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BOOK

Muhammad



Introduction

The idea that the Bible contains prophecies about the coming of Muhammad (peace be upon him), may surprise many people. It isn't difficult to understand why, since the general perception people have of Muhammad is that of a man with no connection to Biblical Prophets or prophecies. However, taking a closer look at Muhammad's life, it becomes clear that he upheld the basic tenets that the Biblical Prophets came with, and led millions to do the same. Indeed it is because of the teachings of Muhammad that billions of Muslims, since his time and until today, have revered the persons of Jesus, Moses and Abraham (peace be upon them all).

In this booklet, you will discover how the Bible foretells the coming of an Arabian prophet, specifically Prophet Muhammad. Although there are numerous prophecies about Muhammad scattered throughout the Bible, we are going to focus primarily on the 42nd chapter of the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. Please note that all verses referenced from the Bible have been taken from the New International Version.





What is Isaiah 42 about?

Isaiah 42 describes itself as a prophecy about the future:

**“the former things have taken place, and new things I declare;
before they spring into being I announce them to you.”**

[ISAIAH 42:9]

In fact the entire chapter addresses the coming of a very special person: a servant of God, someone connected to Arabia, a person of worldly and spiritual authority who will take mankind out of the darkness of idolatry and into the light of the worship of Almighty God. We are now going to analyse some of the key verses of Isaiah 42.

Characteristics of God's Servant

Isaiah starts the 42nd chapter by drawing our attention to a very special person that God will send:

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.”

[ISAIAH 42:1]

We can see that Isaiah describes this person as “servant”, “chosen” and one in whom “God delights”. These happen to be three of the names of Prophet Muhammad.” Prophet Muhammad is known as God’s servant, which in Arabic is ‘Abd-ullah’; and “Chosen one” which is ‘Mustafa’ in Arabic.” The one in whom God “delights in” shows that this person is beloved to God. ‘Khalilullah’ in Arabic, which means “Beloved of God”, also happens to be one of Prophet Muhammad’s names.

Isaiah also mentions “I will put my Spirit on him...”, indicating that God will support the coming servant. The Qur’an confirms that the Spirit of God, who Muslims believe is the angel Gabriel, was sent down by God to Muhammad:

“We have thus revealed a Spirit to you [Prophet] by Our command: you knew neither the Scripture nor the faith, but We made it a light, guiding with it whoever We will of Our servants. You are indeed guiding to the straight path”

The rest of Isaiah 42 goes on to provide further details about God’s coming servant.



Location of God's Servant

Isaiah also reveals the location of God's coming servant:

“Let the wilderness and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops.”

[ISAIAH 42:11]



The two key words used are ‘Kedar’ and ‘Sela’ which together pinpoint an exact location. Out of all the places on earth that Isaiah could have mentioned, he chose to highlight Kedar and Sela’s location so we should pay special attention.

But who is Kedar, and where did he settle? The Old Testament tells us that Kedar was one of the sons of Ishmael:

“These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam”

[GENESIS 25:13]

Ishmael was the brother of Isaac and the son of Abraham. The children of Ishmael are the Arabs and the children of Isaac are the Jews. The Bible informs us that Kedar and his own sons are specifically linked to Arabia:

“Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your favored dealers in lambs, rams, and goats; in these they did business with you.”

[EZEKIEL 27:21]

Smith’s Bible Dictionary defines Kedar as:

“...the name of a great tribe of Arabs settled on the northwest of the peninsula... That they also settled in villages or towns we find from Isaiah (Isaiah 42:11). The tribe seems to have been one of the most conspicuous of all the Ishmaelite tribes...” [1]

The Keil-Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament discusses Isaiah’s use of Kedar:

“The name Kedar is here the collective name of the Arabic tribes generally.” [2]

The Dead Sea Scrolls, which are dated to the 2nd century BCE and represent the oldest surviving manuscript evidence for the Old Testament along with other apocryphal books, also link Ishmael and his descendants such as Kedar to Arabia:

“And Ishmael and his sons, and the sons of Keturah and their sons, went together and dwelt from Paran to the entering in of Babylon in all the land which is towards the East facing the desert. And these mingled with each other, and their name was called Arabs, and Ishmaelite.” [3]

