THE PROPHET'S SIRAH

SERIES 17

LETTERS TO THE KINGS

The Seal of Muhammad Rasulullah and the Call to Caesar, Chosroes and the Negus, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَٰكَ إِلَّا كَآفَّةٗ لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرٗا وَنَذِيرٗا وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكۡثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعۡلَمُونَ

"And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know."

SURAH SABA' 34:28

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who sent His Messenger to all of mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, and who carried His call to the palaces of kings. Blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and upon his family and his Companions, especially the envoys who carried his letters.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This seventeenth book of The Prophet's Sirah tells of the Prophet's ﷺ letters of invitation to the kings: the silver ring "Muhammad Rasulullah", Heraclius questioning Abu Sufyan, Chosroes tearing the letter, the Negus over whom the funeral prayer was offered, al-Muqawqis in Egypt, and the Arab kings. May this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows **an ancient caravan road** that starts from **a date-palm oasis** and **branches out in several directions** across a vast desert plain at **dawn**. Each branch heads towards **a different horizon**: towards **misty mountains** in the north, towards **a glittering sea coast**, and towards **the domes of a distant city** on the skyline.

The branching road recalls the journeys of the Prophet's ﷺ envoys who carried his letters to the lands of

Rome, Persia, Abyssinia, Egypt and Arabia — on a single day, six envoys set out in six directions according to the sirah books. The palm oasis is Madinah, where the call began. The dawn light falling on every horizon recalls Allah's words: "And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind" (Saba' 34:28).

The **dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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LETTERS TO THE KINGS

The sixteenth book of The Prophet's Sirah told of the Battle of Khaybar, when the threat from the north was ended. Now, with ***the Hudaybiyah truce*** guarding the south and Khaybar secure in the north, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ entered a new phase of da'wah: carrying the call of Islam ***beyond the Arabian Peninsula***, to the kings and rulers of the world.

He had ***a silver ring*** engraved "Muhammad Rasulullah" made to seal his letters, then sent Companions to ***Heraclius*** the Roman emperor, ***Chosroes*** the Persian emperor, ***the Negus*** of Abyssinia, ***al-Muqawqis*** the ruler of Egypt, and the Arab kings. Each king responded differently — some with respect, one by tearing the letter, and some with faith. This eBook tells those stories on the basis of the Qur'an and authentic Hadith.

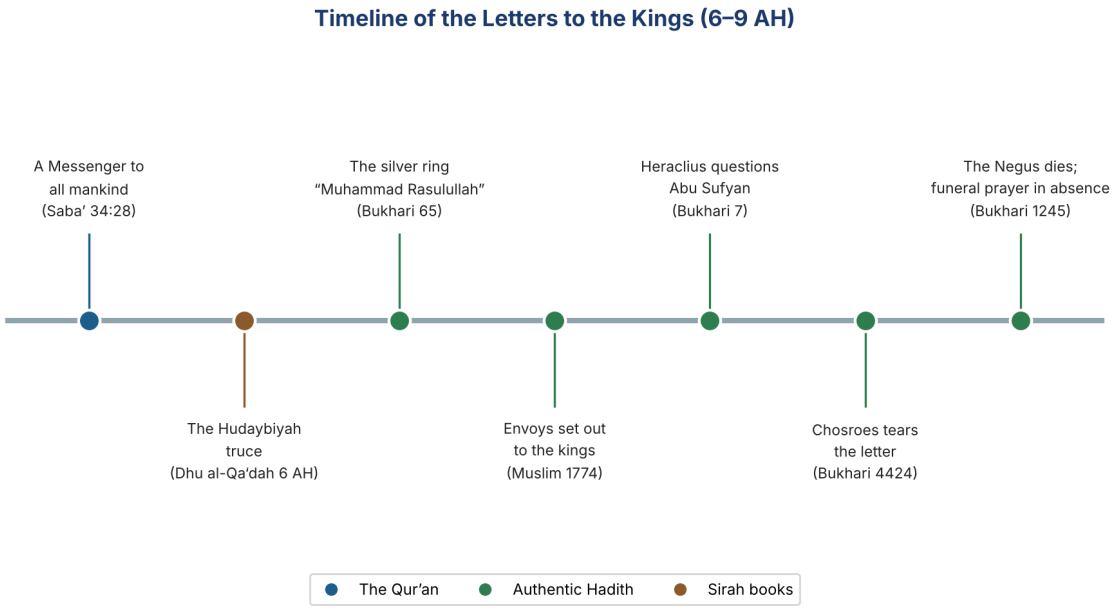


Figure 1: Timeline of the letters to the kings.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Information from the books of sirah is placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, and historical facts come with source links.

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AFTER HUDAYBIYAH: THE DOOR OF DA'WAH OPENS

The Treaty of Hudaybiyah in ***Dhu al-Qa'dah 6 AH*** first looked like a setback, yet Allah called it ***"a clear conquest"*** (Al-Fath 48:1). One reason it was a victory was ***peace***: for the ten years agreed, people could travel, trade and talk without fear of war. In that peace, da'wah spread quickly.

Imam az-Zuhri said, as quoted by Ibn Hisham, that ***no victory in Islam was greater*** before Hudaybiyah, because when war stopped, people met one another and discussed Islam, and many embraced it in the two years that followed — more than had embraced it before.

SIRAH NOTE: WHEN THE LETTERS WERE SENT

Ibn Sa'd in ***at-Tabaqat al-Kubra*** relates that after returning from Hudaybiyah at ***the end of 6 AH***, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent letters to the kings, and in ***Muharram 7 AH*** six envoys set out on the same day.

Some other letters, such as to the kings of Oman, were sent later, in 8 AH.

These dates are ***sirah-book information***. What is certain from authentic Hadith is that the letter to Heraclius was sent during ***the truce*** between the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Quraysh (Sahih al-Bukhari 7).

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah; Sahih al-Bukhari 7. https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7

The lesson: ***peace opens the way for da'wah***. Islam did not spread by the sword, but because people were given the chance to listen, think and choose. When the road opened, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at once used it to carry the message to those farthest away.

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A MESSENGER TO ALL MANKIND

Why did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ write to the kings of Rome and Persia, when earlier prophets were sent only to their own peoples? The answer is in the Qur'an:

"And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind"Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:28.

Allah also commanded him to declare: ***"O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 7:158.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself named this distinction as one of ***five things*** not given to any prophet before him:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 335

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سِنَانٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا هُشَيْمٌ، ح قَالَ وَحَدَّثَنِي سَعِيدُ بْنُ النَّضْرِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا هُشَيْمٌ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا سَيَّارٌ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ ـ هُوَ ابْنُ صُهَيْبٍ الْفَقِيرُ ـ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا جَابِرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ أُعْطِيتُ خَمْسًا لَمْ يُعْطَهُنَّ أَحَدٌ قَبْلِي نُصِرْتُ بِالرُّعْبِ مَسِيرَةَ شَهْرٍ، وَجُعِلَتْ لِيَ الأَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا وَطَهُورًا، فَأَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَدْرَكَتْهُ الصَّلاَةُ فَلْيُصَلِّ، وَأُحِلَّتْ لِيَ الْمَغَانِمُ وَلَمْ تَحِلَّ لأَحَدٍ قَبْلِي، وَأُعْطِيتُ الشَّفَاعَةَ، وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ خَاصَّةً، وَبُعِثْتُ إِلَى النَّاسِ عَامَّةً.

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"I have been given five things which were not given to anyone before me: I have been helped by awe (in the hearts of the enemy) at a distance of a month's journey; the earth has been made for me a place of prayer and a means of purification, so whoever of my nation is overtaken by the time of prayer, let him pray; the spoils of war have been made lawful for me and were not lawful for anyone before me; I have been given intercession;** *and every prophet used to be sent to his own people only, whereas I have been sent to all of mankind.***"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Sinan, from Hushaym; and from Sa'id ibn an-Nadr, from Hushaym, from Sayyar, from Yazid al-Faqir, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tayammum, Hadith No. 335; also No. 438; and Sahih Muslim No. 521.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:335

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This Hadith shows why the letters to the kings were ***part of the prophetic mission***, not merely a political strategy. Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was sent to the Children of Israel and Pharaoh, 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to the Children of Israel, Hud عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to the people of 'Ad — but Muhammad ﷺ was sent to ***every human being***, wherever they are, until the Day of Judgement.

So when circumstances allowed, he did not wait for the kings to come to Madinah. He ***sent the call to them***, in a language they understood and with the courtesy they respected.

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FIVE DISTINCTIONS OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

DISTINCTION	ITS MEANING
Helped by awe a month's distance away	Enemies feared before meeting
The earth a mosque and purifier	Prayer anywhere; tayammum
Spoils made lawful	A mercy for this nation
Intercession	The great intercession on the Day of Gathering
Sent to all mankind	The basis of the letters to the kings

The second distinction — ***the earth made a mosque*** — is closely linked to the universal message. A religion sent to all mankind needs worship that can be done ***anywhere***: in a Roman palace, an Arabian desert, an Abyssinian forest, or the islands of the Malay archipelago. A Muslim needs no temple or special place to pray.

The lesson: Islam is not the religion of one race. Muslims in South-East Asia today are ***the fruit of this universal message*** — a call that began with letters to kings, then was carried by traders and preachers to every corner of the world.

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A MERCY TO THE WORLDS

Allah describes the sending of Muhammad ﷺ in one phrase that embraces everything: ***"And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 21:107.

The letters to the kings were ***a mercy***, not a threat. He invited them to ***safety***, promised a ***double*** reward to People of the Book who believed, and reminded them that if they turned away, they would bear the sin of the subjects held back from the truth because of them. This is the advice of one who cares, not the command of a conqueror.

MERCY FOR KING AND SUBJECT

The kings of that age held absolute power over their subjects' religion. If the king accepted the truth, the people were free to follow; if he refused, they were often prevented. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***began with the kings***: opening the door at the top so the truth could reach those below.

This mercy is also seen in ***how*** the letters were written: brief, clear, opening with the Basmalah, respecting the recipient's title, and offering safety. No insults, no threats of war. This is da'wah born of a heart compassionate towards people.

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THE SILVER RING "MUHAMMAD RASULULLAH"

Before the letters were sent, a small matter showed the ***wisdom*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in understanding people's customs. Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه, his servant, relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 65

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُقَاتِلٍ أَبُو الْحَسَنِ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ كَتَبَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم كِتَابًا ـ أَوْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ ـ فَقِيلَ لَهُ إِنَّهُمْ لاَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابًا إِلاَّ مَخْتُومًا. فَاتَّخَذَ خَاتَمًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ نَقْشُهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ. كَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى بَيَاضِهِ فِي يَدِهِ. فَقُلْتُ لِقَتَادَةَ مَنْ قَالَ نَقْشُهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ قَالَ أَنَسٌ.

