

Nuh [Noah]

Makkan Period

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

[1] We sent Noah to his people (and directed him): "Warn your people before a grievous chastisement comes upon them."

[2] Noah said: "My people, I have certainly been sent as a clear Warner to you,

[3] that you serve Allah and fear Him, and follow me;

[4] He will forgive your sins and will grant you respite until an appointed term.¹ Indeed when Allah's appointed term comes, it cannot be deferred;² if you only knew!"

1. Noah asked his people that if they accepted the three above- mentioned directives -to serve God, to fear Him, and to follow Noah, God's Messenger - then God would grant them respite to live until the time that He had determined for their natural death. In other words, God would not subject them to any collective scourge.

2. The expression "Allah's appointed term" signifies the time determined by God to send His scourge on a people. In this context, the Qur'an has clearly stated on many an occasion that once God resolves to strike a nation down with His scourge, that nation is not spared the scourge even if they embrace the true faith.

[5] He³ said: "My Lord, I called my people by night and by day,

[6] but the more I called, the farther they fled.

[7] And every time I called them so that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears and wrapped up their faces with their garments⁴ and obstinately clung to their attitude, and waxed very proud.

[8] Then I summoned them openly,

[9] and preached to them in public, and also addressed them in secret.

[10] I said to them: "Ask forgiveness from your Lord; surely He is Most Forgiving.

[11] He will shower upon you torrents from heaven,

[12] and will provide you with wealth and children, and will bestow upon you gardens and rivers.

[13] What is amiss with you that you do not look forward to the majesty of Allah⁵

[14] when He has created you in stages?⁶

3. *These verses briefly mention the main points of Noah's teaching and his early efforts to convey his Message. Thereafter no detailed account is given of the greater part of Noah's life involving his continuous efforts to teach and admonish his people. Leaving all that aside, the **surah** goes straight to the last phase of his life and brings to the fore Noah's entreaty to God. See vv. 5 ff.*

4. *There could be several reasons why those unbelievers "wrapped up their faces with their garments". One reason could be that owing to their disgust at his preachings they could not even stomach looking at Noah and so kept their faces, including their eyes, covered. Another reason for so doing could have been to prevent Noah from recognising them. They resorted to this measure probably to forestall Noah from communicating his teachings to them.*

5. *People are generally cognizant that it is dangerous to say or do anything that is offensive to the majestic sensibilities of even the petty chiefs and nobles of this world. But they are scarcely concerned with showing deference to God's majesty. In fact they do a great deal that should offend Him: they rebel against Him associate others with Him in His Divinity, disobey His commands. Furthermore, they are not truly afraid of His wrath which they invite upon themselves by their actions.*

6. *That is, God has brought man to the present stage of his existence: he has passed through the various earlier stages of the creation process.*

[15] Do you not see how Allah has created seven heavens, one upon the other,

[16] and has placed the moon in them as a light, and the sun as a radiant lamp?

[17] And Allah has caused you to grow out of the earth so wondrously,⁷

[18] and He will later cause you to return to it and will then again bring you out of it,

[19] Allah has made the earth a wide expanse for you

[20] so that you may tread its spacious paths."

[21] Noah said: "My Lord, they did not pay heed to what I said, and followed those (nobles) whose possession of wealth and children has led them to an even greater loss.

[22] They contrived a plot of great magnitude.

[23] They said: "Do not abandon your deities; do not abandon Wadd, nor Suwa', nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr."⁸

7. *Here a simile is drawn between man's creation out of the different elements taken from the earth, and the growth of vegetation. There was a time when there was no vegetation on earth and then God caused vegetation to appear. In like manner, there was a time when man did not exist on earth and then God planted him on it.*

8. Here only some deities of the Prophet Noah's people are mentioned. These were the deities that were also worshipped by the Arabs and their temples and shrines were scattered across the expanse of Arabia at the time of Islam's advent.

[24] They have misled many, So do not enable these evil- doers to increase in anything except straying (from the Right Way)."⁹

[25] And so they were drowned on account of their sins, and then cast into the Fire, and did not find any other than Allah, to come forth to their help.

[26] Noah Said: "My Lord, do not leave out of these unbelievers even a single dweller on earth,

[27] for certainly if You should leave them (alive), they will mislead Your servants, and will beget none but sinners and utter unbelievers.

[28] My Lord, forgive me and my parents, and whoever enters my house as a believer, and forgive all believers, both men and women, and do not increase the wrong-doers in anything except perdition."

9. The Prophet Noah (peace be on him) did not invoke this curse simply out of impatience on his part, He did so after he had tried extremely hard to reform his people by constantly preaching his message and only then reached a point of utter desperation.