

Problems In Reconciliation:

The Christian King, Historical Biographies

& An Understanding Reserved for the End Times

The fundamental thesis that Maulana has covered in his book 'The Qur'an and Russia's Destiny' clearly establishes the following from the primary scripture and source of knowledge in Islam, The Holy Qur'an –

1. Rum is identified with Russia, and they will, with Divine aid, eventually become dominant against Gog and Magog civilization of the modern west.
2. Rum comprises of a Christian people who are prophesied to become closest in love and affection to the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The characteristic traits of these Christians are kindness and compassion to the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
3. Whilst they are Christian and the belief in the trinity is in their hearts, Allah does not consider them to be the same as other Christians who are now part of an unholy Judeo-Christian alliance.

No other source, be it Islamic or historical, can ever supersede this foundation that the Qur'an has laid, when it comes to ascertaining Muslim-Christian relations in these end times. The subject of the Christian King, the Negus of Abyssinia, becomes the focus point, when this unfolding Muslim alliance with Rum is scrutinized by critics who refuse to accept the lofty interaction, mutual consideration and exemplary conduct of the beloved Prophet's ﷺ interaction with the Negus, as an example to be upheld by Muslims towards Russia and Orthodox Christians today. As such, this essay is written focused on a Muslim audience who lay their primary allegiance to historical sources rather than doing the same for the Holy Qur'an. It will also benefit Christian readers in learning the warmth with which many Muslims (who grant their primary allegiance to the Qur'an) are open heartedly welcoming the growing Orthodox-Christian and Muslims relations, in-sha-Allah!

1. A story in the books of Seerah (Biography of the Prophet ﷺ)

وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَشَعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

(Behold, most certainly, there are those among the Ahlul-Kittab (Jews and Christians) who believe in Allah, and in that which has been revealed to you (i.e this Qur’an) and in that which has been revealed to them (i.e. the Torah and the Gospel). They stand in awe of Allah and do not monetize the word of God to enrich themselves with gain. They shall have their due reward with Allah, and most certainly Allah is swift in reckoning!)

Surah Aal-E-Imran, Verse 199.

The beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ performed the funeral prayers for the Christian King, Ashama – The Negus of Abyssinia. It was in this context that Allah sent down the above holy verse, wherein he was still identified as one among the Ahlul Kitaab, rather than identifying him as a follower of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The commentators of the Qur’an are in a consensus in their understanding of the reason for revelation of this Holy verse; When the Negus passed, Allah informed the beloved Prophet ﷺ (who was resident in Madinah at the time) about the former’s departure from the material realm. He then gathered his companions for the funeral prayer. Upon being enquired by them, he responded that the prayer was being held for the Negus Ashama, “who was a righteous man”.

Strangely so, despite the Qur’an identifying the King to have died as a follower of Nabi Isa Alayhi Salam, other historical sources almost entirely conclude that the Negus had concealed from his people, his decision to be a follower of the beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. By implication, it was because of this secret decision which he kept to himself that the Prophet ﷺ was commanded by Allah to perform the funeral prayer for the Negus. In this short essay, I am inspecting some of these sources and presenting my conclusions. My conclusion is that the information from the sources cannot be entirely reconciled with the knowledge that flows from the Holy Qur’an and there are at-least five permanent problems when we attempt to do so –

The gigantic biographies of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham both record a story, which suggests that the Negus tricked his people to hide his decision to be a follower of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It is mentioned in these narrations that the people in Abyssinia went out against the Negus and blamed him for changing their religion. They cited the reason for this as the Negus’s contentment with Ja’far and the other companions, who held that Isa Alayhi Salam was an Abd (a creation who serves Allah). According to this story, when

such a situation arose, he prepared a ship for the companions who had earlier emigrated to Abyssinia for safety from the persecutions of the Quraysh. The Negus advised the companions to use the ship and go elsewhere for safety if he were to become unsuccessful in his efforts to calm his people. He also informed them that if he were to become successful in his efforts, they could continue to live in his kingdom in complete safety. He then wrote the following in a paper:

أَنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَتَشْهَدُ أَنَّ عَيْسَىٰ بْنَ مَرْيَمَ عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَرُوحَهُ، وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ

(Underlined words –he bore witness to his faith that Jesus was an Abd (a created being meant to be in service to Allah)

and kept it inside his dress, in a pocket near to the right side of his chest. It supposedly contained the underlined statement wherein he let go of his trinitarian faith and accepted the position held by the companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ . The story continues, and he then went out to his people. Amidst the conversation he had with them, he cleverly planted a pitch to solve the crisis at hand by asking them what they believed about Jesus. When his people replied affirming their faith in the trinity, they in turn questioned him whether he held the same faith. The Negus then supposedly kept his hand over his pocket where the paper was and exclaimed “I do not say anything other than this”. The story suggests that he tricked his people by pretending to affirm with their trinitarian faith, whilst referring to what he wrote and kept hidden in his pocket.

Maulana has already quoted this story in his book, from Ibn Ishaq’s biography of the beloved Prophet ﷺ . Ibn Hisham quotes it from Ibn Ishaq in his biography as follows –

(Translation by me in italics)

حُرُوجُ الْحَبَشَةِ عَلَى النَّجَاشِيِّ

قَالَ ابْنُ إِسْحَاقَ: وَحَدَّثَنِي جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ: اجْتَمَعَتِ الْحَبَشَةُ

Ibn Ishaq has recorded: from Ja’far ibn Muhammad who narrated from his father: Abyssinnia gathered (against the Negus)

فَقَالُوا لِلنَّجَاشِيِّ: إِنَّكَ قَدْ فَارَقْتَ دِينَنَا، وَخَرَجُوا عَلَيْهِ

And they said to him “you have changed our religion”. They went out against him by claiming this!

فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَىٰ جَعْفَرٍ وَأَصْحَابِهِ، فَهَيَّأَ لَهُمْ سَفِينًا، وَقَالَ: اذْكَبُوا فِيهَا وَكُونُوا كَمَا أَنْتُمْ، فَإِنْ هُنِمْتُ فَاْمْضُوا حَتَّىٰ تَلْحَقُوا بِحَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ، وَإِنْ . ظَفِرْتُ فَانْبِتُوا

Then he sent for Ja'far and those with him. He prepared a ship for them and said: Embark on this ship but remain where you are (do not set forth, wait) and if I am defeated then go on until you reach a place that is suitable for you (concerning your safety), but if I am successful (in calming my people), then remain here!

