

from our children? But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned away, except a few of them. And Allah is fully aware of the wrongdoers.

2:247. Their Prophet said to them: Allah has appointed Tâloot as king over you. They said: How can he be king over us when we are more worthy of kingship than him and he has not been given any measure of wealth? He said: Allah has chosen him over you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique: Allah grants kingship to whomever He wills, and Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

2:248. And their Prophet said to them: The sign of his kingship is that there will come to you the Ark of the Covenant, in which there is reassurance from your Lord, and a remnant of that which was left behind by the family of Moosâ and the family of Hâroon, carried by angels. Surely, in that there is a sign for you, if you are believers.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells His Prophet (ﷺ) the story of the chiefs of the Children of Israel, who were the nobles and prominent figures. The chiefs are singled out for mention because they usually discuss their affairs so as to agree on a decision, then others follow them in what they decide. That is because they came to a Prophet of theirs after Moosâ (ﷺ) and said to him: «Appoint for us a king» that is, choose a king for us, «and we will fight in the cause of Allah» so that we can unite behind him and he could lead us against our enemies. Perhaps at that time they did not have a leader to rally behind, because usually among tribes that are composed of clans, each clan would refuse to accept a leader from another clan. So they asked their Prophet to appoint a king who would be acceptable to all clans, and who would be selected in accordance with their traditions. The Israelite Prophets used to decide concerning their affairs; every time a Prophet died, he was succeeded by another Prophet. When they said that to their Prophet, «He said» to them: «Is it possible