

Sura-3, Al-Imran (The Family of Imran), Medina 89

The Quran's Text & Yusuf Ali's Translation:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ... up

110. Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind,

...تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ...

enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God.

...وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ...

If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them;

...مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.

لَنْ يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى... up

111. They will do you no harm, barring a trifling annoyance;

... وَإِنْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ يُؤَلُّوكُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

if they come out to fight you, they will show you their backs, and no help shall they get.

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ أَيْنَ مَا تَفَقَّوْا إِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلٍ مِّنَ النَّاسِ ... up

112. Shame is pitched over them (like a tent) wherever they are found, except when under a covenant (of protection) from God and from men;

...وَبَأَوْوا بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ...

they draw on themselves wrath from God, and pitched over them is (the tent of) destitution.

...ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ...

This because they rejected the signs of God, and slew the Prophets in defiance of right;

...ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

this because they rebelled and transgressed beyond bounds.

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ... ^{up}

3:113. Not all of them are alike:

of the People of the book are a portion that stand (for the right);

...يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ ^{up}

they rehearse the signs of God all night long, and then prostrate themselves in adoration.

Transliteration *Laisu_sawa_'(an), min ahlil kita_bi ummatun qa_'imatuy yatlu_na a_ya_tilla_hi a_na_'al laili wa hum yasjudu_n(a).*

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ... ^{up}

3:114. They believe in God and the Last Day;

...وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ... ^{up}

they enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong; and they (hasten in emulation) in (all) good works;

...وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

they are in the ranks of the righteous.

Transliteration *Yu'minu_na billa_hi wal yaumil a_khiri wa ya'muru_****na bil ma'ru_fi wa yanhauna'anil munkari*** *wa yusa_ri'u_na fil khaira_t(i), wa ula_'ika minas* ***sa_lihin(a)***.

وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ
﴿١١٥﴾

3:115. Of the good that they do, nothing will be rejected of them; for God knoweth well those that do right.

Transliteration *Wa ma_yaf'alu_min khairin falay yukfaru_h(u), walla_hu'alimum bil muttaqin(a)*.

Other Translations:

Muhammad Asad

3:110 YOU ARE indeed the best community that has ever been brought forth for [the good of] mankind:

you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and you believe in God. Now if the followers of earlier revelation had attained to [this kind of] faith, 80 it would have been for their own good; [but only few] among them are believers, while most of them are iniquitous:

(3:111) [but] these can never inflict more than a passing hurt on you; and if they fight against you, they will turn their backs upon you [in flight], and will not be succoured. 82

3:112 Overshadowed by ignominy are they wherever they may be, save [when they bind themselves again] in a bond with God and a bond with men; 83 for they have earned the burden of God's condemnation, and are overshadowed by humiliation: all this [has befallen them] because they persisted in denying the truth of God's messages and in slaying the prophets against all right: all this, because they rebelled [against God], and persisted in transgressing the bounds of what is right. 84

3:113 **[But] they are not all alike**: among the followers of earlier revelation there are upright people, 85 who recite God's messages throughout the night, and prostrate themselves [before Him].

(3:114) They believe in God and the Last Day, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and vie with one another in doing good works: and these are among the righteous.

(3:115) And whatever good they do, they shall never be denied the reward thereof: for, God has full knowledge of those who are conscious of Him.

Muhammad Pickthall

3: 113 They are not all alike. Of the People of the Scripture there is a staunch community who recite the revelations of Allah in the night season, falling prostrate (before Him).

3: 114 They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency, and vie one with another in good works. They are of the righteous.

3: 115 And whatever good they do, they will not be denied the meed thereof. Allah is Aware of those who ward off (evil).

Asad's comments

80 I.e., like the followers of the Bible, who became "Jews" and "Christians" in spite of the fact that their beliefs have a common source and are based on the same spiritual truths (see also 6:159 and the corresponding note).

81 Lit., "to the worlds". For an explanation of this sentence, see 6:131-132 and note 117.

82 As is obvious from the opening sentence of verse 110, this promise to the followers of the Qur'an is conditional upon their being, or remaining, a community of people who "enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and [truly] believe in God"; and - as history has shown - this promise is bound to lapse whenever the Muslims fail to live up to their faith.

83 I.e., if they return to the concept of God as the Lord and Sustainer of all mankind, and give up the idea of being "God's chosen people" which creates a barrier between them and all other believers in the One God.