ثُمَّ عَمَدَ إِلَى كِتَابٍ فَكَتَبَ فِيهِ: هُوَ يَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَيَشْهَدُ أَنَّ عِيسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَرُوحَهُ، وَكَلِمَتَهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ، ثُمَّ جَعَلَهُ فِي قُبَائِهِ عِنْدَ الْمُنْكَبِ الْأَيْمَنِ، وَحَرَجَ إِلَى الْحَبَشَةِ، وَصَفُّوا لَهُ، فَقَالَ: يَا مَعْشَرَ الْحَبَشَةِ أَلَسْتُ أَحَقَّ النَّاسِ بِكُمْ؟

Then he attended to writing, and wrote therein – “that he testified his faith in La-ilaha-illa-Allah and that Muhammad is an Abd (one who is in service to the Lord God Most high) and a Messenger from HIM, and that Jesus the son of Mary is an Abd, a Messenger, Ruh (Spirit) from HIM and HIS promise which was delivered through Mary”. He then placed this writing inside his pocket over his right chest and went out to his people. They (were so many in number that they) then approached him in rows. So he said to them: “O gathering of Abyssynnia! Have I not been the most truthful amongst the people to you?”

قَالُوا: بَلَى، قَالَ: فَكَيْفَ رَأَيْتُمْ سِيرَتِي فِيكُمْ؟ قَالُوا: خَيْرٌ سِيرَةٍ، قَالَ: فَمَا بَالُكُمْ؟

They replied: “Indeed!”. So he in turn said to them: “What how has been my record amongst you?”. They replied: “A good one”. He then asked them: “So what is your matter then (in this gathering)?”

قَالُوا: فَارْقَتْ دِينَنَا، وَرَعَمْتَ أَنَّ عِيسَى عَبْدٌ، قَالَ: فَمَا تَقُولُونَ أَنْتُمْ فِي عِيسَى؟

They said: You have changed our religion! You believe now that Jesus is an Abd (a creation who serves the Lord God Most high, rather than believing he is God). So, he replied to them and said: “What do you all say about Jesus?”

قَالُوا: نَقُولُ هُوَ ابْنُ اللَّهِ، فَقَالَ النَّجَاشِيُّ، وَوَضَعَ يَدَهُ عَلَى صَدْرِهِ عَلَى قُبَائِهِ هُوَ يَشْهَدُ أَنَّ عِيسَى بَنَ مَرْيَمَ، لَمْ يَزِدْ عَلَى هَذَا شَيْئًا

They said: “We believe that he is the son of God”. Then the Negus placed his hand over his chest and it was above his pocket (where the writing was placed). Thereafter, he said that “he believes nothing else about Jesus other than this!”

وَأِنَّمَا يَغْنِي * مَا كَتَبَ، فَزُضُّوا وَأَنْصَرَفُوا (عَنْهُ). فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَلَمَّا مَاتَ النَّجَاشِيُّ صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ، وَاسْتَعْفَرَ لَهُ

(when he said this,) it was a reference to what he had written (and placed in his pocket). The Christian Abyssinians were satisfied and left the gathering. This news reached the Prophet ﷺ. So when the Negus died, the Prophet performed the funeral prayer for him and sought forgiveness for him.

The first problem that we encounter when trying to reconcile this story with the foundational understanding that we derived from the Holy Qur'an is – Allah HIMSELF identified the Negus to be belonging to the Ahlul Kitab when HE sent down verse 199 of Surah Aal-E-Imran. Any efforts to reconcile this story would therefore dangerously imply that while human beings who learned of this story knew about the Negus's secret, Allah The All Knowing remained unaware about the same and declared that he was one among the Ahlul Kitaab.

If one gullibly accepts this story as a mere narration of what unfolded in history, it would be mistake; There appears before such a critic two sources now – One, is the *Sabab-Nuzul* (reason for revelation) of the holy verse quoted above, which the Qur'anic exegesis identify to be the death of the Christian King Ashama. The verse identifies the King to be one from Ahlul-Kitaab. The second is a historical biography which convey that the Prophet ﷺ was aware of the Negus's secret faith and the incident during which he pulled a trick to deceive his people. While the first affirms the Negus's faith to be Christian upon his death, the second projects the meaning that the Negus had done away with the trinitarian faith of the Christians and chose to become a follower of Nabi Muhammad ﷺ.

Honesty on the part of the critics will naturally demand an explanation for all the other narrations recorded in the various Tafseers, all of which clearly establish the reason for revelation of the blessed verse 199 of Surah Aal-e-Imran as the Christian Negus's death:

From the Tafseer (exegesis of the Holy Qur'an) Ad-Dhurr-Al-Manthur-Fi-ta theer-bil-Ma thur'

أَخْرَجَ النَّسَائِيُّ وَالْبَزَّازُ وَابْنُ الْمُثَنَّرِ وَابْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ وَابْنُ مَرْذُوقٍ عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: لَمَّا مَاتَ النَّجَاشِيُّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ نَصَلِي عَلَى عَبْدِ حَبَشِي فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ {وَإِنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْنَا} الْآيَةَ

Al-Nasa'i, records - Al-Bazzar, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, and Ibn Mardawayh narrated on the authority of Anas, who said: When Al-Najashi died, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Pray for him." They said, "O Messenger of God, are we to pray for an Abyssinian Abd ? (i.e A Christian)." Then Allah revealed the blessed verse.

وَأَخْرَجَ ابْنُ جَرِيرٍ عَنْ جَابِرِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَخْرُجُوا فَصَلُّوا عَلَى أَخٍ لَكُمْ فَصَلَّى بِنَا فَكَبَّرَ أَرْبَعَ تَكْبِيرَاتٍ فَقَالَ: هَذَا النَّجَاشِيُّ أَصْحَمَةٌ فَقَالَ الْمُتَأَفِّفُونَ: انْظُرُوا إِلَى هَذَا يُصَلِّي عَلَى عَلِجِ نَضْرَانِي لَمْ نَرَهُ فَظَّ فَاَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ {وَإِنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ} الْآيَةَ

Ibn Jarir narrated on the authority of Jabir that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Come out and pray for a brother of yours." He ﷺ prayed with us, then he said "Allahu Akbar" four times and said: "This (is for the) Negus

Asahma.” The hypocrites then said: “Look at him (The Prophet ﷺ)! He prays for a Christian apostate (The Negus Ashama)! We have never seen such a thing!” So Allah sent down this blessed verse.