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: **The Prophet ﷺ wrote a letter — or intended to write — and it was said to him: "They (the kings) do not read a letter unless it is sealed." So he had a ring made of silver engraved with:** *"Muhammad Rasulullah."* **It is as if I can still see its whiteness on his hand.** Shu'bah said: I asked Qatadah: "Who said its engraving was 'Muhammad Rasulullah'?" He said: "Anas."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Muqatil, from 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, from Shu'bah, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 65; also Nos. 2938, 5872; and Sahih Muslim No. 2092.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:65

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The kings of that time ***would not read an unsealed letter***, since a letter without a seal was thought unofficial or possibly forged. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not dismiss this custom as trivial; he ***adapted*** to it so that his letters would be received and read. A custom that does not conflict with the Shari'ah may be honoured for the good of da'wah.

The ring's engraving was full of meaning too: ***"Muhammad Rasulullah"*** — not a royal title, not a tribal name, but the declaration that he was ***the Messenger of Allah***. Every sealed letter carried this message before it was read: the sender was not a king demanding obedience, but a messenger conveying a message.

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Anas said, ***"It is as if I can still see its whiteness on his hand."*** This memory of a faithful servant shows how the Companions observed and remembered every detail of the Prophet's ﷺ life, and conveyed it to us faithfully.

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AN ENGRAVING IN THREE LINES

Anas رضى الله عنه also described ***the layout of the engraving***, when he himself was sent to Bahrain in the caliphate of Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3106

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الأَنْصَارِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي، عَنْ ثُمَامَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، أَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ لَمَّا اسْتُخْلِفَ بَعَثَهُ إِلَى الْبَحْرَيْنِ، وَكَتَبَ لَهُ هَذَا الْكِتَابَ وَخَتَمَهُ، وَكَانَ نَقْشُ الْخَاتَمِ ثَلاَثَةَ أَسْطُرٍ مُحَمَّدٌ سَطْرٌ، وَرَسُولُ سَطْرٌ، وَاللَّهِ سَطْرٌ.

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه narrated that **when Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه became caliph, he sent him to Bahrain and wrote this letter for him and sealed it. The engraving of the ring was in three lines: "Muhammad" one line, "Rasul" one line, and "Allah" one line.**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari, from his father 'Abdullah ibn al-Muthanna, from Thumamah ibn 'Abdullah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the One-Fifth (Fard al-Khumus), Hadith No. 3106; also No. 5878.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3106

Scholars explain that the three lines were read ***from bottom to top***: "Allah" on the top line, then "Rasul", then "Muhammad" — as a courtesy placing the name of Allah highest. Ibn Hajar mentions this view in ***Fath al-Bari***, noting that the authentic report only mentions three lines without fixing the reading direction.

The same ring was used by Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman رضى الله عنه, until it ***fell into the well of Aris*** in 'Uthman's time and was never found (Sahih al-Bukhari 5879). The lesson: the Prophet's ﷺ seal continued its work — ***conveying a trust*** — after his passing, in the caliphs' letters on zakat and governance.

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LETTERS TO EVERY RULER

How many kings received the Prophet's ﷺ letters? Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه gives an overview that shows ***the breadth*** of his call:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1774

حَدَّثَنِي يُوسُفُ بْنُ حَمَّادٍ الْمَعْنِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الأَعْلَى، عَنْ سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم كَتَبَ إِلَى كِسْرَى وَإِلَى قَيْصَرَ وَإِلَى النَّجَاشِيِّ وَإِلَى كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَلَيْسَ بِالنَّجَاشِيِّ الَّذِي صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه narrated that **the Prophet of Allah ﷺ wrote to Chosroes, to Caesar, to the Negus and to every ruler holding power, inviting them to Allah the Exalted.** ***And this Negus was not the Negus over whom the Prophet ﷺ prayed the funeral prayer.***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yusuf ibn Hammad al-Ma'ni, from 'Abd al-A'la, from Sa'id ibn Abi 'Arubah, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Jihad and Expeditions, Chapter on the Letters of the Prophet ﷺ to the Disbelieving Kings, Hadith No. 1774.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1774

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The phrase ***"to every ruler holding power"*** shows the letters were not two or three, but reached ***the great powers of the world*** — Rome and Persia — as well as the smaller rulers around Arabia. No one was considered too great or too small to be invited.

This Hadith also states that the ***Negus*** who received this letter ***was not the Negus*** over whom the Prophet ﷺ prayed the funeral prayer. This important detail is discussed in the chapter "The Other Negus".

The lesson: da'wah is ***every person's right***. The powerful must be invited, and the weak must be reached. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not choose who deserved the truth; he conveyed it to all, and guidance is in Allah's hand.

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THE UNLETTERED PROPHET WRITES TO KINGS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not read or write. Allah says: ***"And you did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 29:48.

Yet it was this ***unlettered*** Prophet who sent official letters to emperors whose palaces were full of scribes and philosophers. He ***dictated*** the content, and literate Companions wrote it down. The sirah books name among his scribes Zayd ibn Thabit, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan رضى الله عنه.

This quality of "the unlettered prophet" is itself one of the signs mentioned in earlier scriptures: ***"the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 7:157.

That is why Heraclius, learned in the earlier scriptures, questioned Abu Sufyan so carefully: he was ***looking for signs*** he already knew. The letters were not mere paper; they were ***a proof*** reaching those able to recognise the truth.

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SIX ENVOYS, SIX DIRECTIONS

Who carried the letters? The sirah books name envoys chosen with care — each suited to the land he was sent to: some ***eloquent***, some who ***had traded*** in that land, and some ***brave*** enough to face proud kings.

The Envoys and the Kings' Responses

Envoy	Recipient	Response
Dihyah al-Kalbi	Heraclius, Caesar of Rome	Respectful; did not believe
'Abdullah ibn Hudhafah	Chosroes of Persia	Tore the letter
'Amr ibn Umayyah ad-Damri	The Negus, Abyssinia	Believed (Ashamah)
Hatib ibn Abi Balta'ah	al-Muqawqis, Egypt	Respectful; sent gifts
Shuja' ibn Wahb	al-Harith al-Ghassani	Refused and threatened
Salit ibn 'Amr	Hawdhah, al-Yamamah	Demanded a share of power
al-'Ala' al-Hadrami	al-Mundhir ibn Sawa, Bahrain	Believed
'Amr ibn al-'As	Jayfar and 'Abd, Oman	Believed

Envoy names and responses per the sirah books (Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hisham, Zad al-Ma'ad). The letters to Chosroes and Caesar are also in Sahih al-Bukhari 7 and 4424.

Figure 2: The envoys, the recipients and their responses (per the sirah books).

SIRAH NOTE: THE ENVOYS OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Hisham mention: ***Dihyah al-Kalbi*** to Heraclius; ***'Abdullah ibn Hudhafah as-Sahmi*** to Chosroes; ***'Amr ibn Umayyah ad-Damri*** to the Negus; ***Hatib ibn Abi Balta'ah*** to al-Muqawqis; ***Shuja' ibn Wahb al-Asadi*** to al-Harith al-Ghassani; and ***Salit ibn 'Amr al-'Amiri*** to Hawdhah ibn 'Ali in al-Yamamah.

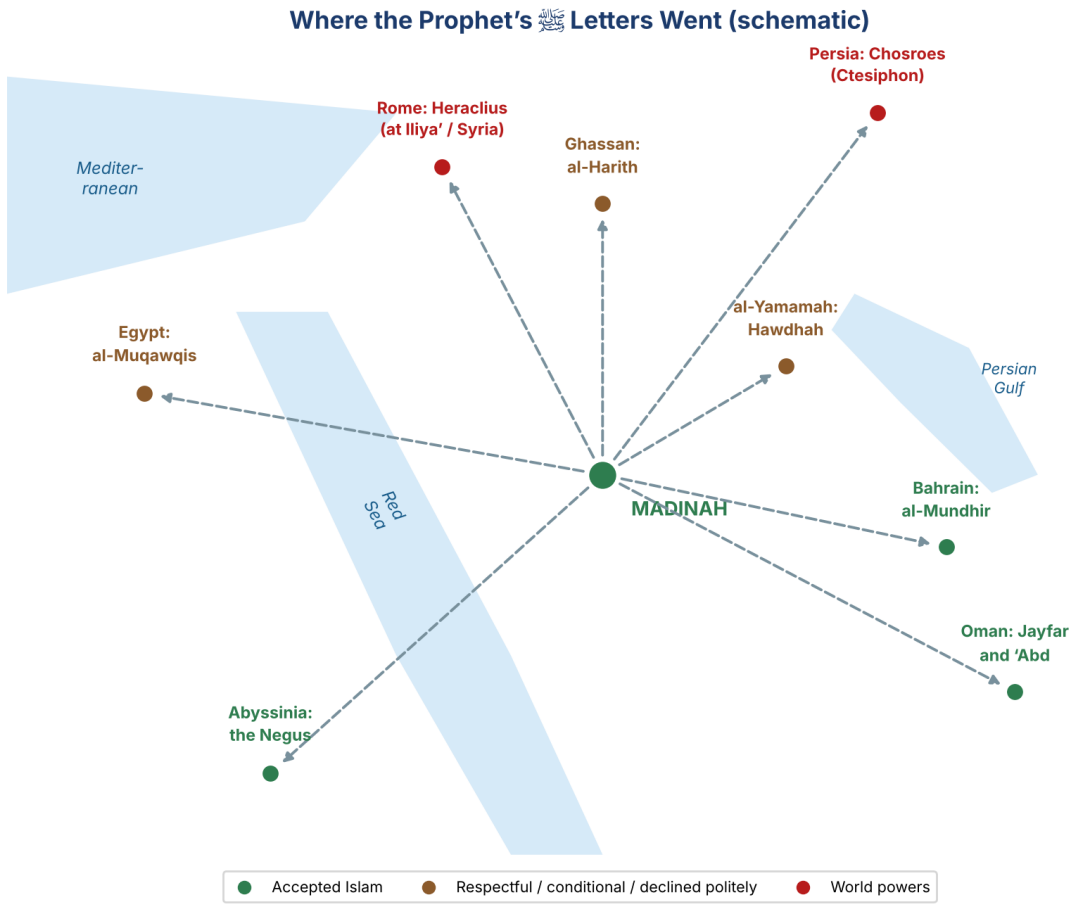
Two names are confirmed by authentic Hadith: ***Dihyah*** took the letter to the governor of Busra, who passed it to Heraclius (Bukhari 7), and ***'Abdullah ibn Hudhafah*** took the letter to Chosroes (Bukhari 4424). The other names are well-known ***sirah-book information***.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.

