

READING THE QUR'AN
SURA 3:33-64

Sura title: The Family of Imran

- 33 God chose Adam and Noah and the House of Ibrahim and the House of Imran above all beings,
- 34 the seed of one another; God hears, and knows.
- 35 When the wife of Imran said, 'Lord, I have vowed to you, in dedication, what is within my womb. Receive this from me; You hear and know.'
- 36 And when she gave birth to her she said, 'Lord, I have given birth to her, a female.' (And God knew very well what she had given birth to; the male is not as the female.) 'And I have named her Mary, and commend her to you with her seed, to protect them from the accursed Satan.'
- 37 Her Lord received the child with gracious favour, and by His goodness she grew up comely, Zachariah taking charge of her. Whenever Zachariah went to visit her in the Sanctuary, he found her with plenty of provisions. 'Mary,' he said, 'how does this comes to you?' 'From God,' she said. Truly God provides to whomsoever He will without reckoning.
- 38 Then Zachariah prayed to his Lord saying, 'Lord, give me of your goodness a goodly offspring. You are the one who hears prayer.'
- 39 And the angels called to him, standing in the Sanctuary at worship, 'Behold, God gives you good tidings of John, who shall confirm a Word of God, a chief, and chaste, a Prophet, righteous.'
- 40 'Lord,' said Zachariah, 'how shall I have a son, seeing I am an old man and my wife is barren?' 'Even so,' God said, 'God does what He will.'
- 41 'Lord,' said Zachariah, 'appoint to me a sign.' 'Thy sign,' God said, 'is that you shall not speak, save by signs, to men for three days. And mention your Lord often, and give glory at evening and dawn.'
- 42 And when the angels said, 'Mary, God has chosen you, and purified you; He has chosen you above all women.'
- 43 Mary; be obedient to your Lord, prostrating and bowing before Him.'
- 44 (That is of the tidings of the Unseen, that We reveal to you; for you were not with them, when they were casting quills which of them should have charge of Mary; you were not with them, when they were disputing.)
- 45 When the angels said, 'Mary, God gives you good tidings of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary; high honoured shall he be in this world and the next, near stationed to God.'
- 46 He shall speak to men in the cradle, and of age, and righteous he shall be.'
- 47 'Lord,' said Mary, 'how shall I have a son seeing no mortal has touched me?' 'Even so,' God said, 'God creates what He will. When He decrees a thing He does but say to it "Be," and it is.'
- 48 And He will teach him the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah, the Gospel,
- 49 to be a Messenger to the Children of Israel saying, "I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. I will create for you out of clay as the likeness of a bird; then I will breathe into it, and it will be a bird, by the leave of God. I will also heal the blind and the leper, and bring to life the dead, by the leave of God. I will inform you too of what things you eat, and what you treasure up in your houses. Surely in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.'
- 50 Likewise confirming the truth of the Torah that is before me, and to make lawful to you certain things that before were forbidden unto you. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord; so fear you God, and obey you me.
- 51 Surely God is my Lord and your Lord; so serve Him. This is a straight path".'
- 52 And when Jesus perceived their unbelief, he said, 'Who will be my helpers unto God?' The Apostles said, 'We will be helpers of God; we believe in God; witness you our submission.'
- 53 Lord, we believe in that you hast sent down, and we follow the Messenger. Inscribe us

therefore with those who bear witness.'

54 And they devised, and God devised, and God is the best of devisers.

55 When God said, 'Jesus, I will take you to Me and will raise you to Me and I will purify you of those who believe not. I will set your followers above the unbelievers till the Resurrection Day. Then unto Me shall you return, and I will decide between you, as to what you were at variance on.

56 As for the unbelievers, I will chastise them with a terrible chastisement in this world and the next; they shall have no helpers.'

57 But as for the believers, who do deeds of righteousness, He will pay them in full their wages: and God loves not the evildoers.

58 This We recite to you of signs and wise remembrance.

59 Truly, the likeness of Jesus, in God's sight, is as Adam's likeness; He created him of dust, then said He unto him, 'Be,' and he was.

60 The truth is of God; be not of the doubters.

61 And whoso disputes with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say: 'Come now, let us call our sons and your sons, our wives and your wives, our selves and your selves, then let us humbly pray and so lay God's curse upon the ones who lie.'

62 This is the true story. There is no god but God, and assuredly God is the All-mighty, the All-wise.

63 And if they turn their backs, assuredly God knows the workers of corruption.

64 Say: 'People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not aught with Him, and do not some of us take others as Lords, apart from God.' And if they turn their backs, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'

The Mother of Jesus

The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt. And she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister. (Numbers 26:59)

They said, "O Mary, you have done an unbelievable thing. O sister of Aaron." ... That is Jesus, the son of Mary. (Quran 19:27-34)

And We gave him (Moses), from Our Mercy, his brother Aaron as a prophet. (Quran 19:53)

And Mary, the daughter of 'Imran. (Quran 66:12)

Making Birds from Clay

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas

II. 1 This little child Jesus when he was five years old was playing at the ford of a brook: and he gathered together the waters that flowed there into pools, and made them straightway clean, and commanded them by his word alone. 2 And having made soft clay, he fashioned thereof twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when he did these things (or made them). And there were also many other little children playing with him. 3 And a certain Jew when he saw what Jesus did, playing upon the Sabbath day, departed straightway and told his father Joseph: Lo, thy child is at the brook, and he has taken clay and fashioned twelve little birds, and has polluted the Sabbath day. 4 And Joseph came to the place and saw: and cried out to him, saying: Why do you do these things on the Sabbath, which it is not lawful to do? But Jesus clapped his hands together and cried out to the sparrows and said to them: Go! and the sparrows took their flight and went away chirping. 5 And when the Jews saw it they were amazed, and departed and told their chief men that which they had seen Jesus do.

When your Lord said to the angels, "I shall create mankind from clay. When I have formed him and breathed some of my Spirit into him ... I created (him) with my own hands." (Quran 38:71-75)

I (Jesus) have come to you with a sign from your Lord. I will create for you out of clay the likeness of a bird; then I will breathe into it, and it will be a bird, by the permission of God. (Quran 3:49)

These ... miraculous powers attributed to Jesus are extraordinary in that they suggest powers usually reserved for God.¹

In the Qur'an the story now says that Jesus only did this by God's permission; however, this does not remove Jesus' divinity from the story, because creating is a unique attribute that defines God. If God shares this attribute with Jesus then Jesus shares in what is uniquely God's, and so shares in the identity of God. If God can share this attribute of creating with anyone then God is no longer unique.

1. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Study Quran*, U.S.A: Harper Collins, 2015, fn. 110, p. 334.