وأخرج عبد بن حميد وابن جرير عن قتادة قال ذكر لنا أن هذه الآية نزلت في النجاشي وفي ناس من أصحابه آمنوا ببي الله وصدقوا به وذكر لنا: أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم استغفر للنجاشي وصلى عليه حين بلغه موته قال لأصحابه: صلوا على أخ لكم قد مات يغير بلادكم. فقال أناس من أهل النفاق: يصلي على رجل مات ليس من أهل دينه فأنزل الله {وإن من أهل الكتاب لمن يؤمن بالله} الآية

Abd bin Hamid and Ibn Jarir narrated on the authority of Qatada, who said: We were reminded that this verse was revealed about Al-Najashi and about some of his companions who believed in the Prophet of Allah, and testified to him being a true Prophet. We were reminded that The Prophet ﷺ, asked forgiveness for the Negus and prayed for him. When the news of his passing reached the Prophet, he said to his companions: Pray for your own brother who has died in a land different from yours! Then some hypocrites mockingly said: “He (The Prophet ﷺ) (even) prays for a man who has not died in his religion! So Allah revealed the verse.

وأخرج عبد بن حميد عن الحسن قال: لما مات النجاشي قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم استغفروا لأخيكم فقالوا: يا رسول الله أنستغفر لذلك العج فأنزل الله {وإن من أهل الكتاب لمن يؤمن بالله وما أنزل إليكم} الآية

Abd bin Hamid narrated on the authority of Al-Hasan, who said: When Al-Najashi died, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Ask forgiveness for your brother.” They said: “O Messenger of Allah, should we ask forgiveness for an apostate (one who has died in Shirk)?” So Allah revealed the verse.

وأخرج ابن جرير وابن المنذر عن ابن جريج قال لما صلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم على النجاشي طعن في ذلك المنافقون فقالوا: صلى عليه وما كان على دينه فنزلت هذه الآية {وإن من أهل الكتاب لمن يؤمن بالله} الآية

Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Mundhir narrated on the authority of Ibn Jurayj that he said, when the Prophet, ﷺ prayed for the Negus, the hypocrites criticized that, and said: He (The Prophet) prayed for him (The Negus) even though he was not following his (The Prophet’s) religion! So this verse was revealed.

وأخرج الطبراني عن وحشي بن حرب قال: لما مات النجاشي قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لأصحابه إن أحاكم النجاشي قد مات قوموا فصلوا عليه فقال رجل: يا رسول الله كيف نصلي عليه وقد مات في كفره قال: ألا تسمعون قول الله {وإن من أهل الكتاب لمن يؤمن بالله} الآية

Al-Tabarani narrated on the authority of Wahshi bin Harb, who said: When Al-Najashi died, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to his companions, “Your brother Al-Najashi has died. Stand up in prayer for him!” Then a

man said: O Messenger of Allah, how can we pray for him, who has dies in disbelief! He said: Do you not hear the words of Allah, and then recited the verse.

Maulana has quoted similar narrations from Jami'ul Bayan of Imam At-Tabari and from the Tafseer of al Al Baghwi in his book 'The Qur'an and Russia's Destiny'. There are plenty more tafseer books which record the exact same reason for the revelation of the blessed verse. Let the Muslim critic therefore answer – What are we to do with these narrations? This is the first problem and the most important problem when we attempt to reconcile the story in the biographies with the understanding flowing from the Holy Qur'an.

In addition to defending the Prophet ﷺ for praying and seeking forgiveness for a Christian King, the above quoted narrations confirm that the verse was also revealed to affirm the Negus was not a Kafir or an apostate. When the hypocrites, mocked and criticized the Prophet by saying “he even prays for an apostate”, Allah revealed the blessed verse in response confirming that the Negus was a believer in Allah and the Qur'an, while believing in the previous scriptures! This confirms Maulana's view that once a Christian accepts the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to be a true Prophet of Allah, believing the Qur'an to also be the Word of God, he is no longer considered an apostate despite being in trinity.

The numerous narrations also deliver a clear understanding that while it is the beloved Prophet's ﷺ example to enjoin fraternal relations between Muslims and those Christians, who, in addition to believing in their scripture, also accepts the Quran as the word of God and act righteously in accordance with faith in Allah, it is the example of the hypocrites to stir up discord and disharmony towards them by claiming them to be in apostacy and Kufr. In fact, it is hypocritical to consider the Christians as being from another religion! The Prophet ﷺ considered them to be within Islam (the one religion which all the Prophet's of Allah preached – which is submission to the Lord God Most High) by referring to the Christian King as a brother of his followers, it is therefore in the interest of the hypocrites to hide this truth and consider the followers of Nabi Isa Alayhi Salam as outside the fold of Islam!

2. The Beloved Prophet's ﷺ صلى الله عليه وسلم letter to the Negus

In a footnote to the hadith narrating the Negus's gift of black slippers to the Prophet ﷺ recorded in Ash-Shama-il Al Muhammadiya published by Dar Ihya-u-turath Al Arabi in Beirut, it is mentioned that the Negus was Ashama, who had accepted Islam in the sixth year of Hijrah “according to most of the authorities”. Here the term “FA-ASLAMA” in the footnote, used to mean ‘he accepted Islam’, is put forth to give the meaning that the Negus chose to become a follower of our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The footnote mentions that the Prophet ﷺ invited the Negus to become his follower through a letter he sent with the companion Amr bin Umayyah Al-Damri. It therefore becomes important to address the letters exchanged between them to verify if such an invitation was indeed sent and if the Negus did in fact decide to become a follower of the Prophet ﷺ. Note that this is now a second reason being cited as a justification for the Prophet ﷺ performing the funeral prayer for the Negus. The footnote complements the story discussed above from Ibn Hisham, as the objective of both appears to be to prove – “the Prophet ﷺ never prayed funeral prayer for a righteous Christian! The latter was in fact, a follower of the Prophet ﷺ.”

Quoting below the Arabic text of the footnote with the relevant part underlined –

عن حجير بن عبد الله. عن ابن بريدة عن أبيه:
 أَنَّ النَّجَاشِيَّ * أَهْدَى لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَفَيْنِ أَسْوَدَيْنِ سَازَجَيْنِ فَلْبَسَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَضَّأَ وَمَسَحَ عَلَيْهِمَا
 *النجاشي: بفتح النون وكسرهما لقب ملوك الحبشة وكان اسم النجاشي: أصحمة وكان من الملوك الذين دعاهم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم
للاسم في كتاب أرسله مع عمرو بن أمية الضمري، وكتب اليه بدعوه للإسلام فأسلم سنة ست على قول الأكثر ومات سنة تسع من الهجرة
 وقد أخبر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أصحابه بموت النجاشي وصلى عليه صلاة الغائب وقد هاجر اليه المسلمون في صدر الإسلام فأكرم
 وفادتهم ورد وفد قريش المكون من عمرو بن العاص وصاحبيه دون أن يمس المسلمين بأذى.