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WHERE DID THE LETTERS GO?



Schematic only; positions not to scale. Recipients and outcomes per the sirah books, except where stated in authentic hadith.

Figure 3: The directions of the Prophet's ﷺ letters from Madinah (schematic).

From Madinah the letters went ***north*** (Rome and Ghassan), ***north-east*** (Persia), ***west*** (Egypt), ***south*** across the Red Sea (Abyssinia) and ***east*** (al-Yamamah, Bahrain, Oman). The lesson: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***chose the right messenger*** — one who understood the language and culture of those invited.

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HERACLIUS AND THE VICTORY OF ROME

To understand where Heraclius was when the Prophet's ﷺ letter arrived, we must go back to ***a prophecy of the Qur'an***. Some years before the Hijrah, Persia had defeated Rome and seized Syria, Jerusalem and Egypt. The idolaters of Makkah rejoiced, since fire-worshipping Persia was closer to them. Then Allah revealed:

"The Byzantines have been defeated"Tafsir Ibn Kathir 30:2.

"But they, after their defeat, will overcome"Tafsir Ibn Kathir 30:3.

"Within three to nine years"Tafsir Ibn Kathir 30:4.

The prophecy came true. Heraclius counter-attacked and ***defeated Persia*** around 627–628 CE, coinciding with the Hudaybiyah period. Imam al-Bukhari narrates that when Allah drove the Persian army away from him, ***Heraclius walked on foot from Hims to Iliya'*** (Jerusalem) in thanksgiving (Sahih al-Bukhari 2941). It was in Iliya' that the Prophet's ﷺ letter reached him.

HISTORY NOTE: THE ROMAN–PERSIAN WAR

The war between the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire and Sasanian Persia in 602–628 CE was among the longest in the history of both empires. It ended with Heraclius' victory and a peace in 628 CE (Wikipedia, "Byzantine–Sasanian War of 602–628"). The war exhausted both great powers — and within less than ten years, both faced the armies of Islam.

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ABU SUFYAN IN THE COURT OF HERACLIUS

When the Prophet's ﷺ letter reached Iliya', Heraclius wanted to know who had sent it. As it happened — by Allah's decree — a Qurayshi trading caravan was in Syria, led by ***Abu Sufyan ibn Harb***, then the chief enemy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The story was told by Abu Sufyan himself, years later after he had embraced Islam, to Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ الْحَكَمُ بْنُ نَافِعٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُتْبَةَ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَبَّاسٍ، أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ أَبَا سُفْيَانَ بْنَ حَرْبٍ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ هِرَقْلَ أَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِ فِي رَكْبٍ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ ـ وَكَانُوا تُجَّارًا بِالشَّأْمِ ـ فِي الْمُدَّةِ الَّتِي كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَادَّ فِيهَا أَبَا سُفْيَانَ وَكُفَّارَ قُرَيْشٍ، فَأَتَوْهُ وَهُمْ بِإِيلِيَاءَ فَدَعَاهُمْ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ، وَحَوْلَهُ عُظَمَاءُ الرُّومِ ثُمَّ دَعَاهُمْ وَدَعَا بِتَرْجُمَانِهِ فَقَالَ أَيُّكُمْ أَقْرَبُ نَسَبًا بِهَذَا الرَّجُلِ الَّذِي يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ نَبِيٌّ فَقَالَ أَبُو سُفْيَانَ فَقُلْتُ أَنَا أَقْرَبُهُمْ نَسَبًا. فَقَالَ أَدْنُوهُ مِنِّي، وَقَرِّبُوا أَصْحَابَهُ، فَاجْعَلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ ظَهْرِهِ. ثُمَّ قَالَ لِتَرْجُمَانِهِ قُلْ لَهُمْ إِنِّي سَائِلٌ هَذَا عَنْ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ، فَإِنْ كَذَبَنِي فَكَذِّبُوهُ. فَوَاللَّهِ لَوْلاَ الْحَيَاءُ مِنْ أَنْ يَأْثِرُوا عَلَىَّ كَذِبًا لَكَذَبْتُ عَنْهُ، ثُمَّ كَانَ أَوَّلَ مَا سَأَلَنِي عَنْهُ أَنْ قَالَ كَيْفَ نَسَبُهُ فِيكُمْ قُلْتُ هُوَ فِينَا ذُو نَسَبٍ. قَالَ فَهَلْ قَالَ هَذَا الْقَوْلَ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ قَطُّ قَبْلَهُ قُلْتُ لاَ. قَالَ فَهَلْ كَانَ مِنْ آبَائِهِ مِنْ مَلِكٍ قُلْتُ لاَ. قَالَ فَأَشْرَافُ النَّاسِ يَتَّبِعُونَهُ أَمْ ضُعَفَاؤُهُمْ فَقُلْتُ بَلْ ضُعَفَاؤُهُمْ. قَالَ أَيَزِيدُونَ أَمْ يَنْقُصُونَ قُلْتُ بَلْ يَزِيدُونَ. قَالَ فَهَلْ يَرْتَدُّ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ سَخْطَةً لِدِينِهِ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ فِيهِ قُلْتُ لاَ. قَالَ فَهَلْ كُنْتُمْ تَتَّهِمُونَهُ بِالْكَذِبِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَقُولَ مَا قَالَ قُلْتُ لاَ. قَالَ فَهَلْ يَغْدِرُ قُلْتُ لاَ، وَنَحْنُ مِنْهُ فِي مُدَّةٍ لاَ نَدْرِي مَا هُوَ فَاعِلٌ فِيهَا. قَالَ وَلَمْ تُمْكِنِّي كَلِمَةٌ أُدْخِلُ فِيهَا شَيْئًا غَيْرَ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةِ. قَالَ فَهَلْ قَاتَلْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُ نَعَمْ. قَالَ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ قِتَالُكُمْ إِيَّاهُ قُلْتُ الْحَرْبُ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُ سِجَالٌ، يَنَالُ مِنَّا وَنَنَالُ مِنْهُ. قَالَ مَاذَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ قُلْتُ يَقُولُ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ، وَلاَ تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَاتْرُكُوا مَا يَقُولُ آبَاؤُكُمْ، وَيَأْمُرُنَا بِالصَّلاَةِ وَالصِّدْقِ وَالْعَفَافِ وَالصِّلَةِ. فَقَالَ لِلتَّرْجُمَانِ قُلْ لَهُ سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ نَسَبِهِ، فَذَكَرْتَ أَنَّهُ فِيكُمْ ذُو نَسَبٍ،

فَكَذَلِكَ الرُّسُلُ تُبْعَثُ فِي نَسَبِ قَوْمِهَا، وَسَأَلْتُكَ هَلْ قَالَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ هَذَا الْقَوْلَ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لاَ، فَقُلْتُ لَوْ كَانَ أَحَدٌ قَالَ هَذَا الْقَوْلَ قَبْلَهُ لَقُلْتُ رَجُلٌ يَأْتَسِي بِقَوْلٍ قِيلَ قَبْلَهُ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ هَلْ كَانَ مِنْ آبَائِهِ مِنْ مَلِكٍ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لاَ، قُلْتُ فَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ آبَائِهِ مِنْ مَلِكٍ قُلْتُ رَجُلٌ يَطْلُبُ مُلْكَ أَبِيهِ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ هَلْ كُنْتُمْ تَتَّهِمُونَهُ بِالْكَذِبِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَقُولَ مَا قَالَ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لاَ، فَقَدْ أَعْرِفُ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيَذَرَ الْكَذِبَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكْذِبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ أَشْرَافُ النَّاسِ اتَّبَعُوهُ أَمْ ضُعَفَاؤُهُمْ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنَّ ضُعَفَاءَهُمُ اتَّبَعُوهُ، وَهُمْ أَتْبَاعُ الرُّسُلِ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ أَيَزِيدُونَ أَمْ يَنْقُصُونَ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنَّهُمْ يَزِيدُونَ، وَكَذَلِكَ أَمْرُ الإِيمَانِ حَتَّى يَتِمَّ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ أَيَرْتَدُّ أَحَدٌ سَخْطَةً لِدِينِهِ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ فِيهِ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لاَ، وَكَذَلِكَ الإِيمَانُ حِينَ تُخَالِطُ بَشَاشَتُهُ الْقُلُوبَ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ هَلْ يَغْدِرُ فَذَكَرْتَ أَنْ لاَ، وَكَذَلِكَ الرُّسُلُ لاَ تَغْدِرُ، وَسَأَلْتُكَ بِمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ، فَذَكَرْتَ أَنَّهُ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ، وَلاَ تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَيَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ الأَوْثَانِ، وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالصَّلاَةِ وَالصِّدْقِ وَالْعَفَافِ. فَإِنْ كَانَ مَا تَقُولُ حَقًّا فَسَيَمْلِكُ مَوْضِعَ قَدَمَيَّ هَاتَيْنِ، وَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ خَارِجٌ، لَمْ أَكُنْ أَظُنُّ أَنَّهُ مِنْكُمْ، فَلَوْ أَنِّي أَعْلَمُ أَنِّي أَخْلُصُ إِلَيْهِ لَتَجَشَّمْتُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَلَوْ كُنْتُ عِنْدَهُ لَغَسَلْتُ عَنْ قَدَمِهِ. ثُمَّ دَعَا بِكِتَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم الَّذِي بَعَثَ بِهِ دِحْيَةُ إِلَى عَظِيمِ بُصْرَى، فَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى هِرَقْلَ فَقَرَأَهُ فَإِذَا فِيهِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى هِرَقْلَ عَظِيمِ الرُّومِ. سَلاَمٌ عَلَى مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى، أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ بِدِعَايَةِ الإِسْلاَمِ، أَسْلِمْ تَسْلَمْ، يُؤْتِكَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ مَرَّتَيْنِ، فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ فَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ إِثْمَ الأَرِيسِيِّينَ وَ{يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَنْ لاَ نَعْبُدَ إِلاَّ اللَّهَ وَلاَ نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلاَ يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ} قَالَ أَبُو سُفْيَانَ فَلَمَّا قَالَ مَا قَالَ، وَفَرَغَ مِنْ قِرَاءَةِ الْكِتَابِ كَثُرَ عِنْدَهُ الصَّخَبُ، وَارْتَفَعَتِ الأَصْوَاتُ وَأُخْرِجْنَا، فَقُلْتُ لأَصْحَابِي حِينَ أُخْرِجْنَا لَقَدْ أَمِرَ أَمْرُ ابْنِ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ، إِنَّهُ يَخَافُهُ مَلِكُ بَنِي الأَصْفَرِ. فَمَا زِلْتُ مُوقِنًا أَنَّهُ سَيَظْهَرُ حَتَّى أَدْخَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ الإِسْلاَمَ.

