

IBN QUTAYBA ON ZECHARIAH

Zakariyyā' and [‘Imrān], upon them be peace!

He says: He was Zakariyyā' b. 'Ādhan.¹ Zakariyyā' b. 'Ādhan and 'Imrān b. Māthān b. al-Ye'āqīm were descendants of David the prophet, upon whom be peace, from the tribe of Yehūdihā b. Ya'qūb. They lived during the same period of time. Zakariyyā' married 'Īšyā'² the daughter of 'Imrān and sister of Maryam the daughter of 'Imrān (cf. Q 66:12). The name of the mother of Maryam was Ḥannah.³ Thus Yaḥyā and 'Īsā were cousins. Zakariyyā' was a carpenter. The Jews relate that he committed the sin of adultery with Maryam, and they killed him in the hollow (trunk) of a tree: they chopped it down, chopping him along with it.⁴

Wahb says:⁵ When he fled, he entered a hollow tree trunk. They placed the saw on the tree to cut, and when the saw reached his body, then God (to Whom belongs might and majesty!) revealed (to him): 'If you do not stop your groaning, the earth will overturn!' So he was silent and ceased groaning⁶ until he was chopped into two (pieces).⁷

¹ 'Ādhan (أذن) is probably a reflex of 'Iddo (עֲדוֹ).

² Read Išbā' (إشباع; i.e., Elisheva') in place of إشباع.

³ Based on the name for Mary's mother provided by the apocryphal (2d century?) *Protevangelium James*.

⁴ One should compare the closely related traditions about the death of the prophet Isaiah found in Heb 11:37; *Ascen. Isa.* 5:1-16; Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Trypho* §120; *Vitae Prophetarum* to Isaiah; *y. Sanh.* 10.2, 28c; *b. Yebam.* 49b; *Pesiq. Rab.* §4 (ed. Ish-Shalom 14a). Note also Josephus, *Ant.* 10.37-39. See Ginzberg, *Legends* 6:374-75 n.103; R. H. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1900), xlv-xlix.

⁵ I.e., Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 728 CE?), reportedly the earliest figure to compile a work which collected the traditions and tales surrounding the biblical prophets. See R. G. Khoury, "Wahb b. Munabbih," *EF* 11:34-36; Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002), 138-41.

⁶ Compare *Ascen. Isa.* 5:14.

⁷ Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-ma'ārif* (ed. Tharwat 'Ukkāsha; 2d ed.; Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1969), 52.