*On the authority of Hujayr bin Abdullah, on the authority of Ibn Buraidah, on the authority of his father:
 Al-Najashi* gifted the Prophet ﷺ two plain black slippers. The Prophet ﷺ put them on, then performed
 ablution and wiped over them.*

*Footnote - *Al-Najashi: By fat-ha over the Nun, was the title of the kings of Abyssinia. The name of the
 Negus was: Asahma. He was one of the kings whom the Prophet ﷺ invited (to Islam) in a letter he sent
 with Amr bin Umayyah Al-Damri. He wrote to him inviting him to Islam, so he accepted Islam in the sixth
 year of Hijrah, according to most people, and he died in the ninth year of Hijra. The Prophet ﷺ informed
 his companions of the death of the Negus and prayed for him in absentia. Muslims migrated to him at the
 beginning of Islam, so he honored them and returned the Quraysh delegation consisting of Amr ibn al-Aas
 and his two companions (against their request) without harming the Muslims.*

A part of this footnote appears to be in favor of the hypocrites who criticized the Prophet ﷺ for performing the funeral prayer for a Christian; the language of the footnote evidently considers any Christian to be living outside the religion of Islam, the One religion that the Lord God Most High sent to guide mankind!

Now, here are the different variants of the beloved Prophet’s ﷺ letters to the Negus.

1. A variant recorded in Kitaab As-Seeratun-Nabawiya Wa Akhbar Al Khulafa Min Ath-thiqaat of Ibn Habban:

من محمد رسول الله إلى النجاشي الأصحم ملك الحبشة، سلم أنت، فأني أحمد إليك الله الملك القدوس السلام المؤمن المهيم العزير الجبار المتكبر، وأشهد أن عيسى روح الله وكلمته ألقاها إلى مريم البتول الطيبة الحسنة فحملت بعيسى، فخلقه من روحه ونفخه كما خلق آدم بيده ونفخه، وإني أدعوك إلى الله، وقد بعثت إليك ابن عمي جعفرًا ومعه نفر من المسلمين، فدع التجبر فإني أدعوك إلى الله وقد بلغت ونصحت فاقبل نصيحتي والسلام على من اتبع الهدى

From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to the truthful Negus, the king of Abyssinia: Peace and security be upon you! I praise Allah, (then he mentioned the holy attributes of Allah) and I bear witness that Jesus is RUH-ULLAH (Spirit that Allah blew into Mary) and HIS promise which He fulfilled through Mary - the pure and fortified virgin, and she conceived Jesus, by the Lord's creation of him from HIS spirit and blowing his soul into him, just as he created Adam with his hand and blowing into him. I call you to (obey) Allah, and I have sent to you my cousin Jaafar, and with him a group of Muslims, so prevent arrogance on them (on my behalf), (for this) I call you to Allah, and I have conveyed this (short) message as an advise, so accept my advice. Peace and security shall always be upon those who follow guidance!

2. Two doubtful variants recorded in Kitaab Dalaail An-Nubuwa of Imam Al Bayhaqi:

أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْخَافِظُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْعَبَّاسِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْجَبَّارِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يُونُسُ بْنُ بَكِيرٍ عَنْ ابْنِ إِسْحَاقَ قَالَ: هَذَا كِتَابٌ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى النَّجَاشِيِّ «بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ هَذَا كِتَابٌ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّجَاشِيِّ الْأَصْحَمِ الْعَبْسِيِّ الْهَبَشِيِّ سَلَامٌ عَلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأَمْرٌ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَشَهِدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَخَدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَأَدْعُوكَ بِدَعَايَةِ اللَّهِ فَإِنِّي أَنَا رَسُولُهُ فَأَسْلِمُ تَسْلِمًا. يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٌ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ: أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ، وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ- فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ. فَإِنْ أَبَيْتَ فَعَلَيْكَ إِثْمُ النَّصَارَى مِنْ قَوْمِكَ

Abu Abdullah Al-Hafiz told us, he said: Abu Al-Abbas Muhammad bin Yaqaub told us, he said: Ahmad bin Abdul-Jabbar told us, he said: Yunus bin Bakir told us, on the authority of Ibn Isaac said: This is a letter from the Prophet Muhammad, to the Negus Ashama: "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." Peace be upon whoever follows the guidance and believes in Allah and His Messenger and bears witness that there is no god but Allah, HE has no partner, that HE has not taken a companion or a child, and that HE is protected This is His servant and His Messenger, and I call upon you with the call of Allah, for I am His Messenger, so submit! (Then the 59th Ayah of Surah Aal-E-Imran is mentioned, underlined in red above). If you refuse, then upon you is the sin of all the Christians from your people

وَفِي كِتَابٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْخَافِظِ فِي الْجُزْءِ الَّذِي أَجَارَ لِي رِوَايَتُهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو الْحَسَنِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْقَفِيقِيُّ، بِمَزْوُورٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا حَمَادُ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ حُمَيْدٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سَلَمَةُ بْنُ الْفَضْلِ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ إِسْحَاقَ، قَالَ: «بَعَثَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ عُمَرُو بْنُ أُمَيَّةَ الضَّمْرِيُّ إِلَى النَّجَاشِيِّ فِي شَأْنِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ وَأَصْحَابِهِ، وَكَتَبَ مَعَهُ كِتَابًا: «بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّجَاشِيِّ الْأَصْحَمِ مَلِكِ الْحَبَشَةِ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ فَإِنِّي أَحْمَدُ إِلَيْكَ اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهِمِّمُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رُوحَ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ الْبَتُولِ الطَّيِّبَةِ الْحَصِينَةِ فَحَمَلَتْ بِعِيسَى فَخَلَقَهُ مِنْ رُوحِهِ وَنَفَخَهُ كَمَا خَلَقَ آدَمَ بِيَدِهِ وَنَفَخَهُ، وَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَخَدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَالْمُؤَالَاةَ عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ، وَأَنْ تَتَّبِعَنِي وَتُؤْمِنَ بِي وَبِالَّذِي جَاءَنِي فَإِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَقَدْ بَعَثْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ ابْنَ عَمِّي جَعْفَرًا وَمَعَهُ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ فَأَقْرِهِمْ وَدَعِ النَّجْرَ فَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ وَجُنُودَكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَقَدْ بَلَّغْتُ وَنَصَحْتُ فَأَقْبِلُوا نَصِيحَتِي وَالسَّلَامَ عَلَى مَنْ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى.