TRANSLATION:

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'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما narrated that Abu Sufyan ibn Harb told him: **Heraclius summoned him with a caravan of Quraysh — they were traders in Syria — during the truce between the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abu Sufyan and the disbelievers of Quraysh.** Heraclius called them into his court, surrounded by the Roman nobles, and asked: "Which of you is closest in lineage to this man who claims to be a prophet?" Abu Sufyan replied: "I am." Heraclius placed his companions behind him so they would deny him if he lied. Abu Sufyan said: ***"By Allah, had I not been ashamed of being called a liar, I would have lied about him."*** Heraclius asked about his lineage (noble), whether anyone before him had made such a claim (no), whether any of his ancestors was a king (no), who followed him (the weak), whether they were increasing (increasing), whether anyone apostatised out of displeasure (no), whether he had ever lied before (no), whether he broke promises (no), whether they fought him (yes, with victory alternating), and what he commanded: **"Worship Allah alone, associate nothing with Him, abandon what your forefathers said; and he commands us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste and to keep the ties of kinship."** Heraclius then explained each answer and said: ***"If what you say is true, he will soon possess the very ground beneath these two feet of mine… Were I with him, I would wash his feet."*** Then he read the letter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: **"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. From Muhammad, the servant of Allah and His Messenger, to Heraclius, the great one of the Romans. Peace be upon whoever follows the guidance. To proceed: I invite you with the call of Islam.** *Embrace Islam and you will be safe*, **and Allah will give you your reward twice. If you turn away, you will bear the sin of your subjects (al-arisiyyin). 'O People of the Book, come to a word that is equitable between us and you…' (Al 'Imran 3:64)."** Abu Sufyan said: When he finished reading, voices rose and we were turned out. I said to my companions: "The affair of Ibn Abi Kabshah (Muhammad) has grown great; even the king of Banu al-Asfar (the Romans) fears him." ***I remained certain that he would prevail, until Allah brought Islam into my heart.***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman al-Hakam ibn Nafi', from Shu'ayb ibn Abi Hamzah, from az-Zuhri, from 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Utbah, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, from Abu Sufyan ibn Harb رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, Hadith No. 7 (quoted up to the words of Abu Sufyan); also Nos. 2941, 4553; and Sahih Muslim No. 1773.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This is ***the seventh Hadith*** of Sahih al-Bukhari, placed by Imam al-Bukhari in the Book of the Beginning of Revelation. It is an extraordinary witness: ***an enemy's testimony*** to the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, before an emperor, when that enemy was not yet a believer and dearly wished to discredit him.

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Abu Sufyan admitted that ***shame at being called a liar*** kept him from lying. For the Arabs, lying was a great disgrace. So his answers, though from an enemy's mouth, became ***honest evidence*** of the Prophet's ﷺ qualities.

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ABU SUFYAN: FROM ENEMY TO COMPANION

Abu Sufyan's last words in this Hadith are deeply moving: ***"I remained certain that he would prevail, until Allah brought Islam into my heart."*** That certainty began in Heraclius' court, but Islam entered his heart only about ***two years later***, at the conquest of Makkah in 8 AH (Sahih al-Bukhari 4280).

On the day Makkah was opened, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ honoured him, saying: ***"Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan is safe"*** (Sahih Muslim 1780). The man who had led Quraysh against him at Uhud and the Confederates finally became a Companion, and his sons Yazid and Mu'awiyah fought to open Syria — Heraclius' own land.

The lesson: ***never despair*** of anyone's guidance. Today's enemy may be tomorrow's companion, and an honest testimony today may be the seed of faith that grows later.

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THE TEN QUESTIONS OF HERACLIUS

Heraclius was not only an emperor; he was also ***learned in the earlier scriptures***. His questions were carefully designed to test the signs of prophethood he knew. After hearing Abu Sufyan's answers, Heraclius himself explained the purpose of each question:

QUESTION AND ABU SUFYAN'S ANSWER	HERACLIUS' EXPLANATION
His lineage? — Noble	Messengers are sent from the noble lineage of their people
Did anyone before him claim this? — No	If so, he might be imitating someone
Was any ancestor a king? — No	If so, he might be seeking his father's kingdom
Did he ever lie? — No	One who never lies to people would not lie about Allah
Who follows him? — The weak	The weak are the followers of messengers
Increasing or decreasing? — Increasing	So is faith until it is complete
Does anyone apostatise from displeasure? — No	So is faith when its sweetness enters the heart
Does he betray? — No	So are messengers; they do not betray
Have you fought him? — Yes, by turns	So are messengers tested, then the outcome is theirs
What does he command? — Tawhid, prayer, truth, chastity, kinship	If true, he will rule where my feet stand

Heraclius' explanation is narrated in the full wording of the same Hadith (Sahih al-Bukhari 7). See how ***logical*** the test was: a liar seeking power would come from a royal family, would lie, would betray, and his followers would leave him once they knew him. None of that ***was true*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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THE SWEETNESS OF FAITH

One of Heraclius' most beautiful remarks was: ***"So is faith when its delight mixes with the hearts."*** One who has tasted the sweetness of faith will not abandon it out of displeasure, even under torture. This was seen in Bilal, the family of Yasir, and the weak Companions in Makkah.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself explained three things that bring ***the sweetness of faith***: that Allah and His Messenger are dearer than anything else; loving a person only for Allah's sake; and hating to return to disbelief as one hates being thrown into fire (Sahih al-Bukhari 16).

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"EMBRACE ISLAM AND YOU WILL BE SAFE"

The Prophet's ﷺ letter to Heraclius is a model ***letter of da'wah***. It is brief, yet every phrase has a purpose.

Let us look at its structure:

PART OF THE LETTER	ITS MEANING
Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim	Beginning with the name of Allah
From Muhammad, servant of Allah and His Messenger	"Servant" first: humility and tawhid
To Heraclius, the great one of the Romans	Respecting the recipient's position
Peace upon whoever follows guidance	A greeting fitting for a non-Muslim
Embrace Islam and you will be safe	A clear call and a promise of safety
Allah will reward you twice	Faith in 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and Muhammad ﷺ
The sin of your subjects (al-arisiyyin)	A leader's responsibility for his people
Al 'Imran 3:64	Common ground with the People of the Book

The letter closes with the verse inviting the People of the Book to common ground: ***"O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:64.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not begin with differences, but with ***common ground***: Heraclius was a Christian who believed in God and the prophets. Wise da'wah ***builds on what is agreed***, then clarifies what is disputed.

A DOUBLE REWARD

The promise of ***"a double reward"*** is explained in another Hadith: three people get two rewards, among them ***a person of the Scripture who believed in his prophet, then believed in Muhammad***ﷺ (Sahih al-Bukhari 97). Islam does not cancel the People of the Book's faith in their prophets, but completes it.

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HERACLIUS AND HIS THRONE

What did Heraclius decide? The full wording of Sahih al-Bukhari 7 continues the story through the report of ***Ibn an-Natur***, governor of Iliya', quoted by Imam az-Zuhri. Heraclius went to ***Hims*** and invited the Roman nobles into one of his palaces. He ordered the doors shut, then said: ***"O Romans, do you want success, guidance, and for your kingdom to remain? Then pledge allegiance to this Prophet."***

The nobles ***bolted*** towards the doors like wild donkeys, but found them locked. When Heraclius saw their aversion and despaired of their faith, he said: ***"Bring them back to me."*** Then he said: ***"I said what I said just now to test the firmness of your attachment to your religion, and I have seen it."*** They prostrated to him and were pleased with him (Sahih al-Bukhari 7).

SIRAH NOTE: THE STATUS OF IBN AN-NATUR'S REPORT

The last part of this Hadith is not a saying of the Prophet ﷺ, but ***a historical report*** narrated by az-Zuhri from Ibn an-Natur, a Christian notable in Syria. Imam al-Bukhari included it as the continuation of the story. Ibn Hajar in ***Fath al-Bari*** explains that az-Zuhri heard it after Ibn an-Natur had become Muslim, or through a trusted intermediary.

Scholars ***differ*** on whether Heraclius believed in secret. What appears from this report is that he ***put his throne first***, and the Hadith closes with: "That was the last of Heraclius' affair." The matter of his heart is left to Allah.

REFERENCES:

Sahih al-Bukhari 7; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation. https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7

The lesson is profound: ***knowing the truth is not the same as accepting it***. Heraclius recognised the signs of prophethood, even saying he would wash the Prophet's ﷺ feet, but ***love of power*** held him back. Abu Sufyan, then an enemy, finally said: ***"Allah brought Islam into my heart."*** Guidance is Allah's gift to whom He wills.

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CHOSROES TEARS THE LETTER

If Heraclius received the letter with respect, ***Chosroes*** the Persian emperor did the opposite. The Chosroes of that time was ***Khosrow II (Parviz)***, ruler of an empire centuries old who regarded himself as almost divine. Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4424

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ، حَدَّثَنَا يَعْقُوبُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، عَنْ صَالِحٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، أَنَّ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ، أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم بَعَثَ بِكِتَابِهِ إِلَى كِسْرَى مَعَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ حُذَافَةَ السَّهْمِيِّ، فَأَمَرَهُ أَنْ يَدْفَعَهُ إِلَى عَظِيمِ الْبَحْرَيْنِ، فَدَفَعَهُ عَظِيمُ الْبَحْرَيْنِ إِلَى كِسْرَى، فَلَمَّا قَرَأَهُ مَزَّقَهُ ـ فَحَسِبْتُ أَنَّ ابْنَ الْمُسَيَّبِ قَالَ ـ فَدَعَا عَلَيْهِمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَنْ يُمَزَّقُوا كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما narrated that **the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent his letter to Chosroes with 'Abdullah ibn Hudhafah as-Sahmi, and ordered him to hand it to the governor of Bahrain. The governor of Bahrain handed it to Chosroes. When Chosroes read it, he tore it up.** (Ibn Shihab said: I think Ibn al-Musayyib said:) ***So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ invoked Allah that they be torn into pieces completely.***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ishaq ibn Ibrahim, from Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim, from his father Ibrahim ibn Sa'd, from Salih ibn Kaysan, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abdullah, from Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Military Expeditions (al-Maghazi), Chapter on the Letter of the Prophet ﷺ to Chosroes and Caesar, Hadith No. 4424; also Nos. 64, 2939, 7264.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4424

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Chosroes ***tore up*** the Prophet's ﷺ letter in anger — the sirah books say he was furious that the Prophet's ﷺ name was written before his own. To an arrogant emperor, a letter from a man of the Arabian desert was an insult.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not respond by sending an army. He ***prayed to Allah*** that their kingdom be torn apart as the letter had been torn. That prayer was answered in an astonishing way, as the following chapters show.

