم امير المؤمنين عليه السلام.

Imam al-Kadhim (a) was asked about this verse and he said: “God gave a parable he who deviates from the guardianship of Ali by comparing him to one who walks fallen on his face and does not take guidance from him. And He has compared the one who follows him (Ali) to one who [walks] upright on a straight path and the straight path is the Commander of the Faithful.”

Verse 23

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

“Say: He it is Who brought you into being and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts: little is it that you give thanks.”

- Because of their stubborn defiance of the truth, God refrains from addressing them directly any further. Instead, he commands his Prophet to communicate with them as a sign of his displeasure.

Verse 23

- This verse reminds them of some of the most important blessings God has bestowed upon them. By virtue of their hearing and seeing, they have risen above God's inanimate creatures and the kingdom of plants (it is true that the senses of taste, touch, and smell are also unique to animals; however, these are not mentioned because they have no significant role to play in a person's guidance). And by virtue of their intellects (represented by the word or **الْأَفْئِدَةَ** "hearts"), they have risen above all other animals.

Verse 23

- Gratitude can be expressed in any of three ways, each one more desirable than the previous. First, is the verbal thanks one may offer God in prayer. Second, comes the admission in one's heart that the blessing is from God. Third, is the correct usage of the blessing in accordance with the wishes of the giver
- Those who do not accept God as their Lord fail to thank him on all three levels. However, it is their failure at the third level that is most egregious. In particular, they have failed to use the faculties God has given them to comprehend and accept his guidance.

Verse 24

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

“Say, " It is He who has multiplied you throughout the earth, and to Him you will be gathered.”

- Human beings are earthly beings but are not created to dwell on earth forever.
- We have been created for a higher purpose.

Verse 25

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

"And they say, "When is this promise, if you are truthful?"

- Their question is spoken in a tone of ridicule.
- Some prophets have sincerely asked God about the timing of the Day of Judgement.

Verse 25

الإمام الصادق عليه السلام : قال عيسى بن مريم عليهما السلام لجبرئيل عليه السلام : متى قيام الساعة ؟
فانتفض جبرئيل انتفاضةً أغمي عليه منها ، فلما أفاق قال : يا روح الله ، ما المسؤول أعلم بها من السائل ،
وله من في السموات والأرض ، لا تأتيكم إلا بغتةً

“Jesus son of Mary asked Gabriel ‘When will the Hour come?’ upon which Gabriel started to tremble so severely that he fainted from it. When he came to his senses, he said, ‘O Spirit of Allah, the questioned one does not know that any more than the questioner does. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, and it [the Hour] will take you all by surprise.”- Imam al-Sadiq (a)

Verse 26

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

Say, "The knowledge is only with God, and I am only a clear warner."

- Our collective ignorance of the timing of that Day forces us to always be prepared because it can happen at any moment.
- The Prophet's duty is to nothing but to convey the message clearly and be its embodiment.

Verse 27

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدَّعُونَ

“But when they see it approaching, the faces of those who disbelieve will be distressed, and it will be said, “This is that for which you used to ask for!”

- This is an expression of the terrible confluence of emotions that will overtake these people at seeing what they denied their entire life come to pass. They will taste dread, shame, regret, disbelief, hopelessness, and so many other bitter emotions at once.

Verse 27

وفي المجمع عن الباقر عليه السلام فلما رأوا مكان عليّ من النبيّ صلّى الله عليه وآله سنّيت
وجوه الذين كفروا يعني الذين كذبوا بفضله

“When they see the status of Ali (a) with the Prophet (s), the faces of disbelievers who rejected his merits will be distressed...”

Verse 28

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِي اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَنْ يُجِيرُ الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

Say, [O Muhammad], "Have you considered: whether God should cause my death and those with me or have mercy upon us, who can protect the disbelievers from a painful punishment?"

- The polytheists of Mecca wished that the Prophet (s) would die so his message would perish. They rejected the notion of life after death and simply wanted him and his ideas to vanish

Verse 29

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ أَمَّنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

Say, "He is the Most Merciful; we have believed in Him, and upon Him we have relied. And you will [come to] know who it is that is in clear error."

- The name of "Al-Rahman" has been mentioned 4 times in this surah.

Verse 30

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَّعِينٍ

Say, "Have you considered: if your water was to become sunken [into the earth], then who could bring you flowing water?"

- Exoteric and esoteric meaning of verse

وفي الكافي عن الكاظم عليه السلام اذا غاب عنكم امامكم فمن يأتيكم بإمام جديد.

"If your imam hidden from you, who will bring you a new imam."-
Imam al-Kadhim (a)