

The followers of Pharaoh were worse than polytheists

Explained by Shaykh Salih Fawzan

Question: Are the followers of Pharaoh considered polytheists with regards to the Lordship of Allah because they followed Pharaoh in his claim that he was the Lord?

Shaykh Fawzan: They were Mu'attilah (those who deny the existence of a Creator), they were not polytheists. They were Mu'attliah. They did not affirm the existence of the Lord. Pharaoh said:

﴿٢٤﴾ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَىٰ

"I am your lord, most high" (Soorah An-Nāzi`āt 79:24)

Pharaoh said:

﴿٣٨﴾ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي

I have not known you to have a god other than me. (Soorah Al-Qaṣaṣ 28:38)

He denied the existence of Allah the Exalted and they believe him in his denial. Thus they became those who deny the existence of the Lord.

All atheists are like this; those who do not affirm the existence of Allah. And they say everything comes from nature. They say nature is what brings everything into existence.

﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ

And they say, "There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time." (Soorah Al-Jāthiyah 45:24)

They don't attribute these matters to Allah the Exalted. These people are called atheists. They are not polytheists. They are those who deny the existence of the Creator. The polytheists are better than them because the polytheists affirm the existence of Allah but they worship others along with Him. As for the atheists, they do not acknowledge the existence of Allah. And how many of these people are present today!