On the authority of Abu Abdullah Al-Hafiz, in the part that he allowed me to narrate from him, he said: Abu Al-Hasan Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Faqih told me at Marwa, And, he said: Hammad Ibn Ahmad narrated to us, he said Muhammad Ibn Humayd narrated to us, he said Salamah Ibn Al-Fadl narrated to us, on the authority of Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, he said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent Amr bin Umayyah Al-Damri to the Negus concerning Ja’far and those with him. And he sent a letter with him: In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, The Most Merciful! This is a letter from the Prophet Muhammad, to the Negus Ashama, the King of Abyssinia: “May Peace be Upon You, I praise Allah (then he mention HIS Holy attributes) I bear witness that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the RUHU-LLAH (Spirit of Allah) and His Promise which He completed through Mary, the pure and protected virgin, and she conceived Jesus. HE created him from his own spirit and blew into him as it HE created Adam with his own hand and blew into him. And I invite you to Allah alone, believe in HIM without associating a partner with HIM, and give your loyalty and obedience to HIM. And I call you to follow me and believe in me and in what has come to me, I am the Messenger of Allah, and I have sent to you my cousin Ja’far and a group of Muslims with him, so when they come to you, treat them well and safeguard them from arrogance. I invite you and your army to Allah. and I have conveyed this (short) message as an advise, so accept my advice. Peace and security shall always be upon those who follow guidance!

It is to be noted that the variant recorded by Ibn Habban has the following characteristics –

- The Prophet’s ﷺ letter to the Negus emphasized on protecting Ja’far and the other companions who had emigrated to Abyssinia for safety from Quraysh. In this letter, the Prophet ﷺ explicitly mentioned to save them from tyranny of the Quraysh.
- Twice in the letter the Prophet ﷺ wrote “I call you to (obey) Allah”, once exactly before mentioning the need to protect his companions and once again exactly after mentioning the same!

- The Prophet ﷺ concluded the letter as being advisory in nature. - وقد بلغت ونصحت فاقبل - نصيحتي
- The Prophet ﷺ also spelled out the lofty status of Jesus, Nabi Isa Alayhi Salam and his virgin mother Mary alayha salam!

There is nothing in the variant recorded in Ibn Habban's book that contradicts the understanding derived from the Holy Qur'an, that the Negus died a Christian. Contrary to this, the first of the doubtful narrations quoted above contain an Ayah of the Holy Qur'an which was not revealed at least until the 9th year of Hijrah. Ayah 64 of Surah Aal Imran was revealed when the Christians of Najran visited the Prophet ﷺ . Imam Ar-Razi mention in his Tafseer Mafateeh Al Ghaib -

وَاعْلَمَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمَّا أُورِدَ عَلَى نَصَارَى نَجْرَانَ أَنْوَاعَ الدَّلَائِلِ وَانْقَطَعُوا، ثُمَّ دَعَاهُمْ إِلَى الْمُبَاهَلَةِ فَخَافُوا وَمَا شَرَعُوا فِيهَا وَقَبِلُوا الصَّغَارَ بِأَدَاءِ الْجَزِيَّةِ، وَقَدْ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ حَرِيصًا عَلَى إِيْمَانِهِمْ، فَكَانَهُ تَعَالَى قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ انْتُرِكَ ذَلِكَ الْمُنْهَجَ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ وَاعْدِلْ إِلَى مَنْهَجٍ آخَرَ يَشْهَدُ كُلُّ عَقْلٍ سَلِيمٍ وَطَبَعٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ أَنَّهُ كَلَامٌ مَبْنِيٌّ عَلَى الْإِنْصَافِ وَتَرَكَ الْجِدَالَ، وَقُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَيْ هَلُمُّوا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ فِيهَا إِِنْصَافٌ مِنْ بَعْضِنَا لِبَعْضٍ، وَلَا مَيْلَ فِيهِ لِأَحَدٍ عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ، وَهِيَ إِلَّا نَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا هَذَا هُوَ الْمُرَادُ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ وَنُنْذِرُ الْآنَ تَفْسِيرَ الْأَلْفَافِ

And know that when the Prophet ﷺ presented to the Christians of Najran various kinds of evidence and yet they obstinately refused, then he recited (Ayah 60-63, in which Allah threatened them by granting the Prophet permission to) invoke a curse on them, so they feared (this) and accepted to give the Jizyah. (When they accepted to pay the Jizyah) the Prophet (sensed this fear in their hearts) and (in his heart) concern grew (for them) , so (this ayah) was like Allah saying: "O Muhammad, you no longer have to invoke curse on them. Embark now on a different way such that every person with sound mind and upright character bears witness that yours is speech based on fairness and devoid of arguments". And tell them: "O People of the book! Let us come to a common word between us and you, that is, come to a word that contains fairness to both sides and in which there is no inclination to drift away for either of us - "We serve none but Allah without associating partners with him in anyway". This is meant by coming to a common word, and I will shortly mention the Tafseer of the words...

أَمَّا قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ فَبَيْنَهُ ثَلَاثَةٌ أَقْوَالٍ أَحَدُهَا: الْمُرَادُ نَصَارَى نَجْرَانَ وَالثَّانِي: الْمُرَادُ يَهُودَ الْمَدِينَةِ وَالثَّلَاثُ: أَنَّهَا نَزَلَتْ فِي الْفَرِيقَيْنِ، وَيَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ وَجْهَانِ الْأَوَّلُ: أَنَّ ظَاهِرَ اللَّفْظِ يَتَنَاوَلُهُمَا وَالثَّانِي: رُوي فِي سَبَبِ النُّزُولِ، أَنَّ الْيَهُودَ قَالُوا لِلنَّبِيِّ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ، مَا تَرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَكَ رَبًّا كَمَا اتَّخَذَتِ النَّصَارَى عِيسَى! وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى: يَا مُحَمَّدُ مَا تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ نَقُولَ فِيكَ مَا قَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ فِي عَزِيزٍ! فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ، وَعِنْدِي أَنَّ الْأَقْرَبَ حَمْلُهُ عَلَى النَّصَارَى، لِمَا بَيَّنَّا أَنَّهُ لَمَّا أُورِدَ الدَّلَائِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْلًا، ثُمَّ بَاهَلَهُمْ ثَانِيًا، فَعَدَلَ فِي هَذَا الْمَقَامِ إِلَى الْكَلَامِ الْمَبْنِيِّ عَلَى رِعَايَةِ الْإِنْصَافِ، وَتَرَكَ الْمَجَادَلَةَ، وَطَلَبَ الْإِفْحَامَ وَالْإِلْتِرَامَ

وَتَرْكِ الْمَجَادَلَةِ، وَطَلَبِ الْإِفْحَامِ وَالْإِلْزَامِ، وَمِمَّا يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ، أَنَّهُ خَاطَبَهُمْ هَاهُنَا بِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ وَهَذَا الْإِسْمُ مِنْ أَحْسَنِ الْأَسْمَاءِ
وَأَكْمَلِ الْأَلْقَابِ حَيْثُ جَعَلَهُمْ أَهْلًا/ لِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ، وَتَطْيِيرُهُ

مَا يُقَالُ لِحَافِظِ الْقُرْآنِ يَا حَامِلِ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ، وَلِلْمُفَسِّرِ يَا مُفَسِّرَ كَلَامِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّ هَذَا اللَّقْبَ يَدُلُّ عَلَى أَنْ قَاتَلَهُ أَرَادَ الْمُبَالَغَةَ فِي تَعْظِيمِ الْمُخَاطَبِ
وَفِي تَطْيِيرِ قَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يُقَالُ عِنْدَ عُذُولِ الْإِنْسَانِ مَعَ خَصْمِهِ عَنْ طَرِيقَةِ اللَّجَاجِ وَالنِّزَاعِ إِلَى طَرِيقَةِ طَلَبِ الْإِنْصَافِ

Concerning Allah's words 'O people of the book' (Ya Ahlal Kitaab), there are three opinions. The first is that it refers to the Christians from Najran, the second is that it refers to the Jews in Madeena and the third is that it includes both sides. There are two aspects (to evaluate this). The first is (to check) the apparent meaning of the word (i.e. People who have been granted a scripture. It will then apply to both Christians and Jews). The second is (to examine) the reason for revelation of this ayah, (one opinion is that) it was (revealed) when the Jews said to the Prophet ﷺ "You only want us to take you as a Lord just as the Christians took Jesus!" And the Christians said: "O Muhammad, all you want is for us to say about you what the Jews said about Uzayr! In my view, it is most likely that (the word Ya Ahlal Kitaab) refers to the Christians! Because as I already explained, The Prophet presented evidence to them first and then (was Divinely required to) invoke a curse on them (if necessary). Then (when they accepted to pay the Jizyah) he was (Divinely required to) address them by a speech which was caring, based on fairness, devoid of argumentation, and seeking bonding and clarity (in mutual relations, just as the Ayah 64 says).

What points to this understanding (or the proof of my view that Ya Ahlal Kitaab here refers to Christians) is how they are addressed with the words "Ya Ahlal Kitab". This is the best title to address them because by it, (it is being acknowledged that) they are worthy of having Allah's book amidst them. It's like addressing one who has byhearted the Qur'an as 'one who carries the Qur'an' and one who does Tafseer of the Qur'an as an 'explainer of God's words!' This title indicates that the arguer wanted to exaggerate in venerating the addressee and in anointing this in the latter's heart. It is only mentioned when a person turns away from the way of argumentation and dispute with his opponent, to the way seeking justice.

Imam Ar-Razi's position can be better understood when we examine his explanation of Ayah 59 of the same Surah, wherein he mentions –

أَجْمَعَ الْمُفَسِّرُونَ عَلَى أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ نَزَلَتْ عِنْدَ حُضُورِ وَقَدْ نَجْرَانَ عَلَى الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The commentators have unanimously agreed that this verse was revealed in the presence of Najran before the Messenger ﷺ .

The verse 59 of Surah Aal-E-Imran came down during the Prophet’s engagement with the Christians of Najran. When they obstinately refused to accept the truth, then came the verses 60-63 detailing the Prophet’s warning of Mubahala to them (i.e. invoking a curse on them). Subsequently, when they feared and accepted to give political authority to the Prophet ﷺ by paying the Jizyah , they were addressed in a lofty manner in verse 64. This is the summary of Imam Ar-Razi’s reason for identifying the Ahlul Kitaab in this verse as the Christians of Najran.

The first of the doubtful letters also appears to be in a demeaning and threatening tone. It would be extremely unwise of anyone, save a Prophet of Allah, to impose belief upon another by threatening the latter with Divine sin. More so, to do that when he is sending his own followers to that very same king for safety!

Furthermore, unique to the second doubtful version compared to what Imam Ibn Habban recorded in his book are the additional words underlined below –

وَأَيُّ أَدْعُوكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَالْمُؤَالَاةِ عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ، وَأَنْ تَتَّبِعَنِي وَتُؤْمِنَ بِي وَبِالَّذِي جَاءَنِي فَإِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ،
وَقَدْ بَعَثْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ ابْنَ عَمِّي جَعْفَرًا وَمَعَهُ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ...

And

فَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ فَافْرِهْمْ وَدَعِ النَّجْبُ فَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ وَجُنُودَكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ

The added words convey the meaning that the beloved Prophet ﷺ supposedly invited the Negus to become his follower. It also gives the impression that the letter was non-advisory in nature. It therefore contradicts itself and Ibn Habban’s variant. The words appear to be an infiltration into the original text of the letters. With their addition into the text, the letter now appears to be one similar to those which were sent by the Prophet ﷺ to other rulers after the conquest of Makkah.

Once Makkah was peacefully conquered, it laid the seat of the Divine caliphate in Arabia and the letters were sent to different rulers as a strategic foresight to prepare them for the rise of the caliphate as a superpower in Arabia in the fore-seeable future. Peaceful coexistence and mutual cooperation in foreign relations with the Divine Caliphate could only be possible for their states, if they recognized the truth in the Prophethood of Nabiyuna Muhammad ﷺ , as the caliphate was essentially a religious state.

The letter sent to the Negus Ashama however, was in the sixth year of Hijrah. It was also sent in response to the Qurayshi delegation commencing on their journey to extricate the companions and Ja’far from Abyssinia back to Makkah. So, it does not suit the context of this letter to comprise these additional words.

