

## QS 13 Q 9:111 – 118

9.111 God has purchased from the believers their souls and their wealth and, in exchange, the Garden shall be theirs. They fight in the cause of God, they kill and are killed – a true promise from Him in the Torah, the Evangel and the Qur'an. Who is more truthful to his promise than God? So be of good cheer regarding that business deal you transact. That is the greatest of triumphs.

9.112 The repentant,  
The worshippers,  
The thankful,  
The fasting,  
They who kneel and prostrate,  
The bidders to good and forbidders of evil,  
The respecters of the bounds of God – give glad tidings to the believers!

9.113 It is not right for the Prophet and the believers to ask forgiveness for polytheists, even if they are relatives, once it has become clear to them that they are denizens of hell.

9.114 Abraham asked forgiveness for his father, this was only to fulfill a promise he had promised him. But once it became clear to him that he was an enemy of God, he washed his hands of him – Abraham was one who sighed much, and was self-restrained.

9.115 God would never lead astray a people once He had guided them until He has made clear to them what they are to fear in piety. God is Omniscient.

9.116 To God belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth;

He gives life and He deals death;  
Apart from God, you have neither friend nor champion.

9.117 God has pardoned the Prophet, the Emigrants and the Helpers, those who followed him in the hour of hardship, after the hearts of a group of them were about to fall into temptation. Then He pardoned them, for to them He is All-Tender, Compassionate to each.

9.118 Likewise He pardoned the three who were left behind. Once the earth, so wide in expanse, had become constricted for them, and their very souls were constricted, and they came to believe that there can be no refuge from God except

9.111 Certes, Allah a acheté des croyants, leurs personnes et leurs biens en échange du Paradis. Ils combattent dans le sentier d'Allah: ils tuent, et ils se font tuer. C'est une promesse authentique qu'Il a prise sur Lui-même dans la Thora, l'Évangile et le Coran. Et qui est plus fidèle qu'Allah à son engagement? Réjouissez-vous donc de l'échange que vous avez fait: Et c'est là le très grand succès.

9.112 Ils sont ceux qui se repentent, qui adorent, qui louent, qui parcourent la terre (ou qui jeûnent), qui s'inclinent, qui se prosternent, qui commandent le convenable et interdisent le blâmable et qui observent les lois d'Allah... et fais bonne annonce aux croyants.

9.113 Il n'appartient pas au Prophète et aux croyants d'implorer le pardon en faveur des associés, fussent-ils des parents alors qu'il leur est apparu clairement que ce sont les gens de l'Enfer.

9.114 Abraham ne demanda pardon en faveur de son père qu'à cause d'une promesse qu'il lui avait faite. Mais, dès qu'il lui apparut clairement qu'il était un ennemi d'Allah, il le désavoua. Abraham était certes plein de sollicitude et indulgent.

9.115 Allah n'est point tel à égarer un peuple après qu'Il les a guidés, jusqu'à ce qu'Il leur ait montré clairement ce qu'ils doivent éviter. Certes, Allah est Omniscient.

9.116 A Allah appartient la royauté des cieux et de la terre. Il donne la vie et Il donne la mort. Et il n'y a pour vous, en dehors d'Allah, ni allié ni protecteur.

9.117 Allah a accueilli le repentir du Prophète, celui des Emigrés et des Auxiliaires qui l'ont suivi à un moment difficile, après que les cours d'un groupe d'entre eux étaient sur le point de dévier. Puis Il accueillit leur repentir car Il est Compatissant et Miséricordieux à leur égard.

9.118 Et [Il accueillit le repentir] des trois qui étaient restés à l'arrière si bien que, toute vaste qu'elle fût, la terre leur paraissait exiguë; ils se sentaient à l'étroit, dans leur propre personne et ils pensaient qu'il n'y avait d'autre refuge d'Allah qu'auprès de Lui. Puis Il agréa leur

with Him, it was then that God turned towards them in pardon that they might turn to Him. It is God who is All-Pardoning, Compassionate to each.

repentir pour qu'ils reviennent [à Lui], car Allah est l'accueillant au repentir, le Miséricordieux.

