

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ -
وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ)

(Verily, in this is an Ayah, yet most of them are not believers. And verily, your Lord, He is truly, the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful.) (26:8-9) meaning, He is All-Mighty in His punishment of the disbelievers, and Most Merciful towards His believing servants.

وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ - نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ
الْأَمِينُ - عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ - بِلِسَانٍ
عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ)

(192. And truly, this is a revelation from the Lord of all that exists,) (193. Which the trustworthy Ruh (Jibril) has brought down.) (194. Upon your heart that you may be (one) of the warners,) (195. In the plain Arabic language.)

The Qur'an was revealed by Allah

Here Allah tells us about the Book which He revealed to His servant and Messenger Muhammad.

(وَإِنَّهُ)

(And truly, this) refers to the Qur'an, which at the beginning of the Surah was described as

(وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ مُحَدَّثٍ)

(and never comes there unto them a Reminder as a recent revelation from the Most Gracious...) (26:5).

(لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

(is a revelation from the Lord of Al-'Alamin.) means, Allah has sent it down to you and revealed it to you.

(نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ)

(Which the trustworthy Ruh has brought down.) This refers to Jibril, peace be upon him. This was the view of more than one of the Salaf: Ibn `Abbas, Muhammad bin Ka`b, Qatadah,

`Atiyah Al-`Awfi, As-Suddi, Ad-Dahhak, Az-Zuhri and Ibn Jurayj. This is an issue concerning which there is no dispute. Az-Zuhri said, "This is like the Ayah:

(قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ
بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ)

(Say: "Whoever is an enemy to Jibril -- for indeed he has brought it down to your heart by Allah's permission, confirming what came before it...") (2:97).

(عَلَى قَلْبِكَ)

(Upon your heart) `O Muhammad, free from any contamination, with nothing added or taken away.'

(لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ)

(that you may be of the warners,) means, `so that you may warn people with it of the punishment of Allah for those who go against it and disbelieve in it, and so that you may give glad tidings with it to the believers who follow it.'

(بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ)

(In the plain Arabic language.) meaning, `this Qur'an which We have revealed to you, We have revealed in perfect and eloquent Arabic, so that it may be quite clear, leaving no room for excuses and establishing clear proof, showing the straight path.'

(وَإِنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَوْلَمِيكُنْ لَهُمْ آيَةٌ أَنْ
يَعْلَمَهُ عُلَمَاءُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَى بَعْضِ
الْأَعْجَمِينَ)

(فَقَرَأَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ-)

(196. And verily, it is in the Zubur of the former people.) (197. Is it not a sign to them that the learned scholars of the Children of Israel knew it) (198. And if We had revealed it unto any of the non-Arabs,) (199. And he had recited it unto them, they would not have believed in it.)

The Qur'an was mentioned in the Previous Scriptures

Allah says: this Qur'an was mentioned and referred to in the previous Scriptures that were left behind by their Prophets who foretold it in ancient times and more recently. Allah took a covenant from them that they would follow it, and the last of them stood and addressed his people with the good news of Ahmad:

(وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ بَيْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ
التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ
أَحْمَدُ)

(And (remember) when `Isa, son of Maryam, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming the Tawrah before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.) (61:6) Zubur here refers to Books; Zubur is the plural of Az-Zabur, which is also the name used to refer to the Book given to Dawud. Allah says:

(وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ)

(And everything they have done is noted in the Az-Zubur.) (54:52), meaning, it is recorded against them in the books of the angels. Then Allah says:

(أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ آيَةٌ أَنْ يَعْلَمَهُ عُلَمَاءُ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ)

(Is it not a sign to them that the learned scholars of the Children of Israel knew it) meaning, is it not sufficient witness to the truth for them that the scholars of the Children of Israel found this Qur'an mentioned in the Scriptures which they study The meaning is: the fair-minded among them admitted that the attributes of Muhammad and his mission and his Ummah were mentioned in their Books, as was stated by those among them who believed, such as `Abdullah bin Salam, Salman Al-Farisi and others who met the Prophet . Allah said:

(الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ)

(Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write ...) (7:157)

The Intense Disbelief of Quraysh

Then Allah tells us how intense the disbelief of Quraysh was, and how stubbornly they resisted the Qur'an. If this Book with all its eloquence had been revealed to a non-Arab who did not know one word of Arabic, they still would not have believed in him. Allah says:

(وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضِ الْأَعْجَمِينَ)

فَقَرَأَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ -)

(And if We had revealed it unto any of the non-Arabs, And he had recited it unto them, they would not have believed in it.) And Allah says:

(وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ
يَعْرُجُونَ لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكَّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا)

(And even if We opened to them a gate from the heaven and they were to keep on ascending thereto. They would surely say: "Our eyes have been dazzled..." (15:14-15)

(وَلَوْ أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَىٰ)

(And even if We had sent down unto them angels, and the dead had spoken unto them...) (6:111)

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ)

(Truly, those, against whom the Word of your Lord has been justified, will not believe.) (10:96)

(كَذَلِكَ سَلَكْنَاهُ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ - لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِهِ حَتَّىٰ يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ - فَيَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ
لَا يَشْعُرُونَ - فَيَقُولُوا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنْظَرُونَ -
أَفْبِعَادَانَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ - أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ سِنِينَ
- ثُمَّ جَاءَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ - مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا يُمْتَعُونَ - وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا لَهَا
مُنْذِرُونَ)

ذِكْرِي وَمَا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ-

(200. Thus have We caused it to enter the hearts of the criminals.) (201. They will not believe in it until they see the painful torment.) (202. It shall come to them of a sudden, while they perceive it not.) (203. Then they will say: "Can we be respited") (204. Would they then wish for Our torment to be hastened on) (205. Think, if We do let them enjoy for years,) (206. And afterwards comes to them that which they had been promised.) (207. All that with which they used to enjoy shall not avail them.) (208. And never did We destroy a township but it had its warners) (209. By way of reminder, and We have never been unjust.)

The Deniers will never believe until They see the Torment

Allah says: `thus We caused denial, disbelief, rejection and stubbornness to enter the hearts of the sinners.'

(لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ)

(They will not believe in it), i.e., the truth,

(حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ)

(until they see the painful torment.) means, when their excuses will be of no avail, and the curse will be upon them, and theirs will be an evil abode.

(فَيَأْتِيهِمْ بَعْتَةٌ)

(It shall come to them of a sudden,) means, the punishment of Allah will come upon them suddenly,

(وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ وَيَقُولُوا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنظَرُونَ)

(while they perceive it not. Then they will say: "Can we be respited") means, when they see the punishment, then they will wish they had a little more time so that they can obey Allah -- or so they claim. This is like the Ayah:

(وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ)

(And warn mankind of the Day when the torment will come unto them) until:

(مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ زَوَالٍ)

(that you would not leave) (14: 44). When every sinner and evildoer sees his punishment, he will feel intense regret. Such was the case of Fir`awn, when Musa prayed against him:

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَهُ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَالًا
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

(Our Lord! "You have indeed bestowed on Fir`awn and his chiefs splendor and wealth in the life of this world) until:

قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَعْوَتُكُمَا

((Allah) said: "Verily, the invocation of you both is accepted.") (10:88-89). This supplication had an effect on Fir`awn: he did not believe until he saw the painful torment:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ ءَأَمِنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا الَّذِي ءَأَمِنْتُ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ

(till when drowning overtook him, he said: "I believe that none has the right to be worshipped but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe.") until:

وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

(and you were one of the mischief-makers) (10:90-91). And Allah says:

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا ءَأَمِنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدُّهُ

(so when they saw Our punishment, they said: "We believe in Allah Alone...") (40:84-85).

أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

(Would they then wish for Our torment to be hastened on) This is a denunciation and a threat, because they used to say to the Messenger, by way of denial, thinking it unlikely ever to happen:

اِنْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ

(Bring Allah's torment upon us) (29:29). This is as Allah said:

(وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ)

(And they ask you to hasten on the torment...) (29:53-55). Then Allah says:

(أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ سِنِينَ - ثُمَّ جَاءَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ - مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُمْتَعُونَ)

(Think, if We do let them enjoy for years, and afterwards comes to them that which they had been promised, all that with which they used to enjoy shall not avail them.) meaning, `even if We delay the matter and give them respite for a short while or for a long time, then the punishment of Allah comes upon them, what good will their life of luxury do them then'

(كَانَتْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا)

(The Day they see it, (it will be) as if they had not tarried (in this world) except an afternoon or a morning) (79:46). And Allah says:

(يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحَّزِحٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ)

(Everyone of them wishes that he could be given a life of a thousand years. But the grant of such life will not save him even a little from punishment) (2:96).

(وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى)

(And what will his wealth avail him when he goes down) (92:11) Allah says here:

(مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُمْتَعُونَ)

(All that with which they used to enjoy shall not avail them.) According to an authentic Hadith:

«يُوتَىٰ بِالْكَافِرِ فَيُعْمَسُ فِي النَّارِ غَمْسَةً ثُمَّ يُقَالُ لَهُ: هَلْ رَأَيْتَ خَيْرًا قَطُّ؟ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا قَطُّ؟»

فَيَقُولُ: لَا وَاللَّهِ يَا رَبِّ، وَيُوتَى بِأَشَدِّ النَّاسِ بُؤْسًا
كَانَ فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَيُصْبَعُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ صَبْغَةً، ثُمَّ يُقَالُ
لَهُ: هَلْ رَأَيْتَ بُؤْسًا قَطُّ؟ فَيَقُولُ: لَا وَاللَّهِ يَا رَبُّ»

(The disbelievers will be brought and once dipped into the Fire, then it will be said to him: "Did you ever see anything good Did you ever see anything good" He will say, "No, O Lord!" Then the most miserable person who ever lived on earth will be brought, and he will be put in Paradise for a brief spell, then it will be said to him, "Did you ever see anything bad" He will say, "No, O Lord.") meaning: as if nothing ever happened. Then Allah tells us of His justice towards His creation, in that He does not destroy any nation until after He has left them with no excuse, by warning them, sending Messengers to them and establishing proof against them. He says:

(وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا لَهَا مُنْذِرُونَ)
(ذِكْرَى وَمَا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ)

(And never did We destroy a township but it had its warners by way of reminder, and We have never been unjust.) This is like the Ayat:

(وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّى نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا)

(And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger) (17:15).

(وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَى حَتَّى يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمَّهَاتِ
رَسُولًا يَلُوقُ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا)

(And never will your Lord destroy the towns until He sends to their mother town a Messenger reciting to them Our Ayat.) until;

(وَأَهْلَهَا ظَالِمُونَ)

(the people thereof are wrongdoers) (28:59).

(وَمَا تَنْزَلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيْطَانُ - وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُمْ وَمَا
يَسْتَطِيعُونَ - إِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمَعَزُولُونَ)

(210. And it is not the Shayatin (devils) who have brought it down.) (211. Neither would it suit them nor are they able.) (212. Verily, they have been removed far from hearing it.)

The Qur'an was brought down by Jibril, not Shaytan

tells us about His Book, which falsehood cannot approach from before or behind it, sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise. He states that it has been brought down by the trustworthy Ruh (i.e., Jibril) who is helped by Allah,

(وَمَا تَنْزَلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيَاطِينُ)

(And it is not the Shayatin who have brought it down.) Then He tells us that it could not be the case for three reasons that the Shayatin brought it down. One is that it would not suit them, i.e., they have no desire to do so and they do not want to, because their nature is to corrupt and misguide people, but this contains words enjoining what is right and forbidding what is evil, and light, guidance and mighty proofs. There is a big difference between this and the Shayatin, Allah says:

(وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُمْ)

(Neither would it suit them)

(وَمَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ)

(nor are they able.) meaning, even if they wanted to, they could not do it. Allah says:

(لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا
مُتَّصِدًّا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ)

(Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rent asunder by the fear of Allah) (59:21). Then Allah explains that even if they wanted to and were able to bear it and convey it, they still would not be able to achieve that, because they were prevented from hearing the Qur'an when it was brought down, for the heavens were filled with guardians and shooting stars at the time when the Qur'an was being revealed to the Messenger of Allah , so none of the Shayatin could hear even one letter of it, lest there be any confusion in the matter. This is a part of Allah's mercy towards His servants, protection of His Laws, and support for His Book and His Messenger . Allah says:

(إِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمَعْزُورُونَ)

(Verily, they have been removed far from hearing it.) This is like what Allah tells us about the Jinn:

وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَهَا مَلِيئَاتٍ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا
وَشُهْبًا - وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقْعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ
يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا)

(And we have sought to reach the heaven; but found it filled with stern guards and flaming fires. And verily, we used to sit there in stations, to (steal) a hearing, but any who listens now will find a flaming fire watching him in ambush.) until;

(أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا)

(or whether their Lord intends for them a right path))72:8-10(.

(فَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا ءَاخَرَ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُعَذِّبِينَ
- وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ - وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ
لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ - فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنَّي
بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ - وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ
الرَّحِيمِ - الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ)
وَتَقْلُبَكَ فِي السَّجْدِينَ- إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ-)

(213. So, invoke not with Allah another god lest you should be among those who receive punishment.) (214. And warn your tribe of near kindred.) (215. And be kind and humble to the believers who follow you.) (216. Then if they disobey you, say: "I am innocent of what you do.") (217. And put your trust in the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful,) (218. Who sees you when you stand up.) (219. And your movements among those who fall prostrate.) (220. Verily, He, only He, is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.)

The Command to warn His Tribe of near Kindred

Here Allah commands (His Prophet) to worship Him alone, with no partner or associate, and tells him that whoever associates others in worship with Him, He will punish them. Then Allah commands His Messenger to warn his tribe of near kindred, i.e., those who were most closely related to him, and to tell them that nothing could save any of them except for faith in Allah. Allah also commanded him to be kind and gentle with the believing servants of Allah who followed him, and to disown those who disobeyed him, no matter who they were. Allah said:

(فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ)

(Then if they disobey you, say: "I am innocent of what you do.") This specific warning does not contradict the general warning; indeed it is a part of it, as Allah says elsewhere:

(لِنُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنذِرَ ءَابَاؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ)

(In order that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, so they are heedless.) (36:6),

(لِنُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا)

(that you may warn the Mother of the Towns and all around it) (42:7),

(وَأُنذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ)

(And warn therewith those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord) (6:51),

(لِنُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَنُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا لُدًّا)

(that you may give glad tidings to those who have Taqwa, and warn with it the most quarrelsome people.) (19:97),

(لَأُنذِرَكُم بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ)

(that I may therewith warn you and whomsoever it may reach) (6:19), and

(وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ قَالَنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهُ)

(but those of the sects that reject it, the Fire will be their promised meeting place) (11:17). According to Sahih Muslim,)the Prophet said:(

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، لَا يَسْمَعُ بِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ هَذِهِ
الْأُمَّةِ يَهُودِيٌّ وَلَا نَصْرَانِيٌّ، ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِي إِلَّا
دَخَلَ النَّارَ»

(By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, no one from these nations -- Jewish or Christian -- hears of me then does not believe in me, but he will enter Hell.) Many Hadiths have been narrated

concerning the revelation of this Ayah, some of which we will quote below: Imam Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him, recorded that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "When Allah revealed the Ayah,

(وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ)

(And warn your tribe of near kindred.), the Prophet went to As-Safa', climbed up and called out,

«يَا صَبَاحَاهُ»

(O people!) The people gathered around him, some coming of their own accord and others sending people on their behalf to find out what was happening. The Messenger of Allah said:

«يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، يَا بَنِي فِهْرٍ، يَا بَنِي لُؤَيٍّ،
أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ أَخْبَرْتُكُمْ أَنَّ خَيْلًا بِسَفْحِ هَذَا الْجَبَلِ تُرِيدُ
أَنْ تُغِيرَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَدَقْتُمُونِي؟»

(O Bani `Abd Al-Muttalib, O Bani Fihr, O Bani Lu'ayy! What do you think, if I told you that there was a cavalry at the foot of this mountain coming to attack you -- would you believe me) They said, "Yes." He said:

«فَإِنِّي نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ»

(Then I warn you of a great punishment that is close at hand.) Abu Lahab said, "May you perish for the rest of the day! You only called us to tell us this" Then Allah revealed:

(تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ)

(Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab and perish he!))111:1(This was also recorded by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i. Imam Ahmad recorded that `A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her said: "When the Ayah:

(وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ)

(And warn your tribe of near kindred) was revealed, the Messenger of Allah stood up and said:

«يَا فَاطِمَةَ ابْنَةَ مُحَمَّدٍ، يَا صَفِيَّةَ ابْنَةَ
عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ، لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ
مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا سَلُونِي مِنْ مَالِي مَا شِئْتُمْ»

(O Fatimah daughter of Muhammad, O Safiyyah daughter of `Abd Al-Muttalib, O Bani `Abd Al-Muttalib, I cannot help you before Allah. Ask me for whatever you want of my wealth.) This was recorded by Muslim. Imam Ahmad recorded that Qabisah bin Mukhariq and Zuhayr bin `Amr said: "When the Ayah:

(وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ)

(And warn your tribe of near kindred.) was revealed, the Messenger of Allah climbed on top of a rock on the side of a mountain and started to call out:

«يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ مَنَافٍ، إِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ، وَإِنَّمَا مَثَلِي
وَمَثَلُكُمْ كَرَجُلٍ رَأَى الْعَدُوَّ فَذَهَبَ يَرَبُّهُ أَهْلَهُ
يَخْشَى أَنْ يَسْبِقُوهُ، فَجَعَلَ يُنَادِي وَيَهْتَفُ: يَا
صَبَاحَاهُ»

(O Bani `Abd Manaf, I am indeed a warner, and the parable of me and you is that of a man who sees the enemy so he goes to save his family, fearing that the enemy may reach them before he does.) And he started to call out, (O people!) It was also recorded by Muslim and An-Nasa'i. Allah's saying:

(وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ)

(And put your trust in the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful,) means, `in all your affairs, for He is your Helper, Protector and Supporter, and He is the One Who will cause you to prevail and will make your word supreme.'

(الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ)

(Who sees you when you stand up.) means, He is taking care of you. This is like the Ayah,

(وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا)

(So wait patiently for the decision of your Lord, for verily, you are under Our Eyes) (52:48) Ibn `Abbas said that the Ayah,

(الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ)

(Who sees you when you stand up.) means, "To pray." `Ikrimah said: "He sees him when he stands and bows and prostrates." Al-Hasan said:

(الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ)

(Who sees you when you stand up.) "When you pray alone." Ad-Dahhak said:

(الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ)

(Who sees you when you stand up.) "When you are lying in bed and when you are sitting." Qatadah said:

(الَّذِي يَرَاكَ)

(Who sees you) "When you are standing, when you are sitting, and in all other situations."

(وَتَقَلُّبِكَ فِي السَّجِدِينَ)

(And your movements among those who fall prostrate.) Qatadah said:

(الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ)

(وَتَقَلُّبِكَ فِي السَّجِدِينَ-)

(Who sees you when you stand up. And your movements among those who fall prostrate.) "When you pray, He sees you when you pray alone and when you pray in congregation." This was also the view of `Ikrimah, `Ata' Al-Khurasani and Al-Hasan Al-Basri.

(إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ)

(Verily, He, only He, is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.) He hears all that His servants say and He knows all their movements, as He says:

(وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْءَانٍ
وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ
نُفِضُونَ فِيهِ)

(Neither you do any deed nor recite any portion of the Qur'an, nor you do any deed, but We are Witness thereof, when you are doing it) (10:61).

(هَلْ أَنْبَيْتُمْ عَلَىٰ مَنْ نَزَّلَ الشَّيْطَانُ - نَزَّلَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَقَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ - يُلْقُونَ السَّمْعَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمْ
كَذِبُونَ - وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ - أَلَمْ تَرَ
أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ - وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا
يَفْعَلُونَ - إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا
وَسَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ)

(221. Shall I inform you upon whom the Shayatin descend) (222. They descend on every lying, sinful person (Athim).) (223. Who gives ear, and most of them are liars.) (224. As for the poets, the astray follow them,) (225. See you not that they speak about every subject in their poetry) (226. And that they say what they do not do.) (227. Except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and remember Allah much and vindicate themselves after they have been wronged. And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned.)

Refutation of the Fabrications of the Idolators

Here Allah addresses those idolators who claimed that what was brought by the Messenger was not the truth but was merely something that he had made up by himself, or that it came to him in visions from the Jinn. Allah stated that His Messenger was above their claims and fabrications, and that what he had brought did indeed come from Allah, and that it was a revelation and inspiration, brought down by a noble, trustworthy and mighty angel. It did not come from the Shayatin, because they have no desire for anything like this Noble Qur'an -- they descend upon those who are like them, the lying fortune-tellers. Allah says:

(هَلْ أَنْبِئُكُمْ)

(Shall I inform you) meaning, shall I tell you,

(هَلْ أَنْبِئُكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَنْ تَنْزَلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ - تَنْزَلُ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَقَاكٍ أَثِيمٍ)

(upon whom the Shayatin descend They descend on every lying, sinful person (Athim))
meaning, one whose speech is lies and fabrication.

(أَثِيمٍ)

(Athim) means, whose deeds are immoral. This is the person upon whom the Shayatin descend,
fortune-tellers and other sinful liars. The Shayatin are also sinful liars.

(يُلْقُونَ السَّمْعَ)

(Who gives ear,) means, they try to overhear what is said in the heavens, and they try to hear
something of the Unseen, then they add to it a hundred lies and tell it to their human
comrades, who then tell it to others. Then the people believe everything they say because they
were right about the one thing which was heard from the heavens. This was stated in an
authentic Hadith recorded by Al-Bukhari from `A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, who
said, "The people asked the Prophet about fortune-tellers, and he said:

«إِنَّهُمْ لَيَسُوا بِشَيْءٍ»

(They are nothing.) They said: "O Messenger of Allah, they say things that come true." The
Prophet said:

«تِلْكَ الْكَلِمَةُ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَخْطُفُهَا الْجِنِّيُّ فَيُقْرِقِرُهَا
فِي أُذُنِ وَلِيِّهِ كَقْرِقَرَةِ الدَّجَاجِ، فَيَخْلِطُونَ مَعَهَا
أَكْثَرَ مِنْ مِائَةِ كَذْبَةٍ»

(That is a word of truth which the Jinn snatches, then he gabbles it like the clucking of a
chicken into the ear of his friend, but he mixes it with more than one hundred lies.) Al-Bukhari
also recorded that Abu Hurayrah said, "The Prophet said:

«إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ الْأَمْرَ فِي السَّمَاءِ ضَرَبَتِ
 الْمَلَائِكَةُ بِأَجْنِحَتِهَا خُضْعَانًا لِقَوْلِهِ، كَأَنَّهَا سِلْسِلَةٌ
 عَلَى صَفْوَانٍ، فَإِذَا فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا: مَاذَا
 قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ؟ قَالُوا (لِلَّذِي قَالَ): الْحَقُّ، وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ
 الْكَبِيرُ، فَيَسْمَعُهَا مُسْتَرْقُو السَّمْعِ، وَمُسْتَرْقُو
 السَّمْعِ هَكَذَا بَعْضُهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ وَصَفَ سُقْيَانُ
 يَدَيْهِ، فَحَرَفَهَا وَبَدَّدَ بَيْنَ أَصَابِعِهِ فَيَسْمَعُ الْكَلِمَةَ
 فَيُلْقِيهَا إِلَى مَنْ تَحْتَهُ، ثُمَّ يُلْقِيهَا الْآخِرُ إِلَى مَنْ
 تَحْتَهُ، حَتَّى يُلْقِيهَا عَلَى لِسَانِ السَّاحِرِ أَوْ الْكَاهِنِ،
 فَرُبَّمَا أَدْرَكَهُ الشَّهَابُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُلْقِيَهَا، وَرُبَّمَا
 أَلْقَاهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يُدْرَكَهُ، فَيَكْذِبُ مَعَهَا مِائَةَ
 كَذِبَةٍ، فَيُقَالُ: أَلَيْسَ قَدْ قَالَ لَنَا يَوْمَ كَذَا وَكَذَا: كَذَا
 وَكَذَا؟ فَيُصَدَّقُ بِتِلْكَ الْكَلِمَةِ الَّتِي سُمِعَتْ مِنْ
 السَّمَاءِ»

(When Allah decrees a matter in heaven, the angels beat their wings in submission to His decree, a chain beating on a rock. And when the fear in their hearts subsides, they say: "What is it that your Lord has said" They say: "The truth. And He is the Most High, the Most Great." Then when the Jinn who are listening out, one above the other) -- and Sufyan illustrated this with a gesture, holding his hand vertically with his fingers outspread -- (when they hear this, they throw it down from one to another, until it is passed to the fortune-teller or soothsayer. The shooting star may strike the Jinn before he passes it on, or he may pass it on before he is struck, and he adds to it one hundred lies, thus it is said: "Did he not tell us that on such and such a day, such and such would happen" So they believe him because of that one thing which was heard from the heavens.) This was recorded by Al-Bukhari. Al-Bukhari recorded from `Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, that the Prophet said:

«إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَحَدَّثُ فِي الْعَنَانِ وَالْعَنَانُ: الْغَمَامُ
بِالْأَمْرِ (يَكُونُ) فِي الْأَرْضِ، فَتَسْمَعُ الشَّيَاطِينُ
الْكَلِمَةَ، فَتَقْرُهَا فِي أُذُنِ الْكَاهِنِ كَمَا تُقْرُ
الْقَارُورَةُ، فَيَزِيدُونَ مَعَهَا مِائَةَ كَذِبَةٍ»

(The angels speak in the clouds about some matter on earth, and the Shayatin overhear what they say, so they tell it to the fortune-teller, gurgling into his ear like (a liquid poured) from a glass bottle, and he adds to it one hundred lies.)

Refutation of the Claim that the Prophet was a Poet

(وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ)

(As for the poets, the astray ones follow them.) `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported from Ibn `Abbas that this means: "The disbelievers follow the misguided among mankind and the Jinn." This was also the view of Mujahid, `Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam, and others. `Ikrimah said, "Two poets would ridicule one another in verse, with one group of people supporting one and another group supporting the other. Hence Allah revealed the Ayah,

(وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ)

(As for the poets, the erring ones follow them.)

(أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ)

(See you not that they speak about every subject in their poetry) `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported from Ibn `Abbas that this means: "They indulge in every kind of nonsense." Ad-Dahhak reported that Ibn `Abbas said, "They engage in every kind of verbal art." This was also the view of Mujahid and others.

(وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ)

(And that they say what they do not do.) Al-`Awfi reported that Ibn `Abbas said that at the time of the Messenger of Allah , two men, one from among the Ansar and one from another tribe, were ridiculing one another in verse, and each one of them was supported by a group of his own people, who were the foolish ones, and Allah said:

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ - أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ
وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ - وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ)

(As for the poets, the erring ones follow them. See you not that they speak about every subject in their poetry And that they say what they do not do.) What is meant here is that the Messenger , to whom this Qur'an was revealed, was not a soothsayer or a poet, because his situation was quite obviously different to theirs, as Allah says:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشُّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
وَقُرْءَانٌ مُّبِينٌ)

(And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it suitable for him. This is only a Reminder and a plain Qur'an.) (36:69),

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ - وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ
قَلِيلًا مَّا تُوْمِنُونَ - وَلَا يَقُولُ كَمَا هِن قَلِيلًا مَّا
تَذَكَّرُونَ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

(That this is verily, the word of an honored Messenger. It is not the word of a poet, little is that you believe! Nor is it the word of a soothsayer, little is that you remember! This is the Revelation sent down from the Lord of all that exists.) (69:40-43)

The Exception of the Poets of Islam

(إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ)

(Except those who believe and do righteous deeds,) Muhammad bin Ishaq narrated from Yazid bin `Abdullah bin Qusayt, that Abu Al-Hasan Salim Al-Barrad, the freed servant of Tamim Ad-Dari said: "When the Ayah --

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ)

(As for the poets, the erring ones follow them.) was revealed, Hassan bin Thabit, `Abdullah bin Rawahah and Ka' b bin Malik came to the Messenger of Allah , weeping, and said: "Allah knew when He revealed this Ayah that we are poets. The Prophet recited to them the Ayah,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ)

(Except those who believe and do righteous deeds,) and said:

«أَنْتُمْ»

((This means) you.)

وَذَكِّرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا)

(and remember Allah much). He said:

«أَنْتُمْ»

((This means) you.)

وَأَنْتَصِرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا)

(and vindicate themselves after they have been wronged.) He said:

«أَنْتُمْ»

((This means) you.) This was recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir from the narration of Ibn Ishaq. But this Surah was revealed in Makkah, so how could the reason for its revelation be the poets of the Ansar This is something worth thinking about. The reports that have been narrated about this are all Mursal and cannot be relied on. And Allah knows best. But this exception could include the poets of the Ansar and others. It even includes those poets of the Jahiliyyah who indulged in condemning Islam and its followers, then repented and turned to Allah, and gave up what they used to do and started to do righteous deeds and remember Allah much, to make up for the bad things that they had previously said, for good deeds wipe out bad deeds. So they praised Islam and its followers in order to make up for their insults, as the poet (`Abdullah bin Az-Zab`ari said when he became Muslim: "O Messenger of Allah, indeed my tongue will try to make up for things it said when I was bad -- When I went along with the Shaytan during the years of misguidance, and whoever inclines towards his way is in a state of loss." Similarly, Abu Sufyan bin Al-Harith bin `Abd Al-Muttalib was one of the most hostile people towards the Prophet , even though he was his cousin, and he was the one who used to mock him the most. But when he became Muslim, there was no one more beloved to him than the Messenger of Allah . He began to praise the Messenger of Allah where he had mocked him, and take him as a close friend where he had regarded him as an enemy.

وَأَنْتَصِرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا)

(and vindicate themselves after they have been wronged.) Ibn ` Abbas said, "They responded in kind to the disbelievers who used to ridicule the believers in verse." This was also the view of Mujahid, Qatadah and several others. It was also recorded in the Sahih that the Messenger of Allah said to Hassan:

«اَفْجُهُمْ»

(Ridicule them in verse.) Or he said:

«هَاجِهِمْ وَحَبْرِيْلُ مَعَكَ»

(Ridicule them in verse, and Jibril is with you.) Imam Ahmad recorded that Ka` b bin Malik said to the Prophet , "Allah has revealed what He revealed about the poets. The Messenger of Allah said:

«إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ يُجَاهِدُ بِسَيْفِهِ وَلِسَانِهِ، وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي
بِيَدِهِ لَكَأَنَّ مَا تَرْمُونَهُمْ بِهِ نَضْحُ النَّبْلِ»

(The believer wages Jihad with his sword and with his tongue, By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, it is as if you are attacking them with arrows.)

(وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ)

(And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned.) This is like the Ayah,

(يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعذِرَتُهُمْ)

(The Day when their excuses will be of no profit to wrongdoers) (40: 52). According to the Sahih, the Messenger of Allah said:

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظُّلْمَ، فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

(Beware of wrongdoing, for wrongdoing will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection.) Qatadah bin Di` amah said concerning the Ayah --

(وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ)

(And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned.) this refers to the poets and others. This is the end of the Tafsir Surat Ash-Shu` ara'. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

The Tafsir of Surat An-Naml

(Chapter - 27)

Which was revealed in Makkah

(بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

(طس تلك آيات القرآن وكتب مبين - هدى
وبشرى للمؤمنين - الذين يقيمون الصلوة
ويؤتون الزكوة وهم بالآخرة هم يوقنون - إن
الذين لا يؤمنون بالآخرة زينا لهم أعمالهم فهم
يعمهمون - أولئك الذين لهم سوء العذاب وهم
في الآخرة هم الأخسرون - وإنيك لتلقى القرآن
من لدن حكيم عليم)

(1. Ta Sn. These are the Ayat of the Qur'an, and (it is) a Book (that is) clear.) (2. A guide and glad tidings for the believers.) (3. Those who perform the Salah and give the Zakah and they believe with certainty in the Hereafter.) (4. Verily, those who believe not in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds fair seeming to them, so that they wander about blindly.) (5. They are those for whom there will be an evil torment. And in the Hereafter they will be the greatest losers.) (6. And verily, you are being taught the Qur'an from One, All

**The Qur'an is Guidance and Glad Tidings for the Believers, a
Warning to the Disbelievers, and it is from Allah**

In (the comments on) Surat Al-Baqarah, we discussed the letters which appear at the beginning of some Surahs.

(تلك آيات القرآن وكتب مبين)

(These are the Ayat of the Qur'an, and (it is) a Book (that is) clear.) It is plain and evident.

(هُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(A guide and glad tidings for the believers.) meaning, guidance and good news may be attained from the Qur'an for those who believe in it, follow it and put it into practice. They establish obligatory prayers, pay Zakah and believe with certain faith in the Hereafter, the resurrection after death, reward and punishment for all deeds, good and bad, and Paradise and Hell. This is like the Ayat:

(قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءً وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ)

(Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing. And as for those who disbelieve, there is heaviness (deafness) in their ears..." (41:44).

(لِنُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَنُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا لُدًّا)

(that you may give glad tidings to those who have Taqwa, and warn with it the Ludd (most quarrelsome) people) (19: 97). Allah says here:

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ)

(Verily, those who believe not in the Hereafter,) meaning, those who deny it and think that it will never happen,

(زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ)

(We have made their deeds fair seeming to them, so that they wander about blindly.) means, 'We have made what they are doing seem good to them, and We have left them to continue in their misguidance, so they are lost and confused.' This is their recompense for their disbelief in the Hereafter, as Allah says:

(وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ)

(And We shall turn their hearts and their eyes away, as they refused to believe therein for the first time) (6:110).

(أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ)

(They are those for whom there will be an evil torment.) in this world and the Hereafter.

(وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْآخِسُونَ)

(And in the Hereafter they will be the greatest losers.) means, no one but they, among all the people who will be gathered, will lose their souls and their wealth.

(وَإِنَّكَ لَتُلَقَّى الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ)

(And verily, you are being taught the Qur'an from One, All-Wise, All-Knowing.)

(وَإِنَّكَ)

(And verily, you) O Muhammad. Qatadah said:

(لَتُلَقَّى)

(are being taught) "Are receiving."

(الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ)

(the Qur'an from One, All-Wise, All-Knowing.) from One Who is Wise in His commands and prohibitions, and Who knows all things, major and minor. Whatever He says is absolute Truth, and His rulings are entirely fair and just, as Allah says:

(وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا)

(And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice) (6:115).

(إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنستُ نَارًا سَاتِيكُمْ
مِنْهَا بِخَبْرٍ أَوْ آتِيكُمْ بِسِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَصْطَلُونَ - فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ مَنْ فِي
النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ -
يَمُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ - وَأَلْقِ

عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا
وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ يَمُوسَى لَا تَخَفْ إِنِّي لَا يَخَافُ لَدَى
الْمُرْسَلُونَ - إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ
فَأِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ - وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ
تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَى
فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ - فَلَمَّا
جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ -
وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا
فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ)

(7. (Remember) when Musa said to his household: "Verily, I have seen a fire; I will bring you from there some information, or I will bring you a burning ember, that you may warm yourselves.") (8. But when he came to it, he was called: "Blessed is whosoever is in the fire, and whosoever is round about it! And glorified be Allah, the Lord of all that exists.") (9. "O Musa! Verily, it is I, Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.") (10. "And throw down your stick!" But when he saw it moving as if it were a snake, he turned in flight, and did not look back. (It was said:) "O Musa! Fear not: verily, the Messengers fear not in front of Me.") (11. "Except him who has done wrong and afterwards has changed evil for good; then surely, I am Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.") (12. "And put your hand into opening of your garment, it will come forth white without hurt. (These are) among the nine signs (you will take) to Fir`awn and his people. Verily, they are a people who are rebellious.") (13. But when Our Ayat came to them, clear to see, they said: "This is a manifest magic.") (14. And they belied them wrongfully and arrogantly, though they themselves were convinced thereof. So, see what was the end of the mischief-makers.)