84 The above passage - as the very similar one in 2:61 - relates specifically to the children of Israel, although this section as a whole (verses 110-115) obviously refers to the followers of the

Bible in general, that is, to both the Jews and the Christians.

85 Lit., "an upright community" : **a reference to those among the followers of the Bible who are truly believers (cf the last sentence of verse 110 above) and observe the "bond with God and with men" (verse 112).**

Ali's comments:

434. [3:110] The logical conclusion to a Universal Religion is a non-sectarian, non-racial, non-doctrinal, religion, which Islam claims to be. For Islam is just submission to the Will of God. This implies

1. Faith,
2. doing right, being an example to others to do right, and having the power to see that the right prevails,
3. eschewing wrong, being an example to others to eschew wrong, and having the power to see

that wrong and injustice are defeated. Islam therefore lives, not for itself, but for mankind. The People of the Book, if only they had faith, would be Muslims, for they have been prepared for Islam. Unfortunately there is Unfaith, but it can never harm those who carry the banner of Faith and Right, which must always be victorious.

435. [3:112] Duribat: I think there is a simile from the pitching of a tent.

Ordinarily a man's tent is a place of tranquility and honour for him. The tent of the wicked wherever they are found is ignominy, shame, and humiliation. It is pity from God or from men that gives them protection when their pride has a fall.

Using the same simile of tent in another way, their home will be destitution and misery.

436 [3 :112] Cf. iii. 21, n. 363. (3.112): 363

Right; haqq has many shades of meaning; (1) right, in the sense of having a right to

something; (2) right, in the sense of straight conduct, as opposed to wrong; (3) truth; (4) justice. All these shades are implied here. (3.21)

437 In Islam we respect sincere faith and true righteousness in accordance with the Qur-An and Sunnah. **This verse, according to Commentators, refers to those People of the Book who eventually embraced Islam.** (3.113)

Amatulla's comments: –

I think many earlier commentators' understanding about this is wrong. The way these verse is structured it clearly indicates the People of the Book who did not convert to Islam at the time of Prophet Muhammad and the communities before his time going back from the time of Adam: It starts with the phrase “not all of them are alike”, these “them” or “they” means people in different camp of faith and not among the follower of the Prophet.

This is a key verse on which not much commentary is available. The Quran is proclaiming that no good work from the non-believers [not believing Muhammad as God's prophet and follow the Quran.] would be rejected. Moreover, it is also recognized that righteous people still exist among that group of people. The main thing is that one believes in God and the Hereafter and do good work in this life. Therefore, it is the Message or Truth from God that is more important and above the consideration that one has rejected Muhammad as the Messenger of that truth.

As always, the Message is more important than the Messenger. If one understands the Message from the Creator and still belong to another brand of faith and pursues his/her path from the understanding based on the common fundamental principles.

This idea of emphasis on God and His Message above a prophet's recognition as the Messenger is of key importance. Many erroneous and

unjust ideas emanate from not understanding and accepting this key idea the Quran expounds in many ways in many places. Here the pronoun “they” undoubtedly mean those who did not follow the Prophet at that time also those from the past.

[Amatulla’s introduction:

These very important verses that recognize piety among the followers of other faiths with different names & brands to emphasize that the essence of all those religions is same because the source is same. The manifestation of the essence is laid down in 3:113 & 114 defining righteous [Swa’lihin] as: **believers in God and Hereafter, upright in conduct, rehearse God’s Messages of their respective Books all night long and prostrate, who enjoin right and forbid wrong. Nothing good of them would be rejected on account that they follow a different path and rituals and that they follow a religion with a different name.** The Quran gives validity to the earlier revelations and Books.

These people may not have the right opportunity or due to the context of their families, upbringing, and exposures may not believe in Muhammad as the Messenger of God, however, still due to their understanding and practicing the most important tenets and moral conduct they are righteous. They have reached the goal via a different path. The Quran emphasizes that there are different paths to God.

As always, the Message is more important than the Messenger. This idea of emphasis on God and His Message above a prophet’s recognition as the Messenger is of key importance.

Many erroneous and unjust ideas emanate from not understanding and accepting this key idea the Quran is expounding. Here the pronoun “they” undoubtedly mean those who did not follow the Prophet at that time.]