

328772 - Did the Prophet Complete the Friday Sermon Before Twelve Men

the question

In the Hadith of Jabir: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was delivering the sermon standing on Friday when a caravan from Sham arrived, and the people dispersed towards it, leaving only twelve men behind. Then this verse from Surat Al-Jumu`ah was revealed: (And when they see some commerce or entertainment, they break away to it and leave you standing) . What happened after the incident, did the Prophet continue the sermon and the Salah with twelve people?

Detailed answer

The incident mentioned was reported by Imam Muslim in his "Sahih" (863) from Jabir ibn `Abdullah, "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was delivering the sermon while standing on Friday, then a caravan from Sham arrived, and the people dispersed towards it, until only twelve men remained, and this verse from Surat Al-Jumu`ah was revealed (interpretation of the meaning): (And when they see some commerce or amusement, they break away to it and leave you standing) [Al-Jumu`ah: 11]."

In another narration by Muslim, he said, "We were with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) on Friday, and a small caravan arrived, he said: so the people went out to it, and only twelve men remained, including myself. He said: and Allah revealed (interpretation of the meaning): (And when they see some commerce or amusement, they break away to it and leave you standing) [Al-Jumu`ah: 11] to the end of the verse."

In another narration by Muslim, he said, "While the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was standing delivering the Friday sermon, a caravan arrived in Medina, and the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) rushed to it, until only twelve men remained with him, including Abu Bakr and `Umar. He said: and this verse

was revealed (interpretation of the meaning): (And when they see some commerce or amusement, they break away to it) [Al-Jumu`ah: 11]."

The apparent meaning of the Hadith indicates that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) completed the sermon and did not interrupt it; and he led them in the Friday Salah.

It also appears from the Hadith that those who left did not return, and for that reason, they deserved reprimand from Allah the Almighty.

However, the Jurists who opined that the Friday Salah is not valid unless attended by forty men interpreted this Hadith to mean that they returned and prayed with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), which is contrary to the apparent meaning.

An-Nawawi said in his "Commentary on Muslim" (6/151):

"This is evidence for Malik and others who said that the Friday prayer is established with twelve men.

The followers of Ash-Shafi`i and others who require forty answered: it is assumed that they returned, or a number of them who completed returned; thus, he completed the Friday [prayer] with them." End quote.

Ibn Rajab said in "Fath Al-Bari" (8/310):

"Al-Bukhari and a number of scholars have used this as evidence that if people flee from the Imam while he is delivering the Friday sermon, and he prays the Friday prayer with those who remain: that is permissible, and their Friday prayer is valid.

This goes back to a fundamental issue which is disputed, which is the number required for the establishment of the Friday prayer, and there is a difference of opinion in that.....

Then he mentioned the differences among the scholars in this regard." End quote.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin said in "Fath Dhill-Jalal bi Sharh Bulugh Al-Maram" (2/326):

"It is derived from this Hadith: that the Friday prayer is established with twelve men because he said: (only twelve men remained with him).

But an opponent might object by saying: perhaps they returned before he completed his sermon, so they became forty.

This is said by those who view that the number must be forty.

However, this is questionable, because we say: the default is that they did not return, and secondly: the apparent meaning of the Hadith is that they did not return; because he said: (only twelve men remained), and if they had returned, it should have been mentioned, due to its significance in removing blame from them." End quote.

It has been previously mentioned on our site that a specific number is not required for the validity of the Friday prayer, and that it is valid with the number that makes the congregation valid, as in the answer to question number: ([7718](#)).

And Allah knows best.