

## Failed attempt to convert Arabia to Christianity

Explained by

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### **Condition of Arabia before Islam**

First we say: Allah the Exalted sent Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم during an interval between the Messengers. Allah sent him while the Arabs were upon extreme ignorance during the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. They were killing and spilling blood for the smallest reason or for no reason at all. They were impoverished and destitute. They were divided, at odds and fighting one another.

They worshipped idols. They referred to soothsayers for judgment. Some of them ate the flesh of dead animals. Some of them would get dates, mix them with fat and worship it and prostrate to it. Then when he became hungry he would eat it. This is mentioned in the books of history.

### **Caesar writes to the king of Arabia**

This was the condition of the Arabs such that the Christians were determined to send their priests to the Arabian Peninsula to convert them to Christianity. They intended to remove them from idol worship and bring them to Christianity. They wanted to go to Mecca because the Arabs viewed it as a great place, so they would convert the inhabitants of Mecca.

Caesar put his plan in motion. He wrote a letter to the king of the Arabs--Numān ibn al-Mundhir. He wrote: "You know that the Arabs worship idols and they are divided. I am sending to them a man who is from the best of our priests to remove them from the worship they are upon and deliver them to the worship of the Messiah son of Mary. For this is better for them".

Numān was not able to oppose Caesar, so he wrote to him in agreement. He promised he would support and aid this priest. And he agreed with this idea to convert the Arabia Peninsula to Christianity.

### **Rome sends priests to Arabia**

The priest went to the Numān the king of Arabia. The priest said: "You know that the Caesar – Heraclius; commanded me to go to the Arabia Peninsula to invite them to

Christianity; including Mecca. Numān promised to support and aid him and to send some people to help him. But at the same time, Numān did not want Christianity in the Arabia Peninsula. But he was not able to oppose Caesar and he did not possess the might to go to war with him. So he made him a promise, but he had a plan to block this priest and to block the plan from the king of Rome to convert the Arabia Peninsula to Christianity.

### Numān's question to the priest

Numān said to one of his confidants: "Come to me tomorrow and speak with me after the delegation arrives and the priest comes". He said: "O king, what shall I say to you?" He said: "Whisper in my ear, and I will take it from there." He replied: "I hear and obey O king."

The next day the Arab delegations arrived. The priest came and stood next to Numān the king of the Arabs. The man whom the king told to whisper in his ear came. The man whispered in the ear of Numān. Numān breathed an emotional sigh of relief. The priest said: "O Numān what's the news?" He replied: "The news is momentous!" The priest said: "Woe to you, what is the news?!" He replied: "The news is momentous!" The priest said: "What is it?" He replied: "This man informed me that the leader of the angels has died." The priest said: "You're lying, the angels do not die!" Numān said: "How can that be so? **How is it that Jesus – the one who is god – dies; while the leader of the angels does not die?!**" The priest understood what was going on. He said: "We have no power over you; we are not able to convert you to Christianity". He returned to Caesar and said: "O king, no matter what we do we are not able to convert the Arabs to Christianity. Leave them be upon their condition".

Thus Numān by way of his plan; was able to repel this Christian evangelization from appearing in the Arabia Peninsula. This was the condition of the Arabs.

### Arabia after the appearance of Islam

Allah favored them by sending Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. He removed them from the darkness of polytheism to the light of monotheism. He removed them from the worship of idols to the worship of Allah. He removed them from referring to the soothsayers for judgement to referring to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Rather he removed them from death to life.

أَوْمَنَ كَانَ مَبِينًا فَأَحْبَبْنَا لَهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا ﴿١٢٢﴾

Is he who was dead (without faith by ignorance and disbelief) and We gave him life (by knowledge and faith) and set for him a light (of belief) whereby he can walk amongst men, like him who is in the darkness (of disbelief, polytheism) from which he can never come out<sup>1</sup>?

There is no good except that he (the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) directed the Ummah to it, and there is no evil except that he warned them against it. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did not die until Allah completed the religion by way of him. He conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust, and advised the Ummah and he struggled in the cause of Allah in the most complete manner.

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee

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<sup>1</sup> Soorah Al-'An`ām 6:122