We've established that Kedar dwelt in Arabia. In fact, Kedar dwelt within a specific part of Arabia known as *Hijaz*, modern day Western Saudi Arabia. This can be established from Biblical geography which places the Ishmaelites in a land called *Midian*:



Typical Bible Map



Modern Day Map

We know that Biblical Midian is linked to Kedar, the son of Ishmael, because the terms "Midianite" and "Ishmaelite" are used interchangeably in the Bible. This is according to Harper's Bible Dictionary [4]. We can see this from the story of Joseph:

"So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt... Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard."
 [GENESIS 37:28-36]

The Old Testament scholar Charles Foster also confirms that Kedar dwelt in Western Saudi Arabia (Hijaz/Hedjaz):

"Namely, of the land of Kedar; which every reader conversant with Arabian geography will recognise as a most accurate delineation of the district of Hedjaz, including its famous cities of Mecca and Madina." [5]

In summary we have established that Kedar and his descendants settled in modern day Saudi Arabia. In fact we can narrow the location down further, recall that Isaiah mentions Kedar in association with "Sela":

"... let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy..."

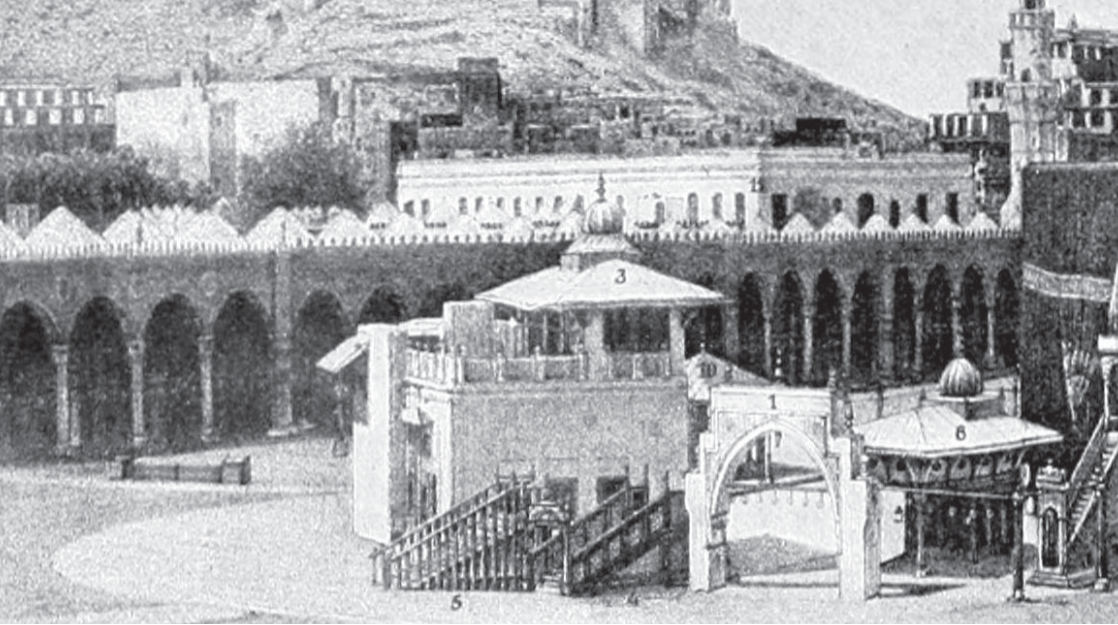


Masjid Nabawi, Prophet Muhammad's mosque in modern day Medina.

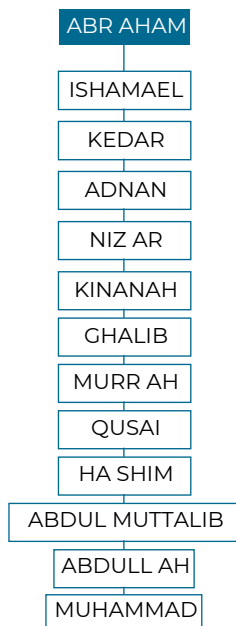
The use of the word ‘Sela’ pinpoints an exact location in Saudi Arabia. The place being spoken of is actually the city of *Medina* because ‘Sela’ is the name of a famous mountain in Medina. Medina was the city of Prophet Muhammad:

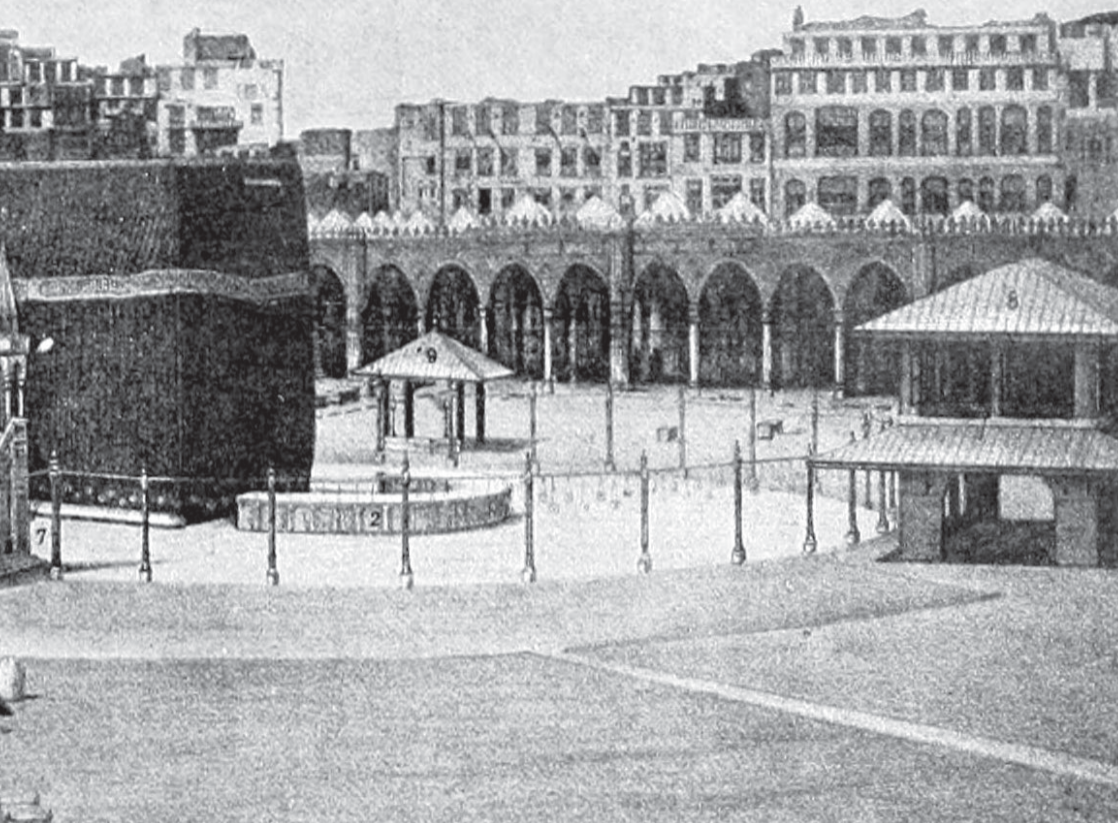
You can find mention of this mountain throughout the statements of the companions of Prophet Muhammad. For example the following is a narration by a friend of the Prophet Muhammad, named Ka'b bin Malik who lived in Medina:

“...while I was sitting in the condition which God described, my very soul seemed straitened to me and even the earth seemed narrow to me for all its spaciousness, there I heard the voice of one who had ascended the mountain of Sala...” [6]



As well as being linked to Kedar and Sela geographically, Prophet Muhammad's genealogy is also linked. His lineage can be traced back to Ishmael and Abraham directly through Kedar:





One of the earliest biographies of the Prophet Muhammad, *Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd* (d. 845 CE), documents one of the chains of genealogy, which confirms that the Prophet Muhammad arrived in Medina, was a direct descendant of Ishmael through his inhabitants were overjoyed and cried out his second son Kedar. Hayden's Bible dictionary states:

"Mohammad is said to have been of the Bene-Kedar [sons of Kedar]." [7]

Isaiah not only reveals to us the location of God's servant, but also describes how the people will react when the awaited one arrives:

"...Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops..."

