10468 - Belief in the Books and Messengers

the question

Who are the Prophets who were sent by Allah? What are the Books which were sent down with them?

Summary of answer

• It is obligatory to believe in all the Books which Allah has revealed and in all the Prophets and Messengers whom Allah has sent.
• The Prophets and Messengers are many, of whom Allah has mentioned twenty five in the Quran, and we are obliged to believe in all of them.
• There are four heavenly books which Allah sent down. They are the Tawrat (Torah), Injil (Gospel), Zabur (Psalms) and the Quran.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Number of the Books of Allah

When Allah sent Adam down to the earth and his descendents spread out, He did not forsake them. Rather He gave them provision and sent down to him and his descendents revelation; some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): ‘Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Taghut (all false deities besides Allah).’ Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified.” [An-Nahl 16:36]

There are four heavenly books which Allah sent down. They are the Tawrat (Torah), Injil (Gospel), Zabur (Psalms) and the Quran. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Quran) to you (Muhammad) with truth, confirming what came before it. And He sent down the Tawrat (Torah) and the Injil (Gospel).” [Al `Imran 3:3]

Allah also says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and to Dawud (David) We gave the Zabur (Psalms)” [Al-Isra’ 17:55]

Number of the Messengers of Allah

The Prophets and Messengers were many, and no one knows their number except Allah. Among them are those of whom Allah has told us, and some of whom He has not told us. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you.” [An-Nisa’ 4:164]

The obligation to believe in the Books and Messengers of Allah

It is obligatory to believe in all the Books which Allah has revealed and in all the Prophets and Messengers whom Allah has sent, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! Believe in Allah, and His Messenger (Muhammad), and the Book (the Quran) which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before (him); and whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away.” [An-Nisa’ 4:136]

Difference between Nabi and Rasool

Rasool (Messenger) and Nabi (Prophet) are two names with the same meaning. It refers to someone whom Allah sent to call the people to worship Allah alone, one of the Prophets and

Messengers whom Allah chose and sent to His slaves to convey His religion. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after the (coming of) Messengers.” [An-Nisa’ 4:165]

Names of Messengers and Prophets mentioned in the Quran

The Prophets and Messengers are many , of whom Allah has mentioned twenty five in the Quran, and we are obliged to believe in all of them. They are: Adam, Idris, Nuh, Hud, Salih, Ibrahim , Loot, Isma`il, Ishaq, Ya’qub, Yusuf, Shu’ayb, Ayub, Dhu’l-Kifl, Musa, Harun, Dawud, Sulayman, Ilyas, Al-Yasa’, Yunus, Zakariyya, Yahya, ‘Isa and Muhammad – blessings and peace be upon them all.

Quran is the last revelation

The Quran is the greatest and last of the heavenly Books , and it abrogates the books which came before it and is a witness over them, so we must follow it and ignore those which came before it. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (this Quran) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and Mohaymin (trustworthy in highness and a witness) over it (old Scriptures). So judge among them by what Allah has revealed.” [Al-Ma’idah 5:48]

What did the Messengers of Allah teach?

Allah chose Messengers and Prophets from among the sons of Adam, and sent them to each nation, and commanded them to call them to worship Allah alone and to explain the ways which would bring happiness in this world and in the Hereafter, and to bring glad tidings of Paradise to those who believed and the warning of Hell to those who disbelieved. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): ‘Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Taghut (all false deities besides Allah).’

Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified”[An-Nahl 16:36]

Allah favoured some of the Prophets and Messengers over others. The best of them are the “Messengers of strong will” who are Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, ‘Isa and Muhammad; and the best of the Messengers of strong will is Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). For each Prophet was sent only to his own people, until Allah sent Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to all of mankind. He is the last and the best of the Prophets and Messengers, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind, but most of men know not.” [Saba’ 34:28 – interpretation of the meaning]

The obligation to follow the example of the Messengers of Allah

The Prophets and Messengers were chosen by Allah to be an example to their nations. He taught them, guided them and honoured them with the Message; He protected them from falling into sin and supported them with miracles. So they are the most perfect of humanity both physically and in their attitude, the best of them in knowledge, the most truthful in speech, the most exemplary in the life they lived. Allah says of them (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We made them leaders, guiding (mankind) by Our Command, and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds, performing Prayer, and the giving of Zakah and of Us (Alone) they were the worshippers.” [Al-Anbiya’ 21:73]

Because the Prophets and Messengers reached such a high status of obedience and good character , Allah has commanded us to take them as an example. Allah says ((interpretation of the meaning):

“They are those whom Allah had guided. So follow their guidance.” [Al-An`am 6:90]

All of the characteristics of the Prophets and Messengers were combined in our Prophet

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and Allah honoured him by instilling in him the noblest characteristics. Therefore Allah stated that his example is to be followed in all situations. Allah says ((interpretation of the meaning):

“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.” [Al-Ahzab 33:21]

Belief in all the Prophets and Messengers is one of the pillars of Islamic belief (`Aqidah), without which the faith of the Muslim cannot be complete, because they all preached the same message, which is belief in Allah. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muslims): ‘We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibraaheem (Abraham), Isma`il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isac), Ya`qub (Jacob), and to Al-Asbat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya`qub (Jacob)], and that which has been given to Musa (Moses) and ‘Isa (Jesus), and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam)’.” [Al-Baqarah 2:136]

And Allah knows best.