#### سورة التوبة

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَغَدَا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمْ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (111) التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الرَّكَعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْأَمْزُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَيَنْسِرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (112) مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أَوْلَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ رَبِّي مَنْ بَغَدَ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ (113) وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَّهَا بِهَا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ (114) وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (115) إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ (116) لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ (117) وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُوا أَنَّ لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (118)

#### Dye

Passage déroutant, à de nombreux égards. Le texte fait allusion à des épisodes dont nous ne connaissons rien (par exemple les vv. 117–118, voir aussi un peu avant, vv. 107–110), mis à part ce qu'en dit la tradition musulmane – ce qui ne nous est pas forcément d'un grand secours.

V. 111 : ceux qui combattent dans le chemin de Dieu échangent leur vie et les biens de ce monde contre la vie (éternelle) dans le Paradis – telle est la promesse de Dieu. Le point curieux est bien sûr le vocabulaire utilisé (*ištarā*). Ce genre de métaphore n'est pas totalement inconnu du christianisme syriaque. Cf. *Synodicon Orientale, ou Recueil de synodes nestoriens*: les fidèles doivent distribuer leurs biens et leurs aumônes pour la rémission des péchés (Syn. 585, Canon XV, p. 182) ; les fidèles prélèvent une part de leur bien pour la donner à Dieu (et à l'Église), en vue de la rémunération lucrative dans l'autre monde (Syn. 585, Canon VII, p. 143). Mais il y a une différence importante avec le verset coranique, où Dieu apparaît comme un partenaire *actif*, comme s'il avait l'initiative dans la transaction, et où ce ne sont pas certains biens, mais tous les biens, et la personne même du croyant, qui sont l'objet de « l'achat ».

D'une certaine manière, le Coran, dans la manière dont il conçoit Dieu et ses liens avec les créatures, est éminemment politique. La façon dont il insiste sur la toute-puissance divine institue un rapport de dominateur à dominé. Le thème est certes aussi présent dans le judaïsme et le christianisme, mais le christianisme souligne tout autant l'idée de *paternité* divine – idée que le Coran rejette résolument. Ce qui compte est l'obéissance à Dieu, et l'installation du règne terrestre de cette volonté (Q 11:19–20). Il me semble que l'on a ici des échos de cette idée, dans un contexte très fortement eschatologique.

Vv. 113–114 : sur Abraham, comparer Q 19:47; 60:4. Contrairement à d'autres passages du Coran, ces versets (et l'ensemble de la sourate) s'opposent à toute tentation de convergence avec les autres confessions.

### Grodzki

I wonder whether v. 111, with the here very enigmatic verb *ištarā*, succeeded by a seemingly quite unorthodox usage of *bi-anna* (in the meaning of *li-kay*) introducing an adverbial purpose clause (in reverse order of the *ḥabar* and *ism* of a nominal sentence), followed by (textually with no clear semantic continuity) fighting in the way of Allah, killing and being killed (?), may be better understood through its back translation into Syriac or Hebrew, perhaps revealing a helpful syntactical or semantic hint or reference? Otherwise we face here a quite original image of making a bargain with God for entering paradise.

### Hilali

This passage does not appear in the manuscript 271 DAM, Yemen. Nevertheless, the expression *fī sabīl Allāh* (in God's way) occurs two times in the same chapter with differences from the Cairo edition of the Qur'ān. This expression occurs often in order to specify the character of the action of fighting the enemies: *qitāl*, *ḡihād*. The fight is qualified as a fight "in God's way" and is most of the time associated with the verb *ḡāhada*. There is a superposition of a certain number of adjectives that designate the believers (v. 112). In the context of this verse, the category of the believers announced (v. 111) seeks a precision introduced by a number of adjectives. I am not suggesting that a part of the text is "original" and another part contains "additions" but I propose to consider the process of textual composition implied in every text. The composition of the passage is built on the specification of the category of the believers and the category of "fighting". The expression *fī sabīl Allāh*, like the list of adjectives of the believers, contextualizes the content of the passage (the category of "fighting" and the category of "believers") and gives to the passage a Qur'ānic meaning in harmony with the rest of the occurrences of the same expression.

### Pregill

Another passage that seems to require heavy interpolation of details from the *sīra* tradition in order to be rendered comprehensible. The context of the emergence of *ḡihād fī sabīl Allāh* as the central ideology or ethos of the community after the Hijra seems to be writ large here, but unmoored from the particular (hiero-)history of what Muslim tradition claims about the Medinan period, what is the context?

Why is the authority of Torah, Gospel, and Qur'ān alike invoked to guarantee posthumous reward for those who kill and are killed? When does the Gospel as we know it ever command believers to kill anyone? Placed in a larger context, one

can imagine that a possible socio-political subtext here is the use of religious language in the propaganda of the Roman Empire after Justinian, especially in the time of Heraclius – the late Roman precedent is the most proximate context in which the Gospel or Christian teachings in general were invoked to legitimate violence. But when did late antique Jews ever cite Torah to justify violence? When or why would this have been necessary?

But perhaps this approach is too literal; could it be that Torah, Gospel, and Qurʾān are invoked together here simply as a way of saying that all those who recognize the authority of revelation, *kitāb*, must acknowledge that their lives are God’s, and that true fidelity to Him may require either killing or being killed as a warrant of that fidelity? (Cf. the “salvific covenant,” Q 4:74 and various other passages on martyrdom.)

Vv. 113–114: Abandonment of family ties in the forging of new communal bonds. Likewise hard to separate from the framework of the *sīra* tradition, or at least from some broader context of a major shift in the revelatory community’s circumstances such as that effected by a mass communal migration.

Ibid. for vv. 117: *anṣār* and *muhāğirūn*. It is again hard to explain this without cribbing from the *sīra*. On the other hand, *muhāğirūn/-in* only occurs a handful of times in the Qurʾān, and is only paired with *anṣār* twice, here and in v. 100 above. It seems quite natural to interpret these terms as designations of specific, discrete groups, but it is by no means self-evident from the text itself that we must do so, and in fact, one wonders why this pairing is so rare in the Qurʾān given the purported centrality of these two groups in the Medinan community.

### Reynolds

The way in which the Qurʾān describes God’s purchasing the very souls and possessions of the believers (v. 111) follows closely the use of similar metaphors among the Syriac fathers to describe the sacrifices of a religious life. In his *Hymns to Abraham Kidunaya* (Ephrem 1972), Ephrem declares, “Your alms and prayers / are everywhere given as loans / which enrich those who received them / while you possess the capital and the gain” (1:7). Meanwhile, the notion that martyrs have a particular promise of paradise involves a conviction, similarly found with the Syriac fathers, that their death works as expiation for their sins (regarding this cf. Q 3:157, 195; 47:4–6). As noted already by Andrae (1955:168) Mar Jesse (d. late 6<sup>th</sup> cen.) writes in his *Treaty on the Martyrs*: “The true martyrs who, by way of a death that covers their sins, demonstrate even more the beauty of their deeds and receive this glorious inheritance by virtue of their blood. By leaving this life they have prepared for their souls an honorable abode in paradise. It was thought that they are already dead, but by their death they have killed their sin, and they are alive with God” (Mar Jesse 1911:32).

The interdiction of prayer for *al-mušrikūn* in verse 113 could be understood as emerging from an abstract theological concern (i.e. that polytheism per se is a heinous crime). But the case of Abraham’s father – or better, the description of Abra-

ham's father as an "enemy of Allah" – in the following verse suggests a second possibility, namely that the Prophet preached in the name of Allah who is not god in some abstract sense but a god with particular characteristics. The *mušrikūn* are not those who have rejected monotheism, but rather those who have rejected his god.

### Rippin

V. 111 has received extensive modern attention in terms of the motivation for suicide such that it needs a special study. The idea of God "buying" (*ištarā*) from the believers (the only instance, I believe) moves commercial vocabulary into the divine realm in a way that suggests a special usage that emphasizes the eschatological meaning more strongly than in most instances (see Rippin 1991). The idea that one can "buy" one's way into paradise, that such is a "promise" (*wa'd*) made in the Torah, Gospel and Qur'ān, and that this is a "transaction" (*bay'*) creates a theological picture that poses a considerable challenge. For scholarly reflections such as these, the verse must be put within a broader context of a discussion of metaphorical language (unless we wish to revert to Torrey's 1892 vision of the use of commercial language as a reflection of the situation in Mecca).

The reference to *al-ṭalāṭa* who were left behind in v. 118 again challenges us about how to understand this outside tradition unless we are willing to live with that sort of ambiguity.

### Sirry

The juxtaposition of the Qur'ān with the *tawrāt* and the *inḡīl* is interesting. Does the Qur'ān refer to itself as a text similar to that of Torah and Gospel? For Wild, the answer is affirmative in such that "The Qur'ān is aware of itself as a recitation and as a text" (2006: 4). The question of the Qur'ān's self-referentiality has recently been the subject of much discussion. For Madigan (2001), such self-referential elements of the Qur'ān can also be understood as reflecting the broader phenomenon of divine engagement with humanity. However, a more relevant question for the passage under discussion is: What promise (*wa'd*) is in the Torah, Gospel, and Qur'ān? The first verse of the passage under discussion may be understood as reinforcing Donner's argument that the community of believers (*mu'minūn*) at the time of Muḥammad were more inclusive than have been commonly assumed, which may include Jews and Christians whose primary concern is monotheism.

The central theme of this passage, it seems to me, is the proximity between human *istiḡfār* and divine *tawba*. As in Q 4:116, in this passage *širk* is described as an unforgivable sin. The Prophet Muḥammad and the believers were asked not to seek forgiveness (*istiḡfār*) for the *mušrikūn* even though they were close relatives with a justification by referring to Abraham's relation to his father. It is assumed that the audience was familiar with Abraham's story. Why Abraham? The passage seems to place a central importance of Abraham as a quintessential monotheist,

and the Prophet was put in line with this tradition in the fight against the *mušrikūn* of his time. Perhaps, this is a strategy of the Qur’ān to claim Abraham for the community of the believers. He is claimed as one who prefigured the faith of the Prophet, rather than that of Jews and Christians. The Qur’ānic claim for Abraham, however, can also be seen as a plea that Christians and Jews should not assume that they alone have the truth. Abraham was a monotheist, not just a Jew or a Christian, but both and more. Presumably, this passage reflects its well-acquaintance with the significance of Abraham in early Jewish-Christian polemics. Here we can see how Abraham becomes a divisive figure, rather than a unifying one as some modern scholars tend to present.

### Stefanidis

V. 113, which forbids the Prophet and the believers to pray for the forgiveness of the “polytheists,” is immediately followed by the explanation of Abraham’s own attempt to ask forgiveness for his father. This detail of Abraham’s life is mentioned in three other passages, Q 19:47, Q 26:86 and Q 60:4, without, however, any condemnation on the part of the Divine voice. How could a prophet like Abraham perform an act that God dislikes? V. 114 seems to respond to puzzlements on the part of the believers or to pre-empt criticism from opponents. It can reasonably be argued that we are here faced with an instance of Qur’ānic intertextuality: proclamations adding to or specifying previous proclamations in response to new circumstances and to the needs of the community. Holding the Qur’ān to provide a “live transcript” of its own emergence, Sinai and Neuwirth (2010:10) have called for locating Qur’ānic communications along their plausible sequence in time. As Sinai notes, previous proclamations “must have continued to play a role within the religious life of their adherents – most likely within the context of worship – that ensured they were sufficiently well-known by ordinary believers in order to merit and require being brought *à jour* rather than simply discarded and substituted by new texts” (Sinai 2010: 431–32). In this particular case, v. 114 assumes the prior circulation of Q 19:47, Q 26:86 and Q 60:4.

