Lesson

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The Life of the Prophet ﷺ

Part One

The Year of the Elephant

Just a few months before the Prophet ﷺ was born, a very important event occurred in Makkah. The cause of this important event goes back to certain happenings in Yemen.

At that time, Yemen was under the rule of Abyssinia, and the King of Abyssinia had appointed one of his men as governor over Yemen. This man was Abrahah Al-Ashram.

Abrahah wanted the Hajj pilgrims to come to Yemen instead of visiting the Ka'bah in Makkah every year. Therefore, he ordered a huge church to be built in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, in the hope of attracting the pilgrims to Yemen. The church was named Al-Qullais. Such an enormous church had never been seen before.

A man from the tribe of Kinaanah visited the church with the intention of defiling it. He spread his excrement on the walls of the church.

When the news of this insulting action reached Abrahah, he swore that he would attack Makkah and destroy the Ka'bah.

Abrahah set off for Makkah with a large army of fighters and a number of elephants. He led the army himself and rode in front on a huge elephant named Mahmood.

The Year of the Elephant

When the army reached a valley on the outskirts of Makkah, Abrahah's elephant refused to move forward. Abrahah tried to force the elephant to advance, but it would not move.

Then, Allah ﷻ sent down flights of birds to attack the army. Each bird was carrying three stones: one in its beak and two in its claws. The birds dropped the stones on the soldiers. Whenever a stone fell on one of the soldiers, his flesh would start dropping off. Many of the soldiers were killed, and the rest ran away in fear. Abrahah was also severely injured. He was carried away by his soldiers ans he died on his way back to Yeman.

This is how Allah ﷻ protected the Ka'bah. Because this was such an important event, the year in which it took place became known as the "Year of the Elephant".

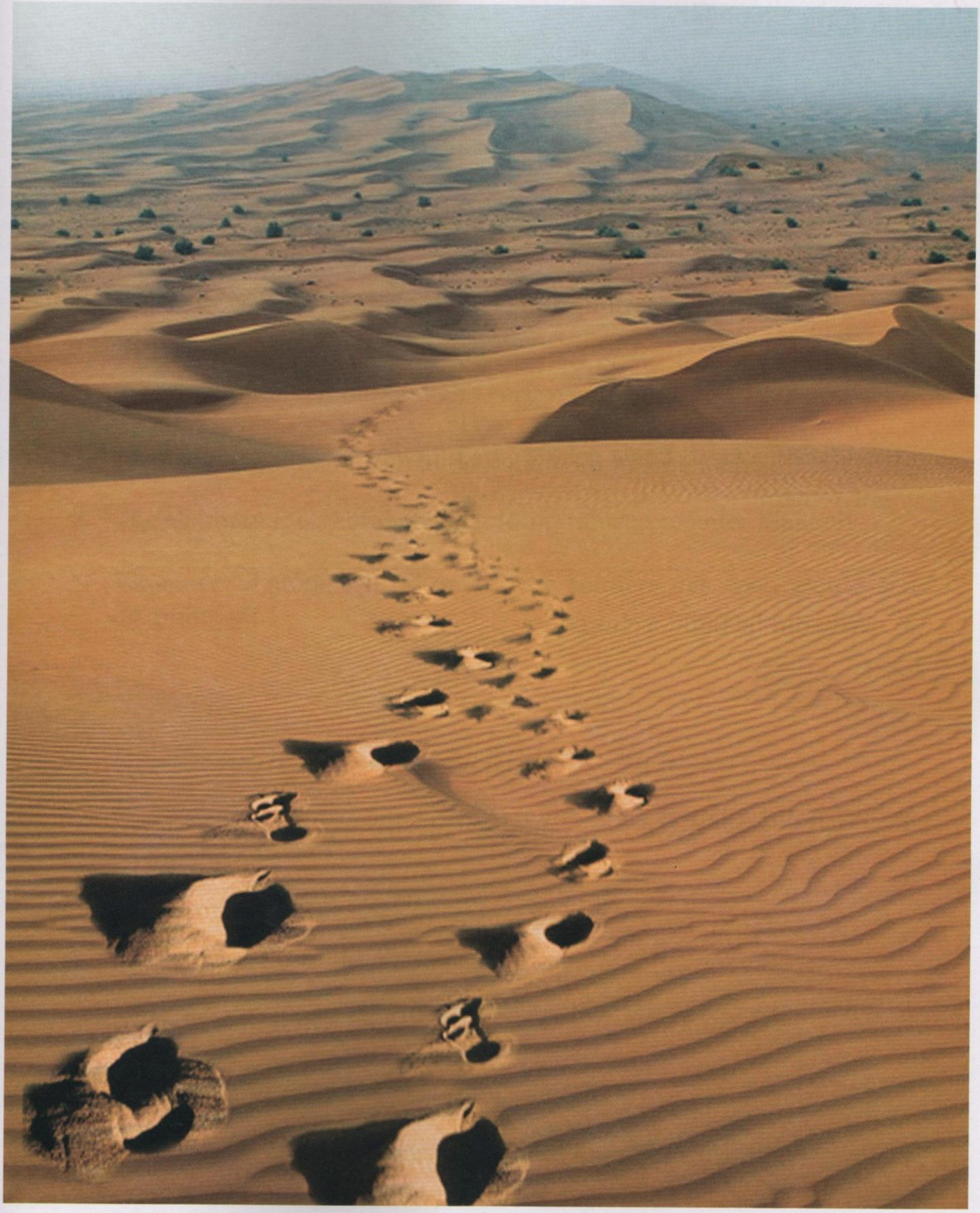
Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ
فِي تَضْلِيلٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيهِم
بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ﴿٥﴾

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? Did He not make their plot go astray? And He sent flocks of birds onto them; striking them with stones of baked clay. And He made them like consumed vegetation. *Sûrat Al-Fîl* (The Elephant); Verses 1-5



Class work

Answer the following questions:

1. Which country was ruling Yemen at this time?

_____

2. What was the name of the man who had been appointed as governor of Yemen?

_____

3. Why did he build a church?

_____

_____

4. What did Allah ﷻ send down to attack the army?

_____

_____

5. What happened to the soldiers in the army?

_____

_____