

- Shurūq, 1412/1991.
- Rāghib. *Mufradāt*.
- Rāzī. *Tafsīr*.
- al-Ṣābūnī, Muḥammad ‘Alī. *Qabas min Nūr al-Qurʿān al-Karīm*. 4 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Jil, 1422/2001.
- al-Saḥāranfūrī, ‘Alī. *Hāshiyat al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*. Ed. Taqī al-Dīn al-Nadwī. 15 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Bashā’ir al-Islāmiyya, 1432/2011.
- Samarqandī. *Baḥr*.
- Ṣāwī. *Hāshiya*.
- al-Shirbīnī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *al-Sirāj al-munīr fī-l-i‘ānat ‘alā ma’rifat ba‘ḍ ma‘ānī Kalām Rabbīnā al-Ḥakīm al-Khabīr*. 4 vols. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Būlāq.
- Stillman, Norman A. “Ezekiel’s Tomb (al-Kifl).” *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*. Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman. Brill Online, 2013.
- Stone, Michael E. and Theodore A. Bergren. *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998.
- al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *al-Muzḥir fī ‘ulūm al-luḡa wa anwā‘ih*. Ed. Muḥammad Abū-l-Ḥaḍḍ al-Ibrāhīm, Muḥammad Jād al-Mawlā, and ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī. 2 vols. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1425/2004.
- Ṭabarānī. *Mu‘jam al-awsaf*.
- . *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*. Ed. Hishām al-Badrānī. 6 vols. Jordan: Dār al-Kitāb al-Thaqāfi, 1429/2008.
- Ṭabarī. *Tafsīr*.
- . *Tārīkh*.
- Tha‘labī. *Kashf*.
- The Jewish Publications Society. *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures*. Philadelphia, Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1985.
- Tirmidhī. *Sunan*.
- Yāqūt. *Buldān*.
- Zabīdī. *Tāj*.
- Zimmerli, Walther, Frank M. Cross, and Klaus Baltzer. *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
- al-Zuhaylī, Wahba b. Muṣṭafā. *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*. 30 vols. Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1418/1997.

See also: ABŪ BAKR, ALLAH BE WELL PLEASED WITH HIM; ADOPTION; AḤMAD, BLESSINGS AND PEACE UPON HIM; ANGELS; ANGER; ANONYMOUS MENTIONS; AYYŪB, UPON HIM PEACE; CHILDREN OF ISRĀ’ĪL; COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET; COVENANT; DĀWŪD, UPON HIM PEACE; DHŪL-L-QARNAYN; ELECTION; FASTING; GUARDIANSHIP; IBRĀHĪM, UPON HIM PEACE; IDRĪS, UPON HIM PEACE; ILYĀS, UPON HIM PEACE; INFALLIBILITY OF PROPHETS; ĪSĀ, UPON HIM PEACE; ISMĀ’ĪL, UPON HIM PEACE; JIBRĪL, UPON HIM PEACE; JIHAD; MARYAM, UPON HER PEACE;

MŪSĀ, UPON HIM PEACE; NAMES OF THE QUR’ĀN; PHARAOH; PROPHETHOOD AND MESSENGERSHIP; REPENTANCE; SATAN; SHU’AYB, UPON HIM PEACE; SIGNS OF ALLAH; YĀ’QŪB, UPON HIM PEACE; AL-YASA’, UPON HIM PEACE; YŪNUS, UPON HIM PEACE; YŪSHA’, UPON HIM PEACE; ZAKARIYYĀ, UPON HIM PEACE.

KAMIL UDDIN

DHŪL-QARNAYN

The king given the cognomen (*laqab*) Dhūl-Qarnayn (*lit.* “the possessor of two horns”) is mentioned in Sūrat al-Kahf (Q 18:83-98) in a passage that opens with a direct reference to the question posed to the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace:

And they ask you about Dhūl-Qarnayn. Say, “I shall recite to you an account of him.” Indeed We established him upon the earth, and We gave him [means] to have everything. So he followed a course until when he reached the point of sunset, he found it setting into a spring of dark mud, and found a people near it. We said, “O Dhūl-Qarnayn, either punish them or deal with them in a good manner.” He said, “As for him who does wrong, we shall punish him, then he will be sent back to his Lord, and He will punish him with a severe punishment. As for the one who believes and acts righteously, he will have the best as reward, and we shall speak to him mildly in our affairs.”

Then he followed a course until when he reached the point of sunrise, he found it rising over a people for whom We did not make any shelter against it. Thus it was, and Our knowledge fully comprehends whatever he had. Thereafter he followed a course until when he reached between the two mountains he found a people who could hardly understand anything he said. They said, “O Dhūl-Qarnayn, these are Ya’jūj and Ma’jūj, corrupters on the earth. We shall pay you tribute on condition that you set a barrier between us and them.”

He said, “That wherein my Lord has established me is better [than your tribute]. Do but help me with strength [of men], and I shall set between you and them a rampart. Bring to me sheets of iron,” till, when he had leveled up [the gap] between the cliffs, he said, “Blow!” till, when he had made it [like] fire, he said, “Bring me molten copper to pour thereon.” And thus [the rampart was built, and] their enemies were unable to scale it, nor were they able to pierce

it. He said, "This is a mercy from my Sustainer! Yet when the time appointed by my Sustainer shall come, He will make this [rampart] level with the ground: and my Sustainer's promise always comes true!"

Q 18:83-98

The few details in the passage and the lack of any sound Prophetic Hadith explicating the verses about Dhūl-Qarnayn have resulted in divergent exegetical and historiographical identifications which are summarized below along with the context of revelation; unless otherwise noted, all exegetical references in this article are to Q 18:83-98.

Context of Revelation

Commentators refer to various occasions of revelation (*q.v.*) for this passage, each hinging on the subject of the verb in the first verse (*And they ask you about Dhūl-Qarnayn...*). The early historiographer Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) reports, from the eminent Follower (*tābiʿī*) ʿIkrima (d. 107/725) through unnamed teachers, that the verse refers to one of three questions posed by the Makkān polytheists to the Prophet to test his veracity. The Makkāns had sent two envoys, al-Naḍr b. al-Hārith and ʿUqba b. Abī Muʿayt, to the Jews of Yathrib (*q.v.*) for advice on how to assess the Prophet's claim to prophethood. The rabbis there told the envoys to ask him about the People of the Cave, Dhūl-Qarnayn, and Spirit (*al-rūh*) (*q.v.*) (Ibn Ishāq, *Sīra* 1:202). The Qurʾānic response to these questions is found in Q 18:9-26, Q 18:83-98, and Q 17:85, respectively.

In another account of its occasion of revelation, al-Bukhārī (194-256/810-870) cites Ibn ʿAbbās (3BH-68/619-688) as saying that when the erudite rabbi ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām entered Islam, certain Jews went to him and said, "Prophethood cannot be among the Arabs (i.e., the gentiles), but your companion (i.e., the Prophet) might be a [Divinely-sanctioned] king." They then went to the Prophet and asked him about Dhūl-Qarnayn as a test of the truth of his claim to prophethood (al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* 1:225). Al-Ṭabarī (224-310/839-923) omits the mention of the Makkān polytheists altogether, attributing the question to certain "People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*) (*q.v.*) (*Tafsīr*).

Ibn Abī Ḥatīm (d. 327/939) quotes al-Suddī (d. 127/745) as saying, "The Jews said to the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, 'O Muḥammad, you mention Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ʿĪsā, and other prophets because you have heard about them from us, but tell us about a prophet whom Allah has mentioned in the

Torah only once.' He asked, 'Who is he?' They said, 'Dhūl-Qarnayn.' He said, 'I have not received anything about him.' The Jews left delighted, thinking they had prevailed, but they had barely reached the door when Jibrīl (*q.v.*) came with the verses *And they ask you about Dhūl-Qarnayn...*" (Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *Tafsīr*).

Ibn ʿAṭīyya (480-546/1087-1151) notes generally that "the exegetes differ about who asked the question" (*Muḥarrar*). The Andalusian exegete Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745/1344) writes that, while it may have involved a Qurayshite intermediary, these variant accounts agree that the question originated among some Jewish scholars of Yathrib (*Bahr*).

His Cognomen

The title Dhūl-Qarnayn comprises the possessive particle *dhū* and the dual noun *qarnayn* (sing. *qarn*). *Qarn* bears the meanings of an obtrusion (hence "horns"), the summit of a mountain, the first rays of the rising sun, and a generation (e.g., its usage in Q 6:6: *...how many generations We destroyed before them...*) and hence a number of years, *qarīn* being one's peer in a generation (Fayrūzābādī, *Qāmūs*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs*; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, sub *q-r-n*).

The exegetes explain his (Dhūl-Qarnayn) variously. The Successor Wahb b. Munabbih (d. ca.109/728) reports that even the People of the Book differ as to the origin of the cognomen. In his master commentary, al-Ṭabarī cites four possible reasons as to why Dhūl-Qarnayn is known by this title: (i) he died from a blow to the head, but Allah resurrected him whereupon he had a second life and later once again died from such a blow—an interpretation attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib; (ii) he was the king of Rome and Persia, thus possessor of two large empires; (iii) he had two horn-like growths on his head, this and the preceding interpretation being attributed to Wahb b. Munabbih; and (iv) both sides of his head were made of copper (*Tafsīr*)—this last opinion is a "far-fetched interpretation," according to Burhān al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. 505/1110) (*Gharāʾib* 1:676).

Ibn al-Jawzī (510-597/ca.1116-1201) adds from al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) that he was called "possessor of two horns" because the Roman and the Persian empires (both under his sway) were elevated at their outer reaches, thus forming topographical prominences or "horns" and adds six more possible reasons: (i) he was given the name by his people after relating a dream in which he ascended to the heavens and held the sun through its two rays; (ii) he travelled to the furthest points of sunrise and sunset; (iii) he