### Stewart

In v. 111 mention of a promise that is contained in the Torah, Gospel, and Qur’ān makes it clear not only that the Qur’ān is not *sui generis* but belongs to a particular genre inhabited by other texts as well. The genre is *kitāb* “scripture,” and these three are the main representatives of the genre, though the Qur’ān also mentions the Psalms of David and the puzzling Scrolls of Abraham. The verse suggests as well that these scriptures have a unified content, or at least share key parts of their message.

Quite striking is the concatenation of *fā’ilūn*, without *wa-* or other intervening particles, in v. 112. The effect of this verse is due in large part to the repeated rhythm – – v –/– – v –/ as well as the internal –*ūn* rhyme.

The two parallel instances of *tabayyana* “it became clear, evident” in vv. 113–114, stating that it became clear to the Prophet that the unbelievers were destined for hell-fire and to Abraham that his father was an enemy of God, join those two events together, serving as yet another example of prophetic typology. The Prophet is like Abraham; just as Abraham cut off relations with his relatives, so the Prophet is cutting off relations with his tribe when he became aware of their true nature—that they were a lost cause. This of course corroborates many other indications in the Qur’ān, similar to Jewish discussions of Abraham’s leaving his father and his father’s land and to Jesus’ statements in the Gospels, that faith trumps blood ties, and that the true family is the family of believers. The two uses of *tabayyana* lead up to, or are resolved in a sense, by the form II *yubayyinu* in v. 115, in which the fact that God makes clear His message to them requires them to make a decision. The divine epithet *‘alīm* is used at the end of this verse, one imagines, mainly because of the verb *yubayyinu*, which suggests that once God explains his message, things are known and out in the open, and definitive decisions about belief may be required.

The phrases *thumma tāba ‘alayhim innahu bihim ra’ūfun raḥīm* in v. 117 and *thumma tāba ‘alayhim li-yatūbū inna llāha huwa l-tawwābu l-raḥīm* in v. 118 illustrate two types of closing rhyme phrases. In v. 117 there is a semantic link between *ra’ūf raḥīm* and *tāba*, whereas in v. 118, *tawwāb* exhibits cognate paronomasia with *tāba*, *li-yatūbū*, while *raḥīm* is still semantically related.

### Toorawa

*Awwāh* (“tender-hearted”) is a hapax (and missing from Toorawa 2011a). I am thrilled to find more candidates and unsurprised that the Qur’ān is yielding more rarities and isolates than I, and others, have catalogued. It seems right that there would be more hapaxes given [1] the Qur’ān’s rhetorical “needs”; [2] the Qur’ān’s—and Arabic’s—recourse to other late antique texts and lexicons; [3] the greater attention scholars are (finally) paying to words in rhetorical context, as opposed to words in isolation and there to be excavated. *Awwāh* occurs only twice (here and in Hūd 11:75), both times in an identical rhetorical context. Thus Abraham is described as “tender-hearted and prudent” in Tawba, and “prudent, tender-hearted and penitent” in Hūd—to use Alan Jones’s translation of the end-words (trans. Jones 2007: 193, 214), though Jones curiously and inexplicably renders *ḥalīm* differently):

*Inna Ibrāhīma la-awwāhun ḥalīm* (Tawba)

*Inna Ibrāhīma la-ḥalīmūn awwāhun munīb* (Hūd)

The placement of *ḥalīm* last in Tawba is dictated by the end-rhyme (it is flanked by *ḡaḥīm* and *‘alīm*). The same goes for *munīb* in Hūd, which is in the following sequence:

*Lūṭ – Ya‘qūb – ‘aḡīb – maḡīd – Lūṭ – munīb – mardūd – ‘aṣīb – raṣīd*

Given the *ḥilm* (“prudence” (?), “forbearance,” “mildness,” “discernment”) the Qur’ān associates with Abraham, it is unsurprising to discover the Qur’ān also attributing *ta’awwuh* (“tender-heartedness”) to him.

### Younes

The phrase *min ba’di mā kāda yazīḡu qulūbu farīqin minhum* in v. 117 is traditionally understood to mean *after the hearts of a party of them had almost swerved aside* (Pickthall). According to the standard rules of Arabic grammar, such a reading would be ungrammatical: the word *qulūb* “hearts,” being a non-human plural, requires the feminine form of the verbal elements *kāna* and *yazīḡu*, thus: *kādat tazīḡu*.

A careful study of the syntactic structure of the phrase makes the following reading more likely: *min ba’di mā kāda yuzīḡu qulūba farīqin minhum*. *After He (God) had almost swerved aside the hearts of a party of them (then He [God] turned unto them in mercy)*. In addition to the correct syntax, this reading makes straightforward the reference of the subject of the three conjoined verbal elements *kāda*, *yazīḡu* and *tāba*—there is only one subject, i.e. God.

### Zellentin

As several commentators note, the traditional notion of the *‘anṣār*, “helpers,” who are mentioned here alongside the *muhāḡirīn*, “emigrants” (v. 100 and v. 117), attributes to both groups a specific role during the career of the Prophet. There is currently no scholarly consensus that would allow us to verify this claim, yet tradition may be helpful in as far as it allows us to think about two concrete groups in the early community of the Prophet. Such a concrete social context can be corroborated by the text itself when reading it along ethno-religious lines.

In order to gain a preliminary understanding of who these “helpers” may have been, I suggest considering the *anṣārī ilā llāhi*, “helpers for God,” whom I have placed in a dual context of Jesus’ discipleship and Christianity in my comments on Passage 6. These “helpers,” the heirs of Jesus’ first disciples, form the dominant group among the Israelites in the time of the Qur’ān, and are to be associated with the *naṣārā*, the Christians.

Variants of the verb “to help,” of course, are quite common in the Qur’ān, and used in many other ways. For example, the emigrants themselves in turn “help” the believers in Q 9:72 and 74; in Q 59:8, they even “help God (*wa-yanṣurūna llāha*) and his apostle. Yet the terminology and description for the “helpers” in the present passage (v. 100 and v.117) suggests the designation of a specific group, which in turn would make an association with the “helpers for/towards God” in Q 3:52 and Q 61:14 very suggestive.

While this possibility is of course speculative, it is upheld by the fact that the Qur’ān is very consistent in its ethnic presentation of both “helper” and “emigrants,” for while the helpers may well be Christian *Israelites*, the “emigrants” seem to be



gentiles. (Syriac patristic sources from Ephrem to the Didascalia describe the church more fully in ethnic continuity with “Israel” and with “the (chosen) people” than the later Greek or Latin church fathers.) Intriguingly, out of the many instances in which the term “emigrants” occurs in the Qur’ān, only one evokes any “Christian” or “Jewish” theme: namely the reference to the Torah and the Evangel in v. 111 of the present passage (note Pregill’s and Rippin’s comments). Yet here, the emigrants are mentioned along with the “helpers,” whose presence explains the reference fully. I would hence suggest the possibility that the “helpers” are a group of Israelite, “Christian” Jesus-believers, whereas the “emigrants” are gentiles, and that the Qur’ān itself preserves concrete designations for the ethnic groups that make up its early community: some Jews and many Christians, the two *Israelite* groups, and gentiles. (See passage VI and Zellentin 2013:163–4)