

The man who never sinned

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْ وَلَدِ آدَمَ إِلَّا قَدْ أَخْطَأَ ، أَوْ هَمَّ بِخَطِيئَةٍ ، لَيْسَ يَحْيَى بْنُ زَكَرِيَّا

There is none from children of Adam except that he has sinned or considered sinning; except Yahya ibn Zakariyah.¹

Imam Shafi'i said: "We don't know of anyone who was granted obedience of Allah such that he did not mixed it with sins except Yahya ibn Zakariyah."²

Allah the Exalted said concerning His slave and Prophet Zakariyah peace be upon him:

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَى مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

So the angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber, "Indeed, Allah gives you good tidings of Yahya, confirming a word from Allah and [who will be] honorable, abstaining [from women], and a prophet from among the righteous."³

Al Qadi ibn Iyyad may Allah have mercy upon him said this means he was free from sin; as though he was blocked or prevented from committing sins. And it has been said this means he did not have desire for women.⁴

Allah the Exalted said:

يَا يَحْيَى خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَنبِئْهُ الْكُفْمَ صَبِيًّا * وَحَنَانًا مِنْ لَدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا * وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا * وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا

(It was said to his son): "O Yahya! Hold fast the Scripture." And We gave him wisdom while yet a child. And (made him) sympathetic to men as a mercy from Us, and pure and he was righteous, and dutiful towards his parents, and he was neither an arrogant nor disobedient."⁵

Ibn Jarir may Allah have mercy upon him said: "pure" means he was pure from sins, he only used his body to obey Allah. Ibn Abbas may Allah be pleased with him said: "pure and righteous" means he never sinned.⁶

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee

¹ From the Hadith of Ibn Abbas collected by Ahmad (2294) declared authentic by Al Albani

² The History of Damascus 8/195

³ Soorah 'Āli `Imrān 3:39

⁴ As Shafa 1/88

⁵ Soorah Maryam 19:12-15

⁶ Tafsir At Tabari