The Story of Musa and the End of Fir`awn

Here Allah tells His Messenger Muhammad about what happened to Musa, peace be upon him, how Allah chose him, spoke with him and gave him mighty, dazzling signs and overwhelming proof, and sent him to Fir`awn and his people, but they denied the proof, disbelieved in him and arrogantly refused to follow him. Allah says:

(إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ)

(when Musa said to his household), meaning, remember when Musa was traveling with his family and lost his way. This was at night, in the dark. Musa had seen a fire beside the mountain, i.e., he had noticed a fire burning brightly, and said,

(لَأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي أَنَسْتُ نَارًا سَاتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبْرٍ)

(to his household: "Verily, I have seen a fire; I will bring you from there some information..." meaning, `about the way we should take.'

(أَوْ ءَاتِيكُمْ بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ)

(or I will bring you a burning ember, that you may warm yourselves.) meaning, so that they could keep warm. And it was as he said: "He came back with great news, and a great light." Allah says:

(فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا)

(But when he came to it, he was called: "Blessed is whosoever is in the fire, and whosoever is round about it!") meaning, when he came to it, he saw a great and terrifying sight: the fire was burning in a green bush, and the fire was burning ever brighter while the bush was growing ever more green and beautiful. Then he raised his head, and saw that its light was connected to the clouds of the sky. Ibn `Abbas and others said, "It was not a fire, rather it was shining light." According to one report narrated from Ibn `Abbas, it was the Light of the Lord of the worlds. Musa stood amazed by what he was seeing, and

(نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ)

(he was called: "Blessed is whosoever is in the fire...") Ibn `Abbas said, "This means, Holy is (whosoever is in the fire)."

(وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا)

(and whosoever is round about it) means, of the angels. This was the view of Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Al-Hasan and Qatadah.

(وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

(And glorified be Allah, the Lord of all that exists), Who does whatever He wills and there is nothing like Him among His creation. Nothing He has made can encompass Him, and He is the Exalted, the Almighty, Who is utterly unlike all that He has created. Heaven and earth cannot contain Him, but He is the One, the Self-Sufficient Master, Who is far above any comparison with His creation.

(يُمُوسَى إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ)

(O Musa! Verily, it is I, Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.) Allah told him that the One Who was addressing him was his Lord Allah, the All-Mighty, Who has subjugated and subdued all things, the One Who is Wise in all His words and deeds. Then He commanded him to throw down the stick that was in his hand, so that He might show him clear proof that He is the One Who is able to do all things, whatever He wills. When Musa threw that stick down, it changed into the form of a huge and terrifying snake, moving quickly despite its size. Allah says:

(فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ)

(But when he saw it moving as if it were a Jann (snake).) Jann refers to a type of snake that is the fastest-moving and most agile. When Musa saw that with his own eyes,

(وَلَّى مُذِيراً وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ)

(he turned in flight, and did not look back.) meaning, he did not turn around, because he was so afraid. Allah's saying:

(يُمُوسَى لَا تَخَفْ إِنِّي لَا يَخَافُ لَدَى الْمُرْسَلُونَ)

(O Musa! Fear not: verily, the Messengers fear not in front of Me.) means, 'do not be afraid of what you see, for I want to choose you as a Messenger and make you a great Prophet.'

(إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ)

(Except him who has done wrong and afterwards has changed evil for good; then surely, I am Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.) This is an exception of the exclusionary type. This is good news for mankind, for whoever does an evil deed then gives it up and repents and turns to Allah, Allah will accept his repentance, as He says:

(وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى)

(And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes and does righteous good deeds, and then Ahtada.) (20:82)

(وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ)

(And whoever does evil or wrongs himself...) (4:110). And there are many other Ayat which say the same.

وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجَ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ
(سُوءٍ)

(And put your hand into the opening of your garment, it will come forth white without hurt.) This is another sign, further brilliant proof of the ability of Allah to do whatever He wills. It is also confirmation of the truth of the one to whom the miracle was given. Allah commanded him to put his hand into the opening of his garment, and when he put his hand in and took it out again, it came out white and shining as if it were a piece of the moon or a flash of dazzling lightning.

(فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ)

(among the nine signs) means, 'these are two of the nine signs which you will be supported with and which will serve as proof for you.'

(إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ)

(to Fir`awn and his people. Verily, they are a people who are rebellious.) These were the nine signs of which Allah said:

(وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ)

(And indeed We gave Musa nine clear signs) (17:101) -- as we have stated there.

(فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً)

(But when Our Ayat came to them, clear to see,) i.e., clear and obvious,

(قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ)

(they said: "This is a manifest magic".) They wanted to oppose it with their own magic, but they were defeated and were returned disgraced.

(وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا)

(And they belied them) means, verbally,

(وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ)

(though they themselves were convinced thereof.) means, they knew deep down that this was truth from Allah, but they denied it and were stubborn and arrogant.

(ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا)

(wrongfully and arrogantly) means, wronging themselves because this was the despicable manner to which they were accustomed, and they were arrogant because they were too proud to follow the truth. Allah said:

(فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ)

(So, see what was the end of the mischief-makers.) meaning, `see, O Muhammad, what were the consequences of their actions when Allah destroyed them and drowned every last one of them in a single morning.' The point of this story is: beware, `O you who disbelieve in Muhammad and deny the Message that he has brought from his Lord, lest the same thing that befell them befall you also.' But what is worse, is that Muhammad is nobler and greater than Musa, and his proof is stronger than that of Musa, for the signs that Allah has given him are combined with his presence and his character, in addition to the fact that previous Prophets foretold his coming and took a covenant from the people that they would follow him if they should see him, may the best of blessings and peace from his Lord be upon him.

(وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ -
وَوَرَّثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُودَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا
مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ
الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ - وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ
الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ - حَتَّى إِذَا
أَتَوْا عَلَى وَادِي النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ
ادْخُلُوا مَسَكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ
وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ - فَنَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّنْ قَوْلِهَا

وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ
عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ
وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ)

(15. And indeed We gave knowledge to Dawud and Sulayman, and they both said: "All praise be to Allah, Who has preferred us above many of His believing servants!") (16. And Sulayman inherited from Dawud. He said: "O mankind! We have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from everything. This, verily, is an evident grace.") (17. And there were gathered before Sulayman his hosts of Jinn and men, and birds, and they all were set in battle order (marching forward).) (18. Till, when they came to the valley of the ants, one of the ants said: "O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Sulayman and his armies should crush you, while they perceive not.") (19. So he (Sulayman) smiled, amused at her speech and said: "My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your favors which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous servants.")

Dawud and Sulayman (peace be upon them), the organization of Sulayman's Troops and His passage through the Valley of the Ants

Here Allah tells us about the great blessings and favors which He bestowed upon two of His servants and Prophets, Dawud (David) and his son Sulayman (Solomon), peace be upon them both, and how they enjoyed happiness in this world and the Hereafter, power and authority in this world, and the position of being Prophets and Messengers. Allah says:

(وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(And indeed We gave knowledge to Dawud and Sulayman, and they both said: "All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has preferred us above many of His believing servants!")

(وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُودَ)

(And Sulayman inherited from Dawud.) means, in kingship and prophethood. What is meant here is not wealth, because if that were the case, Sulayman would not have been singled out from among the sons of Dawud, as Dawud had one hundred wives. Rather what is meant is the inheritance of kingship and prophethood, for the wealth of the Prophets cannot be inherited, as the Messenger of Allah said:

«نَحْنُ مَعَاشِرَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ لَا نُورَثُ، مَا تَرَكَنَاهُ فَهُوَ
صَدَقَةٌ»

(We Prophets cannot be inherited from; whatever we leave behind is charity.) And Sulayman said:

(يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ عَلَّمْنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأَوْتَيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ)

(O mankind! We have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from everything.) Here Sulayman was speaking of the blessings that Allah bestowed upon him, by giving him complete authority and power, whereby mankind, the Jinn and the birds were subjugated to him. He also knew the language of the birds and animals, which is something that had never been given to any other human being -- as far as we know from what Allah and His Messenger told us. Allah enabled Sulayman to understand what the birds said to one another as they flew through the air, and what the different kinds of animals said. Sulayman said:

(عَلَّمْنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأَوْتَيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ)

(We have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from everything.) i.e., all things that a king needs.

(إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ)

(This, verily, is an evident grace.) means, `this is clearly the blessings of Allah upon us.'

(وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ
وَالتَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ)

(And there were gathered before Sulayman his hosts of Jinn and men, and birds, and they all were set in battle order.) means, all of Sulayman's troops of Jinn, men and birds were gathered together, and he rode with them in a display of might and glory, with people marching behind him, followed by the Jinn, and the birds flying above his head. When it was hot, they would shade him with their wings.

(فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ)

(and they all were set in battle order.) The first and the last of them were brought together, so that none of them would step out of place. Mujahid said: "Officials were appointed to keep each group in order, and to keep the first and the last together so that no one would step out of line -- just as kings do nowadays."

(حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِي النَّمْلِ)

(Till, when they came to the valley of the ants,) meaning, when Sulayman, the soldiers and the army with him crossed the valley of the ants,

(قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ)

(one of the ants said: "O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Sulayman and his armies should crush you, while they perceive not.") Sulayman, peace be upon him, understood what the ant said,

(فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ)

(So he smiled, amused at her speech and said: "My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your favors which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You,) meaning: `inspire me to give thanks for the blessings that You have bestowed upon me by teaching me to understand what the birds and animals say, and the blessings that You have bestowed upon my parents by making them Muslims who believe in You.'

(وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ)

(and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You,) means, `deeds that You love which will earn Your pleasure.'

(وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ)

(and admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous servants.) means, `when You cause me to die, then join me with the righteous among Your servants, and the Higher Companion among Your close friends.'

(وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَا أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ أَمْ كَانَ
مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ - لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَذْبَحَنَّهُ
أَوْ لِيَأْتِيَنِّي بِسُلْطَنِ مُبِينٍ)

(20. He inspected the birds, and said: "What is the matter that I see not the hoopoe Or is he among the absentees") (21. "I will surely punish him with a severe torment or slaughter him, unless he brings me a clear reason.")

The Absence of the Hoopoe

Mujahid, Sa`id bin Jubayr and others narrated from Ibn `Abbas and others that the hoopoe was an expert who used to show Sulayman where water was if he was out in open land and needed water. The hoopoe would look for water for him in the various strata of the earth, just as a man looks at things on the surface of the earth, and he would know just how far below the surface the water was. When the hoopoe showed him where the water was, Sulayman would command the Jinn to dig in that place until they brought water from the depths of the earth. One day Sulayman went to some open land and checked on the birds, but he could not see the hoopoe.

(فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَا أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ)

(and (Sulayman) said: "What is the matter that I see not the hoopoe Or is he among the absentees") One day `Abdullah bin `Abbas told a similar story, and among the people was a man from the Khawarij whose name was Nafi` bin Al-Azraq, who often used to raise objections to Ibn `Abbas. He said to him, "Stop, O Ibn `Abbas; you will be defeated (in argument) today!" Ibn `Abbas said: "Why" Nafi` said: "You are telling us that the hoopoe can see water beneath the ground, but any boy can put seed in a trap and cover the trap with dirt, and the hoopoe will come and take the seed, so the boy can catch him in the trap." Ibn `Abbas said, "If it was not for the fact that this man would go and tell others that he had defeated Ibn `Abbas in argument, I would not even answer." Then he said to Nafi` : "Woe to you! When the decree strikes a person, his eyes become blind and he loses all caution." Nafi` said: "By Allah I will never dispute with you concerning anything in the Qur'an. "

(لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا)

(I will surely punish him with a severe torment) Al-A`mash said, narrating from Al-Minhal bin `Amr from Sa`id that Ibn `Abbas said: "He meant, by plucking his feathers." `Abdullah bin Shaddad said: "By plucking his feathers and exposing him to the sun." This was also the view of more than one of the Salaf, that it means plucking his feathers and leaving him exposed to be eaten by ants.

(أَوْ لَأَذْبَحَنَّهُ)

(or slaughter him,) means, killing him.

(أَوْ لِيَأْتِيَنِّي بِسُلْطَنٍ مُّبِينٍ)

(unless he brings me a clear reason.) i.e., a valid excuse. Sufyan bin `Uyaynah and `Abdullah bin Shaddad said: "When the hoopoe came back, the other birds said to him: "What kept you Sulayman has vowed to shed your blood." The hoopoe said: "Did he make any exception)did he say `unless'(" They said, "Yes, he said:

(لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَذْبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ لِيَأْتِيَنِّي
بِسُلْطَنٍ مُّبِينٍ)

(I will surely punish him with a severe torment or slaughter him, unless he brings me a clear reason.) The hoopoe said, "Then I am saved."

(فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ نَحِطُ بِهِ
وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَأٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ - إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً
تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ
- وَجَدْتُهُمْ وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ
فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ - أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ
الْخَبَاءَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ
وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ - اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ
الْعَظِيمِ)

(22. But (the hoopoe) stayed not long, he said: "I have grasped which you have not grasped and I have come to you from Saba' with true news.") (23. "I found a woman ruling over them, she has been given all things, and she has a great throne.") (24. "I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allah, and Shaytan has made their deeds fair seeming to them to prevent them from the way, so they have no guidance.") (25. So they do not prostrate themselves before Allah, Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and

knows what you conceal and what you reveal.) (26. Allah, La ilaha illa Huwa, the Lord of the Supreme Throne!")

How the Hoopoe came before Sulayman and told Him about Saba'

Allah says:

(فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ)

(But (the hoopoe) stayed not long,) meaning, he was absent for only a short time. Then he came and said to Sulayman:

(أَحْطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ)

(I have grasped which you have not grasped) meaning, 'I have come to know something that you and your troops do not know.'

(وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ)

(and I have come to you from Saba' with true news.) meaning, with true and certain news. Saba' (Sheba) refers to Himyar, they were a dynasty in Yemen. Then the hoopoe said:

(إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ)

(I found a woman ruling over them,) Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "This is Bilqis bint Sharahil, the queen of Saba'." Allah's saying:

(وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ)

(she has been given all things,) means, all the conveniences of this world that a powerful monarch could need.

(وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ)

(and she has a great throne.) meaning, a tremendous chair adorned with gold and different kinds of jewels and pearls. The historians said, "This throne was in a great, strong palace which was high and firmly constructed. In it there were three hundred and sixty windows on the east side, and a similar number on the west, and it was constructed in such a way that each day when the sun rose it would shine through one window, and when it set it would shine through the opposite window. And the people used to prostrate to the sun morning and evening. This is why the hoopoe said:

وَجَدْنَاهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ
السَّبِيلِ

(I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allah, and Shaytan has made their deeds fair seeming to them, and has prevented them from the way,) meaning, from the way of truth,

(فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ)

(so they have no guidance.) Allah's saying:

وَزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ
السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ إِلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ

(and Shaytan has made their deeds fair seeming to them, and has prevented them from the way, so they have no guidance, so they do not prostrate themselves before Allah.) They do not know the way of truth, prostrating only before Allah alone and not before anything that He has created, whether heavenly bodies or anything else. This is like the Ayah:

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا
تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

(And from among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate yourselves not to the sun nor to the moon, but prostrate yourselves to Allah Who created them, if you indeed worship Him.) (41:37)

(الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبْءَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ)

(Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth,) `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn `Abbas said: "He knows everything that is hidden in the heavens and on earth." This was also the view of `Ikrimah, Mujahid, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Qatadah and others. His saying:

(وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ)

(and knows what you conceal and what you reveal.) means, He knows what His servants say and do in secret, and what they say and do openly. This is like the Ayah:

(سَوَاءٌ مِّنْكُمْ مَّنْ أَسْرَ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ بِاللَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ)

(It is the same whether any of you conceals his speech or declares it openly, whether he be hid by night or goes forth freely by day) (13:10). His saying:

(اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ)

(Allah, La ilaha illa Huwa, the Lord of the Supreme Throne!) means, He is the One to be called upon, Allah, He is the One other than Whom there is no god, the Lord of the Supreme Throne, and there is none greater than Him in all of creation. Since the hoopoe was calling to what is good, and for people to worship and prostrate to Allah alone, it would have been forbidden to kill him. Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah recorded that Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Prophet forbade killing four kinds of animals: ants, bees, hoopoes and the sparrow hawks. Its chain of narration is Sahih.

(قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ -
اذهب بكتابي هذا فألقه إليهم ثم تول عنهم
فانظرو ماذا يرجعون - قالت يا أيها الملأ إني ألقى
إلى كتاب كريم - إنه من سليمان وإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - أَلَّا تَعْلَمُوا عَلَيَّ وَأُنُونِي
مُسْلِمِينَ)

(27. (Sulayman) said: "We shall see whether you speak the truth or you are (one) of the liars.")
(28. "Go you with this letter of mine and deliver it to them, then draw back from them and see what they return.") (29. She said: "O chiefs! Verily, here is delivered to me a noble letter,
") (30. "Verily, it is from Sulayman, and it (reads): `In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious,
the Most Merciful;') (31. `Be you not exalted against me, but come to me submitting (as Muslims).')

Sulayman's Letter to Bilqis

Allah tells us what Sulayman said to the hoopoe when he told him about the people of Saba' and their queen:

(قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَذِبِينَ)

((Sulayman) said: "We shall see whether you speak the truth or you are (one) of the liars." meaning, `are you telling the truth'

(أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَذِبِينَ)

(or you are (one) of the liars.) meaning, `or are you telling a lie in order to save yourself from the threat I made against you'

(اذهب بكتّابي هذا فألقه إليهم ثمّ تولّ عنهم
فانظر ماذا يرجعون)

(Go you with this letter of mine and deliver it to them then draw back from them and see what they return.) Sulayman wrote a letter to Bilqis and her people and gave it to the hoopoe to deliver. It was said that he carried it on his wings, as is the way with birds, or that he carried it in his beak. He went to their land and found the palace of Bilqis, then he went to her private chambers and threw the letter through a small window, then he stepped to one side out of good manners. Bilqis was amazed and confused when she saw that, then she went and picked up the letter, opened its seal and read it. The letter said:

(إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
- أَلَّا تَعْلَمُوا عَلَيَّ وَأَتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ)

(it is from Sulayman, and it (reads): `In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful; Be you not exalted against me, but come to me submitting (as Muslims).') So she gathered her commanders and ministers and the leaders of her land, and said to them:

(يَأَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ إِنِّي أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَابٌ كَرِيمٌ)

("O chiefs! Verily, here is delivered to me a noble letter.") She described it as such because of the wondrous things she had seen, that it was delivered by a bird who threw it to her, then stood aside out of good manners. This was something that no king could do. Then she read the letter to them:

إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
- أَلَّا تَعْلُوا عَلَيَّ وَأَتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ)

(Verily, it is from Sulayman, and it (reads): `In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful; Be you not exalted against me, but come to me submitting (as Muslims).') Thus they knew that it was from Allah's Prophet Sulayman, upon him be peace, and that they could not match him. This letter was the utmost in brevity and eloquence, coming straight to the point.

