

Are all the Companions included in the Verse 100 of Sura al-Tawba "وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأُولُونَ...?"

The group of the Companions

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The abstract of the answer:

Firstly: Even from the view of Sunnis, this Verse doesn't include all the Companions.

Secondly: what is meant by "السابقون" in the Verse is not the vanguard (of Islam) but the believers' faith and good doing.

Detailed answer:

In this Verse God has praised three groups:

1- The early vanguard (of Islam) from the Emigrants (initial Muslims): in the Verse it's mentioned that (from the Emigrants) so the Verse doesn't include all the emigrants and doesn't include late Emigrants.

Unless they claim that the word "من" is a modifier in the Arabic Syntax which is not provable.

2- The early vanguard (of Islam) from the Ansar (allies): it includes those who supported the prophet (PBUH) in the beginning, and sheltered him. (the first supporters). So this Verse will not include all the Ansar and their children and

So, this Verse indicates two groups. One of them the group of the early Emigrants and the other group is the early supporters who converted to Islam before the Islamic government has become well-established.

some explanation about the two groups:

The believers were patient during the disasters and emigrated to al-Madina or al-Habasha.

The believers who supported the prophet (PBUH) and his helpers and were ready to defend Islam against its enemies since the very beginning.

These two groups certainly include those who converted to Islam before the Battle of Badr. But there is no evidence that this Verse include those who converted to Islam after the religion has become established (in the Battle of Bader). And whoever claims this must show his evidence.

3- Those who followed these two groups by good doing.

According to defining of the two mentioned groups, this group includes those who have converted to Islam in the period since the battle of Bader to the treaty of Radwan or the Conquest of Mecca. So it will not include those who converted to Islam in the ninth year after the advent of Islam (the year of delegations).

The reason for parsing them in this Verse is that they have followed the good practice of the two earlier groups.

So it's obvious that it's not possible to use this Verse to prove the justice of the ten thousand Companions (whose names are mentioned in the Mu'jams) or the one hundred thousand of them (of people who have been seen in different places accompanying the Prophet of God (peace be upon him); only their number is mentioned in the books).

The content which is mentioned is understood from the explicit meaning of the Verse.

Although Sunnis claim that this Verse includes all the Companions, they haven't presented any true evidence in this regard and even their scholars have different opinions on the meaning of the Verse:

Ibn Juzi Hanbali says: there are six different quotes about the meaning of this Verse about the early vanguard (of Islam):

1. People who prayed towards the first and the second Qiblas. This is the view of Abu Mosa Ash'ari, Saied Ibn Musaib, Ibn Sreen and Qitada.
2. People who swore their allegiance to the prophet of God (PBUH) in the treaty of Radwan. This is the view of Shabi.

3. People who participated in the battle of Bader. This is the view of Ataa' Ibn Abi Riyah.
4. All the companions have gained this status because of their accompanying the prophet of God (PBUH). This is the view of Muhammad Ibn Kaad Al al-Qardi.
5. Being the vanguard is subject to the divine reward and martyrdom. This is the opinion of Mawardy.
6. People who converted to Islam before the Emigration (the year of Hijrah of the prophet from Mecca to Medina); this is the opinion of Qadi Abu Yali.

Zad Al-Masir: v 3 p 333, Researched by: Muhammad Ben Abd Al-Rahman Abdullah, Dar Al-Fekr, Beirut

The same content is mentioned in Tafsir al-Tabari.

-Tafsir Al-Tabari: v 11 p 10, Researched by: Sedghi Jamil Al-Atar, Dar Al-Fekr, Beirut

Suyouti expresses another opinion in which he says:

The vanguard (of Islam) are only Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali, Salman and Amar Yasir; and he quotes a narration about this case.

-Al-Dor Al-Manthur: v 3 p 269, Al-Fath, Jadde

Besides the dissension between them about this matter, they also have dissensions about of the meaning of Successors (later generation of the prophet's companions):

Ibn Jouzi says:

The person who considers all the Companions as the vanguard (of Islam) recognizes the Successors as the Successors of the Companions (the so-called Successors). It was quoted from Ibn Abbas that it refers to whom follow them by good doing until the resurrection day.

But the person who says the vanguards (of Islam) are from the Companions, he believes that followers are who had followed them in their conduct. The preference of the vanguard (of Islam) over others is by good doing; even though all the Companions had the virtue of speaking with the prophet.

Ata' says: the following of the past good doers is the good remembrance of them.

-Zad Al-Masir: v 3 p 333

Ibn Jarir and Suyuti have said it means the people from Muslims who are remaining until the day of Resurrection.

-Jame Al-Bayan: v 82 p 120, Al-Dor Al-Manthur: v 3 p 271

Tha'alibi also quoted the saying of Sha'bi in which he says:

People who are the vanguards (of Islam) are those who were coincided the treaty of Radwan and the Successors in good doing are all the Companions and the successors and all the nation include the good doing.

-Tafsir Al-Thaalabi: v 3 p 208, Researched by: Doctor Abd Al-Fatah Abu Sonat, Dar Ehya Al-Torath Al-Arabi, Beirut

Shoukani also says:

Successors in good doing are those who follow the vanguard (of Islam) from the Emigrants and the Ansars (allies). And they are the Companions who have come after them and also people who come after that till the day of Resurrection; and the meaning of successors is not idiomatic meaning.

The purpose of “good doing” is a kind of specification for the successors, which means people who were follower of the vanguard (of Islam) in words and actions, and the good doing was their conduct.

-Fath Al-Ghadir: v 2 p 398, Alem Al-Kotob, Beirut

Now, in spite of all these different interpretations, how Sunnis claim that this Verse explicitly states the justice of all the Companions, God knows!!!

Besides all these matters, we can use the Quran to say that the meaning of precedence isn't the earlier believing but it is the vanguard (of Islam) and good doing. God suggests the same term in many Verses in the Quran:

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ (فاطر 32)

"Then We made heirs to the Book those whom We chose from Our servants. Yet some of them are those who wrong themselves, and some of them are average, and

some of them are those who take the lead in all the good works by Allah's will. That is the greatest grace [of Allah]!"

سَابِقُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ (الحديد 21)

"Take the lead towards forgiveness from your Lord and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth."

In all these Verses precedence has been suggested as going towards good doings and God forgiveness.

But idiomatically in Islam; if precedence is without faith, it will be of no use. Because many Muslims converted to Islam by the force of sword.

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا
(سوره حجرات آيه 14)

The Bedouins say, 'We have faith.' Say, 'You do not have faith yet; rather say, "We have embraced Islam,"'

Good luck

The group of answering misgivings

Research Institute of Hazrat Wali Asr (May God hasten His deliverance)