The lesson: ***arrogance in rejecting the truth*** brings ruin. Allah says of the arrogant: "I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant upon the earth without right" (Al-A'raf 7:146). Heraclius at least listened; Chosroes would not listen at all.

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BADHAN IN YEMEN AND THE DEATH OF CHOSROES

The story after the letter was torn is not in the authentic Hadith we have quoted, but it is widely reported in the books of sirah and history. We mention it with its status made clear:

SIRAH NOTE: BADHAN, GOVERNOR OF YEMEN

Ibn Sa'd and at-Tabari relate that Chosroes ordered ***Badhan***, his governor in Yemen, to send two men to bring the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to him. When they reached Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ asked them to wait, then told them: ***"My Lord has killed your master tonight; his son Shiroyah has killed him."***

The two envoys returned and told Badhan. Soon a letter arrived from Shiroyah confirming his father's death. Then ***Badhan and the Persians in Yemen embraced Islam***. This report is well known in the sirah books; some of its chains are mursal (missing the Companion link).

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; at-Tabari, The History of the Prophets and Kings; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah.

HISTORY NOTE: THE FALL OF KHOSROW II

Non-Muslim historical sources also record that ***Khosrow II was overthrown by his son Kavad II (Shiroyah)*** in February 628 CE and killed days later (Wikipedia, "Khosrow II"). After that, within four years, Persia was ruled by ***more than ten kings and queens*** in succession — the kingdom was truly "torn apart".

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said, on hearing that Persia had crowned Chosroes' daughter: ***"A people who entrust their affairs to a woman will not succeed"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4425) — a Hadith showing he followed events in Persia closely. Scholars discuss its meaning in the context of the supreme leadership of a state.

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"THERE WILL BE NO CHOSROES AFTER HIM"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not only pray; he also ***foretold the future*** of both great empires with remarkable certainty:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3121

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ، سَمِعَ جَرِيرًا، عَنْ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ، عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِذَا هَلَكَ كِسْرَى فَلاَ كِسْرَى بَعْدَهُ، وَإِذَا هَلَكَ قَيْصَرُ فَلاَ قَيْصَرَ بَعْدَهُ، وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، لَتُنْفَقَنَّ كُنُوزُهُمَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"When Chosroes perishes, there will be no Chosroes after him; and when Caesar perishes, there will be no Caesar after him.** *By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, their treasures will surely be spent in the path of Allah.*"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ishaq ibn Ibrahim, from Jarir ibn 'Abd al-Hamid, from 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Umayr, from Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the One-Fifth (Fard al-Khumus), Hadith No. 3121; also Nos. 3618–3619; and Sahih Muslim No. 2919.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3121

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

When these words were spoken, Rome and Persia were ***the two greatest powers in the world***, while the Muslims were a small community in Madinah. Yet within less than twenty years, this prophecy came true.

EVENT	YEAR
Battle of al-Qadisiyyah; the Persian army defeated	15 AH / 636 CE
Al-Mada'in (Chosroes' capital) opened	16 AH / 637 CE
Battle of Nahawand, "the victory of victories"	21 AH / 642 CE
Yazdegerd III, the last Chosroes, killed	31 AH / 651 CE
Battle of Yarmuk; Rome leaves Syria	15 AH / 636 CE

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'Adi ibn Hatim رضى الله عنه, who heard the Prophet's ﷺ prophecy about Chosroes' treasures, later said:

"I was among those who opened the treasures of Chosroes ibn Hurmuz" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3595). Those treasures were spent in the path of Allah in the time of 'Umar رضى الله عنه.

What of Caesar? The title of Roman Caesar continued in Constantinople for centuries. Imam ash-Shafi'i, as quoted by an-Nawawi in ***Sharh Sahih Muslim***, explained the meaning: ***no more Chosroes in Iraq and no more Caesar in Syria*** — and so it happened. After Yarmuk, Heraclius left Syria for ever.

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PROPHECY AS PROOF OF PROPHETHOOD

Imagine the leader of a small state that had just been besieged by the Confederates, swearing with certainty that ***the treasures of the two greatest empires in the world*** would be spent by his followers in the path of Allah. No political analyst of that time would have expected it. Yet it happened exactly as foretold, and was witnessed by Companions still alive.

This is the fulfilment of Allah's promise: ***"It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 48:28.

The lesson: the Prophet's ﷺ prophecies that came true are ***proofs of prophethood*** that history can check. They also teach that ***material power does not last***; empires that seem invincible can fall when Allah wills.

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THE NEGUS: A KING WHO WRONGED NO ONE

If Chosroes tore the letter, ***the Negus*** of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) gave the noblest response. This Negus, named ***Ashamah***, was no stranger to the Muslims. About fifteen years earlier, he had ***protected the Companions*** who emigrated to Abyssinia from the persecution of Quraysh.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose Abyssinia as the first place of emigration because there was ***a king who wronged no one***, as the sirah books say. When Quraysh sent 'Amr ibn al-'As to demand the Companions' return, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib recited Surat Maryam, and the Negus wept until his beard was wet, saying that what 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and Muhammad ﷺ brought ***came from the same source***.

Some exegetes, as Ibn Kathir mentions, connect this verse with the Negus and the priests of Abyssinia: ***"And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 5:83.

SIRAH NOTE: THE LETTER TO THE NEGUS

Ibn Sa'd relates that the Prophet's ﷺ letter to the Negus was carried by ***'Amr ibn Umayyah ad-Damri***. The Negus received it with respect, placed it on his eyes, came down from his throne, and ***declared his Islam***.

The Negus also acted for the Prophet ﷺ in ***the marriage contract with Umm Habibah*** bint Abi Sufyan, who was in Abyssinia, paying her dowry on his behalf (Sunan Abi Dawud 2107, graded sahih by al-Albani). He also sent Ja'far and the Companions home by ship, and they arrived at Khaybar (Book 16).

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Sunan Abi Dawud 2107. https://sunnah.com/abudawud:2107

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A FUNERAL PRAYER FOR A KING

The Negus Ashamah died in ***9 AH*** according to the sirah books. He never met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; he lived thousands of kilometres away, across the Red Sea. Yet Allah informed His Messenger of his death ***on that very day***. Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1245

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم نَعَى النَّجَاشِيَّ فِي الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي مَاتَ فِيهِ، خَرَجَ إِلَى الْمُصَلَّى، فَصَفَّ بِهِمْ وَكَبَّرَ أَرْبَعًا.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that **the Messenger of Allah ﷺ announced the death of the Negus on the day he died. He went out to the prayer ground, arranged the rows with them, and said takbir four times.**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma'il ibn Abi Uways, from Malik ibn Anas, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Funerals, Hadith No. 1245; also Nos. 1333, 3880; and Sahih Muslim No. 951.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1245

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما narrates the Prophet's ﷺ words that day, including the Negus' ***real name***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3877

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الرَّبِيعِ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ، عَنْ عَطَاءٍ، عَنْ جَابِرٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم حِينَ مَاتَ النَّجَاشِيُّ مَاتَ الْيَوْمَ رَجُلٌ صَالِحٌ، فَقُومُوا فَصَلُّوا عَلَى أَخِيكُمْ أَصْحَمَةَ.

TRANSLATION:

Jabir رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said when the Negus died: ***"Today a righteous man has died. So stand up and pray over your brother, Ashamah."***

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CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu ar-Rabi' az-Zahrani, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Ibn Jurayj, from 'Ata' ibn Abi Rabah, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, Chapter on the Death of the Negus, Hadith No. 3877; and Sahih Muslim No. 952.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3877

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ called him ***"your brother"*** and ***"a righteous man"***. In another narration he said: ***"Seek forgiveness for your brother"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3880). An Abyssinian king who never saw him became a brother to the Companions in Madinah — ***Islamic brotherhood*** transcends race, colour and borders.

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THE FUNERAL PRAYER IN ABSENCE

This event is the evidence for ***the funeral prayer in absence*** — the funeral prayer over a Muslim who died elsewhere. Shafi'i and Hanbali scholars generally permit it, while some scholars limit it to situations like the Negus', where ***no one had prayed over him*** in his land. Ibn al-Qayyim in ***Zad al-Ma'ad*** inclines to the second view.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***went out to the prayer ground***, arranged the rows, and said takbir four times — just as in an ordinary funeral prayer. This shows how high the Negus stood with him, and how he valued ***the service of one who protected the Muslims*** when they were weakest.

Ibn Kathir mentions reports that this verse was revealed concerning the Negus, when some questioned praying over an Abyssinian king: ***"And indeed, among the People of the Scripture are those who believe in Allah and what was revealed to you"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:199.

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THE OTHER NEGUS

We return to a phrase in the Hadith of Anas رضى الله عنه (Sahih Muslim 1774): ***"And this Negus was not the Negus over whom the Prophet ﷺ prayed."*** What does it mean?

Scholars explain that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wrote to ***two Neguses***. The first was ***Ashamah***, who believed and was prayed over. After Ashamah died, the Prophet ﷺ wrote to ***his successor***, inviting him to Islam — and this is the letter Anas meant in Muslim's narration, since it is mentioned with the letters to kings who had not yet believed. Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Hajar mention this explanation.

The sirah books do not record that the second Negus embraced Islam. This detail shows ***the precision of the Hadith narrators***: Anas did not let readers confuse two kings with the same title. The lesson: ***accuracy in narration*** is part of the trust of knowledge.

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AL-MUQAWQIS, THE RULER OF EGYPT

Egypt at that time was under Roman rule, and its ruler in Alexandria was called ***al-Muqawqis***. The story of the letter to him is not in Sahih al-Bukhari or Muslim, but is widely reported in the sirah books:

SIRAH NOTE: HATIB IBN ABI BALTA'AH IN ALEXANDRIA

Ibn Sa'd and Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam relate that ***Hatib ibn Abi Balta'ah*** carried the Prophet's ﷺ letter to al-Muqawqis. Al-Muqawqis received it with respect, kept it in an ivory casket, and replied courteously: he acknowledged that a prophet was yet to appear, but ***did not embrace Islam***.

He sent ***gifts*** to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, among them two slave women, ***Mariyah*** and her sister ***Sirin***, garments, and a white mule later named ***Duldul***. Mariyah the Copt became the mother of ***Ibrahim***, the Prophet's ﷺ son. Historians differ over the real identity of al-Muqawqis.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam, Futuh Misr; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.
Wikipedia, "Muqawqis". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muqawqis

The existence of ***Ibrahim***, the Prophet's ﷺ son by Mariyah, is confirmed by authentic Hadith. When Ibrahim died in infancy, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ shed tears and said: ***"The eyes weep, the heart grieves, and we say only what pleases our Lord. Indeed, we are saddened by your parting, O Ibrahim"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1303).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also counselled about Egypt: ***"You will conquer Egypt… so treat its people well, for they have a right of protection and kinship"*** (Sahih Muslim 2543). Scholars explain that "kinship" refers to ***Hajar***, mother of Isma'il عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and ***Mariyah***, mother of Ibrahim — both from Egypt.