(أَلَّا تَعْلُوا عَلَيَّ)

(Be you not exalted against me,) Qatadah said: "Do not be arrogant with me.

(وَأَتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ)

(but come to me submitting (as Muslims).)" `Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam said: "Do not refuse or be too arrogant to come to me

(وَأَتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ)

(but come to me submitting (as Muslims).)"

(قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأَ أَفْتُونِي فِي أَمْرِي مَا كُنْتُ
قَطِيعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّى تَشْهَدُونَ - قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَوْلُوا قُوَّةً
وَأَوْلُوا بِأَسِّ شَدِيدٍ وَالْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَانظُرِي مَاذَا
تَأْمُرِينَ - قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً
أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ
- وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ
الْمُرْسَلُونَ)

(32. She said: "O chiefs! Advise me in case of mine. I decide no case till you are present with me.") (33. They said: "We have great strength, and great ability for war, but it is for you to command; so think over what you will command.") (34. She said: "Verily, kings, when they enter a town, they destroy it and make the most honorable among its people the lowest. And

thus they do.") (35. "But verily, I am going to send him a present, and see with what (answer) the messengers return.")

Bilqis consults with Her Chiefs

When she read Sulayman's letter to them and consulted with them about this news, she said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي أَمْرِي مَا كُنْتُ قَطِيعَةً
أَمْرًا حَتَّى تَشْهَدُونَ

("O chiefs! Advise me in (this) case of mine. I decide no case till you are present with me." meaning, `until you come together and offer me your advice.'

قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَوْلُوا قُوَّةٍ وَأَوْلُوا بِأَسْرِ شَدِيدٍ

(They said: "We have great strength, and great ability for war...") They reminded her of their great numbers, preparedness and strength, then they referred the matter to her and said:

وَالْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكَ فَانظُرِي مَاذَا تَأْمُرِينَ

(but it is for you to command; so think over what you will command.) meaning, `we have the power and strength, if you want to go to him and fight him.' The matter is yours to decide, so instruct us as you see fit and we will obey. Ibn `Abbas said: "Bilqis said:

إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا
أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً

(Verily, kings, when they enter a town, they destroy it and make the most honorable amongst its people the lowest.) And Allah said:

وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ

(And thus they do.) Then she resorted to peaceful means, seeking a truce and trying to placate Sulayman, and said:

وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ
الْمُرْسَلُونَ

(But verily, I am going to send him a present, and see with what the messengers return.) meaning, 'I will send him a gift befitting for one of his status, and will wait and see what his response will be. Perhaps he will accept that and leave us alone, or he will impose a tax which we can pay him every year, so that he will not fight us and wage war against us.' Qatadah said: "May Allah have mercy on her and be pleased with her -- how wise she was as a Muslim and (before that) as an idolator! She understood how gift-giving has a good effect on people." Ibn `Abbas and others said: "She said to her people, if he accepts the gift, he is a king, so fight him; but if he does not accept it, he is a Prophet, so follow him."

(قَلَمًا جَاءَ سُلَيْمَانَ قَالَ أُمِدُّونَنِي بِمَالٍ فَمَا ءَاتَنِي
اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا ءَاتَكُم بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ -
ارْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَنَأْتِيَهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ لَا قِبَلَ لَهُمْ بِهَا
وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُمْ مِنْهَا أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ)

(36. So, when (the messengers with the gift) came to Sulayman, he said: "Will you help me in wealth What Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you! Nay, you rejoice in your gift!") (37. "Go back to them. We verily, shall come to them with armies that they cannot resist, and we shall drive them out from there in disgrace, and they will be abased.")

The Gift and the Response of Sulayman

More than one of the scholars of Tafsir among the Salaf and others stated that she sent him a huge gift of gold, jewels, pearls and other things. It is apparent that Sulayman, peace be upon him, did not even look at what they brought at all and did not pay any attention to it, but he turned away and said, rebuking them:

(أُمِدُّونَنِي بِمَالٍ)

("Will you help me in wealth") meaning, 'are you trying to flatter me with wealth so that I will leave you alone with your Shirk and your kingdom'

(فَمَا ءَاتَنِي اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا ءَاتَكُمُ)

(What Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you!) means, 'what Allah has given to me of power, wealth and troops, is better than that which you have.'

(بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ)

(Nay, you rejoice in your gift!) means, 'you are the ones who are influenced by gifts and presents; we will accept nothing from you except Islam or the sword.'

(ارْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ)

(Go back to them) means, with their gift,

(قَلْنَا تَتِيَّبُهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ لَّا قِبَلَ لَهُمْ بِهَا)

(We verily, shall come to them with armies that they cannot resist,) they have no power to match them or resist them.

(وَلَنُخْرِجَهُمْ مِّنْهَا أَذِلَّةً)

(and we shall drive them out from there in disgrace,) `we shall drive them out in disgrace from their land.'

(وَهُمْ صَغِرُونَ)

(and they will be abased.) means, humiliated and expelled. When her messengers came back to her with her undelivered gift, and told her what Sulayman said, she and her people paid heed and obeyed him. She came to him with her troops in submission and humility, honoring Sulayman and intending to follow him in Islam. When Sulayman, peace be upon him, realized that they were coming to him, he rejoiced greatly.

(قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ
يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ - قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا
ءَاتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَّقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ
لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ - قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا
ءَاتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهُ
مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي
أَعَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ
وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ)

(38. He said: "O chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me surrendering themselves in obedience (as Muslims)") (39. An `lfrit from the Jinn said: "I will

bring it to you before you rise from your place. And verily, I am indeed strong and trustworthy for such work.") (40. One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture, said: "I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!" Then when he saw it placed before him, he said: "This is by the grace of my Lord -- to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for himself; and whoever is ungrateful, certainly my Lord is Rich, Bountiful.")

How the Throne of Bilqis was brought in an Instant

Muhammad bin Ishaq reported from Yazid bin Ruman: "When the messengers returned with word of what Sulayman said, she said: `By Allah, I knew he was more than a king, and that we have no power to match him, and that we can gain nothing by being stubborn with him. So, she sent word to him saying: "I am coming to you with the leaders of my people to see what you will instruct us to do and what you are calling us to of your religion." Then she issued commands that her throne, which was made of gold and inlaid with rubies, chrysolite and pearls, should be placed in the innermost of seven rooms, one within the other, and all the doors should be locked. Then she told her deputy whom she was leaving in charge, "Take care of my people and my throne, and do not let anyone approach it or see it until I come back to you." Then she set off to meet Sulayman with twelve thousand of her commanders from the leaders of Yemen, under each of whose command were many thousands of men. Sulayman sent the Jinn to bring him news of her progress and route every day and night, then when she drew near, he gathered together the Jinns and humans who were under his control and said:

(يَأْيُهَا الْمَلَأُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي
مُسْلِمِينَ)

(O chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me surrendering themselves in obedience (as Muslims))."

(قَالَ عِفْرِيْتُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ)

(An `Ifrit from the Jinn said:) Mujahid said, "A giant Jinn." Abu Salih said, "It was as if he was a mountain."

(أَنَا ءَاتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ)

(I will bring it to you before you rise from your place.) Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Before you get up from where you are sitting." As-Suddi and others said: "He used to sit to pass judgements and rulings over the people, and to eat, from the beginning of the day until noon."

(وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ)

(And verily, I am indeed strong and trustworthy for such work.) Ibn `Abbas said: "Strong enough to carry it and trustworthy with the jewels it contains. Sulayman, upon him be peace, said, "I want it faster than that." From this it seems that Sulayman wanted to bring this throne as a

demonstration of the greatness of the power and authority that Allah had bestowed upon him and the troops that He had subjugated to him. Power such as had never been given to anyone else, before or since, so that this would furnish proof of his prophethood before Bilqis and her people, because this would be a great and wondrous thing, if he brought her throne as if he were in her country, before they could come to it, although it was hidden and protected by so many locked doors. When Sulayman said, "I want it faster than that,

(قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ)

(One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture said:) Ibn `Abbas said, "This was Asif, the scribe of Sulayman." It was also narrated by Muhammad bin Ishaq from Yazid bin Ruman that he was Asif bin Barkhiya' and he was a truthful believer who knew the Greatest Name of Allah. Qatadah said: "He was a believer among the humans, and his name was Asif."