If we are to try reconciling these letters with the Qur’an, now we must face the next two problems –

1. How can the letters which were written to the Negus during or before the sixth year of Hijrah contain a verse which was only revealed in the ninth year of Hijrah when the Christians from Najran came to visit the Prophet ﷺ in Madinah?
2. Why would the Prophet ﷺ demand a King to be his follower when he is sending his vulnerable followers to that very same King for safety? Why would he do so in a threatening manner rather than being advisory in nature?

3.A Chronology of events

Initially, Uthman Bin Ma'dhun and his companions migrated to Abyssinia, seeking refuge from the harsh treatment in Makkah. During this period, Surah An-Najm is revealed to the Prophet, but Satan causes some confusion among the Quraysh. After they all performed Sajdah with the Prophet ﷺ, due to Satan's confusion, the external impression was that all of Makkah now believed in the Prophet's call, and accepted his message. This led Uthman and his companions to return to Makkah, believing that the Quraysh had embraced Islam.

However, upon their return, they encountered renewed hostility and severe persecution from the Quraysh. In response, the Prophet ﷺ sent Ja'far and his companions back to Abyssinia for safety.

When the Quraysh sent Amr Bin Al-As and Umarathu Bin Al-Waleed to retrieve Ja'far and his companions, they attempt to win the favor of the Negus with gifts. However, upon hearing of this, the Prophet ﷺ sends a letter to the Negus via Amr bin Umayyah Al-Damri, reinforcing their plea for protection.

The Negus does not comply with the Quraysh's demands but instead investigates the situation, summoning Ja'far and questioning him about their beliefs. Upon hearing their answers, the Negus recognizes the truth of their faith, which aligns with the message of Jesus (Isa Alayhi Salam). Consequently, he declines the Quraysh's request for extradition and allows Ja'far and his companions to remain in Abyssinia, imposing strict penalties on anyone who might harm them.

It is evident that the Negus was receptive of Ja'far and the other companions with him. The beloved Prophet's ﷺ response of sending a letter through *Amr bin Umayyah Al-Damri* should have reached Abyssinia before the Qurayshi delegation, as it would have been more convenient for Amr to travel swiftly than a big delegation. Had the letter been threatening in nature, the accusations that the Quraysh raised before the Negus against the companions would have immediately succeeded and they would have been extricated back to Makkah for further torture and persecution. So, those who still hold on to the doubtful variants will now have to encounter another (the fourth) problem – Why would the King be receptive of

companions if a letter first arrived threatening him to protect them, and then later a delegation arrives accusing them of severing social ties, demanding for them to be extricated for punishment?

If an argument is put forth by the critic that there is no evidence of the letter reaching the King before the Qurayshi delegation, then that would imply that Allah guided the Prophet ﷺ to send a letter to the King and caused that effort of the beloved Prophet ﷺ to be a waste!

[Refer to the chapter –

باب الهجرة الأولى إلى الحبشة ثم الثانية وما ظهر فيها من الآيات وتصديق النجاشي ومن تبعه [من القسس] والرهبان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم in Kitaab Dalaail An-Nubuwa of Imam Al Bayhaqi for detailed chronology of events summarized above]

4.The Negus's response to the letter sent through Amr bin Umayyah Al-Damri (R)

As the reliable variant did not contain an invitation for the Negus to join the community of our beloved Prophet ﷺ, and since this is the only variant which is in harmony with that truth emanating from the Holy Qur'an, it is in its light that we must carefully read the variants of the Negus's response to the Prophet ﷺ.

From Kitaab As-Seeratun-Nabawiya Wa Akhbar Al Khulafa Min Ath-thiqaat of Ibn Habban -

وكتب جوابه إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم «بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، إلى محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، من النجاشي الأصحم بن أبجر، سلام عليك يا نبي الله ورحمة الله وبركاته الذي لا إله إلا هو الذي هداني إلى الإسلام، أما بعد فقد بلغني كتابك يا رسول الله فيما ذكرت من أمر عيسى فوروب السماء والأرض أن عيسى لا يزيد على ما قلت، ولقد عرفنا ما بعثت به إلينا، وقد قربنا ابن عمك وأصحابه، وأشهد أنك رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم صادقاً مصدقاً، وقد وبايعت ابن عمك وأسلمت على يديه لله رب العالمين، وبعثت إليك بابني أرها بن الأصحم، فأبني لا أملك إلا نفسي، وإن شئت آتيتك يا رسول الله فعلت، فأبني أشهد أن ما تقوله حق- والسلام عليك يا رسول الله! فخرج ابنه في ستين نفساً من الحبشة في سفينة البحر، فلما توسطوا ولججوا أصابتهم شدة وغرقوا كلهم

The Negus replied in writing to the Prophet ﷺ: , In the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful, from Ashama Ibn Abhar to Muhammad ﷺ, May Peace be on you dear Nabi of Allah, and so too his mercy and blessings. HE who guided me to Islam, there is no God but HE! Your letter has reached me O dear Prophet of Allah, in which you mentioned an account of Jesus. By the Lord of the Sky and the Earth, Jesus himself did not say anything more than it! Your cousin and his companions have drawn close to me. I bear witness that you are a Messenger of Allah ﷺ, you are truthful and you are the confirmer. I give my pledge to you, and to Allah, the Lord of all people, through the hands of your cousin. I am sending my son Arha bin Al Asham. (At this moment), I have no control over anyone (amongst my people) except myself. But if you so desire, then I will come to you in person. I bear witness that what you are saying is true. May

peace be upon you. His son set forth with sixty others on a ship from Abyssinnia (to deliver this letter). But amidst their journey, a storm overcame them and they all drowned.