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THE ARAB KINGS: GHASSAN, YAMAMAH, BAHRAIN AND OMAN

Besides the great powers, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also wrote to ***the Arab kings and rulers*** on the borders of the Peninsula. Their responses varied, and these stories come from ***the sirah books***:

RULER AND ENVOY	RESPONSE (SIRAH BOOKS)
al-Harith ibn Abi Shimr al-Ghassani (Syria) — Shuja' ibn Wahb	Angry, threw the letter, threatened to attack Madinah
Hawdhah ibn 'Ali al-Hanafi (al-Yamamah) — Salit ibn 'Amr	Asked for a share of power; refused; he died soon after
al-Mundhir ibn Sawa (Bahrain) — al-'Ala' al-Hadrami	Embraced Islam with many of his people
Jayfar and 'Abd ibn al-Julanda (Oman) — 'Amr ibn al-'As	Embraced Islam after discussion; 8 AH

SIRAH NOTE: HAWDHAH AND THE DEMAND FOR POWER

Ibn Sa'd relates that Hawdhah, ruler of al-Yamamah, replied asking for ***a share of power*** if he followed. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ refused, because this matter was ***not a bargain over power***. Hawdhah died soon after. Al-Yamamah later became the home of Musaylimah the Liar.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.

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BAHRAIN AND THE LETTER OF ZAKAT

The people of Bahrain who embraced Islam later received letters on ***the rulings of zakat***. Anas رضى الله عنه, sent by Abu Bakr to Bahrain, carried a letter sealed with the Prophet's ﷺ ring (Sahih al-Bukhari 3106), and its contents on the zakat rates for camels, sheep and silver are narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari 1454. Letters of da'wah became letters of ***administration and law***.

The lesson: people's response to da'wah ***does not depend on the strength of their state***. The small kings of Bahrain and Oman believed, while the great emperors refused. Guidance is not measured by power, but by ***the heart's readiness*** to accept the truth.

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THUMAMAH IBN UTHAL: A CHIEF WON BY CHARACTER

The story of ***Thumamah ibn Uthal***, chief of al-Yamamah, shows another way of inviting leaders: not by letter, but by ***character***. Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4372

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي سَعِيدُ بْنُ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ بَعَثَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم خَيْلاً قِبَلَ نَجْدٍ، فَجَاءَتْ بِرَجُلٍ مِنْ بَنِي حَنِيفَةَ يُقَالُ لَهُ ثُمَامَةُ بْنُ أُثَالٍ، فَرَبَطُوهُ بِسَارِيَةٍ مِنْ سَوَارِي الْمَسْجِدِ، فَخَرَجَ إِلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ مَا عِنْدَكَ يَا ثُمَامَةُ. فَقَالَ عِنْدِي خَيْرٌ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، إِنْ تَقْتُلْنِي تَقْتُلْ ذَا دَمٍ، وَإِنْ تُنْعِمْ تُنْعِمْ عَلَى شَاكِرٍ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تُرِيدُ الْمَالَ فَسَلْ مِنْهُ مَا شِئْتَ. حَتَّى كَانَ الْغَدُ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ مَا عِنْدَكَ يَا ثُمَامَةُ. قَالَ مَا قُلْتُ لَكَ إِنْ تُنْعِمْ تُنْعِمْ عَلَى شَاكِرٍ. فَتَرَكَهُ حَتَّى كَانَ بَعْدَ الْغَدِ، فَقَالَ مَا عِنْدَكَ يَا ثُمَامَةُ. فَقَالَ عِنْدِي مَا قُلْتُ لَكَ. فَقَالَ أَطْلِقُوا ثُمَامَةَ، فَانْطَلَقَ إِلَى نَخْلٍ قَرِيبٍ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ فَاغْتَسَلَ ثُمَّ دَخَلَ الْمَسْجِدَ فَقَالَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، يَا مُحَمَّدُ وَاللَّهِ مَا كَانَ عَلَى الأَرْضِ وَجْهٌ أَبْغَضَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ وَجْهِكَ، فَقَدْ أَصْبَحَ وَجْهُكَ أَحَبَّ الْوُجُوهِ إِلَيَّ، وَاللَّهِ مَا كَانَ مِنْ دِينٍ أَبْغَضَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ دِينِكَ، فَأَصْبَحَ دِينُكَ أَحَبَّ الدِّينِ إِلَيَّ، وَاللَّهِ مَا كَانَ مِنْ بَلَدٍ أَبْغَضَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ بَلَدِكَ، فَأَصْبَحَ بَلَدُكَ أَحَبَّ الْبِلاَدِ إِلَيَّ، وَإِنَّ خَيْلَكَ أَخَذَتْنِي وَأَنَا أُرِيدُ الْعُمْرَةَ، فَمَاذَا تَرَى فَبَشَّرَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَأَمَرَهُ أَنْ يَعْتَمِرَ، فَلَمَّا قَدِمَ مَكَّةَ قَالَ لَهُ قَائِلٌ صَبَوْتَ. قَالَ لاَ، وَلَكِنْ أَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم، وَلاَ وَاللَّهِ لاَ يَأْتِيكُمْ مِنَ الْيَمَامَةِ حَبَّةُ حِنْطَةٍ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ فِيهَا النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: **The Prophet ﷺ sent some horsemen towards Najd, and they brought back a man of Banu Hanifah called Thumamah ibn Uthal, the chief of the people of al-Yamamah. They tied him to one of the pillars of the mosque.** The Prophet ﷺ came out to him and asked: "What do you have, O Thumamah?" He said: "I have good, O Muhammad. If you kill me, you kill one whose blood will be avenged; if you do good, you do good to one who is grateful; if you want wealth, ask." He asked him again on the second and third days, then said: ***"Release Thumamah."*** Thumamah went to a palm grove nearby, bathed, then entered the mosque and testified the two testimonies, saying: ***"O Muhammad, by Allah, there***

was no face on earth more hateful to me than yours, and now your face has become the dearest of all faces to me…" When he reached Makkah, someone said: "Have you turned apostate?" He said: "No, but I have embraced Islam with Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. ***By Allah, not a single grain of wheat will reach you from al-Yamamah until the Prophet ﷺ permits it.***"

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from Sa'id ibn Abi Sa'id al-Maqburi, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Military Expeditions (al-Maghazi), Chapter on the Delegation of Banu Hanifah and the Hadith of Thumamah ibn Uthal, Hadith No. 4372; and Sahih Muslim No. 1764.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4372

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Thumamah was captured and tied in the mosque for three days. There he ***saw for himself*** the Muslims' life: their prayer, their manners, and the Prophet's ﷺ treatment of him. Then he was ***released unconditionally***. That generosity bound his heart more strongly than the rope had bound him.

Note his words: the face, religion and land he ***hated most*** became those he ***loved most***. This is the power of character in da'wah. Thumamah then stopped the wheat supply from al-Yamamah to Makkah, until Quraysh appealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ — and according to the sirah books, he asked Thumamah to allow the supply again, out of ***compassion*** for the people of Makkah though they were enemies.

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THE TREATMENT OF CAPTIVES

The Qur'an praises those who are kind to captives: ***"And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 76:8.

Thumamah was a captive and an enemy, yet he was fed, not tortured, and asked courteously each day. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not force him to embrace Islam; he ***set him free***, and only once free did Thumamah choose Islam willingly. This is proof that ***there is no compulsion in religion***.

The lesson: the most effective da'wah sometimes needs no words. ***Generosity*** to the helpless, even to an enemy, can open the most tightly closed heart.

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INVITE WITH WISDOM

All the Prophet's ﷺ letters and envoys followed one method laid down by Allah: ***"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:125.

And Allah defines the limit of a caller's duty: ***"but if they turn away - then upon you is only the [duty of] notification"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:20.

These verses explain why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ compelled no one. His duty was ***to convey clearly***; guidance belongs to Allah. Chosroes tore the letter, Heraclius chose his throne, al-Muqawqis sent gifts — and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not wage war to force them to believe.

At the same time, Allah commanded that the message be conveyed ***in full***: ***"O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 5:67.

ELEMENT OF WISDOM	EXAMPLE IN THE LETTERS
Understanding custom	A seal because kings read only sealed letters
Choosing the messenger	Dihyah to Rome; Hatib to Egypt
Starting from common ground	Verse 3:64 to the People of the Book
Respecting titles	"Great one of the Romans", "great one of the Copts"
Brief and clear	"Embrace Islam and you will be safe"
No compulsion	No war because a letter was refused

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GENTLE WORDS TO RULERS

The manners of inviting rulers were taught by Allah to Musa and Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed"***Tafsir Ibn Kathir 20:43.

"And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]"Tafsir Ibn Kathir 20:44.

If Pharaoh — who claimed to be a god — had to be addressed with ***gentle speech***, then other kings even more so. The Prophet's ﷺ letters followed this manner: no insults, no contempt, only a clear call and respect for position.

The lesson for us: advising leaders, superiors or anyone in power must be done with ***wisdom and courtesy***. Truth delivered harshly is often rejected because of its manner, not its content.

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SOURCES OF THE STORY OF THE LETTERS

The story of the letters to the kings reaches us through three kinds of sources of differing strength. This eBook distinguishes them so the reader knows ***what is certain*** and ***what is well known***:

Sources of the Story of the Letters to the Kings

The Qur'an (6)

- A Messenger to all mankind (34:28; 7:158)
- A mercy to the worlds (21:107)
- A common word with the People of the Book (3:64)
- The victory of Rome (30:2–4)
- Invite with wisdom (16:125)
- The duty is only to convey (3:20; 5:67)

Authentic Hadith (8)

- Sent to all mankind
- The silver ring "Muhammad Rasulullah"
- Letters to every ruler
- Heraclius questions Abu Sufyan; the letter
- Chosroes tears the letter
- No Chosroes or Caesar after them
- Funeral prayer in absence for the Negus
- Thumamah ibn Uthal

Sirah books (4)

- Six envoys on one day
- Al-Muqawqis and his gifts
- Arab kings: Ghassan, Yamamah, Bahrain, Oman
- Chosroes killed by his son

Sirah-book stories are mentioned with their status explained in the relevant chapters.

Figure 4: The status of sources for the story of the letters in this eBook.

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STORY	SOURCE AND STATUS
Messenger to all; mercy; common word; Rome; wisdom	The Qur'an (34:28; 7:158; 21:107; 3:64; 30:2–4; 16:125) — certain
Five distinctions; ring; Heraclius; Chosroes	Sahih al-Bukhari 335, 65, 3106, 7, 4424, 3121 — sahih
Letters to every ruler; the other Negus	Sahih Muslim 1774 — sahih
Prayer in absence; Thumamah	Sahih al-Bukhari 1245, 3877, 4372 — sahih
Umm Habibah's marriage via the Negus	Sunan Abi Dawud 2107 — sahih
Envoy names; Badhan; al-Muqawqis; Arab kings	Sirah books — well known; some mursal

Stories from the sirah books are not necessarily false; they are transmitted by trusted sirah scholars. Yet they are ***not on the level*** of the Qur'an and sahih hadith. This eBook ***does not include*** Isra'iliyyat or clearly fabricated reports.

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THE ENVOYS OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ: WHO WERE THEY?

Chapter 6 listed the names of the envoys and the directions they travelled. This chapter gets to know them more closely: which tribes they came from, what their merits were, and how their lives ended. The choice of envoys was not by chance; each one brought something suited to the land he was sent to.

ENVOY	TRIBE	SENT TO	OTHER INFORMATION
Dihyah ibn Khalifah al-Kalbi	Kalb (Quda'ah)	Heraclius, via the governor of Busra	Confirmed by Sahih al-Bukhari 7; known for his handsome face
'Abdullah ibn Hudhafah as-Sahmi	Quraysh, Banu Sahm	Chosroes, via the governor of Bahrain	Confirmed by Sahih al-Bukhari 4424; had emigrated to Abyssinia
'Amr ibn Umayyah ad-Damri	Banu Damrah (Kinanah)	The Negus	Sirah books
Hatib ibn Abi Balta'ah	Originally from Lakhm; ally of Banu Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza (Quraysh)	Al-Muqawqis	A veteran of Badr; sirah books
Shuja' ibn Wahb al-Asadi	Banu Asad ibn Khuzaymah; ally of Banu 'Abd Shams	Al-Harith al-Ghassani	A veteran of Badr; sirah books
Salit ibn 'Amr al-'Amiri	Quraysh, Banu 'Amir ibn Lu'ayy	Hawdhah ibn 'Ali (al-Yamamah)	Had emigrated to Abyssinia; sirah books
Al-'Ala' ibn al-Hadrami	From Hadramawt; ally of Banu Umayyah	Al-Mundhir ibn Sawa (Bahrain)	Later governor of Bahrain; sirah books
'Amr ibn al-'As	Quraysh, Banu Sahm	Jayfar and 'Abd (Oman)	Embraced Islam in 8 AH; later conquered Egypt

The first two names are confirmed by authentic Hadith; the rest is well-known information from the sirah books (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Hisham; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad). The tribe of each envoy is taken from the biographical works such as al-Isabah by Ibn Hajar.

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DIHYAH AL-KALBI: A FACE THE COMPANIONS KNEW

HADITH: JIBRIL IN THE FORM OF A MAN

Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها narrates that Jibril came to the Prophet ﷺ while she was with him. Jibril spoke with him and then left. The Prophet ﷺ asked Umm Salamah: "Who was this?" She replied: "This is Dihyah."

Umm Salamah said that she thought he was none other than Dihyah, until she heard the Prophet's ﷺ sermon telling of Jibril.

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 3634.

This Hadith shows that Dihyah's appearance was well known in Madinah. He was also from the tribe of Kalb, who lived in the north close to Syria, and he used to trade there. An envoy of fine appearance, eloquent and familiar with the land of Rome, was the right choice to stand before an emperor.

'ABDULLAH IBN HUDHAFAH: A COMPANION WHO DARED TO ASK

HADITH: "YOUR FATHER IS HUDHAFAH"

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrates that one day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave a sermon and said: "Ask me." 'Abdullah ibn Hudhafah stood up and asked: "Who is my father?" He replied: "Your father is Hudhafah."

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 93.

Ibn Hajar explains in Fath al-Bari that 'Abdullah asked because some people questioned his lineage; the answer of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ settled his heart in front of everyone. It was this Companion, unafraid to ask, who later stood before Chosroes, the proudest emperor of his age.

SIRAH NOTE: 'ABDULLAH IBN HUDHAFAH CAPTURED BY THE ROMANS

History books such as Tarikh Dimashq by Ibn 'Asakir relate that in the time of the Caliph 'Umar رضى الله عنه, 'Abdullah ibn Hudhafah was captured by the Roman army. The Roman king threatened him to make him leave Islam, but he refused. Finally the king said he would free him if 'Abdullah kissed his head. 'Abdullah agreed on condition that all the Muslim captives were freed with him, and the king did so. When the story reached 'Umar, he said that every Muslim ought to kiss the head of 'Abdullah, and he was the first to do it.

This story is from the history books and its chain is discussed by the scholars; it is not found in the books of authentic Hadith.

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ENVOYS ARE NOT KILLED

HADITH: THE IMMUNITY OF ENVOYS

Nu'aym ibn Mas'ud al-Ashja'i رضى الله عنه narrates that two envoys of Musaylimah came bearing his letter.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked them: "What do you two say?" They replied: "We say as he says." He said:

"By Allah, were it not that envoys are not killed, I would have struck off your heads."

Grade: Declared sahih by al-Hakim (al-Mustadrak) — Sunan Abi Dawud 2761.

This principle, known today as diplomatic immunity, was practised by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ even towards the envoys of a false prophet. His own envoys, however, were not always given the same treatment; the sirah books mention that al-Harith ibn 'Umayr al-Azdi, his envoy, was killed by Shurahbil ibn 'Amr al-Ghassani, and this became the cause of the Battle of Mu'tah (Series 19).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also honoured the delegations who came to Madinah. Among his last instructions was: "Give gifts to the delegations as I used to give them" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3053).

LESSONS

Each envoy was chosen for his strengths: Dihyah knew Syria, 'Abdullah ibn Hudhafah was brave, Hatib spoke wisely, and 'Amr ibn al-'As was a shrewd negotiator. In da'wah and in any task, the right person must be put in the right place. An envoy also carries the dignity of the one who sent him; so the character of the messenger matters as much as the message.

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GIFTS FROM THE RULERS

Chapter 17 mentioned the gifts of al-Muqawqis, including Mariyah the Copt and the mule Duldul, according to the sirah books. This chapter gathers other gifts from non-Muslim rulers narrated in authentic Hadith, together with the ruling on accepting gifts from them.

HADITH: A WHITE MULE FROM THE KING OF AYLAH

Abu Humayd as-Sa'idi رضى الله عنه said: We went out with the Prophet ﷺ on the expedition of Tabuk, and the king of Aylah gave the Prophet ﷺ a white mule and clothed him in a cloak. He wrote for him a treaty confirming his rule over his land.

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 3161.

HADITH: A SILK ROBE FROM UKAYDIR

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrates that a robe of thick silk was given to the Prophet ﷺ, while he used to forbid silk (for men). The people admired it. He said: "By the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the handkerchiefs of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh in Paradise are better than this." The same narration mentions that Ukaydir, the ruler of Dumah, was the one who gave it.

Grade: SAHIH — Sahih al-Bukhari 2615; also 2616.

HADITH: A GIFT REFUSED

'Iyad ibn Himar رضى الله عنه gave a camel to the Prophet ﷺ. He asked: "Have you embraced Islam?" He replied: "No." He said: "I have been forbidden to accept gifts from the polytheists."

Grade: HASAN SAHIH according to al-Albani — Sunan Abi Dawud 3057; also Jami' al-Tirmidhi 1577.

RECONCILING THESE NARRATIONS

Imam al-Bukhari named a chapter in his Sahih «Accepting gifts from the polytheists», and placed in it the Hadith of the king of Aylah and of Ukaydir. Ibn Hajar mentions in Fath al-Bari several ways the scholars reconciled the Hadith of accepting and refusing: a gift is accepted when it brings benefit, such as softening hearts and strengthening ties; and it is refused when it is feared to create a sense of obligation that holds one back from the truth, or when the giver is at war with the Muslims. Some scholars hold that the prohibition in the Hadith of 'Iyad came earlier, and was later lifted.

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GIFT	GIVER	SOURCE AND STATUS
A white mule and a cloak	The king of Aylah (Tabuk, 9 AH)	Sahih al-Bukhari 3161 — sahih
A robe of thick silk	Ukaydir, ruler of Dumah	Sahih al-Bukhari 2615 — sahih
Mariyah, Sirin, clothing, the mule Duldul	Al-Muqawqis, Egypt	Sirah books — well known
A camel (refused)	'Iyad ibn Himar before Islam	Sunan Abi Dawud 3057 — hasan sahih

LESSONS

Islam does not close the door to good relations with non-Muslims. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted gifts from kings, replied with treaties, and honoured envoys. Yet a gift cannot buy principle: when a gift is used to tie hearts away from the truth, it is refused. Even an admired silk robe became only a reminder of the greater blessings of Paradise.

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THE SCRIBES AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE LETTERS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the unlettered Prophet (chapter 5), yet he built an organised office of correspondence: there were scribes of revelation, scribes of letters, scribes of treaties, and translators. This chapter looks at the people behind the pen.

HADITH: ZAYD IBN THABIT LEARNS THE SCRIPT OF THE JEWS

Zayd ibn Thabit رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered me to learn the writing of the Jews for him. He said: "By Allah, I do not trust the Jews with my letters." Not half a month had passed before I had mastered it. After that, when he wrote to the Jews, I wrote to them, and when they wrote to him, I read their letters to him.

Grade: HASAN — Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2715. Imam al-Bukhari also mentions its meaning without a full chain (ta'liq) in the Book of Judgements, in the chapter on translators for judges.

In half a month, a young man of the Ansar mastered the writing of a foreign language for the sake of da'wah and the security of the state. It was this diligence of Zayd that later made him the trusted one to compile the Qur'an in the time of Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه.

THE TRANSLATOR IN THE COURT OF HERACLIUS

The letters of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were written in Arabic. In the court of Heraclius, the dialogue with Abu Sufyan took place through a translator: Heraclius called his translator, and every question and answer passed through him (Sahih al-Bukhari 7). This shows that both sides respected each other's language, and the message still arrived accurately.

THE SCRIBES OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

SCRIBE	NARRATED TASK	SOURCE
Zayd ibn Thabit	Revelation; letters to the Jews	Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2715; Sahih al-Bukhari 4986
'Ali ibn Abi Talib	Wrote the Treaty of Hudaybiyah	Sahih al-Bukhari 2699 (Series 15)
Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan	Scribe after embracing Islam	Sahih Muslim 2501
Ubayy ibn Ka'b	Revelation	Sirah books
'Abdullah ibn al-Arqam	Letters to kings and rulers	Sirah books

In the Hadith of Sahih Muslim 2501, Abu Sufyan asked for three things after embracing Islam, among them that his son Mu'awiyah be made a scribe for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and he granted it. A fuller

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list of scribes is found in the sirah books, such as Zad al-Ma'ad by Ibn al-Qayyim, which mentions more than twenty names.