(أَنَا ءَاتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ)

(I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!) Meaning, lift your gaze and look as far as you can, and before you get tired and blink, you will find it before you. Then he got up, performed ablution and prayed to Allah, may He be exalted. Mujahid said: "He said, O Owner of majesty and honor." When Sulayman and his chiefs saw it before them,

(قَالَ هَذَا مِن فَضْلِ رَبِّي)

(he said: "This is by the grace of my Lord...") meaning, 'this is one of the blessings which Allah has bestowed upon me.'

(لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَءَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَن شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ)

(to test whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for himself;) This is like the Ayat:

(مَّنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا)

(Whosoever does righteous good deed, it is for himself; and whosoever does evil, it is against himself.) (41:46)

(وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا نَفْسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُونَ)

(and whosoever does righteous good deed, then such will prepare a good place for themselves.) (30:44).

(وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ)

(and whoever is ungrateful, certainly my Lord is Rich, Bountiful.) He has no need of His servants or their worship.

(كَرِيمٌ)

(Bountiful) He is Bountiful in and of Himself, even if no one were to worship Him. His greatness does not depend on anyone. This is like what Musa said: p

(إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ)

(If you disbelieve, you and all on earth together, then verily, Allah is Rich, Owner of all praise.) (14:8). It is recorded in Sahih Muslim:

«يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ
وَأَخْرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَىٰ أَتْقَىٰ قَلْبِ
رَجُلٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا زَادَ ذَلِكَ فِي مُلْكِي شَيْئًا. يَا عِبَادِي
لَوْ أَنَّ أَوْلَكُمْ وَأَخْرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَىٰ
أَفْجَرِ قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِي
شَيْئًا. يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أَحْصِيهَا لَكُمْ ثُمَّ
أَوْقِيكُمْ إِيَّاهَا فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ
وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ»

(Allah, may He be exalted, says: "O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, mankind and Jinn alike, were all to be as pious as the most pious among you, that would not add to My dominion in the slightest. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, mankind and Jinn alike, were all to be as evil as the most evil one among you, that would not detract from My dominion in the slightest. O My servants, these are deeds which I am recording for you, and I will judge you according to them, so whoever finds something good, let him praise Allah, and whoever finds otherwise, let him blame no one but himself.")

(قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ
 مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ - فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا
 عَرْشُكَ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا
 وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ - وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ
 اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ - قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي
 الصَّرْحَ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ
 سَاقَيْهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ مِّن قَوَارِيرَ قَالَتْ
 رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ
 رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

(41. He said: "Disguise her throne for her that we may see whether she will be guided, or she will be one of those not guided.") (42. So when she came, it was said, "Is your throne like this" She said: "As though it were the very same." And he said, "Knowledge was bestowed on us before her, and we had submitted to Allah (as Muslims).") (43. And Saddaha that which she used to worship besides Allah has prevented her (from Islam), for she was of a disbelieving people.) (44. It was said to her: "Enter As-Sarh," but when she saw it, she thought it was a pool, and she (tucked up her clothes) uncovering her legs. Sulayman said: "Verily, it is a Sarh Mumarrad of Qawarir." She said: "My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, and I submit, together with Sulayman to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.")

The Test of Bilqis

When Sulayman brought the throne of Bilqis before she and her people arrived, he issued orders that some of its features should be altered, so that he could test her and see whether she recognized it and how composed she would be when she saw it. Would she hasten to say either that it was her throne or that it was not So he said:

(نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ
 الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ)

(Disguise her throne for her that we may see whether she will be guided, or she will be one of those not guided.) Ibn `Abbas said: "Remove some of its adornments and parts." Mujahid said:

"He issued orders that it should be changed, so whatever was red should be made yellow and vice versa, and whatever was green should be made red, so everything was altered." `Ikrimah said, "They added some things and took some things away." Qatadah said, "It was turned upside down and back to front, and some things were added and some things were taken away."

(فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا عَرْشُكَ)

(So when she came, it was said: "Is your throne like this") Her throne, which had been altered and disguised, with some things added and others taken away, was shown to her. She was wise and steadfast, intelligent and strong-willed. She did not hasten to say that this was her throne, because it was far away from her. Neither did she hasten to say that it was not her throne, when she saw that some things had been altered and changed. She said,

(كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ)

((It is) as though it were the very same.) This is the ultimate in intelligence and strong resolve.

(وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ)

(Knowledge was bestowed on us before her, and we had submitted to Allah.) Mujahid said, "This was spoken by Sulayman."

(وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ
مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ)

(And Saddaha that which she used to worship besides Allah has prevented her, for she was of a disbelieving people.) This is a continuation of the words of Sulayman -- according to the opinion of Mujahid and Sa`id bin Jubayr, may Allah be pleased with them both -- i.e., Sulayman said:

(وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ)

(Knowledge was bestowed on us before her, and we had submitted to Allah.) and what stopped her from worshipping Allah alone was

(مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ
كَافِرِينَ)

(that which she used to worship besides Allah, for she was of a disbelieving people.) What Mujahid and Sa`id said is good; it was also the view of Ibn Jarir. Then Ibn Jarir said, "It could be that the subject of the verb.

(وَصَدَّهَا)

(And Saddaha) refers to Sulayman or to Allah, so that the phrase now means:

(مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ)

(She would not worship anything over than Allah.)

(إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ)

(for she was of a disbelieving people.) I say: the opinion of Mujahid is supported by the fact that she declared her Islam after she entered the Sarh, as we shall see below.

(قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً
وَكشفت عن ساقَيْهَا)

(It was said to her: "Enter As-Sarh" but when she saw it, she thought it was a pool, and she (tucked up her clothes) uncovering her legs.) Sulayman had commanded the Shayatin to build for her a huge palace of glass beneath which water was flowing. Anyone who did not know the nature of the building would think that it was water, but in fact there was a layer of glass between a person walking and the water.

Verily, it is a Sarh Mumarrad of Qawarir Sarh means a palace or any lofty construction.

Allah says of Fir`awn -- may Allah curse him -- that he said to his minister Haman:

(ابن لي صرحاً لعلني أبلغ الأَسْبَابَ)

(Build me a Sarh that I may arrive at the ways.) (40:36-37) Sarh is also used to refer to the high constructed palaces in Yemen. Mumarrad means sturdily constructed and smooth.

(مِنْ قَوَارِيرَ)

(of Qawarir) means, made of glass, i.e., it was built with smooth surfaces. Marid is a fortress in Dawmat Al-Jandal. What is meant here is that Sulayman built a huge, lofty palace of glass for this queen, in order to show her the greatness of his authority and power. When she saw for herself what Allah had given him and how majestic his position was, she submitted to the command of Allah and acknowledged that he was a noble Prophet, so she submitted to Allah and said:

(رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي)

(My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself,) meaning, by her previous disbelief and Shirk and by the fact that she and her people had worshipped the sun instead of Allah.

(وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

(and I submit, together with Sulayman to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.) meaning, following the religion of Sulayman, worshipping Allah alone with no partner or associate, Who created everything and measured it exactly according to its due measurements.

(وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ - قَالَ يَقَوْمِ لِمَ
تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ - قَالُوا اطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِمَنْ
مَعَكَ قَالَ طَائِرُكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تُكْفِرُونَ)

(45. And indeed We sent to Thamud their brother Salih, (saying): "Worship Allah." Then look! They became two parties quarreling with each other.) (46. He said: "O my people! Why do you seek to hasten the evil before the good Why seek you not the forgiveness of Allah, that you may receive mercy") (47. They said: "We augur an omen from you and those with you." He said: "Your omen is of Allah; nay, but you are a people that are being tested.")

Salih and Thamud

Allah tells us about Thamud and how they responded to their Prophet Salih, when Allah sent him to call them to worship Allah alone, with no partner or associate.

(فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ)

(Then look! They became two parties quarreling with each other.) Mujahid said, "These were believers and disbelievers." This is like the Ayah,

(قَالَ الْمَلَأَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِلَّذِينَ
اسْتُضِعُّوا لِمَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَالِحًا

مُرْسَلٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا بِالَّذِي ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ
كٰفِرُونَ

(The leaders of those who were arrogant among his people said to those who were counted weak -- to such of them as believed: "Know you that Salih is one sent from his Lord." They said: "We indeed believe in that with which he has been sent." Those who were arrogant said: "Verily, we disbelieve in that which you believe in.") (7:75-76)

(قَالَ يَقَوْمٍ لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ)

(He said: "O my people! Why do you seek to hasten the evil before the good") meaning, 'why are you praying for the punishment to come, and not asking Allah for His mercy' Then he said:

(لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ قَالُوا اطَّيَّرْنَا
بِكَ وَيَمَن مَّعَكَ)

("Why seek you not the forgiveness of Allah, that you may receive mercy" They said: "We augur an omen from you and those with you.") This means: "We do not see any good in your face and the faces of those who are following you." Since they were doomed, whenever anything bad happened to any of them they would say, "This is because of Salih and his companions." Mujahid said, "They regarded them as bad omens." This is similar to what Allah said about the people of Fir`awn:

(فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ
سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَى وَمَنْ مَّعَهُ)

(But whenever good came to them, they said: "Ours is this." And if evil afflicted them, they saw it as an omen about Musa and those with him) (7:131). And Allah says:

(وَإِنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
وَإِنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلُّ
مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ)