

Al-Haqqah [The Indubitable Event] **Makkan Period**

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

[1] The indubitable event! ¹

[2] And what is that indubitable event?

[3] And what do you know what that indubitable event is?

[4] The Thamud and the 'Ad denied the (possibility of a) sudden calamity, ² calling it false.

[5] Then the Thamud were destroyed by an awesome upheaval;

[6] and the 'Ad were destroyed by a furiously raging wind-storm

[7] which He let loose upon them for seven nights and eight days in succession; so that (if you had been there) you might have seen people lying prostrate, as though they were uprooted trunks of hollowed palm trees.

[8] Do you now see any trace of them?

*1. Literally, **al-Haqqah** denotes something that is bound to take place. The significance of using this word is to convey to the unbelievers that their denial of the Inevitable Event, howsoever vehement, will fail to avert its occurrence.*

2. The word "calamity" is used here to emphasise that the coming event is not only inevitable, but also extremely horrendous.

[9] Pharaoh and those before him and the people of the overturned habitations ³ all engaged in the same great sin.

[10] They did not follow the Messenger of their Lord, and so He seized them with a severe grip.

[11] Verily when the water rose to great heights, ⁴ We bore you upon a floating vessel (i.e. the Ark) ⁵

[12] so that We might make it an instructive event for you, and retentive ears might preserve its memory.

[13] So when the Trumpet is blown with a single blast

[14] and the earth and the mountains are carried aloft and are crushed to bits at one stroke,

[15] on that Day shall that indubitable event come to pass;

[16] when the sky will be rent asunder, the grip holding it together having loosened on that Day,

[17] and the angels will stand on the sides, with eight of them bearing aloft the Throne of your Lord on that Day.⁶

[18] That will be the Day when you shall be brought forth (before Allah) and no secret of yours shall remain hidden.

3. *This is an allusion to Lot's people who were struck by God's chastisement, causing their dwellings to be overturned.*

4. *This alludes to Noah's Deluge.*

5. *The whole human race that exists today consists of the descendants of those who boarded the Ark several thousand years ago. Hence it is being said that: "We bore you upon a floating vessel."*

6. *This is a **mutashabih** (ambiguous) verse of the Qur'an, one whose meaning is hard to determine. We can neither know the reality of the Throne, nor fully comprehend how it will be held aloft by eight angels on the Day of Resurrection. It is, however, hardly conceivable that on that Day God will be seated, (literally speaking), on the Throne that will be held up by eight angels. Not insignificantly, the present verse too does not say that at that moment God will be seated on the Throne. Besides, the overall concept of God as expounded by the Qur'an, also prevents one from accepting such a notion. For how can it be imagined that God, Who is above the limitations of corporeality, space and direction, will be seated on a certain object with His creatures holding Him aloft? Hence, it is futile to probe into the matter attempting to know about the pith of things in definite terms; in fact it exposes one to totally erroneous ideas.*

[19] On that Day, he whose Record is given to him in his right hand will say: "Lo! Read my Record!

[20] Verily I was sure that I would be handed over my account."⁷

[21] Then he shall find himself in a life of bliss;

[22] in a lofty Garden

[23] the clusters of whose fruit will be hanging low to be within reach (of the inmates of Paradise).

[24] (They will be told): "Eat and drink with good cheer as a reward for the good deeds you did in the days that have passed by."

[25] As for him whose Record will be given to him in his left hand, he will exclaim: "Would that I had never been given my Record,

[26] and had not known my account.⁸

7. Such a person will explain the reason behind his good fortune: that it lay in the fact that he was never heedless of the Hereafter and spent his whole life believing that one Day he will be made to stand before God and be called to account by Him.

8. Another possible translation could be: "Would that I had known what accounting is!" This emphasises that the evil-doers will be faced with something they had not even imagined - that they will be required to render an account of all their deeds and that the whole record of their lives will be placed before them.

[27] Oh! Would that the death that came to me in the world had made an end of me!

[28] My riches have not availed me,

[29] and my authority has vanished.”⁹

[30] (A command will be issued): “Seize him and shackle him,

[31] then cast him in the Fire,

[32] then fasten him with a chain, seventy cubits long.

[33] He would not believe in Allah, the Most Great;

[34] nor would he urge the feeding of the poor.¹⁰

[35] Today he has been left here friendless;

[36] and has no food except the filth from the washing of wounds,

[37] which only the sinners will eat.”

[38] But no; ¹¹ I swear by what you see,

[39] and by what you do not see,

[40] that this is the speech of an honourable Messenger,

[41] not the speech of a poet. Little do you believe!

[42] Nor is this the speech of a soothsayer. Little do you reflect!

[43] It has been revealed by the Lord of the Universe.

[44] And if he [i.e., the Prophet] had forged this Discourse and thereafter ascribed it to Us,

[45] We would surely have seized him by the right hand,

[46] and then severed his life vein;

[47] and not one of you would have been able to withhold Us from doing so.¹²

9. On that Day he will see that the power he once had and which had turned his head has vanished. Unaided by an army or by those who once obeyed him, he will stand as a miserable and powerless creature lacking even the power to defend himself.

10. Let alone feeding a hungry person, he does not even ask others to do so.

11. That is, the reality is quite different from what they fancy.

12. The true purpose of the statement is to stress that the Prophet (peace be on him) had no authority whatsoever to alter the Revelation; if he did so, he would be liable to God's severe chastisement. The tune and tenor of the statement brings to mind how a king might react on knowing that his officials had forged a document and had then ascribed it to him. It should not be surprising if such persons are subjected to a grievous punishment. Some people put forward an altogether false assertion on the basis of this verse. They claim that if anyone declared that he was a Prophet and his life-vein was not then immediately severed, it would prove that his claim was true. The fact, however, is that what is said here in this verse pertains to Prophets and not to false claimants of prophethood. For as we know, there have been claimants even to Godhead who lived long years despite the absolute falsity of their claims. Their longevity was no proof that their claim to Godhead was true.

[48] Surely it is a Good Counsel for the God-fearing.

[49] We certainly know that some among you will give the lie to it,

[50] and surely it will be a cause of regret for the unbelievers.

[51] Certainly it is a Truth of absolute certainty.

[52] So glorify the name of your Lord Most Great.