LESSONS

Universal da'wah needs skills: writing, reading and understanding the languages of others. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not leave important matters dependent on people who could not be trusted; he trained his own people. For the Ummah today, learning languages and communication skills is part of the trust of conveying Islam.

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MANUSCRIPTS OF THE LETTERS FOUND TODAY

Many readers ask: do the original letters of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ still exist? Several manuscripts attributed to his letters are indeed displayed today. However, their authenticity is disputed, and this eBook mentions them with caution.

> **HISTORICAL NOTE: THE LETTER TO AL-MUQAWQIS**
>
> According to modern historical accounts, a parchment containing the letter to al-Muqawqis was found in 1858 CE in an old Christian monastery at Akhmim, Egypt, among Coptic books. It was taken by a French orientalist and later bought by Sultan Abdülmecid I. Today it is kept in the Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, in the section of sacred relics.
>
> References: Wikipedia, "Al-Muqawqis"; Wikipedia, "Seal of Muhammad".

Besides this, manuscripts attributed to the letters to al-Mundhir ibn Sawa in Bahrain and to the Negus have been published in modern studies, and a letter attributed to the kings of Oman is displayed in the National Museum of Oman, which considers it to have been written in 8 AH.

MANUSCRIPT	LOCATION TODAY	STATUS
Letter to al-Muqawqis	Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul	Disputed
Letter to al-Mundhir ibn Sawa	Published in modern studies	Disputed
Letter to the Negus	Published in modern studies	Disputed
Letter to the kings of Oman	National Museum of Oman	Disputed
Letter to Chosroes	Torn up by Chosroes (Sahih al-Bukhari 4424)	—

THE VIEWS OF RESEARCHERS

Some Muslim researchers, such as Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, studied these manuscripts and held that some of them may be authentic, comparing their writing, material and content with the sirah reports. Some modern historians, on the other hand, doubt their authenticity, because the history of how the manuscripts were passed on is unclear and such writing could be imitated by later people.

Some mention that the seal on the Topkapı manuscript is arranged in three lines, resembling the description of the ring of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Sahih al-Bukhari 3106 (chapter 4). But this resemblance alone does not prove authenticity, because the description of the ring is well known and could be imitated. Therefore this eBook does not affirm the authenticity of any manuscript.

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LESSONS

Our belief in the letters of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ does not depend on a piece of parchment in a museum. We know of them through authentic Hadith narrated with connected chains, such as Sahih al-Bukhari 7 and Sahih Muslim 1774. Manuscripts may add interest and appreciation, but what preserves the religion is the chain of narration and knowledge, not relics.

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TIMELINE OF THE LETTERS TO THE KINGS

This table arranges the events of this series and their outcomes. Dates from the sirah books are estimates, and the sources differ.

TIME	EVENT	SOURCE
Dhul-Qa'dah 6 AH	Treaty of Hudaybiyah; the truce begins	Sahih al-Bukhari 2731
Late 6 AH	The silver ring «Muhammad Rasulullah» is made	Sahih al-Bukhari 65; timing from the sirah books
Muharram 7 AH	Six envoys set out on the same day	Ibn Sa'd
7 AH	Abu Sufyan questioned by Heraclius at Iliya'	Sahih al-Bukhari 7
7 AH	Chosroes tears the letter; the supplication of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ	Sahih al-Bukhari 4424
7 AH	The Negus Ashamah receives the letter; marriage of Umm Habibah	Sunan Abi Dawud 2107; sirah books
7 AH	Hatib in Alexandria; the gifts of al-Muqawqis	Sirah books
7 AH	Al-Harith al-Ghassani angered; Hawdhah asks for power	Sirah books
8 AH	Al-Mundhir in Bahrain and the kings of Oman embrace Islam	Sirah books
Ramadan 8 AH	Abu Sufyan embraces Islam at the Conquest of Makkah	Sahih al-Bukhari 4280
Rajab 9 AH	The king of Aylah and Ukaydir give gifts during Tabuk	Sahih al-Bukhari 3161, 2615
9 AH	The Negus Ashamah dies; the funeral prayer in absentia	Sahih al-Bukhari 1245, 3877
10 AH	The envoys of Musaylimah are not killed	Sunan Abi Dawud 2761
15–16 AH	Yarmuk and al-Mada'in; the treasures of Chosroes opened	History; Sahih al-Bukhari 3121, 3595
1858 CE	The manuscript of the letter to al-Muqawqis found at Akhmim	Modern history

One matter discussed by researchers: non-Muslim historical sources state that Khusraw II was deposed in February 628 CE, that is, before Muharram 7 AH by the usual reckoning. Some researchers hold that the letter to Chosroes was sent earlier than the other six envoys, or that the dates of the sirah books are estimates. The authentic Hadith themselves do not mention the date.

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LESSONS

In about three years, from Hudaybiyah to Tabuk, the call of Islam reached Rome, Persia, Abyssinia, Egypt and the whole Arabian Peninsula. When an effort is made with planning, sincerity and patience, its result can go beyond human expectation.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LETTERS TO THE KINGS

1. HOW MANY RULERS RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ?

Authentic Hadith mention that he wrote to Chosroes, Caesar, the Negus and «every tyrant ruler» (Sahih Muslim 1774). The sirah books name at least eight rulers (chapters 6 and 22).

2. IN WHAT LANGUAGE WERE THE LETTERS WRITTEN?

In Arabic. Heraclius spoke with Abu Sufyan through a translator (Sahih al-Bukhari 7; chapter 24).

3. WHY WAS THE RING OF SILVER, NOT GOLD?

Because gold is forbidden for Muslim men to wear. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once wore a gold ring before it was forbidden, then threw it away and wore a silver ring (Sahih al-Bukhari 5865, 5866).

4. DID HERACLIUS EMBRACE ISLAM?

The scholars differ. What appears from Sahih al-Bukhari 7 is that he put his throne first, and the matter of his heart is left to Allah (chapter 11).

5. IS THE NEGUS WHOSE FUNERAL PRAYER WAS OFFERED THE SAME NEGUS WHO RECEIVED THE LETTER IN SAHIH MUSLIM 1774?

No. Anas stated clearly that the Negus in that Hadith was not the Negus over whom the funeral prayer was offered. The one prayed over was Ashamah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3877; chapter 16).

6. DID THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ FIGHT THE KINGS WHO REJECTED THE LETTERS?

Not for rejecting a letter alone. Chosroes tore up the letter and he only supplicated. The war with Rome at Mu'tah happened after his envoy was killed, according to the sirah books (chapter 22; Series 19).

7. MAY A MUSLIM ACCEPT A GIFT FROM A NON-MUSLIM?

Yes, just as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted the gifts of the king of Aylah and Ukaydir (Sahih al-Bukhari 3161). It is refused when it is feared to bring harm to the religion (chapter 23).

8. WHO ARE «AL-ARISIYYIN» IN THE LETTER TO HERACLIUS?

Ibn Hajar explains in Fath al-Bari that it means the peasants and common people. Heraclius would bear their sin if he kept them from the truth (chapter 10).

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9. IS THE LETTER IN THE TOPKAPI MUSEUM AUTHENTIC?

It is disputed among researchers. This eBook does not affirm it, and holds to the authentic narrations (chapter 25).

10. WHY DID ABU SUFYAN NOT LIE BEFORE HERACLIUS?

He himself admitted that he was ashamed lest his companions report that he had lied (Sahih al-Bukhari 7). For the Arabs, lying was a great disgrace.

11. WHY IS THE PROPHECY «THERE WILL BE NO CHOSROES AFTER HIM» IMPORTANT?

Because it was spoken when the Muslims were still few, and it came true in less than twenty years. It is a proof of prophethood that history can verify (Sahih al-Bukhari 3121; chapter 14).

12. HOW DO WE PRACTISE THE LESSONS OF THESE LETTERS TODAY?

By conveying Islam briefly and clearly, in a language that is understood, with respect for the position of the one invited, and with character that becomes a living «letter» to people (chapters 20 and 28).

LESSONS

These questions show the importance of distinguishing between the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, the reports of the sirah books, modern historical study and the views of scholars. In this way we take lessons that are certain, and put every piece of information in its proper place.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The letters to the kings were the moment Islam ***stepped out*** of Arabia onto the world stage. With a few sheets sealed "Muhammad Rasulullah", the call of tawhid reached the palaces of Rome, Persia, Abyssinia and Egypt.

LESSON	FROM THE LETTERS TO THE KINGS
A message for all mankind	"I have been sent to all of mankind"
Da'wah with wisdom	The seal, suitable envoys, verse 3:64
Honesty attested by an enemy	Abu Sufyan's answers to Heraclius
Knowledge without acceptance	Heraclius chose his throne
Arrogance destroys	Chosroes and his kingdom torn apart
Brotherhood without borders	"Pray over your brother, Ashamah"
Character wins hearts	Thumamah freed, then believed
The duty is only to convey	No compulsion; guidance is Allah's

THE LETTERS IN OUR LIVES

Today we do not write to emperors, but each of us can be a "messenger" in our own way — through ***character*** at work, ***honesty*** in dealings, and ***kind words*** to neighbours of other faiths. Like the Prophet's ﷺ letters, our da'wah should be brief, clear, respectful and born of compassion.

In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***Book 18*** — the events after the letters to the kings. And Allah knows best.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

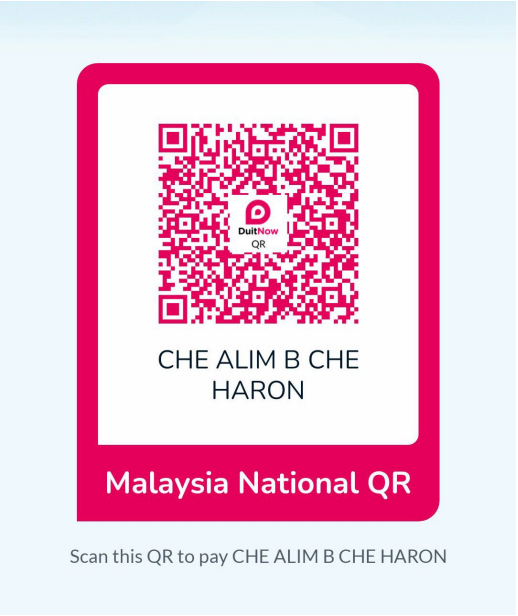
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

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