We are told that the people of Sela will be so overjoyed that they will sing with joy. This is exactly what happened when the Prophet Muhammad arrived in Medina, his inhabitants were overjoyed and cried out in happiness:

"The people hurried quickly to meet the Messenger of God when he arrived in Medina. They cried, 'The Messenger of God has arrived! The Messenger of God has arrived!'" [8]

"Then men and women climbed upon house-tops; the boys and servants scattered in the way, and they were all calling out: 'Muhammad! Messenger of God! Muhammad! Messenger of God!'" [9]



Global Justice and New Revelation

Isaiah informs us that God's servant will bring the following with him:

"He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope."

[ISAIAH 42:4]

In the first part of the verse, Isaiah mentions that God's servant will "*not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth*". This perfectly describes Prophet Muhammad who faced extreme persecution and enmity throughout his prophetic mission but he did not give up the message of Islam. He did not rest until



the just rule of Islam was firmly established within his lifetime. Prophet Muhammad survived several attempts on his life, until he completed his mission and established justice by judging people according to the laws of God. This law is the Qur'an, the book of revelation given to him by God.

In the second part of the verse, Isaiah mentions that

“...In his teaching the islands will put their hope”.

This indicates that God's servant will bring forth a new law. The word translated as “teaching” is the Hebrew ‘torah’ which means instruction or law. According to commentators on the Bible this word “*has in the total context of this passage almost the*

sense of ‘revelation’.” [10] Notice that Isaiah

states that the islands will put their hope in his law, implying he will bring forth something new, something different, as the Law of Moses already existed at the time Isaiah made this prophecy. The Qur'an fits this description perfectly as it was a new book revealed after the time of Isaiah. The Qur'an proclaims:

“Say [Muhammad], “We [Muslims] believe in God and in what has been sent down to us and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes. We believe in what has been given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets from their Lord. We do not make a distinction between any of the [prophets]. It is to Him that we devote ourselves.”” [3:84]

Who will he be sent to?

Isaiah emphasizes the universal mission of the coming person:

“I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles”

[ISAIAH 42:6]

Gentiles means non-Jews, and the Qur’an confirms that Prophet Muhammad was sent to the whole of mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike:

“We have sent you [O Prophet] as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner for the whole of mankind, but most people have no knowledge.”

[34:28]

Isaiah further states that God will:

“...lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them...”

[ISAIAH 42:16]

The pagan Arabs at the time of Prophet Muhammad fit this description perfectly because they had not been sent a messenger prior to Muhammad. The Qur’an bears witness to this; it states that Muhammad was sent to:

“...warn a people to whom no warner has come before...”

[32:3]

Isaiah also highlights the worship of idols:

“I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.”

[ISAIAH 42:8]

Here Isaiah states that God will never give His glory to another and his praise will not be attributed to carved images. The whole of Arabia at the start of Muhammad’s Prophethood consisted of idol worshippers. In fact, Muhammad’s people, the Meccans, had 360 different idols that they worshipped.

Conclusion

This booklet analysed in detail Isaiah 42, a chapter from a book of the Old Testament that foretells the coming of a special person with the following qualities:

- He will be a servant of God who is associated with

the tribe of Kedar,

- the Arabian city of Medina in Saudi Arabia will celebrate his arrival,
- he will bring the light of revelation to the Gentiles (non-Jews),
- he will use his worldly authority to establish justice far and wide

Some Christians argue that Isaiah 42 is speaking of Jesus but this can't be the case, as Jesus has no connection with the tribe of Kedar or the city of Medina in Saudi Arabia. Thousands of years since this prophecy was foretold in Isaiah, which personality in history can such things be attributed to? It can be none other than Muhammad; the successor to Jesus and the Seal of the Prophets. Upon a sincere scrutiny of the book of Isaiah 42, one cannot reject the inevitable conclusion:

There is no god worthy of worship except God and Muhammad is His Messenger.

As a next step, we invite you to look into Islam by reading a translation of the Qur'an

and learning more about Muhammad. Many people are attached to their identity, and don't want to look into another religion. But Islam is not just another religion; it's the same core message of monotheism preached by Moses, Jesus and Abraham. It is the final instalment of the same message sent by God over the centuries:

“Say, ‘He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.’”
[CHAPTER 112]

This short yet profound chapter of the Qur'an, known as Al-Ikhlās (“The Sincerity”), beautifully captures the simple and clear concept of God in Islam: there is only One God who is unlike His creation.

Guidance ultimately comes from God. We ask God to guide us and you. May God's peace and blessing be upon you for the rest of your days.



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Notes



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