The exact same response is also in Kitaab Dalaail An-Nubuwa of Imam Al Bayhaqi:

وَكَتَبَ النَّجَاشِيُّ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مِنَ النَّجَاشِيِّ الْأَصْحَمِ بْنِ أُبَجَرَ
 سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الَّذِي هَدَانِي إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ، فَقَدْ بَلَغَنِي كِتَابُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فِيمَا ذَكَرْتَ مِنْ أَمْرِ
 عِيسَى فَوْزَبَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ عِيسَى مَا يَزِيدُ عَلَيَّ مَا ذَكَرْتَ، وَقَدْ عَرَفْنَا مَا بَعَثْتَ بِهِ إِلَيْنَا وَقَدْ قَرَيْنَا ابْنَ عَمِّكَ وَأَصْحَابَهُ، فَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ رَسُولُ
 اللَّهِ صَادِقًا مُصَدِّقًا وَقَدْ بَاتَعْنُوكَ وَبَاتَعْتُ ابْنَ عَمِّكَ وَأَسْلَمْتُ عَلَى يَدِهِ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَقَدْ بَعَثْتُ إِلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ بِأَرْبَعِينَ الْأَصْحَمِ بْنِ
 أُبَجَرَ فَإِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَإِنْ شِئْتَ أَنْ آتِيكَ فَعَلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَإِنِّي أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مَا تَقُولُ حَقٌّ

The underlined words appear to be addressing the infiltrations which we noted earlier in the doubtful variants, as the beloved Prophet ﷺ did not demand the bay'ah from the Negus Ashama. Rather, his ﷺ intent in sending the letter through *Amr bin Umayyah Al-Damri* is clearly known from the chronology of events. We also have located a reliable variant of that letter which is in total harmony with the Holy Qur'an. Another issue is that while we have enough evidence of continued collaboration between the beloved Prophet ﷺ and the Negus further on, there is once again an absence of evidence of such a response letter ever reaching the Prophet ﷺ from Abyssinia.

If such a letter had ever reached the Prophet in Yathrib, it would –

1. Substantiate the story to be true, as the response mentions that the Negus wrote 'he is a solitary person amidst his people, when it comes to accepting the Prophet ﷺ'.
2. By implication, it would establish that the Negus had actually accepted to be a follower of our Prophet ﷺ - by pledging allegiance to Allah through the hands of our Prophet.

Then there would be no room for the hypocrites to mock the Prophet ﷺ performing the funeral prayer for a Christian as it would have been well known that he was a follower of the Prophet. The fifth problem which we encounter here is that – the sources themselves convey that such a letter never reached the Prophet ﷺ in Yathrib, as the Negus's son the sixty others drowned en-route to Yathrib along with the letter. Then, such a response letter comprising of the (above) underlined words, which is manifestly in conflict with the Qur'an (for the above two reasons), also happens to be from an anonymous source as the original letter never reached the Prophet ﷺ !

It is entirely possible that the Negus did write a letter to the Prophet ﷺ in response to the letter which he sent with Amr. However, since the contents of the Prophet's initial letter to him was only advisory in

nature and intended on requesting protection for Ja'far and the other companions, we can only accept parts of the Negus's reply, to the extent that it does not contradict a variant of the Prophet's ﷺ letter which is in harmony with the Holy Qur'an.

5.An Understanding reserved for the End Times.

When this Christian Negus passed on from this world, The prophet ﷺ performed the funeral prayer for him, and in doing so, sought forgiveness for him, despite the latter having died believing in the trinity. He instructed his followers to perform the funeral prayers for him and therefore to seek forgiveness for him, despite the latter having died believing in the Trinity. In his book, Maulana has gathered numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an which prove that Allah approves some Christians even though he rejects their belief in the Trinity –

1. Allah says that they are not all the same, and there are those amongst the Christians who recite HIS holy verses in long hours of the night (Qur'an 3:113).
2. The Prophet ﷺ and the companions celebrated when Christian Byzantium gained victory over Pagan Persia as prophesied in Surah Ar-Rum. (Qur'an 30:2-6).
3. Allah promised Nabi Isa Alayhi Salam that some of his followers will be dominant over the Jews until the Day of judgement, when they do gain such an upper hand (Qur'an 3: 55).
4. Allah mentions that their Qiblah is still valid for them (Qur'an 2:145).
5. They would commemorate the last supper in the end times (Qur'an 5:114).
6. Allah says in the Qur'an that Nabi Isa Alayhi Salam, who is a Prophet of Allah, will seek forgiveness for some of his followers, despite their belief in the trinity (Qur'an 5: 116-118).

These foundations which the Quran provide make it easy to gather that the Prophet ﷺ himself set an example of maintaining close friendship and alliance with that part of Christianity which still has faith, which does not ally with oppressors and which projects kindness and compassion to his followers. His example is to traverse beyond beliefs and establish an alliance with them based on conduct and righteousness, and this understanding is strongly based on foundation from the Holy Qur'an. When we see the event of the Prophet ﷺ sending few of his companions for safety to Abyssinia in this light, it can be easily understood that the letter which he sent to the Negus should have been advisory in nature.

The Prophet ﷺ sent gifts to the Negus and received his delegation of priests while serving them with his own hands! The Prophet ﷺ also hinted a haven in Rum for his later followers, through his marriage to our mother Umm Habiba (Radhiyallahu Anha). The beloved Prophet ﷺ married her while she was in Abyssinia.

The Negus paid a Mahr (bridal gift paid by the husband to the wife at the time of marriage) of 400 Dinars on behalf of the dear Prophet ﷺ and hosted a splendid wedding feast for the attendees. The Negus also gifted the Prophet ﷺ and all this suggests a continuous healthy relationship between the Christian Negus and the beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. In fact, in allowing the Negus to pay Mahr on his behalf and in performing Wudu (ritual purification) by using the gift he received from the Negus, the beloved Prophet ﷺ has demonstrated something more than mere friendship with such Christians. It was both a validation of Allah's approval of them and a persuasion to his followers to establish close brotherly ties of friendship and love towards them.

The emergence of Russia today as a superpower in the world, powerful enough to challenge the godless modern western civilization (which converted the whole world into a global godless society) made it possible for Maulana to realize Rum in Akhiru Zaman to be Christian Russia, by Allah's grace! Once that realization occurred, it was only then that we could see the strategic importance of cementing and maintaining close friendship and alliance with orthodox Christians and Russia. This understanding therefore appears to be one Divinely preserved for the right moment in history which is now at hand. It seamlessly opens the hearts of both the followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the followers of Jesus, Nabi Isa Alayhi Salam to each other, as their relation now traverses beyond their conflicting beliefs, just as it did for the Negus and the companions of the Prophet ﷺ who came to Abyssinia for safety. They consider themselves to be brothers and part of the same one Religion that Allah sent with all the Prophets (May peace be upon them all). The Prophet ﷺ explicitly mentioned in his letter what he and his followers believed about Nabi Isa Alayhi salam. The Negus was aware of this belief that the companions held, yet granted them safety and security!

It was simply impossible to arrive at such a conclusion regarding the Negus having died as a Christian and the Prophet (S) having performed the funeral prayer for a Christian, so long as our two people remained hostile to each other, owing to the deception of Dajjal and Gog and Magog. The tide is changing, and it will continue to do so, in favor of Muslim – Christian-Rum alliance!

Alhamdulillah!